

Teaching Ethos of Reference Professors

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ABSTRACT – Teaching Ethos of Reference Professors. The present article discusses the teaching ethos of professors who are recognized for their good practice as trainers. The aim of our study is to analyze the influences of such professors' professional constitution, as well as the explicit and/or tacit teaching knowledge they mobilize in their teaching practices. Based on Shulman, Gauthier, Tardif and Polanyi, we conducted interviews with three professors described by their students as reference. They were also observed in their classes, in the context of an undergraduate program in pedagogy at a public university. Data show similarities between the practices of the investigated professors, as well as a consistent description of their didactics, which is marked by intellectual, moral, emotional and behavioral features.

Keywords: Referential Professor. Teaching Ethos. Training Teacher. Didactics. Teacher Training.

RESUMO – Êthos Docente de Professores Referenciais. Este artigo discute o *êthos* docente de professores formadores referenciais de prática, buscando analisar as influências na sua constituição profissional e os saberes explícitos e/ou tácitos presentes e mobilizados em sua docência. Com base em Shulman, Gauthier, Tardif, e Polanyi, foram realizadas entrevistas e observação de aulas de três professores indicados como referenciais pelos seus alunos, no contexto de um curso de Pedagogia de uma universidade pública. Os dados revelam convergências entre as práticas dos investigados e gravitam em torno de uma didática de prerrogativas intelectivas, morais, afetivas e comportamentais.

Palavras-chave: Professor Referencial. Êthos Docente. Professor Formador. Didática. Formação de Professores.

Introduction: a research bet

Initial teacher training is always at the center of contemporary educational debates in Brazil. Authors like Gatti (2010; 2013; 2014), Barretto (2010) and André (2010; 2012) conducted research in the context of undergraduate licensure programs in the last decade and denounced the divide between teacher training and teachers' professional practice.

What is the situation of initial teacher training in undergraduate licensure programs in Brazil today? What training is offered to the future teachers by universities? These are questions proposed by Gatti (2013) in an article that reports on and discusses recent research about initial teacher training at higher education level in the country. Some of the denunciations concerning the training of teachers for contemporary school, according to the author, are: a) the dissonance between courses' pedagogical plans and the set of disciplines and their syllabi; b) the fragmented curriculum proposed by teacher training courses, presenting a scattered, unarticulated discipline set; c) the inappropriate proportion of hours dedicated to professional teacher training in undergraduate pedagogy licensure programs – around 30% –, while 70% are dedicated to other types of subjects or activities; moreover, few of these courses offer disciplines with some depth in early childhood education; and in other undergraduate licensure programs, this proportion varies from 10% to 15% for education disciplines, and from 85% to 90% for other disciplines or activities; d) the analysis of professional training disciplines' syllabi (e.g., methodologies and teaching practices) reveals a predominance of theoretical sources with no association to educational practices and, in the great majority of the courses analyzed, those sources are approached in a generic, superficial way; e) K-12 education curricula are virtually absent from the programs offered; f) few institutions are specific about what their internships consist of, and under what sort of guidance, monitoring and assessment they are conducted; g) the question of practice, which is required by courses' curriculum guidelines, is problematic as it is sometimes said to be embedded in various disciplines, with no clear specification, or it might appear separately but with a vague syllabus; h) a considerable group of curriculum grids have non-specific disciplines, i.e., vague names, short syllabi, and content redundancy between different disciplines in the same course; i) curricula show many hours dedicated to complementary activities, seminars or cultural activities, etc., with no specification on what they refer to (whether they are monitored by teachers, their goals, etc.); and j) part of these licensure programs promote a premature specialization in aspects that might be treated in specialization and graduate programs, or in programs clearly aimed at training professionals other than teachers. In sum, undergraduate licensure programs have been presenting fragmented curricula with excessively generic contents and a great dissociation between theory and practice, as well as fictitious internships and precarious internal and external assessment.

André et al. (2010) published an article discussing the findings of a study about the work of teacher trainers who teach in undergraduate li-

censure programs. Their account focused on the main challenges faced by teacher trainers in a context of change in the contemporary world, as well as the ways they have found to deal with the new demands in their teaching work. The study was conducted in universities across Brazil by interviewing 53 teacher trainers and analyzing the pedagogical plans of licensure programs at those institutions. Data reveal that the economic, social and cultural transformations in course have been affecting their work. Among the various features of the present, they highlight the new profile of students who enter university, bringing along new demands to institutions:

Among these changes, we highlight the ones relating to the profile of students entering university, as they bring new demands to the work of trainers, who seek to rebuild their knowledge and adjust their practices in response to these challenges. We can see that universities have difficulties dealing with these new necessities of teachers and students, particularly due to the permanence of organization forms and an institutional culture that encourages fragmentation and isolation in teaching (André et al., 2010, p. 129).

