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ARTIGO

CONTINUING TEACHER EDUCATION: EPISTEMOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES, AND FOCUS ON LEARNING

FORMAÇÃO CONTINUADA DE PROFESSORES: EPISTEMOLOGIAS, BOAS PRÁTICAS E FOCO NA APRENDIZAGEM

FORMACIÓN CONTINUA DE DOCENTES: EPISTEMOLOGÍAS, BUENAS PRÁCTICAS Y ENFOQUE EN EL APRENDIZAJE

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Abstract:
This article analyzes continuing teacher education in Brazil from an ontological, historiographical, and epistemological approach, with an emphasis on its impact on student learning. The research is guided by the question: what kind of teacher are we currently training, and what kind of teacher should we be training? Drawing on authors such as Ellen G. White, Francisco Imbernón, and Patrícia Albiere de Almeida, the study articulates conceptual, critical, and spiritual dimensions to discuss formative rationalities—classical, technical, practical, and critica—and proposes a new architecture for teacher education. The methodological approach is based on a systematic literature review and document analysis. It was found that, although there are efforts and policies aimed at teacher training, a gap still persists between the training offered and the actual improvement in student learning. The study's central proposal is to re-center the formative process on the student, understanding the teacher as an essential mediator whose training must be intentionally directed toward the transformation of the educational experience. Finally, it advocates for a comprehensive training model grounded in collaborative practices, critical foundations, and an ethical-pedagogical commitment.
Keywords: continuing teacher education; student learning; formative rationalities; epistemology of practice; redemptive education.
Resumo:
Este artigo analisa a formação continuada de professores no Brasil a partir de uma abordagem ontológica, historiográfica e epistemológica, com ênfase em seu impacto na aprendizagem dos alunos. A pesquisa parte da indagação: que tipo de professor temos formado e que tipo de professor deveríamos formar? Com base em autores como Ellen G. White, Francisco Imbernón e Patrícia Albiere de Almeida, o estudo articula dimensões conceituais, críticas e espirituais para discutir racionalidades formativas — clássica, técnica, prática e crítica —, e propõe uma nova arquitetura para a formação docente. O percurso metodológico baseia-se em revisão bibliográfica sistemática e análise documental. Constatou-se que, embora haja esforços e políticas voltadas à formação de professores, ainda persiste uma lacuna entre a formação ofertada e a melhoria efetiva da aprendizagem discente. A proposta central do estudo é recentrar o processo formativo no aluno, compreendendo o professor como mediador essencial, cuja

formação deve ser intencionalmente orientada para a transformação da experiência educativa. Por fim, defende-se um modelo formativo integral, ancorado em práticas colaborativas, fundamentação crítica e compromisso ético-pedagógico.
Palavras-chave: formação continuada de professores; aprendizagem do aluno; racionalidades formativas; epistemologia da prática; educação redentiva.
Resumen:
Este artículo analiza la formación continua de docentes en Brasil desde un enfoque ontológico, historiográfico y epistemológico, con énfasis en su impacto en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. La investigación parte de la pregunta: ¿qué tipo de profesor estamos formando y qué tipo de profesor deberíamos formar? Con base en autores como Ellen G. White, Francisco Imbernón y Patrícia Albiere de Almeida, el estudio articula dimensiones conceptuales, críticas y espirituales para discutir racionalidades formativas — clásica, técnica, práctica y crítica — y propone una nueva arquitectura para la formación docente. El recorrido metodológico se basa en una revisión bibliográfica sistemática y en el análisis documental. Se constató que, aunque existen esfuerzos y políticas orientadas a la formación docente, persiste una brecha entre la formación ofrecida y la mejora efectiva del aprendizaje del alumnado. La propuesta central del estudio es recentrar el proceso formativo en el estudiante, comprendiendo al docente como mediador esencial, cuya formación debe orientarse intencionalmente hacia la transformación de la experiencia educativa. Finalmente, se defiende un modelo formativo integral, basado en prácticas colaborativas, fundamentación crítica y un compromiso ético-pedagógico.
Palabras clave: formación continua de docentes; aprendizaje del estudiante; racionalidades formativas; epistemología de la práctica; educación redentora.

Introduction

In recent decades, teacher education in Brazil has been widely discussed, particularly concerning initial and continuing education, as well as public policies for professional teacher development. This growing interest stems from the understanding that the quality of basic education is directly linked to teachers' preparation and performance. However, despite several initiatives since the 1990s, the impact of these actions on pedagogical practice and student learning remains limited and, in many cases, fragmented.

Given this context, the central problem of this study can be summarized by the following question: what kind of teachers are we currently training in Brazil, and what kind should we be training, considering the student as the core of the educational process? To address this question, the study proposes an approach that goes beyond technical aspects, offering an ontological analysis of the teacher's being, historical construction, and the essential knowledge that underpins their practice.

From this perspective, the teacher is not a mere executor of curricula but a whole, autonomous subject endowed with identity, mission, and unique knowledge, capable of educating the student in their entirety. This view is grounded in the Whitian understanding of

education, which conceives the teacher as an "agent" with a redemptive mission—having Christ as the model and the integral restoration of the human being as the ultimate purpose.

This article aims to analyze teacher education through three axes—ontological, historiographical, and epistemological—in order to propose pathways for developing teachers who respond to the students' integral needs. The specific objectives are: (1) to analyze both teacher and student from the Whitian perspective; (2) to describe how teachers have been conceptualized over recent decades; (3) to examine the knowledge constructed around teacher education; and (4) to propose integrated, student-centered formative practices.

Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative approach, of a theoretical-analytical nature, with a bibliographic design. It is based on a critical reading of consolidated sources, such as studies by INEP and UNESCO, as well as authors such as Tardif (2013), Schön (2000), Zeichner (1993), Guskey (2020, 2021), Imbernón (2011, 2022), Almeida and Biajone (2007), among others.

Its originality lies in articulating three analytical dimensions: the ontological (based on the Whitian philosophy of the teacher's mission), the historiographical (teacher education in Brazil viewed through the lens of public policy), and the epistemological (teacher knowledge and formative rationalities).

The temporal scope focuses on the period beginning in the 1990s, emphasizing studies on both initial and continuing education, including successful practices such as communities of practice and teacher collaboration, as highlighted by Imbernón and Almeida and Biajone.

This methodology seeks to integrate critical analysis with practical proposals, providing theoretical and empirical support for reconstructing teacher education in alignment with students' needs and the broader educational mission of teaching.

An ontological view of who the teacher and the student are in whitian writings

Who is the teacher in essence? The answer to this question varies—and may even be antithetical—depending on the worldview adopted.

For Ellen G. White (2022), the teacher is a co-worker with God in the redemptive plan, understood as a spiritual agent and character builder whose mission is to guide students toward salvation. According to White (2022), education is always conceived through the lens of the

great conflict, understood as a real—and not merely figurative—cosmic drama that spans the entire universe and produces a concrete impact on daily practices and school praxis.

In Freire's (2021) perspective, the teacher is a historical subject engaged in liberating praxis, conceived as a dialogical, political, and unfinished being committed to social transformation. In Hannah Arendt, the notion of *natality* introduces the teacher's responsibility for the world: the teacher acts as a mediator between the old and the new, introducing renewal without severing the common legacy. For Libâneo (2006), the foundation lies in ethical mediation between knowledge and culture; thus, the teacher is an intellectual who shapes other subjects within challenging socioeducational contexts. In Nóvoa (1999), ontology centers on the continuous construction of identity, conceiving the teacher as a being in movement, articulating knowledge, contexts, and experiences. Finally, in Van Manen (1997), the foundation is lived experience and sensitive listening; the teacher is an interpreter of life itself, with pedagogical action rooted in phenomenology. Many other paradigms could be cited in this discussion.

For Ellen G. White, however, the teacher's mission is essentially redemptive, integrating intellectual development with moral and spiritual formation. According to White (2022), education and redemption are one and the same, since both aim at the restoration of human dignity. Teaching, therefore, is a spiritual act, and knowledge becomes a means of leading the student to salvation. True education, in this sense, is anchored in faith and divine revelation, demanding from teachers more than culture and skill—it requires communion, wisdom, and prayer (White, 2022).

The Whitian teacher is also a lifelong learner who seeks both spiritual and academic preparation. Their training extends beyond pedagogical methods to include mastery of content, lived faith, and a constant connection with God. This educator must serve as a spiritual reference—a person of prayer and discernment—committed to teaching with purpose and hope.

The following table (Table 1) presents the main aspects of the teacher's identity, mission, and development according to Ellen G. White's writings:

Table 1 – The teacher according to Ellen G. White

Aspect	**Conception According to Ellen G. White**	**Reference Works (EGW, White, 2022)**
Teacher's Identity	Representative of God, spiritual guide, and co-worker in the work of redemption.	p. 13.
Core Mission	To redeem the student, restore the divine image, and prepare them for eternity.	p. 13, 17.
Educational Task	To teach effectively, foster critical thinking, and lead students to Christ.	p. 73.

Aspect	**Conception According to Ellen G. White**	**Reference Works (EGW, White, 2022)**
Teacher Training	Continuous preparation through prayer, Bible study, and the practice of faith.	p. 73.
Continuous Development	Growth in wisdom, patience, and discernment.	p. 279, 281.
Spiritual Dimension	To reflect Christ in words, actions, and attitudes.	p. 17
Eschatological Reference	Engaged in the great controversy, using teaching as an instrument of salvation.	p. 13–14, 30.
Formation of the Student's Character	Co-laborer with the Holy Spirit in shaping Christian character.	p. 17.
Model to Be Followed	Christ, the Master of masters, is the ultimate example of humility and love.	p. 68.

Source: prepared by the authors.

The view of the student in the writings of Ellen G. White and in Adventist Pedagogy is firmly grounded in the pillars of creation, redemption, and restoration. The learner is regarded as a being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), endowed with dignity, rationality, and freedom, and called to reflect the divine character. Education, in this context, is the means by which that image is restored, fostering physical, mental, spiritual, and social development (White, 2022).

This conception is further expanded in Adventist Pedagogy, which emphasizes the uniqueness and inherent worth of every student as a redeemed being with an eternal purpose (Goicochea, 2024). Education must, therefore, awaken in each student a sense of mission—to reflect Christ and to live responsibly, both in this world and in view of eternity.

Spiritually, the student is an active agent in the plan of redemption, called to choose what is good, to develop character, and to cooperate with God in the great controversy (White, 2022). Intellectually, White values autonomous and critical thinking. The student should be an independent thinker, and intelligence—understood as a divine gift—must be educated for moral and practical purposes.

From a practical standpoint, engagement in manual and labor activities is an essential part of the formative process, integrating theory and practice (White, 2022). The student must learn to serve, embodying an education oriented toward life and toward others.

Moral freedom is also central. The student should not be controlled but rather guided to make responsible decisions. Adventist Pedagogy affirms that every learner is the protagonist of their own learning process, growing in autonomy, creativity, and spirituality (Goicochea, 2024).

