

TEACHERS' CONTINUING EDUCATION IN SOME BRAZILIAN STATES AND COUNTIES

CLAUDIA LEME FERREIRA DAVIS
MARINA MUNIZ ROSSA NUNES
PATRÍCIA C. ALBIERI DE ALMEIDA
ANA PAULA FERREIRA DA SILVA
JULIANA CEDRO DE SOUZA

Translated by David Coles

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to identify the main guidelines adopted by some Brazilian states and counties in the offer of Programs of Continuous Education for Teachers (PCET). Data collection involved interviews with personnel from 19 municipal and state Boards of Education, from different regions of the country. The results showed that PCET are offered mainly to teachers who are working in the initial years of the basic schooling, system focusing primary on Portuguese and Mathematic. Two main perspectives were adopted: the individual one, which seeks to solve the difficulties and impasses presented in the classroom; and, the collaborative approach, which focuses predominantly on activities that take place in schools, emphasizing cooperative work. Most of these Boards of Education found that more enduring and systematic modalities of PCET are more productive in promoting teachers' learning, eventually leading them to modify their pedagogical practices. There were also many difficulties in evaluating and monitoring the PCET results. The conclusions indicate that, at the moment, the Boards of Education have to make simultaneous use of modalities aimed at the teacher and at the school as well as to strengthen internal educational policies that are better articulated and more harmonious with other teaching policies. These seem to be the best alternatives to upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers, helping them to develop themselves in their profession.

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION • TEACHER EDUCATION • EDUCACIONAL POLICES

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to identify the main guidelines adopted by some Brazilian states and counties in the offer of Programs of Continuous Education for Teachers (PCET) Data collection involved interviews with personnel from 19 municipal and state Boards of Education, from different regions of the country. The results showed that PCET are offered mainly to teachers who work in the initial years of the basic schooling, relying heavily on Portuguese and Mathematic. Two main perspectives were adopted: the individual one, which seeks to solve the difficulties and impasses present in his classroom; and, the collaborative approach, which focuses predominantly on activities that take place in schools, emphasizing cooperative work. Most of these Boards of Education evaluated that more enduring and systematic modalities of PCET are more productive in promoting teachers' learning, leading them to modify their pedagogical practices. It was also found strong difficulties in evaluating and monitoring the results of PCET. The conclusions indicate that, at the moment, the Boards of Education have to make simultaneous use of modalities aimed at the teacher and at the school as well as to elaborate educational policies better internally articulated and more harmonious with other policies for teaching. These seem to be the best alternatives to upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers, helping them to develop themselves in their profession.

CONTINUOS EDUCATIONS • TEACHER EDUCATION • TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES • TEACHERS

MANY CHANGES HAVE occurred in Brazilian education since the 1990s as an attempt to overcome the problems of access and assure the successful continuity of students in public schools with a new and improved quality: curriculum reforms, systematic evaluations of the whole student population at national and state levels, the implementation of the system of cycles, etc. However, this attempt to redemocratize public education has caused imbalances between the increased amount student vacancies and the schools' ability to serve their students properly. As a result, the working conditions of teachers have also greatly deteriorated, so much so that in the late 1990s the Ministry of Education acknowledged that Brazilian teachers were receiving insufficient training to promote learning among their students (BRASIL. MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO, 1999). Academic studies, such as those

by Gatti and Nunes (2009) and Gatti and Barreto (2009), have also identified the inadequacy of the initial teacher's training.

In this context, there lies a dual concern – for the quality of students' schooling and for teachers' professional development – that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has attracted interest, underlining the need to go more deeply into discussion about how, and in what circumstances, it has contributed to teachers' professional development and the enhancement of education in Brazil. Indeed, this is the goal of the present study: to see how CPD is provided in different states and municipalities of Brazil, focusing particularly on the most frequent practices and modalities and on the monitoring and evaluation processes employed. The present text is organized into four main topics. The first, which analyzes basic concepts in the field, enables the reader to approach CPD and understand the models that are found in the available literature. The second sets out the methodological design of the study. The third presents the results obtained. And the fourth discusses the main findings of the study and speculates on its future directions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As Baldock, Manning and Vickerstaff (2003) have rightly said, the present moment demands that education be valued even more highly, since a country with a suitably educated population has lower crime rates, better health indicators, lower child mortality, lower rates of unemployment, and above all, is better equipped to deal with situations of economic instability. In the globalized world, therefore, concern for CPD has increased, leading to the proposal of several models and concepts that are rarely found in their pure condition in the studies we have analyzed, since features from several proposals are usually mixed together at the same time.

