

TEACHERS' EDUCATION EXPERIENCE ABROAD: EFFECTS ON PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPTIONS

EXPERIÊNCIA FORMATIVA DE PROFESSORES NO EXTERIOR: EFEITOS NAS CONCEPÇÕES PEDAGÓGICAS

EXPERIENCIA DE FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES EN EL EXTRANJERO: EFECTOS EN LAS CONCEPCIONES PEDAGÓGICAS

Sheylla CHEDIK¹

ABSTRACT: This paper aims at presenting some research results which investigated the formative experience and its effects on the pedagogical conceptions of Basic, Technical and Technological Education of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology teachers who participated in continuous training in Finland, through international mobility. This is a case study, with a qualitative approach. For data collection, documents were used, as well as questionnaires and interviews, totalizing 61 participants. The data were treated by narrative and content analysis methods, with the following central categories: experience, effects, identity, training, knowledge transference, internationalization, and articulation. In this article, we focus on the experience and its effects in relation to the others. The results show that the formative experience involves training, interaction with peers, and cultural immersion. The effects of changes in the teachers' representations about their conceptions and pedagogical practices bring new elements related to the identity construction process of the global educator.

KEYWORDS: Continuing teacher education abroad. International mobility. Internationalization. EBTT Teacher. Brazilian Federal Institutes.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar e discutir parte dos resultados de uma pesquisa de doutoramento que buscou investigar a experiência formativa e seus efeitos nas concepções pedagógicas de professores da Educação Básica, Técnica e Tecnológica dos Institutos Federais de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia que participaram de formação continuada na Finlândia, por meio da mobilidade internacional. Trata-se de um estudo de caso, com abordagem qualitativa. Para a coleta de dados, foram utilizados documentos, além da aplicação de questionários e entrevistas, totalizando 61 participantes. Os dados foram tratados pelos métodos de análise de narrativas e de conteúdo, tendo como categorias centrais: experiência, efeitos, identidade, formação, transferência de conhecimentos, internacionalização e articulação. Neste artigo, enfocamos a experiência e seus efeitos na relação com as demais. Os resultados evidenciam que a experiência formativa envolve formação, interação com os pares e a imersão dos professores. Os efeitos de mudanças nas

¹ Federal Institute of Rondônia (IFRO), Porto Velho – RO – Brazil. Professor at the Federal Institute of Rondônia and active in three research groups: Study Group and Proposals on the formation of the Contemporary Educator (GEPFEC - UNESP), Center for Research and Applied Studies in Active Learning in Basic, Technical, and Technological Education (NUPAT - IFMS), and Center for Historical and Literary Studies (NEHLI - IFRO). PhD in Education (UNESP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0624-2516>. E-mail: sheylla.chediak@ifro.edu.br

representações dos professores sobre suas concepções e práticas pedagógicas trazem novos elementos relacionados ao processo de construção identitária do educador global.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação continuada no exterior. Mobilidade internacional. Internacionalização. Professor EBTT. Institutos Federais.

RESUMEN: El propósito de este artículo es presentar y discutir parte de los resultados de una investigación doctoral que buscó investigar la experiencia formativa y sus efectos en las concepciones pedagógicas de los profesores de Educación Básica, Técnica y Tecnológica de los Institutos Federales de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología que participaron en la formación continua en Finlandia, a través de la movilidad internacional. Se trata de un estudio de casos, con un enfoque cualitativo. Para la recogida de datos se utilizaron documentos, además de la aplicación de cuestionarios y entrevistas, con un total de 61 participantes. Los datos fueron tratados por métodos de análisis narrativo y de contenido, teniendo como categorías centrales: experiencia, efectos, identidad, formación, transferencia de conocimientos, internacionalización y articulación. En este artículo, nos centramos en la experiencia y sus efectos en relación con los demás. Los resultados muestran que la experiencia formativa incluye la formación, la interacción con los compañeros y la inmersión cultural. Los efectos de los cambios en las representaciones de los profesores sobre sus concepciones y prácticas pedagógicas aportan nuevos elementos relacionados con el proceso de construcción de la identidad del educador global.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación continua en el extranjero. Movilidad internacional. Internacionalización. Profesor de EBTT. Institutos Federales.

Introduction

The first years of the 21st century were taken by the intensification of internationalization practices in higher education, especially international mobility, with policies to promote internationalization in Brazil, cooperation for international research and teacher training. As an example, we can mention the Science without Borders Program and Law 11.502/2007 (BRAZIL, 2007), which gave the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) the task of promoting the initial and continuing education of Basic Education teachers.

International mobility - funded with public resources, via federal institutions such as CAPES, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), or other state funding agencies - is associated with scientific and technological development policies, which seek innovative ideas, academic cooperation, or other terms of cooperation for the Brazilian scenario. As they also offer higher education, the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFs) in Brazil are subject to internationalization policies for this level.

