

Articulations between established teachers and outsiders within the context of a teacher learning community

Articulações entre estabelecidos e outsiders no contexto de uma comunidade de aprendizagem docente

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ABSTRACT

The article addresses the relations between teachers considered established and those seen as outsiders within the context of a teacher learning community based on the state of São Paulo, Brazil. It seeks to understand who the subjects are as to professional teaching knowledge under a concept of practice-training induction. Based on a theoretical-methodological perspective, the researchers have produced a study case where the research subjects were also the narrators of their own perceptions, expectations and teaching actions. Holding as reference the studies of Elias and Scotson (2000); Zeichner (2008; 2015), Cochran-Smith (2012) and Nóvoa (2017), it is possible to consider that the teacher learning community reveals itself as a strategy to train subjects, where teacher learning makes teachers' groups move toward insurgent proposals of professional performance.

Keywords: Professional insertion; teacher learning communities; beginning and experienced teachers.

RESUMO

O artigo aborda as relações entre professores considerados estabelecidos e os vistos como *outsiders* no contexto de uma comunidade de aprendizagem docente localizada no estado de São Paulo/BR. Busca compreender quem são os sujeitos na relação com o conhecimento profissional docente numa concepção de indução formadora de práticas. Parte de uma perspectiva teórico-metodológica na qual as pesquisadoras produziram um estudo de caso em que os participantes da

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pesquisa foram também os narradores de suas percepções, expectativas e ações docentes. Tendo como referência os estudos de Elias e Scotson (2000); Zeichner (2008; 2015), Cochran-Smith (2012) e Nóvoa (2017), é possível considerar que a comunidade de aprendizagem docente se revela como uma estratégia de formação de sujeitos, onde a aprendizagem da docência faz com os que grupos de professores se movimentem em direção à propostas insurgentes de atuação profissional.

Palavras-chave: Inserção profissional; comunidades de aprendizagem docente; professores iniciantes e experientes.

Introduction

Although the idea of community seems vague and plural, it can unveil the importance of teachers meetings as spaces for reflection and exchange among teachers-subjects. As explains Hobsbawm (1994, p. 428), “the word ‘community’ has never been used in more indiscriminate and empty way than for the last decades, when communities in a sociological sense started to be hard to find in real life”. In this sense, he stresses that “men and women look for groups to which they could belong, certainly and forever, in a world where everything moves all over the place, where nothing can be taken for granted” (HOBSBAWM, 1996, p. 40).

The sociological theories based on the concept of community are many, and sometimes complementary, either classical or contemporary theories. Even if a community is desirable, it has contradictions due to its social-historical context and its conditioning aspects, making its actual establishment difficult. That is why doubts persist as to its safety and freedom, autonomy and confidence, protection and coziness, and even its feasibility.

The notion of community is also disputed by the educational area, being oriented toward a relationship of interaction and cooperation, and by appropriating its signifiers. The learning communities, while investigative spaces, come from a way of being that should accompany teachers during their professional development. When they gather around a question, challenge and theme, answers to problems affecting other teachers may come up. Thus, they have an investigative and collaborative intent, with different objectives, which are likely to arise in meetings of established teachers, who are more secure related to teaching, and *outsiders*, possible deviants of the professional concepts deemed “traditional” around a common problem, such as, for instance: curriculum, assessment practices, teaching-learning process, policies of students’ access and permanence, among others. However, it is important that the collaboration effectively makes changes in students learning in order to contribute to their participation in an egalitarian and democratic society.

Communities seem to favor a common feeling of belonging to the group, which is

fundamental for those who are starting their professional life, and who can be seen as provisional *outsiders*. Thus, it can be understood as a strategy of teacher induction, but, for that purpose, it is necessary to understand how beginners are inserted and the work carried out within the context of those communities, because, as states Roldão (2014), some groups assume completely different logics, such as mandatory *versus* optional, acritical socialization *versus* professional development, informality *versus* formality, emphasis on assessment *versus* emphasis on training, etc.

