

## FROM NURSE TO TEACHER: PROFESSIONALITY TRAJECTORIES

### *DE ENFERMEIRO(A) A PROFESSOR(A): TRAJETÓRIAS DE PROFISSIONALIDADE*

### *DE ENFERMERO(A) A PROFESOR(A): TRAYECTORIAS DE PROFISIONALIDAD*

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**ABSTRACT:** The nurse's field of work can also be basic education. In this sense, this article describes the construction of the teaching identity of nurses who work as teachers in vocational high school, based on autobiographical narratives. Therefore, we developed qualitative research, with a hermeneutic philosophical approach, anchored in the autobiographical approach. Thus, ten nursing collaborators who work in the classroom for a period of more than two years in the institution accepted to participate. The narratives involved family, school and professional trajectories, allowing knowledge of the experiences that marked them and formed them, seeking to achieve the professionalism they sought. It is concluded that identity formation is inextricably linked to the production of meanings from personal and professional experiences and that this rite of passage, from one place to another, requires learning about new ways of doing professionally.

**KEYWORDS:** Professional identity. Autobiographic narrative. Teacher formation.

**RESUMO:** *O campo de atuação do(a) enfermeiro(a) também pode ser a educação básica. Nesse sentido, esse artigo descreve a construção da identidade docente de enfermeiros(as) que atuam como professores(as) no ensino médio da educação profissionalizante, a partir de narrativas autobiográficas. Para tanto, desenvolvemos uma pesquisa qualitativa, de vertente filosófica hermenêutica, ancorada na abordagem autobiográfica. Assim, aceitaram participar dez colaboradores enfermeiro(as) que exercem atividade em sala de aula, por um período superior a dois anos na instituição. As narrativas envolveram as trajetórias familiares, escolares e profissionais, permitindo conhecer as experiências que os(as) marcaram e os(as) formaram, buscando atingir a profissionalidade que buscavam. Conclui-se que a formação identitária está indissociavelmente atrelada à produção de sentidos das vivências pessoais e profissionais e que esse rito de passagem, de um lugar a outro, requer aprendizagem dos novos modos do fazer profissional.*

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Identidade profissional. Narrativas autobiográficas. Formação docente.*

**RESUMEN:** *El campo de la actuación de lo/as enfermeros/as también puede ser la educación básica. Así, ese artículo describe la construcción de la identidad de enfermeros/as en profesores del grado medio profesional, a través de narrativas autobiográficas. Para tanto, se ha optado por la investigación cualitativa en la vertiente filosófica hermenéutica y ancorada en el abordaje autobiográfico. Desde logo, participaron diez colaboradores enfermeros/as que actuaban en el aula y ejercían como tal a más de dos años en la institución de enseñanza. Las narrativas involucraban las trayectorias familiares, escolares y profesionales, permitiendo conocer las experiencias que se tornaran acciones formativas acerca de la profesionalidad. Se concluye que la formación de la identidad está intrínsecamente relacionada con la producción de sentidos de las experiencias personales y profesionales y que ese ritual de transición requiere aprendizaje de modos profesionales.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Identidad profesional. Narrativas autobiográficas. Formación del profesorado.*

## Introduction

“Teaching is a social practice”, Sacristán already said (SACRISTÁN apud NÓVOA, 2008, p. 66), that is, from the coexistence and interaction between teachers and students with their diverse cultures and social contexts, both teaching and pedagogical intervention were and continue to be influenced by the ways of being, being and acting of those involved. Thus, teaching immersed in this social practice, and considered one of the oldest professions in humanity, maintains its historical-social importance, except when it is seen as a threat, in periods of dictatorship and ultra-rightist governments. Alongside policies and working conditions, there are many historical factors that built and still build the image of teaching and teaching professionalism (BORN; PRADO; FILIPPE, 2019; MATOS, 2016; LENGERT, 2011). This image, or concept of profession, is the product of a certain ideological and contextual content that profoundly influences professional practice. At the beginning of professionalization, it was the Church and the State that imposed the normative system for the career, not allowing the teachers themselves to build their own identity (NÓVOA, 1989). It is opportune to think that teacher formation is related to their life experience, their daily work, family, experiences, thus expanding the perspective of thinking about this formation from other angles, bringing the lives of subjects closer to the heart of becoming yourself teacher. Their subjectivity, their work perspectives, their conception of professional identity, all of this



is intertwined in this understanding of teacher education, tangling the threads that constitute it.