When one reads the specialized bibliography, it can be seen that one recurrent idea is that CPD is needed because of limitations in early training. Its principal function would therefore be to help overcome gaps, since these gaps strongly affect teaching itself. This model is known as the "deficit model", and conflicts with others that see CPD as important because the field of education is very dynamic, constantly demanding the production of new knowledge on the teaching-learning process, and requiring teachers constantly to expand and enhance their theoretical background and their teaching skills. Two perspectives stand out: the individualist perspective, focusing on the figure of the teacher, and the collaborative

perspective which advocates the construction of a culture of mutual exchange and support between teachers, so as to be able to overcome obstacles confronted in their work. Both perspectives will be presented below in a very general form.

INDIVIDUALIST PERSPECTIVES ON CONTINUOUS EDUCATION OF TEACHERS

Several types of assumption underpin the individualist school of thought, among which we may identify: (i) if teachers are better educated ethically and politically, they will be able to assess their social importance, be more aware of their role and the expectations that it brings, and thus be able to construct a new meaning for their profession; (ii) initial teacher training will be eased, while it is essential to help them overcome obstacles in their professional lives springing from a lack of essential scientific knowledge, or classroom management skills, and even an objective view on topics and issues that frequently arise in the day-to-day of schools such as violence, drug abuse, pregnancy and parenthood in adolescence etc.; (iii) professional life cycles need to be taken into consideration, since the teaching experience and its perspectives change with the interests and needs of the age range.

The development of ethics and political awareness

Some studies state that CPD is part of a personal project, because it is necessary to give value and meaning to the activity of teaching. Hargreaves (1995), for example, believes that teacher training should define the space in which educators work and its goals and teaching objectives. The author believes not only that theoretical and practical knowledge are central to teaching, but also that the meaning one gives to teaching is equally important. Therefore, one has to know the reasons why teachers teach, taking into consideration the dimensions of ethics, politics and motivation, which are always addressed together. The ethical dimension means being genuinely concerned for students' well-being and development. The political issue means that a good teacher must also learn to reflect critically on herself, her profession and her students if she is to be better prepared to strive for the construction of a socially desirable future in school and outside it. Finally, the motivational dimension means recovering the joy of teaching and learning, a sense of curiosity, the satisfaction of facing new challenges and overcoming conflicts, all of which are feelings that, if excluded from the school, are replaced merely by anguish and frustration. From this point of view, continuous professional development must allow teachers to have a pleasurable

experience in their profession, valued by allowing them to unveil new ways of being, thinking and feeling, and by leading to the construction of collective projects for the world in which we live.

Overcoming the deficits of initial training

In the individualist model, one widely proposed approach is that it is for CPD is capable overcome shortcomings left behind by initial training. Above all his approach centers on characteristics that teachers lack, and is therefore called the “deficit approach”. This model presupposes that teachers have little or nothing to say about how to enhance their training, which is why they cannot be consulted on the matter. CPD is therefore defined within other agencies and/or superior hierarchical levels in the education system, ignoring the specificities of teachers and their places of work. Standardized, “one size fits all,” “unisex” proposals are put forward, whose goal is to address the all teachers, regardless of their ages, amount of experience, subjects taught, and interests. This approach has survived and is still very popular, because it is based on reality: without suitable training, teachers cannot properly play their role, which is to promote learning and a successful school career for all students.

Focusing on the professional life cycle

Without focusing directly on failures in initial training, the perspective that takes the professional life cycle into consideration also understands Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as an individual undertaking that has to do with the teacher’s professional trajectory, which is not always upwards. For Mevarech (1993, 1995), the teaching career is full of crises characterized by negative experiences, disorientation, feelings of anomy and low self-esteem, all of which must be accepted, understood and worked through in order to enable both subjective and objective changes. This school of thought within CPD argues that the stages of a teaching career should be known so that the needs and shortcomings of teachers be precisely identified in the in order to help them better face the stages in their professional lives.

