

# Teacher professional development in times of academic neoliberalism: what nursing teachers think

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## ABSTRACT

Starting from the premise that the professional development of teachers has a profound relationship with the exercise of teaching, a naturalistic case study was carried out, which aimed to analyze the perception of nursing professors working in a Nursing course at a Public University, on the aspects that involve the professional development of teachers and the exercise of teaching. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview, with approval by the Research Ethics Committee. 30 teachers participated. It was found that the nurse professors understand the primary function of the public university as a social institution, they consent to their contemporary hegemonic function as a social organization, and perceive its physical structure as a contributing element to the professional development of teachers. It was understood that the professional development of nursing professors in a university has an influence on the exercise of teaching.

## KEYWORDS

teaching; nursing education; nursing teacher; nursing teacher practice.

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## *DESENVOLVIMENTO PROFISSIONAL DOCENTE EM TEMPOS DE NEOLIBERALISMO ACADÊMICO: O QUE PENSAM PROFESSORES ENFERMEIROS*

### RESUMO

Partindo-se da premissa que o desenvolvimento profissional docente tem profunda relação com o exercício da docência, realizou-se um estudo de caso naturalístico, que objetivou analisar a percepção de professores enfermeiros atuantes em um curso de Enfermagem de uma Universidade Pública, sobre os aspectos que envolvem o desenvolvimento profissional docente e o exercício da docência. Os dados foram coletados através de entrevista semiestruturada, mediante aprovação por Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa, em que participaram 30 professores. Verificou-se que os professores enfermeiros entendem a função primordial da universidade pública como uma instituição social, consentem com a sua função hegemônica contemporânea, enquanto organização social e percebem a sua estrutura física, como elemento contribuinte para o desenvolvimento profissional docente. Compreendeu-se que o desenvolvimento profissional docente de professores enfermeiros universitários exerce influência sobre o exercício da docência.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

ensino; educação em enfermagem; docente de enfermagem; prática do docente de enfermagem.

## *DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL DEL PROFESORADO EN TIEMPOS DE NEOLIBERALISMO ACADÉMICO: LO QUE PIENSAN LOS PROFESORES DE ENFERMERÍA*

### RESUMEN

Partiendo de la premisa de que el desarrollo profesional docente tiene una profunda relación con el ejercicio de la docencia, se llevó a cabo un estudio de caso naturalista, cuyo objetivo era analizar la percepción de los profesores de enfermería que trabajan en un curso de enfermería en una universidad pública, sobre los aspectos que implican el desarrollo profesional docente y el ejercicio de la enseñanza. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, mediante la aprobación del Comité de Ética en Investigación, en las que participaron 30 profesores. Se ha verificado que los profesores de enfermería entienden la función primordial de la universidad pública como institución social, acceden a su función hegemónica contemporánea, mientras organización social, y perciben su estructura física como un elemento que contribuye al desarrollo profesional docente. Se entendió que el desarrollo profesional docente de profesores universitarios de enfermería influye en el ejercicio de la docencia.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

docencia; educación en enfermería; docente de enfermería; práctica del profesor de enfermería.

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional development (TPD) is an individual and collective process, which takes place in professors' workplaces, and involves different types of opportunities and experiences. It is built throughout the teaching career and can be influenced by the educational institution and political contexts (García, 1999; García and Vaillant, 2016). It has a close epistemological relation with areas of didactic theory and research. It includes the organization of the teaching institution and the curriculum in which professors work; teaching and the social, academic, and cognitive structures that involve the teaching process; and professionalism, which is related to the teaching career, implies the expectations of the profession, the opportunities for training courses, as well as the psychological and social conditions in the exercise of teaching (García, 1999).

Above all, TPD constitutes teacher training under an expanded approach and takes place in a continuum, from family and cultural education to its formal and academic trajectory, maintaining itself as a vital process, while its professional cycle takes place (García and Vaillant, 2016). Understanding the TPD process in its evolutionary dimension favors the understanding of the multiple influences that are established on it (Cunha, 2013).

With the advent of neoliberalism, Brazilian public universities lost their priority in State policies, leaving public university open to commercial exploitation. Therefore, it became an institution of the highest degree of complexity, a sophisticated and diverse type of social organization mainly dedicated to business, involved in academic development as a corporation. Academic career is built basically with publications and the development of research projects, to the detriment of the professor's dedication to teaching (Dias Sobrinho, 2014; Nóvoa, 2015).

The public university is a social institution. It is a historically determined expression of a determined society (Chauí, 2003). It is responsible for the development model of global society (Dias Sobrinho, 2015), and it assumes a commitment to ethics, which means its involvement in projects, in addition to the training of human resources and the production of knowledge, as social, economic, and cultural issues that surround society as a whole (UNESCO, 1998).

In times of neoliberalism, it is important to be concerned with the TPD of Brazilian university professors, especially nurses, working in public universities. This is because, exercising university teaching, nurses' important transversal work in the area of nursing education is not reduced to the didactic-pedagogical field, but presupposes crafts with different branches of knowledge. This requires diversified instrumentalization, with the objective of training nurses to the work environment, an essential professional in the health field, a field of knowledge that is linked to the social, cultural, historical, and political contexts, with which human beings live and relate.