Although the movement of teachers abroad has become more intense with the promotion of internationalization, there is still a lack of studies on the characteristics of the continuing education experience abroad and its effects on the teachers' pedagogical conceptions. Thus, the aim of this article is to present part of the results of a doctoral research, conducted with Brazilian teachers of Basic, Technical and Technological Education (EBTT) from IFs who participated in a training experience in Finland, in a short course (three to five months) in the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. We focus on the results related to the experience and the effects of the training on the teachers' pedagogical conceptions.

This research, of qualitative approach, is characterized as a case study, with descriptive, documentary, and interpretive methodology. As instruments of data collection, we used documents, questionnaire and interviews. The documentary research comprised three public calls for the Teachers for the Future program - Vocational Education and Training (VET) Teachers for the Future - Finland, as well as two final evaluation reports of the editions of the program (first and second, 2014 and 2015 respectively) issued by the Secretariat of Vocational and Technological Education of the Ministry of Education (SETEC/MEC).

In addition to the documentary research, we applied a semi-structured electronic questionnaire, consisting of 5 open and 5 closed questions, sent in the first semester of 2018 by email to the 117 program participants, to which 61 teachers from various IFs in Brazil responded. Of these, 13 also granted the narrative interview, with a guiding script, which occurred in person from the researcher's invitation made in the questionnaire itself. For the analysis of documents and questionnaire, we used the content analysis based on Moraes (1999); for the narrative interviews, we applied the method of narrative analysis based on Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2007), who propose the thematic analysis, i.e., the construction of a referential coding. Thus, the transcription and identification of thematic units preceded the interpretation of the interviews. These methods are aligned and propose the categorization and identification of thematic units, which allowed us to identify general categories, which are: experience, effects, identity, training, knowledge transference, internationalization, and articulation. In this article, we focus on the experience and its effects in relation to the others. We emphasize that this research was submitted to the Ethics Committee and approved under CAAE number: 01603218.9.0000.5400.

This study presents extremely relevant considerations to support the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of internationalization policies for technical-scientific innovation, as it analyzes program results and necessary paths for innovation, based on

international pedagogical practices, without losing sight of the peculiar characteristics of the Brazilian scenario.

The article is organized by the introduction, by two theoretical sections, the first one about globalization, internationalization and education, and the second one about international mobility of teachers for continuing education. In the sequence, the two sections of data analysis are presented, being them: The profile of the traveling teachers and the last one about the intercultural experience of teachers and the effects on pedagogical conceptions. Finally, we present our final considerations.

Globalization, internationalization and education

To understand the process of internationalization in education and teacher training, it is necessary to understand the concepts and the relationship between internationalization and globalization. Giddens (2007, p. 21) explains that globalization is not strictly economic, it is "[...] political, technological and cultural as much as economic. It has been influenced above all by developments in communication systems that date back only to the late 1960s." Thus, globalization is not a single process, but a complex set of contradictory processes. Its complexity occurs, especially, when it affects the daily structure and the subjectivity of individuals, reaching people's intimacy and their relations with the world around them, which alters the individual's experience with people and things. Thus, globalization is related to the macrostructure (society, external to the individual) and the smaller structure (internal to the individual: subjectivity and individual identity).

In this context of contradictions are nationalist movements, separatist movements, the resurgence of local identities and new cultural zones within or across nations, etc. These phenomena are driven not only by historical and economic aspects, but also by technological cultural diffusion and the cultural industry, which can occur either in a colonialist way or the other way around. As an example, we have the cultural homogenization promoted by the richer countries, through movies, music, series, etc.; or the dissemination of cultures from poorer countries, such as the Brazilian soap operas exported to European countries. So, globalization produces not only homogenization, but also contradictions, antagonisms and, furthermore, polarization and deepening of differences and different views on the same subject (GIDDENS, 2007).

In this article, we do not address the specifics of Brazil's historical, social, political, and economic issues in relation to the globalization process. However, it is important to understand

that the country's conditions reflect in international relations and in the representations of countries, individuals, and teachers about Brazil and being Brazilian; these representations, in turn, reflect in the commercial and intercultural relations of the Brazilian teacher in training abroad, as well as in his/her subjectivity.

Internationalization emerged as one of the results of the phenomena produced by globalization, situated in the economic aspect as a production of the capitalist system, due to the interest of commercial expansion without borders. In this context, education is seen as a commercial opportunity, especially because it has been categorized as a service since the regulation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which supported the market view of the internationalization of education (MOROSINI, 2006).

Morosini (2006) explains that internationalization was already present in the way universities related to the idea of universalization of knowledge through teaching, research and extension; what was new was the marketing vision of internationalization policies for higher education. It is important to emphasize that universities are subject to State policies and do not have autonomy to decide the model(s) of internationalization practices, here understood as: international mobility; academic cooperation; research development; partnerships and collaboration networks for extension development, etc.

