



## SECTION: ARTICLES

# Teaching and continuing training of teachers in higher education: experiences at a Brazilian federal university<sup>1</sup>

## Docência e formação continuada no ensino superior: experiências em uma universidade federal no Brasil

## Docencia y formación continua en la educación superior: experiencias en una universidad federal de Brasil

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### ABSTRACT

This article falls within the scope of discussions about teaching and teacher training in higher education. It reports the experience of continuing teacher training at a federal university in Southeast Brazil, based on the following question: how to promote continuous training that meets the real needs of higher education teachers? Methodologically, this is a qualitative study, an experience report, with the objective of socializing training actions promoted for university teachers in the period from 2018 to 2024. The discussion is anchored in Masetto (2008), Masetto and Gaeta (2019), Imbernón (2012, 2022) and Nóvoa (1992, 1997, 2017, 2023), among other authors. The results showed that continued in-service training provided teachers with spaces for professional socialization through different activities (study groups, lectures, short courses, and workshops), consolidating commitment, collectivity and exchange of experiences. Particularly noteworthy is the creation of a space for discussion about

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university teaching, enabling the study and debate topics identified by the campus professors themselves as relevant to teaching practice. In conclusion, the emergence of a new culture of teacher training in the institution under study stands out. This action strengthens the implementation of institutionalized continuing education in higher education, with the purpose of giving new meaning to teaching knowledge and practices, contributing to the personal and professional development of university professors.

**Keywords:** teaching; higher education; continuing education.

## RESUMO

Este artigo se insere no âmbito das discussões acerca da docência e da formação de professores no ensino superior. Ele relata a experiência de formação continuada de professores em uma universidade federal no Sudeste do Brasil, partindo do seguinte questionamento: como promover uma formação contínua que atenda às reais necessidades dos docentes do ensino superior? Metodologicamente, trata-se de um estudo qualitativo, do tipo relato de experiência, com o objetivo de socializar ações formativas promovidas para docentes universitários no período de 2018 a 2024. A discussão está ancorada em Masetto (2008), Masetto e Gaeta (2019), Imbernón (2012, 2022), Nóvoa (1992, 1997, 2017, 2023), dentre outros autores. Os resultados mostraram que a formação continuada em serviço proporcionou aos docentes espaços de socialização profissional por meio de diferentes atividades (grupo de estudos, palestras, minicursos e oficinas), consolidando comprometimento, coletividade e troca de experiências. Destaca-se, principalmente, a criação de um espaço de discussão acerca da docência universitária, possibilitando o estudo e o debate de temas apontados pelos próprios professores do campus como relevantes para a prática docente. Como conclusão, ressalta-se o surgimento de uma nova cultura de formação de professores na instituição em estudo. Essa ação fortalece a implementação de formação continuada institucionalizada no ensino superior, com o propósito de ressignificar os saberes e as práticas docentes, contribuindo também para o desenvolvimento pessoal e profissional dos professores universitários.

**Palavras-chave:** docência; ensino superior; formação continuada.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo se enmarca en las discusiones sobre docencia y formación docente en la educación superior. Relata la experiencia de formación continua de docentes en una universidad federal del Sudeste de Brasil, a partir de la siguiente pregunta: ¿Cómo promover una formación continua que atienda a las necesidades reales de los docentes de educación superior? Metodológicamente, se trata de un estudio cualitativo, del tipo relato de experiencia, con el objetivo de socializar las acciones de formación impulsadas para docentes

universitarios en el período de 2018 a 2024. La discusión está anclada en Masetto (2008), Masetto y Gaeta (2019) Imbernón (2012, 2022), Nóvoa (1992, 1997, 2017, 2023), entre otros autores. Los resultados mostraron que la formación continua en servicio brindó a los docentes espacios de socialización profesional a través de diferentes actividades (grupos de estudio, conferencias, cursos cortos y talleres), consolidando el compromiso, la colectividad y el intercambio de experiencias. Destaca especialmente la creación de un espacio de discusión sobre la docencia universitaria, que permita el estudio y debate de temas identificados por los propios docentes del campus como relevantes para la práctica docente. En conclusión, se destaca el surgimiento de una nueva cultura de formación docente en la institución objeto de estudio. Esta acción fortalece la implementación de la educación continua institucionalizada en la educación superior, con el propósito de resignificar los conocimientos y prácticas docentes, contribuyendo al desarrollo personal y profesional de los docentes universitarios.