Fessler (1995), Fuller and Brown (1995) and Gregorc (1973) agree with these findings, and show that there are critical moments in a teaching career, such as: (i) *the initial teacher education stage*, when basic ideas about the role of the school, the teacher, and the

teaching-learning process are being built; (ii) *the stage of induction into the professional field*, a moment when teachers must meet the demands of their work, succeed and face a range of pressures coming from the teaching system, the managers, the students and their families – this is a phase in which they are so overwhelmed that they cannot find time for any other activity but teaching; (iii) *the intermediate stage of their careers*, which is marked by attempts to adjust those pressures they have felt to their own ideas about teaching – this is a moment where there is a split between those teachers who feel comfortable in their work and satisfied with the profession, and those who feel so dissatisfied that they wonder if they have made the right choice; (iv) finally, *the maturity stage*, which continues until retirement, when teachers feel secure in their profession and are able to identify advantages and disadvantages in the teaching profession regardless of how they perceive it.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES

This second group of studies on CPD differs from the first in that it focuses on the development of pedagogical teams (management, coordination, teaching staff) in schools, which should preferably occur within individual schools and deal with its specific problems. Studies in this trend split into two subgroups: (i) those that believe it is the pedagogical coordinator (PC) who is responsible for continuous professional development activities in the school; and (ii) those that seek to strengthen and legitimize the school as the locus of permanent continuous training, so as to create a collaborative learning community within. These two points of view are described in more detail below; they are by no means mutually exclusive.

The pedagogical coordinator and Continuous Professional Development processes

A considerable number of studies on CPD believe that its focus should fall on the teaching staff of teachers in each teaching establishment, and that the PC should play the role of coordinating education activities so as to promote the development of the pedagogical team rather than that of the teacher individually. Therefore, school time must be organized so as to assure regular meetings, the participation of teachers, and the contextualization of what will be addressed so as to make these discussions moments of actual learning for them. Within Brazil (CHRISTOV, 2007; PLACCO and ALMEIDA, 2003, 2006), the understanding is that the PC, besides coordinating pedagogical work in the school, should intermediate the training

of his team, according to the actual needs and demands of the school in which he works. He must mobilize the teaching staff to draft/redraft the school's Political Pedagogical Project (*Projeto Político-Pedagógico*—PPP), helping them put forward and implement what the group sees as necessary measures concerning the curriculum, the teaching-learning process, evaluation, textbooks and teachers' books, disciplinary and ethical issues, and the interaction of the school with the community around it.

In other countries such as the United Kingdom, someone playing the role of the PC is not always found in schools. In French-speaking countries, France and Canada for example, the duties of this professional (who has a different job title) are very similar to those expected in Brazil. In Canada, the pedagogical “counselor” works in schools to help the teaching staff manage their time and optimize the organization and functioning of teaching cycles. The French educational system does not provide a professional to work in schools, but schools may call on the assistance of a consultancy and educational support service whose goal is to guide teachers and pedagogical teams in schools where general inspections indicate some kind of a problem.

It is clear that both in Brazil and overseas, when there is a PC in a school, his task is to assure the quality of the education provided for the population; and this is done above all by teacher observation and continuous professional development. However, in Brazilian schools, this concept of ongoing training for the teaching staff at schools, coordinated by the PC, has not always been successful. Very often, when it is adopted in public policies, it can be seen that a substantial part of the training is transferred to the schools, and that the PC, obliged to follow government regulations, eventually loses independence and sees teachers as mere executors of actions imposed on them from outside (SÁ ET AL., 2001). Furthermore, it is known that the actions of the PC are not always based on the needs and demands of the school, and that the teaching staff is also often reluctant to accept the proposals of the PC. His leadership is not always acknowledged, whether because her own basic training has not been sound, and/or she is lacking in teaching experience, or because her stance is incompatible with the role expected of him in a democratic school.