The study's interviewees reported that students come to class uninterested, unmotivated in relation to future professional practice, and that they enter university without mastering basic school knowledge. The teachers also highlighted students' utilitarian and pragmatic relationship with the knowledge taught, which for Tardiff and Lessard (2005 apud André et al., 2010, p. 129) is the reflection of a society oriented towards the useful and the functional.

In turn, students also evaluated their teacher trainers, in another study by André and collaborators (2012). Among the research data, the authors highlight that some teacher trainers are considered by their students as reverse role models, i.e., their pedagogical practices are examples of what not to do as a teacher; that licensure students reported unpreparedness to teach in some teachers, including lack of mastery of the knowledge those teachers were supposed to have, and even lack of qualification in the area; and the repetitive use of certain teaching strategies, such as text reading.

Based on this summarized scenario, we can see the inefficiency of teacher professionalization in relation to its social purposes. The effects of this are felt in the locus of teachers' practice – the school, from which other denunciations originate. Since the construction of the philosophical-political foundations of the Republican school – the model that serves as the basis for our country's contemporary education project – the social role of the school is discussed. Today, it seems that the school suffers from inadequacy to the historical context in which it is situated. As Candau (2000) argues, the school needs to be reinvented, as the K-12 Republican school's permanent universalization movement has changed the context of pedagogical work, teaching, the role of teachers and, therefore, teachers' work conditions. The school and teacher training are in question.

Facing the Gordian knot between teacher training and school is still necessary and urgent. In Gatti's words (2013, p. 64), "[...] a true revolution in educational structures and curriculums is necessary".

In order to understand the teacher training-teacher work nexus, and to indicate possible adjustments, teacher trainers are essential, as they realize the materialization of curriculum proposals in contact with future K-12 education teachers. What have teacher trainers been doing to teach about teaching? The investigation of practices of teacher trainers provides traces of the professional knowledge – teaching knowledge – forged in teachers under training, which manifest in the school.

The epistemic focus on teachers' professional knowledge provides a double benefit: to reflect on what is necessary to know to be a teacher by looking at the needs of teaching contexts – an epistemology of practice, meeting its real demands; and, no less importantly, to contribute to the valuing of teaching, by recognizing the professional knowledge of these social actors who differ from others in that they teach something to somebody (Roldão, 2007). Therefore, it offers elements for understanding the teaching profession itself and promotes the permanent (re) construction of a theory of teaching – the domain of didactics as a field.

In this perspective, the present account refers to a study conducted with teacher trainers who are considered practice references by their students, in which we sought to understand how the ethos of the investigated professors is configured. The object *teaching ethos of reference teacher trainers* is a research bet under construction in the overlap between the fields of Didactics and Teacher Training, with a view to presenting contributions to the scenario described earlier and to motivate further reflection on how to rearrange it. The object has also been the focus of two studies already conducted.

Reference Professor should be understood as the teacher trainer who, due to his pedagogical action, to what he does in the classroom and to his teaching personality, acquires, in the eye of teachers under training, a differentiated status in relation to his teacher trainers peers in terms of quality – the archetype of practice to teachers under training. Therefore, he forges professional knowledge in teachers under training – teaching knowledge originated in practice.

Teaching ethos should be understood as each teacher's singularity, the result of his personal and professional contribution: "[...] a personal character; an individual's relatively constant pattern of moral, affective, behavioral and intellectual dispositions" (Houaiss; Villar, 2009). In this sense, teaching ethos would be a teacher's professional personality, an amalgam of teachers' explicit professional teaching knowledge, as well as their tacit knowledge, comprehending intellectual, moral, affective and behavioral aspects.

This article proposes to describe and analyze results of the study with regard to the subjects' personal and professional training trajectories, as well as their didactic conceptions and practices, as manifested through their visions and through the observation of classes they gave. We thus outline the teaching ethos of reference teachers.