This holistic view breaks down the dichotomies between the sacred and the secular, and between the spiritual and the academic, proposing a redemptive education that values all dimensions of human existence.

From this perspective, Table 2 below presents the Whitian view reflected in the book *Pedagogia Adventista* [*Adventist Pedagogy*].

Table 2 – The Student According to Ellen G. White and Adventist Pedagogy

Aspect	**Conception According to EGW and Adventist Pedagogy**	**References**
Student's Identity	Created in the image of God, endowed with dignity and the potential to reflect the divine character.	White, 2022; Goicochea, 2024, p. 21.
Spiritual Mission	Co-laborer in the plan of redemption, called to mirror Christ and to develop character.	White, 2022.
Intellectual Development	An autonomous thinker, possessing logical reasoning, practical wisdom, and critical discernment.	White, 2022.
Autonomy and Freedom	Endowed with moral freedom and capable of making responsible decisions.	White, 2022; Goicochea, 2024, p. 23.
Practical and Technical Dimension	Engaged in manual and labor activities, integrating study with service.	White, 2022.
Active Role in Learning	An active, creative subject, responsible for their own growth.	Goicochea, 2024, p. 22-23.
Restoration of the Image of God	Education aims to restore the divine image within the learner.	White, 2022; Goicochea, 2024, p. 22.
Relationship with Others	Learns to serve and to love, cultivating empathy and Christian altruism.	White, 2022; Goicochea, 2024, p. 21.

Source: prepared by the authors.

Having conducted this specific analysis of Whitian thought—without disregarding the plurality of other existing ontologies—the discussion now shifts to the historiographical aspect of teacher education in Brazil.

A historiographical perspective on continuing teacher education in Brazil

The development of continuing teacher education in Brazil has been the subject of numerous studies, particularly those focused on the *state of the art* of scientific production in the field. Romanowski (2013) presents one of the most comprehensive reviews of trends in teacher education since 1971. Although not encompassing the entirety of existing research, the author seeks to provide a broad and critical overview of the evolution of studies in this area.

Among the central works analyzed in this study, three publications by INEP stand out: André (2002), Brzezinski (2006), and Brzezinski (2014). These studies cover significant periods between 1990 and 2010 and offer a detailed examination of academic production related to teacher education, with a particular focus on continuing education.

André (2002), in analyzing 284 dissertations and theses defended between 1990 and 1998, identified a predominance of studies focused on initial teacher education (76%), while continuing education accounted for 14.8% and teacher identity and professionalization for 9.2%. In academic journals, however, the distribution was more balanced, with continuing education representing 26% of the articles, addressing topics such as teaching practice, concepts of teacher education, use of technology, higher education, and public policy.

Within ANPEd's *Teacher Education* Working Group, André (2002) highlighted that 21.4% of the papers dealt with continuing education. These findings indicate a growing concern with the topic, even though its presence remains less prominent than that of initial education. The analyses also reveal that continuing education research tends to focus on the description of programs, in-service practices, and pedagogical issues, often without robust evaluations of their impact on student learning.

Building on this line of research, Brzezinski (2006) analyzed 742 works (1997–2002), classifying them into seven categories. The most prevalent was *Teaching Work* (36%), followed by *Initial Education* (22%) and *Continuing Education* (15%). Studies on continuing education were further divided into subcategories such as experience reports, field research, and evaluative studies.

Continuing the mapping, Brzezinski (2014) analyzed the period from 2003 to 2010. In the first phase (2003–2007), of the 1,167 theses and dissertations identified, 574 were analyzed in detail, with continuing education representing 14% of the studies. In the second phase (2008–2010), of the 1,947 studies initially identified, only 200 were analyzed in depth, and continuing education appeared in just 12% of them—revealing the low level of interest in this topic at the graduate level.

These three studies reveal not only the evolution of academic production but also persistent gaps and challenges. Despite governmental efforts and the expansion of training programs, there remains a lack of studies that effectively correlate continuing education with measurable improvements in student learning.

Moreover, a more recent study analyzed in this research is *Professores do Brasil: novos cenários de formação* by Gatti *et al.* (2019). This work reaffirms the persistence of challenges in both initial and continuing teacher education and points to the need for a more effective articulation between theory and practice, particularly regarding classroom teaching performance.

Public policies for continuing teacher education

One of the major obstacles faced by public policies for continuing teacher education is the lack of coordination between national and local levels, which leads to discontinuity and difficulty in adapting to school realities. An example of this is the revocation of key regulations, such as the 2015 resolution replaced in 2019, which created instability in training planning (Gatti *et al.*, 2019).

In view of the fragmentation and the discrepancies identified between training programs and the needs of basic education, the federal government promoted an institutional restructuring. Through Law No. 11.502/2007 and Decree No. 6.316/2007, CAPES became responsible for coordinating the national teacher education system. According to Gatti, Barreto, and André (2011), CAPES was tasked with fostering, planning, and monitoring both initial and continuing education initiatives in collaboration with federal entities and higher education institutions, as well as overseeing teacher education programs and promoting studies on training practices.

In 2009, the National Policy for Teacher Education was established, introducing the National Teacher Education Plan for Basic Education and the creation of State Support Forums. The National Network for Continuing Education, established in 2003, was expanded to include programs such as Pró-Letramento, Gestar II, and the Specialization in Early Childhood Education (Gatti; Barreto; André, 2011).

