



Views on an identity in formation: The teaching work of teachers working in university early childhood education

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ABSTRACT. The study in question takes a look at the teaching work of Basic, Technical and Technological Education (EBTT) teachers working in university early childhood education, seeking to analyze their performance, formation and career and the constitution of their professional identity. It is based on the analysis of the subjectivity of teaching work and the constitution of the identity of the teacher based on the logic of productive restructuring of capital, in a dialectic perspective. The set of reforms implemented in Brazilian education in recent decades, directly impacted the teaching performance at all levels of education, causing significant changes in their daily practices and professionalism. For those who work in early childhood education, the effects are even greater due to its nature and an identity still under construction. The study takes a theoretical-critical line, adopting a qualitative approach, using bibliographic research as a procedure, centered on research and theoretical discussions on formation, professional identity, career and teaching productivity submitted to the logic of capital and on the nature of the Child Education Units (UEI) and their professionals. The results point out the contradictions and dilemmas experienced by EBTT professors inserted in a federal teaching career, submitted to the demands of high productivity in the triad teaching, research and extension for performance and progression, in addition to the need for continuing education to guarantee promotion and recognition career. The definition of the profile of the early childhood educator, in general, and of their formation are still in the process of being constituted, which, together with the precariousness of work, for teachers from the EBTT of the Infant Education Unit (UEI) of the Federal University of Alagoas, to affirmation, appreciation and recognition become challenges expressly posed, in the search to build their careers and professional identity.

Keywords: early childhood education; formation; teaching career; academic productivity; professional identity.

Olhares sobre uma identidade em formação: O trabalho docente de professores atuantes na educação infantil universitária

RESUMO. O estudo em tela lança um olhar sobre o trabalho docente de professores do Ensino Básico, Técnico e Tecnológico (EBTT) atuantes na educação infantil universitária, buscando analisar a atuação, a formação e carreira e a constituição de sua identidade profissional. Fundamenta-se na análise da subjetividade do trabalho docente e da constituição da identidade do/a professor/a a partir da lógica de reestruturação produtiva do capital, numa perspectiva dialética. O conjunto de reformas implementadas na educação brasileira nas últimas décadas, impactou diretamente na atuação docente em todos os níveis de ensino, ocasionando mudanças significativas em suas práticas cotidianas e profissionalidade. Para quem atua na educação infantil, os efeitos são ainda maiores pela sua natureza e por uma identidade ainda em construção. O estudo assume uma linha teórico-crítica, adotando uma abordagem qualitativa, utilizando-se como procedimento a pesquisa bibliográfica, centrada em pesquisas e discussões teóricas sobre formação, identidade profissional, carreira e produtividade docente submetidos à lógica do capital e sobre a natureza das Unidades de Educação Infantil (UEI) universitárias e dos seus profissionais. Os resultados apontam as contradições e dilemas vivenciados por docentes do EBTT inseridos em uma carreira de magistério federal, submetidos às exigências de alta produtividade na tríade ensino, pesquisa e extensão para desempenho e progressão, além da necessidade de formação continuada para garantia de promoção e reconhecimento na carreira. A definição do perfil do/a educador/a de educação infantil, de um modo geral, e de sua formação encontram-se ainda em processo de constituição, que aliados à precarização do trabalho, para os/as professores/as do EBTT da Unidade de Educação Infantil (UEI) da Universidade Federal de Alagoas, à afirmação, valorização e reconhecimento tornam-se desafios expressamente postos, na busca por construir suas carreiras e identidade profissional.

Palavras-chave: educação infantil; formação; carreira docente; produtividade acadêmica; identidade profissional.

Visiones sobre una identidad en formación: la labor docente del profesorado que trabaja en la educación infantil universitaria

