

Dossiê “Jovens, Trabalho e Educação”<sup>1</sup>

## Professional trajectories of young teachers<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>

### *Trajetórias profissionais de jovens professoras e professores*

Dirce Zan<sup>(i)</sup>

Aparecida Neri de Souza<sup>(ii)</sup>

<sup>(i)</sup> Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Unicamp, Campinas, SP, Brasil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3663-2232>, [dircezan@unicamp.br](mailto:dircezan@unicamp.br)

<sup>(ii)</sup> Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Unicamp, Campinas, SP, Brasil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1730-4495>, [anerisouza@uol.com.br](mailto:anerisouza@uol.com.br)

#### **Abstract**

This article was written based on research made in 2015 with young high school teachers in public and private schools from the city of Campinas (SP). Aiming to comprehend the training trajectory and work experiences of these subjects, we interviewed 12 teachers aged 20–29 years. We found that the option for the teaching position is viewed by this group as a possibility for contributing, as culture producers, to social changes, and as a viable professional choice given their social and economic condition. The conditions in which teachers work show different factors about the content and meaning of teaching, as well as about their decision to stay in teaching.

**Keywords:** youth, teaching, professional trajectories, high school teachers

<sup>1</sup> Thematic dossier organized by: Aparecida Neri de Souza (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1730-4495>), Dirce Djanira Pacheco e Zan (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3663-2232>) and José Humberto da Silva (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7437-7017>)

<sup>2</sup> Responsible Editor: André Luiz Paulilo - <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8112-8070>

<sup>3</sup> References correction and bibliographic normalization services: Ana Carolina López (Tikinet) – [revisao@tikinet.com.br](mailto:revisao@tikinet.com.br)

<sup>4</sup> English version: Roberto Cândido (Tikinet) – [traducao@tikinet.com.br](mailto:traducao@tikinet.com.br)

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**Resumo**

*Este artigo foi elaborado a partir de pesquisa realizada em 2015 com jovens professoras e professores do ensino médio de escolas públicas e privadas da cidade de Campinas (SP). Com o objetivo de compreender a trajetória formativa desses sujeitos e suas experiências de trabalho, foram entrevistados 12 professores com idade entre 20 e 29 anos. Identificamos que a opção pelo magistério é vista por esse grupo como uma possibilidade de contribuir para mudanças sociais, enquanto produtores de cultura, e como uma escolha profissional viável diante de sua situação social e econômica. As condições em que os professores trabalham colocam em evidência diferentes fatores quanto ao conteúdo e significado do trabalho docente, bem como sobre a decisão de permanecer no magistério.*

**Palavras-chave:** *juventude, trabalho docente, trajetórias profissionais, professores do ensino médio*

This text aims to present results of empirical research on the professional trajectories of young teachers who worked in public and private high schools in 2015 in the city of Campinas, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Accordingly, the article dialogues with research conducted by Aparecida Neri de Souza (Souza, 2017, 2018; Souza & Trópia, 2015; Souza & Zafalão, 2017) involving the multiple dimensions acquired by the changes in labor relations in the public sector, specifically in the field of Education, as well as the social implications of these changes in the daily living or in the modes of life associated with reforms in the field of education and work, justified in the name of a process called modernization. The research highlights devices that shift the assessment of the value of collective teaching work towards an individualized mode, and shows a split between the private and public spheres and the different and contradictory interrelations between private and professional life. The changes are also observed in the redefinition of the teaching profession and work and impose the need to analyze professional trajectories, observing differences in the social relations of gender, class, and generation. The strong resort to education as an instrument of modernization and economic and social development puts in dispute different conceptions and meanings attributed to the teaching work. In this sense, we are challenged to understand the trajectories of new teachers who enter

the labor market in the field of education. By favoring the conception of trajectory as an explanatory possibility as to the teaching work, it is understood that teaching represents not only work as a synonym for survival, but also a producer of culture.

Analyzing the teaching work as a social activity also requires an approach that simultaneously considers the social configurations in which this function is situated. The point here is understanding the theory and empirical research in sociological studies as proposed by Norbert Elias (1980). Analyzing the teaching work as social configuration underscores the social relations of interdependence and the changes to which it is subjected. This notion is directly intertwined with the relations of power and domination.

The hypothesis that guided the research is that young teachers at the beginning of their careers are faced with a work that is increasingly complex and difficult due to the conditions in which it is carried out. Thus, it is in the singular trajectories, attributing meaning to their work, that these professionals build themselves as teachers.

