

Policies for Continuing Education and Teacher Professional Development: a strategy of corporate neoliberal governmentality¹

Políticas de Formação Continuada e Desenvolvimento Profissional Docente: uma estratégia de governamentalidade neoliberal empresarial

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ABSTRACT

The article problematizes the idea of teacher professional development - TPD, from the perspective of neoliberal rationality. It seeks to demonstrate how initiatives in the field of public policies drive actions toward corporate governmentality (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016). To this end, a document produced by the UNDIME, CONSED, *Fundação Carlos Chagas*, and Profissão Docente in partnership with the Ministry of Education aiming to guide cities and states toward establishing professional development matrices for teachers of Basic Education from the Common National Base for the Continuing Training of K-12 Teachers. The artifact under analysis is characterized by a conception of teacher professional development centered on regulatory and self-regulation practices necessary for constructing the neoliberal subject or neo-subject. In this sense, the study identifies mentoring approach for managing continuing education and TPD, establishing action protocols for teaching work.

Keywords: Continuing Education Policies. Teacher Training. Teacher Professional Development.

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RESUMO

O artigo problematiza a ideia de desenvolvimento profissional docente - DPD, na perspectiva de uma racionalidade neoliberal. Procura-se demonstrar como as iniciativas no campo das políticas públicas impulsionam ações na direção de uma governamentalidade empresarial (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016). Para tanto, analisa-se um documento produzido pela UNDIME, pelo CONSED, pela Fundação Carlos Chagas, pela Profissão Docente em parceria com o Ministério da Educação, o qual tem como propósito orientar municípios e Estados, na direção de estabelecer matrizes de desenvolvimento profissional para professores e professoras da Educação Básica, a partir da Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Continuada de Professores da Educação Básica. O artefato em análise se caracteriza por uma concepção de desenvolvimento profissional docente centrada em práticas de regulação e de autorregulação necessárias à construção do sujeito neoliberal ou do neossujeito. Neste sentido, o estudo identifica a prática de mentoria para a gestão da formação continuada e do DPD, com o estabelecimento de protocolos de ação para o trabalho docente.

Palavras-chave: Políticas de Formação Continuada. Formação de Professores. Desenvolvimento Profissional Docente.

Introduction

The article problematizes the concept of teacher professional development –TPD, based on neoliberal rationality. We understand that an investment is underway in educational policies that seek to dispute teachers' subjectivities in the country to maintain neoliberal principles from business governmentality. We want to discuss how teaching gains centrality in the practices to build the so-called neoliberal subject or neo-subject.

To do so, we analyze a document that considers itself a guiding text to build the TPD matrix for Brazilian cities and states. The paper was created by the *União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação* – UNDIME [National Union of Education City Managers], *Conselho Nacional de Secretários da Educação* – CONSED [National Council of Educational Secretaries], *Fundação Carlos Chagas*, and the social organization *Profissão Docente* with the Ministry of Education partnership. Entitled *BNC – Formação Continuada na prática – Implementando processos formativos orientados por referenciais profissionais* –

2021 [BNC- Continuing Education in practice- implementing training processes guided by professional References -2021], the document also has an appendix called *Proposta de Matriz de Desenvolvimento Profissional Docente* [Proposal for a Matrix of Teacher Professional Development].

The analyzed document starts from a concept of teacher professional development identified as a mentorship program grounded on action protocols for teachers' work. This study aims to describe the characteristics and practices of regulation, self-regulation, and teachers' behavior control in Brazil from local policies that seek to regulate teachers' admission and career.

National academic productions have broadly questioned the centrality of teaching in consolidating neoliberal policies. Since the mid-1990s, the investment in discourses around national public education acts toward teachers in two senses, holding teachers responsible for the learning failure of children, young people, and adults and, at the same time, placing exclusively on them the task of reversing the scenario of school retention and failure.

In this direction, it was strategic to produce support material, training spaces, and other strategies that could dispute teachers' subjectivities for the need to change toward enacting educational policies. These are documents, support material, and pedagogical tools produced by business institutions connected with representative bodies of the government, which seek to attract teachers and local managers in an attempt to lead professional behavior. These become powerful tools for regulating and self-regulating teachers' work and subjectivities in the country, seeking to build an entrepreneur teacher.

