

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS AND THE CHALLENGES FOR INNOVATION IN PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

D. O. V. SILVA¹, C. P. NUNES²

Universidade Federal da Bahia

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2316-3035>*

danielaovdasilva@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

This text aims to understand how continuing education for teachers in higher education for innovative pedagogical practices occurs based on training actions carried out by university pedagogical advisors. The study was based on qualitative research that included the participation of pedagogical advisors inserted in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) who monitored the pedagogical training process, for a period of 4 years (2021 to 2024), of bachelor's degree teachers who work in higher education and who here presents an excerpt from

a larger research. Data production was carried out through a semi-structured questionnaire applied directly to the study participants. The results draw attention to the importance of continuing education for bachelor's degree teachers in higher education; highlight the perceptions of pedagogical advisors regarding the continuing education of bachelor's degree teachers; and point out challenges for innovative pedagogical practices in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Teacher training, Continuing education, Higher education. Innovation.

FORMAÇÃO CONTINUADA DE PROFESSORES DO ENSINO SUPERIOR E OS DESAFIOS PARA A INOVAÇÃO NA PRÁTICA PEDAGÓGICA

RESUMO

Este texto objetiva apreender como ocorre a formação continuada de professores na educação superior para uma prática pedagógica inovadora a partir de ações formativas realizadas pela assessoria pedagógica universitária. O estudo pautou-se em pesquisa de cunho qualitativo que contou com a participação de assessores pedagógicos inseridos numa Instituição de Ensino Superior (IES) que acompanharam o processo de formação pedagógica, pelo período de 4 anos (2021 a 2024), de professores bacharéis que atuam no ensino

superior e que aqui apresenta o recorte de uma pesquisa maior. A produção dos dados se deu por meio de questionário semiestruturado aplicado diretamente aos participantes do estudo. Os resultados chamam a atenção para a importância da formação continuada de professores bacharéis do ensino superior; destacam as percepções da assessoria pedagógica acerca da formação continuada de professores bacharéis; e apontam desafios para a prática pedagógica inovadora no ensino superior.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação de professores, Formação continuada, Ensino superior. Inovação.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is important to begin by reflecting on the conditions of being a teacher, as set out by Marcelo Garcia (2010, p.12), when he states that, “teaching, [...], has developed throughout its history a set of constant characteristics that differentiate it from other occupations and professions and that influence the way in which teaching work is learned and how it is improved”. From this perspective, teacher training does not end with the completion of an undergraduate course.

It is for this reason that it is possible to discuss professional teacher development as a concept of continuous training that occurs during the exercise of the teaching profession and that is not dissociated from the performance of the teaching work itself. For Oliveira, Silva, Brito and Nunes (2018), Professional Teacher Development (DPD) needs a perspective that goes beyond training, considering it as just one of the dimensions of teacher appreciation.

Thus, questions regarding training for teaching in higher education involve complex challenges if we consider the context analyzed in which the initial training of teachers takes place exclusively in bachelor's degree courses in which didactic-pedagogical training is not present in the curricula, and which in the reality of this study followed bachelor's degree teachers.

It is in this challenging context of those who work in the teaching profession without a degree, that the existence of projects, programs and policies becomes essential, with a view to intentional training monitoring with supervision and guidance of teachers and that occurs in a formal, continuous and structured manner.

Thus, this research aims to understand how the continuing education of teachers in higher education for innovative pedagogical practice occurs based on training actions carried out by university pedagogical advisors. To achieve the objective proposed in this study, a qualitative approach was adopted, based on secondary data from a broader investigation, in which the pedagogical training process of bachelor's degree holders working in higher education was monitored by pedagogical advisors linked to a Higher Education Institution (HEI), from 2021 to 2024. The analysis presented here focuses on the contributions of these professionals, recorded throughout the training monitoring, and constitutes a specific excerpt of the aforementioned research.

The text is structured in four sections: the present, introduction; then, the discussion on the continuing education of bachelor's degree teachers who work in higher education. In the third section, we will present the results of the research that deal with the perceptions of the pedagogical advisory regarding the discussed theme; in the fourth section, we will discuss the challenges for innovative pedagogical practice, and, finally, the final considerations, with the aim of presenting answers to the proposed objective, as well as possible research gaps.