The discourse of these subjects guided the analysis presented here, which aimed to understand the experience lived at the beginning of the teaching career. The research was carried out through oral statements and observations of students of the undergraduate teaching degree programs of the University of Campinas (UNICAMP), who were interning in public and private high schools under the coordination of professor Dirce Zan. The interviews were conducted with 74 teachers of different subjects, genders and ages, who worked in different schools. Of this total, 12 were aged 20–29 years. Based on the statements collected and for the purpose of this article—which aims to understand the condition of “young teachers”—we selected the statements of these 12 teachers, highlighting social characteristics and their professional trajectories.

Although the concept of youth cannot be reduced to a definition of age, the limit of 29 years was established for understanding that Brazilian policies aimed at youths have assumed this age as a social marker of what is conventionally defined as youth. In Brazil, the age group of 15–29 years is in all legal frameworks that followed the institution of the national youth policy in the early 21st century. We accept the age group as a legitimate marker, although “understanding young people only by the age factor, however, would be simplifying a complex reality that involves elements related to the symbolic and cultural fields and to the economic and social conditions that structure society” (Dayrell & Carrano, 2014, p. 110, free translation).

Considering that youth is a social and historical construction, “and that the fact of talking about young people as if they were a social unit, a constituted group, having common interests, and relating these interests to a biologically defined age already constitutes an evident manipulation” (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 113, free translation), the teachers of this research are asked about how the condition of being a young teacher is thought and interpreted by them. The oral statements enabled the research subjects to express themselves regarding their professional practices; their entry into the teaching profession; professional choice; the difficulties in being a teacher; and the meanings they attribute to teaching. The school is understood as a workplace, in which teachers experience differences, similarities, and contradictions in the organization and process of work.

Studies on youth have expanded and diversified in our country (Zan, 2013). These are studies that address the relations between young people and the school, the youth cultural movements, political participation and the condition of worker—which comprise the occupational or professional trajectories of young people, the meanings they attribute to work, the difficulties as to integration in the labor market, among others<sup>6</sup>. In addition to analyzing the condition of worker as a relevant category in understanding the Brazilian youth, it is necessary to consider the<sup>7</sup> work experiences in relation to the increased enrollment in basic education and especially in secondary education. Therefore, we are interested in knowing: who are the young people who work as teachers in public and private schools? What motivated them to enter the teaching career? How do these young teachers face the changes at work? What are the conditions in which they work? What leads them to remain in the teaching profession? What are their future projects?

The reflection proposed here will be conducted via the analysis of the trajectories, highlighting the social relations of young teachers, seeking to apprehend their similarities and differences. Thus, it is the object that creates the observation point.

Trajectories are understood as the possibility of building different careers or life courses, in different areas and considered as specific courses of action that configure a subject’s life in a

<sup>6</sup> We highlight: Corrochano, 2001; Ferreira, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> “Men and women also return as subjects, within this term - not as autonomous subjects, ‘free individuals,’ but as persons experiencing their determinate productive situations and relationships, as needs and interests and as antagonisms, and then ‘handling’ this experience within their consciousness and their culture... in the most complex... ways, and then... acting upon their determinate situation in their turn” (Thompson, 1981, p. 182).

historical and generational context permeated by the social relations of class, work, gender, ethnicity/race or color (Caballero, 2007; Giele & Elder, 1998).

Social relations of gender are understood as a structuring category and as such have implications for the social division of labor perceived by the principles of separation and hierarchy. Just as sexed groups are social constructs, these relations are built by tensions, oppositions and antagonisms around work, as a “producer of experience.” (Hirata & Kergoat, 2005; Kergoat, 2004).

## Who are the Basic Education teachers?

Data from the 2015 Census of Basic Education<sup>8</sup>—when the subjects of our research were working—inform us that there were more than two million teachers in basic education in Brazil. Of these professionals, 76.6% worked in the public sector and 23.4% worked in the private sector. In the public sector, it was found that municipal governments accounted for most jobs (60.1%), while state governments employed 38.3%, and the federal government, 1.6%. The state of São Paulo had 20.5% of the jobs in the country in public and private teaching; with 14.2% of the jobs in the public sector and 6.3% in the private sector.

In Brazil, women held 80.1% of the jobs in basic education in the country and men, 19.9%. Considering that the research presented here studied teachers aged up to 29 years, we observed that professionals in this age group were in the minority (16.7%) in the contingent of Brazilian teachers in 2015. Notably, there were more young male teachers: they were 19.7% of the total men, while young female teachers were only 16% of the total women, suggesting that the teaching career is attracting young people to this profession. At the other end, only 3.5% of female teachers and 4.5% of male teachers met minimum age conditions—age equal to or greater than 60 years—to apply for retirement. The Brazilian teachers were quite young if we consider that about 95% were below the minimum age to apply for retirement. The state of São Paulo showed the same national trend.

<sup>8</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira, 2019.