The different visions of internationalization, sometimes as a way of universalizing knowledge, sometimes as a market opportunity, have generated tensions, which have been intensified by neoliberalism in education and have been shaping contemporary characteristics, the speed of events and the reconfiguration of time and space. These tensions generate conflicts or lack of consensus even in the conception of internationalization, what it means and what it involves, what its practices and intentionalities are. There is still much confusion between the concepts of internationalization and globalization, as a result of the different perspectives among countries, educational institutions or business, which increases the difficulty of establishing a consensus.

Amidst the many tensions are the visions of internationalization as a "market strategy" and internationalization as "interculturality", preserving human values and the role of education as humanizing, aggregating human values of respect, tolerance, solidarity, responsibility with oneself, with people and with the environment. In this last perspective, the idea of "[...] the existence of equal interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect" is present (UNESCO, 2005, p. 5). As denoted by the suffix 'inter', we can understand that 'interculturality' refers to the relationship between cultures, between patterns of social meanings. A relationship between equals, without

better/worse, superior/inferior, but human beings made up of/by singularities and who know/can interact in an equitable, respectful, solidary and tolerant way.

The defense of a conceptual model of internationalization of education is justified by the need for more systematized and clearer educational policies and practices of its intentions for the countries that cooperate or sign agreements. In this sense, Knight (2004, p. 11) states that "internationalization at the national/sectoral/institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating international, intercultural or global dimensions into the purpose, functions and delivery of higher education. Thus, it involves the integration of teaching, research and extension in these dimensions among partner institutions.

The aforementioned author raises some important reflections and questions about internationalization practices, which can guide the agreements and cooperation terms: a) are they fads; b) are they sustainable; c) are they responsible for the brain drain; d) do they promote cultural homogenization or hybridization; e) what are the purposes; f) what are the benefits; g) what are the negative implications, consequences, and expected and/or achieved results; h) on what values are these practices based; i) are they responses or stimuli from or for globalization. These questions are relevant in structuring internationalization practices. In this context is the international mobility of teachers for continuing education.

International teacher mobility for continuing education

With the intensification of the flow of people, ideas and technologies in the international sphere, gradually, in face of the demands of complexification in society, the profile of the global teacher emerges, with common professional characteristics, such as: to know, respect, be interested in and relate well with the various cultures and local and global identities; to master a foreign language (primarily English, considered an international language); to know how to use means - such as information and communication technologies - to establish international network communication; to diversify methods, methodologies and pedagogical tools to meet the diversified public; who is open to learn and expand their network and their classroom; integrate its pedagogical practices with various areas of knowledge, as well as with research and extension; understand that learning is a permanent process and, therefore, seek to learn always and to instrumentalize their students to seek lifelong learning; be oriented towards the future, in the perspectives of the world of work and desirable social transformations for the construction of a more egalitarian, fair and sustainable society; understand the diversity of the

world, of things, of ideas and of people and know or, at least, seek to know how to act in this environment.

In this scenario, Giroux (2005, p. 133) defends the critical vision of global citizen formation for a global democracy, in which education must form individuals "[...] aware of the interactive nature of all aspects of cultural, spiritual, and physical life. The author clarifies that citizenship for global democracy implies forming a citizen beyond the borders of the nation-state, who knows and can critically analyze history and memories. This acquired knowledge helps the teacher to know and act critically in society; hence the importance of the teacher being exposed to differences and otherness, to develop the characteristics and competencies of a global citizen. Giroux (2005, p. 134) explains that "[...] Individuals must also establish some distance from the knowledge of their cradle, their origins, and the specificity of their place. To do so, they must appropriate knowledge that "[...] emerges from dispersion, travel, border transgressions, diaspora, and through global communications."

Educational trips become formative experiences for the global teacher. The distance expands the possibilities of self-knowledge and knowledge of one's own culture and pedagogical praxis. However, the understanding of the formative processes, in the international sphere, implies the consideration of social, historical, cultural, political and economic aspects of the countries involved, as well as the social constitution of the internationalized world, increasingly 'equal' and full of inequalities. This is the only way to understand how the transformations occur in the teacher's subjectivity, their formative process and, consequently, the influences in the lives of students and in the culture of the educational institution.

He, Lundgren, and Pynes (2017) developed a study similar to the one proposed in this research. As a result, they point out five elements present in the process of continuing education of teachers in a short course abroad: a) cultural immersion; b) teaching opportunities; c) (foreign) language learning; d) reflection; and e) collaboration. The authors argue that the model is very effective in training multicultural and global teachers.

Cultural immersion and different learning opportunities enable the teacher to develop characteristics that align with the profile of the global teacher, i.e., influence teaching practices. However, the training experiences can only be optimally exploited if there is mastery, even at an intermediate level, of the foreign language in which the training is developed. If not, the process may become a source of suffering for the teacher, who is prevented from communicating effectively and exploring learning situations in the context of cultural immersion.

