

Dossier: TEACHER EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE - TIMES, TENSIONS AND INVENTIONS

## SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS: IMPACTS ON THE PROFESSIONAL INDUCTION OF TEACHERS IN THE TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM OF PEDRO II SCHOOL

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this research is to analyze the action of professional induction in recently graduated teachers, focusing on the dialogue between education institution and school, relating the action with its outcomes. Quantitative, qualitative and narrative approaches were used to investigate teachers of the early years of elementary school and early childhood education who participate in a program that helps the professional induction of newly graduated teachers, namely: the pilot program Residency Teacher of Pedro II School, in the city of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil. We analyzed the impact of this Program on professional induction through the application of focused questionnaires and interviews: We investigated particularly the difficulties encountered during the pedagogical practice; the role of the regular supervising teachers (from the basic school, the Pedro II College) and the teaching supervisors of the Program and its influence on the beginning of the professional practice and in the places where they work. Finally, this research aims to give visibility to policies of support for beginning teachers so that they can develop professionally and even reduce their demotivation and eventual abandonment of teaching, as well as contribute to expand the few existing experiences in this area in Brazil.

**Keywords:** professional teaching induction, beginning teachers, teacher education, teaching profession, teaching residency.

### APOIO AO DOCENTE EM INÍCIO DE CARREIRA: IMPACTOS NA INDUÇÃO PROFISSIONAL DE PROFESSORES DO PROGRAMA RESIDÊNCIA DOCENTE DO COLÉGIO PEDRO II

**RESUMO:** O objetivo da presente pesquisa é analisar a ação de indução profissional em docentes recém-formados, com foco no diálogo entre instituição de formação e escola, relacionando a ação com os seus resultados. Abordagens quantitativas, qualitativas e narrativas foram usadas para investigar docentes dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental e da educação infantil que participam de um programa que auxilia a indução profissional de professores recém formados, a saber: o programa piloto Residência Docente do Colégio Pedro II, na cidade do Rio de Janeiro/Brasil. Analisamos o impacto desse Programa na indução profissional por meio da aplicação de questionários e entrevistas focados: Investigou-se particularmente as dificuldades encontradas durante a prática pedagógica; o papel dos professores orientadores regentes (da escola básica, do Colégio Pedro II) e dos supervisores docentes do Programa e a influência deste no

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início da atuação profissional e nos locais onde trabalham. Por fim, esta investigação visa dar visibilidade a políticas de apoio a professores iniciantes para que possam se desenvolver profissionalmente e, até mesmo, diminuir sua desmotivação e o eventual abandono da docência, bem como contribuir para ampliar as poucas experiências existentes nessa área, no Brasil.

**Palavras-chave:** indução profissional docente, professores iniciantes, formação de professores, profissão de docente, residência docente.

### **APOYO AL PROFESORADO EN EL INICIO DE CARRERA: IMPACTOS EN LA INDUCCIÓN PROFESIONAL DEL PROGRAMA RESIDENCIA DOCENTE DEL COLEGIO PEDRO II**

**RESUMEN:** Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo realizar un estudio sobre una acción de inducción profesional por parte del docente recién egresado, con foco en el diálogo entre la institución formadora y la escuela, relacionando la acción con sus resultados. Utilizando enfoques cuantitativos, cualitativos y narrativos como metodología, realizamos una investigación con docentes de los primeros años de la escuela primaria y educación infantil, participantes de un programa que asiste a los docentes recién formados en su inducción profesional, el Programa Piloto de Residencia Docente del Colegio Pedro II en Río de Janeiro / Brasil. Nuestro objetivo fue analizar el impacto de este Programa en la inducción profesional de estos docentes, a través de cuestionarios y entrevistas, enfocándonos en las dificultades que encuentran en su práctica pedagógica, la importancia de la asistencia que les brindó el Programa, el rol de los docentes orientadores (del colegio) del Colegio Pedro II, de los responsables docentes del Programa, al inicio de sus actividades profesionales y en su relación con su colegio. Finalmente, esta investigación ofrece contribuciones para apoyar acciones de docentes principiantes para un mejor desempeño profesional e incluso como una forma de reducir la desmotivación y abandono docente, así como para la expansión de las pocas experiencias existentes en esta área en Brasil.

Palabras clave: inducción profesional docente, docentes principiantes, formación docente, profesión docente, residencia docente.

## INTRODUCTION

In reaffirming the theme of the dossier "Teacher education and teaching practice - times, tensions and inventions", we argue that teachers learn to teach over time, as they build themselves as professionals, especially from the experiences acquired both in life and in their complex and continuous process of education and work. In this sense, we highlight here the beginning of the teaching career, or of the teaching professional induction. This period has been approached by several authors (e.g., HUBERMAN, 2000; SILVA, 1997) as a crucial phase in the learning process of these professionals by making it possible for them to remain in the profession or even to give up, given the "shock of reality" with which they have to deal.

In general, beginning teachers find themselves alone in their professional practice and in their permanence in it. To a large extent, beginning teachers have only experienced professional practice during short mandatory internships that do not prepare them for the beginning of their teaching career, which creates difficulties. The situation becomes even more challenging when they are assigned to the most "complicated" and "problematic" classes in schools, since institutions usually make use of the "authority is rank" rule, that is, teachers who have been in the profession the longest choose their classes first. (See RABELO and MONTEIRO, 2019).