Most teachers (68.7%) who worked in the public sector in Brazil had effective or stable contracts. Although the legislation indicates that the form of entry in this sector is through a public service entrance exam, the data show the expansion of flexible hiring modes. There is a significant percentage (30.1%) of temporary teachers; presence of contracts (0.9%) by the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT); and subcontracting through outsourcing (0.3%). There is evidence that non-effective contracts are increasing in the country: in 2019, temporary teachers were 31.1%, CLT workers were 2% and outsourced workers remained at 0.3%. Law No. 13,429/2017 made it possible to make contracts more flexible in both the private and public sectors (Castro et al., 2019; Krein et al., 2018).

In 2015, the state governments were the ones that least conducted public service entrance exams for admission to teaching: only 63.8% of those who worked in state public schools were public servants admitted through entrance exams, whether effective or stable. A total of 78.4% of the teachers hired by the federal government had been admitted through public service entrance exams and 72.6% of the municipal professors. Therefore, the highest percentage of teachers with temporary contracts worked in state public schools (35.6%), with percentage values of 25.9% in municipal schools and 20.6% in federal schools. Teachers with outsourced contracts were more numerous in federal public schools (0.6%), followed by municipal teachers (0.3%) and state teachers (0.2%). CLT contracts were more significant in municipal schools (1.1%), followed by state teachers (0.5%) and federal teachers (0.3%).

Comparing the state of São Paulo with the country, we observed that, although there were 84.3% of teachers admitted by public service entrance exam or stable by legal provisions, the state government was also the one that held the least public service entrance exams, compared with the municipal and federal governments. Note that, 43.8% of Brazilian teachers sought further training by graduate programs (specialization, master's degree or doctoral degree).

How are the characteristics of basic education teachers expressed in secondary education?

Approximately 25% of Brazilian basic education teachers worked in secondary education (propaedeutic, normal/teaching, and integrated with vocational education) in 2015; of which, 80.9% in public schools and 19.1% in private schools. State governments hired 94.6% of high school teachers in the public sector.

The sexual division of teachers working in high school—public and private—is distinct from the group of teachers in basic education. The percentage of men is significantly higher at this level of education, with 39%. Male teachers are proportionally younger—17% are aged 29 years or younger—than female teachers (14.1% in this age group), and the same phenomenon can be observed for basic education as a whole. The percentage of male teachers (3.9%) and female teachers (2%) who already, in 2015, met the minimum age requirement to retire is relatively small.

Secondary education teachers constitute a group of better trained professionals compared to the group of basic education teachers, as 42.5% of them hold graduate degrees (specialization, master's and doctoral degrees).

There are no significant differences in the forms of hiring high school teachers when compared to the group of basic education teachers in the public sector. Approximately 66% of teachers had, in 2015, effective or stable employment contracts and one-third had temporary contracts. Outsourced or CLT contracts show small percentages (less than 0.5%). The pattern of flexibility of the hiring of federal, state and municipal governments does not differ if we compare secondary education with the group of basic education teachers.

This brief representation of Brazilian teachers is expressed in a similar way in the configuration of high school teachers in the state of São Paulo. The government is responsible for 75% of the hirings, and almost all of them are under the responsibility of the state government. There is a national pattern of hiring flexibility that remains at this level of education, almost 33% of teachers have temporary and CLT contracts.

The age group of high school teachers in the state of São Paulo differs from the whole country, being proportionally older and a higher percentage among those aged 60 years or older. Young male and female teachers aged up to 29 years, in 2015, were 11.6% and those who were aged 60 years old or more were 15.65% (4.1% in the country). Less than 33% of São Paulo teachers who work in high school hold postgraduate degrees (specialization, master's and doctoral degrees).

## Who are the young teachers interviewed?

The group of young people interviewed consists of twelve teachers: five from the public sector—three with temporary contracts and two with permanent contracts—and seven from the private sector; seven women and five men; and all aged between 20 and 29 years.

The feminization of the labor market in the field of education is significant (Souza, 2007); however, the presence of women decreases as educational levels increase. In this sense, in secondary education there is a greater presence of male workers compared to the elementary level and such movement was also observed in the empirical field.

Among the respondents there is a predominance of the area of knowledge<sup>9</sup> of human sciences in relation to the subject taught, and there are two teachers of the area of arts; two of health sciences; two of biological sciences and two of the area of exact and earth sciences as to the area of training.

All respondents worked in the city of Campinas (SP). Nine were trained in the area of knowledge in which they worked and three were still under training. Four of the twelve teachers were attending the master's degree program and two were attending a new undergraduate program. One of them had already completed a master's degree program in the area in which they worked.

