

## **Professional insertion and the organization of school pedagogical work: implications for teacher education**

*Inserção profissional e a organização do trabalho pedagógico escolar: implicações para a formação docente*

*La inserción profesional y la organización del trabajo pedagógico escolar: implicaciones para la formación docente*

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### **Abstract**

The objective of this work is to analyze the relationship between teachers' professional insertion process, the school pedagogical work organization, and the indications for support programs for teacher training. The work starts from an expanded concept of teaching insertion, in the perspective presented by Oliveira and Cruz (2017), differentiating it from teaching initiation and distinguishing new teachers based on their previous teaching experiences when they enter the school. The text dialogues with authors who deal with insertion into teaching, such as Marcelo (2009), Vaillant and Marcelo (2012), Akkari and Tardif (2011) and others. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with incoming teachers and school managers. The analysis was organized considering the professional insertion processes from three dimensions: interaction between curriculum, planning and evaluation; teacher-student relationship; implications of training actions for new teachers within schools. The results indicate the need for differentiated propositions for the teachers' support programs due to the previous experiences of the newcomers, from which the demands for teacher training actions emerge as a function of the school pedagogical work organization.

**Keywords:** Beginning Teachers. Insertion into Teaching. Teacher Education. Support Networks.

### **Resumo**

*O objetivo do trabalho é analisar as relações entre o processo de inserção profissional docente, a organização do trabalho pedagógico escolar e as indicações para programas de apoio à*



*formação dos professores. O trabalho parte de um conceito ampliado de inserção à docência, na perspectiva apresentada por Oliveira e Cruz, diferenciando-se da iniciação à docência, e distingue os professores ingressantes a partir de suas experiências prévias na docência quando de sua inserção na escola. Dialoga com autores que tratam da inserção à docência, como Marcelo, Vaillant e Marcelo, Akkari e Tardif e outros. Os dados foram coletados por questionários e entrevistas, com professores ingressantes e gestores de escolas. A análise foi organizada considerando os processos de inserção profissional a partir de três dimensões: interação entre currículo, planejamento e avaliação; relação professor-aluno; implicações das ações de formação aos professores ingressantes no interior das escolas. Os resultados indicam a necessidade de proposições diferenciadas para os programas de apoio aos professores devido às experiências prévias dos ingressantes, das quais emergem as demandas para a formação docente diante da organização do trabalho pedagógico escolar.*

**Palavras-chave:** Professores ingressantes. Inserção à docência. Formação docente. Redes de apoio.

### **Resumen**

*El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la relación entre el proceso de inserción profesional docente, la organización del trabajo pedagógico escolar y las indicaciones de programas de apoyo a la formación docente. El trabajo tiene como base un concepto ampliado de inserción docente, en la perspectiva presentada por Oliveira y Cruz (2017), diferenciándose de la iniciación docente y distinguiendo a los nuevos docentes a partir de sus experiencias docentes previas al ingreso a la escuela. Diálogos con autores que tratan de la inserción en la docencia, como Marcelo (2009); Vaillant y Marcelo (2012); Akkari y Tardif (2011) y otros. Los datos se recopilaron a través de cuestionarios y entrevistas con los profesores principiantes y los directores de las escuelas. El análisis se organizó considerándose los procesos de inserción profesional desde tres dimensiones: interacción entre currículo, planeamiento y evaluación; relación profesor-alumno; implicaciones de las acciones de formación de los nuevos docentes en las escuelas. Los resultados indican la necesidad de proposiciones diferenciadas para los programas de apoyo a los docentes a partir de las experiencias previas de los recién llegados, de donde emergen las demandas de formación docente frente a la organización del trabajo pedagógico escolar.*

**Palabras Clave:** Profesores principiantes. Inserción en la Docência. Formación de Profesores. Redes de Apoyo.

## **1 Introduction**

The teachers' professional insertion is considered a step in the professional development usually defined as the transition period between the end of the initial education and the start of the professional activity. Vaillant and Marcelo (2012) stated that this phase might last several years and highlighted its importance since it refers to the period in which the teachers appropriate the norms, values, and procedures that guide the school organization culture in which they are inserted.