From this angle, the trajectory of teaching professionalization and deprofessionalization (NÓVOA, 2017) has been quite long. Over time, the figure of the teacher has been strongly influenced by political, economic and social contexts. Thus, professional identity has been little by little (re)constructed and transformed, in a dynamic process that varies according to the claims of each historical period.

In this trajectory of professional teacher constitution, formed nurses enter the school space and the locus of professional experience in care assistance becomes teaching institutions of basic vocational education and, thus, teaching, a requirement of the teacher profession, induces a professionalism. As Sacristán (2010) says, before being teachers, teachers are people dependent on their personal qualities and the social relationships they establish. Therefore, becoming a teacher is to intersect idiosyncratic aspects of each person's repertoire of knowledge and practices.

For this work, we took the narrative as the main method of building professionalism. The adoption, by us, of this word to replace the term professionalism, concerns the idea of Gorzoni and Davis (2017), because they understand that the word professionalism is related to the quality of practice, the integrity of the teaching practice, the integrity of the social dimension and from the teaching staff, to their individual and collective responsibility and their political and ethical commitment, without opposing other authors who do not adopt the term we have chosen.

Studies such as those by Mignot and Souza (2015), Bolivar and Segovia (2018) point out that narration is a reflection when one wants to better understand the process of teacher constitution, since, when recounting their experiences, teachers reflect about what is happening and seek alternative ways to form their professional identity.

In this text, we present an excerpt of the master's research in education, seeking to describe the implications of the identity construction of the nurse, now exercising the teaching function, through their narratives, considering that they only make sense if they are understood in the interior of discursive formations, in the context of their formation. The purpose of the text is to contribute to an effective discussion in the field of teacher identity and self-reflection, so that we can contribute to the (re)construction of the identity of these new teachers from the field of health.

## **Autobiographical research and identity construction**

In contexts of research and teacher formation practices, autobiographical research materializes as an excellent way to enable the construction of individual and collective identities (SOUZA, 2014; MIGNOT; SOUZA, 2015; BOLIVAR; DOMINGOS SEGOVIA, 2018). Thus, in this methodological walk, we highlight the interviews from the autobiographical method, in order to meet the proposed field of investigation. Based on the personal and professional life stories of nurses, teachers, the narrator resumes his story in order to give new meaning to them, after all, as the author Delory-Momberger (2014) points out, to reframe is to say how individuals become individuals. From this, the autobiographical narrative explains how the subject sees himself and others, permeated by social, cultural, historical, linguistic, political, ethical dimensions etc., and how these subjects build their identity as they become aware of their histories.

From this perspective, it is important to highlight that the intention was, through narrative interviews, to hear these constitutive life stories and how they contributed, or not, to the professionalism of teaching in basic education. Unintentionally, for the nurse/narrator it was also an investigation of their history, as the study came from the researchers.

Thus, from the perspective of training resource, (auto)biographical research is based on the close relationship between “biography” and formation, between biography and learning. Making a retrospective of their history, as stated by Josso (2020, p. 43, our translation), serves to add value to their participation, “[...] making use of their past experiences and those of their colleagues. [...] they serve as a “support point” for questioning and a search for a concrete, existential and professional solution [...]”.

Corroborating this idea, Delory-Momberger (2012, 2014) justifies that the use of life stories or autobiographical narratives, as research methods or research sources, constitutes not the only one, but one of the main ways of constructing identities. Therefore, when nurses narrate their life stories, through these spaces of interaction and reflection of their personal and professional experiences, they are allowing the formation and (re)construction of identities, including the teaching identity.

Creswell's (2014) thought rectifies the importance of narrative stories as, when speaking about lived experiences, this narrative sheds light on the identities and images that each person has of himself/herself. Thinking of autobiography as a method, we recognize that this making escapes from positivism, it values micro-stories, because it transposes hermetic and Cartesian knowledge. In the narrative and through the narrative, the subject performs a

work of configuration and interpretation, giving form and meaning to their personal and professional experiences and, reflecting on them, it is possible to understand how the professional identity and the teaching practice were constituted.