Therefore, teacher learning communities can contribute to have provisional *outsiders* - the newcomers, those starting to teach professionally and who need to be introduced to the institution culture - overcome, together with older teachers in the school - who already have professional experience - the main challenges imposed by either the curriculum, individual expectation, meeting the rules, or the teaching-learning process or interpersonal relations.

Bearing in mind all that, we conducted this research seeking to understand and analyze what practicing teachers in a teacher learning community do, what eases and hinders their insertion in the group and the professional induction, by incorporating the subjects' views on the training process and teaching activity.

Theoretical-methodological path

The objectives of the research were to understand the work done by the community surveyed, to analyze the facilitating and hindering aspects involving beginners' participation, and to analyze beginning teachers' learning in a teacher learning community. With the possibility of following up and checking the development of the subjects in the teacher learning community and acknowledging the influences resulting from training processes, we took into account new views according to the beginning teachers' points of view.

The path taken to identify, locate and choose teacher learning communities occurred by means of three methodological strategies, the first one being a literature survey, thus contributing to mapping the theme and to demonstrate the existence of one single group. The second, the informants, in charge of pointing out and locating new groups; as to informants, we worked with a privileged category of informants, a researcher professor of reference in the field of teacher training, with a theoretical inclination toward collaborative and community work. The third, forms were sent to people in charge of the groups pointed out by informants, which were able to render initial information on the organization of the groups and the participants.

When choosing which area should be surveyed, initially five groups out of seven were chosen. Out of those, two were dismissed as time went by considering the difficulty in reaching them, and three remained. Based on the analysis of the answers obtained with the on-line form sent to the people in charge of each group, the groups

that did not include beginning teachers in that moment were excluded, and/or also those whose proposal was significantly different from what we consider a teacher learning community, by observing particularly combined aspects of duration (average in the long run, with flexible participation) and collaboration (collaborative practices among the subjects). Additionally, were excluded groups which did not answer the questionnaire due to the impossibility of verifying some of the criteria adopted.

Thus, the three groups previously chosen were those that met the two criteria set for the selection: to have the outline of a teacher learning community and included beginning teachers, who were those that were having their first effective professional experience, and those with up to five-year experience.

However, one of the criteria adopted in the form showed to be fragile related to the feasibility of the research. As the forms had been completed by the group coordinators, there was not, in this sense, confirmation that the teachers had been teaching for the first five years of their experience. Thus, only one group had beginning teachers, had lasted for enough time for us to learn its practices and understand the work done to train teachers. Out of the three groups found for the research, only one was selected.

The group identified get together at a public university in the stated of São Paulo, Brazil. Its objective is to do literacy-related practices and to propose collective and collaborative reflective practices. It holds meetings every fortnight, where knowledge is shared, in addition to having works presented at different events, such as roundtable discussions and congresses. Teachers of basic education, coordinators and pedagogical advisers and teacher trainers attend those. The meetings are usually organized to have teachers' difficulties presented or even issues related to certain ways of organizing the work; the collective receives said doubts, organizes a set of studies and, sometimes, alternative practices are presented, or even some proposals for the teachers to be able to experience or even participate in pedagogical work with experienced teachers.

We have chosen the format of a study case because we understand that it can disclose deeper knowledge of the relationships set in a teacher learning community, by analyzing their contribution to a teacher training induction. Analyzing one single group was necessary because of the difficulty found in locating and identifying teacher learning communities in Brazil, but that is not all: it enabled a contextualized study of its work based on a specific population of reference – a group composed of teachers who perform in many functions interested in literacy -, which can lead to new knowledge and generalizations when new pieces of information are added.

The intentionality is in the capacity of valuing beginning teachers' points of view and the context they are located. As states Candau (2011), there is no education that is not immersed in the cultural processes where it is located, thus constituting a space of inventiveness, creation and production of new practices, or even of reproduction of social relations. In this sense, there is an effort to go beyond the individual. As explains Fonseca (1999, p. 59), what is sought exactly is the tense encounter between

“methodological individualism (which tends toward sacralization of the individual) and the sociological perspective (which tends toward reification of the social)”.