Theoretical-Methodological Path

This was a theoretical-empirical qualitative study that sought to understand the teaching ethos of teacher trainers identified by their students as practice reference teachers, by means of interviews and observation of their classes. The study's subjects and field were the teacher trainers for the pedagogy licensure program at a public university situated in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

This article refers to the second stage of an integrated study. On the first stage, 17 teachers were identified by their students as practice references, and we analyzed these students' visions about the practices of their reference trainers. In the study reported here, which was conducted in the same institution and with trainers for the same program, we selected three of the seventeen teachers based on strictly defined methodological criteria, and these teachers became the subjects of the new stage. Data were articulated with the results of the study's first stage. We observed a total of 10 classes (approximately 33 hours of observation) during the academic semester. The interview script was organized in two axes: one that was common to all interviewees and another that was specific to each. The common axis was subdivided in two: one comprising questions about the personal and professional trajectories of the investigated professors; the other, questions about their knowledge and practice, their vision about what they did and how they did it in their courses. The specific axis comprised questions that emerged from the observations conducted, which concern the classes of the reference teachers – how they perform the mediation with their students, as well as their perceptions about this mediation. Therefore, each interview script had its specific axis with a variable number of questions.

This new stage was conducted with the general goal of understanding how the teaching ethos of the reference professors investigated is configured, and, more specifically: a) analyzing influences on the professional constitution of the reference teacher trainer investigated; b) mapping the emphases of explicit and/or tacit teaching knowledge present in the teaching ethos of the investigated reference teacher trainer; and c) analyzing the explicit and/or tacit knowledge mobilized in the teaching practice of reference teacher trainers. To achieve these goals, the perceptions of the subjects about their own personal and professional trajectories proved a powerful strategy, as what is manifested in their accounts and practices outlines the explicit aspect of teaching knowledge, while their formative experiences provide a draft portrait of tacit knowledge, giving clues about the foundations underpinning their knowledge and practices. And the observation of the teachers' pedagogical action, combined with their visions of their own didactic conceptions and practices, outline cartography of the subjects' teaching practice.

The study privileged a dialogue with theorizations about teaching knowledge, which have Shulman (2005), Tardif (2014) and Gauthier (1998) as exponents, as well as Polanyi's (2010) study about the tacit di-

mension inherent to all human knowledge, a valid bet for a glance over the teaching ethos of reference trainers.

Professional foundation knowledge that is learned in the relationship between reference teachers and their students transcends knowledge susceptible of formalization. And the study concerning the *reference teachers* construct sought, in its two stages, to face the challenge of understanding the relationship between those who are learning to teach and the explicit and tacit knowledge in circulation in teaching training environments. Evidence has confirmed the potency of this epistemological glance, and Polanyi and his theorizations are an initial possibility of dialogue.

We must highlight that the data analysis did not correspond to any codification. Initially, just like in the initial stage of the investigation, we planned to thoroughly analyze the content (Bardin, 2006), respecting the rigor discussed by the author, based on the stages she suggests. However, the empirical material came with shades that were both subtle and valuable to the object under discussion, the result of narratives rich in details, in which the frame of meanings might induce the discarding of some of them. Therefore, in order to suit the construct, we thoroughly described the data that the empirical material showed, in which the original meaning, a primary and valuable source, can express itself to any reader. This was a handcrafted, rigorous analysis, in which we highlighted recurrences and disjunctions “[...] without ever losing the holistic vision of the phenomena of interest” (Fernandes, 2015, p. 615). In the present report, we only highlighted a few accounts, which were suitable to the analyses evidenced.

Professional Ethos of Reference Teachers

Personal and Professional Trajectory

We do not disclose the real names of the professors investigated, who are identified here as Rubem, Célia and Mariah. By looking at data concerning the teachers’ trajectories, given the experiences they narrated, we can clearly see the presence of some people and their practices influencing choices and developing their teaching ethos. For Nóvoa (1997, p. 9), “[...] today we know that it is not possible to separate the personal I from the professional I, particularly in a profession strongly impregnated with values and ideals and very demanding from the viewpoint of personal commitment and human relationship”. Therefore, it may sound obvious at first to say that experiences forge identities, however, when it comes to teacher training, unveiling the faces of teachers’ personal and professional trajectories is a necessity in order to understand the teaching profession itself.

I had this teacher, Evair Coelho. He would never stand up. I thought: “chances are this class will be monotonous!” It was after lunch, ‘we’re gonna sleep here... He’s just sitting...’ Then he’d start. He taught Nietzsche... But his class was magic because he wouldn’t give us a min-

ute's rest; because he'd give examples... "Also, such and such *Escola de Samba*..." And cinema... He had an impressive general knowledge! And he spoke of things you'd be like 's***, it makes sense!' So, philosophy has to do with life! And that really marked me! "Then I have to watch a lot of films... as many theater plays as I can... To be open to all information..." I have to take these bridges to students, don't I...? I guess a teacher... I don't know... In my area, at least... But I believe that in others... He can't teach a lesson for 5 minutes without giving at least one concrete example... Otherwise, he'll get lost there... (Interviewee Rubem, 2015).

