

**EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS ON THE TEACHING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN THE PERIOD FROM 2020 TO 2021**

***AValiação dos Pós-Graduandos sobre o Programa de Aperfeiçoamento de Ensino no Período de 2020 a 2021***

***Evaluación de los Postgraduados del Programa de Perfeccionamiento Docente en el Período 2020-2021***



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**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this article was to analyze the Teaching Improvement Program of the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing on teacher training in the period from 2020 to 2021. The instrument used to obtain the data were electronic questionnaires with objective questions and dissertations applied every six months to the trainees of the Program. The thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke was used in this article. The total number of participants was 144 postgraduate students. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and it can be said that the need for adaptation and innovation to new remote teaching technologies have brought advances in the process of teacher training. It was also highlighted that the trainees were able to experience, in their training, the five dimensions of teaching, which was evaluated as a very satisfying experience.

**KEYWORDS:** Teaching-Learning. Teacher Training. Higher Education. Evaluation. Teaching Improvement Program.

**RESUMO:** O objetivo deste artigo foi analisar o Programa de Aperfeiçoamento de Ensino da Escola de Enfermagem de Ribeirão Preto da Universidade de São Paulo no Brasil sobre a formação docente promovida no período de 2020 a 2021. O instrumento utilizado para obtenção dos dados se constituiu de questionários eletrônicos com questões objetivas e dissertativas aplicados semestralmente aos estagiários do Programa. Realizou-se a análise temática proposta por Braun e Clarke. O total de respondentes foi de 144 pós-graduandos. O período pesquisado foi perpassado pela pandemia da COVID-19 e pode-se dizer que a necessidade de adaptação e inovação às novas tecnologias de ensino remoto trouxe avanços no processo de formação docente. Destacou-se ainda que os estagiários puderam vivenciar, em sua formação, as cinco dimensões da docência, o que foi avaliado como uma experiência muito satisfatória.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Ensino-Aprendizagem. Formação docente. Ensino Superior. Avaliação. Programa de Aperfeiçoamento de Ensino.

**RESUMEN:** El objetivo de este artículo fue analizar el Programa de Perfeccionamiento Docente de la Escuela de Enfermería de Ribeirão Preto de la Universidad de São Paulo en Brasil sobre la formación docente promovida en el período de 2020 a 2021. El instrumento utilizado para la obtención de los datos fueron cuestionarios electrónicos con preguntas objetivas y disertativas aplicados semestralmente a los pasantes del Programa. Se realizó el análisis temático propuesto por Braun y Clarke. El número total de encuestados fue de 144 posgraduados. El período investigado fue durante la pandemia del COVID-19 y se puede afirmar que la necesidad de adaptación e innovación a las nuevas tecnologías de enseñanza a distancia trajo avances en el proceso de formación de profesores. También se destacó que los pasantes pudieron experimentar, en su formación, las cinco dimensiones de la enseñanza, lo que fue evaluado como una experiencia muy satisfactoria.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Enseñanza-Aprendizaje. Formación de Profesores. Educación Superior. Evaluación. Programa de Perfeccionamiento Docente.

## Introduction

Teacher training for Higher Education takes place, according to Art. 66 of the Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Brazil, 1996, p. 21) “at postgraduate level, primarily in master's and doctoral programs”.

CAPES itself - Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, a body that takes care of the implementation and consolidation of Postgraduate Programs in Brazil, established in 1999 the mandatory teaching internship at undergraduate level for scholarship students enrolled in postgraduate *stricto-sensu* degree (CAPES, 1999). This measure is still in force today, leading Higher Education Institutions to organize themselves to offer this internship.

Even so, even with the legal indication that teacher training takes place in the *stricto sensu* Graduate Program, it is predominantly a space for the training of researchers, its primary function.

In this sense, *stricto sensu* graduate courses offer few pedagogical disciplines, and when they do, these are related to the specific teaching methodology, and are also the result of individual initiatives of a few professors. This shows that there is no institutional concern with teacher training in graduate spaces (Cunha, 2010).