Teacher education understood as TPD has been included in the studies of some authors in the area of general national and international education (Zabalza, 2013; Almeida and Pimenta, 2014; García and Vaillant, 2016). However, it has

not been investigated under the scope of TPD in the area of nursing education. In this regard, it was considered a knowledge gap worthy of investigation.

National and international scientific research published in the last five years with a teacher training approach demonstrated its focus on the characterization of nursing education intimately absorbed by the traditional and biologist paradigm (Alexandre and Cesarino, 2014; Draganov and Sanna, 2016). Besides that, the need for nurse teachers to acquire pedagogical training to exercise the role of educators in higher education is also highlighted (Alexandre and Cesarino, 2014; Draganov and Sanna, 2016; Booth *et al.*, 2016; Agnelli and Nakayama, 2018).

Thus, we were motivated to carry out a study involving the TPD of nurse professors working in public universities. For this, the TPD of public university nurse professors was understood as having a profound relationship with teaching in nursing education. In order to answer the matter, the following research question was elaborated: How do university nurse professors working in a public university perceive the relations that involve TPD and the exercise of teaching in nursing?

In this perspective, the present study aimed to analyze the perception of nurse professors working in a public university, about the aspects that involve the TPD and the exercise of teaching.

## METHODOLOGY

Naturalistic, descriptive, and exploratory case study with a qualitative approach (Lüdke and André, 2018), carried out with university nurse professors, working in a Nursing program at a public university located in the Southeastern region of Brazil.

The inclusion of participants in the study was characterized by intentional qualitative sampling, built on the basis of 32 consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative — COREQ). The participants being those who shared particular characteristics and presented the potential to provide rich, relevant, and diverse data, pertinent to the research question (Tong, Sainsbury and Craig, 2007).

Thus, inclusion criteria were: university nurse professors with training in nursing; under the work regime with full dedication to teaching and research, with a minimum experience of three years; working in the annual or semester courses offered to undergraduate students from the first to the fifth year of the nursing program in the second academic semester of 2016.

Intentional sampling was constructed as follows:

- The schedule of the mandatory subjects of both types of degrees (Bachelor's and Teaching) in Nursing was consulted, taking into account those taught by nurse professors offered in the second semester of the 2016 school year;
- There was an offer of 23 subjects, five in the first year, five in the second year, three in the third year, four in the fourth year, and six in the fifth year;

- A total of 43 nurse professors involved with teaching these courses were identified;
- Of the 43, two professors were excluded, one for being in the condition of senior professor<sup>1</sup>, and another for being the study's supervisor.

Thus, intentional sampling with 41 professors was defined.

For data collection, semi-structured interviews were used (Minayo, 2014), containing questions that involved the identification of professors regarding gender, age, academic training time, and length of professional experience in teaching and nursing care. Besides that, issues addressed from the object of investigation, contemplating the thematic axes common to TPD (Public University, Curriculum, Teaching, and Professionality) were also used.

Interviews were carried out by one of the researchers, between September and December 2016, in the individual work rooms of professors themselves, according to their availability. They were recorded, with a minimum duration of 15 and a maximum of 60 minutes, with only the researcher and the researched being present at the time.

Each professor interview was identified by the letters NP (Nurse Professor), followed by a number corresponding to the number of participants and the order in which the interviews were scheduled.

To verify the theoretical saturation of the findings of the semi-structured interviews, the data treatment technique proposed by Fontanella *et al.* (2011) was used:

- raw data record was made available, with individual auditions of the recording audios, fully transcribing the recorded dialogues;
- analysis of each recording thoroughly, exploring each of the interviews individually, identifying in the participants' reports the composition of themes and nuclei of meaning;
- possibility of organizing two thematic categories was verified, constructed with the separation of participants' speeches in themes surrounded by nuclei of meaning;
- themes were categorized in a table, naming them and adding them to each thematic category, observing when the first occurrence took place, and manually counting the number of times they appeared; and
- the theoretical saturation of data was found, since new themes were not added in the occurrence of different interviews, after the 12<sup>th</sup> interview in thematic category 1 and of the 22<sup>nd</sup> interview in category 2.

Data were analyzed through content analysis, in the thematic modality (Minayo, 2014), with the theoretical reference being Carlos Marcelo Garcia. After performing a pre-analysis, exhaustive and comprehensive reading of the selected material, and treatment of results, the different cores of meaning of the different

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1 Retired professor, who develops teaching and research activities at the institution.

themes were analyzed. An essay was elaborated by theme, in order to encompass all meanings of the texts and their articulation with the theoretical concepts that guided the analysis and theoretical concepts.

Research only took place after approval by the Research Ethics Committee of a public university, under opinion No. 271/2016.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 41 invited nurse professors who were doctors, 30 participated in the study. Ten justified not being able to participate; two due to health reasons, and eight due to the lack of time to schedule the interview. One professor did not respond to e-mails or telephone contact.

