

**STUDENTS FOR TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD TEACHING PRACTICE
IN A COMPETENCE-BASED FORMATIVE CONTEXT**

***PERCEPCIONES DE FUTUROS PROFESORES SOBRE LA PRÁCTICA DOCENTE
EN UN CONTEXTO DE FORMACIÓN POR COMPETENCIAS***

***PERCEPÇÕES DE FUTUROS PROFESSORES SOBRE A PRÁTICA DOCENTE EM
CONTEXTO DE FORMAÇÃO POR COMPETÊNCIA***

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ABSTRACT: In a context of competency-based formative (MINERD, 2016), perceptions toward teaching practices, teacher identity (SERRANO; PONTES, 2016; ZABALZA, 2011), and strategies in favor of professional development (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009; GONZÁLEZ CALVO *et al.*, 2015); held by students for secondary school teachers in a Dominican higher education institution were examined. The study was exploratory and descriptive. The information was obtained through the focus group technique with nine (9) students and some university's tutors and associate professors from the practice centers. For the analysis, ad-hoc qualitative analysis procedures were used, which allowed the construction of categories to answer the study questions. Students perceive that teaching practices constitute opportunities to get to know the educational system, help in the configuration of professional identity and compose an effective scenario for the appropriation of mediation strategies. It is suggested to improve the specialized and pedagogical education of the teachers who accompany them in these practices, to articulate the curricular coherence school university and to make better coordination between all the entities involved in education policies.

KEYWORDS: Pedagogical formative. Student teachers. Professional development.

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RESUMO: Em um contexto de formação por competências (MINERD, 2016), foram examinadas as percepções sobre as práticas docentes (ZABALZA, 2011), a identidade docente (SERRANO; PONTES, 2016) e as estratégias em favor do desenvolvimento profissional (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009; GONZÁLEZ CALVO et al., 2015); de alunos para professores do ensino médio em uma instituição de ensino superior dominicana. O estudo foi exploratório e descritivo; as informações foram obtidas por meio da técnica de grupo focal com nove (9) alunos e alguns tutores da universidade e professores associados dos centros de prática. Para a análise, foram utilizados procedimentos de análise qualitativa ad-hoc, que permitiram a construção de categorias para responder às questões do estudo. Os alunos percebem que as práticas docentes constituem oportunidades para conhecer o sistema educacional, auxiliam na configuração da identidade profissional e compõem um cenário efetivo para a apropriação de estratégias de mediação. Sugere-se melhorar a formação especializada e pedagógica dos docentes que os acompanham nestas práticas, articular a coerência curricular entre universidade-escola e a entre todas as entidades envolvidas nas políticas de formação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação pedagógica. Professores em formação. Desenvolvimento profissional.

RESUMEN: En un contexto de formación por competencias (MINERD, 2016), se examinaron las percepciones sobre las prácticas docentes (ZABALZA, 2011), la identidad docente (SERRANO; PONTES, 2016) y las estrategias a favor del desarrollo profesional (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009; GONZÁLEZ CALVO et al., 2015); sustentadas por estudiantes para profesor de secundaria en una institución de educación superior dominicana. El estudio fue exploratorio y descriptivo; la información fue obtenida mediante la técnica de grupo focal con nueve (9) estudiantes y algunos profesores tutores de la universidad y asociados de los centros de práctica. Para el análisis se utilizó procedimientos ad-hoc de análisis cualitativo, que permitieron construir categorías para responder las preguntas del estudio. Los estudiantes perciben que las prácticas docentes constituyen oportunidades para conocer el sistema educativo, coadyuvar en la configuración de la identidad profesional y componer un escenario efectivo para la apropiación de estrategias de mediación. Se sugiere mejorar la formación especializada y pedagógica de los profesores que los acompañan en dichas prácticas, articular la coherencia curricular entre universidad-escuela y la coordinación entre todos los entes involucrados en las políticas de formación.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Formación pedagógica. Estudiantes para profesor. Desarrollo profesional.

Introduction

The education of this century has brought new demands and challenges; these include the need to improve teacher training; especially that of students for teachers, that is, the so-called initial training (SÁNCHEZ PONCE, 2013), which can be assumed as a process of

progressive and gradual dissolution of conceptions and beliefs, typical of school culture that students for teacher have derived from their previous

experience as students throughout the different stages of their transit through school; therefore, this training should provide opportunities for students to experience new ways of learning for themselves and to be personally involved in learning and teaching situations, such as those expected to be able to design and manage during the professional exercise of their role as teachers (GONZÁLEZ, 2010, p. 49, our translation).

