Dilemas e dificuldades de coordenadoras pedagógicas iniciantes no ensino público do estado do Paraná

Dilemmas and difficulties of beginning pedagogic coordinators in public education in the state of Paraná

Dilemas y dificultades de los coordinadores pedagógicos principiantes en la educación pública en el estado de Paraná

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the dilemmas and difficulties of beginning teachers in the school pedagogical coordination, in the state public school of a city of Paraná. It is the initiation period, which refers to the first five years of experience, which establishes the foundations for future professional practice. A case study was carried out with 11 beginning coordinators, with experience of up to five years in their function. The data collection instruments form an interview and a free record book. It was found that beginning coordinators go through dilemmas and difficulties related to the organization of pedagogical work, the relationship with the group of teachers, issues involving students and their families, and training to work in pedagogical coordination. Therefore, it is important to have specific support and training for beginning pedagogical coordinators, in order to favor their performance in the school environment and their permanence in the function.

Keywords: Beginning Pedagogical Coordinator. Professional Initiation. Pedagogical Coordination.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa objetivou investigar dilemas e dificuldades de professores iniciantes na coordenação pedagógica escolar, no ensino público estadual de uma cidade paranaense. É

no período de iniciação, que se refere aos cinco primeiros anos de experiência, que se estabelecem as bases para o exercício profissional futuro. Realizou-se um estudo de caso com 11 coordenadoras iniciantes, com experiência de até cinco anos nessa função. Os instrumentos de coleta de dados foram a entrevista e um caderno de registros livres. Verificou-se que as coordenadoras iniciantes passam por dilemas e dificuldades relacionados à organização do trabalho pedagógico, à relação com o corpo docente, às questões que envolvem os alunos e suas famílias e à formação para a atuação na coordenação pedagógica. Ressalta-se, assim, a relevância de que haja apoio e formação específicos para coordenadores pedagógicos iniciantes, a fim de se favorecer a sua atuação no âmbito escolar e a permanência na função.

Palavras-chave: *Coordenador pedagógico iniciante. Iniciação profissional. Coordenação pedagógica.*

Resumen

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo investigar los dilemas y dificultades de los profesores principiantes en la coordinación pedagógica escolar, en la educación pública estatal en una ciudad de Paraná, en el período de iniciación, que se refiere a los primeros cinco años de experiencia, cuando se establecen las bases para el futuro ejercicio profesional. Se realizó un estudio de caso con 11 coordinadores principiantes con experiencia de hasta cinco años en esta función. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron la entrevista y un cuaderno de registros libres. Se constató que los coordinadores principiantes pasan por dilemas y dificultades relacionados con la organización del trabajo pedagógico, la relación con el cuerpo docente, cuestiones que envolven los estudiantes y sus familias y la formación para actuar en la coordinación pedagógica. Por lo tanto, es importante contar con soporte y capacitación específica para los coordinadores pedagógicos principiantes, con el fin de favorecer su desempeño en el ámbito escolar y su permanencia en la función.

Palabras Clave: *Coordinador Pedagógico Principiante. Iniciación Profesional. Coordinación Pedagógica.*

1 Introduction

The school education coordination[1] corresponds to the activity performed by the teacher who coordinates the school pedagogical processes, focusing on teaching and learning related issues. This activity has been investigated by those who intend to analyze the history of such position, its attributions, and the importance of continuous education for teachers in this activity.

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[1]Pedagogical coordinator, coordinator teacher, pedagogical instructor, pedagogical analyst, and education coordinator are the denominations pointed out by Macedo (2016) as used in different studies to refer to the teacher that coordinates the education work at schools. In the education system in the state of Paraná, they are called teachers-educators, professionals that need to be approved in specific selection processes (test or selection test) to occupy such position. In this study, following the specific literature, we opted for calling them pedagogical coordinators.

In Brazil, many studies have focused on the problems related to the pedagogical coordination, which are linked to the complexity of the school reality. Such research has shown the challenges that the professionals working in coordination face to consolidate their professional identity (MACEDO, 2016) since they need to give new meanings to their experience as teachers to meet the specific requirements of the coordination activity.