Participants characterization was predominated by adult women, with a time of academic training over 10 years, and with professional experience in teaching and nursing care for more than five years.

Information predominance in the reports of the investigated group (85 to 95%) allowed the identification of elements common to TPD, which comprised the composition of thematic categories:

- The organization of the public university as an element inherent to the professional development of professors;
- TPD and the academic and didactic activities that involve the exercise of teaching in nursing education.

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY AS AN ELEMENT INHERENT TO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The primary responsibility of a university is to carry out its training activities, and to deal with knowledge with the highest possible degree of academic, scientific, technical, moral, political, and social qualities, consisting essentially of the formation of individuals-citizens endowed with civic values, of scientifically relevant technical knowledge and social relevance (Dias Sobrinho, 2015). As a public university, it must be characterized as a social institution, given that its ideological universe is society (Chauí, 2003), which compels social responsibility.

The social responsibility of a university includes the development of activities that include the teaching, research, and extension projects tripod. These activities must be carried out under an ethical dimension, covering social, economic, and cultural projects, with scientific and intellectual precision (UNESCO, 1998).

Nurse professors demonstrated to understand the primary function of the public university as a social institution, and recognized the development of teaching, research, and extension projects as activities that denote their social responsibility: “*We can pay back the investment that society makes in this type of institution*” (NP 28); “*Teaching, researching, and conducting extension projects with a return impact for society*” (NP 16).

Above all, professors emphasized the role provided by training nurses in the research activity: *“Researching to leverage the profession, with a leading role in the nursing course and the training of nurses”* (NP 29).

A study carried out with nurse professors at a Federal Institution of Higher Education, located in the Southern region of Brazil, agrees with these findings. Those researched were favorable to the development of research at the university with the purpose of improving the construction of the nursing profession (Sebold and Carraro, 2013).

For Nóvoa (2015), university research must consolidate the links between education and science, building a basic education, which provides professors and students the necessary knowledge and self-knowledge instruments, aiming to achieve results in a wider audience.

The fact that nurse professors are researchers in their own field can contribute to the training of competent nurses who are aware of the dimension of their intervention in the social context (Lima and Santos, 2011), which presumes to enable the advance in the production of knowledge and the involvement of students in learning beyond the technique.

In this sense, university research becomes an inherent part of academic work, with the aim not only of professional training, but of social responsibility (Giroux, 1997). In this line of reasoning, the knowledge produced by nurse professors will have public and social value, belonging to the sphere of human rights and civilizational projects, mediating teaching under a collective and articulated process.

For nursing professors, the public university must be committed to teaching and training human resources, aiming to satisfy social and public health demands: *“Since its creation, the primary function of public universities has been teaching”* (NP 13); *“Training nurses to contribute to improvements in the population’s quality of life”* (NP 26).

In a study carried out with nurse professors at a public university in the Midwestern region of Brazil, the concept that nursing education must be geared to meet the needs of the public health system’s patients was evidenced (Pereira and Chaouchar, 2010).

The university has the mission of training people with a high cultural, moral, and political sense of citizenship; and to contribute, in its sphere of possibilities and limits, to the solution of collective problems (Dias Sobrinho, 2015).

When thinking about training nurses, it means to train these professionals, important health workers, in addition to supplying the market demand, which includes effectively contributing to the changes in social realities that are in place.

The requirements for training nurses to satisfy the needs of the public health system are recommended in the national curricular guidelines for undergraduate nursing courses (DCN/ENF/2001) since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Brasil, 2001).

For nursing professors to participate in training nurses from the perspective of their social relevance, as a profession to be exercised in nursing, is a challenge, as it understands the practice of teaching effort, not only individual, but collective,

which depends on the construction of relevant and innovative knowledge that is inserted in educational institutions.

Nurse professors expressed their consent to the contemporary hegemonic function of the public university, as a social organization, which is related to teacher involvement in the academic productivism paradigm.

Some professors lamented the excessive work demand they have to meet at the public university in which they work: *“It is a work load that involves teaching, researching, and conducting extension projects. I think I fail in the teaching aspect”* (NP 22).

Others demonstrated the importance of dedication to teaching in scientific production to the detriment of teaching itself, aiming at international competitiveness and the raising of financial resources for the university: *“Professors have to dedicate themselves to their research so that they can compete with international scientific production”* (NP 7); *“The currency of exchange within the university is research when you want to progress in your career, assume positions, and request resources (whether material, financial, or human)”* (NP 16).

In a study carried out with nurse professors from three higher education institutions in São Paulo City, participants considered the teaching activities subsumed to research (Leonello and Oliveira, 2014).

For Chauí (2003), the perspective of the public university as a social organization carries in its structure the ideological dynamics of social power and control, which is in close connection with the cultural industry. In this perspective, university professors, in order to make themselves recognized in the academy, are inserted in the logic of an exacerbated academic productivism (Nóvoa, 2015).

In Brazil, public activity management bodies proliferate in public universities, which seek fundraising and intermediation with external corporations for research development (Dias Sobrinho, 2014).