Reflection and collaboration are common features in continuing education courses abroad, and were also found in our research. Reflection is part of the program and is done through reflective diaries, usually electronic, in blogs, in which teachers must record and analyze their formative experiences, which also serve as a follow-up for the formative evaluation. Collaboration is present in the organization of daily activities in groups and are constitutive of Professional Learning Communities (PAC), as "the culture of collaboration is key in the notion of PAC, given that collaborative groups work interdependently" (CHEDIAK *et al.*, 2018, p. 307).

Intercultural interaction is a central element for the development of a more collaborative attitude, as it involves communication skills and the ability to negotiate meanings with individuals from different cultures, languages, values, etc. In this sense, the mobility experience promotes the development of interculturality.

In general, the formative experience mobilizes cognitive and affective aspects and is full of different moments. Culture shock, experienced in the first days of contact with the new culture, is one of them. Another moment is the reverse culture shock, when the individual returns to his or her country. Cushner (2007) explains that, when returning to the country of origin, the individual feels, on the one hand, enthusiastic and excited to share the experiences; on the other hand, he/she experiences the fear of returning to the routine, with learning situations not as intense as those in his/her formative experience abroad.

These feelings may vary according to the condition in which the person lived during the course (if he lived with foreigners or compatriots, the degree of immersion in the culture, etc.). Another complicating reason for reverse culture shock is that the individual feels misunderstood by not having other people who have gone through the same experience. Cushner (2018) further argues that this experience can be a challenge to self-concept. The individual feels transformed and their identity relationship with their country may alter, their relationship with groups and ideas that once worked well may have changed. For a time, on his return, he may feel out of place.

Other challenges elucidated by Cushner (2018) in returning are: a) frustrated expectations; b) feeling of loss - saying goodbye to the people, culture, things, benefits experienced in the foreign country; c) finding the new adjustments when integrating the new learning into the cultural reality. The latter, which is perhaps the biggest challenge, has more chances of success when the individual can identify the changes in oneself - their self-concept, the transformations in their values and attitudes, and evaluate the possibilities of integration, that is, what can be changed in their surroundings and what concerns only oneself.

Border transgressions for pedagogical purposes are formative experiences of the global teacher, as we have discussed. The geographical displacement and the distance from one's own culture expose the individual to otherness and to the possibilities of self-knowledge and knowledge of one's own culture and social practices. In this regard, Larrosa (2002, p. 24) comments:

The experience, the possibility of something happening to us or touching us, requires a gesture of interruption, a gesture that is almost impossible in our times: it requires stopping to think, stopping to look, stopping to listen, thinking more slowly, looking more slowly, and listening more slowly; stopping to feel, feeling more slowly, lingering on details, suspending opinion, suspending judgment, suspending the will, suspending the automatism of action, cultivating attention and delicacy, opening our eyes and ears, talking about what happens to us, learning slowness, listening to others, cultivating the art of encounter, being very quiet, being patient, and giving ourselves time and space.

The research context involves a gesture of interruption - a suspension of automatisms - from the geographical displacement and removal from work, which, for Larrosa (2002), is the 'anti-experience', since it hinders or prevents the individual from establishing an experience capable of touching and transforming him.

Larrosa (2002, p. 25) understands that the subject of experience is a subject "reached", "knocked down", seized by the experience and not the opposite. He who stands firm and does not submit is incapable of experience. Many things can happen, yet nothing happens within the individual. This happens for various reasons, the main ones listed by the author are too much work, too much information, too many opinions and events, and too little time.

Training abroad allows the individual the experience of being away from the automatisms of work, away from one's routine and culture. The exposure to otherness demands deep elaborations to think about one's own culture and the culture of the other, the value of education in one's own country and in another country. New personal meanings are subjectivized, in an individual way, which is related to the collective, in the interaction with fellow countrymen and people of other nationalities.

It is pertinent to differentiate 'experience' from 'living'. Josso (2004, p. 48) explains that experiences refer to countless situations, but they can only be considered experiences "[...] from the moment we do some reflective work on what happened and on what was observed, perceived, felt". To exemplify, the author raises the question: "[...] if each of us makes the 'experience', in the common sense of the term, of sleep and dreaming, how many among us carry out a work on their oneiric activity and the role of sleep in their life as a human being?"

(JOSSO, 2004, p. 48). Thus, the experience can only be formative if we conceive it from a learning perspective, when it involves elements related to behavior, thought and feelings, that is, the identity/subjectivity of the teacher.

In our research, we understand experience as something that happens to the individual and by which he/she is touched (LARROSA, 2002) and as a set of experiences that can become formative experience (JOSSO, 2004). Thus, we understand that not every experience becomes an experience.

