

## **Teaching beginnings: professionalism and experience of beginning teachers and those restarting in a new stage of basic education**

*Inícios da docência: profissionalidade e experiência de professoras (re)iniciantes em nova etapa da educação básica*

*Inicios de la enseñanza: profesionalidad y experiencia de docentes (re)iniciantes en una nueva etapa de la educación básica*

Maria Cecília Cerminaro Derisso<sup>1</sup>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1343-7258>

Emília Freitas de Lima<sup>2</sup>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6916-130X>

<sup>1</sup> Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, São Paulo – Brasil. E-mail: [cecilia\\_cerminaro@yahoo.com.br](mailto:cecilia_cerminaro@yahoo.com.br).

<sup>2</sup> Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, São Paulo – Brasil. E-mail: [eflima281001@gmail.com](mailto:eflima281001@gmail.com).

### **Abstract**

The article comes from an investigation whose objective was to analyze how the professionalism of the teacher with more than five years of teaching experience in the early years of elementary school is remade when becoming a beginning teacher in early childhood education. Of a quantitative-qualitative nature, the instruments used were the questionnaire (Likert Scale) and the semi-structured interview. The data indicate that the participants experienced learning in their first teaching experience that contributed to the quality of the experiences in the new stage with regard to relational and disciplinary knowledge. Regarding the part of professionalism that is rebuilt, there are pedagogical knowledge – the central point of this teaching (re)construction in the different beginnings of teaching – as they keep characteristics, knowledge, skills and competences specific to the new stage of teaching. The study confirms the need for greater attention to “initiations”, considering that the beginning of teaching cannot be considered a single moment in the profession. It is about defending the use of the term “beginnings” in the plural, since the time of teaching experience does not guarantee specific knowledge and knowledge to the different stages of teaching, since in each new beginning, the teacher is faced with the need to (re)construct their professionalism.

**Keywords:** Beginnings of Teaching. Teaching Professionality. Teaching Experience.



### **Resumo**

*Este artigo advém de pesquisa que analisou como a profissionalidade do(a) professor(a) com mais de cinco anos de exercício da docência nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental se refaz ao tornar-se professor(a) iniciante na educação infantil. De natureza quanti-qualitativa, teve como instrumentos a Escala Likert e a entrevista semiestruturada. Os dados indicam que as participantes vivenciaram aprendizagens em sua primeira experiência docente que contribuíram para a qualidade das experiências na nova etapa no que se refere aos saberes relacionais e disciplinares. Com relação à parte da profissionalidade que se refaz, encontram-se os saberes pedagógicos – ponto central desta (re)construção docente nos diferentes inícios da docência –, visto que guardam características, conhecimentos, habilidades e competências específicas à nova etapa de ensino. O estudo ratifica a necessidade de maior atenção às “iniciações”, uma vez que o início da docência não pode ser considerado como um único momento na profissão. Trata-se da defesa do uso do termo “inícios” no plural, visto que o tempo de experiência docente não garante conhecimentos e saberes específicos às distintas etapas de ensino, pois, em cada novo início, o(a) professor(a) depara-se com a necessidade de (re)construção de sua profissionalidade.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Inícios da Docência. Profissionalidade Docente. Experiência Docente.*

### **Resumen**

*El artículo se origina de una investigación cuyo objetivo há sido analizar cómo se rehace la profesionalidad del docente con más de cinco años de experiencia docente en los primeros años de la educación primaria al convertirse en docente principiante en educación infantil. De carácter cuantitativo-cualitativo, los instrumentos utilizados fueron el cuestionario (Escala de Likert) y la entrevista semiestructurada. Los datos indican que los participantes vivieron aprendizajes en su primera experiencia docente que contribuyeron a la calidad de las experiencias en la nueva etapa en cuanto al conocimiento relacional y disciplinar. En cuanto a la parte de la profesionalidad que se reconstruye, están los saberes pedagógicos – punto central de esta (re)construcción docente en los diferentes inicios de la docencia – puesto que se conservan características, conocimientos, habilidades y competencias propias de la nueva etapa de la docencia. El estudio confirma la necesidad de mayor atención a las “iniciaciones”, considerándose que el inicio de la docencia no puede ser considerado un momento único en la profesión. Se trata de defender el uso del término “inicios” en plural, ya que el tiempo de la experiencia docente no garantiza saberes específicos a las diferentes etapas de la enseñanza, teniendo en cuenta que, en cada nuevo comienzo, el docente se encuentra ante la necesidad de (re)construir su profesionalismo.*