The strategies considered to construct data were: interviews, on-line participant observation (due to the coronavirus pandemic), notes taken in the field, analysis of the meetings’ agenda (2020-2021), among others executed along the research. During the period of observations, also the field researcher participated in the WhatsApp and Facebook groups and had access to the conversations deemed informal or of backstage on the preparation of the meetings. At the end of that construction, analysis was conducted based on the three initial theme axes: 1. Aspects of professional insertion; 2. Teachers’ learning in the teacher learning community; 3. Induction strategies. These axes were prepared according to the research objectives. For the purpose of answering them, based on them were observed recurrence of empirical materials, with emphasis in the interviews, for us to obtain the findings.

We understand, as explains Simmel (2006), that subjects are always under pressure of contradictory feelings, impulses and thoughts. On the other hand, the social groups, although they often change their action orientations, they would always be convinced, without hesitation, of their orientation, knowing who their peers are and who they intend to avoid. Therefore, there is a tense relation among understanding the “group’s collective spirit”, what happens in that group, which their objectives are, who can participate, and the individual interests of the research subjects, i.e.: Are they the same of the group? Are they fixed and immutable? Do they contribute to teachers’ professional insertion? Understanding that relation between the subjects and the teacher learning community, individual and professional paths, can take us closer to their pedagogical experiences.

Next, we present a summary table containing the main pieces of information of the research subjects. The names have been changed to ensure anonymity and ethics in the research in education, and the choice of aliases was based on the group’s experience of training readers. It is worth signaling that the research has been approved by the Committee of Ethics in Research, and that all participants authorized recordings and transcriptions, and they also received their copies and signed the Register of Free and Informed Consent for Research in Education.

The choices described considered the possibilities of doing the research and our own positions while teachers and researchers, in an attempt to contemplate subjects’ individualities and subjectivities composing the group surveyed, in articulation with the collective relation of culture, society and politics, i.e., a constant transformation of who they are in the relationship with the other.

FIGURE 1 – Table of the research subjects.

Alias	Years spent working as teacher	Area of performance/function	Performance network	Year when entered the community	Date of the interview
Lygia	2016-2021 4 years	Elementary School Teacher/ PCAE(acronym in Portuguese – School Coordinator Teacher)	Public State	2020	03/23/2021
Ruth	2020-2021 1 years	Elementary School Teacher	Public Municipal	2020	26/03/2021
Tatiana	2017-2021 3 years	Elementary School Teacher	Public State	2019 with leave of absence and return in 2021	03/26/2021
Bell	2018-2021 2 years	Elementary School Teacher/Pedagogical Coordinator	Public State	2019	05/28/2021
Conceição	1990-2021 + 20 years	Pedagogical Coordinator	Public State	2011	05/17/2021
Elena	2011- 2021 10 years	Elementary School Teacher	Private	2011	05/27/2021
Noemi	+ 20 years	Trainer of Trainers	Public and private	2011	05/12/2021

SOURCE: Authors, 2021.

Established teacher-subjects and outsiders

In this section we are interested in looking at the articulation between beginning teachers and experienced teachers, in a search for making the subject and the teacher’s understanding explicit before the research context presented. Even if *outsiders* and established teachers have different characteristics, as demonstrate Elias & Scotson (2000), we tried to understand them by considering their differences, but acknowledging the encounter of their movements.

The perception of a subject is outlined among the disputes of sense in becoming a teacher in a democratic society that demands learning actions toward social justice. Being and becoming a teacher-subject implies contextualizing the various views about what to be a beginning teacher is considering a need of training between the initial training and the beginning of the teaching profession. For that purpose, we propose a contextualization about what field surveys report on teacher training (ANDRÉ, 2010;

ZEICHNER, 2015) and our own views about provisional definitions of teacher-subjects and their different power positions related in the relation with the school knowledge.