However, this is not the case in most initial teacher training programs. This situation, explained by González (2010), justifies the efforts to transform the curricula of these programs, as well as requires updating the pedagogical strategies put into play to contribute to the training of future teaching professionals.

In several Ibero-American countries where such transformations were carried out, competence-based training was chosen, as evidenced by the work of (DIAZ *et al.*, 2020; SARCEDA-GORGOSO; SANTOS-GONZALEZ; REGO-AGRASO, 2022; UNESCO, 2018).

The meaning of *competition* has been the subject of many different discussions and interpretations. For example, the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (MINERD, 2016, p. 44) defines competence as "[...] the ability to act effectively and autonomously in various contexts, mobilizing concepts, procedures, attitudes and values in an integrated manner." In turn, the university defines it as:

[...] the skills acquired (knowledge, attitudes, skills, perspectives and skills) through systematic learning processes that enable, within the chosen field, appropriate approaches to their specific problems and the proper management of procedures and methods to act effectively in the face of requirements (p. 25, our translation).

The authors of this study assume that training in skills is a means for the realization of the person fully in the whole being, doing, existing and living together (MARTÍNEZ CLARES; ECHEVERRÍA SAMANES, 2009; PERRENOUD, 2011; TARDIF, 2014). Therefore, for efficient performance in any profession, we recognize that "[...] it is necessary to master the knowledge required by him, for the effective exercise of this knowledge it is necessary to know how to do; and to be functional in a changing world, it is necessary to know how to be and even more know how to be" (MARTÍNEZ CLARES; ECHEVERRÍA SAMANES, 2009, p. 130, our translation). This approach to professional training puts more emphasis on the development of the person in its anthropological, sociocultural and technical dimensions.

In the specific case of initial training by competencies of future teachers, authors such as Castro Rubilar (2017) and Perrenoud (2011), recognize that the development of teaching skills is a process that must be permanently fed; mainly because continuous improvement and reflection are essential to guide students to successful vocational training. These two authors

agree with Zabalza (2011), who states that "the more we know about the internal processes that lead each subject to learning, the better we can optimize them, organize things so that learning outcomes are effective" (p. 26, our translation).

A relevant aspect for the evaluation of competencies, which constitutes the theme of advisory interest of this study, is that, from their perception and their training, they have the very actors of the training process, which, in this case, are the teachers and students who practice their teaching practices. The information they provide is a valuable intake for the implementation of improvement processes in terms of initial training of future teachers (RUBILAR, 2017).

In this sense, recognizing what was affirmed by Zabalza (2011), we assume that teaching practices constitute an ideal opportunity to favor professional training more effectively, since they allow the future teacher to connect, both disciplinal and emotionally, with the environment in which he will perform his professional work; therefore, such practices can be assumed "[...] as a magnificent opportunity for teachers in training to connect with themselves, with their strengths and weaknesses" (ZABALZA, 2011, p. 37, our translation).

Based on the above, our theme of interest is based on the teaching practices that should be carried out by students of the Bachelor of Science Oriented to High School (Social Sciences, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology and Physics), offered by a private university in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. This is justified because the authors are part of the team of teachers that supports the management and execution of these practices; therefore, we undertook this study whose objectives were:

- a) Identify the perceptions of teachers and students about the opportunities of knowledge and training that teaching practice offers in a context of competencies-based training;
- b) Examine the relationship between practices and the construction of teacher identity;
- c) Evaluate which processes and strategies best mediated the teaching practice developed.

Theoretical references

Depending on the objectives of the work, the main theoretical references assumed corresponded to the following constructs: teacher education, teaching practice, teacher identity and training processes and strategies.

Teacher training

During teaching practice, the knowledge accumulated by students throughout their life trajectory "come to life", both sociocultural (for example, those acquired within their families) and those obtained as a result of their participation in formal training processes (schools, high school institutes and university) (IGLESIAS MARTÍNEZ; MIRALLES MONCHO; LOZANO CABEZAS, 2019; TARDIF, 2014). This practice is a fundamental period of initial training, as it offers opportunities to test teaching skills in authentic contexts, as well as promote reflection and continuous improvement of participating students.

However, despite being a central element in the initial training of future teachers, there is no common view of their concept (ÁLVAREZ, 2015; KLETTE; HAMMERNESS, 2016) and how to develop it in the different training institutions, and each of them develops it in a differentiated way (ZABALZA, 2011).