**Palabras clave:** enseñanza; enseñanza superior; educación continua.

## INTRODUCTION

Research and debates about the need for specific training for teaching in higher education are gradually gaining prominence. The increasing diversity of students, as well as the advancement of technology, among other factors, intensifies the challenge for teachers, who need to look harder for training to help them maintain quality teaching with meaningful student learning (Imbernón, 2012, 2022; Cotta, 2023; Demo, 2023).

The teacher's training in higher education is restricted to the bases set out in articles 66 and 67 of the Education Guidelines and Bases Law No. 9394/96 (Brazil, 1996). However, the legislation does not stipulate how the continuing professional development of these professors should be organized. Higher education institutions are instructed to draw up a personal development plan for technical-administrative staff and professors (Brasil, 2006), but not for continuing training. The terms training, improvement and qualification recur, but the legislation makes little use of the term formation, which brings a mercantilist character to higher education (Nóvoa, 2023).

Discussions about teaching and continuing training for higher education teachers are emerging. Many studies highlight the importance of institutionalized continuing education and question who is responsible for the ongoing education of university professors (Cunha, 2008; Lupia; Capecchi, 2023; Masetto, 2008; Masetto; Gaeta, 2019; Nóvoa, 2023). This experience report highlights the importance of continuing education actions for these professionals, focusing on the relevance of professional development and self- and inter-formative processes for the field of teacher education in higher education.

Higher education institutions organize and implement actions such as projects and programs, however, it is clear that there are insufficient public policies for continuing training for professors at this level of education. This study was therefore motivated by the following question: how can we promote continuing training that meets the real needs of higher education teachers? To this end, it is important to ensure that this professional's ongoing training is in-service and covers pedagogical preparation, curriculum design and management, teacher-student and student-student relationships and mastery of educational technology (Masetto, 2008; Masetto; Gaeta, 2019).

This is about a descriptive study with a qualitative approach (Lüdke; André, 1986; Zanette, 2017), of the experience report type, to socialize the training actions carried out with professors from an extension project at a federal university in Southeast Brazil, consider the motivation, planning, execution and evaluation of continuing education in dialogue with the concepts of university professorship and continuing formation in higher education, based on Masetto (2008), Masetto e Gaeta (2019), Imbernón (2012, 2022), Nóvoa (1992, 1997, 2017, 2023).

In this article, in addition to this introduction, the first section discusses the concepts of lecturing and continuing education in higher learning. The second section details the methodology, the third describes the continuing education actions from 2018 to 2024, the fourth discusses the professors' perceptions and the legitimacy of this formative space, and finally, the final considerations.

## TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND CONTINUING TRAINING

Teaching is seen here as a professional activity that requires specific knowledge and skills to carry out its functions. According to Zabalza (2004, p. 110), “teaching is an activity that requires specific knowledge, ad hoc training and permanent retraining (in content and methodologies)”. The task of educating necessarily requires constant action and reflection. Cunha (2011, p. 81) states that “[...] it is by teaching and reflecting on this that one really learns to be a teacher”.

However, in Brazil, it is not compulsory to have a specific teaching qualification in order to become a higher education teacher. It is only required that candidates for the position have a postgraduate degree at a *stricto sensu* level (master's and/or doctorate) in their area of expertise, based on the LDB, Law 9394/96 (Brasil, 1996). This fact reflects a historical conception that all it takes to teach is mastery of the content. Nevertheless, this is not what practice has shown. According to Imbernón (2012), teaching skills should not be based solely on technical knowledge, but on planning and managing teaching and learning, leading to the social transformation of students.