2 CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS

According to Pimenta and Anastasiou (2014), teaching is a teaching attribute that involves a complex social practice, full of value conflicts and that requires ethical and political choices.

Therefore, being a teacher requires scientific, pedagogical, didactic, and educational knowledge and expertise, sensitivity, critical thinking, theoretical foundations, and creativity to deal with the ambiguities, uncertainties, and challenges of teaching situations in educational contexts.

Freire (2018), in the 57th edition of his classic work, *The Pedagogy of Autonomy*, provocatively presents us with the knowledge necessary for educational practice, arguing that teaching requires methodical rigor, research, respect for the knowledge of the student, critical thinking, ethics, acceptance of the new and rejection of any form of discrimination, critical reflection on practice, common sense, humility, generosity, tolerance, joy, hope, conviction that change is possible, scientific curiosity, professional competence, commitment, understanding that education is a form of intervention in the world, requires freedom and authority, conscious decision-making, requires availability for dialogue and that teaching is a human specificity.

In this line of reasoning, Nóvoa (1995) states that the training process should provide teachers with a critical-reflective perspective, while also providing the means for the development of autonomous thinking, which facilitates the dynamics of participatory self-training and enables dialogue between the personal and professional dimensions of the teacher. Thus, according to the author, teacher training is not built through the accumulation of courses, knowledge or techniques, but through critical reflection on practices and the continuous (re)construction of a personal identity. Therefore, entering the world of teacher training means believing in the importance of reflection based on lived experiences.

Experience, according to Nóvoa (1995), should not be mobilized only in a pedagogical dimension, but also as a possibility of constructing knowledge. To this end, “[...] it is important to create networks of participatory (self)training, which allow us to understand the subject as a whole, assuming training as an interactive and dynamic process. [...]” (NÓVOA, 1995, p. 26). According to the author, this exchange of experiences and knowledge consolidates spaces of mutual training, in which each teacher plays, at the same time, the role of trainer and trainee.

In this same direction, studies developed by Bolzan (2001; 2002; 2004; 2005) and Isaia and Bolzan (2007) on the construction of shared pedagogical knowledge have pointed to the importance of in-service training work, considering interactive and mediational processes as essential for the development of teacher skills. They therefore believe,

[...] that the processes of interaction and mediation are constituted as cultural instruments, such as discourse and reflective intellectual activity on the practical knowledge of teachers, are developed. In this way, one voice joins the others and, in the course of interactions, it is possible to share meanings and ideas about pedagogical knowledge. In this interactive and mediational process, joint activity is used as a way of constructing teacherhood, and it is in the fabric of this that ideas and knowledge are redesigned in a shared way (Isaia & Bolzan, 1997, p. 8).

The constitution of this network, according to the authors, occurs as the process of exchanges between peers is established as a preponderant element in this collective construction. This joint work between teachers is based on the mastery of knowledge that will be constructed in a shared way during the interactive and mediational process.

Still on the subject of the construction of shared pedagogical knowledge, Isaia and Bolzan (2007) state that it is done step by step, based on the individual knowledge of teachers, throughout their professional lives, in the context of their pedagogical and social environment. And, from this perspective, the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal process involves the adjustment and reworking between what the teacher brings and what he or she is able to learn from the collective activity, favoring this shared construction and, consequently, his or her teaching ability.

According to Nóvoa (1995, p. 27), “[...] the situations that teachers are forced to face (and resolve) have unique characteristics, thus requiring unique responses: the competent professional has reflective self-development capabilities”. In this sense, the author emphasizes that “[...] the logic of technical rationality always opposes the development of a reflective praxis”. This indicates that competent teachers, capable of reflecting on and about practice, articulate strategies and creativity to solve everyday problems in the classroom.

Considerations on the topic show the need for teacher training courses to train professionals capable of critically reflecting on their practices, with the ability to make critical and creative decisions in their actions and, before that, the teacher must be willing to get involved in training activities, thus assuming responsibility for their own professional development so that they can build their teaching skills.

According to Pereira (2013), rethinking teacher training is not about simply discussing theories and organizing a new methodological or curricular proposal, but it necessarily involves understanding how the human condition, in its processuality, can compose teaching. In other words, it involves understanding how life paths compose the teacher that one has become. Thus, according to the author, teacher training is not only the result of academic training, but being a teacher “[...] is the way of being of a subject who, having lived a given existential framework, positions himself as an educating subject, who educates, who forms other subjects. [...]” (Pereira, 2013, p. 50).