RESUMEN. El estudio en pantalla analiza la labor docente de los docentes de Educación Básica, Técnica y Tecnológica (EBTT) que trabajan en la educación infantil universitaria, buscando analizar el desempeño, la formación y la carrera y la constitución de su identidad profesional. Se basa en el análisis de la subjetividad del trabajo docente y la constitución de la identidad del docente a partir de la lógica de la reestructuración productiva del capital, en una perspectiva dialéctica. El conjunto de reformas implementadas en la educación brasileña en las últimas décadas, impactaron directamente el desempeño docente en todos los niveles de la educación, provocando cambios significativos en sus prácticas diarias y profesionalismo. Para quienes trabajan en educación infantil, los efectos son aún mayores por su naturaleza y una identidad aún en construcción. El estudio toma una línea teórico-crítica, adoptando un enfoque cualitativo, utilizando como procedimiento la investigación bibliográfica, centrada en la investigación y discusiones teóricas sobre la formación, la identidad profesional, la carrera y la productividad docente sometida a la lógica del capital y sobre la naturaleza de las Unidades Estudiantes universitarias de Educación Infantil (UEI) y sus profesionales. Los resultados señalan las contradicciones y dilemas vividos por los profesores de EBTT insertados en una carrera docente federal, sometidos a las demandas de alta productividad en la tríada docencia, investigación y extensión para el desempeño y la progresión, además de la necesidad de una formación continua para garantizar la promoción y el reconocimiento. carrera. La definición del perfil del educador de la primera infancia, en general, y su formación se encuentran aún en proceso de constitución, lo cual, unido a la precariedad laboral, para los docentes de la EBTT de la Unidad de Educación Infantil (UEI) de la Universidad Federal de Alagoas, la afirmación, el aprecio y el reconocimiento se convierten en desafíos expresamente planteados, en la búsqueda de construir sus carreras e identidad profesional.

Palabras clave: educación infantil; formación; carrera docente; productividad académica; identidad profesional.

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Introduction

In the last three decades, profound changes have marked the history of education in Brazil, especially after the enactment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) of 1996, and the series of educational reforms resulting from the dictates of multilateral organizations at the service of international capital. These reforms affect all levels and modalities of Brazilian education, with a great impact on the careers, formation and performance of teachers, considering that these are central elements for the realization of neoliberal projects of adaptations to the demands of capitalism to overcome the crisis of its reproductive system.

Early childhood education, with the new LDB, Law No. 9,394 (1996), becomes part of the first stage of basic education and begins to gain greater visibility on the national scene. This is because with the advent of the Federal Constitution of 1988, this stage is recognized as a need and right of all children, in a pedagogical concept of complementing the family's action and the State's duty to provide.

Thus, in the set of educational reforms implemented from the 1990s onwards, early childhood education is now incorporated by education systems within the scope of guaranteeing children's rights, strengthened by the struggle of social movements for the expansion and improvement of care, as well as for the recognition of its specificity and importance in the school trajectory of the subjects, from an early age.

Public policies to ensure educational care for babies and young children have been gradually gaining ground, in the search to make it possible to guarantee them, expand access, offer quality and overcome the historically predominant assistance character.

The expansion of early childhood education, within the framework of educational reforms, is also characterized by regulatory processes produced by the State as spaces for disciplining and managing poverty and work. These reforms highlight changes in the professional profile, which until then had been accepted with any formation to work in day care centers, as they were seen only as caregivers. However, with the new regulation of early childhood education as a right from 0 to 6 years of age, with discussions about the social function of early childhood education and the inseparability of caring and educating, professional performance is considered a determinant for quality of the educational process, at all levels, generating new demands on the teaching performance and recognition of the professional of early childhood education, requiring a minimum formation consistent with the role of educator, and defining legal guarantees of working

conditions and plan of career. However, the struggle for formation its professionals and recognition of the profession is, today, still the target of discussion and confrontations in the Brazilian scenario (Kramer, 2006).

The teaching category, at all levels, from early childhood education to higher education, has been directly affected by neoliberal educational reforms, reinforcing the precariousness of teaching activity, with consequences in all aspects of their lives, from formation, appreciation and career to aspects and its effects on everyday life. Thus, from the 1990s onwards, many studies and investigations have been carried out focusing on the category of teaching work in the context of capitalist society on diverse ranges of analyses, although they generally have as a guideline, regardless of the line of research, the dialectical relationship, between the different interests that stipulate, determine and mediate the teaching work and the aspects that transcend it.

Certainly, there are aspects that come together and others that differ when analyzing the spaces of activity of teachers, even from the same stage or modality of education, since the specificities of the teaching networks (public or private) impress certain features. In this discussion, the focus is on the analysis of the careers of teachers who work in Early Childhood Education Units at Federal Universities, from the perspective of the capitalist productivity logic that regulates academic activities.