The concepts of teachers' insertion and initiation have been many times used as synonyms. However, Akkari and Tardif (2011) explained that insertion is a complex, multidimensional concept, and emphasized the need to consider two levels: the individual (subject) and society (system). In such process, the subject's resources, and strategies struggle with the social and organizational logics of the professional context. Oliveira and Cruz (2017) referred to the professional insertion as the period that includes the first few years in the teaching activity in a new context of action, a process that is marked by tensions resulting from the need to act in an unknown environment, seeking to set one's position in such context. In our study, the professional insertion concept is closer to this perspective. Thus, throughout the text, we use the term beginning teachers when referring to those who had no previous teaching experience before entering the education system and experienced newcomers, when referring to those that had some previous experience, but are starting their activities in the education system.

Regarding the pedagogical work organization (PWO), we considered Freitas's conception, Freitas (2012), which systematizes it at two levels, namely, the school global work organization and the teachers' work in the classroom. For that author, "the school global organization is the mediator element between social relations and the classroom" (FREITAS, 2012, p. 12), emphasizing the importance of reflecting upon the implications of such organization for the teaching practice. In this study, the teachers' work organization level was analyzed considering issues such as interaction between curriculum, planning, and evaluation; the teacher-student relationship in the schoolwork global organization, followed by the implications of the actions of support to incoming teachers within schools, considering the ways they are pedagogically organized. These three analysis dimensions originate in the categories established from the examination of the data collected, based on content analysis (BARDIN, 2010). The analysis included floating reading followed by codification. This phase was established considering the indications of reference units from the research participants' answers as intensity measures (Bardin, 2010). The reference units indicated as the most relevant in relation to the PWO were curriculum, planning, and evaluation, teacher-student relationship, and pedagogical organization types. Also, to set the three dimensions, the research objectives and the literature indications regarding PWO were taken into consideration.

The methodology<sup>1</sup> included the use of a questionnaire, which was answered by 86 incoming teachers and 15 semi-structured interviews carried out in 6 schools in different regions of Curitiba, involving incoming teachers and the managers of those schools. To elaborate the questions, the indications provided by the theoretical background used were taken into consideration. Next, the scripts were validated by a specialist in the matter and the questions were adjusted according to the suggestions received. The instruments included the participants' following data: education, entrance in the education system, previous experience; questions regarding the initiation period and the difficulties faced; types of support received from the school and the maintainer entity, and indications of actions suggested for the improvement of the pedagogical work organization process. The managers were also asked about actions developed with the beginning teachers.

The schools chosen were those with the highest number of teachers in probationary period. This period involves teachers with up to three years of work in the education system, therefore, it meets the criterion of teachers' career steps as proposed by Huberman (1992). We considered that each subject's report is determined by their historical-cultural context and might reveal the meanings and values they ascribe to their experiences. In such context, the interview is a privileged instrument to access these experiences, enabling the understanding of such meanings (POUPART, 2012).

## **2 Interaction between curriculum, planning, and evaluation**

The school planning, the curriculum, and the evaluation are considered components of the pedagogical work organization. As a result, they refer to the fulfillment of the school social function, evidencing the education intention. Such intention depends on the historical-social context and is marked by the subjects' different views of the world, permeating the actions carried out inside the schools (FREITAS, 2012). The testimonies given by the incoming teachers show concerns related to the PWO, showing the importance of locating oneself in relation to the conceptions that guide the education work. Such concern appears in the speech of both beginning teachers and experienced newcomers:

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<sup>1</sup> In the text, teachers who answered the questionnaire are identified with numbers, while those interviewed are identified by their function, a fictional name, and the school (identified with letters). Regarding teachers, they are indicated as beginning teachers and those that had some previous experience as teachers before entering in that school, that is, experienced newcomer.

The program could focus on the most frequent difficulties faced by the new professionals such as use of methodologies that were suitable for the contents worked, teaching sequence and project suggestions [...]. (TEACHER 13, beginning teacher – QUESTIONNAIRE)

Well, then I guess it is the pedagogical part really. What the town hall thinks of education, because each one learns in one way [...] then, apart from this difficulty, I think it is mainly the pedagogical difficulty, because since I came from the private system, their reality is different, it is another way of evaluating. (TEACHER ISABEL, experienced newcomer – SCHOOL D – INTERVIEW)

We noticed that the beginning teachers reported interactions and concerns related with the PWO and work development in the classroom, from the plan organization to the evaluation. These issues were pointed out by Vaillant and Marcelo (2012) when they addressed the importance beginning teachers give to the procedure dimension, which is related to some concern with the efficiency of their actions. Teachers with previous experience, when inserted in a new professional context, considered important to know the network education project to direct their work well, and also sought to understand the education conceptions and pedagogical organization (learning cycle education, full time school pedagogical proposal, literacy and evaluation conceptions), which impact the pedagogical planning and work. The school management teams confirmed such concern, defending the need of close support to incoming teachers aiming at better organization of the teachers' work. Vaillant and Marcelo (2012, p. 92) emphasized that the teachers' learning process occurs when the teachers become aware of the purpose of their educational actions: "when we give reasons and reflect upon the origins and consequences of our conduct and the others". This process refers to an experimental and active learning, rather than to imitation of models and use of skills.