The analysis developed here understands neoliberalism through its economic bias and mainly as a set of rules that want to guide the practices of governments, institutions, and people. A way to conduct the subjectivities that expanded the perspective of capital to every way men and women relate nowadays (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016). Therefore, neoliberalism is about money and minds (BALL, 2014).

In this sense, neoliberalism is a rationalism, which takes shape through a series of discourses, practices, and strategies that construct a new way to govern men and women, guiding their behavior based on competition, rivalry, and the individual-enterprise (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016).

We defend that neoliberal actions assume the unification of all subjectivities in the enterprise figure. The neoliberal moment suggests a process that intends to homogenize human beings so that only one subject would be possible: the business subject, the neoliberal subject, or the neo-subject. According to Dardot and Laval (2016), this would be an extreme strategy to perpetuate the domination of capital.

Neoliberalism is a government rationality grounded on the maxim of competition as a “conduct norm and business as a subjectivation model” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p.17). In this sense, we perceive a set of discourses and strategies that seek to enact a new form of governing men and women based on establishing competition principles.

We understand that the educational policies with TPD in their core enact strategies to consolidate teachers as entrepreneur subjects. The artifact produced by civil society actors becomes one more device to suggest particular forms of being in public teaching. A discourse that builds truths about the professional teaching character from a self-entrepreneur perspective.

We argue that the analyzed artifact points out a mentorship program whose aim is to guide subjects’ conduct toward self-improvement and the enhancement of education as a whole. The document’s discourse stimulates specific actions of being and acting in teaching, directing the behavior of education secretaries and K-12 teachers, and establishing what Dardot and Laval (2016) call business governmentality.

In-service teacher training and professional development policy

Producing support or guidance documents has been a constant strategy in the dispute for subjectivities when adhering to neoliberal educational policies. These are devices that represent neoliberal ideals that advocate for the privatization of public services, health services exposed to the market forces, educational reforms guided towards the free market, new models of public management based on private groups, and the subjects’ responsibility through their fulfillment, the capacity to decide, select preferences, and increase life quality (MILLER; ROSE, 2012).

Neoliberal rationality draws a new relationship between the State and civil society, so that the “different procedures of translation and alliance are implied when political institutions are decentralized in a power network” (MILLER; ROSE, 2012, p.103). The neoliberal ruling art proposes a lack of distinction between the definitions of State and non-State. New organization ways in power, political, and governance networks are established.

Thinking under the governance perspective is understanding a new configuration of the State, in which there the State action does not disappear when conducting policies but forms to rule based on “a new modality of public power, agency, and social action, in fact, a new form of State” (BALL, 2013, p.180). This new State form is articulated by consolidating the political powers of civil society actors. We understand as social actors, non-governmental organizations, charity foundations, social and political entrepreneurs, policy consultants, international agents, and other sectors self-described as solvers of social problems, mainly in the educational area.

This model articulated to neoliberalism starts to guide a “substantial discourse of governance, precisely powerful due to its capacity to combine economy, social dimensions, and politics in the name of a rational choice as a legitimacy principle” (PETERS; MARSHALL; FITZSIMONS, 2004, p. 83). The notion of governance seems to be most favorable in the set of discursive innovations due to the displacement of administration and policies with an emphasis on management when establishing itself as part of the managerialism – grounded in the assumption of business management- “management of private sector companies, in the public choice and institutional economy” (PETERS; MARSHALL; FITZSIMONS, 2004, p. 77).

The changes in this logic of public administration, with the emergence of governance, incorporate political reforms with capitalist values and neoliberal rationality. Governance, as a new ability to govern, broadens the State’s action with other relations established in political networks and is considered the best way for social actors to develop relationships to gain power and legitimacy in the social responsibilities and government practices. As Ball (2013, p.180) affirms, “new forms of ‘experimental’ and ‘strategic’ governance based in network relations, within and through new political communities, aimed to create a new capacity to govern and increase legitimacy.”

The presence of these actors, established by different sectors in society, has shown a significant influence not only in disputes and negotiations around educational agendas but the action of these groups have mainly been influential in the creation of the legislation. These collective groups, self-called organized societies, present their studies, defend arguments, and establish truths that have become references to build the discourses of public education policies. These actors are even part of the CNE [National Education Council], sign these documents, and are recognized by their relationships with well-known non-State institutions intervening in Brazilian reforms and educational policies.