Even though we recognize that the understanding of the interference that neoliberal reforms have exerted on the work relations and productivity of professionals in early childhood education at Universities and the institution's proposals for assistance in this area still need to be better investigated and deepened, we aim here, albeit briefly, due to the limits set, to analyze how the teaching work of teachers of Basic Technical and Technological Education (EBTT) who work in early childhood education at Federal Universities, has been constituted from the perspective of formation, career and professional identity and its nature in the spheres of the teaching, research and extension triad, which mediate the teaching activities of the federal teaching profession.

The study takes a theoretical-critical line, in the perspective of highlighting the conditions of historical oppression and domination to which teachers are subject, adopting a qualitative approach, which, in the understanding of Minayo (2006, p. 22-23), is capable of "[...] incorporate the issue of meaning and intentionality as inherent to acts, relationships and social structures, the latter being taken both in their advent and in their transformation, as significant human constructions". Thus, our intention was to seek an approximation with the meanings and senses attributed by the subjects in the daily exercise of their professional life and in the social context in which they live. As a procedure, a theoretical and historical bibliographic research (Gil, 2008) was used, based on the survey of research and theoretical discussions on formation, professional identity, career and teacher productivity submitted to the logic of capital, such as the studies of Abreu and Landini (2003), Fidalgo and Fidalgo (2009), Garcia, Hypolito and Vieira (2005), Kilp and Ruiz (2009), Vieira and Martins (2012) and Yamanoe (2013), and on the nature of the Education Units Children (UEI) university and their professionals, such as the studies developed by Raupp (2002, 2004), Pereira (2019), Santos (2019), Cardoso (2013) Vieira, Lopes, and Vieira (2013), Barros, Aquino and Pereira (2014) and Rocha (2019), in addition to legislation dealing with careers at the EBTT, such as Law 11,784 (2008) and Law No. 12,772 (2012) and EUI regulations, such as Resolution No. 22 (2013) - CONSUNI /UFAL, in order to support the analysis of the teaching work of the EBTT career at the UEI of the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL).

The identity and teaching career in the logic of academic productivity

In the molds of the current capitalist state based on the expansionist logic of accumulation, which has affected, in addition to the fields of economics, the social activities necessary for its reproduction, including education, the dialectical characteristic of antagonistic interests deepens even more, given the corrective action strategies to maintain the accumulation processes that have taken place. Thus, the context of educational reforms implemented in recent decades in various parts of the capitalist world, submitting the adequacy of educational and curriculum policies to neoliberal precepts, has fostered significant changes in the nature of teaching work.

Pragmatism and utilitarianism set the tone for school culture, curriculum and education, now aligned with market needs. It is a questioning control that affects teachers, hurting their autonomy and their ability to conceive, also affecting their physical and emotional integrity, with effects even on the identity of teachers (Vieira & Martins, 2012, p. 93).

Considering the current stage of capitalism, especially in realities such as Brazil, of peripheral capitalism, whose educational policies have turned their focus to the country's economic development, linking education to market needs, the teaching work assumes both the specificity of the production of productive subjects and also starts to have as its basic characteristic the very logic of productivity.

To conform to this logic, profound changes in the world of work began to be instituted after these reforms. At the same time, labor, social security and educational policies are implemented through various legal provisions, transforming the whole of teaching work, both at a basic and higher level. Fernandes and Leite (2013) highlight the extent to which these measures implemented to fulfill these political-economic agendas have generated effects on the modes of organization, management and on the ways of developing teaching. “Teachers, as central actors, have been stimulated to new professional challenges that require an increase in activities and responsibilities” (Fernandes & Leite, 2013, p. 40). For the authors, “[...] the field of action of higher education, namely, marked by the exercise of teaching and research, has conferred a loss of social status for teachers” (Fernandes & Leite, 2013, p. 40), issue related to the increase of tasks and the loss of quality, control and meaning in their work. Which extends, in our view, to the action of all teachers in the federal magisterium.

Another study (Yamanoe, 2013) highlights that the productivity required of the professor at the university, in addition to teaching, translates into the intensification of research aimed at raising resources, disputes in development notices, patents, increase in the quantity of publications, guidelines for scientific initiation and postgraduate research, and several other required academic productions. These questions point to the legitimacy of a teaching subjectivity based on the unconditional production of knowledge and total dedication to work.