Teaching practice

In the case of the reference institution, the Subcomponent of Teaching Practice is carried out from an integrative view between theory and practice, developing together with the other actions of the formation and not in an isolated or independent way. In this institution, teaching practice is conceived as: "a training tool to qualify their professional practice with a view to strengthening their proper insertion in the work context that corresponds to them" (INTEC, 2017, n.p.).

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that teaching practice is a process lived, not only by the practicing student, but also in an environment where it has the support of a group of professionals who contribute to its development. All this forms a system in which the actors intersperse to enhance the training of the practicing student, who is accompanied and receives guidance from both their practice teachers and their associate teachers, during their immersion in the school institution where this practice is performed.

The practitioners, together with the professionals who accompany them, constitute a triad composed of: (a) the practitioners (assumed as teachers in training); (b) associate teachers acting as counselors or co-coaches when they receive professionals in classrooms; and (c) internship teachers, responsible for the curricular space, as well as tutoring practitioners when they assume the teaching-learning process in the classroom (AZAM *et al.*, 2019; CHALIES *et al.*, 2012; GUEVARA, 2016; HASS, 2019). In its teaching practice system, the institution (2017, p. 24-25, our translation) assigns specific functions and functions to each of the actors of this triad, as established below.

- The trainee student (practitioner) is the future teacher responsible for his learning that, with each experience in the educational center to which he was assigned, seeks deconstructions and co-construction of the meanings learned along the formal or informal trajectory of training and interactions during practice;
- The *associate* teachers are the teachers who receive the trainee students according to each discipline, whose main responsibility is to serve as a professional reference and good practices;
- The *teacher* or *tutor* of the subject is the higher-level educator of the discipline of his students; he must have teaching experience, research and follow-up strategies, as well as excellent ICT management and demonstrated moral solvency.

Teaching identity

Teaching practice is an ideal environment for students to know the reality of the context in which they will develop professionally, reviewing their previous beliefs and ideas about educational processes and reaccommodating them in their mental schemes (LÓPEZ; HINOJOSA, 2008), which is a fundamental aspect in the configuration of the teacher's identity; this is strengthened both in the higher education institution and during the development of the practice in the educational center.

Regarding the social dimension of teacher identity, Serrano and Pontes (2016) affirm that it is built in social spaces of interaction and that the acceptance of oneself as a teaching professional occurs through the confrontation with the demands of practical exercise in a real teaching and learning scenario, where social recognition is vital.

Training processes and strategies

According to González Calvo *et al.* (2015), the teaching practice, when developed with appropriate training processes and strategies, allows students to reconstruct their ideas, images and beliefs built in their formal and informal school career, confronting them with the school reality experienced during this practice (KORTHAGEN, 2010). Therefore, such processes and strategies must be in tune with the ideal of the teacher to be trained, in order to create, in the real contexts of the future teacher's action, adequate conditions that enable the construction of their knowledge and the development of the skills necessary for their professional practice.

Therefore, for training in practice to favor the consolidation of the teacher's identity, it should offer opportunities in which the practitioner can: understand the reality of the classroom in which it will correspond to develop; develop its capacity to respond to the needs of students to whom it must meet according to the educational level where it will work (elementary, high school, university); demonstrate their skills to manage didactic-pedagogical processes, among other teaching skills. All these aspects, "[...] inevitably go through analyzing, observing, reflecting on what is done and how it is done." (GONZÁLEZ CALVO *et al.*, 2015, p. 148, our translation).

Next, we will outline the two most appropriate strategies in the initial training of teachers.

Reflection on practice is a formative instance that aims to construct, situated and contextually, professional knowledge to transform reality. This strategy should be developed in an ideal space that favors the analysis of the experiences lived by the student and the interactions he has maintained both with the teacher who accompanies him or his/her practice partners. The idea is that all together can rethink the situation of the classroom in which they participated, comparing the expected objectives with the achievements, drawing conclusions and making commitments for improvement (PERRENOUD, 2010; SCHÖN, 2010; GONZÁLEZ CALVO *et al.*, 2015; VILLEGAS; HERNANDEZ, 2017).

The community of practice is a modality of organization in which learning is constructed from the socialization of experiences, the dialogue around these experiences and contributions emanating from a reflective process in which, together, practitioners participate with their practice teachers and associated teachers. Its purpose is "[...] to explain the informal transfer of knowledge, offering a formal structure that allows to acquire more knowledge through shared experiences within the group." (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009, p. 2, our translation).

Work methodology

Considering that the main intention of this work was to understand the meanings that the subjects of the study, teachers and students attributed to teaching practices, developed as part of the initial process of teacher education in a real context of action, the approach assumed in the research was qualitative, defined according to the criteria established by Bogdan and Biklen (2010) and Moreira and Rosa (2016).