The profile of traveling teachers

Representations result from the interaction of psychic functions, such as perception, sensation, attention, imagination, thought and language, and feeling and emotion. An individual brings a background to his or her experience that, in interaction with new/other experiences, produces the representations and effects in different ways. Thus, although many of them are similar, they are all unique and concern the individual who, in turn, is part of a collective on which he or she impacts and is impacted by.

The general survey of the profile considered the background of the teacher going through the experience, what he has already built in his training trajectory. Of the 61 participants, most were between 30 and 40 years old (45.8%), 35.6% between 40 and 50, and 16.9% between 50 and 60. A minimum percentage of 1.7% was between 20 and 30 years old. A total of 64.4% of the participants are male and 35.6% are female. A maioria dos participantes (40,7%) tinha entre sete e nove anos de tempo de serviço na Rede Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia, seguidos de 22% entre quatro e seis anos e 16,9% entre 10 e 12 anos.

Most of these professionals joined the Network after the creation of the IFs (Law No. 11.892/2008) and were in the middle of the construction/consolidation of their identity formation as Basic, Technical, and Technological Education teachers.

Of the 61 participants, most stayed for a five-month immersion period in Finland, 18.6% in 2014 and 33.9% in 2015, corresponding to 52.5%. A total of 47.5% of the participants had a three-month immersion period in the year 2016. The areas of initial training were quite varied, and were specified by 53 participants; only eight did not respond. Of the 53 respondents, 31 were from the technical field and 22 from undergraduate degrees. Thus, the majority had no pedagogical training in undergraduate studies.

Another important piece of data was to investigate whether the participants had already had some experience abroad, for study, work, or leisure. Out of the 61, 72.9% had already had experience abroad, and only 27.1% had not. Of those who had this experience, 33.9% had already had initial or continued training abroad before the immersion program in Finland. Among the training courses taken, the following were reported: a) participation in exchange programs for studying the English language in countries like Canada, the United States or England; b) participation in sandwich/full Master's or Doctorate programs in countries like Paraguay, Argentina, Portugal, England, the United States, France, Spain, Canada; and c) several courses/training courses in Japan or Portugal.

The experience of participating in the continuing education course in Finland also shows that it is constitutive of a teacher interested in international training projects, in the expansion of the network of relationships and access to different international educational projects and programs. Most of the teachers who responded (54.2%) took professional development courses abroad after participating in the Teachers for the Future Program, with or without financial aid and scholarships.

Intercultural experience of Basic, Technical and Technological Education (EBTT) teachers and the effects on pedagogical conceptions

The participants in our research went through many experiences that became formative experience or experiential training, when certain elements, mainly revealed in the narrative interviews, were secured. Among the activities developed in the formation were: participation in classes, academic events, visits to cultural settings, technical visits to educational institutions, local culture programs (e.g. sauna, fishing at the lake, typical Finnish cuisine, etc.), interaction with people from the country or other countries, etc. Two central points mentioned in these activities were the suspension of the automatisms of the profession in the context of cultural immersion and the interaction with peers in a context free from the pressures - imposed by bureaucracy and managerialism in education - impregnated in the teaching profession.

Despite the experience of each one involved in the process, we were not impregnated by work addictions. This experience was very rich and contributed a lot to my formation as a teacher in EPT (Participant 53/source: questionnaire/emphasis added).

This was, and still is, extremely significant for me, because I interpret it as a performance and a deeper exchange between groups of diverse teachers

interested in thinking and doing differently (Participant 61/source: questionnaire/emphasis added).

Cultural immersion presented itself as an important factor to intensify the learning situations and the understanding of the context in which education is inserted.

*The **immersion** process has something that keeps you connected all the time. So it is much more **intense**. The conflicts, the energy, the knowledge that comes to you. So much so that there came much more from the practice [knowledge of the practice]* (Participant 05/source: interview/emphasis added).

*The internationalization, I think it is lame, if you will pardon the expression, when a foreign teacher comes here. Because no matter how much he tells this experience, **when you live the experiences, it changes totally**. From taking the train and not paying the ticket, or paying the ticket and not presenting it to anyone, in fact, this is the issue, or even some things that would be normal in our culture and are offensive and vice-versa in the other culture. And I think all the experiences there are very rich* (Participant 02/source: interview/emphasis added).

[...] the five months were more than five for me! it seems like it was a year, two years, of an experience, of a very big immersion (Participant 03/source: interview/emphasis added).

[...] This (the immersion) was important for me. Since you improve your English, since you take the trains autonomously, you move around and see that security in Finland is different from security in Brazil. This gives people autonomy from the beginning, since they are little children (Participant 08/source: interview/emphasis added).

The individual is attentive to details and to capturing the social values embedded in simple everyday acts and their relationship to education, whether it is crossing the street and experiencing traffic rules, the dynamics of public transportation, the supermarket checkout, people's behavior, safety and its impact on people's lives, social assistance, etc.