This logic encompasses all teachers in the federal administrative sphere, but when it comes to teachers of basic education, whose activity was culturally linked more directly to teaching, the constitution of their careers in the scope of federal teaching, also generates more identity and ideological conflicts, as it participates in a career equaled to higher education, it submits to the same productivity rules as these, although with specificities in pedagogical practices aimed at serving children, in this case, early childhood education, which we will address further up.

Going into an analysis of the subjectivity of teaching work helps to understand the constitution of the teacher's identity within this logic of productive restructuring of capital. Thus, from an ontological perspective of the work category, for the understanding of the social objectification and subjectivation processes that occur in being, work is seen as the founding category of social being. It is in the social work relations, in the course of the modes of production, that the sociability processes are constituted. Such processes are not, therefore, purely objective, as they also have a charge of subjectivity intrinsic to human social nature. According to Bock, Furtado and Teixeira (2008, p. 23), subjectivity,

[...] it is the singular and individual synthesis that each one of us builds as we develop and live the experiences of social and cultural life; it is a synthesis that identifies us on the one hand, for being unique; and on the other hand it equals us, insofar as the elements that constitute it are experienced in the common field of social objectivity.

The authors also emphasize that subjectivity is not innate to the individual, “[...] he builds it little by little, appropriating material from the social and cultural world (the expression collective subjectivity), and he does this at the same time as it acts on the world, that is, it is active in its construction” (Bock et al., 2008, p. 23). In this way of thinking, Yamanoe (2013) highlights that there is an intrinsic relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, constituted in the objective social relations of production and reproduction of human life. Thus, “[...] the subjectivity of the worker in capitalism is linked to his productive function and, with the advances of the forces of production, especially from the Toyotist model of work management, other particularities are added to this subjectivity” (Yamanoe, 2013, p. 5).

To understand the constitution of the teaching identity in the logic of capitalist productivity, it is inevitable to understand the nature and specificity of their work, considering that this is not alien to the objective conditions to which they are submitted.

The specificity of non-material teaching work brings up divergent reflections and positions on the role of this type of work in capitalist society. According to the Marxist conception,

From the point of view of the work process in general, work that was carried out on a product was presented as productive, more specifically on a commodity. From the point of view of the capitalist production process, a more precise determination is added: that work that directly values capital, which produces surplus value, is productive [...] (Marx, 1985, p. 109).

Taking into account the Marxian premise, it can be considered that the teacher's work does not result in a materialized product, since there is no possibility of extracting surplus value in the act of teaching. However, as defended by Abreu and Landini (2003, p. 3),

[...] teaching, salaried work, is linked to the production of surplus value insofar as it is linked to the formation of the workforce. In this sense, although not directly productive, the work of the educator and the teacher is linked to the productive logic.

Yamanoe (2013, p. 8), adds that,

[...] if directly in the practice of teaching work it is not possible to exploit the labor of the teacher, the intensification of work, linked to other activities, performs this control. In the specificity of Higher Education teaching, there is also research and extension (in addition to teaching) as essential activities. In this sense, the productivity of teaching work involves the requirement of scientific production, constitution of research groups, guidance of different natures, university extension, in addition to the high workload in the classroom.

Abreu and Landini (2003) corroborate that both works, material or immaterial, can be linked to the process of producing surplus value, as even if a given work is not immediately linked to the surplus value process, it needs to be considered from its role in the logic of capital appreciation.

Based on this logic, there is a paradoxical issue: the unproductive work of the teacher under the fetishistic economic perspective of capital and, at the same time, the high productivity required of this worker by the system. Considering the specifics of teaching at different levels of education and, especially at the university level, the construction of teaching subjectivity stands out as an element composed of several contradictions in the current neoliberal model. Hypolito, Vieira and Pizzi (2009) point out that these changes have profoundly affected the teaching identity and enabled new discussions about the burdens and burdens that teaching work forces them to experience. These changes, of a post-Fordist nature, affect both the bodies and the emotional, causing the intensification processes to internalize and transform themselves. Thus, the teaching identity ends up suffering intense influences from the multiple representations conveyed socially, as highlighted by Garcia et al. (2005, p. 47):

Dealing with the teaching identity is to be aware of the representation policy that the discourses conveyed by groups and individuals who dispute the academic space or who are in the administration of the State establish. It is also to consider the practical effects and the politics of truth that discourses conveyed by the print, television and cinematographic media are helping to shape. The teacher's identity is negotiated between these multiple representations, among which, and in a relevant way, the identity policies established by the official educational discourse.