The study involved 9 students who are part of the first group of the Bachelor of Sciences (Social, Mathematics, Biology, Physics and Chemistry) Oriented to High School. To complement the information, the latter was also consulted, through 14 professors of teaching at the university and 14 associate professors, the latter linked to the educational centers where the practices were carried out. The selection of subjects was intentional and it was possible that in the group of students there was representation of the five careers. The focal group lasted approximately 90 minutes. To keep the secrecy of the people who participated in the research, acronyms and a successive number will be used to identify teachers and students, as indicated below: students (Est1...); university professor (DocA1...); teachers of practice centers: (DocA1...).

The focus group was recorded and then transcribed using a word processor. Thus, a corpus of information was formed that was organized according to the propositions and questions formulated during the session and the answers given by the participants. The information contained in this corpus was analyzed directly by the researchers responsible for the study.

For the analysis of the information obtained, indicators were extracted, respecting the meanings and meanings existing in the texts, which were reliably transcribed from what was provided by the study participants. These indicators were grouped according to coincidences and connections between some ideas and others.

Subsequently, they were grouped into units of meaning, according to the objectives; thus, deriving the categories about the perceptions that students had about teaching practice. These categories were the following three: (a) Teaching practice as an opportunity for qualified immersion in the educational system; (b) Teaching practice in the construction of professional identity: "This is the teacher I want to be."; and (c) teaching practice as a context for the appropriation of strategies for mediation of professional development.

Finds

The findings of this research are organized according to the categories mentioned in the previous paragraph:

Teaching practice as an opportunity to immerse themselves in the educational system

The teaching practice consists of a set of teaching activities that students in training develop in schools to become teachers, (in the case of the participants of this study, they were high school institutions), in order to put at stake the skills they are developing, thus evidencing the realization of the concepts, skills and attitudes provided for in the curriculum; Through teaching practice, future teachers are able to immerse themselves in the reality of the educational level at which they will have to act after the completion of their studies. Taking this into account, the study allowed identifying the perceptions of students, related to (a) opportunities for knowledge and training that the teaching practice offers them; (b) Improvement of training received by teachers and students; (c) need for sustainable investment, increased professionals qualified to monitor teaching practice and greater synchronization and university-school coordination.

Opportunities to know the educational system in its role as future teachers. The common reflection on the experience as a teacher allows them to perceive both the complexity involved in the management of the classroom, as well as the general and specific characteristics of the schools, assumed as centers for the realization of the practices. This finding matches with other studies already conducted, such as Vezub (2007); Vaillant (2009, 2019); Nóvoa (2019). This was expressed by some of the students:

Knowing the reality of public schools was important to know how the system works and how I understood and what I should work to know how public education works. Because I didn't see that. There are many things I saw and that I was surprised because I saw firsthand what the situation is, since I had not fallen on my feet on how it was that the students lived and how the centers were managed [...] (Est7)

The positive part that puts you in touch with reality and you realize how difficult it is to manage, how to try to manage this classroom in the best possible way. (Est6)

Opportunities to value the professional training developed during their stay at the university and put into practice the knowledge acquired, which allowed them "always have the pleasure of having the opportunity to do their practice", mainly because it is a joint work carried out by a team composed of teachers, associates and professionals of the practice:

[...] now we are learning how school and students work. (Est1)
[...] acquisition of a new perspective of the teaching role and understanding of the complexity of the profession. (DocPD8)
[...] to be able to contrast how I was trained with the teacher. (DocPD7)
[...] in addition to students, teachers also learned and updated. (DocA16)

In a way, students are aware that it is in practice that knowledge is consolidated, highlighting reflexive practice (SCHÖN, 2010; TARDIF, 2014) and that is a process that should be carried out in collaboration with the entire team that supports training because, as Nóvoa (2019, p. 220, our translation) argues: "No one becomes a teacher without the collaboration of more experienced colleagues. It starts in universities; it continues in schools."

The teaching practice offers *opportunities to learn*, both from the use of some basic strategies to improve training (reflection, reflexive journals, dialogical survey, community of practice and micro class) and by the application of acquired learning (related to the use of technologies, play as a didactic strategy and material manipulation) to promote concrete knowledge. Here are some expressions from both teachers and future teachers:

This has allowed us to look for solutions to the problem you have now. (Est3)
Teaching practice has always led us and motivated us because we were always talking and reflecting on what happened to us and how we lived the experience at school and university. (Est9)

The previous extract highlights the activities that should be a permanent part of the teaching task: reflecting and solving problems, two competencies that, according to Tardif (2014), Schön, (2010) and Nóvoa (2019), are essential in pedagogical action.