In the school context there might be some lack of understanding of the pedagogical coordinators' (PC) work, and this is mainly due to how difficult it is for these professionals to organize and execute action plans in the school routine due to the everyday emergencies. According to Almeida (2010), such emergencies are mainly linked to the lack of teachers, the conflicts between teachers and students, and school indiscipline.

Macedo (2016) highlighted that current studies have been dedicated to the pedagogical dimension of the PC's work, seeking to present a profile that is coherent to their duties and in tune with the literature about their action in the school. This pedagogical dimension refers to the functions of articulation, education, and transformation inherent in the job and that include the construction, implementation, and evaluation of the school Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) and demands the type of action that prioritizes the most important activities, that is, those related to the objectives set forth in the PPP to be achieved in the short, medium, and long term (PLACCO, 2010). It also involves pedagogical support to teachers, mediation, and dialogue with students and their families, in addition to administrative tasks (FRANCO, 2008).

Pereira (2017) understands that the PC's responsibilities are different from the teachers' duties. This is confirmed by Almeida, Placco and Souza (2016), who pointed out that they must work on educational activities and supporting the elaboration of lesson plans, but they must also be attentive to the students' attendance and behavior and provide a more direct relationship with families to collaborate with the teachers' work. Paperwork related to the pedagogical dimension of the schoolwork is also part of the PC's tasks.

Despite the importance of the pedagogical coordination work, there is still lack of studies focusing on the first years of these professionals' activity, that is, studies indicating the characteristics of this period, aiming to minimize difficulties and prevent dropout of beginning coordinators, as occurs with beginning teachers (MARCELO GARCÍA, 1999).

According to Imbernón (1998), beginning teachers are those professionals that have been working as teachers for up to five years. Marcelo García emphasizes, supported by Burke, Fessler and Christensen (1984 apud MARCELO GARCÍA, 1999, p. 114), that teachers might also experience a period of initiation "[…] when they change school, region, level of education […]", or, as discussed in this study, when they change their position and start to work in the pedagogical coordination.

When taking over the coordination of a school, the beginning PC starts to have a different view of the school, that is, from the coordination standpoint, but one should consider that their action does not start from zero, but from their experience as teachers. However, although their knowledge of teaching is the base for their work in the pedagogical coordination, there are specificities of the new function to be learnt and performed by the coordinator (MELO, 2015).

Therefore, this study focuses on beginning pedagogical coordinators, who have been in the coordination position for up to five years, and aims to answer the following question: What are the dilemmas and difficulties[2] found in the context of being a beginning pedagogical coordinator in the state education system in a municipality in the state of Paraná, Brazil?

The importance of this study lies in emphasizing the particularities of the beginning PC's work, highlighting aspects that might be neglected by schools and the education system and favor its understanding.

The article includes this introduction, followed by the methodological aspects of the study. Next, it presents the discussion of the dilemmas pointed out by the participant PC professionals.

2 Research Methodology

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Commission as a study involving human beings and was developed as a case study (ANDRÉ, 2005) based on a qualitative approach (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1994). The participants were beginning PC professionals

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[2] Dilemmas and difficulties are used interchangeably in this article. However, a dilemma might be defined as "a problem that presents two solutions that are equally undesirable or unpleasant" (HOUAISS, 2015, p. 337), while one of the definitions for difficulty is "[…] characteristic of something that is difficult; an impeding condition; obstacle; […]; a harrowing situation" (HOUAISS, 2015, p. 336).

with up to three years of experience in the job (the inclusion criterion was up to five years in the activity), working in the state education system of a municipality in the state of Paraná.

To select the participants, in February 2018, the researchers asked the Regional Education Office (NRE) of the municipality involved the list of pedagogical coordinators working in the state education system that had taken over the position in 2015 (last call of the public selection test for pedagogical coordinators up to that year), to identify among them the ones that were starting in the activity, since some could have been working in this position for over five years. The list included, in addition to the professionals' names, the school where they worked, and their time in the coordination activity.

After verifying the list, 11 PC professionals were identified as beginners. However, eight of them did not take part in the research. This occurred because some had been working in coordination for over five years (even if they had been rehired after the 2015 public selection test, after having been working in the activity as a part time job), or because they were not located in the schools listed by the NRE, or even because they did not want to take part in the study. Thus, the initial number of participants in the research was three pedagogical coordinators.