Nóvoa *et al.* (2023, p. 4-5) state that, to create better pedagogical conditions, it is essential that professors recognize the centrality of teaching, without diminishing other university dimensions, such as research. In this sense, the authors stress the importance of university teachers recognizing the centrality of the teaching role. One concern they highlight is that, in higher education, we have an additional challenge: “the failure to recognize oneself as a teacher”.

As Lupia and Capecchi (2023) illustrate, when university professors enter the teaching profession, they have little or no pedagogical training. Most are graduates from postgraduate programs, specialized in their area of research, but when they enter the reality of the classroom, they face challenges in dealing with teaching practice. Even the graduate “will bring with them a disjointed performance of the functions and objectives of higher education” (Pimenta; Anastasiou, 2014, p. 105). In an attempt to get it right, they sometimes replicate the practice of their teachers and don't always achieve the necessary success.

Being a teacher in higher education is becoming an increasingly demanding task, as it involves teaching, research, extension and administrative activities. As well as mastering a particular area of knowledge, professors need to maintain a good relationship with students and new teaching techniques (Cunha, 2011); motivate and be open to innovation (Braathen, 2014); and use educational technology resources (Masetto, 2008; Masetto; Gaeta, 2019), including group dynamics and also evaluation (Cotta, 2023; Imbernón, 2012, 2022).

Continuing training for higher education teachers is essential for their personal and professional development, complementing their initial training. According to Imbernón (2012), being a teacher is an unfinished task, in constant development and reflection, making teacher training an ongoing process.

Masetto and Gaeta (2019) point out that university pedagogy and the pedagogical training of higher education teachers face challenges that point to the need for innovation in learning spaces. These challenges include meeting the new needs of students, adapting to new fields of professional training and keeping up with advances in technological sciences. This will require teachers to adopt new attitudes and values and to be open to a continuous training process.

According to Nóvoa (2023), continuing training is central to a teacher's professional life. He states that the training of a professional is not limited to the acquisition of certain knowledge or skills, but also involves experiences, interactions, socialization dynamics, the appropriation of a culture and a professional ethos” (p. 73). For him, teaching is complex and requires increasingly collective collaborative work. In higher education, this challenge is greater due to the diversity of areas and trends.

To this end, there is a need for reflection spaces and the exchange of experiences, in which teachers can permanently reflect on their pedagogical practices in the classroom. According to Nóvoa (1997, p. 26), “[...] the exchange of experiences and the sharing of knowledge consolidate spaces for mutual training, in which each teacher is called to play the role of trainer and trainee at the same time”.

The university is identified as this space for teacher training, even because of its legal prerogatives. However, higher education institutions must first have spaces for training their teachers (Cunha, 2008). Concerning providing spaces for socialization and professional teacher training in higher education, Imbernón states that

To facilitate these spaces for reflection, participation and training is the essential function of university teaching training. Rather than taking on the role of pedagogical updating for university professors, university teaching training should take on the role of creating these spaces (Imbernón, 2012, p. 115).

It is in this sense that projects and programs for the continuing education of higher education teachers have emerged. However, when it comes to spaces that provide continuing training, there are many challenges and tensions, since there is not always institutional or financial support to develop in-service training programs that meet the needs of teachers. This is why this experience report shares how in-service training can emerge on a university campus in the countryside.

## THE METHODOLOGICAL PATH

Methodologically, qualitative education research was adopted (Lüdke; André, 1986; Zanette, 2017), of the experience report type, to socialize the training actions carried out with university professors at a federal university in the Southeast of Brazil, from 2018 to 2024, consider the motivation, planning, execution and evaluation of these trainings.

This study arose from the initiative to socialize the experiences of continuing education for higher education teachers at one of the campuses of a federal university in the Southeast of Brazil. These actions were initiated through an extension project developed between 2018 and 2020, which continued through study groups in 2022, after the pandemic period.

Continuing education actions for university teachers consisted of obtaining data through direct contact between the researchers and the situation being studied. In this way, the corpus of this research consisted of direct observation, with notes in the field notebook, and the application of questionnaires to the participants with the aim of collecting information before and after the training meetings of the Study Group on Teaching in Higher Education (GEDES).