The school as locus of permanent ongoing training

Many collaborative CPDs, while not ignoring the role of the PC, give greater attention to the school, privileging interactions that occur in the workplace itself or in other facilities of the education system. This school of thought, strongly rooted in the institutional plane,

believes that teachers permanently question their teaching practice, so that a rich discussion about teaching should identify its critical aspects and encourage experimentation in the classroom, the use of new teaching strategies, and the adoption of a more efficient way of organizing the classroom. In particular, dialogue between teachers should build an atmosphere of trust and integration, a core feature of “learning communities” (FULLAN and GERMAIN, 2006). In these communities, it is possible to observe and comment on what is done, and thus what is observed and what is said become feedback to enhance the teaching process.

These results are very promising: greater commitment by the teachers to innovation and experimentation; and more efficient coordination of work among and between grades, the sturdy linking of different levels of teaching and a greater effort to phase out teaching procedures that contribute neither to motivating nor to stimulating the learning goals among students. In order to build learning communities, teachers need to learn to diagnose and negotiate conflicts; to avoid hasty and simplistic compromises; to develop political and ethical sensitivity; to become aware of the macro-context in which they work, with its inequalities and dysfunctions; and to struggle to overcome obstacles in the school as well as those of society at large. “Continuous learning” has been argued to be a notion to be incorporated into school culture by means of partnerships set up between universities, individual schools, and education systems. Only by working together will it be possible to shape institutional cultures in schools that offer support to different teachers at different moments throughout their professional cycle.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In order to identify the present configuration of continuous professional development activities in public education networks, especially the modalities and practices employed, the authors visited Municipal and State Education Secretariats (SEs). The study involved 19 SEs – six State Secretariats (SEEs) and 13 Municipal Secretariats (SEMs). Six were located in state capitals, seven in medium-sized cities, and the remaining secretariats were in small towns scattered throughout the five regions of Brazil (North, Northeast, Midwest, Southeast and South). The following criteria guided the initial selection of SEs: they should include both municipal- and state-level education agencies, they should vary in size, and all five regions of Brazil should be represented. Some SEs that we contacted turned down the invitation to take part in the survey, or were not ready in time for data gathering, which led to changes in the

regional distribution that had initially been planned. Confidentiality about the data obtained in the SEs was guaranteed by identifying them through abbreviations which indicate if they are state-level or municipal-level secretariats, the region of Brazil in which they are located, and the size of the city (capitals, medium-sized or small). The table below shows the final list of SEs included in this study.

TABLE 1
IDENTIFICATION OF EDUCATION SECRETARIATS BY REGION OF BRAZIL

Region	State-Level Education Secretariats	Municipal-Level Education Secretariats	
		State Capital	Medium-sized or small municipalities
North	SEN1	SMNcap	-
	SEN2		
Northeast	SENE	SMNEcap1	SMNEm
		SMNEcap2	SMNEp
Midwest	SECO	SMCOcap	SMCOp
Southeast	SESE	SMSE	SMSEp
		-	SMSEm
South	SES	SMS	SMSp
		-	SMSm

Fonte?

Before fieldwork began, letters were sent to the SEs requesting permission to begin the survey, and explaining that joining the study would mean allowing people who were dedicated to CPD and holding positions of responsibility to be interviewed. At least three people were interviewed in all SEs, among whom were: the education secretary (or his or her representative); the CPD coordinator (or person responsible for this work); someone responsible for a project identified by the SE as standing out in its CPD policy. The material obtained (documents made available by the SE, field records and the transcription of interviews) containing data from all the SEs, enabled similarities, contrasts and even contradictions to be identified so that a selection, systematization and analysis of the principles found could be carried out and the approaches and modalities of CPD in practice in the SEs studied could be analyzed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATION SECRETARIATS

We knew beforehand that the context and characteristics of the 19 SEs investigated would vary greatly, even among those belonging to a single category: state-level secretariats, capital-city secretariats or secretariats from medium-sized and small municipalities. In fact, we found that the working conditions offered to teachers in the SEs that we studied were extremely varied and did not always include hours for group work. Monthly hours devoted to continuous professional development activities range from 5% to 35% of the teachers' working week. Only four of the SEs set aside hours exclusively for in-service training. Few SEs (five) have exclusive training centers although the intention of achieving a specific space for CPD was a constant goal mentioned in the interviews.