These three coordinators helped us to locate other beginning PC professionals, since we used the snowball technique for participant selection, which required that each PC joining the study indicated a colleague to be included in the group (VINUTO, 2014).

Therefore, from the first pedagogical coordinators' indications and those indicated by the newcomers, we reached a total of 22 new beginning coordinators to be included in the study. However, factors such as time of experience in coordination or lack of updated data to locate some of them, or lack of agreement to take part in the study, only eight out of the 22 PC professionals were included in the study as a result of the use of the snowball technique, which enabled the inclusion of 11 female participant coordinators. We sought to reach at least 11 PC professionals because that was the number initially found in the list provided by the NRE. The 11 participants worked in nine state schools in different regions of the municipality.

Empirical data was collected using a semi structured interview (I) and a free register book (RB) handed out to the participants. The PC professionals were identified in the study using numbers from 1 to 11 preceded by the acronym PC (pedagogical coordinator), resulting

in the identification CP1, CP2, and so on.

The research data was organized into categories that were set forth according to the recurrence of content, that is, they had not been previously defined. The data was treated based on content analysis by Bardin (2004).

3 Dilemmas and difficulties faced by beginning pedagogical coordinators

The attributions of the pedagogical coordination in the state of Paraná are related to the collective elaboration and monitoring of the school PPP and the school action plan. They also act in the coordination of the collective construction and implementation of the curriculum proposal following the guidance of the State Education Secretariat (PARANÁ, 2004).

According to the literature and the official documents of the state of Paraná, the PC professionals' attributions are several and diverse, which increases the complexity of this function. Such attributions are specified in activities such as administration of personnel and financial resources, guaranteeing the fulfillment of school days and class hours throughout the year, overseeing the teachers' work plan implementation, providing the means to recover students that require remedial work, articulation with the students' families and community, coordination of processes such as planning, evaluation and professional development, and monitoring the school functioning and students' performance (PARANÁ, 2013). Thus, meeting the requirements of this job might be rather challenging for the beginning PC professionals due to their lack of experience.

Our field data indicated that the beginning PC professionals graduated in Education, which is a requirement of the state education system for this position[3]. Most of them, regarding the period of work in this function, evidenced some feelings of weakness when facing the new job, expressed by the indication of fear of the unknown, lack of self-confidence, and feeling of being lost or not properly prepared. They stated, for example:

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[3] "Professional position: unitary and indivisible center of competences and attributions, regulated by the law, with proper denomination, in a certain number, and remunerated by the public power, occupied and exercised by an individual, hierarchically located in the public service organizational structure" (PARANÁ, 2004, p. 2).

> Fear of not being able to accomplish the tasks proposed […]. Then, it was this fear, this concern about not knowing how to do what the institution expected from you (PC1/I).

> When I started, I was quite nervous, rather nervous, because I had no experience at all (PC11/I).

Lack of self-confidence is commonly reported in studies with beginning teachers, and the same occurred with the beginning PC professionals. The latter indicated their expectations of action in the new scenery since even if their professional initial education was based on teaching, they had to face new responsibilities in the school context.

Groppo (2008, p. 2) considered the transition from teacher to pedagogical coordinator as a moment of "[…] affective turbulence […]" for provoking unexpected situations. In our study only one of the participants expressed a feeling of happiness for her entrance in coordination because she "[…] had just been approved [in the public test] […]" (PC8/I), which confirmed the predominance of the feeling of insecurity among the participants at the beginning of their pedagogical coordination activity.

To achieve the aims of this study, the dilemmas and difficulties of the beginning PC professionals were organized into four categories, all resulting from the field data analysis. The categories are as follows: a) organization of the pedagogical work; b) relationship with teachers; c) problem situations involving students and their families; and d) qualification to work in pedagogical coordination. In these categories, dilemmas and difficulties are treated together for being intertwined, and are discussed below.

3.1 Dilemmas and difficulties related to the organization of the pedagogical work

This category of analysis addresses aspects related to the beginning PC professionals' frustration and discontentment for not being able to fulfil the attributions they considered to be part of their position.

Our results showed their difficulty to plan and execute specific actions due to emergency situations in the school that consumed their time as exemplified below:

> Well, having a plan and saying that you followed your plan, is not possible. […] You spend most of your time […] dealing with emergencies, so this is sad (PC8/I).

