

SIGNIFICANCE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN HEALTH: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

SIGNIFICAÇÃO DO DESENVOLVIMENTO DOCENTE PARA O ENSINO SUPERIOR NA SAÚDE: REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS

SIGNIFICADO DEL DESARROLLO DOCENTE PARA LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR EN SALUD: REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to apprehend the present elements in the social representation of faculty development (FD) in higher education in health areas. FD is understood as a set of institutional tools that enable teachers to carry out a multiplicity of action to support their pedagogical practice. Social representation research with a qualitative approach. The research took place at three higher education institutions on southern Brazil, with faculty members from the undergraduate courses in Nursing (10) and Medicine (11), totaling 21. The production of data took place through in-person and online semi-structured interviews (COVID-19). The analysis technique followed Moscovici's methodological steps, through two processes of Social Representation formation: objectification and anchoring. It is concluded that the FD process is shown to the personal and professional growth of those who commit to it, providing the development of critical-reflective thinking.

KEYWORDS: Higher education. Measurements, methods and theories. Medical faculty. Nursing faculty.

RESUMO: *Este artigo tem por objetivo apreender os elementos presentes nas representações sociais de docentes sobre o processo de desenvolvimento docente (DD) no ensino superior da área de saúde. Entende-se DD como um conjunto de ferramentas institucionais que viabilizam ao docente uma multiplicidade de ações para suporte a sua prática pedagógica. Pesquisa de representação social com abordagem qualitativa, realizou-se em três instituições de ensino superior no sul do Brasil, tendo como participantes docentes dos cursos de graduação em Enfermagem (10) e Medicina (11), totalizando 21. A produção de dados deu-se por entrevista semiestruturada presencial e online (Pandemia COVID-19). A técnica de análise seguiu os passos metodológicos de Moscovici, por meio de dois processos de formação das Representações Sociais: objetivação e ancoragem. Conclui-se que o processo*

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de DD se mostra legítimo no que tange ao crescimento pessoal e profissional daqueles que se comprometem com o processo, proporcionando o desenvolvimento do pensamento crítico-reflexivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação superior. Medidas, métodos e teorias. Docentes de medicina. Docentes de enfermagem.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo aprehender los elementos presentes en las representaciones sociales de los docentes sobre el proceso de desarrollo docente (DD) en la educación superior en el área de la salud. El DD se entiende como un conjunto de herramientas institucionales que permiten al docente realizar una multiplicidad de acciones para apoyar su práctica pedagógica. Se realizó una investigación de la representación social con enfoque cualitativo en tres instituciones de educación superior en el sur de Brasil, con docentes de las carreras en Enfermería (10) y Medicina (11), totalizando 21. La producción de datos se ha hecho a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas presenciales y en línea (COVID-19). La técnica de análisis siguió los pasos metodológicos de Moscovici, a través de los procesos de formación de Representaciones Sociales: objetivación y anclaje. Se concluye que el proceso de DD se muestra legítimo en cuanto al crecimiento personal y profesional de quienes están comprometidos con el proceso, proporcionando el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico-reflexivo.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación superior. Mediciones, métodos y teorías. Docentes médicos. Docentes de enfermería.*

Introduction

Reflections on the teaching profession have gained notoriety in the current scenario, in view of the occurrence of significant changes in the field of teaching practices and new methodologies (PINÃ-SARMIENTO, 2014). There is an expansion of the teaching field, resulting from the multiple needs and purposes that make up the complexity of teaching and learning (VEIGA, 2008).

Teachers, by assuming an active role, need to understand the demands and pluralities of students in order to become facilitators of learning (CADÓRIO; SIMÃO, 2018). This 'becoming' a teacher is situated in reflective practice, and it is necessary to consider the sociocultural aspects of their work, including their personal and pre-professional experiences (BENASSULY, 2002).

The profile of the Brazilian teacher is formed by intellectual autonomy, which is constituted by scientific, pedagogical, and interpersonal knowledge, taking into account a

structured formation that assures a theoretical-practical organization of own and educational knowledge (RAMALHO; NUÑEZ; GAUTHIER, 2004).