Of the graduated teachers, most had completed their undergraduate programs three years prior and only two more than five years prior. Nine of the twelve teachers interviewed graduated from a public university. These young people built professional training trajectories that led them to teaching. Considering the age of admission to the university, which tends to be around 17 and 18 years and the duration of a teaching degree program, about four years, it is understandable the low experience in teaching presented by this group: less than one year and at most three years of experience as a teacher. Only one teacher had been teaching for nine years, indicating that he had started working in schools before completing his undergraduate program.

<sup>9</sup> Areas of knowledge according to CNPq classification. Available at: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/web/dgp/arvore-do-conhecimento>. Accessed May 9, 2020.

**Table 1. Teachers interviewed, 2015**

Name <sup>10</sup>	Age	Sex	Time since graduation	Time working	Subject
Carolina	20 years	Female	Student (Public Univ.)	Less than one year (public network)	Arts
Bruna	22 years	Female	Less than one year (private univ.)	Less than one year (private network)	Physical Ed.
Lucas	23 years old	Male	1 year (public univ.; attends master's degree program in the same university)	2 years (public network)	History
Robson	24 years old	Male	2.5 years (private univ.)	2 years (public network)	Philosophy
Mariana	24 years old	Female	2 years and attends master's degree program (public univ.)	2 years (admitted by public service entrance exam in the public network)	Arts
Júlia	24 years old	Female	2 years (public univ., attends social sciences at the same university)	2 years (private network)	Philosophy
Rafael	24 years old	Male	Student (Public Univ.)	4 years (private network)	Physics
Natália	27 years old	Female	5 years (public univ.)	5 years (private network; works as a company geographer)	Geography
Jéssica	28 years old	Female	6 years (doctoral and master's degrees in obstetrics, public univ.) attends teaching degree program (public univ.)	3 years (private network)	Nursing
Ana	28 years old	Female	3 years (private university)	3 years (admitted by public service entrance exam in the public network)	Biology
Daniel	28 years old	Male	4.5 years (public univ.)	4 years (exonerated from the public network, works in the private network)	Biology
Pedro	29 years old	Male	5 years (public univ.)	9 years (private network)	History

Most respondents had a working day that ranged from four to 10 hours per week; only four teachers worked 30 hours or more per week (two worked 30 hours per week and two teachers above 40 hours/class per week). The weekly working hours reflects on salaries, since

<sup>10</sup>The names are fictitious.

the teacher's remuneration in basic education is directly related to the number of classes and may indicate a need to supplement income through another paid activity. However, of the twelve professors, nine declared that they did not have another professional activity, which leads us to conclude that this is a group of young people newly graduated from the university and who start their professional activity with the financial support of their families and/or a partner.

## What led teachers to enter the teaching career?

How did teachers opt for teaching? What led them to this professional choice?

In the professional choice, two movements intersect: the first of conformism in the face of the social demands of survival; and the second of attributing meaning to the chosen profession. The option for teaching degree programs builds a university career that leads to teaching.

According to the young teachers, the option for teaching is based on the image of a teacher as a producer of social changes, imprinting their individuality and creating a professional reference framework. Although the respondents attribute to the teaching work the possibility of social changes and production of culture—“*Making a difference. Contributing to the ‘change in the students’ relation with the knowledge taught*”—, professional choice seems to be the possible way taking into account their social and economic condition—“*most concrete possibility of work*” (Robson, philosophy, public school).

*I chose to be a teacher because of the multiple job opportunities that this profession can provide and because of the possibility of coordinating class schedules with other practices I carry out (master's degree program, dance groups). In addition, being a public servant affords stability that is rarer to find working as an artist—thirteenth salary, vacation, payment on the fifth business day, career plan. (Mariana, arts, public school)*

Teaching as a work that guarantees survival acquires a new meaning in the transcribed statement, it is a profession with differentiated working conditions, with flexible schedules and stability that the artist career did not provide.

According to the teacher of the following account, the decision to teach seems to have been constructed as a last possibility; however, through the professional experience, new meanings are given to the professional choice, that is, to the importance of teaching as work.

*In fact, I never wanted to be a teacher... when I was attending the University of Sao Paulo, you know?! I didn't want to be a teacher... it was the last thing I thought I... I was going to do, but then I graduated and completed my master's degree program, I came to Campinas, and... I needed to teach, I needed to work and this opportunity arose, and I... I went for it more because of that... and it ended up... it ended up... working out, I found out that I liked it a lot, and, anyhow... I didn't choose teaching, right?! It was... I was led to it and ended up... liking and creating this desire to be a teacher and to, and to improve myself, that's why I sought to complete the undergraduate teaching degree program and everything. (Jéssica, nursing, private school)*

This other teacher argues that teaching appeared as a possible course for not seeing another possibility of work and became socially relevant.