> This is the right thing to do [about planning] every week, but humanly, this is impossible. […] (PC6/I)

When indicating their difficulties to plan and execute their actions, the participants were concerned, ascribing this difficulty to the unforeseen events that they must deal with. This is metaphorically compared by the beginning PC professionals to extinguishing fire, since these are actions that are not objectively provided for in the official documents, but that take a considerable part of their time. Some reports are quite illustrative:

> Monday: Putting out fire. Rushing through things. Activism. No reflection (PC1/RB).

> […] You keep extinguishing fire, […], when the day comes to an end, it seems you did not do your job, […] when you realize, the afternoon is over and you were involved with little things, you see? This, I think, is the main difference from what I imagined my job would be, and it is not at all […] (PC2/I).

> […] there is no way, I can't, I can't [plan]! Because then, three or four teachers miss work, and then, there come some students' parents […], either students fight, or they play truant […] (PC3/I).

These professionals' reports exemplify what seems to define the essence of the daily work of beginning coordinators, that is, to solve immediate issues. Most of them indicated that emergency problems are usually the same, which means taht situations of indiscipline involving conflicts between teachers and students, or students and students, frequent cases of

substitution of teachers, and unexpected meetings with students' family members are recurrent events. Similar difficulties regarding coordination were reported by Almeida (2010) and Placco (2010). Placco (2010) pointed out that these difficulties deviate the coordinators from the pedagogical dimension of their work turning them into problem solvers.

Another aspect verified in the field data refers to the pedagogical coordination multiple attributions, which interfere in the organization of times, spaces, and processes by beginning PC professionals and are linked to the many bureaucratic activities they have to carry out. Such activities include the digital or manual record of meetings, occurrences, and students' absences, for example.

Meetings with parents and formal conversations with students and/or teachers are recorded by the PC professionals in minutes and/or acknowledgment protocols, which are bureaucratic procedures assigned to the beginning PC professionals in some schools, aiming to register the occurrences and protect the professionals in case of doubts regarding their action.

Students' performance and absences are also recorded in the Online Roll Call Register (RCO, Brazilian acronym for Registro de Chamada Online) and the Protection Network Educational System (SERP, Brazilian acronym for Sistema Educacional da Rede de Proteção), respectively. The participants stated:

> […] the main, the major concerns regarded the paperwork, because the bureaucratic issues […] in state schools are different, then, I didn't know how to do that, […] Sometimes, we call the Regional Office and the information is confusing, or sometimes, they send the document "We are sending the document related to …", but the doubt we have is not there, then we read, and read again, […] and we don't understand […] (PC3/I).

> I suffered a lot because I didn't understand very well the paperwork part, I didn't understand this search for the roll call, I didn't understand the responsibility, and I couldn't manage time efficiently […] (PC9/I).

Due to the specificities of the paperwork, the beginning PC professionals reported difficulties regarding the registers, these records were considered necessary by some of them,

but others thought they were of little relevance, repetitive, and time consuming. To accomplish these tasks, the beginning PC professionals reported that they required the help of more experienced colleagues. These more experienced peers were highly relevant for the beginning PC professionals' learning.

3.2 Dilemmas and difficulties experienced in the relationship with teachers

As regards this category, we observed that the dilemmas and difficulties were mainly related to three aspects: the PC professionals' expectations regarding their own work with teachers, their expectations regarding teachers' actions according to a desired profile, and teachers' absences on schooldays.

As for the first aspect, one excerpt is quite illustrative:

> […] so, I had this ideal, in my idealization of the position, that I wanted to be that educator that works together with the teachers, the one that helps them build up their teaching plan, who incentivizes teachers to do different things, […], one that mobilizes the school, […], I wanted to have this bond with teachers in the sense that "[…] let's make a difference in these students' lives, in this community, in this neighborhood" and then, I got completely and absolutely disappointed (PC3/I).

This beginning PC professional, when entering the coordination, expected to play the role of a supporter to the teachers, but what happened was not exactly that as explained by another PC professional (PC2/I), assisting teachers "[…] takes some time, and this is the time that you don't have in the daily routine, […] these things appear and end up deviating you from what you'd like to do".