The concept of Faculty Development (FD) or Teaching Development (TD) refers to all the activities sought by health professionals to improve their knowledge, skills, and behaviors as teachers, educators, leaders, managers, researchers, and academics, not only individually, but also in groups. In a review research on publications regarding faculty development in the medical field, the author noted that there were the highest number of publications between the years 2010 and 2018, with an increasing production since the 1980s (STEINERT, 2019).

It is understood that TD consists of a set of institutional tools that enable the teacher a multiplicity of actions that will support his or her pedagogical practice (CENTRA, 1978; STEINERT *et al.*, 2007). It can be considered a process of constant transformation that provides an opportunity for a conscious reflection on the professional exercise, providing greater involvement and collaboration of the agents involved in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it is a method that has been gaining space in the academic field, with the purpose of certifying the construction of the teacher's professional identity (ALMEIDA *et al.*, 2019).

Faculty can develop knowledge through experience, observation, and reflection; but they can also improve their skills through peer coaching, student feedback, online learning, and on-the-job learning, often by being a member of a community of practice. The authors indicate different educational strategies, in a variety of settings, assisting in the effectiveness of faculty development (STEINERT *et al.*, 2016).

When it comes to the professionalization of teachers, training must take into consideration a process of formation that contributes to the development of the profession and of the professional as a whole (ENS *et al.*, 2009).

In this study, Moscovici's Theory of Social Representations was adopted as a theoretical framework, with a sociogenetic approach that addresses the scope of the phenomenon in relation to the conditions and processes involved in the emergence of representations. The narrative operates through the articulation of different perspectives and the central core is constituted by the state of cognitive polyphasia, presenting coexistence of knowledge and distinct logics in the same representational field (ANDRADE; TEIBEL; ASSUNÇÃO, 2020).

In view of the new paradigms in education, it is necessary to have a critical-reflective look at the teaching practice and the reality faced by these professionals (BATISTA, 2004). The process of reflection on the subject's routine practice is understood as critical-reflective, in which the subject is able to understand its conducts and, based on this understanding,

propose situational transformations. Such perspective is thought taking into account the contextual and specific needs of teaching-learning (MAGALHÃES; FIDALGO, 2007). Thus, with the purpose of dialoguing about the exercise of teaching and its multiple determinants, the discussion about the representation about the practice and conceptions of university teaching is carried out.

In view of this, this article aims to apprehend the elements present in the social representations of teachers about the process of Teaching Development in Higher Education in the area of Health.

Methodological framework

This is a research of qualitative approach, using the theoretical and methodological framework of the Theory of Social Representations of Moscovici. For Moscovici (2007), the representations are a way to elucidate the everyday real thought, becoming a way to put into practice, through the knowledge developed individually and collectively, the positioning of a social group in relation to situations, events, and objects that are affected by them, promoting a social construction of reality. It is understood that "to represent a thing, a state, is not only to unfold it, repeat it or reproduce it, it is to reconstitute it, retouch it, modify its text" (MOSCOVICI, 2012, p. 54).

The Theory of Social Representations is a methodological and didactic approach rich for making visible what was unknown until now and for providing ways to know, in fact, the understanding of a certain population about the intended object of study (NOGUEIRA; DI GRILLO, 2020). The epistemological root of the theory starts from the assumption of the social construction of reality, which is presented in the form subject-object and individual-society, since the subject constructs both the world and himself. This dichotomy implies understanding the subjective and the collective in the representation of the world, constructed by human beings (SCHWARZ; SEITENFUS; BOUSFIELD, 2020).

According to Moscovici (2003), Social Representations are not similar to all members of a group because they depend both on common sense knowledge and on the context in which the subjects are inserted. Thus, the Social Representations do not aim to understand the group in a homogeneous way, since the subjects bring with them different baggage and life experiences.

The narratives present in this study are part of a dissertation from the *Stricto Sensu* Graduate Program in Teaching in Health Sciences at a HEI in Curitiba/PR. The analysis of the

forming elements of the social relations apprehended refers to the category 'Social Representations of the Process of Teaching Development in Higher Education in the Health Area' and the subcategory 'The Significance of Teaching Development for Higher Education in Health', from which two Representation Units resulted: 'Teaching Development as a constant path for learning' and 'Social Representations as a teacher about the process of Teaching Development'.