*Throughout the undergraduate program I never thought about being a teacher. Working in companies was my goal. However, as soon as I graduated I had the opportunity to work at the school where I had studied in my hometown. I accepted and so I entered teaching. (Natália, geography, private school)*

These statements enable us to affirm that the provisions that guide professional choice have a double dimension, sometimes presented as survival in the face of social contingencies; sometimes as a political subject who has the possibility of social changes. Teaching work represents not only a means of survival, but also a political dimension, as it can attribute “to the subject the possession of a predicate that makes him human among men” (Souza-Lobo, 1991, p. 25, free translation).

The gusto for the teaching profession is a social practice built during university education, in undergraduate programs, as can be seen in the two statements below. Professional choices cannot be explained as rational strategies, but rather as mediation between the objective and subjective conditions experienced in the academic trajectories. The material and symbolic conditions act on teachers in complex relationships of interdependence in the construction of professional trajectories. The notion of “gusto” for the teaching profession is borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu (2008), considering that gusto is the result of a diversity of socialization conditions built in life trajectories. “During the undergraduate program I had contact with teaching work

*when coordinating a popular university entrance exam preparation course that ended up sensitizing me to the profession” (Daniel, biology, quit public education network and works in private school).*

*First I chose this profession because I always had affinity with the area of biological sciences and mainly with the functioning of living organisms. The gusto for teaching came throughout college through experiences with the internships offered. At each stage it was a new and enchanting experience. (Ana, biology, public school)*

The young teachers do not explain the professional choice by vocation, but by the provisions related to the professional and/or knowledge field. The professional choice for teaching is reaffirmed through the encounter with the discipline in which they work. This is not a career chosen for “lack” of other work, but for the encounters and academic training that are determinant in the choice. The experience as a student seems to be the backbone of the teaching work. The two teachers—of philosophy and physics—argue that the gusto for the discipline developed in their student years and were decisive in choosing the university and professional career. *“I have always had affinity with the area” (Robson, philosophy, public school).*

*Physics was because of a close connection, like, because it is the subject that I liked the most in school because I find it super interesting to understand how nature works. Physics has a very interesting philosophical aspect. I think that in schools, today, there is a very large deficit as to passing on the very natural character of physics. Today everything is very formulated, very mathematical. I think the essence of physics is lacking in schools. (Rafael, physics, private school)*

As pointed out by Charlot (2009), the school has an important role in the construction of the relation between subjects and knowledge. According to the author, there is a specificity of school activity that requires and produces certain relations with the world, with others, with oneself, with language and with time, that is, that define a certain relation with knowledge and with school. From this perspective, it can also be affirmed that elementary school has proven an important institution for professional advisory of young students, as can be observed in the statement of the physical education teacher about her choice for the teaching degree: *“During school I had a very good Philosophy teacher. And it influenced my decision” (Bruna, physical education, private school).*

The professional choice for teaching, in the selected statements, is an expression of the dimensions of both work synonymous with survival and work as a producer of culture, in the

meanings attributed by Hannah Arendt (1991). If the choice for teaching career is presented as a possibility of professional integration, it is in the experience that teachers attribute meanings to the work. They understand themselves as producers of culture, as creators of the “artifice of the world” (Arendt, 1991), as work subsists to the worker, as it leads to social and cultural changes.

## What are the working conditions?

The *Dictionary of teaching work, profession and condition* contains the following definition of working conditions:

The notion of working conditions designates the set of resources that make it possible to carry out the work, involving the physical facilities, materials and inputs available, the equipment and means of carrying out the activities and other types of necessary support, depending on the nature of the production. However, working conditions are not restricted to the sphere of the workstation or workplace or to carrying out the work process itself, that is, the process that transforms inputs and raw materials into products, but also concerns employment relationships. Working conditions refer to a set that includes relationships, which relate to the work process and employment conditions (forms of hiring, remuneration, career and stability). (Oliveira & Assunção, 2010)

The conditions in which teachers work underscore different factors related to the content and meaning of the teaching work. Young teachers face adverse conditions attributing a social meaning to the work, arguing that teaching is qualified and is built in the process of mediating knowledge and in stimulating learning. Teaching is a work that enables *contributing to the development of new generations; sharing knowledge; expanding cultural repertoire* and *contributing to the development of critical thinking*. The identification of the teaching profession as an activity engaged in social transformation is present in the statements of teachers from different subjects. The engaged activity is characterized by questioning about the meaning of teaching for the teacher and for the students<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> On this conception of engagement, see Elias, 1998.