In turn, the associated teachers gladly waved the contributions of future teachers on:

Facilitate learning in these contents that have become complex for students through games and technologies as a didactic resource. (DocA16)
The use of the effectiveness of reflection on practice in the classroom and didactic sequence. (DocA11)
This allowed us to revive our daily teaching practice. And be more methodical at work to model properly. (DocA2)

For teachers who follow the practice, the experience facilitated:

Update yourself on very interesting content. Be part of a working team of those who manage the practices, who already feel part of their teaching DNA, based on satisfactory communications (DocPD12)
The educational centers were spaces of collaboration with the teachers of the centers mediated by a climate of trust, with some teachers. (DocPD2)

In summary, it can be concluded that the practice is a great opportunity to: know the educational system inside; train and learn from others by reflecting on the situations that happen in the center of practice and solving problems; participate in discussions and dialogues between and with teachers and future teachers. That is, experiences that are of great value in training (MARCELO; VAILLANT, 2018; NÓVOA, 2019; MATSUMOTO-MOYA; RAMÍREZ-MONTOYA, 2021).

It needs to make a sustainable investment based on student enrollment, the quantity and quality of teaching professionals needed to track and feed practice, and the infrastructure needs of educational centers. The lack of investment has the following consequences: (a) imbalance between the student enrollment and the availability of prepared teachers; (b) Insufficient educational centers with good practices and teachers with training to support the development of teaching practice, both in university and in educational establishments. In this study, it was found that the university has professors who have been qualified in several disciplinary areas; however, as enrollment is higher in natural science careers such as mathematics and biology, teachers who manage the disciplines of these careers are privileged, but who often do not have the specific didactic training to teach to learn the discipline. It was also found that teachers in the classroom at the secondary level (teaching practice centers) did not have an adequate repertoire of curricular skills that would allow them to guide learning well in specific disciplinary areas.

There were teachers who were not qualified to guide. Qualified teachers were needed in new ways of teaching and guiding learning." (Est4)

There is also a need for university professors prepared both in disciplinary theory, pedagogy, practice and research in education. (Est8)

We need teachers in schools who serve as an example of how learning should be taught and promoted and that, at the time we teach, we have a person to give us advice, depending on needs. (Est7)

This perception was expressed by the students due to *the lack of didactic preparation* of the university professors for teaching the discipline. Thus, many future teachers indicated that this required them to "*look for themselves*", find out on the internet, or consult teachers other than their partners.

It is estimated that this lack, in the long term, can negatively affect the educational system, reinforcing traditional training in terms of how to manage subjects and not train in the competency model, because the absence "*[...] of university trainers who can provide the specifications of their own discipline according to the professional practice of teachers[...]*"

(TARDIF, 2014, p. 214), makes the initiatives of future teachers discouraged by the inertial strength of the routine class.

This situation reveals a more complex issue related to the training of both university professors and those who are part of the team that supports practices when receiving teachers in training. For this reason, schools can continue to be content breeders, but also spaces for the production of didactic and pedagogical knowledge and knowledge constructed from the joint reflection of teachers (trainers and companions) and practitioners, on the practices performed.

Also, an aspect that affects the quality of training is that there are not enough well-trained teachers who can accompany the practice:

[...] I was 20 years old and he didn't give me the calendar to see them in the morning. I had to put guys on in the afternoon because he didn't give it to me. I know it's an administrative issue, but that's critical. I had to reduce the number of students also by sections to do these projects [...]. (DocA18)

The lack of curricular coherence between the university and the school (ZABALZA, 2011; MULLER et al. 2016; JENSET, 2017) helps students experience the fragmented process and disconnected instances, so:

We were taking the matter and at the same time we were applying them in practice; So, we didn't really know what we were doing. (Est9)

The type of research methodology proposed in the university program has no action research. (Est2)

There is a weak articulation of teaching practice with the subjects of the curriculum, especially with key themes such as processes, classroom management and evaluation. (Est7)

The above also reveals that the application approach, dichotomous in the theory-practice of separation (HIRMAS; CORTES, 2013; IGLESIAS MARTINEZ; MONCHO MIRALLES; LOZANO CABEZAS, 2019; NÓVOA, 2019; TARDIF, 2014, VEZUB, 2007) prevails in university education "[...] and the subsystem for which teachers prepare: primary or secondary schools." (VEZUB, 2007, p. 9, our translation); thus, it reduces the possibility of performing a serious analysis of the meaning of the practices and their formative doctrinal orientations. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a space for school-university dialogue, which implies profound changes in the organization of university courses and programs (FORZANI, 2014; MULLER et al., 2016; NÓVOA, 2019).