Study site

The research was carried out with professors from three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), located in the municipality of Curitiba/ PR, one private for-profit and two non-profit institutions. These HEIs were chosen for offering undergraduate courses in the health area (Nursing and Medicine) and for presenting proposals for a Teaching Development Program in their institutional project.

Study Participants

The research participants totaled 21 professors, 10 from the undergraduate Nursing course and 11 from the undergraduate Medicine course of three Higher Education Institutions (HEI) of Curitiba/PR. The choice of professors was due to the fact that they are representatives of the reality investigated in this study, since they actively assist in the construction of perspectives and subjectivities of the educational context, are the main actors in the teaching-learning process and experience the Faculty Development Programs. The choice for HEIs is due to the fact that they have some kind of Teaching Development Program in their organizational chart. Among the 21 professors interviewed, 19 were women and 2 were men, with ages ranging from 28 to 62 years old. The time they have been teaching varied between 1 and 23 years. Furthermore, 19 professors stated they had no training for teaching before joining the higher education courses researched, and three had sought activities related to the teaching-learning process and their own training in teaching.

Information Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, based on a previously established and sequenced combination of open-ended questions and sociodemographic questions, in which the participants of the social group researched shared ideas, reports, and

experiences on the theme in question. The initial contact with the teachers was made via e-mail or telephone. Part of the interviews was done face-to-face until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic; after March 2020, they were done remotely, being scheduled and recorded. Data collection took place from November/2019 to May/2020.

Information Analysis

The data analysis of both Representation Units, which are 'Teaching Development as a constant path of learning' and 'Social representations as a teacher about the process of Teaching Development', consisted in the understanding and construction of forming elements of the social relations apprehended, following the methodological steps of objectification and anchoring proposed by Moscovici (2012), in which there are two processes of formation of social representations linked and shaped by social determinants. We also used the sociogenetic approach as a theoretical reference, by the same author.

Objectification is a process that consists of three stages: selection and decontextualization; organization and classification; formation and structuring of the elements. In the first stage, a movement of **selection and decontextualization** of beliefs of the object of representation occurs, filtering and retaining relatively what establishes a coherent relationship with reality, including group norms and values.

After the collection, the statements were transcribed in full to compose the corpus of analysis. This moment of analysis was composed of two fundamental stages that helped in the visualization of the speeches, in order to preserve the necessary information to consolidate the social representation of the researched group.

In this way, the first stage, selection and decontextualization, consisted in dividing the statements according to the following questions: what is your representation of your teaching practice, what is involved in this action? What are your social representations, as a HEI teacher, about the process of Teacher Development in higher education in the health area? Next, all the answers were grouped together, obtaining a comprehensive view of the speeches in order to facilitate the **selection and decontextualization** of beliefs, which enabled the creation of a moderately cohesive whole.

In the second step, the elements were **organized and classified** in their structures, establishing a pattern of relationships between them. After a thorough reading of the speeches of the interviewed professors, three subcategories emerged that composed the understanding

of the represented phenomena. In this article, the subcategory 'The Significance of Teaching Development for Higher Education in Health' is discussed.

The last stage is understood as a stage of **formation and structuring of the elements** that were decontextualized and selected in the first stage, transforming an abstract reality into a concrete one.

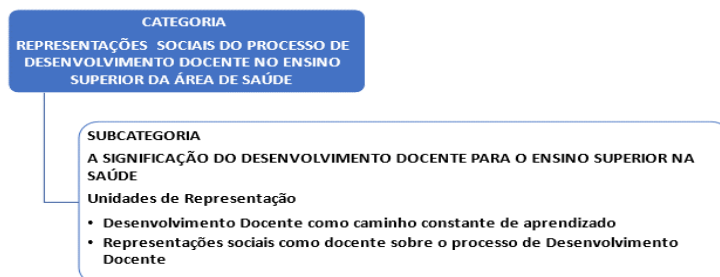
Ethical aspects:

The research met the guidelines of Resolutions No. 466/2012 and 510/2016 of the National Health Council on the ethical aspects related to research with human beings, being approved by the CEP (Research Ethics Committee – IRC) with human beings under opinion No. 3.736.6661.