Among the SEs that have such a resource, the information given is that the training centers in general provide a good infrastructure (with a library, computer room, small or large auditoriums, training classrooms, yard and kitchen) and work from Monday to Saturday with assistance provided by education and administration professionals. It should also be pointed out that some training centers found were, despite having a good infrastructure, not yet properly organized as effective studying and CPD centers. In fact, they basically only provide classrooms for sporadic activities or for courses structured by the SEs and made available to interested teachers. Generally speaking, municipal education networks are responsible for early childhood education and for the first years of primary school (1st to 5th year). State education networks are responsible for the final years of primary school (PS) and for secondary school (SS). Not all SEs offer reinforcement education for young people and adults, one of the modalities of primary school. The interviewees reported that CPD is directed towards all teaching modalities, but the priority remains that of the first years of primary school. There were two exceptions: one SEM from the Southeast region (SMSEp) that does not emphasize any particular teaching modalities; and one from the Northeast region (SMNEcap1) that concentrated its efforts on early childhood education in 2010.

MAJOR FINDINGS

VISION OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

In the body of data gathered, a sort of “discursive consensus”¹ was found regarding the vision of CPD. The following aspects were frequently mentioned by the CPD teams in the SEs heard in the present study: teachers and teacher training are very important if the quality of education is to be enhanced; it is understood that training is the linchpin of interventions in school; provision of CPD is guided by evaluations of the system and the need to promote systematic training practices. The way in which repeated reference to CPD was made seems to suggest that the “discursive consensus” in force is closely linked to the production of knowledge in the field and to political actions taken in recent decades nationally and internationally (NÓVOA, 2007). This movement has led SEEs and SEMs to center their focus on teachers, with CPD policies taking on strategic importance in actions carried out in teaching networks. All of this gives a core role to educational processes and urges teachers, managers, pedagogical coordinators and teacher trainers to assume responsibility.

SEs see CPD as a *sine qua non* for enhancement of the quality of teaching. Associating CPD to the enhancement of teaching practices in the daily life of schools to promote students’ learning is no novelty. Educational policies have put teachers at the core for a long time and for this reason CPD activities are expected to produce positive changes in students’ school results, above all results in large scale evaluations. It can be seen from the statements that CPD is understood to be a structural axis of SEs’ work, precisely because it allows intervention in daily school routine.

In those SEs that achieved improvements in the Basic Education Development Index (*Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica – IDEB*) the teams ascribe these results to CPD because they believe that the level of teacher training affects students’ learning. Even though CPD is not thought to be the only solution to the problems of quality in teaching, it is understood to open up prospects of enhancement in the teaching-learning process. That is why greater space has been granted for the construction of collective actions aiming to improve teachers’ performance. It can also be observed that in most of the SEs studies, CPD is not understood as a correction of initial training which is nearly always seen as precarious. But it is understood that there are a range of factors acting to transform the work of teachers, and that teachers’ knowledge and skill must be constantly extended and enhanced in order to meet

¹ This expression was used by Nóvoa (2007), in his text “O regresso dos professores” (*The Return of the Teachers*), during the Conference entitled “Desenvolvimento profissional de professores para a qualidade e para a equidade da aprendizagem ao longo da vida” (*Teachers’ Professional Development for Quality and Lifelong Equity in Learning*).

new educational demands. Some SEs stressed that “initial training leaves many gaps and these gaps need to be filled” (SEN1, director of teaching) – these gaps are a challenge to the planning and execution of training practices.

SE educational policies, in their discourse and agendas are known to place great importance on the ability of teacher development practices to promote renewal. Most SEs have conceived of CPD not as a product to be individually assimilated by teachers through participation in conventions, lectures and courses. Many SEs understand that CPD cannot be restricted to the domain of scientific or academic subjects and that the education practices offered to teachers cannot only be attempts to overcome possible flaws in initial training, rather than serving as a ---- to enable professional development and favor school management.