*I think teaching is helping to develop thinking and active citizens in this world, right? Not only passive and observing people, but people who have the ability to observe and integrate into society, and modify it, you know? And in physics there is a lot of this in the scientific method, you knowing how to observe the phenomena around you and problematize them, you see? And I think education has everything to do with it. (Rafael, physics, private school)*

Committed to a teaching activity that promotes meaningful learning (Charlot, 2001, 2009) and expanded training, it is possible to identify that these respondents approach a pedagogical practice inspired by the so-called non-directive pedagogies. Knowledge is considered by the teachers as fundamental in the transformation of social relations. Contradictorily, however, it was observed in the selected statements the concept of teacher as the one who is the bearer of a specific knowledge that is transmitted to the students. These teachers also attribute a political content to teaching.

*Teaching is one of the exercises, it is one of the most constructive, most interesting functions that a person can go through, one of the most humanizing experiences. So, I really like teaching, it is a very important moment of relationship, affection, exchange of knowledge, both theoretical and academic knowledge and life knowledge, experiential knowledge. (Robson, philosophy, public school)*

Teaching through mediation does not distinguish means and ends in the work process. The selected statements highlight the difference between usefulness and meaning of teaching. *“Oh! Teaching means... passing on a knowledge that I had and... I don't know... in a way changing people's perspective on something, especially art that is very... something that students don't take seriously...”* (Carolina, arts, public school).

The conditions in which teachers carry out their work highlight the means of work. Having students as interlocutors, in an active posture in their learning process, and introducing technological resources in the daily routine of the classroom are some of the concerns of the selected respondents. There is a recognition that the generation of high school students today is connected and up to date on new technologies. However, the class as a work activity and the use of new resources pose not only some dilemmas for teaching, but also explains the precarious working conditions, particularly in public schools.

*I use some videos (although it is a struggle to manage to schedule the school video room to be able to play them to the students) and you know how it is... technologically outdated... the school even has a projector, but it has been broken for a year and so far it is not known when it will be fixed (and even if it was, the room does not have the structure to use a projector because we have to place it on my desk, and we often need to stack books to position it at the ideal height, in addition, the image quality is terrible... and the wires of the device, a horror. (Ana, biology, public school)*

*I do not have a room suitable for art classes. I also feel far short of the knowledge needed to teach music, dance, visual arts and theater. I often seek to establish partnerships and seek help from other artists and teachers, but this issue causes a little frustration. I would also mention the overcrowding of classrooms as a relevant difficulty. Working with 40 students in just two hours a week leaves something to be desired as to the attention that each one would deserve. (Mariana, arts, public school)*

*I usually use it when I need to show images, like, I was teaching the theme "great navigations" in the last class, so I used it to show the maps, I indicated the route showing them and such, but I try not to rely too much on it too because it is not always that I have these resources available, so I always try to use the blackboard a lot. I don't use support material, I usually prepare my classes and take the printed summary to them, I feel more comfortable doing it this way. (Lucas, history, public school)*

In public schools, teachers have more precarious working conditions compared to private schools. The respondents who work in private schools highlight the relative autonomy of teachers with regard to decisions about content and methods in the classroom. The comparison between the statements of teachers working in public and private schools indicates that, in the private sector, teachers do not have control over their own work; however, it engenders the possibility of resistance, as they attribute meaning to teaching. The respondents consider that the pedagogical relationship is the centrality in the teaching work. Teachers indicate that they still have a certain extent of control over their own work, not limited to a repetitive routine, and observe the existence of a space of initiative, responsibility and engagement in teaching.

*In fact, there is already a plan ready, at the beginning of the year the school hands me four course booklets that have — let's say — a very strict plan... So, in some classes I show a documentary, I conduct a debate, a discussion... And, it is very interesting, but at the same time sad, because it is exactly in these classes that... Go figure... You spend a class talking about feminism, which is something that is not in the textbook, and then... the class ends, the students approach me: "Teacher, why don't you talk more often about that, that's what I wanted to know, the class was really cool!" So, this is exactly the kinda class that they like, and that you mobilize yourself, it is that which is not in the textbook, but are rare events that we try to create; the alternative ones, such as afternoon classes, film club and let's see... (Júlia, philosophy, private school)*

The development of new work instruments has caused changes in the teaching process. These new tools are characterized by the flexibility and capacity of multiple combinations. The teachers believe that it expands the possibility of socializing knowledge, developing skills and exercising autonomy, as can be observed in the following statement.