The three teachers highlighted positive experiences with their trainers and that those experiences are present in their professional ethos. This fact is revealing of the potency of the case we make in this study, i.e., that teaching marks are built in the contact between future teachers and reference teachers, and they manifest themselves in future practice. Hence the relevance of investigating the *Reference Professor* representation in the context of discussions about teacher training.

Also present in data is the relationship that subjects reported to have had with teaching since very early. Either through the contact with teachers in the family; or because of a whole K-12 education in a teacher training school, or due to a lay teaching practice in religious spaces or because they recognize in the practice of teachers who taught them quality teaching archetypes.

And my whole elementary education, since I started in school, I already started at the Instituto de Educação de Niterói... Which is that teacher training school, the oldest teacher training school in Latin America, right? [...] So, the fact of having had this elementary education in the old middle school, the old *escola normal*, within an institution that was then considered a reference, I guess it gave me much more of a boost to have this self-assurance about what I would like to be (Interviewee Célia, 2015).

That's what excited me! That they'd put subject and life together. There and then... All of them! Gertz would give the street market example, the other gave... It was three or four... But they marked me deeply... (Interviewee Rubem, 2015).

Lodi (2010, p. 56), when investigating life stories of teacher trainers, remarks that "[...] the different types of knowledge acquired, whether personal experience-related, relational, social, or pedagogical, provide the teacher with a certain 'recipe' that usually turns into the basis for his practice". This is what research on teaching knowledge aims to discuss, i.e., what types of knowledge constitute the teaching professional, and from what sources they emerge. Data concerning the trajectories of Rubem, Célia and Mariah allow us to see the extent to which their pre-teaching experiences are present today in their teaching ethos. And also, that they value those experiences, and do not reproduce them, but, rather, make them dialogue: experience-based knowledge – knowledge forged in experiences as a teacher (Tardif, 2014); and knowledge from pedagogical tradition – a representation of school, teacher and classroom which was determined prior to any teacher education course and resides in the recess of our consciousness (Gauthier, 1998) –, with demands in contexts of practice.

When I began to teach there, I was quite traditional, I'd give tests... But then I began to see, as I moved from the K-12 cycle to grades more, I mean, grades further ahead, that it was strange to teach like that. And, then, I wanted to study how I could help my students. First, I began to invent things building on practice I had already experienced as a student, both in [the discipline of] teaching practice, but particularly at CAp. So, I made a 'poetry clothes-line' over the corridors – the principal didn't quite love it, but I did it anyway. The history class participated, the geography class participated, because we were in wing 3, the humanities one; letters participated, of course. And we put the line in every classroom, with little poetry bags; each of us provided something, so, someone's father was a baker and provided the bags; I had a mimeograph machine, and I did it. I made copies of students' poems, then we held a big fair. Another activity I did was a Christmas play by Vinicius de Moraes. [...] I took all that from my head. And I think the experiences I had, certainly. [...] So I think if I am what I am, it comes from a memory... [it is the product of this whole trajectory...] Yes (Interviewee Mariah, 2015).

Data allow affirming that biographic marks delineated the personal and professional personality of the professors investigated. According to Polanyi (2010, p. 9), "[...] it is impossible to account for the nature and justification of knowledge through a series of strictly explicit operations, without referring to deeper compromises". Therefore, what presents itself explicitly has its tacit foundation. When it comes to teaching, what is experienced as tacit education marks the professional who presents himself explicitly, even though he cannot say or explicate the foundation of his knowledge. Certainly, and we so argue here, what teachers under training acquire as professional knowledge in their contact with teacher trainers becomes knowledge about teaching, since this contact is part of their personal and professional trajectory. Still, in the affective relational contact with reference professors, those who stand out from their peers and are therefore considered practice archetypes by their students forge, in a deeper way, these students' teaching ethos. Below is an excerpt of Rubem's account which reinforces the thesis developed here:

Paulo Freire... You get Paulo Freire's DNA just right when you hear that experience that his mother educates him, teaches him to read and write with sticks on the sand. He, before starting in school, he was already literate, informally... He's going to be one of the icons of pedagogy. Then he goes to school and on his first school day, and he goes up to his mom and says 'mom, I thought my friends from our street would come to school too... What about Manuel, João...' 'No, son, they are poor, poorer than us. They have to work to help their mothers, they can't go to school'. Couldn't it be that that marked Paulo Freire? He later loses his father and leaves school. Stays off for three years. When he's back, he's back in a class with kids younger than him, he's the big guy in the class. Here's the oppressed, the excluded... All this he... I'm not saying that biography explains it. But biography gives consistence to one's construction (Interviewee Rubem, 2015).