In this sense, there is an international trend of implementing programs that assist early career teachers, called "professional induction." However, this is still not happening in Brazil. Several studies prove that few innovative actions to support beginning teachers have been implemented (see RABELO AND MONTEIRO, 2019; ANDRÉ, 2012). However, they present good results and serve as a model for other initiatives.

Thus, the objective of the research<sup>3</sup> conducted in 2018, with CNPQ support, was to study professional induction actions for newly graduated teachers, with a focus on the dialogue between education institution and school, by analyzing the actions and the results of these actions. We followed teachers from the early years of elementary school and early childhood education who participated in a program to assist recent graduates in their professional induction between 2012 and 2018: the pilot program Teacher Residency of Pedro II School, in the city of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil. This initiative aimed to analyze the impact of the program on the professional induction and insertion of these teachers.

We surveyed, by means of a questionnaire, beginning teachers who took part in the Faculty Residency Program (FRP) (from the Brazilian Portuguese *Programa Residência Docente - PRD*) of the Pedro II College to help beginning teachers, about the difficulties encountered in their pedagogical practice and about the help given by the program for their professional induction. In a second moment, we interviewed some of the teachers about the difficulties in pedagogical practice, about the help provided by the program to their professional induction, and about the role of the regular supervising teachers (from the basic school of Pedro II School – CPPII, from the Brazilian Portuguese *Colégio PedroII*) - as well as of the teaching supervisors, in the beginning of their professional practice and in relation to the school where they work. Finally, we share the results of this investigation and encourage the reevaluation of existing programs, as well as the expansion of the number of actions, benefits and financing in this area in Brazil.

## METHODOLOGY

The quantitative and qualitative, narrative and comparative studies proposed by Sampieri, Collado and Lucio (2006) in their multimodal and mixed model of investigation - which converges such approaches - was the methodology adopted in our study. The sample was composed of teachers of the initial years of elementary school and early childhood education who participate in the pilot program Teacher Residency of Pedro II School, in the city of Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, which accompanies newly graduated teachers in their professional induction, through innovative actions.

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<sup>3</sup> The support to the beginning-of-career teacher: impacts on the professional insertion of the residence teacher program of Pedro II School and other national and international programs.

We used the general method of narrative research explained by Ponte et al (1998, p. 31), which consists in understanding and reconstructing narrative units from interviews by prioritizing the "categorical-content" process. However, we did not leave aside the "holistic-content" process, which focuses on the contents presented by the individual (LIEBLICH, TUVAL-MASHIACH, ZILBER, 1998). In this sense, we adopted the overall framework of the narrative research methodology, centered on the interpretive method, which was applied to the narratives obtained during the interviews. We also analyzed the narratives/discourses written in the questionnaires. The statistical data provided during the information gathering process made it possible to build analyses, understanding in depth the aspects addressed in the questionnaire and the interview. The data collected also enabled the analysis of the group of teachers investigated, considering that each life is unique, although the individual tends to seek common patterns - that is, individuals construct descriptions, measures and observations that influence, and are influenced by the other (BOLÍVAR et al, 2001).

### **Strategies and instruments developed and used**

We designed and applied a questionnaire composed of objective and subjective questions to teachers who had finished their participation in the program, and a smaller questionnaire for teachers who had only begun their participation in the program. Finally, we conducted narrative interviews about the impact of this program on the professional insertion and practice of teachers who finished their participation in the program and who were already teaching.

All teachers of the early years of elementary school and early childhood education who participated in the program between 2012 and 2018 formed the universe of application of the questionnaire - in total, 101 questionnaires were sent. However, only 57 were effectively answered and returned for analysis. We also conducted 10 interviews, of which: 5 initial interviews with coordinators (two coordinators were interviewed, together) and 5 interviews with graduates of the course (who were selected after the application of the questionnaire). Of these, 9 interviews were transcribed.

The questionnaire was prepared according to discussions made by Marcelo (1999), Nóvoa (2017) and André (2012), after extensive literature review on the topic, covering 7 axes of questions/analysis, namely: 1- personal data; 2- motivation for choosing the program; 3- problems of daily school life before entering the program; 4- experience in the program; 5- difficulties experienced during the program; 6- help from the program to solve difficulties; 7- contribution of program activities to teaching practice.

The first axis of the questionnaire contained questions about personal data, including schooling, type of education, time in education and service, when did you start in the program, when (and if) you finished the program, as well as post-program expectations. The second axis addressed the motivations for choosing the program. The answers followed the Likert scale type (1-5), where 1 represented "not at all important" and 5 meant "very important". The motivations listed were divided into: obtaining a diploma, support in difficulties, knowledge, scholarship, and others. We enumerated these motivations based on initial interviews with the program coordinators. The third axis, "daily school problems before joining the program", presented sentences with answers based on a Likert scale that described several problems observed in the daily school life. The sentences were drawn from the four basic types of conflicts and tensions experienced by beginning teachers defined by Beach and Pearson (1998, p. 339-340): curriculum and instructional conflicts; interpersonal relationship conflicts; self-concept or role conflicts; contextual and institutional conflicts.

Based on the dimensions described above, we elaborated phrases substantiated by the sayings of student teacher trainees and teachers in charge of monitoring these trainees. They were phrases we heard when we were still teachers of the subject "Pedagogical Practice". Some of them also resulted from issues analyzed in the research "Pedagogical practice in public education: the internship as a link between theory and practice, experience and innovation", which was funded by CNPQ. The choice of this path is justified by the fact that, practically all research on early career teachers, such as: Huberman (2000); Alarcão and Roldão (2014); Nóvoa (2017); Papi and Martins (2008); Corrêa and Portella (2012); Marcelo (1999); Flores and Ferreira (2009); Cardoso and Ferreira (2008); Cochran-Smith et al (2012), point out

their many difficulties. These findings bring to light the need to support teachers at this stage of their careers.