This is true especially for research in Nursing. In recent years, through bibliometric and rankings indexes, a significant increase in scientific production in the country has been observed. The great challenge of researchers is achieving excellence, producing and publishing their evidence in national and international journals recognized by the scientific community (Marziale, 2012).

No one should fail to recognize the importance of public universities, regarding international excellence in terms of scientific production. However, in this logic, reflections on the repercussion of this project when it raises academic productivity are valued.

Academic productivism weakens the foundations of the academic profession (Nóvoa, 2015). On the other hand, it is by reaching and exceeding productivity goals that one has access to the scarce resources available to finance research, mainly in the field of human sciences (Domingues, 2013).

With regard to research produced in the field of nursing education, professors are expected to achieve productivity goals, which must be constituted under ethical and social justice principles. Their results should be applied to improve and strengthen health care, and to train nurses.

In relation to the organization of the public university in which the professors work, they pointed out aspects they considered to interfere in their TPD. Some said they recognized the physical structure of the university and the opportunity for pedagogical training courses as contributing factors to TPD: “*The infrastructure influences a lot. We have had good social laboratories that favor the issue of professional training*” (NP 1); “*I relate TPD with the opportunities for pedagogical preparation courses*” (NP 15).

According to García (1999), TPD understands the knowledge and involvement of professors with the organization and structure of the educational institution in which they work. It requires their training on teaching in relation to the contents and the different ways of teaching them. Moreover, teaching professionalism, which includes the knowledge that propagates the capacities of individual and collective action, and the institutional autonomy that intrinsically affect professors, as professionals and learning subjects, also relates to it.

Throughout their teaching career, professors are expected to have opportunities to participate in a variety of training activities that lead to processes of revision, renewal, and improvement of their thinking and action, and, above all, of their professional commitment (Day, 2001), which involves continuing education (Nóvoa, 2009).

Vaillant and García (2015) consider that every TPD system must be able to transform and make professors education facilitators throughout their professional lives.

Nurse professors demonstrated to conceive TPD as an element that embraces the teaching career: “*TPD is the professors’ career, because we bring to undergraduate, to the teaching we exercise, what we were and what we are. We bring our worldview, our experiences, what we believe in, what we want to form*” (NP 17).

The study conducted with nurse professors by Madeira and Lima (2010) identified the professional teaching experience as a contributing tool in the ability to perform nursing education.

Regarding university nurse professors, associating TPD with experiences acquired by them during the course of their profession is possible, whether in the initiation of undergraduate nursing education, or in the performance of care practices, which compete with nurses’ work.

As to the experiences acquired in the performance of the nursing profession and their contributions to the exercise of teaching, some professors demonstrated that these factors contribute to TPD: “*I understand that my professional experience prepared me for teaching, and I’ve worked in a hospital and in emergency care*” (NP 23); “*Professional practice and teaching are always connected to me*” (NP 9).

These reports can be associated with the studies by Rodrigues and Mendes Sobrinho (2008), and McNamara, Roat and Kemper (2012), who pointed out the experience of care practice as a fundamental factor in the development of teaching work.

According to Vaillant and García (2015), TPD is a continuous, systematic, and organized process, which covers the entire teaching career. García and Vaillant (2016) state that TPD embracing the teaching career corresponds to the principle

of diversity, since teachers go through different stages, with very diverse interests and styles of learning, involved by different beliefs and ideas. In addition, this principle can be concluded by the principle of continuity, in which any opportunity can serve to start a TPD process, as long as a goal itinerary is established.

Daily work built by nurse professors at the public university create their TPD, since they learn from it. However, the profession of nurse professors has an arduous intention, given that its connotation is broad, as being a nurse is to act in care, and a nurse professor is to train those who will exercise care in the future, which requires diversified knowledge, with pedagogical foundation and specific theory about what is taught.

#### TPD AND THE ACADEMIC AND DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES THAT INVOLVE THE EXERCISE OF TEACHING IN NURSING EDUCATION

TPD integrates the professors' personal commitment, as well as the availability to learn to teach (García, 2009). It must be connected to a comprehensive process, with a focus on improving student learning (García and Vaillant, 2016). To happen with teaching, theoretical training proposals must be built within the profession, and new modes of organization must be promoted, reinforcing the personal dimension and the public presence of professors (Nóvoa, 2009).

García (2009) points out to curricular innovation as an agent of the personal and public dimensions of professors, since the curriculum contains instruments that privilege professional development for teaching with regard to activities developed at school, in the classroom, and in the planning and evaluation of learning strategies.

According to Sacristán and Gómez (1998), the curriculum theme will only have a relevant role in TPD when worked with professors, considering their forms of existence, for both prescribed and explicit curriculum. Prescribed curriculum, also called pedagogical project (PP), refers to a written and materialized plan under a text, in which professors order what they teach. Explicit curriculum is related to the expression of an intention and content, which, represented by social thought and culture, involves the school, students, and what professors say they teach, materializing in what is taught.