It seems relevant to highlight that experienced newcomers seemed to have appropriated the benchmarks that can contribute to this new insertion in the work context. Their reports regard the teaching action understanding as a social practice, with intention, a complex and demanding task that goes beyond the classroom and that requires qualification, commitment, and responsibility (VEIGA, 2012). They understand teaching as a theoretical-practical activity that goes beyond the procedure dimension, which requires the understanding of the determinants that take part in this process in a holistic dimension (ROMANOWSKI; WACHOWICZ; MARTINS, 2005). This is an issue related to teachers' learning, which is built

up by beginning teachers when they demonstrate that they can already “look back” and analyze their actions:

[...] I believe that the first years were rather complicated [...] And, then, at that time, I was ok with that. But now, looking back, I see that many elements were missing [...], because I had not been instructed, and because I didn't know what had to be done. (TEACHER PAULA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL F – INTERVIEW)

This report indicates the impacts of situations that involve beginning teachers regarding planning, curriculum management, learning objectives, and other issues. The meetings for collaboration processes joining beginning and experienced teachers are fundamental in this process. The teachers' work evaluation refers to results obtained by the class when their learning is evaluated. On the other hand, the speech evidences the difficulty experienced by the beginning teacher to acquire parameters to help him/her to evaluate his/her work.

Beginning teachers refer to the way of conceiving and dealing with planning since it involves – dialectically, the elaboration of actions, their implementation, and the reflection upon the process. The analysis is founded on the understanding of learning as a concrete, complex, and arduous social practice, and the teaching plan is one the requirements they must meet (VEIGA, 2012). Such understanding appears in their speeches, when they point out aspects such the unpredictability and complexity of teaching and the impacts of these factors on planning:

[...] teaching is mainly a function in which things happen all the time. They don't repeat, they are new and you need to deal with them all the time. This means that it is not certain that you are going to plan, enter the classroom and apply the steps as they are described. The events occurring in the classroom...it's not something that is ready in the plan. (TEACHER HELENA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL C – INTERVIEW)

The reports revealed the need to understand planning as an open process. Teachers do not understand these situations as problems or difficulties, but rather as issues inherent in teaching, which is relevant. Veiga (2012) observed that the act of teaching implies several requirements from the teachers, which include mastering the content of the subject they teach, knowing their students as well as their learning processes, applying different teaching methodological approaches, and selecting resources and teaching strategies, among others. These

are requirements implicit in the teaching plan when considered broadly and that require more attention to the beginning teachers' work.

The support from the school pedagogical team regarding planning issues is highlighted by both beginning teachers and experienced newcomers:

In my opinion, the education office (pedagogical center) should have time to sit with the beginning teachers, show them good plans, listen to their doubts, and try to give them answers, supporting the planning from the elaboration, contributing with ideas, and encouraging required adjustments. The Municipal Education Secretariat should have a team to help teachers to devise the plan to be applied, reducing the pedagogical coordinators' work, so that they could provide such support to the teachers inside schools. (TEACHER VÂNIA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL F – QUESTIONNAIRE)

The teachers recognize that the teaching activity cannot be improvised, and they also evidenced the need for a pedagogical team qualified to help effectively the planning process. However, some reports revealed the weaknesses of the pedagogical center in providing proper support.