The fourth axis, "experience in the Program", dealt with sentences answered by a Likert scale about the acquisition of experience during the program, about what the teacher was looking for in it, and about the knowledge acquired (or not). This axis was aimed at relating the difficulties mentioned in the previous axis about the experiences they had during the program - these sentences were also based on the interview conducted with the course coordinators.

The fifth axis, "difficulties in the program", presented sentences with answers on a Likert scale that justified some difficulties that might have arisen during the program, whether personal or professional. Such difficulties were described by the program coordinator between 2012 and 2016 (see Costa, 2017), and were also mentioned in interviews with the program area coordinators. The sixth axis, "the program's help in difficulties", brought up aspects of daily school life; the respondents should mark the level of importance of the Teaching Residency program to help improve the aspects addressed. Their answers corresponded to a Likert scale (1 to 5), in which 1 meant "the program did not help at all" and 5, "the program helped a lot". We related the problems described in our second axis with the possibility that the program helped them to overcome professional difficulties. We adapted some items described in the program's own evaluative questionnaire (evaluation questionnaire FRP-2016). The seventh axis, "contribution of program activities to teaching practice," presented all the activities described on the program's website and asked respondents to base their sentences on a Likert scale (1 to 5), in which 1 meant "contributed nothing" and 5, "contributed a lot."

We selected 5 faculty members from those who answered the questionnaire for the interview. The choice was based on answers that needed to be deepened; 3 selected participated in the program until the end, and 2 had dropped out of the course. The interviews followed the script prepared according to categories related to the questionnaire. However, the analysis we performed followed a further categorization, which was based on the narratives contained in the interviews, as well as on the analysis performed on the subjective answers from the questionnaire.

The narratives contained in the interviews and in the open questions in the questionnaires made it possible to select information about the teachers' experiences, to analyze the meanings present in them and their relationship with society, as well as their institutions and their statements - a fundamental factor in comparative studies. The surveys aimed to validate, complement and confirm the analysis of the interviewees' narratives.

We used these two techniques (interviews and questionnaire surveys) to articulate data and complete the information (Martins, 1996). In doing so, we aimed to embrace the potential of each of these techniques, especially the extensiveness of the questionnaires, which allowed for comparisons and extrapolations, and the depth of the interviews, which helped us to better grasp certain issues and capture more subjective information - as well as to minimize their limitations. Interviews restricted to a few individuals are an example of such limitations, since this process reduced the possibility of generalizations. Another example is the superficiality of the surveys via questionnaires, as they did not allow us to understand subjective experiences).

We consider the interpretations arising from the research process as specific to, and pertaining to, the investigated universe. Thus, we do not intend them to become universal, even though every study contributes to the unveiling of issues pertinent to a certain field of knowledge. In other words, although specific and contextual, they allow us to reach theoretical flights, beyond the analyses carried out.

## **THE FACULTY RESIDENCE PROGRAM AT PEDRO II COLLEGE**

Pedro II School (CPPI), founded in 1837, was the first official secondary school in Brazil. Developed to be a model for secondary education, it still maintains its tradition today and is considered a benchmark public education institution in Brazil. The school seeks the vanguard of its teaching and the excellence of its faculty, which is achieved through rigorous and competitive selection. The Faculty Residency Program (FRP) was created in May 2012 at CPPI, the institution's first graduate program, at the request of CAPES, which fostered it between 2012 and 2015. The program:

aims to **enhance the education of Basic Education teachers** through a **continuing education project**, developing teaching skills that complement the education received in the Higher Education Institution (HEI) of origin, from the **experience in a school environment of recognized excellence**.

The Teaching Residency pairs **recently graduated teachers** (here called Resident Teachers) with **advising teachers from Pedro II School** (Supervising Teachers and Area Coordinators), in order to give the new professional **complementary education** in teaching-learning issues in the area/discipline, as well as in aspects of school life. In addition, it intends to enable the application of **new methodologies and pedagogical strategies** at the institution where the Resident Teacher works, in order to improve the learning outcomes of students in Basic Education. (CPII website, our emphasis).

The program's target audience is made up of state and municipal public-school teachers who are in charge of their classes, with a degree in Full Licensing and working in the Basic Education areas/subjects offered by the program. After finishing the course, the residents are certified by CPII as Basic Education Specialists (post-graduate *Lato Sensu*).

However, consisting largely of residents who are beginning their careers as teachers, the selection of residents is not restricted to newly graduated teachers. One of the ranking phases uses age criteria (younger teachers followed by older ones) and time of course completion; therefore, some teachers who participated in the course were not recent graduates.

Since 2016, residents have to fulfill the workload of 360 hours, which are distributed over a period of one academic year, between classroom and distance activities, as well as activities developed in the school where they work, namely: activities in the area of teaching - didactic activities developed at CPII and in the resident's school unit; activities in administrative-pedagogical sectors of CPII; activities focused on continuing education - workshops, congresses, etc. Residents must also submit written assignments, such as reports, a detailed memorial and a final product that associates what they experienced at CPII with what they experience in their reality as teachers in other classes.