The Classes: conceptions and practices

Every teaching action is founded on a method, whether the teacher is aware of it or not, whether he acts deliberately in function of it or

not. In this respect, Pimenta and Anastasiou (2010) say that teaching requires mastering the teaching method, just as scientific research requires methods specific to the correlate areas of knowledge, as these have their own inner logic and determinants, concepts, laws and principles, its historicity and process of production. What does that method consist of? At what level does its mastery occur? The authors argue that

With regard to the *method* of teaching and causing learning, we can say that it depends, initially, on the teacher's view of science, knowledge and school knowledge. If the teacher views the curriculum as a sum of disciplines disposed side by side or like a grid – as it is commonly named – and takes the discipline he teaches as an end in itself, he will adopt a method of knowledge transmission and reproduction. In this vision of science, knowledge is taken as neutral, decontextualized, an end in itself, separated from its production process, definite and true (Pimenta; Anastasiou, 2010, p. 195).

Therefore, investigating the classes of reference professors is revealing of the logic inherent in their teaching methods, their visions of science, knowledge and skills. The classes present indications of their conceptions through their practice.

In Rubem's classes – he teaches a discipline called Social Imagery and Education –, debates about the biographies and works of authors related to the discipline stand out, like an introduction to these authors' theories. He does so with a view to instigating students' interest in going further into topics and facilitating their future efforts, and he makes intensive use of narratives that combine personal and professional experiences, accounts and stories, in an enticing rhetoric with a provoking spirit.

Because we ended up with two parameters, and that's not only in the education school, it's a general thing. The scientist parameter, which guides these technical norms, and the Marxist parameter [...] Now I don't mean to criticize Marxism in itself, because there's a lot of things I learned from Marxism that I find important... But when you analyze someone in terms of social class, in terms of historical materialism, of dialectics, the human, the biographic disappears. Because that narrative aspect disappears. Because narrative is really connected to that experience of the human. Everything I just told you, about this manifestation, this expression [of mine] as an educator, you probably realized it's marked with family blood, with experience... And you get to academic work... 'So, starting from his ideas, such and such a concept...' And you don't even know who the guy was (Interviewee Rubem, 2015).

What it seems to me: his expositions explicate key concepts for an initial understanding of the authors studied. A sort of theoretical earthwork; an immersion in previous knowledge without which understanding the theories of the authors studied would be more difficult. In all classes observed, this method was evident (Notes from Rubem's Field Notebook, Apr. 27, 2015).

In Mariah's classes, what stands out is the theoretical-reflective dialogue she establishes with students based on clinical cases. In her

work as a psycho-pedagogical therapist, she catalogs her clients' clinical cases, their complaints and therapeutic approaches. She presents them and dialogues with students about the pedagogical perceptions they can have on the subject, and thus mobilizes the content of the discipline (i.e., Psycho-Pedagogy and Education), expanding students' perceptions. Students' response to this strategy is impressive.

Sometimes I remember things I experienced as a student, and then I tell them. So, I think being able to tell my students things I remember – and I don't prepare that, they'll come repeatedly. [...] The clinical cases I bring them, they are always from at least 10 years earlier, normally from the social practice I have, and I still have it, and I bring it so they can analyze the topic I'm giving, of the drawing the child made at the time of diagnosis. I'm not gonna ask them the diagnosis, I'm gonna ask 'what do you, as a pedagogue, see in that drawing?', then I show the complaint. If he [the student] got the evolution of the drawing right, which he learned in some discipline, he'll say: well, the drawing is in a three-dimension framing, she uses colors, and so on... 'But what do you see? Is that what you see?' I put it on the board and show the complaint. And then, they can see what measures can be taken or even where the school's, the teacher's mistake is... So, I use that a lot, in any discipline. Psychology of development, psychology of learning, psycho-pedagogy, psychoanalysis in education... And even in my research group, I bring a lot of cases I've had the privilege to have in my hands, and not necessarily solved them. Many went wrong, but I'll bring it so they can think about it based on the place they are in. Never starting from a clinical perspective. So they can learn to have an applicability of psycho-pedagogy in the classroom. 'What if I have one student who does this? What if I have a group of students who do that, how am I going to deal with it?' This I always seek to approach: how is this going to be handled by the teacher in the classroom. i it can be handled at all? Some things can't be handled, others can... (Interviewee Mariah, 2015).