Teaching practice in the construction of professional identity "*This is the teacher I want to be*"

During teaching practice, participants are constantly confronted with a reality; this contributes to the configuration of the identity and professional development of teachers of all actors in the school experience, processes that develop throughout active professional life (TARDIF, 2014; VILLEGAS; GONZÁLEZ, 2021).

Below are some of the indicators of the perceptions that students sign about their teacher identity: *Confirmed Identity, Tensioned Identity and Claimed Identity* (TARDIF, 2014).

Confirmed identity is the opportunity to recognize and value oneself as a teacher, taking into account the knowledge and knowledge it has, learning derived from previous experiences and trust in one's own ability to reflect and seek ways to solve problems. The study participants highlight how the practice was fundamental in confirming their identity and developing their professionalism as teachers, as can be seen in the following statements:

Perceive yourself as a teacher in the classroom of the secondary level. That was a source of pride. He is proud of the preparation he has received and is excited to be a prepared teacher. (Est1)

I came to physics for this career, [...], but it is in teaching practice and in their role, at the end, that I find a call to education and it is not only for the concepts they give me in class, but when I get to school, I see these concepts and my eyes shine. (Est2)

For me it was also a very good experience and coming back with the teacher, to be able to counter how me and the teacher formed. (DocPD7)

This is like reliving everyday practice as a teacher and also strengthening for them. (DocA16)

I felt very good and identified with the program and more when students call me: hello teacher, hello teacher. I feel great. (DocPD12)

We appreciate that, as Tardif (2014, p 184) states, teaching practice contributes to "[...] reformulate and renew the epistemological foundations of the profession of teacher or teacher and educator, as well as training for teaching"; contributes to the awareness of the transitory nature of the practice, when the practitioner ceases to be a student, and progressively assumes the role of teacher, which becomes evident during the realization of the practice" (VANEGAS ORTEGA; FUENTEALBA JARA, 2019, p. 121, our translation); an associate teacher testifies this as follows:

When we finished class, the interns asked me: -teacher, what we failed, what we should improve, how we should do each thing. So, I started explaining to him with a lot of dedication. (DocA13)

Stressed identity. The teaching practice, a process in which dreams and efforts have been invested, produces tensions between the university utopia (the theoretical ideal) and the

concrete reality (the school specificity), whose overcoming contributes to the confirmation of identity. This is expressed by one of the students who participated in the focus group when he said, "*Before the practice, we believed that we would save the education of the country.*" (Est3). The reality of making learning possible and creating a climate that motivates students is not an easy task, as one student says: "*The reality is that you realize how difficult it is to manage and how to try to manage this classroom in the best possible way.*" (Est6).

These tensions may appear at any time, but they arise regularly when we must engage in a new process, in a scenario where we must put our knowledge into practice, since these are constituted in real contexts of work and not outside them, as Tardif (2014, p. 190, our translation) states, which also claims that "[...] the work is not first an object that is looked at, but an activity that is done and, in carrying it out, knowledge is mobilized and constructed."

By becoming aware of the tension between utopia and reality, the future teacher was able to recognize the complexity of teaching and learning processes in which many factors intervene whose proper conjugation contributes to the strengthening of professional identity. However, one problem is that the future teacher is not prepared emotionally or cognitively to act properly in contexts of tension, which could generate attitudes of resignation in the face of the adversities of the trade, a student puts it this way: "*When we arrive, we realize that we could be drowned by the voice of the routine class.*" (Est9).

Alleged identity. Thanks to social interactions with other colleagues, the image that each of the practitioners has of himself is impacted (VILLEGAS OTALVARO, 2016; VANEGAS ORTEGA; FUENTEALBA JARA, 2019; VILLEGAS; GONZÁLEZ, 2021). In this, the teachers who follow the practices of the students play an important role as inspiring models, as one student put it: "*From the first practice block, my group had in the 1st a person who inspired us, who was excellent. Very well organized. That's the kind of teacher I want to be.*" (Est4). Some testimonials to corroborate the statement are shown below:

The experience of the practice was something that meant a change in the way I thought. (Est1)

Reflection has allowed us to look for solutions to the problem you have now. (Est8)

I have been happy to support you and everyone else. In addition to us as a way to stay informed, we always share the details of each meeting. (DocPD2).