Besides the residents, other professionals involved in the Program are: Supervisor Professor (CPII effective teachers in the various areas who receive and supervise residents in their classrooms); the Area Coordinators (CPII postgraduate teachers who, in addition to coordinating the Program area, also monitor and control the activities of each resident in their school of origin); Program Coordination.

Residents need to fulfill the didactic workload of observation and participation, as if it were a curricular internship, at CPII, in the classroom of the supervising teacher. In other words, their mentor is not a teacher from the school where they work, nor does he/she do face-to-face supervision at the resident's school of origin. This process aims to provide information about the innovations made at CPII by providing experiences for residents in a school environment of recognized excellence.

However, as teachers of the early years of primary school and early childhood education - the areas under investigation here - usually work full time, many residents had difficulties in fulfilling their workload. This scheduling impasse generated one of the main problems identified by the coordinators: the evasion of teachers. Between 2013 and 2016, the evasion of teachers from the early years of elementary school and early childhood education reached 28.16%. Most of the time, this evasion was caused by problems in reconciling schedules between Supervising Teachers and Teaching Residents who also work and were not excused from their activities in order to fulfill their workload at CPII.

## RESULTS

The results presented in the 57 returned questionnaires were correlated with information we obtained in categorizing the interviews conducted: 10 interviews, 5 with course graduates, and 5 with coordinators (two coordinators were interviewed jointly. In total, - 9 interviews were transcribed).

The results will be presented based on the seven axes of questions/analysis of the questionnaire: 1- personal data; 2- motivation for choosing the program; 3- daily school problems experienced before joining the program; 4- experience acquired during the program; 5- difficulties experienced during the program; 6- help from the program to solve difficulties; 7- contributions of the program's activities to the teaching practice. The interviews were inserted within these axes of analysis

described here, although the interviews were categorized a posteriori. Thus, they went beyond the axes mentioned and allowed different analyses from those present in the questionnaires.

It is worth mentioning here that we obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.905 for the questionnaire. Thus, we can infer that the questionnaire applied has coherence; it is not redundant, nor full of disconnected questions - a fact that assesses the quality of the instrument and the reliability of the research findings.

## Personal Data and Professional Education

The first axis of the questionnaire contains questions about personal data, including education, type of education, length of education and service, as well as beginning in the program, whether or not the program was completed, and post-program expectations.

Most of the teachers were young people between 21 and 30 years old (43.9%), which was followed by participants between 31 and 40 years old (42.1%), and by those over 41 years old (14%). Most of the teachers taught in the initial years of elementary school (70.2%); 29.8% taught in early childhood education; in addition to having studied the specific program for the initial years (71.9% and 28.1, respectively).

Regarding the time of graduation at the beginning of the course, we noticed that most participants had graduated between 1 and 3 years (38.6%); 12.3% of the participants had graduated up to one year. Thus, we can conclude that 40.9% of the teachers were new graduates.

There is still no consensus in academic research about the real period of professional induction, or the beginning of the teaching career. Huberman (2000) indicates that this phase lasts until the third year of the career. Other authors, such as Silva (1997), highlight the first year of the career as the most complicated and the one that needs the most support. Thus, some international professional induction programs focus on the first year of the faculty member's professional career; other programs cover longer times of assistance (see RABELO, 2019). Therefore, data on age and time to completion of their degree for most of the faculty in our study prove pertinent to the research at hand.

In the particular case of Pedro II School, we noticed that the program prioritizes teachers at the beginning of their careers, but is not limited to them. We noticed that 10.5% of the professionals who answered the questionnaire had been teaching for up to 1 year and 35.1% had been teaching for 1 to 3 years. Therefore, 45.6% of the teachers would really be in this initial phase of their career. Although we also found 38.6% of participants who had been teaching for between 3 and 6 years, 8.8% of them had been teaching for 6 to 10 years, and 7% with more than 10 years.

Most of the teachers belonged to the municipal school system of the city of Rio de Janeiro (54.4%), and were followed by teachers from other municipalities in the state of Rio de Janeiro (40.4%), and by other options (5.3%).

The majority of the respondents who completed the program did not receive a scholarship (54.4%) for the course. In total, 42.11% of the participants completed the course; 14.03% were finishing it; 35.09% were starting the program; and 8.77% dropped out.

The teachers analyzed wanted to deepen their knowledge and continue their studies. For this reason, we asked in the interviews what their professional aspirations were. The respondents expressed the desire to get a Master's degree (50%), or another post-graduate degree (25%), as well as to be approved in selection processes to work at Pedro II School (25%).

To choose the teaching professionals who would participate in the interviews, with the exception of the coordinators, we asked about the interviewees' life histories. We verified great differences with regard to the professional choice among them. Only two interviewees claimed to have chosen teaching because they had always wanted to be teachers. The others showed different motivations, including inspiration from a teacher they had in the past (1 interviewee), motivation from the internship (1 interviewee), choice for lack of another option (1 interviewee) or because their mother imposed it (1 interviewee).

## Motivation for choosing the program

The second axis of the questionnaire analysis focuses on the motivations for choosing the program. According to the results registered for the questions in this axis, we can see that most of the answers indicate as motivation for choosing the course: obtaining knowledge, support to overcome difficulties, and obtaining a diploma. The respondents were practically indifferent with regard to the scholarship. Some teachers specified some other reasons for this choice in the questionnaire:

I enrolled with the intention of getting to know an institution touted as one of "excellence in teaching". P24

To return to studies after 2 years stopped after graduation. P44

To get to know Pedro II's curricular proposal. P51

In the interviews, when asked about their motivation for taking the course, the teachers explained that the knowledge acquired was the most important. This was followed by the certificate and the fact that it was a free course. They also mentioned the importance of getting a support:

People do a lot of it because of the degree. Most of the people who were doing teaching residency were not for adding [...], people wanted a post degree, or to fit in, or for something else. (P.E.)