We can mention the ongoing articulations regarding the proposal of a national curriculum for K-12 education, the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC- Common National Curriculum Framework), and the *Proposta da Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Inicial de Professores da Educação Básica* (BNC-Formação- Proposal for a Common National Framework for the Pre-service Education of K-12 Teachers) and the *Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Continuada de Professores da Educação Básica* (BNC-Formação Continuada- for Continuous Education). The process of building these policies shows the bond between these interests and the articulations of the State with the educational organizations. For instance, the “*Movimento Profissão Docente*” (2022) [Movement Teaching Profession] is kept by non-governmental institutions concerned with disseminating and producing knowledge to promote the debate on teachers’ education policies. Among its actions was the creation in 2019 of the document ‘*Referenciais Profissionais docentes para Formação Continuada*’ [Guidelines for Teachers’ Continuous Education] that was used by the CNE in 2020.

This document is mentioned in the Review CNE/CP n.º 14/2020, approved on July 10, 2020 (BRASIL, 2020a), to establish the National Curriculum Guidelines for K-12 Teachers’ Continuous Education and grounds the Resolution CNE/CP n.º 1/2020, approved on October 27, 2020 (BRASIL, 2020b).

In its introduction, the Resolution CNE/CP n.º 1/2020 points out that the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC) is central to teachers’ continuous education. It repetitively reiterates the need to propose a base for teacher education aligned with learning standards, in this case, the BNCC guided by the CNE/CP n.º 2/2017 resolution.

The document above presents teachers' professional competencies in three dimensions: I – professional knowledge, II – professional practice, and III – professional engagement. The document ratifies the competencies presented in the Review CNE/CP n.º 22/2019 (BRASIL, 2019a) and the Resolution CNE/CP n.º 2/2019 (BRASIL, 2019b) that established the new Guidelines for Teachers' Education/National Common Base (BNC) for teacher education.

We can see that the Resolution CNE/CP n.º 1/2020 defines how the teachers' continuous education should be, reiterating the premises of BNCC and the Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers' Training, and the *BNC-Formação de professores*. At the core of these legal documents, guiding devices were written by non-governmental organizations aiming to dispute subjectivities and guide the behavior of different education actors. One of these documents is the “*BNC - Formação Continuada na Prática: implementando processos formativos orientados por referenciais profissionais*” and its appendix “*Proposta de Matriz de Desenvolvimento Profissional Docente*”, from 2021, which we will analyze in this article.

As previously mentioned, the document entitled “*BNC - Formação Continuada na Prática - implementando processos formativos orientados por referenciais profissionais 2021*” (BRASIL, 2021) was built by CONSED, UNDIME, Fundação Carlos Chagas, and Profissão Docente, in partnership with the Education Ministry. According to the presentation text, the document is support material for cities and states to construct references for teachers' professional performance from the *BNC-Formação Continuada* established by the Resolution n.º 1 of the *Conselho Nacional de Educação* (CNE) on October 27, 2020.

The document comprises suggestions and guidelines for city and states public systems to build their references for teachers' professional development. In its presentation, the entities involved in the production of the material emphasize that the guiding artifact is the result of investments in studies held between 2019 and 2021. According to its organizers, the text presents examples of actions in national and international systems as references for the practices that should be built in each place.

Organized into six sections, the document has a preamble explaining its construction. It explains the movements that originated the material. According

to the text, they interviewed ten state and ten municipal education secretaries to identify the continuous education practices enacted by these bodies and their main difficulties. Based on these data, it presents the theoretical literature in the area and the search for successful experiences nationally and internationally.

After this, the writers created the first draft of the document, divided into six sections and their respective summaries, giving visibility to the text that would establish the final version. This first text was sent to the networks that critically read it and returned the document to the group managing the proposal. From this feedback emerged the first version of the material, already followed by an appendix of the professional development matrix. Finally, the work network systematized the main contributions of the systems and concluded the work that originated the guiding document we problematize here.