Based on the theory of multiple representations on which they are based, the authors present a concept of professional identity:

By professional teacher identity we mean the positions of subject that are attributed, by different discourses and social agents, to teachers in the exercise of their functions in concrete work contexts. It also refers to the set of representations put into circulation by discourses on the ways of being and acting of teachers in the exercise of their functions in educational institutions, more or less complex and bureaucratic (Garcia et al., 2005, p. 48).

At the heart of the university, knowledge production space, the productivist logic imposes itself, demanding acceleration of production as a requirement for the development of the teaching career and bureaucratic forms of control are instituted in order to regulate teaching efficiency. Fidalgo and Fidalgo (2009, p. 94, emphasis added), on this issue, they note that

[...] the development of the productivist logic imposed by regulatory instruments and institutions (generally, evaluators) of university teaching work has gradually confronted the identity of this field with the restructured forms (not to say that they are 'new') of conformation of its objectivity, but mainly of its subjectivity.

The new managerial practices increasingly demand the intensification of professionalism processes. Thus, Kilp and Ruiz (2009) argue that there is no type of subjectivity that is not constituted by the discourses of truth that accept them as true and by which they organize their way of living. Subjectivity is a complex construction that involves practices and truths that legitimize its performance. In this sense, the truths that subjects believe and accept have a decisive impact on their personal and professional lives and, consequently, on their professional identity.

The neoliberal policy that regulates the career of professional teachers in federal teaching, acting in higher education or in basic, technical and technological education, is strongly marked by the logic of market productivity of a commodified model of education. In the federal network, whether in higher, professional or basic education, the struggle for spaces to survive and obtain resources to ensure research and other projects, in addition to the direct relationship with career plans, lead to submission to this logic that every time more precarious, intensifies and impacts on the performance, life and health of teachers' workers.

Thus, it is from this productivist logic, anchored in the dictates of capital, that we enter into the analysis of the work, career and professional identity of EBTT professors working in a UEI of a university and in the relationships and contradictions that are woven in this dialectic.

A look at the teaching work, professional identity, career and formatio of EBTT teachers working in Early Childhood Education

Research on the Federal Units of Early Childhood Education at Universities is still little known. Those carried out by Raupp (2002, 2004) stand out, which are always referenced when it comes to analyzing the origin, performance and functioning of these units. This author points out that early childhood education units in universities emerged from the 1970s onwards and came from the upsurge of social movements and women's struggles for day care centers for working women at that time, also fostering the struggle of university communities for the right to child care in the absence of student or servant mothers. It has been incorporated by the federal government sphere and day care centers have been created in the structures of some universities. Raupp (2002, 2004) raised the existence of 26 UEI, within 19 Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES) in the country. The greatest expansion took place between 1980 and 1992, influenced by the guarantee of early childhood education as a right in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and by the advances and growth of the area as a field of research and formation.

In the studies by Raupp (2004), regarding the nature and performance of the Units, the author deduces that few have been able to provide answers towards a practice that combines teaching, research and extension, although these are the aspects that seem to illuminate the debate on the relevance of these units in the university environment. More recent studies (Vieira, Lopes, & Vieira, 2016; Barros, Aquino, & Pereira, 2014; Pereira, 2019) already bring other perspectives of action and expansion in research, extension and teacher formation, resulting from changes in the framework of professionals, occurred in recent decades, and the mobilization of its main authors to resist the processes of municipalization of early childhood education in universities and for the permanence and continuity of these spaces of academic support.

As for the professional teaching staff of university early childhood education, it is noteworthy that, according to the survey by Raupp (2004), just over two-thirds of teachers had a relationship with the IFES, that is, they belonged to the career of basic education at the university itself. Another part were administrative technicians added to civil servants and teachers from agreements with city halls or outsourced workers. This was the case of the Child Education Unit at the Federal University of Alagoas, until mid-2014, when the first public examination for EBTT professors to work at the Unit took place and the appointment of five professors by the aforementioned university took place. Until then, the UEI, since its inception, in 1984, has worked with entertainers hired by the University Foundation for the Development of Extension and Research (FUNDEPES) and, between 2002 and 2014, with teachers from the municipal network of Maceió provided by through a Technical Cooperation Term with UFAL (Rocha, 2019). This new reality, with the arrival of the EBTT professors, has raised a new challenge for the unit and for all those who comprise it, and in particular for new professionals, especially with regard to the realization of a recent career, until then, non-existent in the context of basic education within that university, raising an internal policy for this area of activity that needs to be thought through, structured and built.