It is noteworthy that institutional policies are necessary that are committed to the teaching training process of in-service teachers, in order to propose, monitor, stimulate and finance, with the aim of ensuring the quality of pedagogical practice (Cunha, 2016).

The University of São Paulo established a pilot project for *Initiation in Higher Education* in 1992 (USP, 1992), culminating, in 2005, with the Teaching Improvement Program (PAE), aimed at improving postgraduate students for didactic activity degree (USP, 2019). According to its guidelines, there are different dimensions of teaching to be worked on: organizational, technical, didactic-pedagogical, evaluative and that which refers to the teacher-student relationship (USP, 2019).

The PAE is present in all USP units that have postgraduate programs. There is a central committee at USP and each unit constitutes its own specific committee (Rivas *et al.*, 2016).

The PAE consists of two mandatory stages, the first being Pedagogical Preparation and the second being the Supervised Teaching Internship. The first stage, of pedagogical preparation, it presents two modalities: postgraduate subjects, with contents that address university and higher education issues; and the core of activities with an emphasis on the preparation of teaching material, curriculum discussions, subject syllabi and course planning,

coordinated by USP professors. In the supervised teaching internship stage, the postgraduate student works on undergraduate subjects, being supervised by the professor who teaches them. It is a space to get closer to aspects related to being a teacher (USP, 2019).

The PAE of the Ribeirão Preto School of Nursing at USP (PAE-EERP/USP) presents two mandatory stages, the first being the Pedagogical Preparation, with an emphasis on pedagogical subjects and the second, the Supervised Teaching Internship, developed in subjects of degree, supervised by the professor who teaches it. Through this program, it is possible for the student to get closer to the political, theoretical and methodological aspects inherent to the teaching-learning process in Higher Education. A committee made up of faculty and student representatives from EERP/USP accompanies the student during this process through periodic meetings. Interns are also asked to complete PAE-EERP/USP electronic evaluation forms every six months.

In this context, the following research problem guided this work: how has PAE-EERP/USP fulfilled its role of offering teaching training to the Unit's postgraduate students?

Thus, the objective of this article was to analyze the PAE-EERP/USP - Teaching Improvement Program of the Ribeirão Preto School of Nursing at the University of São Paulo in Brazil on teacher training promoted in the period from 2020 to 2021.

## **Method**

This is a qualitative study with thematic analysis developed based on Braun and Clarke (2006), in which the steps are subdivided: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, search for themes, review of themes, definition and assignment of names to themes, and preparation of the report.

The data were obtained through electronic evaluation forms applied every six months to postgraduate interns at PAE-EERP/USP, in the period 2020-2021, consisting of essay and objective questions related to the preparatory stage, the dimensions of teaching and the perception of interns about their teaching training in accordance with PAE guidelines, totaling 17 questions. It is worth mentioning that, to guarantee anonymity, the names of the interns were replaced by numbers.

The results of the four semesters, referring to the first and second semesters of 2020 and 2021, of assessments carried out by postgraduate interns at PAE-EERP/USP were analyzed. Initially, the data from the objective questions was organized for characterization, and then we

sought to carry out the thematic analysis of the essay questions (Braun; Clarke, 2006). For objective questions, the Likert Scale was used, where 1 represents very dissatisfied and 5 represents very satisfied.

This study was approved by the EERP-USP Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Guidelines and Regulatory Norms for Research involving Human Beings, contained in CNS Resolution 510/16 under CAAE protocol 53046821.0.0000.5393.

Authorization was requested from the EERP/USP Postgraduate Committee to make the material produced for the analysis of the evaluation of the PAE program at the Unit available. It is a material that does not contain the identification of postgraduate students, therefore, the use of the Free and Informed Consent Form was waived.