The concept of *outsider*, widespread in sociology, initially comes up with the study of crime and other transgressions. Caused by high consumption of alcohol and drug use, it has been possible to analyze antisocial behaviors. More critical sociologists reject this analyze by bringing forth issues of social injustice. Becker (2008), as much as other researchers, redirected the studies to “deviations”. For Becker (2008), a person is an *outsider* when:

All social groups make rules and try, at certain moments and in some circumstances, to impose them. Social rules define appropriate situations and types of behavior, by specifying some actions as “correct” and forbidding others as “wrong”. When a rule is imposed, a person who presumably infringed it can be seen as a special type, someone who is not expected to live by the rules set by the group. This person is seen as an *outsider* (BECKER, 2008, p. 15).

Authors Elias & Scotson (2000) developed an ethnographic study dealing with a small community whose center was a neighborhood relatively old and, around it, two county subdivisions that had been formed more recently. They defined established dwellers and *outsiders* based on the power relation between them and the associated tensions. *Outsiders* and established dwellers are analytical categories that are modified according to the historical-social context in question and, based on the assumption that the interactions among subjects do not take place in a sociological void, also the school is subject to the conflicts, power relations and disputes inherent to the training processes such as the one where such categories originate, being important to reflect how each group experiences those situations.

Experienced teachers are teacher-subjects who have already undergone the period of professional insertion and conflicts, power relations and disputes inherent to the training processes, such as the one that gives rise to those categories, being important to reflect how each group experiences those situations. Nevertheless, more experience does not mean better practices. However, it is evident that once they have worked for longer in the institution, they know the procedures and have already been through several situations that put them at an advantage in relation to professional knowledge.

Being experienced within the context of teacher professional practice means, according to Pacheco & Flores (1999), to base actions on different and more complex structures than those of the beginners. They seem to have voluntary and strategic control of the teaching-learning process, which occurs in a more automatized way in the case of beginners. Conceição, an experienced teacher participating in the research, reflects about a teaching situation where she shows to be more secure in her teaching:

This was a discussion we had there, she was impressed to see that up to then, for her, it was a good situation, and she would not think about the context of the

production, she would not think that when I write, I write a genre for someone, for some purposes, which will circulate somewhere, so, things like that, you know? (Conceição, interview, 2021).

Experienced teachers are established in the school because they do not experience the ignorance of the profession such as beginners. Perhaps they are the ones who see newcomers as foreigners due to their relation of belonging to the institution and, even if unintentionally, they monopolize discussions, decisions and power opportunities, thus professionally isolating the other group.

As to teaching, some experienced teachers may have traditional epistemological concepts of teaching, based on learning that crystalized as time went by, considering the repetition of their own practice for many years. The security of their teaching and absent any practice of reflection, may lead beginners to consider going against the grain of that group, strengthening their understanding of *outsiders* opposing to those established, as Ruth exemplifies next, about the support granted by an experienced teacher. In this case, as explains Becker (2008), they may reject the rule by which they are being judged and may disregard those they think legitimately authorized to do it. They become *outsiders* for disregarding or being unable to adapt to the institution's culture.

Honestly, I was a little aggressive, because I think that the relation with students is built and, sometimes, people are willing to deposit many prejudices, let's say, in that child, and I was a little worried about it once it could modify my relationship with them. (RUTH, interview, 2021).

Exactly because they are more secure in the teaching-learning process and in the relation with students, depending on the training design and on how long teachers have been working, those who have worked longer may resist to practices deemed "innovative" or "differentiated" than those they already do. Beginning teachers tend to arrive at the school with new teaching knowledge, betting on trial and error, which can make their relationship with the experienced teachers rather difficult.

The relationship set between beginning and experienced teachers can occur in a hierarchized1latively recent discussion.