In the meantime, during the empirical research, we resorted to the use of different instruments, which allowed us to work on the complexity of the phenomena as they were revealed and, later, in the analysis and discussion phase, we performed the data triangulation. This strategy used aimed to provide sufficient elements to ensure an in-depth analysis and research quality (GERHARHT; SILVEIRA, 2009).

The empirical space of the research included the State Center for Professional Education in Health Tancredo Neves/CEEP, located in the municipality of Senhor do Bonfim-Ba, characterized as a public institution dedicated to high school professional formation.

The group of nursing professors working at CEEP Tancredo Neves is made up of 15 professionals, 10 of them professors in the classroom and 05 nurses preceptors in internship fields in a Health Unit. two years of teaching at the institution, we constituted a universe of 10 nursing professors whose identification was preserved and replaced by the names of nurses who have been highlighted throughout the history of Nursing.

The investigation took place in three stages: the first, in which data were obtained through narrative interviews; in the second phase, the Scale of Values technique was applied, through a structured questionnaire, a critical analysis of the problems/themes that the respondents considered to be a priority for their formation; the third and last moment being the collaborative construction of the Teacher Formation Proposal, that is, the formative strategy. It is worth noting that in this article we will focus on the analysis of narrative interviews.

In the development of data collection, through autobiographical narratives, a question was used that acted as a triggering element for the beginning of the speeches, organized into three axes: "Stories of the self", "Trajectories of the teaching profession" and "Performance in Education Professional". The thematic analysis consists of "cores of meanings" inserted in the transcripts of the interviews whose frequencies of appearance were significant for the research. Thus, we grouped three thematic categories: a) Why I became a teacher: trajectories; b) Construction of being a teacher: the paths and c) The voices of teachers/nurses: acting in professional education. For this text, we focus the discussion on the third core of meaning, which refers to praxis itself and how they were internalized for the construction of teacher identity, reflected from their entry into the field of basic professional education.

## Results and discussion

We highlight the category “Coping with teaching: devices used for pedagogical practice” to describe which individual and collective tools were used to initiate the “rite of passage” from nurse to professor.

When entering the space of professional practice, the situations experienced favor the process of learning about one's own actions and the entire repertoire of preexisting knowledge. In this sense, situations experienced daily can generate thoughts, problematizations, questions that, in turn, are capable of triggering individual and collective actions, mechanisms and movements in the search for solutions and answers, which can promote changes and generate new situations. Even though it is not the characteristic space of the nurses they were used to attending, this movement to seek answers, for their professionalism, was able to generate a lot of learning, as shown in the narratives.

Faced with the countless challenges faced by nurses in professional education, most pointed out deficiencies in the choice and use of methodological strategies appropriate to their practice. Such concern is justified, and we say it is commendable, because, in addition to technical competence, these nurses have been acquiring political competence, a perception and sensitivity to educational issues, in order to reflect in situations of great complexity, like those we experience in basic education (ROCHA; MALHEIRO, 2019; MAIA, 2012). These professionals are getting used to school culture, daily life, and end up identifying the lack of pedagogical formation regarding theoretical and practical knowledge related to teaching and learning issues. (BUENO *et al.*, 2017; MAIA, 2012).

The importance of the pedagogical training process for non-graduates working in basic and vocational secondary education is endorsed in the Curriculum Guidelines for High School Technical Professional Education (BRASIL, 2012), whose fulfillment should end in 2020, that is, the Guidelines ensures that all non-graduates must undergo pedagogical formation, made possible by education systems (TOZZETO; GOIS DOMINGUES, 2020), which was made possible by our proposal as a final research product, acting as in-service formation.

The narratives about the devices used in the daily practice of nurses' teaching followed a perspective of concern to find the best way to perform this activity. These narratives are based on evidence, as nurses mobilized knowledge, values and attitudes that were shaping the “new” professional identity. In this sense, most described that, in an attempt to overcome the lack of didactic-pedagogical formation, they sought help from fellow graduates or more

experienced bachelors in technical education, with experiences and knowledge different from those they had, as shown in the following examples:

*So, I asked a fellow nurse for help, she gave me the course plan [...], what I learned was with the help of my colleagues, right? [...] she helps me a lot, she already has more time and has given guidance on the matrices, [...]* (Wanda, 2017author's highlights, our translation).