Thus, when expressing their unfulfilled intention to discuss planning, or work closely to the teachers, and dedicate to teachers' development, in addition to helping, motivating, and establishing some partnership with them, the PC professionals revealed their frustrated expectations regarding the coordination attributions for the promotion of the improvement of teachers and the school.

In relation to the beginning PC professionals' expectations towards teachers, the data collected indicated that the relationships were sometimes conflicting due to the teachers'

resistance to accept suggestions or requests by the coordination and also due to the difficulty resulting from the teachers' lack of control over their classes and poor planning. These aspects were somehow expected by the PC professionals, according to their reports:

> […] [difficulty is] the lack of teachers' adhesion to our proposals, we ask little things such as organizing students in lines, […] then, this hampers the organization. So, sometimes, these small things complicate our work (PC3/I).

> As a coordinator, one of the things that was weird to me was having to enter the classroom and call the students' attention, organize the classroom so that the teacher could teach. This was awkward to me because I never had to do that as a teacher […] (PC4/I).

> […] some teachers don't prepare their lessons, teach a lesson that is less than regular, […] I know it, because I used to be an interpreter in the classroom, so I know all the nonsense, some pretend they are doing something serious, others simply keep this insolent conduct. […]. I can say that five teachers are really dedicated, the rest of them, they are hopeless… (PC9/I).

In the PC professionals' speech, they revealed that when entering coordination they had in mind one type of teacher, but when they had to face other profiles and teaching practices, quite different from what they had expected, they felt disappointed. Also, the high number of teachers' absences in the classroom seemed to impact directly the beginning coordinators' work, making them feel bad about it:

> [About] too many absences, like last year, from the 27 working Fridays in the school calendar, they missed 18. Look, this destroys our [planning], everything that we had planned to do in relation to monitoring students, […] the work with teachers, we simply cannot […] (PC3/I).

It is interesting to observe that, in some cases, the previous teaching experience made the beginning PC professionals to put themselves in the teachers' shoes and express their understanding in relation to the difficulties they presented such as keeping students' participation in class. However, in other situations, it was exactly this experience that allowed them to disapprove of certain teachers' behavior such as low commitment, lack of

responsibility, and frequent absences, according to their report. Thus, we concluded that their personal experience as teachers, in many cases, influences the expectations the beginning PC professionals have in relation to the teachers' work, which sometimes hampers their action.

3.3 Dilemmas and difficulties related to students and their families

The dilemmas and difficulties found in this category of analysis were related to issues such as students' indiscipline, poor performance and poor family participation in the teaching-learning process monitoring. Some examples are given below:

> What makes the work harder is also the fact that the families are not in tune with us, you see? Many times, we speak to them, we want to change a situation, […] but we cannot because the families simply don't care about it, […] (PC3/I).

> […] then I spend most of my time, […], separating students' fights, talking to parents about their kids' mess, dealing with students who are neglected by their parents, or those who do wrong things, and the parents simply disappear, […] (PC4/I).

> They keep failing year after year, the failure index in the sixth year is horrible, because they reach this level with a huge knowledge gap, some of the students at this level cannot read or write properly and […] they are like eleven, twelve years old … And we must work with these students […] (PC2/I).

> […] I didn't imagine that I would have to work so much on that [indiscipline], […]. Anyway, teachers' ask us to interfere all the time […] (PC10/I).

The beginning PC professionals demonstrated that their intentions in relation to the students and their families differed from what they had expected since they were constantly requested by the teachers to solve the students' indiscipline occurrences, and thus needed to stay in classrooms or bring these students to their own offices. They indicated that parents being called to come to the school due to more complex cases was very common. However, the needs pointed out to parents were not given the importance they deserved, which made their job more difficult. Thus, they demonstrated to be insecure and powerless when facing

these issues.

According to Franco (2008), the pedagogical coordination in the basic education refers to the implementation, motivation, and constant production of a reflective and prudent process related to the school actions aiming to transform its pedagogical practices. But, since they have to spend so much time trying to solve problems involving undesirable situations in the students' behavior, these professionals feel that their contribution to the production of such transforming practices from planned actions is limited.

In addition to the aspects already mentioned, other data provided by the beginning PC professionals in relation to students' behavior referred to their understanding that certain tasks they had to accomplish were not exactly their attribution. They emphasized the referral of some students to other institutions, either for being physically aggressive to others, or to be assisted in complex cases involving pregnancy, drug abuse, or domestic violence.