Professional induction and insertion: challenges to training teacher-subjects

The interface between teacher-subjects and professional knowledge during the professional insertion period presents a series of challenges to training, which is understood as democratic. A gap remains between initial training and continuing training, when they end up by abandoning the professional in the first years of their professional life due to insecurities typical of that phase of the career (LAHTERMAHER, 2021).

We have defined insertion as a period (which may vary as to duration, conditions,

resources and opportunities) marked by specific professional features identified as “reality shock”, insecurity, feeling of loneliness and intensive training (VEENMAN, 1984; MARCELO, 2009; LIMA *et ali*, 2007; CRUZ *et ali*, 2020). Although those are outstanding features in that period, they vary depending on the subject, educational institution, training programs, individual differences, search for partnerships, school climate, school management, violence, etc. That is why we advocate that professional development is a continuous process marked by phases such as initial training, professional insertion (which may happen with induction actions or otherwise) and continuing training, influenced by factors inside and out of the school.

What the narratives of the research’s participating teachers suggest is that “reality shock” takes place mostly resulting from lack of knowledge of how to teach different audiences than actual lack of knowledge of the local culture. Said fact may result from each one’s personal trajectory or even from their previous experiences in internships and professional work.

When participants mention their perceptions of the schools where they teach, beginning teachers highlight the initial reception they had and the support in the first moments of their arrival in the institution. Support, however, comes from different professionals, such as pedagogical coordinators, in the case of Lygia, Bell and Tatiana, and newcomer beginning teacher, as received by Ruth. Tatiana, for instance, tells how she felt when she started: “prepared, no, but I had a lot of help, my coordinator helped me, who is in the collaborative group”. And Ruth tells:

Last year was very difficult because my partner in the year was this woman who started with me on the same day and she did not have any experience as a teacher either, she was a school secretary, so we two would exchange our inexperience. She was very important in the way we were welcomed, we would always talk about it, although we would not achieve much, but we helped each other in the issue of content also, we would harbor each other’s anxieties, fears, everything. We talked all the time, what we would do, we talked a lot (Ruth, interview, 2021).

Because of the detachment resulting from a separatist concept of teacher training, and which traditionally occurs in college, it prevails the understanding that students “are given theories” for them to use later at schools. This movement, Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) will name learning FOR practice.

The detachment triggers in beginning teachers the “reality shock” because when they enter the school environment, they realize they do not know much about the diversities. In their speeches they emphasize the separation between theory and practice, as if their training lacked teaching practical knowledge. There is, in some moments, overvaluation of the knowledge brought by experience (TARDIF, 2002) in detriment of academic knowledge.

The relation between theory and practice is presented, according to the reports,

in a dichotomized version of teacher's training. Teachers make statements about not knowing the "school floor" and the curriculum; difficulties to adapt different strategies to the diverse set of students; need of adapting their practice to physically/mentally challenged students; and more precisely about teaching literacy and mathematics. The reports below let us see a break in beginning teachers' expectations between what they learned in their initial training and the mobilization of knowledge required in the school's daily life.

When we start to teach classes in person, we say "My God! It seems a different reality", because theoretically, Piaget sees everything nicely arranged, and in practice it is not as nice as we were taught. (Tatiana, interview, 2021).

As a teacher I think that lack of experience is one of the main challenges. The practice you have not been prepared for, and you propose an activity and sometimes it is not what you...your class is not prepared for what you have proposed. Or you suggest an activity that your students already knew...I got a very good class, you see. Then, they would usually do the activities very quickly and I was not prepared to increase the difficulty in it. I think that my first years was may laboratory. (Bell, interview, 2021).

According to the argument of Zeichner (2013; 2014), one of the core questions for the current debate on teacher training is based on the knowledge required for teachers to teach. This author advocates the importance of training for democratic societies based on an epistemology that is, per se, democratic and is part of the professional, academic knowledge and of the local community.