**Palabras Clave:** *Inicios de la Enseñanza. Profesionalidad Docente. Experiencia en la Enseñanza.*

## **1 Introduction**

Teachers’ professionalism construction and their career initiation have been frequently studied. However, throughout their career, their entrance in a phase of teaching different from the one which they are already experienced in remains a problem that deserves special attention.

The process of understanding the professionalism of these teachers in the new context presents singular aspects with which their acquired experience dialogues, but at the same time conflicts with the new experience. This movement, in which a set of consolidated learning is kept along with the construction of a new professionalism from the existing aspects that reshape it, is our research object.

We start from the hypothesis that teachers that already have some experience in one phase of formal education and start to work with a different phase develop their actions based on the consolidated experiences that are kept and transit between the teaching phases, but at the same time, they (re)build their new professionalism from the learnings acquired from the specificities of the phase in which they have just started to work. The term “experienced teacher” then, does not imply that the learning developed by these professionals in one moment of their professional experience makes them qualified and experienced to operate in all phases of formal education without struggling. Thus, we sought to identify how teachers that are considered experienced onboard professionally the new phase of basic education, showing how their new professionalism is developed, which aspects of the acquired experience are preserved, and which are rebuilt.

The theoretical background approaches the beginning of teaching as the first phase in the teachers’ professional life cycle (HUBERMAN, 1992)<sup>1</sup> and the main characteristics of the beginning of the teaching career (MARCELO GARCIA, 1999; HUBERMAN, 1992; and LIMA, 2004, among others). We question the definition of “experienced teacher” based on the concept of experience – in a perspective of meaningful experiences (DEWEY, 1976) – focusing on its subjective connotation and dissociating the teaching experience from an exclusive time perspective. Regarding the professionalism concept, we sought support in Roldão (2017) and Gimeno-Sacristán (1995), among others, to identify the elements of such concept, namely, i) pedagogical knowledge related to teaching, know-how, specific knowledge, skills to guide the students’ learning process, material preparation, evaluation, organization of spaces and materials, development of the teaching action; ii) knowing the content to be taught according to the different school subjects; iii) interpersonal skills, which include regulating the relations inside the classroom/mediating conflicts, developing a relationship with students’ parents and other family members; relating to their peers; iv) belonging to a collective group; and v) career

---

<sup>1</sup> To select the research participants, we used the time of experience criterion, which was questioned as a function of the data obtained in its development, as presented in sub-section 3.1.

conditions. These factors were analyzed since they reveal the set of knowledge originated in the professionals' experience in elementary education, which helped them to deal with some aspects of the early childhood education phase, and the set of knowledge that was remade in the movement of these teachers' professionalism reconstruction given the specificities of the context of the new teaching phase.

## 2 Methodology

This is a quantitative-qualitative study divided into two moments. The first was carried out by applying an online questionnaire to all teachers of the municipal education system that were "beginning" to work with a different level. The questionnaire was also divided into two parts, namely, the subjects' characterization and the Likert scale, which was used to identify the degree of agreement of those professionals with the diverse aspects, characteristic of the beginning of the teaching activity, according to the set of knowledge produced in the area. Likert scale is an attitude scale in which the respondents indicate how much they agree or disagree with certain concept (APPOLINÁRIO, 2007).

According to Brandalise (2005, p. 4):

The main advantages of the Likert scale include: simple construction, use of statements that are not explicitly linked to the attitude under study, allowing the inclusion of any item that is empirically coherent with the final result; and also, the range of allowed responses, which result in more accurate information regarding the respondent's opinion in relation to each statement. The disadvantage is that for being essentially ordinal, it cannot be used to find out when one respondent is more favorable than another, or to measure how much change occurs after respondents are exposed to certain events.