The Pró-Letramento program aims to improve the training of teachers working in the early years of elementary education in reading, writing, and mathematics through blended learning courses. Studies show that although it has led to changes in teaching practice, the outcomes are not always consistent with participants' discourse, and there is a lack of evidence proving its impact on student learning (Gatti; Barreto; André, 2011).

The Gestar II program, designed for Portuguese and mathematics teachers in the later years of elementary education, has a workload of 300 hours. Some studies indicate progress in pedagogical planning, particularly in mathematics, but also identify weaknesses in the treatment of Portuguese language teaching. As in the previous case, no studies have confirmed a direct impact on student learning outcomes.

The ProInfantil program offers secondary-level distance education for early childhood teachers without specific qualifications. By 2010, the network's programs had served more than 600,000 teachers, although Gatti, Barreto and André (2011) warn of the lack of monitoring and consolidated data on outcomes.

The Open University of Brazil (UAB) stands out as a mechanism for expanding access to both initial and continuing education. However, studies indicate that distance education programs still face challenges in ensuring the expected quality of training (Gatti, 2021). The UAB offers specialization, professional development, and extension courses, emphasizing diversity-related topics. Despite its reach, training focused on specific curricular areas remains limited.

Evaluations conducted with teachers highlight challenges such as the lack of time to participate in training programs, which often take place at night or on weekends, generating resistance. Other obstacles include insufficient initial training, high teacher turnover, difficulty in changing pedagogical practices, and the lack of follow-up in continuing education initiatives (Gatti; Barreto; André, 2011).

Although there have been efforts to establish links between continuing education and student learning, as indicated by Brzezinski (2006) and André (2015), research proving such a connection remains scarce. The current scenario underscores the need to review training policies to promote more effective and sustainable actions.

Initial teacher education and its complexities

To fully understand continuing education, it is essential to consider the weaknesses of initial teacher education, which often need to be "corrected" or supplemented throughout a teacher's career. Research indicates that this stage still presents deep structural shortcomings (Romanowski, 2013).

Gatti *et al.* (2019) highlight the socioeconomic profile of teacher education graduates: the majority come from low-income backgrounds, have parents with limited education, attended public schools, and work while studying. Moreover, fewer than half are within the ideal age range (18–24 years). This reveals additional challenges for teacher education, particularly concerning student retention and the overall quality of the academic experience.

Previous studies point to multiple issues within teacher education programs, such as fragmented curricula, the absence of a national policy for teacher preparation, the insufficient qualification of instructors, and the unregulated expansion of distance-learning programs. Supervised internships—an essential stage for linking theory and practice—are frequently disjointed and reduced to mere observation.

Another critical issue is the emphasis of public policies on the regularization of unqualified teachers, rather than on solid investments in initial education (Gatti *et al.*, 2019).

Castro and Amorim (2015) argue that the priority should be to correct the deficiencies of initial training, not merely to compensate for them through continuing education initiatives.

Efforts to reorient teacher education—such as the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the high school reform, and the National Teacher Education Base (BNC-Formação)—have faced criticism for prioritizing market-oriented interests and for reducing teacher education to minimal competencies, thereby undermining the historical and pedagogical conception of teaching (Freitas; Conceição, 2022; Nogueira; Borges, 2021).

Thus, it becomes evident that continuing education programs must address not only the gaps left by initial training but also the structural, cultural, and professional challenges that directly affect the quality of teaching. The following section discusses the professional knowledge required to overcome these challenges.

Teaching knowledge and formative rationalities: an epistemological analysis

This section seeks to analyze, from an epistemological perspective, the main forms of teaching knowledge and the formative rationalities that underpin continuing teacher education programs, highlighting their conceptual foundations, approaches, and implications for educational practice.

Continuing education: conceptions and meanings

When addressing continuing education, it is necessary to clarify the terminological, conceptual, and epistemological issues that permeate the field. Terms such as *training*, *improvement*, *updating*, and *professional development* reveal the conceptual fluidity present in both official documents and academic literature (Castro; Amorim, 2015). This terminological diversity is not neutral; it often reflects a technicist view of teacher education.

André (2002) emphasizes that since the 1990s, authors and studies have rejected the notion that continuing education should be reduced to isolated events such as short courses or workshops. Instead, it is understood as part of a continuous process of professional development, closely linked to initial teacher education. This perspective was reaffirmed by ANFOPE (Brzezinski, 2006), which conceives continuing education as a space for reflection on pedagogical practice and reinterpretation of acquired knowledge.

Imbernón (2011) broadens this view by emphasizing that continuing education must go beyond the acquisition of technical skills, promoting instead a critical and reflective attitude. Freire (2021) reinforces that all education involves ideological choices and conceptions of the human being and society. Therefore, understanding the meaning of continuing education requires examining its underlying intentions.

Gatti (2014, 2021) argues that, given the shortcomings of initial teacher education, in-service teachers must reframe their conceptions and practices. This process demands consideration of institutional, cultural, and human factors that shape formative experiences. Hence, continuing education should not be treated as an isolated process but rather as one that is integrated into the school context and responsive to the realities of teaching practice.

Formative models and educational rationalities

Several studies (Agi, 2012; Araújo; Araújo; Silva, 2015) identify four major models that structure teacher education practices: the classical-traditional, the technical, the practical, and the critical-emancipatory models.

The classical-traditional model, rooted in the ideas of Comenius, Pestalozzi, Herbart, and Durkheim, conceives the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and moral values. Education, in this perspective, is seen as a means of preserving social order and shaping obedient, disciplined individuals.