I saw a colleague of mine in a group of teachers posting this [...] specific specialization for public school teachers, I fit this profile, it was also free [...] I went there and signed up with the intention of knowing what it was like, it wasn't even with the intention of having a specialization. Specialization, in terms of money, in Rio's City Hall, is not worth anything. (P.P.)

When I entered [the public career] I started to think: "well, I need more education, what I have is not enough, I need to look for more" and I started to look [...] I thought of a master's degree, [...] but in public institutions until today none of them offers a master's degree that meets the needs of the teacher who works with Fundamental I [...] because they all work with the idea of the teacher who can have a free day during the week and this is not our reality [...], we don't have a master's degree that is offered at night, that is offered on Saturdays, so it's not for us. So, [...] I started looking for and found the FRP that offered a very flexible schedule, a schedule that I could adapt to my work routine. So that's why, when I saw a graduate course that proposed a dialogue with my classroom, which was different, at least when I read the proposal, it was a graduate course that would start from my work in the classroom, that would be linked to that, it was a proposal that I had not found in the others and I added the question of the schedule, "ah, so that's the one" and I enrolled. (P.A.)

The scholarship was mentioned as important only by the coordinators. The professors said that when they chose the course, they didn't even pay attention to the fact that it offered a scholarship, even if it was a good one. For some respondents, the fact that they were doing a free graduate course, in itself, already justified their choice for the course.

The interviewees stated that the course was not widely known, so we asked them how they found out about it. 2 said it was by recommendation, 2 by research on the internet and 1 by chance.

## Everyday school problems experienced before entering the program

The third axis, "everyday school problems before joining the Program", presents descriptions of several problems faced in everyday school life. The phrases with which respondents agreed the most were: teachers need support at the beginning of their professional careers; they need to exchange knowledge; and they need to deal with all the social aspects at school. The phrases with which the teachers most disagreed were related to the fact that the internship is short and that parents of students do not understand the teacher's way of teaching. The others had neither much agreement nor much disagreement.

Given the basic types of conflicts and tensions experienced by novice teachers as defined by Beach and Pearson (1998), we can highlight those with the most agreement from teachers: those related to "contextual and institutional" conflicts, including expectations with the preparation given by the University about the school system; "curriculum and instruction" conflicts with regard to doubts about

how to deal with teaching school content - less value was given to "self-concept or role" and "interpersonal" relationship conflicts.

With respect to the open question, in the questionnaire about the beginning of the teaching career, some teachers expressed their opinions about the difficulties they encountered before entering the program, and about the contribution of the course in solving them. These answers showed that the Teaching Residency Program was very important for these professionals, given the several reports that extolled its relevance, especially for their daily teaching practice. Others described that they had no difficulties at the beginning of their careers, but that they tried to study and build their professional practice.

Based on educational theory (HUBERMAN, 2000; ALARCÃO & ROLDÃO, 2014; PAPI & MARTINS, 2008; CORRÊA & PORTELLA, 2012; MARCELO, 1999; FLORES & FERREIRA, 2009; CARDOSO & FERREIRA, 2008; AUTHORS, 2019), we can conclude that early career teachers experience many difficulties, and that they need support at this stage of their career. However, most of the time, they do not receive help in the schools in which they work or even at the University. This was confirmed by the answers in the questionnaires.

The interviews showed several narratives about the aspects mentioned in the statements about support and difficulties at the beginning of the career, as well as the strategy of changing schools to try to solve the problems of teaching. The greatest support apparently came from the management (school or city hall), parents, colleagues, and exchange of knowledge. However, the difficulties in front of the same actors: management, colleagues, parents of students, were also recurrent, besides the lack of education, lack of structure and materials, violence at school, the students themselves, discouragement and self-questioning; the difficulties were more cited than factors related to the support received. All the interviewees mentioned the difficulties listed above, and, on the other hand, only half of them mentioned receiving support; 2 interviewees also mentioned that they changed schools to solve their difficulties in teaching.

Also, with regard to the understanding that the internship and the undergraduate course prepared them for the beginning of their professional careers, most respondents emphasized that they were not well prepared by them. However, some of their experiences show that internship and undergraduate studies can be good, but other experiences show that the fault for the deficient education may lie with the individual himself, when he does not take advantage of his initial education and internship.

The realization of the difficulties and lack of support experienced by beginning teachers confirms Lima's (2004) conclusion: beginning teachers are increasingly alone and take sole responsibility for staying in the profession.

### **Experiences lived during the program**

The fourth axis, "experience in the Program", includes statements about the teacher's experience during the Program, about what the teacher was looking for in it, and the knowledge acquired (or not). We can see in the answers to the questionnaires the great importance of the course for the teachers' professional performance, mainly because most of them agreed that the program helped them overcome teaching difficulties, as well as the importance of the supervisors, the exchange of knowledge, the contribution of the knowledge acquired in the program about the relationship between theory and practice. However, the majority did not agree with the statement that the course did not bring the knowledge and/or skills they expected.