Pereira (2019) reinforces that little has changed in terms of the reality of professionals working in UEI. It is worth mentioning some competitions held in the last decade that allowed some effective hiring of professors, as was the case at UFAL, with the staff still being complemented by interns, outsourced professors and even volunteer professors in some units. In the case of UFAL, still with part of the faculty being provided by the municipality of Maceió.

Effective teachers belong to the teaching career of Basic, Technical and Technological Education (EBTT). This career, created and regulated by Law No. 11.784 (2008), was previously called federal teaching of 1st and 2nd degrees and encompassed the professional teaching staff of the former Federal Technical Schools, Federal Agrotechnical Schools, Military Colleges and Pedro II College, continuing at the Federal Technological Education Centers (CEFET). The change in legislation aimed to reorganize the federal teaching profession and the government's conceptions of the teaching career, in addition to meeting the demands inherent in the creation of Federal Education Institutes (IF) and the expansion of the federal education network professional, scientific and technological in the country, from 2008 onwards. This expansion and restructuring brought needs to also reorganize the careers of teachers to meet the new configurations of the IF courses and recent legal adjustments were instituted between 2012 and 2013.

EBTT's teaching career since its creation until the date of March 1, 2013 (entry into force), as of its structuring by the enactment of Law 12,772, of December 28, 2012, was unregulated, leading to erroneous understandings. The aforementioned Law provides for the structuring of the Federal Teaching Careers and Positions Plan; on the Career Plan and Teaching Positions for Basic, Technical and Technological Education and on the Federal Basic Teaching Career Plan, referred to in Law No. 11,784, of September 22, 2008. According to the Law, it was structured, as of March 1, 2013, the Career Plan and Federal Teaching Positions, comprising four Careers and positions, among which is the Teaching Career of Basic, Technical and Technological Education, comprising positions of effective provision of Teacher of Basic, Technical and Technological Education, referred to in Law No. 11,784, of September 22, 2008 (Brito & Caldas, 2016, p. 89).

With Law No. 12,772 (2012), the careers of federal teaching staff are equalized and both the EBTT teaching career and the higher teaching career are now part of the same Federal Teaching Careers and Positions Plan, except for distinctions of denomination in the classes. And so, the professors belonging to them become subject to the same performance and promotion requirements in their careers. In addition to the federal network of professional and technological education, the EBTT teachers also start working in basic education at the Application Colleges and at the Child Education University Units.

In the public examination for the EBTT career, a university degree at the undergraduate level is required as a minimum qualification. There are criteria for promotion by title and performance. Since for the last class of the career, full professor, there are requirements for the professor to have a doctorate degree, to be approved in the performance evaluation process and, in addition, to obtain approval of a memorial that should consider the teaching and research activities, extension, academic management and relevant professional production, or the defense of an unpublished academic thesis (Brasil, 2012). These requirements tend to ensure higher quality of the teaching staff. In the teacher evaluation process, teaching, research and extension activities are present at all levels of career promotion. In fact, teachers need to develop beyond teaching, which is inherent to the position, research and extension because they are within the federal university and in accordance with the requirement of the EBTT position, the university triad is a *sine qua non* condition to achieve promotion to the class subsequent (Pereira, 2019, p. 78).

In the scope of UFAL, since 2006, there had already been hiring professors from that career, however, to work in the technical courses of the Technical School of Arts (ETA) of the University, whose nature was similar to higher education courses in the arts area of the institution, and, therefore, they did not yet have internal regulations. Thus, for the UEI teachers who had just arrived at UFAL, there was no action parameter, including for the first performance assessment and probationary internship processes, being submitted to the same evaluation instruments used for higher education teachers and by the same regulations, as was the case with the ETA teachers, although in practice, the working conditions at the UEI were quite different, starting with the journey of teaching activities in early childhood education that covered half of their workloads, in addition to no structural conditions in the workplace for the development of research and extension activities (Rocha, 2019).