## **Results and discussion**

### **Characterization of postgraduate interns at PAE**

In 2020, 1st semester, there were 46 PAE interns in the EERP Postgraduate Programs (24 scholarship holders); in the 2nd semester, 65 interns (22 scholarship holders); in 2021, 1st semester, 37 interns (25 fellows) and in the 2nd semester, 50 interns (24 fellows). In total, there were 198 interns during the period. Of these, 144 responded to the forms. The results obtained in the data analysis were extracted from these completed electronic forms. Regarding the period of 2020, there were 32 (22.2%) respondents in the first semester and 44 (30.6%) in the second semester. In 2021, there were 29 (20.1%) respondents in the first semester and 39 (27.1%) in the second semester. In the four semesters, more than 50% of participants were doctoral students.

It is noteworthy that the USP-RP Campus offers PAE in the Postgraduate Programs of its eight units (Usp, 2023) - School of Physical Education and Sports of Ribeirão Preto – EEFERP (a PAE discipline); Ribeirão Preto School of Nursing – EERP (four PAE subjects); Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences of Ribeirão Preto – FCFRP (two PAE subjects); Faculty of Law of Ribeirão Preto – FDRP (one PAE subject); Faculty of Economics, Administration and Accounting of Ribeirão Preto – FEARP (four PAE subjects); Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto – FFCLRP (five PAE subjects); Faculty of Medicine of Ribeirão Preto – FMRP (18 PAE subjects); Faculty of Dentistry of Ribeirão Preto – FORP (two PAE subjects), and postgraduate students can participate in the program in any unit.

The PAE-EERP/USP Program, the focus of our study, received students from other Postgraduate Programs (15 from the Interunits in Nursing, three from Pharmacology, one from the Surgical Clinic, one from Nutrition and metabolism and one from the Professional Master's in Nursing) who sought to develop their teaching training, but the programs with the most participants were, respectively, the Postgraduate Program in Fundamental Nursing (52), Public Health Nursing (46) and Psychiatric Nursing (25), all from the unit itself: EERP /USP.

It is observed that in the pedagogical preparatory stage, four subjects stand out for being the most studied by PAE interns, namely: ERM 5780 – Teaching in health education: knowledge and practices (35.4%); ERG 5908 – University teaching: concepts, professionalization and didactic foundations (14.6%); ERE 5529 – University teaching in health: formation of professional identity (13.2%); ERP 5806 – Planning teaching work in higher education (12.5%).

These disciplines have in common aspects related to teaching improvement, planning and teaching in higher education; in addition to addressing and aiming to develop a critical, reflective, scientific, creative, and innovative stance in relation to the role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process. The evaluation of didactic-pedagogical aspects is presented in Table 1, below.

**Table 1** – Assessment of didactic-pedagogical aspects by postgraduate students

Aspects evaluated (%)	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Participation in discipline planning	12.5	9.7	15.3	29.2	33.3
Participation in the definition and choice of support materials	13.2	7.6	16.7	31.9	30.5
Articulation of theoretical and practical elements	2.8	1.4	9.7	25.7	60.4
Teaching methodology with individual, large and small group work.	0.7	2.1	11.8	20.1	65.3



The use of active methodologies	0.7	4.2	15.3	19.4	60.4
The use of communication and information technologies (ICT) - resources and equipment	1.4	0.7	5.5	21.5	70.8
Demands from undergraduate students for PAE interns	5.5	5.5	22.2	33.3	33.3
Participation in the learning assessment of undergraduates	6.9	2.8	9.0	26.4	54.2

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Source: Prepared by the authors.

It can be seen that, in general, the didactic-pedagogical aspects offered by PAE/EERP-USP were satisfactory, enabling the active participation of interns, even during the most critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the internship, in its majority, was developed in a remote format.