One of the main characteristics of qualitative research is the collection of data through the direct interaction of the researcher with the phenomenon in question, which implies a certain degree of subjectivity (Lüdke; André, 1986; Zanette, 2017). It answers very specific questions, seeks to understand a specific phenomenon in depth, works with descriptions, comparisons and interpretations, and is concerned, in the social sciences, with a level of reality that cannot be quantified (Minayo, 2004). The questionnaire was chosen because it was possible to apply it simultaneously to all the teachers, to get answers more quickly and more accurately (Lakatos; Marconi, 2008).

In 2018, the extension project arose from the initiative of two public servants who, at the time, were starting to work as pedagogical advisors on campus, and it aimed to start continuing teacher training, since, until then, there had been no record of actions of this nature on campus. For this reason, it was decided to detail, in this text, all the actions of the project that generated the first ongoing teacher training actions that continue to this day.

## THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER TRAINING ACTIONS

The main aim of the project was to create a space to raise awareness and reflect on the importance of continuing teacher training. It also sought to stimulate commitment, collectivity and the sharing of experiences among the teachers themselves.

When the project was conceived, the campus had a total of 236 teachers distributed between two teaching centers, 17 undergraduate courses and around 3 thousand students. At that time, there were also 8 master's degree programs and 3 doctoral programs. The concentration areas of the courses were varied, including agrarian, exact, humanities and health sciences, mostly bachelor's degrees, with only 4 undergraduate courses.

Once the project had been approved and registered, the first step was to create an e-mail account, in which all the teachers were registered. Then they were sent an invitation to the first meeting. An important fact to highlight during this phase was the large number of positive responses from the teachers, who congratulated the initiative.

At the first meeting, there was a theoretical reflection on the need for teacher training, followed by the presentation of the idea of promoting periodic meetings for study, reflection and debate on issues related to teacher training for higher education.

In order to draw up the work plan for 2019, a survey was carried out with the teachers about their main difficulties and training demands. The conviction was that, to provide meaningful work, it was necessary to listen to the teachers and base the training actions on their real needs. It is worth highlighting the importance of training actions not being imposed, but open

to voluntary participation, as well as being based on the real needs brought by the subjects (Pimenta; Anastasiou, 2014).

A questionnaire made up of three parts was used to survey the teachers' perspectives on the desired training. The first part included direct questions about age, area of training, qualifications, teaching time and participation in specific training for teaching.

In the second part, the teachers were asked to answer three questions: 1) about the main demands and difficulties related to teaching; 2) about the expected ideal situation; and 3) if they could contribute, and in what way, to the group's training process (workshops, lectures, sharing experiences...).

Finally, in the third part, teachers were asked to express their experience of teaching at the university to date in a free way, using words, drawings, pictures, or any other form they considered best. Once completed, the questionnaire was sent to the lecturers in printed form in order to collect the required information.

The questionnaire was answered by 74 teachers, corresponding to a 31% return rate. Of this group, 65 had a doctorate and 9 had a master's degree, aged between 25 and 69. The length of time they had been teaching in higher education ranged from 1 to 42 years. Of the 74 total, 15 teachers had already worked at other levels of education before starting their careers in higher education.

When asked about the main sources of preparation for teaching, those who got it pointed to the teaching internship and the course of isolated subjects in methodology and didactics during the *stricto sensu*. This data confirms what Pimenta e Anastasiou (2014) This data confirms what Pimenta and Anastasiou (2014) say when they point out how little postgraduate students are prepared for a possible professional activity in teaching. According to Braathen (2014), higher education teachers are rarely prepared for the profession, unlike other professions.

One of the highlights is that teachers from private institutions reported receiving some ongoing training during their time at the institution. It is important to investigate, in future studies, whether this training met the teachers' specific needs and promoted significant professional development for working in public institutions.

In the second part of the responses, it was observed that the teachers' difficulties and demands were closely associated with the ideal they were aiming for, mainly updating methodologies, planning, public speaking, assessment, inclusion, motivation, new technologies, among others. They also highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and group discussions. Around half of the teachers were willing to contribute to their colleagues'



continuing education, with the socialization of experiences being the most frequently mentioned suggestion.