In the technical rationality, influenced by positivism and behaviorism (Skinner), the teacher is conceived as an executor of methods whose training prioritizes mastery of content and techniques (Freire, 2021). This conception separates theory from practice, treating teaching as a linear transmission of knowledge.

The practical rationality, in contrast, breaks with the dichotomy between thinking and doing, valuing reflection *in* and *on* action (Schön, 2000; Zeichner, 1993). The teacher is viewed as a professional who learns from experience and problematizes their own practice. Although this perspective advances beyond the technical view, it is also criticized for maintaining a certain political neutrality.

Finally, the critical-emancipatory rationality, influenced by Critical Theory (Freire (2021), Carr and Kemmis (1986), understands teacher education as a political-pedagogical process. The teacher is seen as a historical subject and transformative intellectual who acts toward the emancipation of students and social transformation (Diniz-Pereira, 2014). These models are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 – Conceptions of teacher education and formative paradigms

Conception	Paradigm	Foundational Authors	Reference Authors
Classical-Traditional	Christian Humanism, Functionalism	Comenius, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Durkheim	Tyler (1974)
Technical Rationality	Positivism, Liberal-Conservatism	B.F. Skinner, Ralph Tyler	Freire (2021)
Practical Rationality	Neotechnicism, Pragmatism	Schön, Dewey, Zeichner, Tardif	Carr e Kemmis (1986)
Critical Rationality	Critical Theory, Emancipatory	Freire, Habermas, Carr and Kemmis	Zeichner (1993), Libâneo (2006)

Source: prepared by the authors.

A reading of the table above reveals that, although distinct in their origins and foundations, formative conceptions intertwine with pedagogical rationalities that shape educational practices and teacher identity. Each paradigm offers an interpretive lens on the role of the teacher, the nature of knowledge, and the objectives of education, directly influencing both initial and continuing teacher education programs.

The following section deepens the critical analysis of these rationalities based on specialized literature. The purpose is to understand how these perspectives concretely affect teacher education and to identify the limits and possibilities inherent in each model. This in-depth examination is essential to refine the debate and to propose approaches that are more consistent with the formative mission to be developed. Accordingly, Table 4 is presented below:

Table 4 – Formative rationalities

Paradigm / Rationality	Representative Authors	Core Contributions	Implications for Teacher Education	Critiques and Limitations of the Paradigm According to Classical Thinkers
Classical–Traditional	Comenius, Herbart, Pestalozzi, Durkheim, Ralph Tyler	Emphasis on order, morality, systematic instruction, and the social function of schooling. Advocacy for universal education and rational curricular structuring.	Teacher as a transmitter of knowledge, moral agent, and reproducer of social values. Training focused on mastery of methods and content.	Criticized for its idealism, pedagogical authoritarianism, and social reproduction tendencies (Libâneo, 2006).
Technical Rationality	B. F. Skinner, Ralph Tyler	Teaching based on objectives, outcome control, and the technification of teaching practice. Planning and assessment as central pillars.	Training centered on the technical application of methods and objectives. Teacher as an executor of external programs and plans.	Criticized for reducing teaching to the mere application of techniques and for disregarding the human complexity of learning (Freire, 2021).

Practical Rationality	Donald Schön, J. Schwab, Stenhouse, Zeichner (fase inicial), Tardif, Alarcão, Pimenta	Emphasis on practice, reflection, and experiential knowledge. The teacher as a professional who reflects on action within real contexts.	Teacher as a researcher of their own practice. Training guided by situated reflection and learning through action.	Criticized for its difficulty in systematization and the risk of superficial reflection when lacking institutional support (Nóvoa, 1999).
Critical / Emancipatory Rationality	Carr & Kemmis, Paulo Freire, Habermas, Hooks, Giroux, Pérez Gómez	Education as a transformative social practice. Focus on critical consciousness, praxis, and the overcoming of social inequalities.	Education as a political-pedagogical process. Teacher as a historical subject and transformative intellectual.	Criticized for potential ideologization, implementation challenges in conservative systems, and dependence on political conditions (Nóvoa, 1999).

Source: prepared by the authors.

The systematization presented in the previous table enables a comparative view of the conceptual foundations underlying each form of rationality and their implications for teacher education. However, although relevant, such models operate predominantly within secular frameworks, often detached from a spiritual and redemptive understanding of the human being.

It is at this juncture that Ellen G. White's educational conception offers a distinctive contribution. Grounded in theological and philosophical principles, her proposal integrates the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of both teacher and student, advocating a holistic formation guided by eternal values.

Ellen G. white's vision: a theological-formative proposal

Based on the epistemologies previously discussed, a dialogue is proposed with the concept of teacher education found in Ellen G. White's writings. Her thought integrates spiritual, moral, intellectual, and practical dimensions, forming a comprehensive educational approach that transcends secular paradigms.

Para White (2022), the teacher is a co-worker with God in shaping the character of the student. The teacher's mission is redemptive, centered on the restoration of the divine image. Teacher preparation encompasses a life of prayer, biblical study, mastery of subject matter, and commitment to truth. Education is understood as a process that unites intellectual instruction with moral and spiritual formation. The following table (Table 5) summarizes the key aspects of teacher education from a Whitean perspective.

Table 5 – The concept of teacher according to Ellen G. White

Dimension	Characteristics	Reference
Mission	Educate for both present and eternal life; restore the image of God	(White, 2022)
Preparation	Biblical study, prayer, spiritual and academic development	
Development	Lifelong growth; openness to new light	
Curriculum	Integration of science, morality, spirituality, and manual labor	

Source: prepared by the authors.