*Regarding the preparation of classes and assessments, I learned from fellow students who are from the teaching degree course* (Glete, 2017, author's highlights, our translation).

The narratives, in the midst of professional development and in contradictory conditions between being a nurse and being a teacher, through the request for “help” to colleagues, seek the (re)construction of professionalism (LENGERT, 2011; TOZZETO; GOIS DOMINGUES , 2020) through social interaction between peers, by a collective movement, to solve a basic issue of planning and preparation of classes, for example, recognizing how much this absence impacts on their teaching practice. This knowledge is characteristic of teaching degree courses curricula and is the starting point for any teacher who enters the classroom.

In this case, the professional development of nurses is constituted by sharing knowledge and reflections with more experienced colleagues and reaffirms that the school is not just a place where you teach, but also a space where you learn (NÓVOA, 2008). Freire (1996, p. 22) already announced that “[...] there is no teaching without students”, because the school allows you, at the same time, to be teacher and student, teacher and apprentice.

In the context of autobiographical narrative, peer interaction is a potential mechanism in the formation of new learning and this multifaceted and subjective reality allows the subject to build and reconstruct meanings (ABRAHÃO, 2014; FRISON; VEIGA SIMÃO, 2020). We understand that basic education is the same. When asking for “help” from colleagues, the nurse/teacher is open and receptive to new ways of constituting themselves, mainly in aspects that are absent in initial professional formation. Thus, we resorted to the idea of Nóvoa (2017, p. 1121), for whom “[...] becoming a teacher is to transform a predisposition into a personal disposition”, it is to create opportunities for spaces and times that enable a work of self-knowledge and self-construction.

In this process of self-knowledge and reflection, in search of identity construction, mutual help and the collectivity reverberate in a premise that is not exclusive to the health area with its multidisciplinary teams. Group work and dialogue between areas of knowledge, through interdisciplinarity, enhance the quality of work. Therefore, these multiple looks at the

same object are capable of deepening the vision. Corroborating this view, we highlight the narrative, explaining the desire to act from the perspective of reducing the fragmentation between knowledge, as well as in multidisciplinary teams in the field of health.

*[...] I can count on the help of the math teacher, I just need to signal, we managed to articulate this this year [...]* (Wanda, 2017, author's highlights, our translation).

The speech reveals that, at times, reflective spaces for sharing knowledge and practices are experienced. When teachers work together, each can learn from the other and this leads them to share evidence and seek solutions. With this attitude, we understand that the nurses/professors are imprinting the mark of teaching. It presupposes mastery of knowledge and practices in the field of nursing, as well as sensitive listening to the perspective of values that consider the knowledge from the experience of other colleagues. This process makes it possible, by sharing the culture of a group, to open space for the construction of their professional identity (MATOS, 2016). Even in this case, the discursive evidence related to this issue share the idea of interdisciplinarity, seeking to break the fragmentation between the curricular components, favoring a better relationship between them and improving teaching practice.

To that extent, we can extrapolate and think that the concern with breaking the fragmentation reverberates in the formation of future nursing technicians for health care in a holistic and integrated manner. Bringing nursing work closer to other areas of knowledge, reducing biomedical rationalization and focusing only on final objectives, requires the nurse/teacher to also rethink the profile of this future professional. Therefore, a technician is expected to mobilize knowledge in practice, who is flexible, and who enhances the power of criticism and reflection. Thus, the narratives demonstrate that they sought to break the findings of Rehen (2009), for whom professional courses in Brazil are characterized by the integrative absence between the curricular components and the theoretical-practical disarticulation.

Thinking interdisciplinary requires bringing areas together, seeking the use of diversified and shared strategies in order to enable changes in teaching practice and in the development of professionalism, while emphasizing the role of active and critical subject in the production of knowledge and in the construction of teacher identity. Although we know that interdisciplinarity has been a debated subject in educational spheres for decades



(FAZENDA, 2007), it has not yet been broadly internalized in the school context, but there is always resonance when professionals enter the educational field.