*The blackboard is almost an institution, almost sacred to the school, and the art of good use of the blackboard is valued. Audiovisual resources are used in conjunction with the blackboard. Each teacher is provided their own iPad that connects to the projector via Apple TV and affords mobility to teachers during the execution of the work. (Daniel, biology, quit the public education network and works in private school)*

In addition to the new instruments that directly affect the teaching work process, it is necessary to consider, as in the following definition of the organization of school work, "the periods and shifts of work and the curricular strategies" (Oliveira, 2010). This organization involves conditions — as to time, space, resources, instruments — on which the execution of teaching depends, expressing power relations.

*I believe that one of the major challenges in working with physics content is time, because everything is very rushed. We don't have time to explore all the content, all the examples that we can bring from the student's daily life and I think this is very important for us to bring to the students. It becomes a little deficient, a little... something inconcrete, you know? It becomes something that seems to exist only in an ideal world, but no, physical phenomena happen all around us and it is up to us to stop and observe. The problem is that there is no time to observe these phenomena happening. (Rafael, physics, private school)*

In addition to the working conditions and the organization of work, there is also the challenge of managing to deconstruct the power relations between the different disciplinary fields. The school is driven by the divisions—devaluation and stereotypes—between the disciplines and their teachers. Art, physical education and philosophy occupy not only an inferiorized space in the technical division of teaching work, but also in the representations that students build regarding the curriculum, both in public and private schools. High school teachers, even if they are hired to work with a discipline, are challenged to pedagogical work, arguing that they are less occupied with the discipline and more with pedagogy in teaching practice. This finding has two dimensions: on the one hand, there is a challenge of the coordination between theory and practice; on the other hand, it is not exactly an intellectual work claimed by teachers. Thus, they seek a pragmatic and necessary adaptation for the students, simplifying the curricular contents.

*I taught in a public school for a while, in 2012 in the PIBID internship<sup>12</sup>, but it was a very traumatic experience... I realized that the role of the teacher is very limited, if you have students in the second grade of high school who can't read there is nothing you can do, there is no way to teach philosophy to people who lack the knowledge of the minimum language for that, but after I was admitted to a private school, expectations gradually changed, transformed. If in the public school we see a lack of tools to understand the subject, in the private school this tool that we can understand as language, it exists, what does not exist is a motivation for the subject. (Júlia, philosophy, private school)*

The students' interest in the subject and the teacher is, in a way, a measure of the quality of the teaching work. The absence of these devices affects the work, as it reflects on the presence or absence of social recognition. Accordingly, there are divisions due to the set of subjects in the curriculum and the content taught that structure the teaching work in secondary education. There is a hierarchy among teachers, according to the subject taught, as the philosophy teacher tells us:

<sup>12</sup> Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência.

*Philosophy has a role marginalized by the workload, by the views of the students and even by the rest of the teaching staff, who are teachers of more consolidated subjects, such as mathematics and Portuguese, who in my school have even said that philosophy shouldn't be taught during school hours, in the program... and that mathematics should have the workload increased to six classes, and then the students would have an excellent training... and then, even to combat this type of thinking that comes from the teachers themselves, philosophy is important... The payment per class hour is lower, reaching ten reais of difference, and this comparing philosophy teachers with literature teachers. If we compared philosophy teachers with mathematics teachers... Wow!! This difference in payment reaches more than thirty reais, just so you know... (Júlia, philosophy, private school)*

These above divisions are expressed in different working conditions. School education is a favorable labor market for young people; however, the conditions in which this work is carried out are precarious. Young teachers have little support to face the difficult working conditions, and thus opt for “defense strategies” by attributing meaning to the teaching profession.

le concept de «stratégies de survie » (survival strategies) qui est utilisé, en vie de rendre compte des montages adaptatifs par lesquels les enseignants « pris au piège » d'un métier de plus en plus ingrat s'efforcent de « sauver les apparences » et d'échapper à la destruction de leur identité. (Woods, 1997, p. 351)<sup>13</sup>

The teachers interviewed seek social recognition through salaries and working conditions. The recognition that teaching is a highly qualified and creative work is fundamental for the construction of collective identities of being a teacher. Research shows that low salaries and unstable contract conditions are factors that contribute to early discouragement and low adherence to the teaching profession. A study by the Institute of Applied Economic Research – IPEA (2017), based on data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), on basic education teachers in Brazil concluded that the average salary of teachers is lower than the average of professionals with the same educational level.

<sup>13</sup> le concept de «stratégies de survie » (survival strategies) qui est utilisé, en vie de rendre compte des montages adaptatifs par lesquels les enseignants « pris au piège » d'un métier de plus en plus ingrat s'efforcent de « sauver les apparences » et d'échapper à la destruction de leur identité.

the situation of teachers tends to be similar to that of other employees in metropolitan areas. In this context, working as a teacher seems to be less attractive in all Brazilian regions, considering that the other employees have lower educational level. (Matijascic, 2017, p. 15)

Based on the statements of teachers of humanities subjects, their condition of precariousness is even greater. For the group of young teachers interviewed, it can be observed that the unstable conditions in the labor bond and the low salaries are present in the lives of most of these teachers, which impacts their future projects, although they are committed and often passionate about teaching.