She continues using, as a didactic strategy, events of her professional history. She narrates clinical and/or school cases, and the appropriate psycho-pedagogical approaches. At these times, the class shows a stronger connection with the teacher (Notes from Mariah's Field Notebook, Mar. 30, 2015).

As for Célia's classes, what stands out is the dialogue she establishes with students based on Socratic maieutics and the repetition of information in a language that is increasingly accessible. Like in Rubem's classes, debate is the main discourse strategy mobilized by the professor investigated in relation to the teaching-learning with her students, based on what she denominates participatory exposition. The teacher approaches the themes of her discipline – Curriculum – through texts she produces, denoting enthusiasm and pleasure about what she does in the meetings with students.

Yes... Always, in my teaching practice, on the first day, I plan the course together with the students, you know? So, I make it very clear to them 'look, these things I can't negotiate with you: I can't negotiate the name of the discipline, I can't negotiate the number of hours, I can't negotiate the credit system, I can't negotiate the syllabus. But from then on, let's do this!'. And then I ask them, 'what do you think should be the purpose

of the discipline?' So, each year, each semester, I plan it... The first day is dedicated to that discursive planning with students. For instance... the program... I'll discuss the goals of the course with them... I discuss, based on a syllabus, what the program should be like. I'll say: "Of course I have a proposal, but I want to hear it from you". For instance, in this last class, a student made a suggestion I couldn't find a way to add. I spent the whole morning trying to fit the program to what she had requested, which was a discussion about the planning of a distance learning curriculum. I never taught that. It's going to be included this year, because it was the students' suggestion. So, that is a practice I've had since the beginning of my career. And I don't see how it could be otherwise. I could never understand it. Maybe it's because I'm a Libra (laughter). I trust the other, I have to listen, you know? But, to me, that's... A pedagogical premise. Hell, the student has to be heard! (Interviewee Célia, 2015).

She works in detail on the content in question. She asks the students' help to read a short text she wrote to serve as an example about what she is teaching: the discursive features of a 'summary' text. She does so through intensive dialogue, and the exchange she establishes with students is impressive (Notes from Célia's Field Notebook, Apr. 08, 2015).

It is worth highlighting the representational nature of the didactic means used by the investigated trainers. They mobilize strategies designed with a view to becoming bridges between the teacher's understanding and the understanding desired by students. Examples, narratives, cases, demonstrations – options that are methodologically founded on the conceptions presented by the subjects and articulated to benefit students' learning. Shulman (2005) points out that the experienced teachers he investigated conducted their teaching by providing examples and building powerful analogies related to the content that was being taught. To him, this belongs in the sphere of *pedagogical content knowledge* of the teacher in action, "[...] their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 2005, p. 11), a special amalgam of content and knowledge that is uniquely the province of teachers. Based on what the author discusses, we can see the expertise of the professors investigated in conducting their courses and classes as they manifest the pedagogical knowledge contained in their professional knowledge bases.

I think I can bring... I no longer teach for K-12 level... I can talk, well, about my experience: whether in teaching or as a mother. So, I use a lot the examples of my daughters, yes; of my dog, the cute little monster; because I think that brings us closer, to real life, situations... [...] I think the teacher's experience, and in my case, in the disciplines I can also bring clinical experiences, it... How can I put it... It gives concreteness to a series of concepts that would remain just as concepts (Interviewee Mariah, 2015).

A student makes an observation about the class topic; the teacher praises his remark, showing elements in the student's remark that are interesting; narratives, examples and experiences are presented; he eventually gets to a displacement of meaning of the student's observation towards the class content. In other words, the teacher created a discourse trajectory that valued the construction of knowledge by the student, and expanded it by offering a more appropriate meaning to the student's ob-

servation about the class topic with the help of narratives (Notes from Rubem's Field Notebook, Mar. 16, 2015).

The assessment processes conducted by the professors investigated show attempts to change the paradigms in effect. Not only in the conceptions presented in their accounts, but also in the strategies in which those conceptions are manifested. Self-evaluations and games, and final assignments with no demands concerning form and content, are evaluating steps of teacher trainers who believe there are different possibilities than the historically consolidated ones. Possibilities which attract students' attention, to the point of contributing to the reference professor nomination.