In the third part, 61 teachers gave their opinions on their experience of teaching at university. After compiling the data from the questionnaire, a second meeting was held with the group of teachers to present the results, the themes and the organization of the training sessions. The teachers suggested a fixed annual calendar consisting of fortnightly meetings of short duration, in the afternoon, and taking place on alternate days of the week, to facilitate participation. The meetings lasted two hours, with the first part being for the guest to explain the topic, followed by a space for questions and debate.

Between April and October 2019, 10 training meetings were held with teachers. Invitations to participate were sent out via posters distributed around campus, as well as via email to all teachers. Each meeting was led by a professional specializing in the topic, with the goal of sharing experiences and stimulating discussions. Most of the meetings (six) were led by teachers from the campus itself, who had expressed an interest in sharing their experiences in a previous questionnaire. Only two meetings were led by people from outside the academic community.

The topics covered in each meeting are described in the table below:

**Table 1** – Calendar of group meetings.

Month	Theme	Responsible
April	Stress and affectivity, an epigenetic dialog	Teacher on campus
	Motivation	Psychologist on campus
May	The 300 Method	Pedagogue on campus
	Inclusion of disabled students in higher education	Teacher on campus
June	Inclusion of students with learning disabilities: a challenge for educators	Invited neuropsychologist
	Inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education - hearing impairment and/or deafness, autism and intellectual disability	Teacher on campus
September	Active methodologies	Teacher from another HEI
	Mental health in the classroom	Psychologist on campus

October	Problem-based learning: an alternative way of teaching in the classroom	Teacher on campus
	Experiences and challenges in using active methodologies in the classroom	Teacher on campus

Source: prepared by the authors, 2024.

The themes of the meetings addressed essential issues for the human formation of teachers and students, such as stress, affectivity, motivation and mental health, as well as the inclusion of students with disabilities and active methods in higher education. These themes invited us to develop spaces that would initially deal with the subjective dimensions of student teaching and learning, but also as training for teachers, as highlighted by Nóvoa (2023).

The meetings provided a space for sharing and dialog on the themes, encouraging discussions and exchanges of experiences between the participants. This allowed critical reflection about teaching practice and the re-signification of knowledge based on Nóvoa (2017, p. 1122): “the axis of any professional training is contact with the profession, knowledge and socialization in a given professional universe”. The author reinforces that “it is not possible to train teachers without the presence of other teachers and their experience in educational institutions”. From this perspective, organizing teacher training programs with the aim of understanding and improving teaching work, promoting professional development and the quality of teaching, becomes indispensable for higher education institutions.

In addition to the 10 training meetings, a lecture on active methods and two teacher development workshops were offered in September. The first workshop covered active teaching, learning and assessment methods: pedagogical concepts, important concepts and strategies; the second covered concept maps and flipped classes as teaching, learning and assessment methods. Both were offered by a professor from another federal university in 2019 and were attended by 37 teachers from the campus.

At the end of this period of activities, a questionnaire comprising seven questions and a free space for reporting experiences was drawn up and sent via e-mail to the teachers who had taken part in the training sessions. The questionnaire aimed to evaluate the project's actions and collect data for future training sessions. The questions asked of the participants are shown in table 2.

**Table 2** – Questionnaire given to the study participants.

Question Number	Question
1	Mention what you thought was positive about the meetings.
2	Have you or do you intend to put any of the lessons learned into practice? If so, which one(s)?

3	Did you have any problems or difficulties taking part in the meetings? If so, which one(s)?
4	Did you miss any topics that weren't covered? Which one(s)?
5	Would you like to expand on any of the topics already covered? Which one(s)? And in what way?
6	Submit your suggestions for improving the project's actions here.
7	Would you like to take part as a leader in any of the group's meetings? What topic? What form would it take? Or would you be able to recommend a name?
8	We would like you to give us a personal account of your experience with the Study Group.

Source: prepared by the authors, 2024.

The questionnaire received 27 responses, all of which were very positive about the activities carried out. The extension project lasted two years and had to be ended due to changes in university legislation. However, the training activities continued through shared study groups, workshops and short courses.