It can thus be affirmed, in light of the data gathered from the SEs, that the practices adopted in CPD have improved. Great efforts have been made to meet the needs of educators, as can be seen in the attempts to avoid isolated, on-off and/or short-lived training modalities. However, acknowledging that the concepts, practices and policies of CPD have been gradually evolving does not signify an absence of constraints, limitations and mistakes, nor does it mean that the desired results have been achieved. It is a complex task to plan and execute CPD actions for it demands highly coordinated actions from the SEs. It should be noted that some better-organized SEs have implemented and consolidated their CPD policies and possess a clear view of what is important to offer teachers in their education systems. Still, others do not yet have a CPD policy and only offer their teachers a few modalities of courses, nearly always promoted or supported by the Ministry of Education – MEC. But teachers unanimously wish to be able to enjoy a CPD plan in their schools, one that will build upon what has already been achieved.

Those education systems that already have a continuous development policy share at least two aspects that explain why they are ahead of the others: (i) they have a historical continuity of CPD actions; and (ii) they value education professionals and, within public education career plans, assure them of continuous professional development, including periods reserved for training in their workload. Eight of the SEs—four state secretariats (SECO, SEN1, SESE and SES) and four municipal secretariats (SMScap, SMNcap, SMCocap and SMSEm)—have been constructing and rewriting their CPD policies over time. In recent years, these SEs have defined the permanent professional development of teachers

as a priority, which in most cases meant creating mechanisms for training and a career in public education.

The teams of these SEs have been allowed to remain in their roles for several mandates, which has guaranteed the continuity of initiatives and activities. This set up a virtuous cycle: the continuity of the management teams enables identification of the system's needs and therefore leads to enhancement of education practices. The reports from these SEs show the construction of a process in which CPD evolved gradually from on-off courses to longer programs and actions that are geared to needs identified among the teachers. The goal of strengthening the school as an educational space and assuring continuous and systematic CPD actions was a concern for most of the SEs. They all seem to understand that “continuous training cannot be provided only through courses” and “must be included in the working routine of the Secretariat and the school” (SMNcap –CPD Coordination Team).

MOST FREQUENT TRAINING PRACTICES

We have tried to identify and analyze continuous development modalities offered by the SEs, with emphasis on the most frequently used contents and strategies. Not all the CPD programs and actions carried out by the several SEs will be addressed; only those that seemed to best exemplify CPD actions under government responsibility. This is because, as is known, several CPD programs and actions are supported by Non-Governmental Organizations or by education systems managed by the private sector with funding from states or municipalities.

The results of the surveys show that the CPD policies of most of the SEs investigated center around practices seen as “classic” (CANDAU, 1997), in other words, courses prepared by specialists to enhance teachers' knowledge and methodologies. The literature on this subject (IMBERNÓN, 2010; SZTAJN ET AL., 2003; FULLAN, 1995, 2006; CANDAU, 1997) questions this format because it is, among other things, basically instrumental. While this is the prevailing CPD perspective among those SEs visited, there were some advances and even pleasant surprises. In many SEs, particularly those in larger towns and cities, different CPD modalities coexist; since many different goals need to be attained: “continuous training could be a course, or a workshop. It may even be lengthy. You can vary the strategy – actually it's beneficial if you do. The strategy is in fact to use different strategies [...]” (SMSEm – primary School coordinator). This comment well illustrates the fact that there are different training practices in the education systems; it could even be affirmed that what

differentiates the CPD policy of the SEs is the emphasis given to the different modalities offered and the focus on the individual or collective work, as shown below.

Individualized perspectives

The individualized perspective seeks to value teachers themselves, ironing out flaws from their initial training in their mastery of situations in their current school or of teaching practice itself. This perspective is also adopted when pedagogical changes need to be disseminated or new programs and policies implemented in the SEs. In these cases, several formats predominate: courses of both short and long duration, ad hoc workshops and actions (such as attending lectures, enrolment in conferences, participation in seminars, study days, and so on), and training actions that take into consideration the professional life cycle and professional development.

Among individualized training practices, the one most commonly found in SEs is the provision of short courses, most of them face-to-face in the classroom. The formats of such courses vary greatly, as do the number of hours of study, and they normally have to do with issues related to classroom teaching. In some education systems, there are some courses that disseminate the use of technological tools and work in virtual environments. There is a typical explanation for the frequent use of this modality: this type of practice seems to promote higher teacher attendance. Some SEs have stressed their concern for maintaining the continuity of such courses, striving to offer them throughout the school year.