From the above expressions, it is evident that the execution of activities in real learning situations (supported by reflection and work in collaborative teams) shows how the practice is sustained in four axes, that is: the individual, the private, the public and the collective

(MENEZES; COSTELLA, 2020). Thus, the context and social interactions provided contribute to the constitution of professional identity.

Teaching practice as a context for the appropriation of strategies for mediation of professional development

Teaching practice functions as a methodological mediation scenario between disciplinary training and pedagogical training; in this study, the mediation strategies most valued by the participants were: communities of practice, dialogical survey, reflection on practice and reflexive journals, which are part of the subcomponent practice.

In the implementation of these strategies, teachers (of practice and associates) played an important role that asked practitioners to write their reflective diaries, narratively describing the experiences lived during each of the activities developed in the course of teaching practice.

The content of these reflective journals was socialized in the communities of practice, during which discussions were held on the content of reflective diaries and observations of micro class videos, all from the perspective of the dialogical survey (GORDON, 2001).

The *community of practice* was conceived as a space in which learning is constructed from dialogue, socialization around the experience gained during the internship, and the contributions of colleagues that arise from the process of shared knowledge management, from reflection, which is fostered in it (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009; SCHÖN, 2010). This management was carried out collaboratively, establishing strategies for participation, leadership, identity and use of knowledge. The following testimonies give an account of the above:

I believe that reflecting on practice is what allows situations such as those presented to Est4 or to yourself, in communities of practice that can be overcome when trying to find a way to understand what happened and, from there, try to find a possible solution or possible solutions to these ambiguities that occur. (Est8).

When you are there (in the teaching practice center) you learn new things and reflect on them, as you see the teacher, you even learn to criticize him for what he was taught, but he is doing something that is not right and you give reasons for yourself because you consider wrong, it was a continuous process of reflection, both of my own mistakes and of the people I have observed. (Est1)

This confirms that it is in the communities of practice that "knowledge transfer is explained, offering a formal structure that allows the acquisition of more knowledge through shared experiences within the group" (BOZU; IMBERNON, 2009, p. 2); moreover, the

experience gained in practice is shared and, in addition, the socialization of knowledge is managed.

Another strategy developed during the internship was *the dialogical survey*, which was a fundamental example in the development of a positive attitude towards teaching, from the exploration and analysis of educational situations; these processes were carried out with the mediation of others, which allowed to build knowledge contextually situated to transform the practice (VILLEGAS; HERNANDEZ, 2017). Thus, in the students' perception, the dialogical survey is assumed as an opportunity to detect errors and outline strategies to overcome them, but from their own reflection, as highlighted by one of the students:

One of the most interesting cases was the fact that it was there that we were taught what the dialogical survey was, so the teacher did the survey to analyze the micro class with the support of a video about the class made to see how the students reacted and ask us everything that happened in that class, what resources we use, why we use these resources [...] what changes, what doesn't change. (Est6)

Dialogical research allows the generation of interactions within the community of practice; therefore, it can be assumed as a strategy of co-training teachers (VILLEGAS; HERNÁNDEZ, 2017) because it allows us to learn together with others and reflect on our own and other limitations, which can also be ours. One of the students indicates this by saying:

I believe that reflecting on practice is what allows situations such as those presented to Est4, or for yourself [...] allow us to understand what happened [...]. (Est8)

The reflective journals were developed with the mediation of teachers who asked students to write in the diary the details of the experiences lived throughout the practice and then socialize these texts in the communities of practice. These diaries were very useful because they allowed students, on the one hand, to develop the habit of writing, and, on the other, to document the trajectory experienced throughout the formation, as indicated by one of the students:

*To make a retrospective of the experience in the centers, reflective diaries were used; to see the evolution we were experiencing gradually. In theory, it should have been answered as I was as a good teacher, how much we have evolved. I think it was so, with the newspapers was that we could see that how the practice permeated a little our actions as a teacher. (Est3).
For the question of which word comes to mind when mentioning the reflection on practice, the main element that arises are the reflective journals. (Est2)*

It was possible to verify the fundamental role that the writing of the diaries had to narrate, continuously and routinely, each activity performed in practice; these records allowed them to appreciate their evolution throughout the process and thus critically review the work they did in the classrooms; writing, reviewing, critically reflecting were actions provided by the elaboration of reflective diaries, which helped them mobilize their knowledge about the reality lived and recognize themselves as professionals in permanent training (TARDIF, 2014; VILLEGAS; GONZÁLEZ, 2021), as certified by one of the students in his narration:

The diary is the minimum resource that we have for each of the students to generate an attitude of constant criticism in the good sense of the word. Be critical all the time of the whole process, what is made of what you see and what you want to do, what you live and how what is lived influences what surrounds you (Est2)

It should be noted that the student highlights how the reflection on practice allows the professional in training to master his own evolution, which, since Perrenoud's interpretation (2010), helps him to become a professional capable of building new skills and knowledge acquired from the lived experience.