The research on high school teachers at the vocational level informs us that employment in the field of education is attractive to those social groups that are unemployed as a consequence of changes and restructuring of productive activities. Therefore, there are two distinct issues: the decision to build a career through professional training, that is, undergraduate programs that train teachers (teaching degree programs); and the conversion of careers as a strategy to stay in the labor market. (Souza, 2007, p. 49)

## What are the future projects?

Of the 12 young teachers, only two stated having as a future project staying as teachers in basic education. They are those who had better working and salary conditions. Three others said they have the intention of continuing in the teaching profession, but working in higher education. The teaching profession in high school, for most of them, is seen as a passage, as the beginning of the profession or as a source of income while not finding another better job. “Injustice wants that, in the end, the worker himself becomes artisan of his suffering” (Dejours, 1992, p. 47, free translation):

*Future projects, they do not directly involve teaching, especially in high school, in basic education. There are major problems in education. There are problems of lack of recognition of teachers, poor salaries, professional burnout, lack of structure, all these issues. (Mariana, arts, public school)*

On the other hand, it is possible to observe that better working conditions and better salaries contribute to the construction of a project for staying as a teacher in basic education.

Although there is still a desire to be better recognized professionally, which can occur through career advancement, by becoming an educational manager. This is the case of these two teachers who work in private schools:

*I chose the profession because it's exactly what I like to do. For now, my focus is on improving the quality of my classroom work and obtaining my master's degree. In the future, I think about advancing to management without, however, leaving the classroom. (Daniel, biology, quit the public education network and works in private school)*

*My plan is to continue teaching. I want to be a teacher for the rest of my life. (Rafael, physics, private school)*

However, teaching in higher education is the goal for two other respondents, both working in private schools. Even though the work is hard, the professional trajectories enabled building a project to keep teaching and the pursuit of better working conditions, better salaries, and social recognition:

*I really like teaching! I intend to continue in this career, but, at first, I want to... practice, and keep teaching at the vocational level and, as I gradually gain experience and maturity in practice, and confidence uhmm... continue, then, you know?! the academic career, obtain a doctoral degree, and... and maybe teach in a larger university or stay at the vocational level, but manage to have greater responsibilities such as taking the class to internships, to practical classes, in short. (Jéssica, nursing, private school)*

*Yes!!! Continue in teaching life, but I seek to obtain a postgraduate degree and try a career also in university. (Pedro, history, private school)*

Teaching work is understood by one of the teachers as “hard work as a duty that brings in itself its own reward” (Weber, 1967, p. 33, free translation), but it also holds pleasure and personal satisfaction. The reward is the result of the work: students learned:

*I use the students' arguments to try to correctly explain the physical phenomenon that is occurring, always based on the students' prior knowledge, on what they bring me in these debates. From there, I formulate the concept, already the mathematical, algebraic formula, you know? With the right formulas. I think this class model is very cool because we bring the students into physics, into nature, so that they can try to understand and try to create their own theories, their own explanations. (Rafael, physics, private school)*

In a way, it is possible to say that these teachers remain committed to building a positive relationship between high school students and the knowledge of their specific subjects. They are engaged in a motivating movement that enables mobilizing students for their learning (Charlot, 2001).

## Final Considerations

This study made a methodological choice to apprehend the experience of a group of 12 young teachers at the beginning of their teaching career in high school. It is not possible to generalize the results of the study, although they are relevant for more in-depth analyses of social processes.

The researched teachers showed that the teaching work is not survival; beyond this dimension, it transforms itself and transforms students through work. Its work is not materialized in “thing,” because it is produced and reproduced constantly and remains in the student. Therefore, the teaching work process does not disappear in the product.

We also observed that, although the conditions and organization of the teaching work are precarious—which is expressed mainly in low salaries—they do not result in disinterested and irresponsible teachers. Teachers, in questioning working conditions, produce a double movement: stay and escape from teaching work. Those who stay understand the teaching work, despite the working conditions, as bearer of a project of transformation of the teacher and the student. Others, paradoxically, indicate that it is necessary to quit the teaching profession if they want better salaries and working conditions. These are conflicting relationships with the teaching profession in the pursuit of social recognition, which is materialized in decent working conditions and salaries.

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***Corresponding author:***

***Dirce Zan*** - Universidade Estadual de Campinas – Faculdade de Educação, Av. Bertrand Russell, 801, Cidade Universitária Zeferino Vaz, Campinas, SP, Brasil.