In the range of states and municipalities, short courses are modified in order to meet the expectations of teachers with regard to a stronger link between theory and practice, and the need to enable them to carry out changes in the classroom. Some SEs (SEN1, SEN2, SES, SMScap, SMNEm, SMSp, SMSm, SMSEm and SMNEcap2) pointed out that the workshop format for short courses works very well and the teachers taking part in them approve of it: “We have found that workshops dealing with students’ needs, and the necessities of the classroom, have been much more effective. They draw teachers’ attention to the problems they face in the classroom” (SEN1 – director of teaching at the SE). Another aspect often pointed out in the statements – and one that explains why this modality of CPD meets approval – is that teachers believe that the workshops not only enable them to link their practice to theoretical aspects, but also help them create materials and resources for daily use in the classroom.

The vast majority of the SEs in the study make use of federal government programs in order to offer longer duration courses to their teachers. In fact, reports show that the National Network for Continuous Teacher Training (*Rede Nacional de Formação Continuada de Professores*) has been greatly used, particularly by the SEEs, who put forward their demands and receive support from the participating universities to be able to offer CPD in the desired area; as is the case with the Gestar and Pró-Letramento Programs. The methodology of these programs has been praised and they have been well-received by teachers. The method adopted in the Gestar program stands out in the view of the SEs we visited in the meeting teachers expectations of obtaining new theoretical knowledge of the teaching-learning process while developing teaching strategies that can be used in everyday classroom practice.

SEs also resort to ad hoc CPD activities such as lectures, seminars, conferences, study days, pedagogical meetings and other such events, although they do not consider them ideal. These SEs think that such on-off actions tend to be insufficient to bring about lasting change in teaching practices and enhance the quality of the education provided. Nonetheless, these CPD modalities are often used as supplementary practices, and are interesting because they motivate teachers, lead them to begin to reflect upon certain issues and bring the know-how produced in the educational field up to date.

Another approach that fits into the individualized perspectives is that which takes into consideration teachers' life cycles and their professional development. This type of approach was only found in one SE in the South (SES), which set up an educational development program linked to the functional progression of teachers in their careers. It is an online CPD linked to the career plan and intended for teachers with approximately 20 years' professional teaching experience and who must "pass this program in order to enroll in the final career level" (SES-state coordinator for the project).

There are also outsourced individualized CPD activities, but these are somewhat rare among the SEs that we investigated; only one adopted them (SMSEp). Outsourcing meant using material in the form of bound folders, bought from an institution for use throughout the education system, with a training package built in for the use of the material and to clear up any queries teachers might have – but this service is not always available at convenient times or in places that are easy to get to. Finally, we found that the SEs we studied have been phasing out on-off CPD activities in favor of longer programs that bring about better results. The relevant literature supports this finding (GARET ET AL., 2001).

Collaborative perspectives

Unlike the individualized perspectives, in some SEs, we found a discourse whereby the school must be seen as and encouraged to be the locus of CPD. As Imbernón (2010) explains clearly, this presupposes that while the teaching profession has a subjective component, it also entails a collaborative component. This perspective centers around activities carried out in schools: study groups that enjoy systematic and thorough follow-up; the collective production of teaching materials for given years and subjects for later dissemination at the SE portals; the involvement of teachers in planning processes, in carrying out activities and in evaluating them; the creation of pedagogical projects for curriculum issues or problems identified in the classroom; and the setting-up of virtual professional cooperations and support networks within school communities and education systems, among other activities.

Some collaborative perspectives lean heavily on the role of the PC, who is seen as responsible for the continuous training of teachers within the school, for strengthening the entire teaching team including the director, and for legitimizing the school as a CPD where people help one another. However, very few programs and policies have managed to promote collaborative training practices. In the SEE of the Southeast region (SESE), for example, a CPD program was set up to trigger collective work in the school. Study groups were formed and tasked to review matters in the common basic curriculum – a project that led to the proposal of a new curriculum, gradually perfected up until 2009. There are several interesting aspects to this modality of CP; it encourages collective studying in the school, with systematic thorough follow-up; knowledge and study can be valued; a collective project can be put together in the workplace itself, since it is in the school that the problematic situations faced by teachers occur.