In the technical sheet of this guiding artifact, we can read that it is a work conducted by the *Frente CONSED Base Nacional da Profissão Docente* listing the participants of the *Frente de Trabalho*. The partners listed in the technical sheet are the *Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação (CONSED)*, *Fundação Carlos Chagas, Profissão Docente*, and the *União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipal de Educação (UNDIME)*. As we can see, the Ministry of Education is not mentioned in the construction of the document that proposes the reference matrix for teachers' professional development policies.

As previously pointed out, the document is divided into six sections, establishing the organization premises to define the teachers' professional development matrix in each place. Each section focuses on teachers' being and doing, as seen in the following brief description.

In section 1, called "*Apropriação da BNC - Formação Continuada*" [BNC Appropriation- Continuing Education], the prescription is marked by the maxim that every guiding document referring to teachers' professional development should refer to *BNC - Formação Continuada*. *BNC-Formação Continuada* defines the competencies and abilities that should establish the desired professional standard.

Under the title "*Planejamento da Formação Continuada a partir de referenciais profissionais*" [Planning of Continuous Training from professional References], section 2 reinforces the idea that updating investments, deepening the studies offered to teachers by the systems, should reflect the premises of what

is established as professional competence in the *BNC-Formação Continuada*. The section focuses on the defense of arguments that value the planning of educational actions by managing instances based on the higher levels of management following the routine of school institutions.

In section 2, there is a script to be followed by Brazilian education secretaries to implement a continuous education program. This script encompasses a plan that starts from a necessity, passes by teacher's education, and ends with providing the efficiency of the process through the changes observed in teachers' practices and in their students' performance

Section 3, "*Levantamento das necessidades formativas orientado por referenciais profissionais*" [Raising formative needs guided by professional references], describes the forms to identify the training demands emerging from the school routine. Thus, it defines practices that can make appear "formative needs" based on the professional reference specified in the document. Some examples of these practices are teachers' self-evaluation, through which teachers evaluate their personal development; class observation conducted by a tutor, i.e., a more experienced colleague that will act as a "guide" to less experienced one or a reference colleague in the school with good professional performance; the observation of other teachers' activities, such as how they plan their classes, related with their peers and students' families and guardians, together with the students, to evaluate teachers' actions; and, finally, conversation circles, spaces where teachers are invited to talk about the difficulties and successes in teachers' practice.

Section 4, "*Fortalecimento dos formadores de professores*" [Strengthening teachers' trainers], defines who is authorized to conduct the processes of continuous education from the reference of the Professional Development Matrix. The text revolves around the quality of the professionals that will work in teachers' training. Quality is characterized by the alignment with the concept of training/formation indicated in the literature that grounds the *BNC-Formação* and what is dictated by the guiding document.

According to the document, many professionals can be considered trainers to conduce continuing education activities in the public systems. It cites "pedagogical coordinators, tutors, area coordinators, trainers of a fixed staff, trainers hired for a specific initiative, internal and external professionals"

(BRASIL, 2021, p.67). However, among the criteria described in the document that characterize a good trainer, the perspective of being a good learning mediator for teachers stands out. The written content defines that the trainer needs to show what a good teacher is, understand how teachers learn, use pedagogical behaviors involving teachers' difficulties, and are trained in the area they will work as trainers.

The document discriminates each aspect of the trainers' characteristics. Together with the description of how trainers should be, the text presents examples of formative actions undertaken and the role played by such agents in the mentioned practices. There is a reference to be followed by those that fulfill this role in each place.

Section 4 tries to define the secretaries' role in strengthening teacher trainers. In this direction, it emphasizes the recognition of professionals whose works stand out in the system and even recommends some financial incentives for developing this work. The text mentions the possibility of members external to the system participating in these training processes, emphasizing the need to know the public system's peculiarities and specificities. However, the guideline is that trainers should be part of the personnel of the system.

The follow-up and evaluation of training actions are presented in section 5. In this phase, the text defines the forms to evaluate the investment of each secretary. With the aid of the literature that grounds the construction of the guiding material, it suggests evaluating the training in five levels. These levels concern how the participants understand the training, the choices regarding the planning of training activities, the aspects of teachers' learning, the data referring to the incorporation of learning in the pedagogical practices of participant teachers, and, finally, students' learning transformation.