Nurse professors demonstrated knowledge and involvement in the curriculum of the nursing program in which they worked: "*Curriculum sets out the guideline, because it is a letter of intent. It signals how we want to achieve our objective, which is properly trained students*" (NP 18); "*I participate a lot in the curriculum because I believe that situating ourselves in its discussion process is important, even to find our identity within the training context*" (NP 1).

A study carried out with nurse professors at a Federal University of Piauí State identified the construction of the prescribed curriculum of the course as a milestone for the sustainability of the socio-educational actions that involve teaching. This way, it is set as a work tool that suggests what will be done, in order to safely reach the desired results (Madeira and Lima, 2010).

For Sacristán and Gómez (1998), the curricular text is not the reality of the effects converted into learned meanings, but it is a text that has its importance, because it disseminates codes about what teaching at universities should be. Thus, the fact that nurse professors have demonstrated knowledge about the curriculum is important within the academic environment, since the curriculum serves to guide professors when training nursing students.

In addition to claiming to know the prescribed curriculum, some professors reported having participated in its construction: *“I know the PP. I have already read it, had contact with it, and participated in the meetings of the curricular structure”* (NP 13); *“I participated since the beginning of this curriculum creation”* (NP 2); *“I know the curriculum because I participated in some meetings to discuss it”* (NP 23).

García (2011) states that when professors participate in curriculum planning, their commitment grows, as does their learning.

The way in which the curriculum is formulated conditions it. According to Sacristán and Gómez (1998), the text must reproduce the university's own culture, which has certain intrinsically teaching purposes and naturally provides a peculiar service to socialization and reproduction. When it comes to nursing education, it must be seen as a dynamic project, involved in the social, economic, political, and cultural realities that involve training nurses. Moreover, it contains the preparation and organization of teaching materials and administrative decisions on how nursing education will develop.

Some professors demonstrated to perceive the curriculum as a dynamic project, which proposes the use of active teaching methods, promoting critical and reflective learning: *“PP is very dynamic. We have a pro-form. It has an objective image of its objectives, but it is the context that determines the training process”* (NP 1).

However, divergences regarding the positive opinions about the curriculum were evidenced: *“The curriculum has its strengths, but also has weaknesses”* (NP 2); *“There are some gaps in our curriculum”* (NP 7).

The reports can be related to the considerations of Sacristán and Gómez (1998), who affirms that every proposal for a curricular text is translated by the readers, and when interpreting it, their intentions can be enriched and even subverted. Paraphrasing García (2011), during curriculum development, the need for its constant evaluation must be a collaborative and shared process among nurse professors. Contrary to individual differences about it, what can happen compromises the proper functioning of academic activities that belong to the public university and nursing education.

In relation to sharing ideas about the program's curriculum, some nurse professors demonstrated that it must happen: *“I think that sharing with other colleagues would help a lot, because you don't know exactly what happens in your area and in others”* (NP 22); *“We were unable to get together. I feel very frustrated”* (NP 18).

With regard to these statements, the study carried out by Backes *et al.* (2013) with university nurse professors, the prescribed curriculum of the nursing program was found to be a basic training required by professors.

Professors demonstrated to perceive the curriculum as an element of investigation and divergences, in which the need for training and discussion about it

is explicit in their reports. They also expressed understanding of the curriculum as a contributing mechanism to TPD: *“The curriculum itself has very interesting aspects to be worked on, but I really miss receiving training, something like continuing education about it”* (NP 28).

A study conducted with university nurse professors by Mafra *et al.* (2013) found the need for a teacher approach to the program’s curriculum for a critical understanding of the pedagogical proposal. In this perspective, we agree with the statements of Giroux (1997), pointed out more than two decades ago: for them, the view on the social construction of the principles that govern the curricular project is largely ignored by professors. In this way, the curriculum is understood as a proposal to be worked on and adapted to the different realities of themes and contents, which nurse professors must act on, with its main focus being the proposition of change and innovation in nursing education.

Dias Sobrinho (2015) states that, currently, public universities are pressured by empowered international nuclei, being constrained to adjust their curricula to the guiding standards of evaluation rankings. The requirements for connectivity of knowledge and technical instrumentality of training, that is, professional training, impose curricular and disciplinary priorities that adhere to the economic order. However, this has a strong impact on social and academic prestige, as well as on funding policies, such as important impacts on fragmentary and utilitarian training for students. If the training needs of nursing professors on the understanding of the philosophical principles that are inserted in the prescribed curriculum are met, teaching skills performed supported by it would flow with more ease of understanding and acceptance.

Curriculum innovation promotes TPD for professors, because the curriculum contains instruments that privilege professional development for teaching (Gómez, 1998). Teaching promotes TPD, given that it encompasses communication, academic tasks, methods, and strategies, as well as hidden dimensions of the teaching process, that is, thoughts and decision-making by professors and students (García, 1999).

Teaching requires that professionals who exercise it through teaching be properly prepared (García and Vaillant, 2016). Quality teaching requires quality professors, trained and with knowledge that demonstrate skills to face the complexity and changes inherent to teaching, and committed to their profession throughout their teaching career (Flores, 2008). Thus, the development of teaching provides TPD and depends on the exercise of teaching, which is an extended process that involves not only knowing how to teach, but the context and environment in which professors are inserted.