Data obtained from the Likert scale allow the establishment of an equivalence and comparison relation, enabling ordering the individuals' agreement attitude in relation to certain statement, but do not indicate how much one individual agrees more than another. Thus, in this study, the Likert scale was used as the starting point to produce data to be deepened using semi-structured interviews. The theoretical categories guiding the questionnaire were previously defined from the theoretical background and included: motivation, loneliness, support, lack of knowledge, relationship with students' parents and other family members,

reality shock, students' learning and development, discipline, teaching, integration with the school culture, and socialization.

The data analysis in this first moment was carried out via data tabulation and representation in graphs and tables, and specific statistical analysis to treat the Likert scale data. Their results guided us in the definition of subjects and elaboration of the instrument and development of the second part of the research.

Next, we used semi-structured interviews aiming to deepen our knowledge of the teachers' professional construction and reconstruction at each new beginning (beginnings) of their careers. Each participants' interview content was translated literally. Initially, their answers were treated individually and synthesized in a chart of answers designed for each participant. After that, we carried out an exhaustive reading of the material obtained in the synthesis to identify the dimensions related to the beginning of teaching revealed in the teachers' speeches. Then, we identified the recurrent aspects in several moments of their speech, which led to the construction of seven analysis axes: 1) Changing schools x Permanent school choice; 2) What to teach; 3) How to teach; 4) Children's learning; 5) Discipline; 6) Relationship with students' parents and family members; 7) Career conditions and teaching work. Therefore, the theoretical categories previously defined and observed in the first phase were regrouped in the second phase from the reading and organization of the data collected. The research general theoretical categories were those corresponding to their key concepts, namely, "professionalism" and "experience" in the light of which we deepened the discussions proposed in the research from the analysis of the data gathered.

### **3 About professionalism and experience**

#### **3.1 Experience**

The analysis of teaching beginnings that we carried out in this study inevitably requires the discussion of the difference between experienced teachers and beginning teachers. The latter are mainly categorized in the education literature from the time factor. Thus, the literature explains that after a certain period of time (usually between one and five years) teachers are no longer considered beginning professionals. Therefore, experienced teachers are commonly identified as those with over three or five years of professional activity, who are supposed to be able to handle practical issues confidently, relating them to the theory learnt and seeking to

question their reality with their peers. These professionals tend to incentivize the school collective to study and question, and not conform to the situations experienced by the group, school community, and even to broader social issues (MARCELO, 2006).

In our study, initially supported by this time-based categorization of beginning teachers, we ended up challenging the definition of beginning and experienced teachers using that categorization and sought to build up another way of conceptualizing them.

Our concern originated in the lack of studies considering teaching beginnings in different phases of the education activity<sup>2</sup> as singular moments in which, from our initial hypothesis, the so-called “experienced teachers” relive situations – ascribed by the literature in this area to the beginning of the teaching activity – which in the time-based classification should be limited to the first few years of the teaching work. In other words, teachers starting to teach in a different phase of the students’ education from the one they used to work with face challenges, which most of the time, are reported by the literature on beginning teachers as characteristic of the first years in the profession (between three and seven years). However, we are quite sure that many of those challenges are relived in new beginnings and, thus, teachers feel like beginners again since they must rebuild their professionalism when facing the new work context. According to this hypothesis, in this movement between experienced and beginner, we think that the teachers’ professionalism is reconstructed due to the new situation lived, in this case, the beginning of teaching in another phase of education.

The term “experienced teacher” is directly related to the concept of experience. The concept of experience observed in this study is based on Dewey (1976), that is, it is not exclusively associated with the time aspect. Thus, teachers are not seen as experienced only due to their time of professional activity. Experience in this sense is related to the events lived by each individual and the consequences of these events on teachers’ learning, which is a process directly influenced by these professionals’ experiences.

In such perspective, we do not take the time aspect as sufficient to determine teachers’ teaching experience, and adopt the idea that teachers are considered experienced when, in their teaching trajectory, they have had meaningful experiences that led them to reflect upon their

---

<sup>2</sup> Such inexistence was demonstrated by the survey carried out to find related studies before starting the research to situate it in the set of productions about this theme.

action and enabled some learning so that future experiences can be (re)viewed in the light of past experiences and contribute to their quality.