School violence[4] results in physical and/or verbal aggression towards other students, teachers, and coordinators, or even, being aggressive to other students' family members. Some examples are quite illustrative:

> The most remarkable experience as a pedagogical coordinator? It was when I had to go the police station because of my job, it was horrible, […], I thought the police officer's attitude "pointing his finger to me" terrible, I didn't want to go and I had nobody to help me, […] (PC9/I).
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> When I started, the first problem I had to deal with was a gang fight, […]. [I imagined] that this had been in the classroom; […]. So, I already dealt with students and drugs, drunk students, fights, you name it … (PC11/I).

> One thing that marked me was the day I had to go to the police station with a teenager, that's a day I cannot forget, […]. The boy threw his cell phone at me … And started to use dirty words, to swear, and call me names […] (PC11/I).

Cases involving physical violence in school require, according to the PC professionals, the presence of the family and the *Patrulha Escolar*[5]. Whenever needed, those involved are

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[4] About school violence, see Charlot (2002).

sent to the police station accompanied by a guardian. And if the students' parents do not come to the school, the school has to accompany these kids, and it is usually the coordinator who does that. Having to go to the police station was an embarrassing situation for the beginning PC professionals, a dilemma for them since they felt this should not be their obligation.

According to Macedo and Carvalho (2013), the authority crisis shown by the current generation of students and lack of family structure contributes to school violence. Those authors also think that lack of family support in the teaching-learning process monitoring is also to be considered one of the causes of school violence, which limits the possibilities of action by the beginning PC professionals since they are not always supported in the resolution of problem situations.

The participants understand that there are problems in the school context that go beyond the coordinators' attributions since they go against the meaning ascribed to the pedagogical coordination activity in schools. Thus, feelings such as sadness, frustration, and disappointment were mentioned, but at the same time, when reflecting upon their work and their schools, the PC professionals also demonstrated perseverance, which motivated them to listen to, care for, and help students, despite the difficulties of the professional activity and their own limitations as beginners.

The students' learning gap issue was also hard for the PC professionals, mainly for being many times linked to poor involvement of parents/guardians in the learning process, and indiscipline situations. Such events confirm the reality shock felt by the coordinators, as pointed out by Huberman (1995) in relation to beginning teachers.

If, on the one hand, the pedagogical coordination has a character of articulation, education, and transformation (PLACCO, 2010), on the other hand, without the family support or without the assistance of the state education management agencies in the resolution of difficulties – even if the beginning professionals have the best intention – their work is limited and they have to face embarrassment when deal with certain situations at school.

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[5] According to the Military Police of the State of Paraná, the *Patrulha Escolar* is a state project managed by the Public Safety Secretariat and launched in 2004, "aiming to reduce crime inside and outside schools, the disorder noticed by the community, and improve the quality of life and education in state, municipal, and private institutions". Retrieved from: http://www.pmpr.pr.gov.br/modules/conteudo/conteudo.php?conteudo=360. Access on: 15 Jun. 2019.

3.4 Dilemmas and difficulties related to the education to work on pedagogical coordination

The participants showed some concern with the contribution of the initial education to the coordination activity since they indicated that what they learnt in the education undergraduate course did not meet the requirements of the state school and those that the professionals in this position face daily, that is the PC attributions. However, they did not seem to notice that their indications of what they believed the pedagogical coordination attributions were, in several moments, resulted from their education process, which, even if contradictorily, indicated some contribution of this education. They stated:

> […] at the beginning you feel quite lost, we didn't know what the attributions of a pedagogical coordinator were. Although we had spent four years studying, we had seen the theory only, "Ah, the coordinator has to do this, this, and that", but what does this mean in practice, what exactly does the coordinator do? (PC2/E).

> […] I had seen it at university, but it was more like the theoretical side of it … Really, the theory and the practice are very different, […] Then, you read, you see theory, but the practice is something else… (PC5/E).

The PC professionals reported difficulties and some frustration regarding the relation between theory and practice experienced in the Education undergraduate course, although such articulation in the initial education is a relevant aspect for the PC professional, as pointed out by Placco (2010), it is important to understand the articulation, education, and transformation dimensions of the job.