For those purposes, Zeichner & Liston (2013) and Zeichner, Saul & Diniz-Pereira (2014) advocate that teachers undergoing their initial training learn the context where they will teach, the importance of "practice" being stated. According to them, this is not only about producing more academically talented people to the educational system for a short period of time, but to value and take advantage of contextualized learning. It involves learning different teaching strategies, professional routines in force at schools and the knowledge that are mobilized by the teachers. .

By reflecting on beginning teachers' activities, those that can be seen or see themselves as *outsiders* of the teacher learning process they undergo it is possible to infer how few actions are taken to support teachers in that phase of their career. In Latin America there has been an advancement in the last decade in the recognition of the importance of programs and policies during professional insertion, experiences of support to teachers coming up, in addition to mentoring programs within different training contexts. Nevertheless, there are few formal projects of professional induction for those teachers beginning their career, isolated short experiences prevailing, as explain Marcelo, Marcelo-Martínês & Jáspez (2021) and Vaillant (2021). In Brazil, the discussion on teacher professional insertion is rather recent. As explain Mira &

Romanowski (2016), after analyzing documents that blocked the theme, at national level the theme started to be explicitly considered only in the PNE (National Plan of Education) (2014-2024).

Therefore, insertion is a period that belongs to the professional development process, we understand induction as a supervised intentional accompaniment at the beginning of the professional activity, occurring in a formal way by means of projects and policies instituted. It is worth differentiating the concepts of induction and probation which, in spite of being very often used as synonyms, refer to different logics. The former refers to a development dimension, while the latter refers to an assessment and control dimension.

Based on the studies of Marcelo & Vaillant (2017), Roldão, Reis & Costa (2015) and Reis (2015), we advocate a concept of induction as a training process of beginning teachers during their period of professional insertion, which involves accompanying their actions, their decision-making process, sharing their experiences and teaching practices. As important as the strategies used it is to conceive that induction involves a concept of training those individuals, which can be formative for social justice (targeting on teacher collaborative training) under a democratic or reproductive perspective of education (only interested in retaining the subjects).

Teacher induction, without taking into consideration a project of training THE practice, (COCHRAN-SMITH e LYTTLE, 1999), involving the school and its agents, does not seem to us a strategy able to favor the first years of professional exercise. If it is understood under the point of view of persuasion, it can trigger the effect of control of practices and acritical assessment of teaching concepts.

Induction from a point of view of “training THE practice” is a possibility of inserting oneself in the professional environment by accepting the collectivity, by recognizing oneself as part of a new teaching body, putting aside the view of *outsider* to become, little by little, an established teacher-subject at the school. This passage “from the outside in” is a fundamental moment in the process of professional insertion, and it needs to be accompanied intentionally and formatively. Even if welcoming initiatives happen, as a presentation of the school, a meeting to introduce new teachers, passing the classes, it is not enough as time goes by to have those professionals feel a part in the institution.

For an insurgent training space: a teacher learning community

Based on the perspective that knowledge is not acquired from the outside in the school, i.e., it is not produced by academics to be applied in the basic education schools, authors Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) recognize that there are different concepts of teacher learning characterized as: knowledge for practice, in practice and of practice. Defending knowledge of the practice, they propose an investigation as stance, culminating in investigative communities, which later on would be called teacher learning communities.

Thus, those authors develop the concept of “Teacher Learning Community” stating that the knowledge required to teach is a result of systematic questions about teaching, students, content, curriculum, schools, and said knowledge is collectively constructed inside local and broad communities. They are intellectual, social and organizational spaces supporting the professional development of their members, where new teachers, experienced teachers and those being trained can speak, think, read, write about their work in a contextualized way. They are organized for a minimum period of one school year, with stable attendance, where there are debates, discussions and reflections about teaching situations and texts.

We appropriate the teacher learning community as a hybrid training space of teacher-subjects, holding as reference the researches of Zeichner (2015). For him, hybrid spaces within the training context are those that gather university faculty and basic education teachers, academic knowledge and professional practical knowledge, aiming at improving students’ learning.