The aspects evaluated above are related to the five dimensions of teaching established by the PAE: 1) organizational, which works on the selection of curricular content and the organization of teaching resources; 2) technical, which is related to monitoring theoretical and practical classes in which the intern works to control attendance, insert material on the USP platform, among other actions; 3) didactic-pedagogical, which involves the development of classes with a supervisor, participation in doubts sessions, seminars, guided studies; 4) teacher and student relationship, in which the intern experiences communication between the teacher and students, favoring the learning process; 5) evaluative, in which the student evaluation process works together with the supervisor. It should be noted that all of these activities necessarily require the supervision of the teacher responsible for the intern (USP, 2019).

## Perception about being a university professor and the teaching training

This topic refers to essay questions that required greater reflection from the interns. These questions dealt with being a university professor and also with significant aspects of teacher training, including the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and remote undergraduate teaching.

Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, codes were assigned to the interns' responses, which resulted in themes. These themes are presented here, followed by some extracts - excerpts from postgraduate students' responses - that illustrate their constitution.

There are five major themes: 1) political-social aspects of teaching; 2) knowledge: construction and sharing; 3) facilitating teacher; 4) strategies and new EAD teaching platforms/tools; 5) adaptation and reinvention of teaching.

**Table 2** – Frequency of codes in each theme in the 1st and 2nd semesters of 2020 and 2021.

Themes	1st semester 2020	2nd semester 2020	1st semester 2021	2nd semester 2021	TOTAL
1. Social politician	13	28	18	27	86
2. Knowledge: construction and sharing	16	19	13	9	57
3. Facilitator teacher	8	11	10	9	38
4. Strategies and new EAD teaching platforms/tools	17	26	17	15	75
5. Adaptation and reinvention	10	20	20	34	84

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The first theme was constituted based on the presence, in the answers, of teaching elements linked to insertion in society, considering its different aspects: political, economic and social. This theme was named: Political-social aspects of teaching. It is observed below how the intern highlighted the role of the university professor, linking it to such aspects:

[...] being a university professor means integrating teaching, research, extension and administrative activities into the practices developed. It is about transmitting the knowledge accumulated over the years through different teaching strategies, the improvement of this knowledge and the development of new knowledge based on investigative practices. It is a profession that requires constant improvement, flexibility, ability to deal with new teaching and work contexts, sensitivity to deal with students who are in constant transformation, in the process of development and who have needs that go



beyond learning needs. It is having the ability to have critical sense, working with scientifically proven methods and techniques, without leaving aside the social, human and existential aspects of the people involved in the process, respecting scientific knowledge and historically constructed popular knowledge (Intern 14, PhD, 1st without 2020, our translation).

Intern 14 highlights that the teacher must work scientific methods without leaving aside social, political and human aspects.

Likewise, intern 12 also presents in his speech the importance of the aspects mentioned above:

Being ethically, scientifically and politically committed to the emancipatory and consolidating project of science and excellent education, being socially committed is also one of the pillars that, for me, are important in university teaching (Intern 12, PhD, 1st semester 2021, our translation).

For the participants, being a teacher must form critical subjects who contribute to their profession and society, showing a perspective beyond traditional training, in which the focus is on content. They point out that the teacher helps in the formation of opinion and citizenship, having an ethical and social commitment to the context in which he is inserted. Furthermore, they point out that it is essential that teachers understand the socioeconomic and educational profile of the students they are teaching.

In this sense, Freire (2011) points out the importance of emancipatory education in which students' prior knowledge is considered, as well as their autonomy in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the importance of using Active Methodologies is considered, which put the student into activity, aiming at their learning and the development of their ability to think critically about their reality (Libâneo, 2022). This is one of the challenges of teaching, uniting the pedagogical and conceptual domain related to the teaching-learning process with university political aspects, understanding the movement of society, recognizing its characteristics and identifying its needs in order to conduct the educational process to meet the needs in accordance with this reality (Freitas, 2016; Saviani, 2020).

The second theme, Knowledge: construction and sharing, addressed aspects related to the importance of the teacher-student relationship in the construction of knowledge.