We assumed that these professionals lived meaningful learnings in their first teaching experience and those contributed significantly to the quality of the experiences they had in the new phase. Thus, our hypothesis is that there is a set of knowledge originated from their experience that allows them to deal with the new situation, this set of knowledge is kept. At the same time, a new set is developed (or [re]made) within the new context. In this sense, teachers' initial experience and their professionalism built up from it provide them with input regarding some aspects of the teaching activity and are reshaped when facing situations that are particular to each phase of the basic education.

The analysis axes were divided between those linked to difficulties faced and those linked to the easy aspects facilitated by the previous experience. The organization of the axes shows the existence of a higher frequency of aspects related to teachers' difficulties than easiness. Among the aspects related to the latter, we identified students' discipline and indiscipline, and relationship with students' parents and family members.

We observed that when considering the aspects they find easy to deal with, due to the learning developed in their previous experience working in elementary education, the learning events are different for each teacher. Thus, even if they might converge in some points, they are quite divergent in others due to the subjectivity of the experience as pointed out by Dewey (1976). Therefore, these teachers' distinct experiences in elementary education provided them with diverse learning experiences, which enabled approximations between them related to the disciplinary and interpersonal aspects. However, we cannot infer rules that apply to all of them given the subjectivity of each teacher when living the event and the meaning given to each experience.

In other words, each teacher's subjective process when teaching in elementary education (EE) and reflecting upon their experience, enabled them to build up a set of knowledge and skills related to students' discipline and their relationship with students' parents and other relatives that made it easy for them and gave them confidence when dealing with the same aspects in the early childhood education (ECE). Thus, even when considering the distinct experiences and the subjective process of each professional, they revealed some easy aspects they had in common related to these events when shifting from one phase of education to the other.

On the other hand, the data analysis shows us that there is an even larger set of aspects related to difficulties faced by teachers when starting to teach in a new phase of basic education. These aspects are mainly related to their insecurity and need for support in this new beginning in the teaching career. We identified that these difficulties started when they had to change schools, which is characteristic of the beginning teaching period, which allied to other aspects hampers the development of bonds and the understanding of the school culture, thus provoking a feeling of not-belonging, which only ends, according to the teachers, with the “*escolha de sede*”<sup>3</sup>, that is, when they choose their permanent school. This is a difficulty relatively discussed in the literature about beginning teachers and, from this study data, we evidenced that also has some effects on new teaching beginnings, that is, even if teachers have overcome this difficulty in their first beginning, it appears again when they start to work in a different phase of basic education.

Advancing in the discussion of difficulties, we identified three aspects that polarize it, constituting the phenomenon that we identified as the great challenge related to teachers’ professionalism, namely, what to teach, how to teach, and the children’s learning. Teaching work in EE regarding these aspects was not seen as a generator of learning easily transferred to the ECE and facilitate the teachers’ work in this phase. Therefore, teachers feel as beginners in these aspects. This does not imply the absence of lived and reflected experience by these teachers in EE related to the teaching action but rather demonstrates the specificity of the teaching action in each phase of education. Consequently, the need for an attentive institutional look into the entrance of these teachers, even if experienced, in a different phase from that they used to work with is required. In other words, institutions must consider teaching beginnings as multiple moments, quite specific and that make these professionals face feelings and experiences characteristic of the beginning teaching period.

Thus, in the context of this study we identified learnings originated in the experience of these elementary school teachers, which when they started to work in early children education, made it easy for them and allowed the (re)construction of their knowledge for the beginning teaching in early childhood education. This movement broadened their first experience, with a propositional and constructive character evidencing the beginning of the experience continuity. On the other hand, we identified with greater representativeness, difficulties in the new teaching

---

<sup>3</sup> The expression “*escolha de sede*”, used in the education network investigated, indicates the situation in which teachers are permanently assigned to a school after an initial trajectory of working in different schools.



beginning, which those teachers associated with lack of knowledge and lack of confidence and, at this point, we emphasize the discussion about the specificities of teaching and of the teaching professionalism in different phases of education. This confirms the perspective we defend regarding teaching beginnings, that is, the novelty of each phase triggers experiences commonly found in the first years of the teaching practice, and we evidenced that this time framework is not enough to resolve them since even experienced teachers become beginners in relation to the specific challenges posed by the new phase of education.