Such importance was also demonstrated in the interviews, when the teachers gave more emphasis to the positive aspects of the course, as the examples in some narratives, cited below:

I found that it was not only specialization in theory by theory, but that it had many other discussions about practice and I found it very interesting too[...] both the workshops, the minicourses, we always attended and participated with people from other courses, I think this adds a lot too [...] to see the reality of other teachers, there was Physical Education teacher, Portuguese language teacher, very good these discussions [...] and even within my area being able

to live together with various realities because there were people from various municipalities, people from very far away, so it was very rewarding. (P.C.)

All the issues, the courses, the minicourses, it made me completely change the way I work, because I was really understanding what the work of Early Childhood Education was, how we should see the child, the issue of literacy [...] there is this pressure of early literacy, [...] it was there, in the courses, in the conversations with teachers who have to prepare this child to be literate in elementary school [...], which is a process, which takes time. In Childhood Education, you have to have experience, experience, [...] I had already taken a course that always talked about this, but in practice in the teaching residency it was fundamental, because I saw that you don't really need to keep copying, no, there are other ways of working, different ways than that traditional way that many people still insist on doing, so it was fundamental [...] so I think it is a very valid course, very important (P.K.)

My dream job, to work at Pedro II (laughs). So, really, there you have all the possibilities to do it, but I think that we do our reality. [...] Since we don't have any, I try to work according to what is possible, you know? What I can do for the children [...]. We can't do a standard work like Pedro II. But I don't think that just because we don't have the structure, they have that we shouldn't try to offer something better for our children. I do it to the extent that is possible in the reality that we are, you know? I know it is not the best, but it is not the worst, either. That's what I say to the mothers, I study, everything I do, in the meetings I present and show the justification "I do it this way, this way, and this way", and when they say: "ah, but how come? So, I still show and talk a lot about the post-graduation course, because it left its mark, you know? In my professional life, in my learning process, the post-graduation course was very important, despite all the adversities to get it right, but it was important. (P.K.)

It is true that the working conditions at Pedro II compared to those at Rio de Janeiro is surreal, it is something from another world, it seems that we have arrived in the United States, we see the realities of the teachers of Pedro II, but this is not an inhibitor because we can take advantage of many things. [...] I think we can take advantage of many of the things they do there for our reality, [...] we can't do everything, but this line of work that I followed, it's a line that doesn't need to have the conditions of Pedro II for me to do, because it gives voice to the child, it gives the child a voice, it doesn't buy what the child can produce. That line of work I took advantage of for me. (P.P.)

The interviews highlighted the importance of Pedro II School, for being a reference school that adopts modern methodologies, as well as the importance of the practical discussions during the course and the exchange of knowledge with course colleagues. They also talked about the relationship with the supervisors, who did not get to know the reality faced by the teachers (but who brought important contributions to the teachers); about the final product, which created some difficulty, but ended up bringing important knowledge for their work; about the relationship with the school and the course, which is, in general, complicated, mainly due to the difficulty in reconciling workloads and the collision between pedagogical positions discussed during the course and at school. However, they also defended the position that the course provided a more comprehensive reflection on these pedagogical positions - this item was also the target of some negative criticism.

### **Difficulties experienced during the program**

The fifth axis, "difficulties in the Program", presents statements that express some difficulties that might have arisen during the program, either personal or professional. According to the results, we verified that the difficulties encountered were unnoticeable for most of the respondents: the vast majority disagreed with most of the items about difficulties experienced.

However, we point out that most of the teachers who dropped out did not answer the questionnaire, possibly because their e-mails and data were outdated. Almost all the items were answered by one or more people who had experienced some difficulty - nobody pointed out any difficulty caused by moving. So, in this case this does not mean that there were no difficulties, but that most respondents did not experience them.

Most of the answers to the open question described the lack of difficulties during the course and their importance, as the answers below:

The Teaching Residency Program was crucial to my professional growth and my continuing education. The opportunities to learn from each other, exchange information and experiences were very rich for the construction of my knowledge. P4

It was a valid and productive exchange of knowledge. P5

When I took on the job as a preschool teacher in 2012, I immediately sought to update myself. I sought a lot of knowledge through research in books, internet, magazines and with the management of my unit. In 2013 I started an extension course at UniRio and in 2014 at UFRJ. Thus, I did not work in a completely traditional way, but I had many anxieties about the relationship between theory and practice. I did not own the theory that governed my practice. Today after the FRP I have ownership of the theoretical knowledge that guides my practice. P11  
I was lucky. The Program was very important to me. I am very happy for the academic work that I was able to develop, and for the teaching actions that I was able to put into practice and continue to do. P28

I started teaching months before I entered the FRP, I was very insecure about my practices. I think the program helped my practices a lot, and I was even indicated as the outstanding literacy teacher by the school management of the CRE in which I work. I am very happy to have my work recognized! P29

Actually, I had no difficulties. P6

I had excellent supervisors, who always tried to help me even though my schedule was limited due to work. We met on weekends and, when on weekdays, during the evening hours. Thus, there was full support to finish the course in the allotted time. P27

Some open answers pointed out the importance of the course, while also highlighting some difficulties experienced, as the following answers demonstrate:

It is an excellent Program. I recommend it. There are difficulties related to the schedule of the mini-courses, some colleagues had difficulties with their supervisor who didn't pay enough attention. P24

During the FRP, many times, I had the perception that most of the teachers in the CPII institution were not very interested in our reality, their main interest was to show how they acted without the concern that there is a huge gap that differentiated our daily lives. From my trajectory, I can only highlight one name inside the FRP that was interested in exchanging with us and not just criticizing our reality without worrying about ways to discuss and change it. However, the program was worth a lot as a space for exchange among the residents. P30