Intern 16, in his speech, highlights the complexity of university teaching:

For me, being a university professor involves knowing the role of the university, identifying the profile of students entering higher education and adapting their practice to the different contexts encountered (society is constantly changing and, therefore, the professor's work must also follow these changes). Furthermore, the elements that constitute teaching practice in

higher education involve teaching planning, the definition of teaching-learning methodologies and strategies to be used, the selection of content and teaching resources, the teacher-student relationship and the evaluation process. (Intern 16, PhD, 1 week 2020, our translation).

For intern 29, there is a concern about the role of the teacher in the professional training of undergraduate students:

Promote paths for the construction of a theoretically-scientifically qualified professional, with social awareness and empowered to identify their potentials and weaknesses, instructing possible paths for the development of better professional skills and growth (Intern 29, doctorate, 1 week 2021, our translation).

Statements similar to these appeared in 57 responses from interns, pointing out that university professors must have the responsibility for building and sharing knowledge with their students, being responsible for planning teaching methodologies and strategies that instigate curiosity and development, taking into account the diversities and transformations of each student.

From the moment the teacher overcomes his traditional pedagogical conception, in which knowledge is passed on unilaterally, and adopts a model that favors the construction of a critical perspective, enables the democratic relationship between teacher and student and favors the construction of knowledge through co-participation, which is fundamental for the critical-reflective training of those involved in the teaching-learning process (Freitas, 2016).

The third theme was called Facilitator Teacher, composed of excerpts from the interns' speeches that point to the role of the teacher at the University as a facilitator of learning.

Intern 13 reports the importance of the facilitating teacher:

Being a teacher is nothing more than a facilitator of knowledge. I believe that a teacher is someone who can do the didactic transposition of content to facilitate and stimulate the student's curiosity (Intern 13, master's degree, 1st semester 2021, our translation).

Intern 21 highlights the tripod of teaching:

“[...] Facilitator in the teaching-learning process, with the aim of expanding the student's horizons in teaching, research and extension” (Intern 21, PhD, 2nd semester 2020, our translation).

Among the interns, 38 highlighted the role of the university professor as a mediator of learning, in which he provides conditions for his students to build knowledge through the

articulation of theory and practice and, furthermore, they highlight the tripod of teaching which in fact is the work of being a professor at the University.

The university professor, in addition to knowledge of his specific area of activity, has a fundamental social role in mediating the teaching-learning process through critical-reflective pedagogical knowledge. It is necessary for teachers to be aware of their practice so that their work does not become repetitive, valuing the student's reality, experience and knowledge (Pimenta, 2009). It is important to highlight that, as a mediator, the teacher has the role of supporting students with resources aimed at developing autonomy in the search for knowledge, without losing sight of their responsibility with ethics and reflective criticism in this transformative training process (Freitas, 2016).

Article 207 of the 1988 Federal Constitution states that “Universities enjoy didactic-scientific, administrative and financial and asset management autonomy, and will obey the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension” (Brasil, 2016, p. 123). This tripod, teaching, research, extension, is seen as an inseparable unit, which strengthens the quality of university teaching, favoring autonomous, competent and ethical teaching (Moita; Andrade, 2009).

The fourth theme was called Strategies and new platforms/tools for distance learning teaching, grouping the answers referring to teaching technologies and strategies. With the COVID-19 pandemic, interns demonstrated the needs of remote teaching.

Intern 18 reports on learning new methodologies:

I learned new teaching methodologies that help with better quality teaching, given the various technological resources available in the context of distance learning (Intern 18, PhD, 2nd semester 2020, our translation).

Intern 8 reflects on the new challenges encountered in the pandemic for being a teacher:

The pandemic certainly generated new challenges for the day-to-day development of university professors. However, I also believe that it opened up some opportunities, such as knowledge of technologies and tools, which assist in teaching-learning and provide interactions with students, even in remote teaching (Intern 8, PhD, 2nd semester 2021, our translation).