Another aspect analyzed refers to the learning evaluation. The evaluation is a central dimension that permeates the school pedagogical work organization. In general, it is related to the school global organization and, more specifically, refers to the work at the classroom level, in its relations with the teaching-learning process (FREITAS, 2012). As regards this aspect, their speeches evidenced differences. For the beginning teachers, the concern with evaluation was related to their students' performance:

We are charged heavily, however, receive little support. You know because the work demand is huge. Then, there is a lot of charge: you have to provide results! The class has to present good results, they must do well..., but there is little feedback in relation to the pedagogical issue, like "let's sit and do it together [...]". (TEACHER PAULA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL F – INTERVIEW)

This teacher emphasized control situations aiming at results, denouncing this issue that is experienced by most teachers currently: on the one hand, they are charged for results, on the other hand, they required better work conditions to develop a teaching-learning process that is coherent and in tune with a procedural and educational evaluation conception. The reports put forward by experienced newcomers revealed situations related to lack of knowledge of the

evaluation system, exam elaboration, and register of descriptive reports, which are characteristic of the cycle learning system. For teachers who entered education systems that have this type of organization, which differs from the series regime, these are issues that need to be appropriated, which demands education actions from the Education Secretariats and schools, and which are directly related to the teachers' work organization. The elaboration of more descriptive evaluations with result record instruments, evidences new professional requirements that require some response from the teachers.

### **3 Teacher-student relationship**

This item of the analysis emphasizes the main challenges faced by incoming teachers regarding the teacher-student relationship. The ways and practices of interaction between teachers and students cannot be explained only by their internal context, since they express the social dimensions of the historical time where they occur (MARTINS, 2012). Currently, changes such as the implementation of learning cycles, the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular school, and the continuous progression raised new issues such as the need for adjustments in the planning to cater for the students' differentiated levels of learning. Such issues impose new demands to the teachers, mainly those at the beginning of their careers, and increase these teachers' feeling of pressure (FULLAN; HARGREAVES, 2000, ROMANOWSKI, *et al.*).

Ochoa (2012) describes the interaction with students' diversity as a concern in the teaching insertion since these professional lack "expertise" in relation to the management of these groups of students. Many times, this situation can lead to demotivation and a feeling of inability, evaluated in a perspective of individual responsibility. However, teachers' reports showed that these issues are not only hard for beginning teachers:

The teachers cannot work with children that have specific learning needs such as children with syndromes, autism, Asperger, Down, etc. And when they know, there is lack of resources for an effective practice. The requirement of applying differentiated activities becomes a burden for the teachers, who need to do a lot of paperwork, plan, attend meetings and courses, and organize portfolios [...]. (TEACHER 4, experienced newcomer – QUESTIONNAIRE)



Beginning teachers tend to refer more to issues involving the work at the students' different levels of learning, while the experienced newcomers indicate indiscipline issues and those of school inclusion more often. Management teams also confirm these issues, highlighting that these are challenges that impact all teachers, but mainly those at the beginning of their careers: adjusting plans, elaborating and implementing an individual support plan for students who have learning disabilities, working according to the different learning needs, and providing school inclusion. One of the principals pointed out that the cause of these difficulties, mainly those related to school inclusion, lies in the flaws of the teachers' initial education. She also stated that if the management team notice that a teacher 'cannot accomplish properly', the school must organize ways of helping this professional. However, another principal revealed that she notices "greater availability of beginning teachers to welcome students in the inclusion group, and accept that the inclusion is a reality, and that they [teachers] must be prepared for this reality [...]" (PRINCIPAL MARINA – SCHOOL D – INTERVIEW).

Teachers' knowledge is (re)constructed throughout a long, dynamic, and many times contradictory process, considering the experiences they had as students, undergraduate students and in continuous development, and even through their professional practice (VAILLANT and MARCELO, 2012). That is why it is relevant to reflect upon the teachers' initial education role in the preparation of future professionals regarding inclusion issues. The initial education might not be able to cover all inclusion situations, for example: when the guidance needs to consider the specificities of each case, support to beginning teachers should also imply this issue and provide in service training. As regards indiscipline, actions should involve some reflection upon knowing students, being aware of their characteristics, learning styles, and teaching methodologies, among others. The situations reported revealed that class management might be difficult in the professional insertion process, and refer to several factors that originate in students' diversity and include social vulnerability, cultural diversity, students whose parents have low level of schooling, social and family instability, difficulties in organizing the classroom routine, and methodological issues.

Some actions carried out in the continuous development process were mentioned. Such occasions provided teachers with opportunities for reflection towards learning related to heterogeneity issues. However, in addition to the courses/workshops offered, they also emphasized the importance of more effective support to teaching in a diversity context.