Results and discussion

For this article, the subcategory of analysis chosen was 'The Meaning of Faculty Development for Higher Education in Health', which comprises the formative elements of social representations. In turn, this subcategory was divided into two Representation Units: "Faculty development as a constant path of learning" and "Social Representations as a teacher about the process of teaching development", according to Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Representation of the category, subcategory and Units of Representation⁴



Source: Research data

From the speeches analyzed in the subcategory "The Meaning of Teaching Development for Higher Education in Health", as well as in the Representation Unit "Teaching Development as a constant path of learning", it was found that the TD is a continuous, multidimensional process that aims at improving skills and competencies, integrating theory and practice and providing opportunities for health professors to approach new techniques, concepts and tools capable of facilitating the students' academic performance. To maintain the anonymity of the participants, the letter D was used to designate speech and the numbering according to the order of collection, followed by the name of the HEI to which they belong.

*I understand it as a **continuous, multidimensional process of searching for skills and competencies** to integrate theory and practice, produce new knowledge, and directly or indirectly make a difference in the reality and quality of life of the communities where I am inserted (D1, HEI2).*

*For me, the process of teacher development is a **constant path of learning** that gives the professional who works in higher education teaching the opportunity to get closer to techniques, concepts, and tools that can combine his technical knowledge with teaching strategies that can facilitate the exchange with the students and the sedimentation of the teaching-learning process. (D5, HEI3).*

⁴ Categoria = Category; Representações sociais do processo de desenvolvimento docente no ensino superior na área de saúde = Social representations of the teaching development process in higher education in the health área; Subcategoria = Subcategory ; A significação do desenvolvimento docente para o ensino superior na saúde = The significance of teaching development for higher education in health; Unidade de representação = Units of representation; Desenvolvimento docente como caminho constante de aprendizado = Teaching development as a constant learning path, Representações sociais como docente sobre a o processo de Desenvolvimento Docente = Social Representations as a teacher about the Teaching Development process

Professional development is seen as a process of constant renewal and changes in teaching, and teachers are active agents of the improvement of knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence, which are essential for TD (DAY, 2001). With the help of Social Representations, teachers' knowledge became evident through the knowledge built in their concrete practice, which, in turn, becomes structured, organized, and aligned with common sense, instituting teaching. Thus, besides being a reflection of reality, the TD is also a process of mediation and mental construction of the subject, providing subsidies for the formation of educational action (SOUZA; TAVARES; VILLA BÔAS, 2009).

Social Representations constitute a form of social knowledge established by Moscovici (1978), acting as guidelines for the understanding and organization of reality and ensuring that subjects can interpret and act on them through interaction with the social group.

TD guarantees the quality of both the institution and the professional. Professional development involves all learning experiences, direct or indirect, with the aim of favoring those who want to learn. It is a process by which the teacher, considered as an agent of change, obtains competencies and skills (DAY, 2001). For this to happen, TD programs go through a continuous and longitudinal process, investigating what needs come from the teaching professional's practice (O'SULLIVAN; IRBY, 2011).

In the Representation Unit 'Social Representations as a teacher about the process of Teaching Development', the speeches showed that the possibility of performing the TD is aligned to the institutional goals, the goals of innovations, the improvement of the teaching-learning process and the updating.

*I think that really, the teacher who takes TD seriously stands out, **is always aligned with the institutional goals**, because here where I work it is very clear. We have goals for innovations, for improvements, so the teacher who understands this, is quickly aligned, while we see others who are not, who continue with their more traditional ways, with some resistance to active methodologies (D1, HEI1).*

*The institution provides several trainings, in the sense of active teaching methodologies, focused on teaching, not exactly the area we work in teaching, **but focused on teaching, on how to teach and how to improve the student's teaching-learning** (D2, HEI1).*

*I believe that in the face of advances in science and technology and a world in constant transformation, I act as an **articulator of student learning**, so that they can achieve autonomy, propose solutions to everyday challenges, and find new and better ways (D1, HEI2).*

The TD programs of the HEIs where the professors in this study work operate through training courses and workshops, which not only motivate the professor to be in constant

development, but also improve his teaching-learning skills and techniques. We believe in the need for institutional investment in this professional, with the alignment of the TD to the goals of the HEI involved in the process. The HEIs need to value the teaching staff, as they play an active role in the student's education, and must ensure excellence in teaching (CACHAPUZ, 2002).