The last section, "*Condições favoráveis e processos formativos orientados por referenciais profissionais*" [Favorable conditions and formative processes guided by professional references], focuses on the need to align the local policies of continuous training with the other educational policies. In this sense, it mentions the conditions to be offered for the teachers to participate in the activities promoted and the possibility for them to enact the innovative practices learned in their classes. The last section ends by advocating the institutionalization of continuous education as a State policy, guaranteeing its format regardless of the governments in power.

This document also comprises an appendix called “*Proposta de matriz de desenvolvimento profissional docente*” [Proposal of a Matrix for Teachers’ professional development]. The guidance developed in the described document is at the service of states and cities so they can build proposals for continuous education and their own matrix of professional development. This matrix seeks to reference hiring teachers and their career development and progression.

Teacher professional development- the ‘self-entrepreneur subject’ perspective

The document problematized here is a reference for cities and states to build their Teacher Professional Development (TPD) matrix. It has already been shown how this artifact is grounded on aligning with public policies that define the curricula of K-12 education and teacher education. Besides this, the reference expresses a very particular perspective of TPD, which needs to be understood in the scope of neoliberal rationality.

The analyzed document is an artifact whose discourse has a type of addressing, a way of building a relationship with the target audience. From its presentation, the material shows the investment in an innovative perspective in the format and the language. The hues that color its pages and the icons that translate the messages stress an air of modernity and technological space-time. In this sense, the discourse refers to novelty and change, but not any change but a technological one, which is evidently valued by society.

Beyond this aspect, we should highlight that in the last decades, it has been common for large companies and private groups to invest in personnel management practices to optimize workers’ performance. These are motivational lectures, coaches, guides, and advisors who, from psychological techniques, seek to improve workers’ performances and a responsible engagement towards the companies’ goals.

Among these investments, the mentorship programs stand out. Mentorships are characterized as a process of professional growth that is said to be more effective in resolving specific problems. It is a training anchored in the relationship between a mentor and a mentee.

The mentees are people who wish to learn and, to do so, count on the mentors' experience. The aim is for mentees to improve themselves personally and professionally and, consequently, reach more productive results for themselves and the company.

What differentiates the mentorship program from other formation training in the companies is that it is personalized, depending on the mentees' needs and toward the companies' interests. In this sense, the mentor does not approach general themes on professional development but identifies their mentees' limits and potential. The mentees are guided to solve their problems or acquire new learning topics from a specific diagnosis.

As professionals with vast experience, the mentors know what to do, can identify the action scenario, and will indicate the specific practice to be adopted to create more efficiency in the sector or department. Thus, sharing their knowledge of the situation and re-guiding their mentees to do what it takes to modify, adapt, adopt, and innovate, among other things.

According to the Mentor blog, the formation actions offered in the model of team improvement have been considered insufficient to qualify the workers. In its turn, the mentorship program is understood as a significant innovation in terms of professional and personal development in human resources management. The mark of such programs is the personalized solution for each mentee. The blog also highlights the perspective of learning from the mentors' experiences (MENTORBLOG, 2022). In the mentorships, the practical experience overlaps the techniques and the theoretical field in workers' training relations.

Besides creating a high level of identification between the workers and the company, the companies aim to work in the perspective that the companies' development equals the development of each person. To do so, they invest in motivational techniques that stimulate and incentivize individuals from a range of practices from organizational psychology. In these training initiatives, the work aims to guarantee that the company will be a place for people's growth and the space and time for improvement opportunities. There is a movement of a company culture, business governmentality, or managerial governmentality (SOUZA, 2013).

Foucault (1979) conceptualized governmentality as a series of practices establishing a new ruling art. An art that presupposes the relation between

forms of government, enacted by the convergence of interpersonal and institutional practices in the social environment with the political government, what would correspond to the State's sovereign. The government is a power exercise identified in spaces such as schools or families, intrinsically related to micropolitics, and guided individually to each component of a population. According to Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 18), governmentality is a "meeting between domination techniques enacted on others and the techniques themselves. Hence, ruling guides men's conduct, as long as this conduct is the same with oneself and others".