## 4 Initiatives to support incoming teachers

At this point, we analyze the initiatives carried out by school management teams and, in some cases, the support provided by peers. We consider that the school plays a fundamental role in the teachers' insertion process. Regarding beginning teachers, Marcelo (2009) pointed out the need for a support service inside the schools, in collaboration with universities. Likewise, André (2012) emphasized the importance of a policy of support to the beginning teachers' work, which should involve the Education Secretariat and management teams. The research data showed that the main actions carried out involve issues such as the possibility of incoming teachers (especially beginners) acting as assistant teachers in their period of insertion in the system, ways of monitoring and support really offered by management teams and initiatives related to exchange and help among teachers, contributing to the incoming teachers' professional insertion process.

### 4.1 An initiative of the education system: shared teaching

Shared teaching<sup>2</sup> became one of the alternatives related to the insertion of incoming teachers in schools in the education system investigated and was positively evaluated by the research participants. This possibility of work allowed incoming teachers to understand how the pedagogical work was organized, the daily routines, and the teaching methodology. At the same time, it provided them with more security and autonomy so that they could later on take over the class. Several reports highlighted this issue:

From the second semester onwards, I started to be an assistant teacher in the 1<sup>st</sup> year. Then, I felt more secure. I assisted a teacher that had eight years of experience in the system, and had already worked as a pedagogical coordinator, then I think I started to feel more secure in the classroom. (TEACHER HELENA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL C – INTERVIEW)

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<sup>2</sup> In the education system investigated, up to 2012, the assistant teacher worked in the classroom together with the responsible teacher, helping him/her and working mainly with students that presented learning disabilities. Each assistant teacher would attend up to four classes, once a week in each class. From 2013 onwards, with the extension of the out-of-class work for 33% of the weekly workload, each assistant teacher develops his/her work in two classes teaching them sciences – in addition to the work with students with learning disabilities. Such reorganization, with a trio of teachers at each two classes was called shared teaching.

For beginning teachers, shared teaching was considered significant due to the following aspects: providing more confidence in relation to the classroom work; contributing to the practical analysis, mainly class management, content work, and more suitable teaching strategies. For experienced newcomers, the contribution was also positive, enabling gradual appropriation of the work to be carried out from observation and analysis of their peers' teaching practices. The school pedagogical teams also evaluated positively this possibility, highlighting that it helped the professional insertion process and, regarding beginning teachers, it supported their learning of how to teach. Beginning teachers indicated having little knowledge of their work and represented their problems in a more concrete way; in this sense, more experienced teachers had already acquired the competences that allowed them to know when, why, and how to use the knowledge they had in each situation (VAILLANT; MARCELO, 2012).

Another relevant piece of data is that each trio of teachers had a period of four hours every week to study, plan, and evaluate their action, which was called permanence period or '*hora-atividade*', that is a paid period of time that the teachers remain in the school doing work outside the classroom and without interacting with students, so that they can develop the activities listed above. This time shared with their peers allows the beginning teachers to clarify their doubts about the classroom work with more experienced colleagues, and get some help in their planning, by exchanging ideas and suggestions regarding the implementation of the teaching work, which constitutes an educational practice.

An issue to be addressed is the need for changes in the professional and institutional culture aiming at the valorization of care and support actions targeting beginning teachers. However, it seems relevant to bear in mind that there are situations in which schools receive a lot of incoming teachers at the same time, which makes this organization more difficult. In such case, one alternative would be to prioritize those that are beginning teachers to be placed as assistant teachers, considering the teachers' personal option. Constant change of schools in the professional insertion period is also frequent, and this should be observed in each school the incoming teacher starts a new period of work.

## **4.2 School initiatives: management team's support**

Bearing in mind the importance of the support and involvement of the school management team in the teachers' insertion process, we analyzed the ways how these themes really monitored and supported those professionals. Romanowski and Soczek (2014) pointed out that the support and monitoring of beginners in the teaching practice is rather scarce.

In the education system investigated, the management team of each school was formed by the principal, vice-principal, and pedagogical coordinator(s). The principal and the pedagogical coordinator(s) are usually the ones responsible for the support to incoming teachers throughout their probationary period, helping them in this insertion process. Some teachers' testimonies revealed that there was a welcoming service, offering guidance and support beyond the evaluation of the probationary period. Their reports evidenced that such support occurred on a daily basis, with more informal guidance and/or in a systematic way, during permanence periods or meetings that involved the organization of plans, studies, clarification of doubts, and exchange of experiences. In some cases, the support came from the principal, in others, it was the coordinator's role, and sometimes both professionals provided this assistance.