During the pandemic, in the years 2021 and 2022, teacher training was carried out through training meetings organized by the Directorate of Pedagogical Development (DDP) of the Pro-Rectorate of Postgraduate Studies (ProGrad), by web conference. The topics covered: I - Teacher training in times of pandemic and resistance; II - Experiences in Temporary and Emergency Remote Teaching-Learning (Earte); III - Assessment and technological resources for teaching-learning; and IV - Teaching methodologies.

In 2022, after the pandemic, in-person activities were resumed in the campus study group, focused on theoretical studies on university teaching. At that time, the works *Innovating teaching and learning at university* (Imbernón, 2012) and *The good teacher and his practice* (Cunha, 2011). This group has gained new participants and generated new work proposals for the continuing education of campus teachers.

In the first semester of 2023, two training classes on Active Methods were organized - Module I (for beginner teachers) and Module II (for teachers who had already participated in Module 1 in 2020). The modules consisted of topics focused on teaching practice.

Module I dealt with the themes of Active teaching, learning and assessment methods: important concepts and requirements; Pedagogical concepts; Film-based learning; Flipped classroom and concept map. The training lasted two days and lasted 16 hours, with the participation of 28 university teachers from various areas of knowledge.

Module II dealt with the following topics: Challenges and potential related to the application of active teaching, learning and assessment methods and techniques; Guidelines and important concepts to consider when working with active methods; The need for training and teacher development for educators trained in the XX century to educate students in the XXI century; Problematization as a teaching, learning and assessment method; The portfolio and web-portfolio as a teaching, learning and assessment method; How to use formative assessment and immediate feedback in the teaching, learning and assessment process. The module lasted two days and lasted 16 hours, with the participation of 28 university teachers from various departments on campus.

In the second semester of 2023, the highlight of the training activities was the lecture on Meaningful Learning and the mini-course on Bloom's Taxonomy, with Prof. Per Christian Braathen, author of the book *Professor, how to succeed in higher education: Didactics and methodology for effective higher education*, which was also the subject of study in the study group from 2022 to 2023.

In 2024, in the first semester, teachers received training on mental health at university, offered by one of the institution's psychologists. As a strong point, the fortnightly meetings of the study groups continue, currently with the book *Active methods of teaching, learning and assessment: from theory to practice* (Cotta, 2023).

The next topic will present the results and discussions related to teachers' perceptions of the GEDES study group's training activities as a way of building legitimacy in these training spaces.

## TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE TRAINING SPACE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS LEGITIMACY

Building the legitimacy of continuing training for university teachers requires recognizing that "the university as a training space may or may not become a training place. The place represents the occupation of the space by people who give it meaning and legitimize its condition" (Cunha, 2008, p. 184). This study reports on how these spaces are transformed into training places and how the subjects in training recognize their legitimacy in the institution under study.

The extension project's training activities were attended by 31% of the total number of teachers who teach on the campus's 17 undergraduate courses, with a special mention for the Food Engineering course, which was attended by more than 60% of its teaching staff.

With the development of the project, it was possible to train a group of teachers, which, in their view, was the most positive aspect of all, reinforcing Cunha's statement (2008, p. 185) that "when our subjectivity attributes meaning to places, they become part of ourselves. They

build our history and we leave part of ourselves in them” [...]. Highlighted below is the narrative of a teacher who sees teaching in his life as something positive, sometimes exciting:

*“Teaching requires sensitivity and dedication. The human material (students) differs every semester. This makes teaching and learning a difficult but at the same time challenging process. May different students come along, because this motivates me to work harder and harder for teaching. This is my motto. And as Paulo Freire says: ‘Only those who have a passion for teaching can inspire a passion for learning.’ I have a passion for my profession” (Professor X, 2018).*

Teacher X's narrative emphasizes that teaching requires sensitivity and dedication, stressing that he feels encouraged to continually improve his work by the diversity of students he receives each term. This reflection leads us to “value the human dimension”, both of the teacher and the student in training, highlighting the “importance of a human relationship that is not limited to the acquisition of techniques and skills”, but which “enriches the training process with subjective dimensions that are central to the process of knowledge” (Nóvoa, 2023, p. 35).