Considering all the complexity presented, it is essential to discuss the ongoing training of teachers, especially those with a bachelor's degree, who work in higher education and often need to assume the fragility of their pedagogical training for teaching and learning.

Being a bachelor's degree teacher means facing the lack of initial training for university teaching. Therefore, they often end up using experiences they had as students and the models of teachers they have worked with throughout their educational life, directing their practice based on these parameters. According to Pimenta and Anastasiou (2014, p. 63), these teachers argue that, “in one way or another, they learned to teach from their experiences and by looking at their own teachers”.

In the effort to dedicate themselves to teaching and learning how to teach, teachers go through an intense learning phase, in which they seek to build professional knowledge and balance their personal development. During this time, teachers experience learning about the profession in a unique way, a process that occurs amid the contradictions present in the educational and school reality (Papi; Martins, 2009).

In the context of continuing education that occurs at the postgraduate level, Fortunato, Araújo and Medeiros (2023) highlight the importance of the teaching internship in master's and doctoral courses, as: a training space that favors the mobilization of knowledge through dialogue and reflection; pedagogical constructions that are discussed with internship advisors and supervisors; a collective construction and involved in specific contexts that envision the internship as an invitation to teach in higher education and that intends to train teacher-researchers. Furthermore, according to the authors:

In essence, it seems that the ideal model of *stricto sensu* training is one that focuses on the relationship between training teachers for Higher Education and research, opening up spaces for problematizing university teaching, in its specificities, and thus contributing to the valorization of Pedagogy and pedagogical research in postgraduate programs (Fortunato, Araújo, & Medeiros, 2023, p. 13).

We can infer that learning to teach is a challenging phase faced by teachers. For Marcelo Garcia (1999), professional development begins before entering the profession or in training courses and is configured as a mix of processes and strategies that allow teachers to reflect on their practice, contribute to teachers building practical knowledge and being able to learn from their own experiences.

According to the author, professional development involves improving teaching skills, improving working conditions, is related to personal development, involves training, self-training, learning, experiences, is based on reflection, occurs individually and collectively, favors the organization of professional groups and fosters pedagogical theories and concepts.

Professional teacher development is a broad, dynamic and multidimensional process that occurs in contexts of personal, social, economic, cultural, historical, political, organizational and curricular development and strongly influences the teaching career in all its phases.

For Ferreira (2023), Professional Teacher Development can be understood as a process of continuous learning of teaching, which takes place throughout the teacher's life, involving elements that constitute teaching and is influenced by personal, social, cultural, economic, contextual, emotional factors, among others, and is crossed by variables that imply changes.

The aforementioned author adds that professional teacher development involves three elements that make up the educational process, namely: teacher, student and school. Therefore, it is a broad, developmental, contextual and articulatory process and requires a sensitive approach so that the quality of education is solid.

3 PERCEPTIONS OF PEDAGOGICAL ADVISORS REGARDING THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF BACHELOR'S DEGREE TEACHERS

As we noted in the previous section, there are many challenges faced by university professors, which, depending on their experiences, can lead these professionals to abandon the profession. Studies indicate that there is little investment and even a lack of intentional monitoring and didactic-pedagogical training provided for in public education policies, which can even be considered a traumatic moment in the professional trajectory of higher education professors.

Therefore, there is a need to think about institutional strategies for strengthening, retaining and developing these professionals in the teaching career.

According to Lantermaher (2020), in studies on early-career teachers, he advocates collaborative and supervised practices for teaching learning, which occurs formally through projects or instituted and practiced policies. It is worth noting that supervision does not aim at control and competence, but at being together, supporting and sharing experiences through listening, exchanging texts, planning, narratives and collective analyses. The study cited refers to early-career teachers, we believe that these practices are necessary at all stages of the career, but essential at the beginning because teachers with adequate pedagogical training can remain in the career more fluidly.

It is in this context that we seek to understand how the continuing education of teachers in higher education for an innovative pedagogical practice occurs based on training actions carried out by the university pedagogical advisory services of the institution studied. According to the pedagogical thinking of the HEI, pedagogical advisors are responsible for performing their functions with a focus on the quality of teaching so that it reverberates in quality in learning. To this end, it argues that for this to occur, it is essential that teachers are qualified and exercise an innovative pedagogical practice. For this to happen, the institution promotes continuing pedagogical training actions for its teachers, whether they are beginners or experienced.