Therefore, companies' governmentality refers to the forms of behaving and living in the everyday routine using the companies' knowledge and structure. This knowledge comes mainly from business management and is acquired in training, MBAs, post-graduation courses, specializations, and managerial, even motivational, bibliography. This knowledge is mobilized to reinforce the business perspective of government and people's self-government (SOUZA, 2013).

As we can see, a governmentality format seeks to coopt the individual as a subjectivity that needs to be fully involved with their professional activity. The perspective is to completely involve people in the demanded action, which should be enacted with competence and efficiency under the argument of professional and personal growth.

The perspective of organized entities, which promote the analyzed document, is to bring many business references to the public administration. An administrative model supported by distance government, in which the subjects are summoned as responsible for governing, rule less to rule more. These neoliberal government strategies establish themselves as regulation through controlling activities and individual choices, "the contemporary government operates by infiltrating, subtly and thoroughly, the ambitions of the regulation process within our existence and experience as subjects" (ROSE, 1998, p.43). These self-regulated techniques affect the subjects' choices at the service of the government's interests, which present themselves in the field of education from the responsibility of each one for their own professional development that, in turn, is directly connected to the success of the education institution, the students, and, consequently, national education.

We can perceive the establishment of an idea of a TPD matrix from external agencies in the organization form of education professionals. The meaning of being a professional, its competencies, abilities, and behaviors that characterize a certain professionalism have the business model as a reference. In this direction, these mentorship models motivate professionals in their work performance, convincing them that individual and company success depends on their behavior. A behavior standard is also disseminated in the educational context.

Teachers' work conditions and the salary issue are submitted to a discourse that preaches that taking care of oneself and ensuring an excellent professional performance is crucial to their professional development and, in this case, to improving public education. Teachers' investment (or not) in their development is seen as a "choice," an "option," as it depends on their engagement, efforts, and dedication.

From the perspective of company governmentality, the aim is always to gain something more from the individual, taking advantage of their body, mind, and time, everything the individual can offer under a discourse of professional development. We can consider how this type of strategy moves contemporary social practices. Numerous social agencies foment among the population some psychological or even mystical techniques of self-knowledge, control, and relaxation aiming to dispute self-guided subjectivities. A language that captures individualities by its welcoming tone and the promise of appeasing hearts and minds, channeling emotions and uneasiness, and promoting their professional, emotional, and social progress.

Teachers face similar practices in the professional context. The standard of behavior, suggested and stimulated conduct, is the same. In self-knowledge practices, people are guided toward processes that pass by the identification of their limits, the confession of their flaws and bad habits, and are stimulated to identify practices considered mistaken that would not contribute to their full development. This also includes behaviors regarding their diet, physical activities, and beliefs. There is even a mention of limiting beliefs that would hinder people's growth and their existential progress as contemporary people.

After people identify their limitations, they have to plan their change. This supposes knowing where one wants to reach, establishing goals, and seeking self-behavior strategies that make them build another way of being in the world.

In this process, the narrative of others' successes – having peace of mind, having good job positions, happy relationships, and solutions to family problems – are at the center of the proposal. They are true 'testimonies of faith' that rock the promises of those who first come to this consultantship and mentorship sessions. People that gather in groups with this type of proposal profit from a specific social position, establishing themselves as examples of people who 'invested in themselves' and, therefore, are willing and will know how to invest in the company or institution.

In the idea of the TPD matrix, as presented in the text that intends to be a reference for cities and states, there is a mentorship program comprised of action protocols for teaching. The continuous training should start from the teachers' reality, having an initial moment called '*adhesion*'. According to the reference, this stage consists of practices through which teachers should go through evaluation processes.

The first process is self-evaluation, when everyone should identify how they organize themselves, teach, and conduct their daily practice seeking possible problems in their pedagogical actions. This moment establishes a confession practice in which the people should talk about themselves and point out their mistakes and the efforts undertaken in their professional activities, having the competencies and abilities foreseen in the *BNC-Formação* as references.

The second process is carried out as scrutiny, referring to the moment teachers should invite one of their peers, considered 'good' teachers, to their classrooms and open themselves up to judgment, showing their being and doing. The 'good' teacher, chosen as a mentor, will observe the mentees' behavior in the classroom with their students. Furthermore, mentors also need to follow their colleague's behavior regarding the students' families and the other professionals in the school.