The methodology of the actions was highlighted by the teachers, as well as the diversity of themes and the exchange of experiences with colleagues from different areas and institutions. The initiative was praised above all for encouraging continuing teacher training. The themes were considered relevant and well-developed. The majority of teachers reported that they had already put into practice some of what they had learned at the training meetings, while the others expressed their intention to do so soon.

Among the lessons put into practice, active methodologies appeared: the 300 Method, the inverted classroom, concept maps, problem-based learning, gamification, among others. Learning related to mental health came next. Some teachers said they were paying attention to their students' behavior, observing them more and working better on welcoming them. One teacher reported that, in order to minimize student anxiety, he had introduced the practice of pre-lecture relaxation.

Regarding the legitimacy of training spaces for these teachers, Cunha (2008, p. 185) points out that:

[...] when we take up positions in the university for teacher training, we are defining the formats and alternatives that we are able to establish for this purpose and we attribute a sense of legitimacy to them. But we will turn these places into territories when we establish actions as a culture, outlining decision-making processes and epistemological visions that become preponderant. Territories have a certain stability, and changes to their borders are always the result of competitive struggles (Cunha, 2008, p. 185).

Thus, according to the author, places are constituted from the meanings of the training experience lived in these spaces, which will be recognized through their belonging and legitimacy. Territories, on the other hand, are perceived based on their legal and institutional support, which underpins the proposals for university teacher training programs. Imbernón (2012) points out that, in addition to training practices, it was necessary to analyze training as an element in the struggle for social and labor improvements, seeking to value labor relations.

In this training experience, the topics covered met the teachers' expectations, since most of them reported not having missed any other subject. They did, however, express an interest in delving deeper into some topics, such as assessment, active methodologies, inclusion, mental health and planning, through more practical workshops, mini-courses and courses.

Imbernón (2012) highlights the importance of teacher training and professional development, since the organization of teaching results in a commitment to meaningful student learning by recognizing the demands of pedagogical dynamics.

By leaving their reports, the professors were able to express how much this training space made a difference to them. For some, it was like the opening of a new horizon, because they felt motivated, valued and listened to. The exchange of experiences and meeting new colleagues were pointed out as very significant aspects. They reported that, after using active methodologies in the classroom, they noticed changes in the students' interest in the lessons, as well as improvements in the teaching-learning process. This change can be clearly identified in the teacher's speech:

*“The meetings provided by the study group and the events or courses offered were important opportunities for me to find out more and reflect on my teaching practice. From the lectures, I was able to better perceive and understand the problems faced by many students. The active methodologies approach allowed me to see possibilities for adapting the teaching-learning methods I use, giving me options for diversifying them and making them more interesting for the students” (Professor Y, 2020).*

According to Nóvoa (1992), training should awaken teachers' critical-reflective thinking and provide autonomy and (self) training. For the author, “being in training implies personal investment, free and creative work on one's own paths and projects, to build an identity, which is also a professional identity” (p. 25). Thus, the following teacher's narrative demonstrates the construction of this critical-reflective perspective:

*“The study group was a motivating factor for me, in the sense of trying to keep up to date with new methodologies. The exchange of experiences at our meetings was enriching. These meetings touched me so much that I'm already thinking about training in this area, something that had never crossed my mind. I think these meetings 'opened my mind to other potentialities that I hadn't yet explored and that I thought were impossible'.*

*I talk a lot about active methodologies, but we had other meetings that were also very enriching. In addition, the group allowed me to meet new colleagues within UFES” (Professor Z, 2020).*

Professor Z's narrative shows that the study group motivated him to update and broaden his vision of active methodologies. He reports that the exchange of experiences was enriching, inspiring him to seek training in areas he hadn't considered before and allowing him to get to know other teachers at the university. This professional socialization highlighted by Professor Z is defended by Nóvoa (2023) as a central point of teacher training. According to the author, it is necessary to “rethink training, research and work environments” to “strengthen teachers as a teaching collective” (p. 81), favoring collaborative work and the co-construction of knowledge and pedagogy (Nóvoa, 2017). In this way, it can be inferred that the teachers were motivated by the training, which leads us to believe in the potential growth of the work begun. Zabalza (2004) points out in his study that:

the professors who seek the most training are precisely those who have had the most training, which speaks in favor of these courses: they encourage the desire for training, make professors more aware of their needs and the possibilities they have to face the great complexity of university teaching today in better conditions (Zabalza, 2004, p. 151).