Knowledge and Practice: the tacit in question

Among data, we should still underline expressions that could be seen as skills revealed by the professors, related to their own perceptions of their knowledge and practice – an analysis about how the reference professors perceive their own professional teaching profile in the relationship they establish with their students; and an analysis-synthesis of their pedagogical skillfulness, which also outlines their teaching ethos. These are necessary steps, given what we try to show through this investigation, namely to evidence, based on perceptions (whether of professors, students or the researcher), faces of the teaching ethos of these reference professors by outlining the tacit dimension that imposes itself, in terms of teaching learning, as professional contents.

According to Polanyi (2010), even when the cognizing subject is unable to formalize what he learned, or does not explicitly understand the learning that occurred, or the sources of his tacit knowledge, learning does occur deriving from a process denominated *internalization*, a process of signification by identification. For Polanyi (2010, p. 30), “[...] to internalize is to identify oneself with the teaching in question”. In a relationship oriented by values, reference professors tacitly provide attitudinal contents; students tacitly internalize them.

Data allowed us to infer the reference professors' values that are connected to their pedagogical actions by means of their perceptions of themselves and their practice; of the affective-relational dimension established in view of desirable learning; and their pedagogical skillfulness, which they tacitly provide to students. The constitution of their ethos in predominantly subjective aspects. Rubem indicated a few faces of his teaching ethos:

You mean, the way I see myself? [Yes!] It's difficult... Because... It's difficult to talk about oneself, isn't it...? But I see myself with a role, a mission. This I got, to a good extent, from my religious tradition, of bringing to people new ways of seeing life. With teaching, new ways of educating, of doing school... A philosophy of 'debanalizing' the banal... Debanalizing everything we saw and still see about education. I think I see myself like this, almost like a missionary, a missionary of libertarian thinking in education (Interviewee Rubem, 2015).

Rubem says he is a missionary. How to understand what he said? From a certain point of view, if we remove it from its context, it may sound like a disservice to teacher professionalization. Efforts have long been made to undo the image of teaching as a mission, and, in the present, to raise it from the status of a craft to that of a profession, the passage between both being not in the least linear, with coexisting perceptions about it (Tardif; Lessard; Lahaye, 2013). Based on observations of his classes and his words, when he says he is a *missionary of libertarian thinking*, what Rubem advocates is the institution of a professionalism¹ politically founded on the destabilization of contingencies – the mission, in this case, would be a historical contingency. In other words, destabilizing historical permanencies related to a teaching profile that no longer fits in the present historical demands, not by an overcoming of its meaning, but, rather, by its resignification. As shown in his words, *to debanalize the banal, to bring new ways of seeing life*. How much can his words refer to a past teaching *modus operandi*? Perhaps, only as regards the keynote of perseverance, which surrounds the meaning of mission. The missionary is persevering, as is (or should be) the teacher. Freire (1996, p. 16-17) affirmed: “We should devote ourselves humbly but perseveringly to our profession in all its aspects: scientific formation, ethical rectitude, respect for others, coherence [...]”.

Célia’s account about her professional personality – and the classes observed ratify this – indicates that discussions about the contents under her responsibility are impregnated with political and ethical meanings. Therefore, in the training she offers her students, she does not limit herself to teaching disciplinary contents, and her teaching is not circumscribed to techniques, whether concerning assessments or the discipline domain dedicated to teacher training. In sum, Célia teaches the disciplinary content amidst ethical-political contents; and her teaching practice manifests that.

My behavior is in function of the other. That’s why ethics is fundamental. Because ethics is an intersubjective practice, you know? So, I’m extremely concerned with developing ethical questions, hence my being influenced by that in evaluation [she refers to one of her instruments to assess her students, i.e., self-evaluation], you know? That the student, that he is responsible for his own training in relation to the other (Interviewee Célia, 2015).

Mariah underlines the other face of her teaching ethos, from her perspective: being available to listen to students, and her listening is responsible, without judgment. Just as Freire (1996, p. 119) affirms that “Listening is obviously something that goes beyond one’s auditory capacity. Listening means permanent availability on the part of the subject who listens so as to be open to the other’s speech, gesture and differences”. Attentive, sensitive listening is an evident fact in the didactic practice of the three teachers.

I’m alert. I stop, and the first thing I look at is the eye. If the person looks down, that’s already a sign. I’ll go, ‘what’s that!’ I watch the movement the person is making, the hand, the foot, I’ve done this since always, not

because I'm a psychologist. I learned that this is important. This is also a language (Interviewee Mariah, 2015).