In this first moment, teachers in continuous education must expose and show themselves vulnerability. Each person will present their actions to the gaze of others that will 'study' them to 'advise' the other in the best way possible.

Both processes that comprise the first action protocol of teachers' work are also very close to the standard of religious practices – the confession, through which the Christians would deserve forgiveness and the heavens by confessing and exposing themselves, assuming their blame, redeeming themselves, and

promising to re-guide their behavior towards the path to good. As we can perceive, these are discourses mobilized by the practices of different self-knowledge groups, coaches, mentors, and, as shown here, by the policies of the TDP matrix.

The confession practice is a productive way to produce truths. Foucault (1988, p.59) states, “We have become a singularly confessing society.” According to the author, all is confessed or is led to be confessed. The act of confessing is done in the face of someone. A listening that demands a confession and leads to an evaluation about it. The listener can infer, influence, interfere, who can issue judgments, establish punishment or forgiveness, and that can legitimize the process validating it as truth. For the author, the confession practice consists of a “ritual in which the statement itself, regardless of its external consequences, produces intrinsic changes in those who articulate it: clearing him, purifying him, delivering and releasing him from his faults, freeing him, promising him the salvation” (FOUCAULT, 1988, p.61).

The mentee’s task is to analyze the self-evaluation process and identify their mentees’ practices by observing their behavior and pointing out their limits and possibilities. Through the mentor’s listening, the mentee’s conduct is established and defines the behavior to be reconfigured.

From this behavior, reconfiguration emerges the second phase referenced in the TPD matrix, here called ‘*training*,’ which refers to the formation, counseling, construction of strategies, studies, and establishing targets to be reached. This phase would be grounded by practices that should develop the competencies and abilities foreseen in the *BNC-Formação*. These competencies regard teaching, how to teach more, and how to teach aligned with the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC). Teaching as a way to guarantee that students can positively answer the evaluations and be an example to them. Besides working on the respective content of each school subject, based on how they guide the classes and behave professionally, teachers need to demonstrate professionalism.

Being a professional involves following the TPD regarding the three fields preconized by the *BNC-Formação*: professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement. Professional knowledge is related to knowing how to teach the content of the disciplinary field. Professional practice refers to active methodologies, such as didactic-pedagogical practice.

Professional engagement answers the maxim of collaborative work among peers and the responsibility for their professional development, taking care of their careers.

The objectives to be reached by the TPD matrix are the competencies and abilities present in the *BNC-Formação* and are references to building the local professional development matrix. The evaluation parameter regarding professional development should be checked by the follow-up of teachers considered to be 'good' examples: the mentors. They should follow the changes in their mentees' pedagogical practices. The training focuses on these changes.

The mentors represent the 'good' teachers in the school community, the example to be followed, and the success cases. Good teachers are considered good trainers in the guiding text. We also highlight that, though women mainly compose the public educational system, masculine terms are more used when referring to teachers. This fact is relevant when we consider that, historically, professional competence has been connected to the professions in the public world, referring to white men who would incorporate the efficiency standards demanded by the market with disposition and commitment.

The document also insists that trainers should be teachers from the system. It emphasizes the use of the masculine form of the word (in Portuguese: *treinador*), reinforcing the professional reference connected with gender. We should highlight that, though it agrees with the tendency to defend *in loco* teacher training, the choice of a 'good' teacher is directly connected with the interests of local managers. We can infer the type of selection that will be enacted to define who will be more suitable to develop the mentorship tasks. The criteria to define mentors would be circumscribed to a perspective of 'success' and the professional competencies connected to the results obtained by them and their students in national evaluations.

The metric of success in continuous education and the TPD is the same, and, finally, the indexes reached by students in external evaluations. Students' performance gives the success measure of teachers' learning.

The artifact argues that the TPD matrix comprises continuous actions of in-service education that establish themselves as State policies and not as government policies. The idea that the State's role would be to legitimize the TPD matrix format specified by the entities is reinforced in this argument. The

entities that represent the category, the researchers and scholars in the field of teachers' work, and Brazilian K-12 teachers had no influence or could not collaborate in the definition, conceptualization, and discussion of teachers' continuous education.