For Nóvoa (2009), becoming a teacher is challenged in the dialogue between peers, while realizing reality and intervening in it in accordance with local circumstances. This increases the feeling of belonging to the new professional niche (NÓVOA, 2008). This individual restructuring, in search of the collective of their knowledge schemes, allows them to resolve (in part) didactic-pedagogical issues, favoring the transition and maturation process for the new professional status.

We understand that one of the great difficulties for teaching in an interdisciplinary way is the result of the curriculum focused on the positivist, decontextualized and fragmented model (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2015). However, we interpret that, in seeking interdisciplinary thinking, these nurses teachers bring from their formative memory concepts of working in teams, which are indispensable in nursing care, whose understanding encompasses the person, the context and the situation (QUEIRÓS, 2016).

In addition to the dialogue with peers, the articulation with school management was evidenced, in an attempt to seek solutions to the challenges. In this way, as Matos (2016, p. 71, our translation) says, we show that the constitution of the teaching identity “[...] summons different dimensions of the subject teachers: their knowledge and affections, their experiences and convictions, their ethical sense and social commitment”. Thus, understanding the identity process involves understanding its own intersubjective and relational character. In the words of Nóvoa (2002, p. 12, our translation), it is “[...] in the individual and collective work of reflection that they will find the necessary means for their professional development”.

On issues related to learning, the interviewees' narratives initially highlight a concern about the poor formation of students throughout the school trajectory and its consequences for the teaching of vocational education.

*[...] another thing I also noticed is that the students have almost no basis; So, one of the biggest difficulties I felt when I started teaching them was that I tried, I started with the technical terms, which we ended up getting used to, but I saw that they didn't know much* (Rachel, 2017, author's highlights, our translation).

The reflection contained in this narrative about the teacher-student relationship asserts that promoting learning is not transferring knowledge, but generating the possibility for its construction (FREIRE, 1996). In this sense, we can make an analogy that these professors are expressing the primordial principle of nursing, which is care. Caring with action, attitude,

availability, putting yourself in the other's position. Paying attention, taking care of the other is a virtue that integrates the identifying values of the nursing profession and, in this case, incorporated into the educational dimension, we believe that it is the result of this memory of professional and academic life that they have. It is as if they contextualized care and teaching in pursuit of the essential objective in the educational process: teaching and learning (FREIRE, 1996; MAIA, 2012).

In relation to the strategies to face the disinterest and lack of commitment of the students, reported by the interviewees, the use of pedagogical concepts in terms of educational methodologies was widely discussed. As much as their narratives evidenced the attempt to create motivation among students, only two nurses/professors sought to diversify the methodology, using problematization and case studies. This data validates the lack of pedagogical formation and knowledge of the numerous methodologies used in the classroom, maintaining space for the predominance of the traditional and merely expository methodology.

This contradiction is explained by the existence of a gap between the romanticized vision and the reality of teaching (NÓVOA, 2017; OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2015). It is noteworthy that, based on the speeches and in line with our understanding, there is no single way to learn to be a teacher, but realizing that this teacher profession varies with the context, with the training trajectory and with the activity they perform in the school context. The problematization approach constitutes a characteristic of nursing, the practical science of action. Teaching and learning in health shows, in general, an accentuated valorization of the technique, in an assistance and interventionist paradigm, leaving this scenario absent from some specific competences of teaching, relegated to the background.

In such a way, these problematizing experiences, in technical teaching for nursing assistants, show that the nurses teachers make the daily life of students a starting point in the construction of their teaching professionalization, in order to build competences, skills and attitudes in search of solutions to problem situations. In addition, those involved also reveal their formative memories, as it is one of the most used techniques in courses in the health area. (MENEZES-RODRIGUES *et al.*, 2019).

Professional education counts on the presence of many bachelors, such as those involved in our research. They arrive in the educational field of basic education with a good professional experience (care), which we understand is important and vital, however without time or prior knowledge to develop a solid didactic-pedagogical action (ABREU, 2009;

OLIVEIRA; SALES; SILVA, 2017), which we consider to be essential for the nurse/teacher to be able to carry out their teaching work.

Upon becoming a teacher, the nurse/teacher needs to have the necessary understanding to plan educational situations that promote learning and that demand active participation from students. Therefore, not only the mastery of the content is necessary, but also, and mainly, the search for the appropriation of teaching methods that favor the process of meaningful learning. (BUENO *et al.*, 2017).