*[...]I was very impressed, because the course was **very intense**. [...] It changed many educational paradigms. And Finland also brought me many examples of a country, many examples of citizens' behavior, many examples of personal and professional values. So it was a learning that I had from the personal point of view, and also the professional one* (Participant 08/source: interview/emphasis added).

A transforming meaning was attributed to the experience, which leads us to conclude that the experience was formative and not simply a set of experiences, as it impacted the subject and brought new elements into the process of identity construction. In relation to Professional and Technological Education, for example, the training promoted the recognition of being a teacher, especially for those with technical training who did not have a degree.

[...]The meaning of all this? **A transformation**. I feel like a teacher, really. More capable, more prepared (Participant 06/ our emphasis).

[...] it was a **turning point** in my career (Participant 39/our emphasis).

[...] for my classroom practice and understanding of what we represent in terms of professional education, I consider this experience a **watershed**. I am sure of how we should act and I learned how to do that (Participant 38/emphasis added).

By understanding the teaching and learning process in a more complete way I started to understand the role of each agent involved in this process. Thus I started to worry more about the real learning of the students, giving them more voice (Participant 53/ our emphasis).

An incredible experience that **changed my professional life** radically (Participant 21/our emphasis).

It meant a lot to me, because I see that I am leaving the chemistry lab to enter an area where I can contribute with more people, including with the improvement of education in our country, especially basic education (Participant 04/our emphasis).

[...] this experience was very **significant for me**.

[...] very positive and **high impact** on my performance (Participant 16/our emphasis).

Another important fact is related to the experience as a generator of internal motives. Thus, the educational traveler tends to return highly motivated to his or her work context, which, in turn, can generate great frustration when the impediments arising from cultural differences are encountered.

[...] my **level of motivation and belief** that we can improve Brazilian education increased a lot. [...] It is also important to emphasize that it brought me a factor that may seem corny to report, but for me it has a deep symbolic dimension, it brought me more **motivation and belief** in the teaching work and the potential to change the school, education and the world (Participant 57/emphasis added).

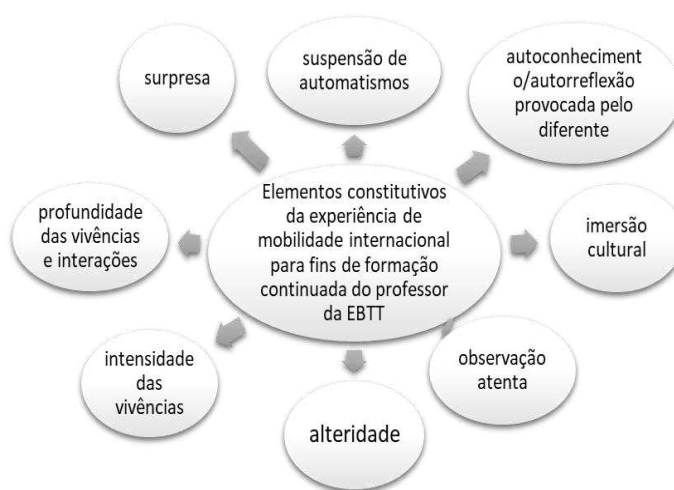
[...] with new visions, with new methodologies to be tested, with a lot of **internal motivation** (for having experienced in practice an educational model that I believe in and for having grown and evolved as a professional) but also with many challenges: culture shock, resistance to change, criticism from other colleagues, etc. (Participant 59/emphasis added).

We can conclude that the main elements that transform the experiences of these teachers - during the period of international mobility for continuing education purposes - into a formative experience are: (a) surprise and amazement - new elements happen exterior/interiorly; (b) suspension of automatisms (attention to what is happening - interior/exterior); (c) alterity; look at the other, live the different; another society/culture; (d) self-knowledge/self-reflection; look

at themselves, at their own pedagogical practices; being a teacher/being Brazilian; being individual/your society/your culture; e) cultural immersion; observation and experience of the whole and the parts - society and all the spheres that compose it - to understand education; f) attentive observation to details, behaviors, situations, contexts, etc. ; g) intensity in the experiences; exploratory spirit; and finally, h) depth in the experiences, learnings, and interactions with compatriot teachers and knowledge and self-knowledge, driving the generation of the system of distributed expertise and relational agency.

Figure 1 illustrates the elements of the overseas training experience:

Figure 1 – Elements of the training experience abroad²



Source: Prepared by the author

We do not intend to close the elements that make the experiences a formative experience, considering that they vary according to the context, implications, stages and modalities of the experience, aspects discussed by Josso (2004) and brought to our research, with a specific situation and public: teachers of EBTT participating in the continuing education program in Finland. The analysis of the modalities, context, dimensions, characteristics of teachers' experiences was inspired by Josso's (2004) studies.