### **3.2 Professionality**

When beginning teaching, the movement between the set of knowledge that is kept and the part that requires reconstruction leads to the constitution of a new professionalism that occurs from the elements of the previous experience in dialogue, reflection, and conflict with the beginning of the new phase. In this sense, considering teaching beginnings implies knowing and recognizing that new learnings are aggregated to the lived experiences and constitute teachers' professionalism. This process is marked by singularities about which there is not enough evidence in the specific literature on beginning teaching and which are the focus of this study.

Teaching beginnings keep particularities that influence directly the construction and reconstruction of teachers' professionalism, covering aspects that interfere and reconfigure the process of becoming teachers. The teachers' profession has a complex nature and specific and singular features regarding its activity in each phase of education, so that being a teacher in each phase entails specificities thus requiring specific knowledge. Therefore, when teachers start to work in a different phase of education, they go through a process of knowledge mobilization and constitution of new meanings that demand their pedagogical, disciplinary, and interpersonal expertise, and other types of knowledge, reconfiguring the development of their professionalism and involving new knowledge and skills needed in their professional activity. However, these teachers already have the experience developed in their teaching work in other phases and, in this sense, certain knowledge and skills are rebuilt according to the specific characteristics of the new phase. At the same time, other knowledge and skills already consolidated remain and from the hypothesis of this study might appear in the teachers' action in different phases.

A fundamental difficulty in the constitution of the participant teachers' professionalism is the constant change of schools at the beginning of their teaching career, that is, successive mandatory changes in the teaching beginning that are characteristic of this career. This fact is not favorable to the creation of bonds among peers, to the constitution and strengthening of groups, or to the development of a feeling of belonging to a collective organization. The strengthening of teachers' professionalism usually results from the feeling of belonging to a cohesive group and identification with their peers, students', and the school community.

The rotation system experienced in the first years of their teaching career hampers the development of their professionalism exactly at the point that teachers most need support as verified in the data. Teachers reported that in the first years of teaching in the new education phase, many frailties are revealed. They indicated the need for support to the development of their work and very frequently mentioned that they found difficulties to seek this help inside schools, since they did not feel to belong to that group. We verified that, in such context, working permanently in one school helps beginning teachers to feel like belonging to a group and favors relationships and their identification with their peers, enabling the development of collaborative partnerships and professionalism among teachers.

In addition to the problem of constantly changing schools, these professionals face lack of welcoming programs for beginning teachers, that is, no support is offered by the education system or within the schools. The literature about beginning teaching systematically points out this lack of guidance, welcoming, and support to beginning teachers and indicates that the so-called survival period is marked by suffering resulting from pedagogical loneliness (GUARNIERI, 1996; CORSI, 2006; FONTANA, 2000). We observed that this process also occurred in these teachers' new beginnings since they pointed out the need for support in distinct issues such as routines, classroom organization, planning, and students' learning, among others. The lack of systematization of welcoming actions to the new teachers make them experience the onboarding process on their own, which usually makes this period painful and a generator of demotivation in the work.

Regarding the specificity of the teaching activity (ROLDÃO, 2007), it constitutes the fundamental characteristic of the teachers' professionalism and refers to the teachers' activity character. The teaching action is a function that is socially ascribed to teachers (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 1995; ROLDÃO, 2007) and requires the mobilization of a set of specific knowledge needed to its development. Several aspects are ascribed to teachers' professionalism,

among those related to the teaching activity, we find pedagogical knowledge (teaching, guiding students' learning process, preparing materials, evaluating, and organizing spaces and materials) and abilities, that is, know-how and the ability to develop the teaching action.

The data analysis revealed that the teaching activity is the sore point in the constitution of beginning teachers' professionalism, starting with the issue 'what to teach', we identified that, unanimously, the teachers participating in the study reported that their greatest insecurity and anxiety experienced at the beginning of the ECE referred to "what" and "how" they had to teach, and they linked them directly with the identification of their lack of knowledge. According to Roldão (2007), the teaching activity is essentially understood as the specialty of leading somebody to know something (curriculum). Therefore, before teaching, one must master the content to be taught, thus, knowing the curriculum content or the subject knowledge is an essential requirement (RAMALHO; NUNES; GAUTHIER, 2004).