The TPD matrix comprises competencies and abilities defined in the scope of the entities representing the managers of education secretaries and social subjects that represent the interests of national and international businesses. Dismissed from the process, teachers are called only to positively answer what is understood as a significant investment in Brazilian public education.

Finally, the last step of the mentorship program, which establishes an action protocol for the teachers' work, refers to the '*evidence*,' the learning results. These pieces of evidence are revealed from the training evaluation developed and can be seen in the improvements enacted in teachers' pedagogical practices. The mentor's responsibility is to check the transformations enacted by the learning teachers.

Regarding learning evidence, there are data related to the performance of K-12 students. Regardless of the processes experienced by teachers in continuous education, the success of the TPD matrix will only be seen if the students' performances show this growth.

Interestingly, with its teaching-action protocols, this mentorship program involves teachers' actions within a TPD matrix. However, it concerns the same action cycle in the education secretaries that propose the TPD matrix. All those involved in the protocols that promote '*adhesion*,' '*training*,' and learning '*evidence*' as a repeating cycle in a permanent dynamic. A cycle that reveals consistent vigilance and self-vigilance, permanent regulation, and self-regulation.

The detailed description that the education secretaries should follow in planning and executing the continuous training goes through the cycles of '*adhesion*,' '*training*,' and '*evidence* .' At first, the secretaries must identify students' performance indexes and detect their investments in continuous education to create the system diagnosis. Afterward, they should gather their 'good' teachers, considered 'good' trainers, and build a training proposal that should be implemented in each education institution. Finally, they have to establish evaluation processes that show the success reached by the proposed action.

Every mentorship program has action protocols, ‘*adhesion*,’ ‘*training*,’ and ‘*evidence*’ described in the research material analysis, followed by examples already implemented and whose efficiency was proved. They are “witnesses” of how these questions were enacted, the main work strategies, and numbers revealing the endeavor’s success. The testimonies and narratives are used to stimulate, convince, and coopt.

The last section of the analyzed document discusses the need for more favorable conditions to enact the in-service education processes from the TPD matrix. In this direction, it specifically points out the time need to develop training practices and defends a certain coherence between effective work conditions and the matrix of teachers’ professional development. However, there is no mention in the text about the decrease in working hours, new arrangements of work hours in the contract, and the number of students per class. None of these conditions for teachers’ work quality is considered. In this sense, we reiterate that the TPD process is exclusively delegated to individual responsibility. The perspective is that teachers can become more professional and grow in their careers by establishing and focusing on the targets,

Final remarks

This article aimed to problematize the concept of teacher professional development- TDP, from a neoliberal rationality. We identified that the TDP proposal is enacted by a Mentorship Program, composed of action protocols for teachers’ work – ‘*adhesion*,’ ‘*training*,’ and ‘*evidence*,’ which establish a strategy of managerial neoliberal governmentality.

As initially stated, the analyzed artifact aims to guide subjects’ conduct toward self-improvement and education development. The established protocol promotes specific practices to be and act in teaching, disputing the behavior of education secretaries and K-12 teachers.

Self-responsibility and self-entrepreneurship, freedom of choice, flexibilization, and innovation are characteristics stimulated by the discourses that affect the control of conduct. These discourses support the creation of better performances and competitive positions, the type of teaching expected to establish this self-manager subject. There is a subjectively-produced need to

want to invest in oneself, to be better, and to guide one's learning, contributing to the quality of education. A quality restricted to results that can be seen in the statistical indexes of educational development.

We can perceive, towards our questioning, that teachers' education seems to be guided as a way to govern oneself and others. When introducing ways of being and acting in teaching and, at the same time, driving the conduct of educational behaviors, we can see a process of objectification and commodification that transforms the performance levels, results, and quality standards exposed to judgments, as in a company.

Finally, we point out that the progress in TDP does not mention, at any moment, the possibility of post-graduate courses or even a more fruitful relationship with the universities as knowledge production centers in education. The traditional work between school and university is substituted by the peer relationship in the same system. Teachers will progress within the parameters based on a TDP matrix built from protocols created by non-governmental organizations with a neoliberal perspective.

The article questioned the idea of teacher professional development- TPD- from a neoliberal rationality perspective. In this sense, the undertaken efforts lead teachers towards a professional profile connected with the new technique of business performance.

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