Such programs help build the teachers' identity, being determined by multiple factors that talk among themselves and form the Social Representations that teachers make of their role, of their performance and of themselves, taking into account each one's life history (GARCIA; HYPÓLITO; VIEIRA, 2005). The transformation of pedagogical practice is a process of critical reflection, in which the linking of connections between practice and the broader social context occurs, helping the student in the teaching-learning process (GHEDIN, 2002).

Moscovici (2003) and Jodelet (2001) establish that there is an intelligible communication between research participants through the Social Representations, which formalize and give meaning to the object of study. The Social Representation, when spoken of in a system of interpretation, becomes a mediator between the subjects inserted in the same social group, referring to an organization of conducts and perceptions that conduct behaviors in a contextualized chain of different personal relationships and experiences, with the consequent modification of a subjective theory into something objective, external.

TD can be considered a tool for constant updating, investigation, and exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge that enables the continuous growth of both the curriculum and the institution (GARCIA, 1999). It is a training process that occurs through the exchange of knowledge between teachers and students, with a complex movement between the personal and the social, determined and influenced by the context and intersubjective experience (TUNES; TACCA; BARTHOLO-JÚNIOR, 2005). It is through personal, professional and institutional development that the teaching work is transformed into a constant and changeable process (IMBERNÓN, 2010).

When delineating the Units of Representation, which are the object of this article, it is possible to perform the anchoring, a process performed before or after the objectification. When it precedes, it is due to the fact that the object of representation is thought from previously determined experiences and schemas. When it follows objectification, anchoring is used as a way to understand and build the forming elements of social relations (MOSCOVICI, 2012).

The understanding and construction of the forming elements of social relations showed that individual experiences and exchanges of experiences in relationships between peers are necessary to understand and give meaning to the representational object, making the messages meaningful.

The teacher, anchored to meaningful learning, seeks to be the protagonist of his own teaching-learning process, seeking constant updating to help the student in his trajectory. It was evident that the teaching exercise is composed of cognitive, affective, and sociocultural factors, which depend on the subject's critical reflection about his or her own action. Teachers who reflect on their practice are capable of self-regulating and adapting to different educational contexts and social groups.

The teacher is seen as a mediating agent in the teaching-learning process, assuming the role of instructing students in their learning process, mediating the construction of knowledge. For this to happen, it is necessary to be aware of the changes in the educational scenario, seeking constant updating. The TD program emerges as a tool that helps teachers improve their skills and competencies, applying them in their daily lives. Besides, it provides a critical-reflective and self-regulatory thinking of their practice.

Final remarks

The Teaching Development (TD) programs act as support for teachers in a multiplicity of aspects related to the teaching-learning process, since teachers must be in constant theoretical-methodological updating. Based on the statements presented in this article, Teaching Development (TD) programs are located at the junction of knowledge about educational concepts and principles, specific teaching-learning strategies, skills acquisition, teaching performance in the classroom, to improve teacher-student-institution relationships, in addition to valuing the teaching role.

The expression of professors from the two courses in the health area of the institutions surveyed, Nursing and Medicine, indicates that there is a lack of preparation for the exercise of teaching, an aspect that goes beyond professional training; there are gaps in the TD involving the various dimensions that compose it, such as personal (choice of teaching career), professional (preparation/training for teaching) and institutional (the HEI's vision/support for teacher preparation and achievement of educational goals).

The TD has multiple interpretations and this study highlighted the citizen's concern in the training of future health professionals, considering the transversality and complexity that

involve this practice and the intention to contribute to the formation of a critical-reflective professional prepared for the healthcare market. work, able to face the challenges of professional life.

The Theory of Social Representations, which makes it possible to reveal determinants of actions, supported the theoretical-methodological trajectory of this study, acting as a guide for reading reality, assuming a fundamental role in the dynamics of social relations and in everyday practices. The professors' representations in this research become photographs of the practice, demonstrating how representations are transformed into a movement of reciprocal influences. Teachers, through social representations, offer a network of meanings, attribute meaning to their practices, re-signify actions, activate daily reflection and indicate new ways of relating to knowledge and learning.

It was also evident from this research the importance of investing in the training of teaching professionals so that they meet the demands of the student and the HEI in which they work, in addition to meeting the social commitment to the multiple agents involved in this process.

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