The EBTT teachers who participated in the continuing education in Finland through the Teachers for the Future Program created the conditions to live the experience, that is, they 'did

² Elementos constitutivos a experiência de mobilidade internacional para fins de formação continuada do professor EBTT = Constitutive elements of the international mobility experience for the continuing education of EBTT teachers; surpresa = surprise; suspensão de automatismos = automation suspension; autoconhecimento/autorreflexão provocada pelo diferente = self-knowledge/self-reflection provoked by the diferente; imersão cultural = cultural immersion; observação atenta = attentive observation; alteridade = alterity; intensidade das vivências = intensity of experience; profundidade das vivências e interações = depth of experiences and interactions

the experience', from the moment they submitted their applied research projects for selection. However, these professionals did not control and did not look for all the experiences they had in the foreign country. In this way, they 'had the experience' by living the element of surprise that makes it up. These modalities of doing and having the experience were lived in contexts of interaction with peers, with trainers, with localized places and concrete situations, with intensity, depth, and close observation, which also propitiates the creation of systems of distributed expertise.

[...] when I arrived I thought that all that living, Finland, Finnish education, and seeing the possibility of integrating some methodology that is working in my place [...] (Participant 01/ our emphasis).

*[...] this program, VET, was kind of like hunger with the desire to eat - **the opportunity to have this training**, this complementation, and still have this in a different place, outside my context* (Participant 02/ our emphasis).

Thinking about experience occurs continuously and is characterized as a critical moment when returning and trying to transfer the knowledge acquired in training. This context of thinking about experience occurs in less localized fields, in the interaction between new learning and other acquired knowledge and wisdom, all of which play an important role in the interpretation of experience.

[...] being there in the program, in VET, with people from other institutes, not only the [...] where I am a professor, was for me by far my greatest asset. Because this provided me not only with pedagogical content, related to education, but also helped me understand where I was inserted [...] I was able to have a vision that maybe in ten years at the Institute I could not have (Participant 02).

These modalities and contexts lead us to consider the dimensions that characterize the experience. As sociocultural and psychosomatic individuals, the experiences in the interaction with others help us in the co-interpretation, at the same time that we need to think about the impact of the experience on ourselves, as unique individuals, with unique previous experiences and different from peers. Thus, the interpretation of experience is individual and it is collective. Relational schemas are built in the experiences with others and can be modified through the system of distributed expertise, gradually built in the coexistence with peers.

The collective/individual, interiority/exteriority dimensions form the dialectic pairs that constitute the experience that we deal with in this research: the formative experience, with deep learning and transforming of the individual. In some cases, the experience brought suffering in

the adaptation process - close to a different culture and far from the family, language, and mother culture, which also has a connection with the affective dimension.

[...]So it was another two months of suffering. I suffered, I cried. And I have difficulties with the language, I have difficulties with digital tools, and I didn't have my partner by my side to scream, to ask for help, to cry, to listen to me. I cried a lot [...] (Participant 11).

The "sensitive", "affective" and "consciential" dimensions were revealed in the answers to the questionnaires and in the narrative interviews, being more evident in the latter, due to their open and fluid nature. Although we understand their phenomenological heterogeneity, the perceptions and meanings attributed to the experience show similar perspectives, which allowed us to group them as follows: (a) **potentially transformative experience** - a watershed - in relation to the teacher's conceptions and pedagogical practices, as well as for the practices of the teacher-researcher - more adept at applied research, especially to teaching; b) **an experience with the potential to help the teacher recognize himself as an agent of transformation of himself, of his surroundings, of the people and scenario** - education and society - and as a multiplier of knowledge; and c) **an experience with the potential to provoke new perspectives and consequent enthusiasm towards change in the scenario** itself, also contributing to provoke diverse feelings and emotions with the reverse culture shock, such as frustration, sadness, discouragement, and loneliness.

The formative experience produces effects on the teachers' pedagogical conceptions, another category listed and linked to the first one. In order to analyze it, we searched the documents of the Secretariat of Vocational and Technological Education of the Ministry of Education - SETEC/MEC for the expected effects and in the teachers' speeches for the effects perceived from their perspective.

We can conclude that the expected effects on the teacher's training to work in Professional and Technological Education (EFA) are related to the training of an innovative teacher profile, a multiplier, a solver of problems related to the local/regional community and a developer of research applied to the productive sector. All calls aimed, in general, to "train teachers to develop applied research projects with a focus on integration with the productive sector"³.

This interpretation is possible from the analysis of the objectives, project themes, the course program, expectations and final evaluation. This profile meets the purpose and objective

³ Public Call CNPq - SETEC/MEC - Teachers for the Future Program (Finland).

of the FI prescribed in its creation Law no. 11.892/2008, which establishes as one of its purposes "to conduct and stimulate applied research, cultural production, entrepreneurship, cooperativism and scientific and technological development" and one of its objectives is to "conduct applied research, stimulating the development of technical and technological solutions" (BRAZIL, 2008).