Among the interns, 75 considered that they had learned and developed new teaching strategies and that the search for online tools and platforms provided interaction with students, being significant for the training process as future teachers.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge for society and also in the area of education. The transfer of face-to-face activities to remote activities required great efforts from teachers in using technological resources to reorganize their didactic-pedagogical plans, as most teachers did not know or did not know how to use the technological tools available, highlighting the need for continuous teacher training, given the dynamics of technological development (Almeida *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, the pandemic crisis highlighted the potential of applying active methodologies inserted in the remote modality. In the active methodology, the student has an active stance in relation to their learning, and remote teaching offers strategies that establish greater flexibility of time and space for students (Palmeira; Silva; Ribeiro, 2020).

The fifth theme was called Adaptation and reinvention, based on situations brought up by interns who highlighted the challenges faced by university professors.

Intern 6 highlights the importance of the teacher being dynamic to provide learning opportunities to the student:

Being a university professor means being an educator, motivating, inspiring, and understanding your student as a whole. Furthermore, the university professor is the one who adapts and reinvents new education methodologies according to a given situation, making it possible to carry out the quality teaching-learning process (Intern 6, master's degree, 2nd semester 2021, our translation).

Intern 32 reports on the search for new didactic knowledge in relation to teaching practice:

It means reinventing yourself all the time, updating yourself, understanding that teaching demands are complex and require a broad look at the needs of students, considering that they have different skills and difficulties (Intern 32, PhD, 2nd semester 2021, our translation).

Being a university professor is a challenge that requires constant adaptations to the context in which the professional is inserted. Reinventing yourself is necessary to understand the diversities that students present during their training. This issue was considered significant in the training process of the second half of 2021, mainly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This point highlights the flexibility required of teachers and the understanding of the complexity involved in university teaching. The adaptation and innovation of strategies is essential to enable alternative paths, without losing sight of promoting autonomy and exercising the role of students as subjects participating in the significant teaching-learning process,

involving the selection of appropriate techniques, procedures and resources (Cunha, 2010; Freitas, 2016).

### Final remarks

This work sought to approach the issues of higher education teacher training dealt with in postgraduate studies, through PAE-EERP/USP. In general, the interns satisfactorily evaluated the development of the program, both in the preparatory pedagogical stage and in the supervised internship during the period 2020-2021. Considering that the period researched was covered by the COVID 19 pandemic, this positive evaluation allows us to say that an advance was identified in the teaching-learning process due to the need for innovation and adaptation to remote teaching technologies. Furthermore, it was identified that the objective of the PAE was achieved and the interns had the opportunity for teacher training involving the five dimensions, namely: organizational, technical, didactic-pedagogical, evaluative, and teacher-student relationship, having been evaluated as a very satisfactory experience.

The limits of this work materialize in the use of forms previously prepared for didactic purposes, not specific to this research. This limitation is compensated by the possibility of obtaining data already available and directed to the evaluation of the Program itself. Furthermore, the cut-off for the analysis of forms covering only two years may have limited our results.

On the other hand, the relevance of the work lies in the contribution that this analysis of the experience of PAE-EERP/USP interns can bring to the recognition of the importance of higher education institutions organizing institutional policies that effectively focus on and value teaching training. in *stricto sensu* postgraduate courses, overcoming perspectives that exclusively value research.

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**Author contributions:** Marina Marques: preparation and design of the study; acquisition, manuscript analysis, manuscript writing. Mônica Mitsue Nakano: elaboration and design of the study; acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data; writing and reviewing the manuscript. Maraina Gomes Pires Fernandes Dias: data analysis and interpretation; writing and reviewing the manuscript. Débora Tatiane Góes Silva: data analysis and interpretation; writing and reviewing the manuscript. Luciane Sá de Andrade: writing and reviewing the manuscript. Marlene Fagundes Carvalho Gonçalves: preparation and design of the study; acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data; writing, and reviewing the manuscript.

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