Data collected in the interviews with the management teams allowed the systematization of the main actions developed aiming at guidance and support to incoming teachers, which included: initial meeting with these professionals, individual meetings or in small groups for guidance, hearing and clarifying doubts, helping to solve problems, monitoring and assisting the pedagogical team during planning, school internal (re)organization to support the incoming teachers, direct help inside the classroom, teachers' plan feedback, and seeking technical-pedagogical help from professionals outside the school.

This data shows the importance of considering the subjects that take part in this institutional context – incoming teachers, other teachers and the management team – and the relations established in these contexts, understanding that in this movement, permeated by the teaching conditions and situations, they build up and experience their profession (AMBROSETTI; ALMEIDA; CALIL, 2012). We could infer that the different experiences occurred in the interactions with the management teams of each school create distinct ways of insertion in the professional context.

Other reports, however, evidenced difficulties in relation to a more effective support from the management team. Some teachers highlighted that the pedagogical coordinator

support was limited to the planning events, focusing on feedback from the material produced by students. Others reported that this support should be more systematic, and that pedagogical coordinators should be more attentive to the teachers' needs "because you sometimes do not have time [to meet the coordinator], you are in the classroom..." (TEACHER KÁTIA, experienced newcomer – SCHOOL E – INTERVIEW). One of the teachers revealed that he/she thought it was important to have the pedagogical coordinator more present in the classrooms and monitoring the "beginning teachers' classes. Many times, this support seems to occur more due to the teachers' initiative than the management team's effort, in agreement with the results reported by Romanowski and Soczek (2014).

Beginning teachers were those that mostly evidenced the need for support from the management team, highlighting the importance of this team welcoming and help in the guidance of the teaching work. They pointed out some flaws such as the turnover of pedagogical coordinators in schools, these professionals' lack of time to monitor and support, and the lack of experience or poor qualification of such professionals, etc.

Some reported the challenges faced by beginning teachers to work with pedagogical teams that did not offer the necessary support to the teachers' insertion. Many times, the coordinator is also new in that education system. For this reason, beginning teachers usually seek support from their peers. According to Avalos (2008), one characteristic of good professional induction programs is exactly the emphasis on collaborative work, experience exchange activities, and practice share among colleagues.

### **4.3 Teachers' collaborative work: from informal support to systematic actions**

One of the mostly highlighted aspects in studies on teachers' professional development refers to the importance of the collaborative work among teachers (MARCELO, 2009). Research has evidenced that

[...] the possibilities of improving teaching and learning increase when teachers collectively question the teaching routines that are not efficient, examine new teaching and learning conceptions, and find ways of responding to divergences and conflicts, acting actively in their own professional development]. (MARCELO, 2009, p. 24, translated by the authors)

Planning together with colleagues, sharing, and developing experiences and knowledge, might help teachers to face the growing challenges of their activity. Support and collaboration relations are not always easily implemented since they require breaking teachers' isolation, which originates from several factors such as the school architecture, poor flexibility of class hours, work overload, and even the school history, which has always privileged individualism as pointed out by Fullan and Hargreaves (2000).

When it comes to experienced newcomers, having time/space to reflect collectively, exchange experiences and ideas with their peers, and establishing collaborative relationships is a relevant factor in the professional insertion process. For this reason, we observed that despite the difficulties reported, many beginning teachers pointed out the importance of having been supported by more experienced colleagues, revealing the partnerships created:

In the second year, I went to another school and took over a 2<sup>nd</sup> year class. A friend that had already worked with the 2<sup>nd</sup> year before helped me a lot, taught me to verify the levels of acquisition of writing and adapt activities according to each students' level, we planned together, the pedagogical coordinator of that school also helped whenever we reached her. This lowered my level of anxiety. [...] (TEACHER VÂNIA, beginning teacher – SCHOOL F – QUESTIONNAIRE)

Their reports reveal a relationship of help and guidance between the beginning teacher and the one that was more experienced in that position<sup>3</sup>, who took the role of a mentor teacher (MARCELO, 2009), even if in this case, it occurred in a more informal perspective. Marcelo (2009) cited studies on the mentor's role, highlighting as their main task the pedagogical and personal consultancy to the beginning teacher, guiding this colleague in relation to the curriculum, class management, and even observing classes and giving feedback. The main aspects addressed by beginning teachers who demanded support referred to teaching issues and the needs of the teaching practice. One of the principals suggested actions in this direction, but she also pointed out some dilemmas related to this professional choice criteria:

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<sup>3</sup> These situations differ from what happens with the trio of teachers working in shared teaching because the latter is an institutionalized relationship. When considering collaborative work between teachers, we refer to situations in which a more experienced teacher (who did not take part in the shared teaching trio) or a group of teachers supported and helped the incoming professional inside the institution.