The effects expected by the teachers alternated between: a) pedagogical training, since they were encouraged or received information about the program through other former participants; and b) development of research, based on the public calls. These effects are linked to the subject's potential for internal changes and its action to provoke transformations in its surroundings.

In general, considering data from the teacher's perspective, evidenced in the questionnaire and in the interview, and in the final reports issued by SETEC/MEC, which considered results from questionnaires applied to participating teachers, we can summarize the effects in: a) expansion of the network of relationships (national and international); and b) transformative effect in the conceptions and pedagogical and research practices.

[...] 77.78% of participants reported that they changed the didactic-pedagogical approach, such as changes in the teaching method and tools used in the classroom in the subjects taught by the teacher and creation of study groups on project-based teaching (FINAL REPORT, 2014, p. 22).

[...] 14.8% state that they influenced the curriculum of their institution with the creation of an Integrated Project subject to include more practice in the course (FINAL REPORT, 2014, p. 22).

*Today I teach in a Master's Program in Professional Education (PROFEPT), and I could learn a lot in Finland about **applied research** (Participant 17/our emphasis).*

Regarding the transformative effect, we can summarize it as follows: a) changes in pedagogical practices, involving more frequent use of active methodologies, digital tools, collaborative/group techniques and strategies; b) changes in research practices (with a focus on applied research) and c) changes in conceptions about regulatory documents (especially the Pedagogical Proposal for Courses): (i) proposals for the inclusion of integrative projects; (ii) curriculum reformulation/updating, considering the competence-based curriculum and student protagonism.

Both the effect expected by SETEC/MEC and the effect caused, from the teacher's perspective, show that the demands for individual efforts of the teacher prevail. On one hand, the "global teacher" is expected, as an individual articulated with his or her peers, to innovate,

multiply his or her knowledge, propose solutions to the problems around him or her (and, many times, solve them) and research in an articulated way with the productive sector, also proposing solutions for this sector.

On the other hand, the teachers themselves, transformed after an intense formative experience, feel determined to perform all the tasks for which he was prepared; however, they do not find the desired institutional response, due to lack of articulation between the spheres of planning, delivery and evaluation of the program. This scenario generates new effects on the transfer of knowledge, such as discouragement, conflicts experienced with the challenges caused by impediments (institutional/national policies, institutional culture, management model with strong bureaucratic characteristics, relationship with peers, lack of support and integration of actions, etc.).

Final considerations

The objective of this research was to investigate the formative experience and the effects on the pedagogical conceptions of EBTT teachers from IFS, who participated in continuing education through international mobility in Finland. We focused on the categories of effects and experience, considering the effects on pedagogical conceptions and on the elements of the formative experience.

At a given moment of the experience abroad, even in a short course, the subject experiences intense feelings, sensations, and perceptions that provoke internal changes in the relationship with other people and cultures. The formative experience is potentially transformative of the teacher's pedagogical conceptions regarding the act of teaching and the relationship with students. However, the effects of training appear as yet another fragmenting experience of the teacher's identity, since there are several institutional, administrative, and cultural impediments to integrate their learning on return.

The suspension of automatisms, excessive work and information and exposure to otherness are essential elements of this transformative process, which would not apply, for example, in an in-service training course. This exposure to difference experienced by the Brazilian teacher may cause different feelings: satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of his or her country of origin, work routine, educational policies, infrastructure, the value given to education in a given country and its ramifications (the prestige given to the teacher, the budget allocated to public education, the care taken with the structure and school

environments, the quality of teacher training, educational policies as state policies and not government policies).

The intercultural experience shared and interpreted with peers, with common goals and focus on learning, proved to be fundamental for the construction of a distributed system of expertise, in which each individual, from different areas of knowledge, is an aggregator and composes a relational community that is strengthened by knowing each other and helps interpret the experience. Thus, a learning community is built at the moment of cultural immersion, which, as we have verified, may or may not extend the time of collaboration beyond the period abroad, through the formation of networks of relationships and collaborative work, such as research and extension projects, publications, etc.

The formative experience lived by the Brazilian teacher in Finland, a country of excellence in education, requires deep elaborations for application in the Brazilian context. In Finland, education is part of the nation project, with perennial State policies that are maintained throughout the different governments. Public education is of quality and for everyone, rich and poor. There are no private schools, so public schools must meet the needs of everyone, regardless of social class.

These differences can generate adverse feelings on the return to Brazil, when the teacher goes through the most conflicting moment of his or her formative experience: the reverse culture shock. In our country, the value of education is historically different than in Finland. Thus, the reverse culture shock is the most critical moment of the intercultural experience, because, although the individual introjects as his responsibility to do something with what he has learned, the changes and implementations do not depend solely on him, but also on issues involving institutional management, as well as other dimensions such as cultural, economic and social.

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