Teaching depends on the pedagogical practice exercised by the professors. Pedagogical practice involves the questions proper to the educational activity of teaching, and they understand what is taught, its purpose, and how it is performed (Almeida and Pimenta, 2014). Pedagogical practice includes didactics and transcends them (Franco, 2015).

Didactics comprises the construction of knowledge that enables the mediation between what is necessary to teach and what is necessary to learn;

between the structured knowledge in the disciplines and the teachable knowledge in circumstances and moments; and between the current forms of relationship with knowledge and the new possible ways of reconstructing them, structuring themselves in the possibilities of mediation in teaching (Franco and Pimenta, 2016). Didactics is what gives meaning to teaching, which is exercised by professors through pedagogical practice.

Franco (2016) considers that in pedagogically constructed practices, there is the mediation of the human, and not the submission of the human to a previously constructed technical artifact. Besides that, the pedagogical practice should incorporate continuous and collective reflection, in order to ensure that the proposed intentionality will be made available to all those involved. Thus, a class or teaching activity becomes a pedagogical practice when it is organized around intentionalities, as well as when considering constructing practices that give meaning to intentionalities.

For Leal (2005), the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process is realized through its planning. Professors said they had difficulties regarding the availability of time to prepare their teaching activities in advance, due to the extensive academic demands they have at the university: *“I would like to have more time to prepare teaching activities, but the work load is very high”* (NP 23); *“I cannot say that I prepare 100% of my classes in advance”* (NP 17).

These reports can be related to the statements by García (2010), when he points to the fact that professors rising to different roles in a teaching institution leads them to move away from activities that involve teaching. According to Dias Sobrinho (2015), the major impacts of academic demands on the lives of university professors are related to the irradiation and consolidation of ideology, and the neoliberal economy of the current globalization. Considering the excessive demand for academic work, there were nurse professors who reported extending their working hours in the comfort of their homes, in order to fulfill their commitments to the university: *“I take work from here to home very often, even on weekends”* (NP 7); *“The work process at the university today really occupies me outside it, that is, at home, on weekends”* (NP 17).

A study that aimed to analyze the characteristics of the work of nurse professors in higher education in institutions in São Paulo City identified complaints about the excessive demands for academic work from those investigated (Leonello and Oliveira, 2014).

The hegemonic university model in the world is committed to the irradiation and consolidation of the neoliberal ideology and economy of the current globalization, and, in this logic, science, technology, and innovation are made. Related to this is a major impact of academic demands on the lives of university professors (Dias Sobrinho, 2015).

In this context, university nurse professors are identified as individuals who consent to the neoliberal economy. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they are driven by interests that keep them in their teaching positions, and it is up to them to fulfill the academic demands that compel the university career. Above all, one perceives the university nurse professor biased to immerse in the context

of the neoliberal proposal in which the current public university is found, with regard to suppression, academic expertise in teaching, mediation of knowledge, and the application of results and processes of innovation in nursing education.

According to Franco (2015), pedagogical practices are charged with intentionality, which directs and gives meaning to the action, requesting a planned and scientific intervention on the object, with a view to the transformation of social reality. With this purpose, Leal (2005) highlights the fact that the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process takes place through teaching planning, since it is precisely what should contemplate the course's syllabus, teaching objectives, contents, methodology, and evaluation (Leal, 2005). Lesson plan corresponds to the expectation of what professors intend to teach (Vasconcellos, 2008).

Nurse professors admitted that they did not always have the routine of preparing their lesson plans: "*Most of my classes have a plan*" (NP 17); "*In general, I make a lesson plan. If I don't do it, I'll put the lesson items on the board*" (NP 24); "*I don't prepare lesson plans, but I do take some notes that help me*" (NP 9).

According to these reports, one can relate the study carried out by Alexandre and Cesarino (2014), involving 60 nurse professors from universities in a city in the inland part of São Paulo State, which identified that less than half of the total of investigated professors performed lesson planning.

According to Almeida and Pimenta (2014), teaching involves knowing the planning of each course, as well as the pedagogical actions and adequate resources to reach the objectives. In this perspective, García (2011) states that in order to develop competence in a given area, professors must organize knowledge in order to facilitate its implementation.

García (2011) considers that professors must have a solid base of theoretical knowledge to develop competence in a given area, understanding facts and ideas in the context of this conceptual structure. Above all, student learning depends mainly on what professors know and how they make teaching happen (García, 2008).

According to García (2010), knowing how to teach the knowledge of the subject is not a sufficient condition of quality, since there are other types of knowledge, which are also important, such as the knowledge of the context, of the students, of themselves, and of the best way to teach. In addition to knowing the content they teach, professors must have knowledge about the place and people to whom they teach, which must be adapted to the students' subject and the particular conditions of the educational institution; psycho-pedagogical aspects are also important, which are related to the general principles of teaching, student learning, teaching in small groups, class management, and didactic content, constituting a central element of the teacher's knowledge and representing the appropriate combination between the knowledge of the subject to be taught, and the pedagogical and didactic knowledge referred to as teaching (García, 2011; Vaillant and García, 2015).