One possible solution to minimize this lack of knowledge and guide teachers' practices, provided that the school is aware of these aspects, would be the existence of welcoming programs or dynamics targeting beginning teachers to give them the chance to share their difficulties and their lack of knowledge, helping to guide and support these professionals. Otherwise, the abandonment of these teachers in their lonely search for the solution of their difficulties end up impacting students' learning. According to Lima (2006), students are the ones most affected by the evident and inescapable struggles that characterize the beginning teaching period.

Going further in the specificity of the discussion about teaching and the aspects related to it regarding teachers' professionalism, we noticed the issue of "how to teach". It appeared at the beginning of the ECE teaching and was directly linked to the pedagogical know-how and the abilities to develop the teaching activity and pedagogical skills. These aspects, in early childhood education, present specific characteristics that define them in a particular way, different from those observed in elementary education since they require some knowledge of the children's development specificities – teaching very young children requires ways of communicating, organizing, and relating to the body and movement, among others, that are specific of children between 0 and 6 years old – and of the form-content relation, that is "content pedagogical knowledge". According to Shulman (1986), this knowledge corresponds to the knowledge specialization, it goes through reflection upon one's know-how, taking practice to a certain level of awareness, reflection, analysis, systematization, and intention. Grasping this

movement characterizes the teachers' professionalism construction regarding specific knowledge – teaching – and, thus, it is built up in teaching beginnings when facing the specificities of the education phase, being part of what we call teachers' professionalism aspects that are (re)built throughout teaching beginnings.

Another aspect of this professionalism, still regarding the skills needed to develop this work, refers to interpersonal skills, which include abilities and skills employed in interactions with students' parents and other family members, mediating interactions in the classroom and developing a relationship with their peers and the school management team.

Interacting with students' parents and relatives and keeping discipline in the classroom by establishing conduct norms are two of the main problems faced by beginning teachers, constituting aspects characterized as the great difficulties of the beginning of their professional career (VEENMAN, 1998). We observed that in the new beginnings, this difficulty disappears and the relationship with parents is not a matter of concern for the teachers, who reported that although parents' concerns and needs are different in different education phases, the way of dealing with them learnt while teaching in EE is similar to that developed in ECE and they feel confident about it.

When analyzing their ability to mediate conflicts (CONTRERAS, 2002) and regulate classroom interactions (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 1995), the literature about the beginning of teaching reports that disciplinary issues are a source of anxiety and difficulty in this period. This study identified that such issues are not among the greatest difficulties faced by ECE teachers. Therefore, apart from the discussion about what discipline is and what a disciplined student is, in this new beginning, the previous experience allows teachers to master some pedagogical resources including classroom management. In such context, students' discipline, which in the past was one of the main difficulties starts to have a secondary role in this new beginning. For this reason, we consider that seeking mechanisms and alternatives to deal with students' parents and other family members and solve students' disciplinary issues are aspects of teachers' professionalism that appear in the new beginnings as consolidated despite the specific characteristics of dealing with children in a different age group.

Finally, the discussion of interpersonal skills also regards teachers' relationship with their peers and the school management team. As observed, their relationship with students' parents and relatives as well as the mediation of students' relationships are no longer great difficulties in these teachers' new beginnings. Conversely, their relationship with peers and the

management team – similar to what is reported by the literature about the beginning teaching period – remains a conflict aspect in new beginnings since the participant teachers reported that they feel lonely, unsupported, and insecure in relation to their peers. This data refers to the previous discussion about changing schools and lack of a feeling of belonging experienced by beginning teachers, which hampers the establishment of bonds that would make them confident to share their difficulties with the group. On the other hand, we noticed that difficulties related to interpersonal skills that involve pedagogical knowledge tend to worsen because when the several “beginnings” of the teaching career are not recognized, these teachers who have already acquired the status of “experienced” should not present these doubts. For this reason, they experience a feeling of loneliness accompanied by shame for not knowing, since for being “experienced”, when they reveal lack of knowledge and seek help, it might be interpreted as a recognition of inability before their peers in the new education phase. The solution found most of the time is to talk to colleagues from other schools that they trust and feel they can share their difficulties with – the so-called “critical friends”. These findings point out, again, the common path that indicates lack of welcoming and support to beginning teachers, which is worse in their career new beginnings since they are no longer considered beginning professionals.