In light of this, an analysis is proposed to identify the convergences and divergences between formative rationalities and Whitean thought. Table 6 presents this comparative synthesis:

Table 6 – Convergences and divergences between Ellen G. White and academic models

Thematic Axis	Academic Conceptions (Classical-Traditional / Technical / Practical / Critical)	Ellen G. White	Convergences and Divergences
Conception of Teacher	Classical-Traditional: moral educator, transmitter of knowledge and social values. Technical: executor of externally prescribed methods and procedures. Practical: reflective professional, critically analyzing their own actions and context. Critical: transformative intellectual and political agent.	Teacher as a spiritual guide, model of Christ's character, and co-worker with God in character formation.	Converges with the practical and critical paradigms by valuing teacher agency. Diverges from the technical (instrumentalization) and classical (reduction to moral and social functions) models.
Purpose of Education	Classical-Traditional: formation of moral citizens who adhere to prevailing social norms. Technical: efficiency and attainment of measurable outcomes. Practical: context-based professional and cultural development. Critical: emancipation and cultivation of critical awareness.	Restoration of God's image, holistic formation, and preparation for both present and eternal life.	Converges with the critical paradigm in the pursuit of transformation and with the classical in valuing morality. Diverges from all three by proposing a transcendent and eschatological purpose.
Role of Knowledge	Classical-Traditional: structured, universal, and normative knowledge. Technical: operationalized and fragmented content. Practical: experiential and reflective knowledge. Critical: situated, political, and problematizing knowledge.	Knowledge integrated with biblical revelation, practical and scientific understanding, aimed at redemption.	Converges with the classical paradigm in its appreciation for organized knowledge and with the practical in valuing contextualization. Diverges from all four paradigms by viewing knowledge as an instrument of salvation.
View of the Student	Classical-Traditional: passive subject to be disciplined and instructed. Technical: receiver of information and outcomes.	Human beings are created in God's image, endowed with moral freedom and a spiritual mission, and active in character formation.	Converges with the practical and critical paradigms in emphasizing learner agency. Diverges from the technical and classical models by seeing the

Thematic Axis	Academic Conceptions (Classical-Traditional / Technical / Practical / Critical)	Ellen G. White	Convergences and Divergences
	Practical: active learner within real contexts. Critical: historical subject and agent of social transformation.		learner as a divine co-worker rather than merely a social being.
Relationship with Society	Classical-Traditional: preservation of order and reproduction of social values. Technical: adaptation to productive and institutional systems. Critical: critique and transformation of unjust structures.	Education is a redemptive instrument for society through the regeneration of the individual.	Converges with the critical paradigm by seeking social change, but through spiritual rather than merely political transformation. Diverges from the classical and technical models by rejecting the maintenance of the *status quo*.
Curriculum and Practice	Classical-Traditional: encyclopedic and universal curriculum focused on formal content. Technical: content organized into measurable competencies. Practical: contextualized and flexible curriculum. Critical: problem-posing and socially engaged curriculum.	Balanced curriculum integrating sciences, the Bible, manual labor, and spiritual principles; practical, reflective, and morally oriented methodology.	Converges with the practical paradigm in valuing reflective practice; with the critical in addressing social aspects; and with the classical in including formal content. Diverges from all by integrating eternity and spirituality into the curriculum.
Teacher Autonomy	Classical-Traditional: limited autonomy, under the authority of the system and tradition. Technical: low autonomy, centered on the application of external methods. Practical: partial autonomy, oriented toward situated reflection. Critical: broad autonomy, involving political and curricular engagement.	High autonomy guided by spiritual discernment, faith, and moral responsibility.	Converges with the practical and critical paradigms in valuing autonomy and professional agency. Diverges from the technical and classical models by grounding freedom in dependence on the Holy Spirit and spiritual principles.

Source: prepared by the authors.

This educational proposal transcends the dichotomies between content and form, between technique and reflection, by integrating the transcendent dimension into pedagogical practice. Although not commonly included in academic debates, the Whitean perspective offers an alternative and profound worldview capable of enriching the discussion on teacher education in its entirety.

Teacher Education: Propositions and Articulations

Amid theories, paradigms, ideologies, and formative models stands the teacher—the protagonist of the educational process and, simultaneously, the target of ever-increasing

demands. In light of transformations in educational policies, such as Brazil's BNCC and the New Secondary Education framework (Gatti *et al.*, 2019), it is essential that teachers understand the assumptions underlying formative proposals and act with autonomy and awareness regarding their educational mission.

Despite the persistent challenges in establishing a broad and effective training policy, studies highlight promising experiences that point to viable pathways. Successful programs clearly recognize that the principles of formative coherence, the centrality of teaching practice, induction/mentorship, and outcomes monitoring are consistently emphasized in recent analyses, indicating that professional development must align contemporary contexts and demands without losing sight of pedagogical results (Gatti, 2023; 2021a; 2021b). Particularly noteworthy are the contributions of Imbernón (2011, 2022) and Almeida and Biajone (2007), who advocate for training grounded in context, collaboration, and teacher agency.

Good Pedagogical Practices

Imbernón (2022) criticizes the persistence of training models grounded in technical rationality, content transmission, and episodic approaches, despite the theoretical advancements of recent decades. Although many educators are aware of best practices, these are often not implemented. The author emphasizes that teachers must be protagonists of their own education, situated within a complex and dynamic context.

It is no longer acceptable to assign teachers a passive role. They are the ones who orchestrate educational processes and therefore require intellectual tools to interpret complex situations, as well as communal training that connects knowledge with social realities (Imbernón, 2011). Such training must be collaborative, taking into account the spaces, times, and agents that constitute the school community.