[...] I believe that many of these professionals, they need other professionals with more experience, but also that are professionals with good performance... so, it is difficult, because you start from meritocracy: who are the ones showing good performance? Are they those teaching the class that had good results? It is difficult, we need to think how to do that. But there are some studies, we see things that happen in other countries, which show that there is a possible way, yes, in the exchange of experience between a more experienced teacher and the incoming professional. [...] (PRINCIPAL MARINA – SCHOOL D – INTERVIEW)

Such considerations are related to issues such as the professional qualification (mentor), to skills and knowledge needed to provide pedagogical support and the ways the mentor/beginning teacher relationship is established. However, their statements revealed that even experienced newcomers benefitted from this support during their insertion in the education system.

There are reports of more consolidated actions such as the collective planning practice, supported by the management team. Such actions involve experienced and beginning teachers working together in a perspective of collaborative work. The development of a culture of cooperation and support among teachers is a challenge, but it can provide significant contributions, enabling teachers to have more options and confidence in their decision making. In such perspective, they tend to show greater commitment with their own professional development and improvement of the education institution. However, Fullan and Hargreaves (2000, p. 82) pointed out that “interactive professionalism involves redesigning teachers’ roles and their work conditions”.

## 5 Final Considerations

The results of the analysis of relations between the teachers’ professional insertion process, the pedagogical work organization, and the initiatives of support to incoming teachers in schools allowed us to infer some indicators related to teachers’ education. These clues express the different experiences reported by the subjects, considering the emphasized PWO dimensions. The demands raised are:

- Need to know about and situate the professional in relation to the school PWO conceptions, which include curricular guidelines, cycle organization, planning modality, and school evaluation, among others. This implies education actions that enable the newcomers to

appropriate the knowledge required by the PWO and teaching, helping them to understand the determinants of their practice, which go beyond technical issues.

- Regarding the teacher-students relationship, all incoming teachers referred to class organization and inclusion, in which the specificities of each inclusion situation suggest the need for qualification and in loco guidance to professionals who work with each of these students, due to the diversity of situations;

- Cultural diversity, social vulnerability, and family experiences with schooling are types of relations originated from social situations, which are not always understood by teachers, who also sometimes fail to understand the way of expressing cultural diversity and difficulties of relationship between the students and the school;

Beginning teachers require more help for class organization, have doubts in relation to the teaching procedures and selection of content to be approached in each school year, unlike more experienced ones, who already acquired more solid and elaborated knowledge related to the teaching process. Thus, the support is more directed to the class organization and less to the pedagogical work organization.

Beginning teachers tend to evaluate their work by the results obtained by the students they teach. This is a relevant indicator, but is not the only one, there are other elements such as lessons that promote students' participation, broadening the repertoire of education activities for diversity, regulatory evaluation, peer exchange, relationship with the students' families, paperwork, participation in the school's decisions, and collaboration with the pedagogical project, that is, the different dimensions of the pedagogical work organization.

Considering the initiatives of support to beginning teachers, shared teaching, management team support, and collaborative work are fundamental elements in their professional insertion. Start working as assistant teacher (shared teaching) was seen as a factor that resulted in positive contributions to these teachers; however, some criteria must be established for this partnership between experienced and beginning professionals. Such initiative does not exclude the need for the management teams to develop other development actions to work with incoming teachers. All these actions evidence possibilities of advancement toward breaking a culture of individualism and competitiveness in schools.

The management team support is fundamental to all beginning and experienced teachers. Being welcomed, feeling of belonging, collaboration, and sharing favor the



development of self-confidence and security at the beginning of the teaching career to be and remain in the profession. In this process, education actions might bring contributions to both the learning of teaching by the beginning professionals and the insertion process of all incoming teachers. To sum up, our results revealed the need for differentiated proposals for teachers' support programs according to the incoming teachers' previous experience, from which some demands raise regarding teachers' education and the school pedagogical work organization, evidencing that favorable work conditions are indispensable for the teachers' work.

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