Regarding the pedagogical training actions developed in the researched reality, the pedagogical advisors reported that they seek to welcome bachelor's degree teachers to present institutional policies and procedures; promote didactic-pedagogical training workshops for teachers that deal mainly with the themes of using institutional platforms, planning that involves everything from the elaboration and completion of the teaching and learning plan to the assessment of learning, going through the necessary knowledge of didactics and the use of various teaching methodologies with a focus on active methodologies so that pedagogical practice is innovative, elaboration of learning assessment and monitoring of the class.

With this vision, pedagogical advisors seek to provide teachers with some points of reflection that, gradually exposed, form a sum that qualifies, providing support so that they, in their teaching activity experiences, feel confident to develop teaching in a conscious way and with pedagogical intentionality.

Experience has shown that bachelor's degree teachers come to teaching through different paths and reasons, and therefore face many challenges, among which we can mention the lack of pedagogical knowledge, since they often do not have pedagogical training to perform the teaching function. Seeking to characterize pedagogical praxis, it is found that there is a diversity of daily practices, from expository classes and consolidation exercises to teachers who provide spaces for collective reflection and other methodologies. We understand that the current training needs (arising from pedagogical praxis), in the exercise of teaching in higher education, are: pedagogical training centered on didactics, development of planning with pedagogical intentionality, use of varied teaching-learning methodologies, teacher-student-knowledge relationship; spaces for reflection in/on the practice of assessing learning.

To this end, the higher education institution we studied develops its training activities aimed at the ongoing training of bachelor's degree teachers, prioritizing discussions about teaching professionalism and, therefore, the elements that give meaning to this role. From this perspective, continuing education can occur at the *lato sensu* or *stricto sensu* postgraduate level, or even during the exercise of the profession in the workplace, in moments of pedagogical training that can take the form of workshops, meetings, study groups, discussion groups, among other formats that are promoted by the education network itself.

According to Diniz-Pereira (2010),

It was not long before several criticisms of this compartmentalized view of “training stages” emerged. It was argued that it was necessary to overcome this conception of teacher training as isolated moments that are closed in on themselves, and it was suggested that we begin to examine teacher training as a process that occurs in a *continuum* between “initial” and “continuing” training. This idea of training became increasingly widespread in Brazilian academic circles (Diniz-Pereira, 2010, p. 1).

However, the practice of continuing education that we experience most often involves isolated, specific and occasional actions, because the offer of short courses called refresher courses, improvement courses and training courses still predominates. We also have *lato sensu* postgraduate courses in which the topics and content covered do not necessarily reflect the training needs of teachers, and are often full of discussions that are far removed from the daily experiences of the classroom.

Oliveira and Maués (2012) state how worrying the quality of specialization courses is, which teachers often take to advance their careers. In this way, Diniz-Pereira (2010) states that teachers start collecting certificates, worrying more about signing attendance lists than about effectively participating in the discussions promoted by these training moments. Often, the greatest interest is that these training courses may mean a percentage increase in their salaries, but generally do not bring much gain in improving their teaching practice in the classroom and ensuring the quality of education.

In view of this, aware that bachelor's degree teachers, in the development of their pedagogical work, are becoming teachers through the production of knowledge as they think about their work and about their work, we realize that, in this path, the participation/adherence of teachers to the training offered has been low, they still cannot understand that knowledge from experience is different from pedagogical knowledge and that the pedagogical practice of the teacher requires a theoretical foundation necessary for this professional experience. Although they recognize the importance of training meetings for their qualification in university teaching, they still face challenges in organizing themselves for the study time aiming at professionalism.

According to the participants, the training planning is diverse, including lectures, workshops, mini-courses, discussion groups, and pedagogical support, and the offering is constant. Some of the topics are offered every six months, such as assessment and planning, for example. Among the most frequently discussed topics are: workshop on developing questions; introduction to general aspects of learning assessment; construction of the identity of university professors; teaching planning and guidance; individual monitoring and guidance for professors with difficulties

in the didactic transpositions of the courses offered by the institution; teaching and learning planning; discussion on diversity and inclusion, among others.