Despite the importance of continuing education, Imbernón (2011) reminds us that the full development of the teaching career also depends on structural conditions such as fair wages, career progression plans, a favorable institutional climate, and social recognition. Training, though essential, cannot by itself resolve the challenges of education.

Two central concepts underpin Imbernón's (2011, 2022) formative proposal: collaborative work and community of practice. The first seeks to overcome teacher isolation by fostering learning environments based on dialogue, listening, autonomy, and emotional engagement. The second value is collective learning grounded in shared experience and

reflection. In such communities, teachers determine their own learning interests based on their lived practices.

These communities connect through networks that enable exchange, innovation, and critical resistance to top-down policies. Connectivism, facilitated by ICTs, expands training possibilities, allowing teachers to build external learning networks that integrate people, institutions, content, and experiences (Imbernón 2011, 2022).

Contributions of Patrícia Albiere de Almeida

Almeida and Biajone (2007) and Gatti *et al.* (2019) advocates for teacher education that is closely linked to the school context and to professional autonomy. Instead of technicist and decontextualized models, she proposes collective and collaborative spaces for reflection, where teachers can reinterpret and give new meaning to their practices. Silva, Almeida, and Gatti (2016) further argue that teacher professionalization presupposes a body of professional knowledge that integrates theoretical and practical dimensions, mobilized in diverse teaching situations, requiring reflection, contextual adaptation, and autonomy. The construction of reference frameworks aims to address the absence of a clearly defined professional profile for teachers in Brazil, organizing a coherent body of foundational knowledge that elevates the debate beyond opinion-based discourse.

In an effort to disseminate successful practices, Gatti *et al.* (2019) present studies that function as a critical repository of pedagogical practices consolidated through recent research, highlighting didactic and collaborative arrangements commonly associated with improvements in teaching and learning processes.

This vision is also reflected in initiatives recognized by the Fundação Carlos Chagas—an institution where Almeida works and coordinates national awards—which portray schools as privileged spaces for teacher development. These initiatives foster dialogue between universities and schools, breaking hierarchical structures and strengthening learning communities.

In the book *Professores do Brasil: novos cenários de formação* (Gatti *et al*., 2019), of which Almeida is a co-author, the authors highlight initiatives such as that of the Federal University of São Carlos, which created investigative communities where teachers studied real problems from their daily practice. In this way, teacher education becomes situated, critical, and transformative.

Almeida and Biajone (2007) argue that constructing a repertoire of teaching knowledge—anchored in professional knowledge mobilized through practice—enables the creation of formative mechanisms that bring future teachers closer to the realities of their work. This approach overcomes both the notion of *craft without knowledge* and *knowledge without craft*. To that end, they advocate for the articulation between cultural, scientific, pedagogical, and disciplinary training and practical formation as the foundation for consolidating a *Theory of Teaching*.

Relations between Imbernón and Almeida

Both Imbernón (2022), Almeida and Biajone (2007) and Gatti *et al.* (2019) reject imposed forms of training, instead advocating for processes that are constructed from within schools. They value teaching practice as a source of knowledge, defend action research, and propose context-based teacher education. While Imbernón emphasizes the potential of *communities of practice* and collaborative networks, Almeida and Biajone (2007) and Gatti *et al.* (2019) focuses on the horizontal dialogue between universities and schools.

Both recognize that teacher education will only be effective if it is linked to real working conditions and professional recognition. Despite differences in emphasis, they share a common understanding of the teacher as an active, critical subject and an agent of transformation.

It can be concluded that the proposals of Almeida and Biajone (2007), Gatti *et al.* (2019) and Imbernón (2022) point toward viable pathways for meaningful continuing education—collaborative, contextualized, and politically and pedagogically grounded. These approaches break away from technicism and reaffirm the teacher's role as the protagonist in building a transformative education, paving the way for students to once again occupy the center of all pedagogical action.

Return to the student: the centrality of learning in continuing education

Amid various formative approaches—traditional, technical, reflective, and critical—, one central dimension cannot be overlooked: the student. Behind every model, curriculum guideline, and public policy, there must be a guiding question: *Is this training effectively contributing to student learning*?

Reaffirming the concepts proposed by authors such as Almeida and Biajone (2007), Gatti *et al.* (2019) and Imbernón (2022), it is argued that continuing education must be contextualized, collaborative, ethical, and guided by the student's right to learn. Although the

teacher is the starting point and the main agent of professional development, the ultimate goal lies in the students' learning—encompassing academic, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Figure 1 below visually synthesizes this formative principle:

Figure 1 – Training cycle focused on student learning



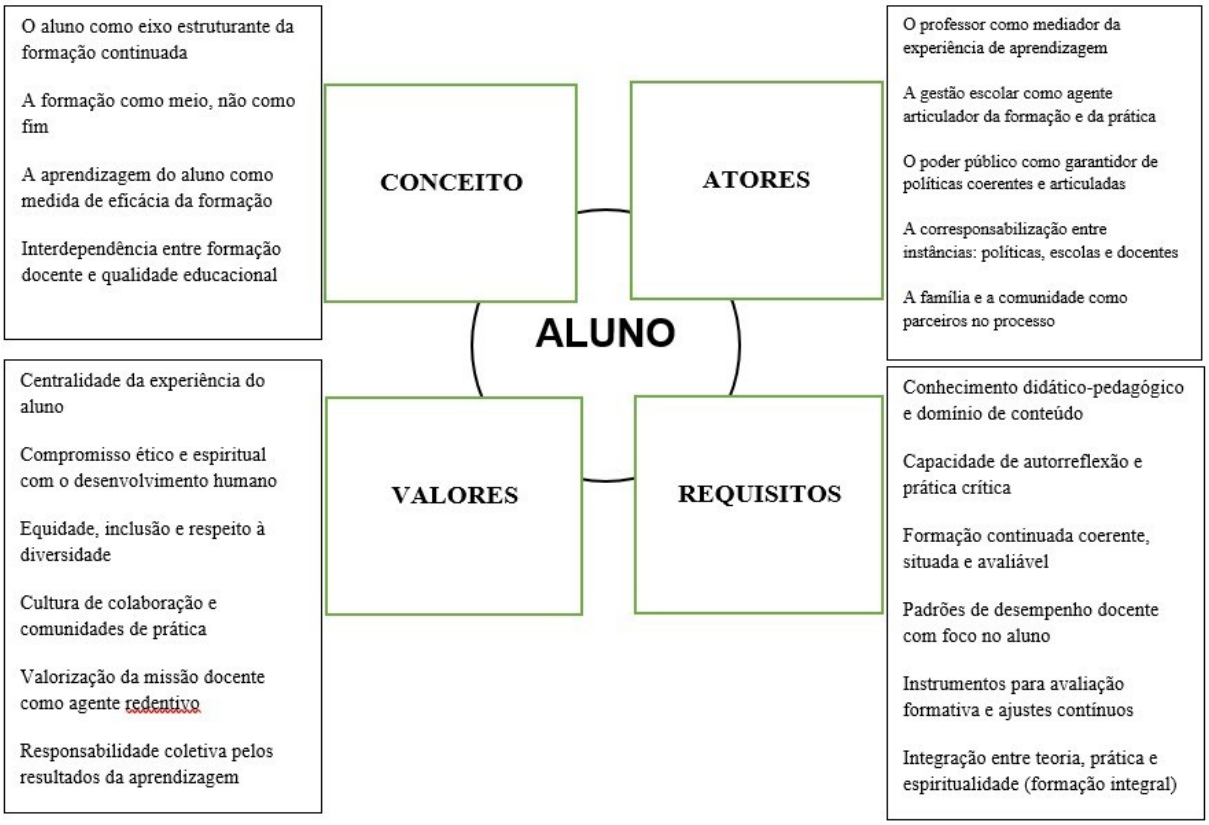
Source: developed by the authors.

However, reality reveals a significant gap between discourse and practice. Gatti (2021), Guskey (2020, 2021), and Pereira and Follis (2024) point out that many professional development programs continue to be evaluated solely from the teachers' perspective, disregarding their actual impact on students. Pereira and Follis (2025), drawing on the approaches of Guskey and Bauer, outline a methodological proposal to guide continuing education programs toward their ultimate cycle: evaluating the impact of professional development. The issue has been exacerbated by the lack of systematic assessments and the predominance of evaluation methods limited to participants' perceptions.

As a result, these programs mobilize significant human, financial, and institutional resources without ensuring evidence of real progress in student learning. According to Gatti (2021), Brazil lacks a robust and continuous evaluation system capable of linking teacher training to educational outcomes.

Therefore, a new conceptual framework for continuing education is proposed, represented in Figure 2. This structure places the student at the center and organizes four key elements:

Figure 2 – Conceptual framework of student-centered continuing education



Source: developed by the authors.

This is an integrative model, grounded in the theoretical frameworks analyzed throughout this study and anchored in the real needs of school systems.

Conclusions

This study examined the continuing education of teachers in Brazil through ontological, historiographical, and epistemological lenses, focusing on its impact on student learning. The guiding question—*what kind of teachers have we been forming, and what kind should we form?*—directed a critical analysis of public policies since the 1990s.

The following specific objectives were defined: (1) to analyze the teacher and the student ontologically from the Whitian perspective; (2) to map the historical evolution of

teacher education models; (3) to discuss the epistemological foundations underlying these models; and (4) to propose pathways for comprehensive training based on best practices.

The findings reveal punctual progress yet significant limitations: fragmented actions, lack of articulation among institutional levels, and absence of effective evaluation mechanisms. The persistent disconnection between teacher education and student learning continues to undermine the effectiveness of existing programs.

In light of these issues, the study proposes a reorientation of the formative model—from an exclusive focus on the teacher to a student-centered approach. As illustrated in the previous figures, student learning must feed back into every dimension of the process—from the design of training programs to their adjustments and reassessments. The teacher remains an essential mediator, but professional development only attains its full meaning when it effectively contributes to transforming the students' learning experience.

The Whitian ontology reestablished the redemptive role of the teacher and the holistic conception of the student. The historiographical analysis unveiled both the advances and impasses of teacher training policies. The epistemological discussion revealed the limits and potentialities of the classical/traditional, technical, practical, and critical rationalities.

It is concluded that only a training model that integrates pedagogical knowledge, reflexivity, spirituality, and a genuine commitment to the student can transform Brazilian basic education. This work proposes a new paradigm: the formation of reflective teachers, centered on the student, with transformative educational purposes.

As further developments, the following actions are recommended:

- Invest in *empirical research* to measure the impact of teacher education on student learning;
- Develop *practical guides* to support the design and evaluation of student-centered training programs;
- Promote *collaborative networks and communities of practice*;
- Strengthen the *spiritual and ethical* dimensions of teacher education, as proposed by Whitian redemptive education.

Only through such an approach will teacher education fulfill its true purpose: to transform the school, pedagogical practice, and, above all, the lives of students.

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