In this perspective, activities of pedagogical practice must be based on theoretical references of education. Evidence on the use of theoretical frameworks of education, as support in the preparation of pedagogical practices, was

found in the reports of the investigated nurse professors: “*I have been using many approaches offered by David Paul Ausubel*” (NP 19); “*I do not follow Paulo Freire by the book, but I like his statements*” (NP 27); “*I use Vigotski as a didactic theoretical basis*” (NP 21); “*Currently, I have come much closer to the critical historic approach of Demerval Saviani*” (NP 14).

Foundation as a pedagogical support for the preparation of teaching activities is based on theories elaborated by authors of education. These theories, known as pedagogical and teaching, were built with the purpose of presenting answers accepted as references by the community, being related to historical facts and influencing the pedagogical decisions of teaching (Hengemühle, 2008).

Pedagogical theories serve as a reference on the method used in the construction of the teaching process. Teaching theories emphasize the complexity and value of teaching, promoting TPD. Among those investigated, there were reports by nurse professors, who admitted that they did not use education theorists to support the preparation of their pedagogical practices: “*I don’t use any author of education to prepare my classes*” (NP 30); “*To prepare my classes, I use the specific theoretical framework of the course that I teach*” (NP 15).

These reports confirmed the studies carried out with nurse professors by Rodrigues and Mendes Sobrinho (2008), and Rodrigues *et al.* (2013). In the first, it was found that most nursing professors did not base their pedagogical practice on any teaching theory. In the second, nurse professors admitted that some pedagogical approaches are not well defined and understood by them, as they have no conceptual domain over teaching and pedagogical theories. Besides that, they are not sure about how and when they can use these pedagogical foundations to prepare and develop their teaching activities.

For Franco (2015), pedagogical practice must reach the proposed purposes by intentions, always being set up as a conscious and participatory action. In this sense, the pedagogical practice exercised by nurse professors will only be defined as such when providing students’ involvement with the learning process. Evidence on the attempt to provide a pedagogical practice with meaning and intentionality, aiming at the reflection and the participation of the students involved in the learning process was present in the reports. Some nurse professors reported using attractive and active teaching strategies to perform their classes: “*What we try to do in the course is using some more active methodologies. We do labs, games of images and actions, which I don’t know if are adequate or not*” (NP 30); “*In the subjects I teach, we work with more professors and we try to make some dynamics using playful strategies*” (NP 18).

In the study by Madeira and Lima (2010), which investigated the teaching knowledge that underlies the pedagogical practice of nursing professors, professors who identified themselves in an original, and often creative way, elaborate their pedagogical practices in the classroom. In the study by Pereira and Chaouchar (2010), the nurse professors investigated revealed to replace the traditional pedagogical practice with more dynamic practices, emphasizing that this is something that needs prior planning.

These reports can also be related to the recommendations of Art. 14 of DCN/ENF/2001, with regard to ensuring that the structure of the Undergraduate Nursing Course offers theoretical and practical activities, permitting training nurses, in an integrated and interdisciplinary way, and the implementation of methodology in the teaching-process that encourages students to reflect on the social reality and to learn through group dynamics, which favor collective discussion and interpersonal relationships (Brasil, 2001).

On the other hand, there were nurse professors who reported still adhering to their pedagogical practices, merely traditional teaching strategies: “*I try to relate the content I teach with nursing practice, so that they value what they are learning*” (NP 13); “*Traditional classes still take place. We do the theoretical framework, then we do the practice exercise*” (NP 18).

Scientific studies of national and international literature corroborate these reports. Studies carried out by Alexandre and Cesarino (2014) and Draganov and Sanna (2016), in Brazil, evidenced the predominance in the use of traditional pedagogical practices by university nurse professors. An American study of 946 nurse professors, with the aim of exploring the types of innovative pedagogies used in nursing education worldwide, found that the conventional professor-centered approach remains the most prevalent teaching style (Brown *et al.*, 2009).

Vaillant and García (2015) warn to the fact that the teaching approach, in which the model of relationships that is established is the juxtaposition of contents, to which theory comes first and practice comes second as an occasion to apply knowledge, providing basically academic, conceptual, and propositional training. For Schön (2000), professional training in different areas in a Cartesian way, with theory disconnected from practice as a consequence of solid theoretical training, does not allow development of creative professionals who can handle the different demands imposed by practice.

According to Vaillant and García (2015), traditional ways of teaching no longer serve the contemporary world, because both society and students have changed, given the places where they learn and the multiplication of systems of access to information.

Evidence related to the creation of knowledge mobilization mechanisms in other educational spaces was considered among the investigated nurse professors, when they declared relating what they teach to research and to extension projects they develop: “*Research and extension projects that I carry out are related to what I teach*” (NP 2); “*I have extension projects and create things with students along with practices in health services*” (NP 9).

These reports are in line with what is recommended in articles 9 and 14 of DCN/ENF/2001 (Brasil, 2001), with regard to higher education in Nursing, substantiated by the articulation between teaching, research, and extension projects. The social responsibility of a university is developed through activities that include the teaching, research, and extension projects tripod (UNESCO, 1998). Thus, university nurse professors must train nurses from the perspective of social responsibility.