However, some open answers pointed out certain difficulties experienced during the course, as shown in the following answers:

I could not participate in most of the workshops in the morning and afternoon because I did not receive time off from work. P7

There were several workshops, lectures and courses that I wanted to do, but unfortunately the schedule was not good for me. P10

I didn't do the FRP. I signed up, but when I arrived to register, I realized that I had signed up at the wrong time and in the wrong segment. P23

The program doesn't issue a statement of attendance or a document that we can hand in at the school. So, we are at the mercy of the direction's good sense to release the employee to fulfill the residence hours. I had a lot of difficulty with the dismissal because of the lack of a document, which caused me to think about giving up several times. P11

The schedules of the minicourses were very short, which made it difficult to have in-depth discussions. P24

As the course load is quite long, and we need to go to CP2 several times to fulfill them (courses, minicourses, lectures, meetings with supervisors, classroom hours), the cost of travel and food ends up being a little high. The scholarship was very much needed in this sense. P29

I chose not to start the Program because I couldn't reconcile the course with my work. P33

Some aspects of these difficulties were reported during the interviews. We emphasize that the most highlighted ones were:

- the fact that the teachers are not released from their jobs by the City Hall to do the practical part of the course - 6 interviewees mentioned this difficulty:

at the same time that the legislation says that we teachers have to have continuing education, we don't have release in the City Hall of Rio to take these courses, so it was very complicated because the extension courses, I took either at night, or Saturday because it couldn't be during working hours and the [...] the teaching residency was very difficult, I almost abandoned several times because I didn't have release to go to the field to observe. [...] Because Pedro II doesn't give a statement [...] so we have to make an agreement with the administration... so that the children won't be without a teacher [...] so I said I would take over the absence, but my colleagues took over the class for me, and I managed to finish my hours, [...] so we are also at the mercy of the administration to release us or not, some even got it easier, but I didn't get it easy, no. (P. K.)

- the fact that it is a model school, that does not have the same structure as the school where they work - four interviewees mentioned:

They did not want to dialogue with me, they wanted to talk about their reality, their research, what they developed, what they thought I should develop, they were not interested in dialogue and knowing my reality, and sometimes what we talked about our reality was clear that for them it was something so absurd, so out of the real... when we, the city hall of Rio is the largest network, the real is us and they did not see that (P.A.)

- the fact that the course is like an internship - 4 interviewees mentioned:

I wanted to dedicate my time doing something that would really add to me, that I could study, I even glimpsed a possible master's degree in life, I wanted to study and I was disappointed because I got there and it was an internship, exactly the same as the internship I did in normal, no take away and no put away. (P.E.)

- the fact that a more comprehensive dialog was missing - 1 interviewee:

I was a little bit deluded thinking that the course would start from this dialogue. There were lectures, mini-courses... but very little [dialogue] [...] It was simply showing what was done there or in another institution, other than Pedro II, other than Pedro II, but not wanting to dialogue with my space. (P.A.)

- the fact of the long distance to be traveled between the workplace and the course - 1 interviewee:

From Morro dos Macacos I had to go to Realengo, [...] from São Cristóvão I went to Realengo, from Realengo I had to go back to Tijuca, so there was the issue of the commute as well. (C.C.)

- the fact that the course offered little theoretical knowledge - 1 interviewee:

I thought it was going to be associated with theory, that we would meet with a teacher, that we would meet with a teacher, that it would be "we are going to go to a theory class today", something that would prepare us even for a greater foundation, that we would follow a career in academic life, [...] I wanted to associate theory with practice (P.E.).

## The program's help in overcoming difficulties

The sixth axis, "help from the Program in overcoming difficulties" deals with aspects of daily school life. Here, the respondents indicate the level of importance of the Teaching Residency Program in helping to improve these aspects.

Based on the analysis of the averages recorded for all items, we can see the high levels of help offered by the program to overcome the difficulties experienced in the daily practice of teaching. This was confirmed by two open answers:

The school I teach is very old, and even today it is still in poor condition; we have no playgrounds for Physical Education classes. Students usually go to study wearing flip-flops and clothes that they slept in the day before. The attendance of children in the early grades is low. I had some

difficulties in putting into practice what I was learning in the course, but at the end of the course my work with the children (Final Product) was rewarding. P10  
 The Program opened a range of possibilities that help me to reflect on my practice and encourage me to improve it on a daily basis. I believe that I have become a teacher researcher of my practice. P11

The interviews also strongly demonstrated the reality described above, since all interviewees reported improvements in their work based on what they had learned and experienced in the Teaching Residency Program. The only interviews that did not deal with this topic were those with the coordinators.

Several statements presented a wealth of details on how this happened, on the change in the way of looking at the student, on a new way of school planning, on the different and better use of teaching spaces and resources, and on the contents to be taught. Some teachers showed that the criticism promoted by the course motivated changes in their institutions. One of the interviewees became a teacher at the Pedro II School. Some of the respondents also reported a change in their behavior when faced with problems they experienced and in their dealings with colleagues.

Finally, the importance of the program, and the help it provided to beginning teachers, corroborates Zeichner (2010), and the OECD report (2006), which emphasize the importance of support programs for beginning teachers and help them apply the knowledge acquired during the education process to the complexity of classroom teaching.