Among the teachers' positive perceptions, the most important was the creation of this space for teachers to get to know each other, talk about their dilemmas and progress, exchange experiences and learn. The teachers were very interested and participative during the meetings. According to Zabalza (2004, p. 154), “[...] university pedagogy has an important role to play in terms of training as a stimulator of the creation of this common professional space between teachers from different specialties [...]”.

The participation of teachers from different areas, as well as the heterogeneity of the group, provided a wealth of experiences. In this sense, it can be considered that a new culture of higher education teacher training is gradually being created at the institution under study. Since the implementation of new pedagogical practices began to come to the attention of the researchers through photographic records and oral reports of some of the techniques learned, especially in the teacher training and development workshops.

During the course of the extension project, the teachers faced difficulties attending the meetings due to the coincidence of their schedules with their academic, administrative and research activities. Despite alternating days of the week, not everyone was able to attend all the meetings. As a suggestion for improving future actions, the teachers suggested alternating not only the days of the week but also the times of the meetings. In this sense, it is important that continuing training takes place in the context of professional practice and that it is the result of shared reflection between the teachers (Nóvoa, 2017).

From this perspective, the creation of study groups to share experiences among teachers has been a successful training practice on campus, meeting the demands for continuing training among university teachers. As highlighted by Nóvoa (1997, p. 30), “the territory of training is inhabited by individual and collective actors, constituting a human and social construction, in which the different players have margins of autonomy in conducting their own projects”.

This debate on the spaces and territories of teacher training focused on professional practice, emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the personal (life history) and professional (teaching practice) aspects of teachers, as well as the institutional structure (the university), in order to promote new ways and strategies for teacher training in higher education.

Teaching, like other professions, can never be seen as static, and reflection and the constant search for improvement in the ways of teaching and learning are essential. Programs and projects aimed at continuing in-service training for university teachers should be promoted and encouraged by higher education institutions.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article reports on the experience of continuing teacher training at a federal university in southeastern Brazil. The evidence presented in this study confirms the need for higher education institutions to create permanent, institutionalized spaces (training territories) for this purpose.

The results showed that in-service training provided teachers with spaces for professional socialization through different activities, consolidating commitment, collectivity and the exchange of experiences. The meetings initially covered topics such as stress, affectivity, motivation, mental health, inclusion of students with disabilities and active teaching methods, highlighting the importance of training taking place in the context of teaching practice, based on the real needs of the teachers, which values the subjective dimensions in the teaching and learning of students.

Currently, teacher training on campus is characterized by continuous reflection on their professional practice. Teachers act as protagonists in the development and improvement of educational practices, in a collaborative process that allows for the sharing of experiences and knowledge. This promotes continuous professional development, adapted to the specific needs of the educational environment, based on studies by authors on teaching and active methods in higher education. This collaborative approach strengthens the teaching community, encouraging innovation and improving teaching.

A new culture of teacher training needs to emerge at the institution under study. This action strengthens the implementation of institutionalized continuing training in higher education,



with the aim of re-signifying teaching knowledge and practices, contributing to the personal and professional development of university teachers.

Finally, the need to increasingly encourage teachers in the importance of continuing training, as well as research and publication of their own educational practice, is highlighted. There is also a need to keep official records in the public domain, with texts, photos and accounts of teachers' experiences, so that those who have not yet joined the movement can somehow feel encouraged to do so.

As guidelines for future studies, we believe that listening to students is fundamental in any work that aims to improve teaching and learning. With this in mind, the aim is to align continuing teacher training activities with listening to student demands and proposals, their needs and difficulties, seeking ways to make teacher and student training a driving force for social transformation.

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