Despite the PC professionals identifying some flaws in the educators' education at the university level, one of them mentioned the importance of the practical knowledge of more experienced colleagues as a learning source, support, and guidance in their work as beginners: "[…] experience is fundamental, […], because they have a lot to teach us, a lot to say, and out of everything I've learnt in my practice, only a tenth came from the documents, most of it came from my colleagues" (PC3/I).

Learning from the contribution of more experienced colleagues has been reported in studies with beginning teachers (MARCELO GARCÍA, 1999), and the same process is observed in the pedagogical coordination activity.

When facing the routine of the work, which is many times influenced by factors that limit the PC professionals' action, it seems difficult for beginning coordinators to establish relations between what was learnt in the initial education and their experiences at school. However, according to Placco, Almeida and Souza (2015), it is quite worrying that coordinators and teachers undervalue the initial education contributions and consider that only knowledge developed in their practice is relevant for their professional development since theory also plays a relevant role in their professional development.

Thus, although the coordinator's daily practice does not have to be exactly as the literature, it is necessary to establish reflective processes enabled by theories that can shed light on or assist them when dealing with weaknesses in their activity. In this sense, in addition to the initial education, continuous development initiatives for beginning PC professionals are equally important, even if some of them reported demands that have not been addressed yet, as follows:

> […] I thought that…, one thing I thought would happen was more meetings organized by the Education Office to instruct us about what to do […] (CP10/I).

The improvement of continuous development for beginning CP professionals seems to be necessary, which confirms data found in the literature. According to Placco, Almeida and Souza (2015), there is not enough continuous development for pedagogical coordinators, which creates a gap in the education field due to the specificities of the coordinators' work, and mainly the difficulties faced by beginning PC professionals.

4 Final Remarks

The beginning PC professionals participating in this study noticed the different forms of entering the pedagogical coordination since most of them mentioned feelings such as fear,

insecurity, and anguish. However, the impact felt when starting the new function was minimized, mainly due to the support received from more experienced colleagues.

This study evidenced dilemmas and difficulties related to the organization of the pedagogical work such as the difficulty to plan and implement action plans in schools due to the multiple emergencies faced by the PC professionals. The participants indicated that it was not possible to fulfill all obligations because their work routine was interrupted by other activities that interfered with the pedagogical work related to the teaching-learning process. Also, paperwork inherent in the state education system became a difficulty for the beginning PC professionals since they were not included in the theoretical training they had.

Another aspect related to their relationship with teachers also became a difficulty/dilemma since the expectations they had regarding their own work and the work to be developed by teachers were not fulfilled, which resulted in frustration.

The relationship with students and their families was another difficult aspect in the beginning PC professionals' work since the students' indiscipline and poor participation of their families in the teaching-learning process were outstanding aspects. In the same context, the fact that some coordinators had to accompany students to the police station was a conflicting situation for them, since they understood this was not part of their attributions as coordinators, thus they felt disturbed by that.

The qualification to work in coordination was the last aspect verified among the beginning PC professionals regarding their dilemmas and difficulties and referred to their concern with the contributions of the education undergraduate course to their action in the public education reality in the state of Paraná. However, even if they seem to disregard the fact that if they understand their attributions, which were referred to in different moments during the development of the research, it indicates that their initial education is reflected in their constitution as coordinators. Also, in relation to their qualification, they revealed that they felt a gap in their continuous development that should be filled in by the state education system by offering more opportunities of professional development, training, and qualification.

The experience of the first years of activity in the pedagogical coordination of schools provided the beginning PC professionals with a relevant learning process, despite the several dilemmas and difficulties they had to face. Thus, we understand that the effective

support of higher instances of the state education management, mainly the education regional office, is required by means of specific assistance and qualification programs for PC professionals starting this job so that the impact felt due to the new attributions can be minimized.

This study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the dilemmas and difficulties experienced by beginning PC professionals seeking to stimulate advances in the discussion about the initial period of the pedagogical coordination. This is a complex activity, which is even harder for those starting to work on it.

The advancement of such discussions might favor those involved if we consider that the same treatment given to beginning teachers, that is qualification processes and support actions, should be given to beginning PC professionals to help them consolidate their practice, their professional identity, and their permanence in the coordination.

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