When higher education institutions hire graduates to perform teaching functions, it is assumed that they understand that there is specific knowledge for teaching that the professionals hired do not have. Therefore, before requiring them to have pedagogical training, it is necessary to assume ongoing training for this purpose, expanding the proposal for monitoring and individual guidance of graduates in their role as teachers, as is the case with the actions under analysis.

In the reality researched, it was possible to perceive the development of what we call here formative actions, because in this institution there are institutional programs and policies for continuing education, since in the Brazilian reality, as stated by Cruz, Farias and Hobold (2020, p.13), "there is no indication, on the part of the research, about the existence of an induction program that results from a national policy".

As long as there are no public State policies that regulate the teaching career, considering the characteristics of each phase and the professional development of teachers, it is up to institutions to develop training actions through institutional programs and policies that can eliminate existing gaps and promote a quality learning process, as well as teaching working conditions.

4 CHALLENGES FOR INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In the area of education, innovation has been presented in a way that is connected to the use of digital technologies applied to education. In this section, we will seek to revisit and discuss the issue presented in the previous section, which deals with the quality of teaching so that it reverberates in the quality of learning, based on innovative pedagogical practices, a theme that has been widely disseminated in higher education, requiring that teachers develop and execute their planning based on such innovative practices.

For Cunha (2016, p. 92), "innovation is often understood as the inclusion of digital and technological devices in educational institutions. However, this is a reductionist way of approaching the topic". The need for changes in teaching practices is discussed, giving up the use of traditional methodologies for the insertion of innovative and active teaching methodologies, in accordance with the advancement of technology and modernity, thinking about the possibilities of strategies to teach knowledge.

Kenski (2013) warns that traditional practices still predominate in higher education classrooms, especially classes based on the teacher's oral presentation. In the author's view, digital culture is still far from pedagogical practices in higher education. Furthermore, she highlights something very interesting, "[...] that these same technologies are fully used by teachers and researchers outside the classroom and in their research" (Kenski, 2013, p. 70).

The technological leap therefore occurs between the action of the university professor as an innovative researcher and as a teacher. From the laboratory to the classroom there is a technological gap that compromises the quality of teaching and, consequently, of learning (Kenski, 2013, p. 70).

In this sense, it is important to (re)think the structure of university education, in which technology is seen as a resource, an additional support in the teacher's practice, without considering its intrinsic value as a cultural artifact, in the mediation between young people and learning, especially considering the advances of the 21st century. It is necessary to consider that students have access to a variety of information about what they study at university (which was acquired in informal contexts) and that it can be used in favor of learning with the aim of transforming information into knowledge, as this is the primary role of formal education.

In the reality studied, the implementation and consolidation of the Pedagogical Project occurs based on teaching guidelines that seek to establish and consolidate a pedagogical identity based on the following assumptions: curricular flexibility, building skills, integrated curriculum, active learning, innovative methodologies, among others. The teaching methodology of the institution studied is student-centered, aiming to stimulate the formation of logical-critical thinking and, to this end, uses theoretical and practical classes, valuing interdisciplinarity; values research as an instrument of analytical knowledge; assessment of procedural and continuous learning; encouragement of talent, creativity, initiative and the value of learning, in view of the demands of modern market demands; encouragement of an integrated-participative spirit; cooperative learning environment, enabling modes of social interaction with the development of projects that meet the needs of various social segments; all of this based on practical experience with the use of active learning methodologies, mediated by the teacher.

In order to ensure effective construction of knowledge based on the development of skills, the principles that guide the educational proposal of the aforementioned institution defend the didactics of dialogue and advocate active teaching methodologies that encourage teacher/student interaction in pedagogical practice, in the relationships of identity in the process, in which the student is the subject and the teacher is the mediator of learning. For all this to happen, it is clear that the curricula of the undergraduate courses offered by the institution needed to undergo reformulations, so that the requirements of the Institutional Political Project were met.

According to Canário (2006), the reorganization of the curriculum needs to interactively articulate situations of information, interaction and production. "It is this articulation that can allow the evolution of the training system, from a logic of repetition of information to a logic of production of knowledge" (Canário, 2006, p. 77). However, the reality is that there is still a huge gap between pedagogical practices and the use of technologies in these practices. We thus realize that the key to understanding this gap lies in teacher training, which in the context of this research is presented in the continuing education of bachelor's degree teachers in higher education.