There is not hierarchized knowledge of teacher learning considering the university as the only and exclusive source. Those spaces gather from situated practical knowledge to academic knowledge, targeting on creating new learning opportunities for teachers being trained.

Differently from conventional and sporadic partnerships, teacher learning communities may become a democratic space for their participants. They can be hybrid because their members hold various positions, such as in the university and in basic education. Under a hybrid training perspective, the gap is expected to decrease, common in teachers’ training, between the knowledge coming from the university and the realities in the school’s daily life. An example refers to the “new place for training teachers” (NÓVOA, 2017), a bordering space between university and basic school, which takes a stance of professionalization. For Nóvoa (2017, p. 8), “it is a place which produces the profession of teacher, not only at the training level, but also at the level of their affirmation and public recognition”, and it should be able to answer how to shelter students taking a bachelor’s degree and make them teachers, inserting them in the profession in an innovative way.

It is this exposure to others, to “strangers”, where the training becomes truly public, acknowledging the cultural, social and political diversity that pervades the training paths of students and teachers. For Zeichner (2008, p. 17), this is a fundamental aspect in training teachers for social justice, because it is necessary “to acknowledge the social and political dimension of teaching, together with its other dimensions, and to acknowledge teachers’ contributions to broaden the life of their students”. For him, it is necessary to involve joint actions for social change, as much as to involve local communities that are willing to work to reach those same purposes.

In this sense, the teacher learning communities are understood as social, political and institutional organizations, as spaces of exchanges and reflections on teaching,

with emphasis in the challenges faced by teachers at the beginning of their career. They are composed of beginning and experienced teachers who, when perceiving common objectives, exchange experiences in texts, narratives, writings with each other, among other strategies aiming at collaborating among peers.

The teacher learning community should not be seen as a simple gathering of people, it should favor teachers' professional development and, in the case of the research presented herein, the professional insertion period, which may configure an induction strategy. Beginning teachers, while being part of a community, develop a feeling of belonging, contribute to their permanence in the school, of opening practices and sharing fears and insecurities.

For those purposes it is important that they are able to organize themselves, to represent and communicate so that students understand the content more deeply. Collaboration among colleagues, if any, enables beginners to overcome their difficulties in a process of professional socialization. If beginners, when they arrive at the school, are seen as provisional *outsiders*, they can create sound relations of alterity in the group and learn the institution's rules and procedures.

However, said encounter does not always occur harmonically and consensually, because the teachers are living different moments when they meet each other and so it can include disputes, power relations and influence among them. The four beginning teachers participating in the research are challenged by a diverse, social and cultural professional context which leads them to resort to specific strategies of continuing training. The bachelor's degree offers a wealth of training experiences and, with them, professional knowledge, but they appear to be disconnected from teaching doubts and situations teachers face daily. Due to that, there is a complaint that they think to be purely theoretical in detriment of a professional teaching exercise that demands different teaching-learning formats, update of the curriculum in force in the teaching networks, and specific knowledge of physically/mentally challenged people.

Due to the challenging scenario of becoming a teacher and the aspects that ease and hinder professional work, the four subjects sought in the community a form of teacher learning. None knew the community a priori, but in exchanges with their pedagogical coordinators they were invited to join the group and consider it a training space. One of them sought to continue her training individually by taking a subject in the university, which led her to find out the group. Thus, it is not enough to join any professional environment to find a learning community for you, there should be a specific interest in practices able to contribute to exercising the profession according to the subject's high expectations (COCHRAN-SMITH, 2012).

An important characteristic of teacher learning in a group happens due to its dialogic aspects. Lygia says that "this is what is cool in the group, because you show your experiences, everybody has a cool experience which worked out, then it is cool to show, to copy, literally to copy it. And that's it, the debates. I like the debates there

very much: if the subject is this or that, they ask us what we think about it, and then we go on swapping ideas, each one thinks something different, and then you form your opinion through the debate there”.