UEI serves children aged 2 to 5 years and 11 months, in nursery and pre-school classes, daughters of students and employees of the University and the surrounding community. It is linked to the Education Center Academic Unit (CEDU) and aims to integrate teaching, research and extension activities related to children in the Early Childhood Education age group, in accordance with Resolution No. 22 (2013) CONSUNI/UFAL, of April 8, 2013 and Resolution No. 74 (2019), of November 12, 2019. The arrival of EBTT teachers fostered new configurations in the directions of UEI actions to meet the specifics of their careers that, inserted in the federal teaching profession, in addition to teaching, they need to develop research and extension activities, which were previously carried out sporadically by undergraduate or graduate professors. Furthermore, Rocha (2019) points out that the Unit still highlighted the need to deepen basic and relevant issues of its nature and functions, especially regarding the quality of care – educating and caring – provided to children and other purposes for which it existed. A role that required the constitution of new theoretical and practical references, updating the political pedagogical project and creating normative documents for educational actions, which would critically overcome the still very present educational assistance model, and which would constitute possibilities for new actions and practices of innovative experiences, as it is welcomed within the production of knowledge and carries the responsibility of being a reference in early childhood education for other schools in the surroundings, both in educational practices and in academic production and in the democratization of knowledge produced in the community.

This was and still is one of the great challenges of this and other UEI. Research (Raupp, 2004; Cardoso, 2013; Pereira, 2019) indicates that it has not been an easy task, due to the obstacles that permeate a culture of contradictory conceptions between knowing and doing, the limitations of the administrative

and pedagogical structure and the need to be considered the formation of professionals who work in this area of basic education. In their formation process, it is necessary that the teacher appropriates various knowledge that enable them to exercise a reflective and interventional educational practice. On the other hand, according to Alves (2006), the definition of the nursery educator profile and its formation is still in the process of being constituted. Teachers who work in this area of education are still in search of a professional identity. From the same point of view, Haddad (2009) argues that all the peculiarities surrounding early childhood education point to a highly complex and fragile professional field, with a diffuse and not yet fully consolidated identity, a situation that also weakens the construction of an identity solid for the professional teaching in the area. Reis et al. (2014), argue that the initial and/or continued formation of early childhood education teachers,

[...] is understood as a set of processes and actions that enable teachers to reflect on practice, articulated with theoretical and political reflections and with pedagogical practices and knowledge. In this way, it contributes to the construction of knowledge and teachers can expand it by thinking about their experiences, articulating theory/practice. This concept of formation goes beyond the space of day care centers/schools; it is linked to the improvement of working conditions, greater autonomy and the potential for action of teachers, collectively or individually, that is, their full professional development: career, enhancement, improvement, salary floor and adequate conditions of work (Reis et al., 2014, p. 27).

With regard to university early childhood education units and EBTT teachers, the disputes about their professional development and identity are even more intensified by the squeamishness of the consolidation of the educational area itself, the specifics of a career in federal teaching, in view of the neoliberal policies that govern it, a heavy logic of productivity for career advancement and promotion, and the consequent pressure of continuing education in the postgraduate course, in addition to the long and exhausting working hours in the classroom and precarious working conditions, ranging from the scarcity of teaching material and equipment, to the qualification policy, which, in the case of the UEI/UFAL, does not even allow leave for this purpose, forcing the teachers to face the postgraduate course, working fully and giving account of all the attributions inherent to its functions.

Conclusion

The exercise of teaching is always marked by contradictions and dilemmas characterized in the dialectical relationship between the different interests and forces that govern it. Dealing with this issue in an analysis of the work, formation and professional career of EBTT teachers working in early childhood education at universities is important, as these professionals exist and have a relevant social contribution in the field of childhood education. They are often made invisible within the University itself by the breadth of academic actions, scientific, cultural and educational productions, but also by the social concepts and values produced and reproduced in the academy.

According to Cardoso (2013), with regard to formation and professionalization, whose exercise is specified in caring and educating, the field of scientific investigation has

[...] several issues were unveiled, especially those that refer to gaps in the valuation of professionals, as the current conception reveals that the smaller the child the teacher works with, the lesser the recognition of the importance of work he/she performs (Cardoso, 2013, p. 59-60).