#### **4 Some considerations**

The study developed focused on the teaching beginning theme in a perspective that proposed to broaden the discussion for considering beginnings – plural form – all times teachers face a situation not experienced before such as the case presented of teachers starting to teach in another phase in basic education different from the one they used to teach before. We found out that although they were considered experienced, the teachers that took part in the study faced situations that were characteristic of the teaching beginning period and beginning teachers’ experience. We identified a significantly larger set of aspects that they reported as difficulties in this new beginning of teaching than those related to easiness due to their learning in the previous education phase they used to teach, which implied the (re)construction of these teachers’ professionalism. When analyzing the aspects considered as “not difficult”, we identified interpersonal relationships (relationship with peers, management, and families) and students’ discipline management. On the other hand, difficult aspects regarding the rebuilt professionalism, we identified: change of schools x choice of permanent school; what teach and

how to teach; students' learning; career and teachers' working conditions; and support x loneliness. These findings led us to consider two highly relevant discussions when addressing teaching beginnings, namely, experience and teachers' professionalism.

As regards the discussion of teachers' experience and the distinction between experienced and beginning teachers, we started from the time perspective. Our hypothesis, however, questions this time aspect in the definition of experienced and beginning teachers, which was confirmed by our data. They revealed that, although those professionals had been teaching for over ten years, when they started to work in a new education phase they were challenged by situations, experiences, and feelings that were considered part of the beginning teaching period rather than the experienced teachers' routine. To understand the concept of experience, we referred to Dewey (1976), who explained that experience is not exclusively associated with the time aspect, but rather to each individual's experience and the consequences of the events experienced while developing learning, which is a subjective construction.

Teachers' professionalism, in turn, includes several elements as part of its definition. Our effort to characterize it in its teaching dimension does not exempt us from the need to question the concept and consider it in its multiple aspects. The teaching professional activity is usually marked by difficulties related to their working conditions and career, and new teaching beginnings are not free from these struggles. The contexts experienced impose these teachers challenges regarding lack of options when choosing classes and schools since they need to change schools frequently, and this prevents them from belonging to a group or developing trustful relationships with their peers and establishing some bonds with them.

In addition to the working conditions, teachers' double shift and lack of input and necessary materials for the development of their practice are also difficulties. Another aspect noticed is the lack of welcoming to beginning teachers and programs aimed at their integration and support in their difficulties. In these professionals' new beginnings, the conjunction of these factors increases the number of teachers dropping work since they are considered "experienced" but cannot overcome such difficulties. In other words, in these new beginnings, they must face difficulties originated in the new situation and in the demand (by themselves and others) for a teaching action based on confidence and mastering of competences and skills needed in the teaching activity. However, they do not feel such confidence since their professionalism in teaching new beginnings must be reconstructed in the movement between the previous experience and the novelty of the new education phase they just started to teach.

This study confirms the need for greater attention and creation of more suitable teaching “initiations”, considering the particularities of this phase in their careers. It also broadens this understanding from the consideration of the teaching profession in its specificities, considering that the beginning teaching period cannot be considered a single moment in the profession, and defends the adoption of teaching “beginnings”, in the plural form, since only the teaching experience time does not guarantee specific knowledge and skills for different levels, phases, and modalities of teaching. In fact, in each new beginning, teachers face the need for (re)constructing their professionalism, in a movement that provokes insecurity, concern, and intensive learning, which are usually faced by beginning teachers.

Thus, in the study that generated this article, we proposed to start questioning the ways of considering beginning teachers and teaching beginnings, so that many issues that need to be deepened are raised in further investigations aiming at enlightening the construction of knowledge focusing on the specificities of the teachers’ professionalism experience. They would certainly contribute to the construction of evidence on the need for formal institutional and systematic welcoming to new teachers in each of their new beginnings, and to the definition of public policies addressing teaching “beginnings”, in its plural form.

## References

ALVES, C. S.; ANDRÉ, M. E. D. A. de. A constituição da profissionalidade docente: os efeitos do campo de tensão do contexto escolar sobre os professores. *In*: 36 REUNIÃO NACIONAL DA ANPED, 2013, Goiânia. **Anais [...]**. Goiânia, 2013.