The different teaching concepts and the crossing issues about how, why, to whom and what to teach in a contextualized manner, i.e., by analyzing different methodologies used, the contexts and assumptions from which they have been generated, are some of the community’s outlines, which lead teachers to stay there, but also push away other professionals. Disputes about different concepts of teaching come up in the depositions below:

Some reflections are made in the group, they can help us and help other teachers. They have helped me a lot, but there are many things that I still have to learn, many things that I have to think about, because there is the habit, see? Teachers sometimes turns some things into habits in the classroom, then we need to de-construct and construct them again, ok? (...) including, to all teachers I meet I say: “ah, join this group, it’s very good”. I invite them.” (Bell, interview, 2021).

Then the group welcomed me totally and sometimes issues I would not be able to talk directly with all teachers of the network, of the school where I worked, sometimes I would talk with someone or other there in the group, I would hear that they experienced the same afflictions, the same concerns and angsts of those members of the group (Ruth, interview, 2021).

In this sense, teacher learning communities break free from academic hierarchies that value only some types of knowledge. To be a part of a teacher learning community shows how beginning teachers can learn based on shared practices. But that is not all: they evidence how each one’s participation performs a fundamental role in teachers’ professional development, as exemplify Ruth, Tatiana and Elena:

It is a group that proposes based on the school reality, then everything is related to it, so much so that one of the axes is the “school floor”, there is the reading that shelters, someone who records, someone who takes the minutes and another who makes the “school floor”, which brings a reality, an experience they lived to share with the group; it is not in all meetings that it happens, but when it does, the discussion is very rich because it is fully oriented toward practice in the classroom. In other meetings we also sit to discuss the issues of the classroom per se, sometimes there are more theories, sometimes there is fewer theories, but always they permeate the school issues (Ruth, interview 2021).

I think that it is actually more those exchanges of experiences, how each one works, the format. When we start, we don’t have much experience, but I have witnessed the opposite. There was a teacher last year, she taught second grade, and she had 25-year teaching experience, but she didn’t know how to deal with the WhatsApp, we would help her often, she had much more experience in the

classroom than me, of course. I learned a lot from her, but she also learned something from me, the technology thing, how to record videos, edit videos, which is something she didn't know either. In the group there were many exchanges (Tatiana, interview, 2021).

Our goal is the knowledge which is produced in a group, and I said that for me this is revolutionary, because we always think and end up dealing with the knowledge separately, kind of, I am here, and the child is there. Then, in the group, I come and say that everything is mixed. And I think that that's what makes the broth good, that the thing makes sense: it is in the life, in the training, in the book, and theory and practice are there, see? It isn't theory different from practice and practice different from theory. No, everything is closely linked, things make sense, and it is there that I think the whole thing changes (Elena, interview, 2021).

We advocate in the argumentative context of this text that by assuming the characteristics exposed, the teacher learning community gains a sense of collectivity, being rescued from marginal training and valued as fundamental strategy of professional induction under a perspective of training the practice of teacher-subjects. From peripheral to the frontline, it composes a hybrid space which can perform a central role in educational reforms, particularly as to the formative permanence of beginning teachers.

Conclusions

While writing this text we made articulations between two groups of subjects that occupy the position of teachers in different professional moments: those who are starting their professional career, and due to that can see themselves or be seen as *outsiders*, and those who have taught for longer and tend to be the established teachers at the schools. However, we tensioned said analytical categories considering the provisional nature of their positions in their dynamics of power and disputes related to knowledge. Being an *outsider* or an established teacher in a specific period, such as that of professional insertion, also depends on each subject's teaching concepts and on the training networks available.

The teacher learning community shows to be an insurgent training strategy where subjects seek to occupy spaces to which they want to belong, and to develop concepts with which they identify themselves. Nevertheless, the community's common feeling can only exist during collective work, with belonging, professional socialization and alteritarian listening. In other words, it depends on the proposals developed and on participants' willingness to make teaching actions public.

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