The fact that the interviewed nurse professors articulate teaching and research, and extension projects is considered a prominent aspect in the nursing program, the present study scenario, considering that these activities are fundamental in students training, because they provide mechanisms for mobilizing students' knowledge built in different educational spaces.

Conceiving the involvement between TPD and teaching, nurse professors considered TPD as a positive influence in the exercise of university teaching. This is due to the benefit provided to teaching through the qualification and maturation of professional teaching: *"If I did not have all the trajectory of teacher training I had, I believe I would not be the professor I am today"* (NP 14); *"The theoretical basis of the master's and doctorate programs made me a better professor"* (NP 29).

The opportunities for pedagogical training courses and the development of autonomy in the teaching career involve continuous, interactive, and cumulative learning, which comprises TPD (García, 1999). Thus, TPD is not a moment, but a journey; it must integrate the disciplinary knowledge that professors have on a given subject and the educational skills necessary to exercise the teaching profession (García and Vaillant, 2016). Moreover, it involves opportunities that strengthen the conditions for exercising the teaching profession (Vaillant and García, 2015).

However, nurse professors considered that TPD can negatively influence the exercise of university teaching, since it distances them from teaching due to the excessive administrative demands involved in academic work and priority dedication to research: *"Work at the university requires many responsibilities that make professors tired of exercising teaching"* (NP 22); *"The teaching career requires dedication with valorization in research, which compromises the dedication to teaching"* (NP 30).

These reports can be related to the considerations made by Dias Sobrinho (2014), who affirms that the teaching carried out by professors adhering to academic neoliberalism takes place in public universities, through the management of various activities, which seek to raise funds and mediate with external corporations, such as the development of research, innovation processes, and products. Santos, Guilherme and Dietz (2015) reiterate stating that, due to increasingly less state intervention in the direction and financing of public universities and research programs, higher education is progressively at the mercy of hegemonic globalization and neoliberal capitalism.

Considering the university's responsibility in the integral training of professional citizens (Dias Sobrinho, 2015), professors are urged, as those responsible for the activation and development of teaching processes (Vaillant and García, 2015).

Therefore, working conditions of nurse professors working in a public university are mediating elements of TPD, which can intimidate or leverage activities that involve the exercise of university teaching, whether or not they benefit nursing education.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Upon carrying out this study, the initial premise that motivated it was confirmed: identification from the perspective of nurse professors working in public universities with a TPD that has a profound relationship with the exercise of teaching in nursing education.

In this perspective, TPD influences the exercise of teaching, whether or not it benefits nursing education; because it involves the personal and professional lives of nurse professors, as well as the organizational context of the public university, where they carry out their academic activities.

However, in view of this analysis, listing the benefits or loss that TPD of nurse professors working in a public university can unleash on nursing education was not possible. Nevertheless, the identification of a paradox between results may be the mentor for questions and reflections that can help to identify this result.

Among the investigated group, professors perceived to be engaged in the exercise of university teaching, but distanced from the pedagogical foundations that involve nursing teaching, especially with regard to their planning. In this sense, immersed in the context of the neoliberalist proposal, they are overloaded by extensive academic activities, which consenting to the neoliberal university, suppress the planning of the exercise of teaching to the detriment of academic productivism.

When analyzing nurse professors, inserted in a public operational university, there is concern as to the influences that the working conditions of these professionals may trigger on those they train: nurses, professionals to be trained under principles that should actively integrate human and social interests, and not just satisfy the business market.

Given this scenario, the following question is raised: Is it possible for university nurse professors without the necessary time to dedicate to teaching not allowing the exercise of teaching to be weakened?

The hegemonic university model in the current world is not being denied herein. This model is committed to the irradiation and consolidation of the neoliberal ideology and economy, which exceeds productivity goals, allowing access to the scarce resources available for research funding, especially in the Nursing field. But in view of this, nurse professors are invited to think about the possible reflexes of this logic on nursing teaching.

Contrary to the logic of academic productivism, nurse professors are expected to have an active voice in the academy, not simply bending to meet the demands of the intellectual market automatically, but finding mechanisms to dialogue with it, generating cutting-edge knowledge that are constituted under ethical and social justice principles, which involves nurses training and nursing care in the health area. Moreover, it preserves the image of the public university that welcomes it. For being a social educational institution, its primary function is the integral formation of citizens-professionals mediated by the knowledge that integrates the human social formation, ethics and politics, which hosts

the exercise of teaching in nursing education under this philosophical logic. Perhaps, the path taken to soften the influence exerted by TPD on the exercise of teaching in nursing education lies in the opening of spaces for discussion on this subject among nurse professors.

Study limitations are the scarcity of research involving the TPD theme of university nurse professors, in this context inhibiting more valuable comparisons; and the scenario in which the investigation was carried out, since the opinion of university nurse professors related to the TPD in a public university may differ according to the context of the university, in which the pedagogical experiences are thought of and applied.

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