APPOLINÁRIO, F. **Dicionário de Metodologia Científica**. São Paulo: Atlas, 2007.

BRANDALISE, L. T. **Modelos de medição de percepção e comportamento**: uma revisão. Florianópolis: LGTI. Laboratório de Gestão Tecnologia e Informação. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brasil, 2005. Disponível em: <http://www.lgti.ufsc.br/brandalise.pdf>. Acesso em: 28 jul. 2021.

CERMINARO-DERISSO, M. C. **Experiências de (re)início da docência na educação básica**: a profissionalidade em foco. 2020. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 2020.

CONTRERAS, J. **A autonomia de professores**. Tradução de Sandra Trabucco Venezuela. 2. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2002.

CORSI, A. M. **O início da construção da profissão docente**: analisando dificuldades enfrentadas por professoras de séries iniciais. 2002. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) – Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 2002.

DEWEY, J. **Experiência e educação**. Tradução Anísio Teixeira. 2. ed. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1976.

FONTANA, R. C. **Como nos tornamos professoras?** Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000.

GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. Consciência e acção sobre a prática como libertação profissional dos professores. *In*: NÓVOA, A. (org.). **Profissão Professor**. 2. ed. Porto (Portugal): Porto Editora, p. 63-92. 1995.

GORZONI, S. de P.; DAVIS, C. O conceito de profissionalidade docente nos estudos mais recentes. **Cad. Pesqui.** São Paulo, v. 47, n. 166, p. 1396-1413, dez. 2017. Disponível em: [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0100-15742017000401396&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0100-15742017000401396&lng=pt&nrm=iso). Acesso em: 18 fev. 2022

GUARNIERI, M. R. **Tornando-se professor: o início da carreira docente e a consolidação na profissão**. 1996. 149 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Universidade Federal de São Carlos, 1996.

HUBERMAN, M. O ciclo de vida profissional dos professores. *In*: Nóvoa, A. (org.), **Vida de professores**. 2. ed. p. 31-61. Porto, PT: Porto Editora.1992.

LIMA, E. F. de. A construção do início da docência: reflexões a partir de pesquisas brasileiras. **Revista do Centro de Educação**. Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, v, 29, n. 2, p. 85-98, 2004.

LIMA, E. F. de. Introdução. *In*: LIMA, E. F. de. (org.). **Sobrevivências no início da docência**. Brasília: Líber Livros, 2006.

MARCELO GARCIA, C. **Formação de professores: para uma mudança educativa**. Porto, PT: Porto Editora. 1999.

PAPI, S. de O. G. **Professoras iniciantes bem-sucedidas: um estudo sobre seu desenvolvimento profissional**. 2011. Tese (Doutorado em educação) –Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, 2011.

PRÍNCEPE, L. M. **Condições de trabalho e desenvolvimento profissional de professores iniciantes em uma Rede Municipal de Educação**. 2017. 234 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2017.

PRINCIPE, L. M.; ANDRÉ, M. Condições De Trabalho Na Fase De Indução Profissional Dos Professores. **Currículo Sem Fronteiras**, v. 19, p. 60-80, 2019.

RAMALHO, B. L.; NUÑEZ, I. B.; GAUTHIER, C. **Formar o professor, profissionalizar o ensino: perspectivas e desafios**. 2. ed. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2004.

ROLDÃO, M. do C. Conhecimento, didáctica e compromisso: o triângulo virtuoso de uma profissionalidade em risco. **Cadernos de Pesquisa**, São Paulo, v. 47, n. 166, p. 1134-1149, out./dez. 2017.

ROLDÃO, M. do C. Função docente: natureza e construção do conhecimento profissional. **Rev. Bras. Educ.**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 12, n. 34, p. 94-103, abr. 2007. Disponível em



Teaching beginnings: professionalism and experience of beginning teachers and those restarting in a new stage of basic education

[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1413-24782007000100008&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1413-24782007000100008&lng=pt&nrm=iso). Acesso em: 12 fev. 2022.

SHULMAN, L. S. Those who understand: knowledge growth in teaching. **Educational Researcher**, v. 67, p. 4-14, 1986.

Received on: 10/3/2022

Revised on: 19/8/2022

Approved on: 22/8/2022