Abreu (2009) draws attention in the sense that school programs are guiding, but situations in the classroom are unpredictable, often requiring an alternative plan based on decisions that reflect individual and experiential choice at the time of educational practice. Thus, one has to know how to act in unusual situations, as well as in the absence of a methodology that makes this action feasible, and even more, know how to deal with uncertainty, with common sense, with the challenge, during professional practice.

As a tactic to become a teacher, two nurses applied what they learned from their continuing education, such as hybrid education and active learning methodologies, in their teaching practice. Their reports constitute a self-formation strategy (FRISON; VEIGA SIMÃO, 2020) and function as a process of self-knowledge by the subject. It is this view that many nurses build when they participate in formation courses for preceptors as they develop skills aimed at education in/in health in an interactive, playful and dialogue-based way (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2015), however, not all research participants who are working in professional education had the same opportunity and entered the educational field due to factors beyond their initial desire, when they completed their graduation. The active methodology and hybrid teaching are strategies that have stood out in recent times and are widely used in teaching degree and basic education courses.

All these narratives described converge to the concern to be doing the best possible in the construction of being a teacher, which involves exchange, sharing, knowledge and representations. This construction takes place in the usual classroom, in the exercise of their daily lives, since it is not just a matter of mastering technical knowledge and practices but building on the sensitivity that the educational field requires.

In order to seek to combine theory and practice, seeking to bring learners closer to the content of their experiences, the researched report that they seek to involve the student in the teaching-learning process, associating theory and practice, in order to promote dynamic classes. In an (un)conscious way, holding the students' attention, joining theory to practice and providing dynamic lessons refers to the principles of active methodologies. The

nurses/teachers explained that they try to work the content of the class by bringing it closer to the student's reality, considering that the new content has significance and represents an achievable challenge for the student, because, in this way, will be motivated during learning.

From this perspective, we observe that the daily work of teachers and nurses continue to modify the identity of the worker, that is, working is doing something about yourself, assuming the marks of the work identity and being part of their existence. It is constituted as it articulates teaching and learning, exchanging the functions of collaborative professional learning as a *sine qua non* of becoming a teacher. The integration between care and teaching, from the perspective of solving and coping with problems, avoids the dichotomy between theory and practice and, consequently, renews knowledge and health practices.

All these findings that emerged in the voices of those surveyed are evidenced in the initial formation of teaching degree courses and that continue in the continuing formation of teachers. Now, let's imagine the following: how difficult must it be for someone who has not had this formation and who built himself in a completely different perspective? His experience as a teacher reflects a lot of memories of his teachers, before that, this question arises: how to transform a worker whose social and professional identity was not your initial desire and who did not have adequate formation to carry out this work? The construction of a teaching identity or the professionalism of teaching is a complex process (MATOS, 2016), so we understand that these narratives allowed nurses to incorporate the construction of a new representation, of the new professional practice, of teaching as part of your personal and professional projects.

### **Final considerations**

We infer in this text the possibility of searching for possible strategies in the practice of the nurse/professor for the technical education of Nursing and, above all, the certainty that it is possible to advance, and that the possibilities of transformation involve the teachers themselves, their experiences, their reflections, allied to new perspectives, towards new territories. The research carried out showed that initial and continuing education are fundamental dimensions for the constitution of the teaching profession.

In the meantime, formation is inextricably related to the production of meanings about personal and professional experiences. This professorship must be associated with representations, meanings and practices, among other fundamental factors for its understanding.

Thus, based on the construction of the narratives, the nurses were able to problematize, analyze, reflect and understand their own practices and think about a new professional identity, made possible by their entry into everyday school life. This constitution of the professional teaching identity was strongly marked by the personal trajectory and collective influences in the new workspace.

Many of them started teaching armed with theoretical knowledge in the technical area of nursing, but without the expertise in the pedagogical area, a trend already identified in other studies, however, they recognized the complexity of education, were willing to exchange professional knowledge, maintain to be accessible and receptive to the reception of new ways of establishing oneself both in terms of pedagogical and experiential knowledge, without forgetting specific knowledge.

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