It is necessary, then, that the reflection on the practice was a strategy that added value to the experience lived by all participants of the practice, both students and accompanying teachers. This added value is highlighted by some students when they highlight the importance of a critical look at teaching work. The latter is reinforced in the following text:

[...] because if you reflect on the situation or about what you haven't solved or about the mistake you may have made yourself, allow you to look for a way, a way out of the situation. (Est8)
The experience of the practice was very reflective because we always talked about what happened in teaching practice. (Est1)

In the latter part, it is evident that the practices carried out were aligned with the objective of moving from traditional training to training based on critical reflection on professional practice, becoming reflective teachers (PERRENOUD, 2010; SCHÖN, 2010); it was found that the students recognize that the reflection constituted an exercise of critical questioning that helped them to understand and improve their teaching practice.

It was a time to continue with the reflection. It wasn't just going out there and taking a class, but it was something that meant a change in the way I thought, how the system worked and how I understood it and how I should also work. (Est1)

With these perceptions of the students, the teachers agree, who subscribed that the reflection on the practice was important, both for the teacher who followed the process and for the teachers in training.

Good for me, reflecting on practice is taking a very deep look at the things that are really being done, what are we really doing as a teacher with these students? And what are these students really doing in this educational context? What can be done in that center that corresponded to them? (DocPD12)

In a light, all our voices agree that reflection is an essential component of practices, because from it you can "[...] practice itself in order to improve it. (DAVIS; BOERST, 2014, p 13), and "[...] it is possible to know the social needs and demands of the context in which the future teaching exercise will be." (IGLESIAS MARTÍNEZ; MONCHO MIRALLES; LOZANO CABEZAS (2019, p. 61, our translation). Without critical reflection, the teaching exercise could be fossilized, becoming a routine based on the traditional sequence of transmission, reproduction and repetition. Therefore, it is essential that it becomes an inevitable process in all phases of the training processes, both initial and continuous, of professionals from all areas and, mainly, of teaching professionals.

Conclusions and recommendations

The results of this research show to be consistent with those identified in the literature review on the problems that affect the education of high school teachers in Latin America; among the coincidences, the following stand out: (a) when immersed in the educational system (the internal school) practitioners become aware of how complex the management of a classroom is; (b) The recognition of the fundamental role played by practice, the role of well-trained university and school teachers with contextualized knowledge about their respective disciplines, in order to adequately monitor practitioners and help them solve didactic problems that may arise for the development of their classes during the period of teaching practices; (c) The importance of increasing financial investment in education, especially in terms of the number of well-trained teachers and the consequent decrease in the number of students per classroom, in order to allow the teacher to manage and supervise better; and, (d) the need for greater articulation between the university and the educational center for greater curricular coherence and for a better use of the time and experiences lived during the internship.

On the other hand, it is confirmed that to constitute professionalism it is essential that practitioners, as teachers in training, develop: (a) attitudes to consider problems as part of the complexity of the exercise, and (b) a knowledge based on methodologies that approve them to face problems and analyze them in order to avoid teacher conformism that can erode their identity. In this case, accompanying teachers play an essential role that, through a socialized interaction with practitioners, encourage reflection on practice, facilitate the constitution of an image of permanent students and stimulate the recognition of their identity as teachers.

Regarding the strategies used during the practice, since all were based on reflection, the participants considered that they were allowed to: (a) review, analyze and adjust, when necessary, those practices that could not develop the expected competencies; (b) to involve a more flexible attitude to appreciate uncertainty as part of the teaching exercise; and, (c) to recognize themselves as subjects of rights and, thus, claim to be educators in the process of continuous education.

The above results and conclusions favor reflection on the opportunities offered by teaching practices, not only for teaching professionals, but also for teachers who manage them, so that, from the university, the needs of educational centers where practices are performed can be noticed and influenced, and thus a more articulated training with reality can be promoted. Higher education institutions, in addition to carrying out improvement actions to achieve more effective development in practice, can serve as a spokesperson before the competent organizational bodies, for the creation of cultures and conditions within the centers so that teaching teams can play a more decisive role in the training of future teachers.

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