As to their own perceptions about their teaching ethos, the faces of their ethos, and by observing their practices, the professors indicated their professional teaching attributes. Beyond the picture that is susceptible of being reported here, they indicated passion and pleasure about what they do, as well as rigor, responsibility, perseverance, humanity, intellectual commitment, dedication, joviality, opportunism, attentive listening, enthusiasm in doing, and diligence to learn. These are attitudinal contents which are tacitly taught in the teaching practice of the reference professors investigated.

Data reveal evidence that the conceptions of the professors investigated go hand-in-hand with their practices, with a theoretical-methodological coherence in how they conceive and develop their courses, planning and evaluation. The presence of some key experiences in their identity trajectory was evidenced. We can infer that their actions are imbued with values forged with the *blood of experiences*.

If we consider, in line with Roldão (2007), that a more pedagogical and plural attitude towards teaching resides in causing someone to learn something, the data presented here confirm that the way these professors organize their discourse preserves the intentions of conscious causing-to-learn. And what they perform in terms of teaching about teaching, as they are teacher trainers, forges a professional knowledge foundation in future teachers – pedagogical action knowledge. Pedagogical action knowledge is understood by Gauthier (1998) as the teaching experience validated by scientific criteria, and tested through research conducted in classroom settings. Here, we shift the meaning presented by the author: what the trainer does in the classroom in didactic terms, although not being the focus of the trainer's intentional analysis (meta-class), will become pedagogical action knowledge to the teacher under training. Since, as Martins (apud André, 1995, p. 95) argues, “[...] what is experienced in practice is much stronger and longer-lasting than what is heard at the discourse level”.

According to Gauthier (1998), although teaching is a universal craft, we still know little about the phenomena inherent in it. The author reflects that knowledge of these elements of professional teaching knowledge is fundamental to allow teachers to exercise their craft more competently. Gauthier says that research on knowledge base, i.e., the foundation of teachers' professional knowledge, is an advance and “[...] can be interpreted like a series of stimuli for the teacher to recognize himself as a teacher, like a series of attempts to identify the constitutive elements of teacher professional identity and define the knowledge, skills and attitudes involved in the teaching practice” (Gauthier, 1998, p. 17-18).

It is worth, then, to highlight that our exposition does not mean to argue for a pedagogical action knowledge ‘applicable’ to any context. The meaning we propose about the formation of this knowledge con-

cerns the knowledge formed in the student, in his teaching singularity, his teaching ethos, forged in his didactic relationship with the reference teacher trainer, with what he is as a teaching personality and what he does. In reverencing these practices, the student adds to his pedagogical action knowledge the parameters he desires and values, and turns the result of this relationship into an archetype of practice. Our exercise, in this investigation, was to look into this knowledge and discuss it, as it is a type of knowledge that constitutes the teaching ethos of reference professors, based on theorization about the teaching knowledge base. It constitutes the ethos of the subjects investigated, as can be seen in the trajectory of each of them, and will constitute the teaching ethos of future teachers, based on the discussions conducted here.

Final Remarks

The theme of teaching needs to be explored in all its features, in order to meet the complex demands not only in the present context of teacher training at higher education level, but also the complex demands of K-12 education, of this other, historically situated school that is supposed to be outlined on new epistemological and political bases.

In recent years, education researchers have been making efforts to refine the theoretical instruments available to conduct investigations capable of tackling these new questions, whose complexity defies current paradigms.

Reflecting on teacher education is necessary as this education must not only enable the teacher to give classes, but also prepare him to always seek further knowledge, as well as other strategies and actions that can make him autonomous with regard to his pedagogical practice. Teacher education environments must allow a permanent reconfiguration of the knowledge built by teachers over their trajectories.

The results presented are meant to collaborate in elaborating a new theory of teaching in permanent (re)construction, a historical becoming, as we dedicate ourselves to investigate the teaching process as a complex phenomenon.

We hope our case for the existence of tacit learning in the relationship between the parties to the professionalization process, beyond *classic* contents, has been sustained. And the skills of reference professors are part of this encounter, as they foment meanings in students. In sum, data allow us to affirm that formative experiences forge teachers' teaching ethos, their professional identity. And understanding the formation of the teaching ethos of reference professors – those with a status of practice archetype for their students, and who will mark future teachers' practice – is another necessary path to understand teaching practice and collaborate to its professionalization.

Translated by Fernando Effori de Mello and Proofread by Ananyr Porto Fajardo

Received in October 18, 2016

Approved in May 23, 2017

Note

1 Professionalism, as proposed by Brzezinski (2002, p. 10), is a set of abilities and knowledge developed in the exercise of one's functions in a given historical moment.

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