What was possible to perceive in the researched reality is that the pedagogical advisors develop the processes of continuing pedagogical training in a systematic way to meet the institutional purposes. To this end, the teachers are encouraged to participate in the meetings with the aim of studying innovative educational methodologies and practices in order to later "insert" and "apply" such practices in the classroom, having as a complementary reference what is already proposed in the Pedagogical Project of the Course. In general, the aforementioned Pedagogical Project of the Course is oriented around an epistemological axis that is based on the competence-based approach. Another aspect that can also be perceived concerns the principle around which the aim is to integrate the various knowledge that subsidizes academic work in the search for

interdisciplinarity and learning to learn, with the student as an active subject in the learning process and the teacher as a facilitator of this process, using active methodologies so that meaningful learning occurs.

On the other hand, pedagogical advisors present the challenges faced by teachers who report difficulties with classes full of students that make it difficult to use active methodologies, since these focus on practical and group activities so that students can learn by doing; with the lack of materials, physical structure and technology for classes to take place as recommended by the institution; class time that was reduced in the reformulation of course curricula that impacts the remuneration of teachers who receive for class time, which generates dissatisfaction among the teaching staff; lack of internet for use of applications that are taught in workshops, but teachers are unable to use because the internet does not work in all classrooms; teachers complain about the amount of bureaucracy they are subjected to, such as filling out teaching and learning plans, preparing learning assessments in a rigid format, mandatory discursive questions and the demand for correction, given that classes have more than one hundred students.

Thus, it is important to emphasize that when higher education institutions hire bachelors to perform teaching functions, it is assumed that they understand that there is specific knowledge for teaching that the professionals hired do not have. Therefore, before requiring them to have pedagogical training, it is necessary to assume ongoing training for this purpose, expanding the proposal for individual guidance of bachelors in the condition of teachers, respecting the institutional limits for established practices and meeting the needs of teacher appreciation not only from the perspective of training but mainly from the categories of remuneration and working conditions and health of teachers.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this way, we can infer that there is an effort in the higher education institution researched to ensure that training actions take place based on the work developed by its pedagogical team through pedagogical consultancies that seek to guarantee training times and spaces from the perspective of professional development of bachelor's degree teachers.

Although it is not possible to identify a national educational policy that encompasses the insertion and/or induction of bachelor's degree teachers into higher education, the institutional training actions presented here are able to support bachelor's degree teachers through pedagogical support, favoring the confrontation of complex challenges of professional practice, thus it was possible to identify some form of support for these teachers.

In addition to the above, we also consider it important to (re)think about the training processes in the higher education institution space, seeking to observe the conception of the training carried out, the involvement of teachers from the planning phase, whether they are heard by the pedagogical team regarding the activities to be developed and whether teacher appreciation is carefully addressed based on the categories of training, remuneration, career and working and health conditions.

Teaching requires continuous and permanent study, this is learned in the construction of being a teacher, which involves professional, experiential, existential knowledge, which is built

from initial training and permeates continuing education, hence the importance and need for continuity of the training processes organized by institutions such as the reported experience, which should assist in professional development and in the constitution of the teaching identity.

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SOBRE OS AUTORES

D. O. V. SILVA

Doutoranda em Educação pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação pela Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA). Mestre em Educação pela Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia (UESB). Vice Líder do Grupo de Pesquisa Didática, Formação e Trabalho Docente (Difort/CNPq). Membro do Grupo de Pesquisa e Estudos Pedagógicos (GEPEP/CNPq). Professora da Educação Básica em Vitória da Conquista, Bahia. E-mail: danielaovdasilva@gmail.com.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2316-3035>

C. P. NUNES

Pós-Doutor em Educação pela Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Doutor em Educação pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) tendo realizado Estágio Doutoral na Universidade de Coimbra (UC). Mestre em Educação e Pesquisa, pela Université Du Québec À Chicoutimi (UQAC). Professor Titular da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia e do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação. Líder do Grupo de Pesquisa Didática, Formação e Trabalho Docente (Difort/CNPq). Bolsista de Produtividade em Pesquisa do CNPq -Nível 1D. E-mail: claudionunesba@hotmail.com.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1514-6961>.

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