This understanding points to a conception of valuing the teaching work based on the levels of education, which means that the teaching activity is still socially valued by the professional's performance, and the lower the level and/or stage of teaching, the lower the social recognition of the teaching professional.

Although the federal teaching careers are equalized, it is still common to discriminate between the two careers (EBTT and higher teaching) in academia and society, embodying itself in the historical social valuation of teaching activity based on the teaching level of the professional's performance. The higher, the more valued, regardless of the degree of academic formation.

Internally, in this particular UEI, the identity conflict also stands out, given the fact that they are teachers of basic education (early childhood education), but governed by the logic of the professional career of the Federal Magisterium. Share the exercise of their functions with teachers from another network, with other working, formation and career conditions, consequently, salaries and professional development, as part of the classes is assisted by teachers from the municipal network with effective links and with temporary links,

has generated striking differences between professionals with different career realities, but in the same conditions and teaching spaces. This reality, so adverse and contradictory, reveals aspects of the precariousness of the work of these teachers and also contributes to intensifying identity conflicts, hindering the consolidation of a referenced quality service, in addition to being a formula with real imploding power on physical and the subjects involved, the institutional well-being and, consequently, the commitment of the group's potential.

Thus, for these teachers who now work at UEI/UFAL, career affirmation and its consequent appreciation and recognition are challenges exposed in the field of action, in the academic environment, in society as a whole and in the subjective and objective search to build it. if professionally. Challenges that present themselves on several fronts of conflicts: regulation of the distribution of the workload to guarantee the development of research and extension, in addition to teaching; affirmation, recognition and equality of material working conditions and professional development in the academic sphere; theoretical-practical contributions towards improvements and qualification of the service provided and the dissemination of a concept of childhood that encourages the appreciation of the child as a social and rights subject; the construction of new possibilities of action and insertion in the different spaces of discussion, professional representation and management in the University instances; consolidation as researchers and construction of growth and development perspectives in the professional career; struggles for the strengthening of the UEI and the search for investments, improvements, institutional regulation and minimum guarantees for the Unit's subsistence in the activities they develop; isonomy in the university's internal teacher qualification policy; and other minimum conditions that allow for a point of balance between the demands posed by the current capitalist model of regulation, high academic productivity and teaching performance with conditions of personal, social and family life, based on principles of quality of life and human dignity.

Although all these challenges and their consequent impacts on the performance of EBTT professors from this and other federal universities' UEI are recognized, researches affirm that they

[...] have contributed to the quality of children's education, as they constitute spaces that seek to respond to the demands and challenges posed to public early childhood education. In addition to being characterized, in addition to being a field for the education of children, as spaces of excellence for academic and professional formation, they are also a privileged locus for carrying out research and extension projects for the production and socialization of knowledge related to early childhood (Pereira, 2019, p. 79).

At UFAL, this legitimacy has been gradually strengthened among the academic community. The trajectory of the Unit, with regard to care for children, has always been validated by families due to the differential of being inside the University and counting on contributions from technical professionals working in the unit and courses through internships or extension projects, ensuring interventions and monitoring in the areas of health, psychology, nutrition, physical education, music and pedagogy itself, which is commonly more present, in addition to the good quality care and education offered to children.

In recent years, with the work of EBTT professors, many academic productions resulting from scientific research or reports of experiences developed by professors have begun to emerge in national and international academic events and in editorial publications. These initiatives have reverberated to other teachers in the municipal network who are already starting to rehearse their own productions or in partnership. UEI's outreach actions have reached the school community, strengthening the partnership between school and families, disseminating a concept of childhood and early childhood education that respects and defends children's rights, fostering meetings and ongoing formation, contributing to cognitive, human development the entire school community and fulfilling an important social role.

These are legacies that can be attributed to the actions and paths taken by the group and evidence of an affirmation in the field of early childhood education, in teaching, research and extension actions at UFAL, constituting a theoretical-practical space for production, formation and democratization knowledge in the area. Thus, it is concluded that the results of the work and teaching work are relevant to imprint their nature and professional development and corroborate the construction of a professional identity that, in the case of these teachers, begins to form and assert itself, although a long and thorny path is still to be followed, thus demanding new and deeper perspectives and more focused researches for the deepening of the analyses, in other contributions.

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