### **Contribution of program activities to teaching practice**

In the seventh axis, "contribution of the Program activities to teaching practice", we inserted all the Program activities described in the FRP website, so that the respondents could evaluate their contribution. According to the results, the teachers who participated in the survey considered that most of the program activities contributed a lot to their professional practice, except for the activities in the administrative-pedagogical sectors. However, some problems were reported in the answers to the open question:

Regarding the orientation we had quite a lot of difficulty due to the strike and availability of the supervisor. P9  
 At the end of the course, my two colleagues and I had a lot of difficulties regarding the delivery of the final product. The coordinator and the supervisor had some disagreements; the supervisor also had health problems, which somewhat compromised the delivery of my final work. P10  
 I believe that the observation of daily life at Pedro II School was fundamental to my education. I regret that I was not able to be there more often due to the stress at my school of origin. P11  
 Due to the need to fulfill the required workload, I enrolled in courses and lectures only looking for schedules that were compatible with mine, regardless of the subject matter. P29

In this case, problems related to the workload and the difficulty in orienting the final work were cited. Besides the problems we mentioned in previous items, we asked during the interviews what the professors would change about the course. Some suggestions for change were given, namely: a declaration of exemption from work; a closer relationship with the teacher's school; that the course should be only for inexperienced teachers; that there should be more theoretical knowledge; that the course should also be geared toward more experienced teachers; that there should be more meetings related to the teachers' specific areas.

However, the interviews with the course coordinators provided some explanations about the need for the workload exemption and the impossibility of offering a declaration of exemption, about the course being geared toward beginning public school teachers, about the structure and the beginning of the course, and about the course evasion/withdrawal from the course by the participants.

Finally, the data described above and the narratives can be further analyzed to allow a more accurate knowledge of the difficulties experienced by teachers, the dynamics of the course and the help it can offer teachers, especially those beginning their careers. However, the data presented shows the importance of the initiatives to support beginning teachers, the positive aspects that were mentioned that

can be expanded in other programs, as well as the criticisms and negative aspects mentioned in this research that need to be reviewed, among other aspects.

It is worth mentioning that the program evaluated here provides support to beginner teachers. As indicated by one of the coordinators, it was structured as a continuing education strategy. Therefore, we consider that the interpretations resulting from the research process are specific, and belong to the universe investigated here. Thus, we do not intend them to become universal. However, we believe that this study has a strong potential to contribute to the unraveling of issues pertinent to support programs for early career teachers - professional induction.

## CONCLUSIONS

First and foremost,<sup>4</sup> we want to emphasize the importance of the Residency Teacher Program of Pedro II School for being a pioneer in professional induction actions in the country. We add that, according to the results presented, the strategies used by the program brought many benefits to the teachers who participated in it. Nevertheless, they can be improved based on the criticisms made by the teachers through the questionnaire and the interviews. Some of them have already been identified by the coordinators, who also mentioned them during the interviews we conducted with them.

The application of the questionnaires and the interviews allowed us to affirm that teachers seek this program, above all, to acquire knowledge and to receive support to overcome the difficulties they experience, to receive the course certification, and because it is free. We emphasized the difficulties experienced by teachers before entering the program, and its great importance for the professional performance of the teachers who participated, as well as the importance of the supervisors, the exchange of knowledge, the fact that Pedro II School is a model in modern methodologies, and the practical discussions held during the course, which led to significant changes in the professional performance of the participants.

However, some respondents also pointed out negative aspects of the course, that they had difficulties during the Program because of them, especially the lack of time off work to do the practical part of the course. This fact caused some participants to give up the course. The fact that it is a model college, which does not have the same structure as the participants' workplace was also pointed out as a problem, as well as the fact that the course is the same as an internship; that sometimes there is a lack of dialogue; the long distance to be traveled between the workplace and the course location; the little theoretical knowledge offered by the course, in the opinion of some; the difficulties in the orientation of the final work.

The teachers also offered suggestions for improving the course, such as: declaration of exemption from work; a closer relationship with the school of the teacher participating in the course; that the course was only for inexperienced professionals. Other participants also pointed out that the course should also be geared towards more experienced professionals; that it should offer more theoretical knowledge; that there should be more meetings related to the teachers' specific areas.

We also observed the need for more communication among those involved in the program, based on the quotations in some interviews and in some questionnaires, or from the statements of the program supervisors and CPII's regent tutors. Most of the time, no one from the program goes to the teacher's school, nor contacts the teacher, and this fact can create difficulties for the teacher to adopt the pedagogical practices and knowledge acquired.

We intend, therefore, as a result of this research, to publicize the need to expand professional induction programs to support beginning teachers in school systems and in all teacher education institutions. According to the results of the program we investigated, such support promotes the better qualification of teachers and, consequently, the improvement of the quality of teaching, since it makes up for the already demonstrated lack of experience of newly qualified teachers in the school environment. Thus, these new professionals would have the supervision of active teachers and of higher education and teacher education institutions.

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<sup>4</sup> We want to make it clear that we recognize that the analyses presented here on all investigated aspects could be deepened, as well as present more data and tables that we elaborated on each axis, but as an article has its format limitations, this would only be possible in several specific articles on each theme addressed.

Finally, our research has allowed us to confirm a) the importance of giving support to beginning teachers; b) the need to expand the few existing experiences in this area in Brazil; c) the need for comprehensive research on these experiences in Brazil and in the world, in a contextualized way, in order to analyze the best ways to expand the support given to beginning teachers.

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