Two SEs, despite having very different characteristics – one is state-level, the other municipal – came up with a teacher-authored proposal that encompasses all teachers (SMNEcap2 and SES). The SEM of the Northeast region encourages its teachers to divulge their teaching practices, by publishing them in the form of journals recalling their experiences. Besides encouraging authorial writing, this publication become into books to be used by the students. The SEE of the South region (SES), believing that continuous training should not be driven exclusively by the availability of courses and concerned about valuing teachers, drafted a proposal whereby teachers are encouraged to write academic and didactic texts. The training

activities of these two SEs are important strategies for valuing teachers: they go from being mere consumers to producers of knowledge. This is a collaborative perspective that privileges teachers and their partners, enhancing communication and the sharing of experiences and feelings about what goes on in the classroom and at the school (Imbernón, 2010).

Another good example of collaborative CPD practices is the State Secretariat of the Midwest Region (SECO). Of all the SEs in this study, this one has the training policy deemed most innovative by the literature: the school is seen as the locus for excellence of CPD. The current training policy of this state seeks to favor the following points: the fostering of a cooperative atmosphere among teachers at the school; the teacher's participation in planning processes and execution as well as evaluating the school's results and the evaluation of teachers' know-how and experience. The SE organizes itself to support the training offered in the schools by allowing them to create institutionalized training spaces which enhance their teachers to work collectively. It also provides teachers with the chance to plan and/or rethink their practices on the basis of the demands from their respective schools, taking both the curriculum and their students learning needs into consideration. This SE set up several CPD centers to help teachers at the school with their work, striving to achieve better teaching conditions. These training centers are facing the challenge of making the school's practice and its specific needs a benchmark for CPD. They are responsible for organizing and executing activities in the schools themselves, at times set aside for pedagogical activities that are integrated during the teachers' working week. This project has enabled collective action, the establishment of information networks, the exchange of knowledge and shifts in values through permanent dialogue. Its core objective is to make teachers responsible for changing their own teaching practices.

FORMS OF EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The follow-up and evaluation processes are valued by the teams involved in CPD, although all of them, without exception, show difficulty in carrying them out, especially when verifying the impact in the classroom. Noted on changes in teaching practices which have resulted enhanced student learning in schools is reviewed in order to follow up on CPD's actions. In many cases, in the different SEs, those responsible for CPD believe that the PCs are their main interlocutors in the discussion on teachers' and students' performance.

Several strategies are used in order to verify the effectiveness of the PC's actions: specific forms are filled out; meetings are held regularly (weekly or fortnightly) with the CPD team in the SEs; students' notebooks are analyzed; and there is even an incentive, or duty, to observe classrooms in order to help teachers transpose the activities organized out in CPD into everyday school life. Although the SEs generally understand the need to observe teaching, very few are able to put this into practice. Many state that this is a proposal to be implemented in the long term, and that a new teaching culture must first be created that is capable of accepting, welcoming, and opening the classroom doors to the PCs. Other obstacles to this practice range from skepticism as to how these educational agents can bring teachers to the difficulties the PCs have in presenting themselves as teachers' partners.

In some of the SEs visited in the study, it is the PC who must make sure that CPD programs are implemented and must be able to both verify their impact and to help teachers properly use teaching materials developed by the central agency. Most SEs report that they keep tight control of teachers' attendance at CPD activities, since this is one way of following up on the programs, and since the activities are run during the teachers' working hours. Furthermore, they are a pre-requisite for the teachers to obtain certification. In some cases, attendance checks are the only way to assess the courses offered.

CPD actions are normally assessed in two ways: in the first, the teacher takes part in evaluating the training he or she received; in the second, SEs seek to measure the impact of this training on students' learning, which is the program's main goal. Evaluations of the first type use short, and therefore somewhat vague questionnaires; we only found more extensive questionnaires being used in a few cases. Participants generally do not receive feedback on the opinions they give concerning CPD. In the second perspective, evaluation of the CPD results is indirect and indicated by the student's performance in local or national external evaluations (such as the so-called Prova Brasil) and by education quality indicators such as the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), which occurs in seven of the SEs we studied. As before mentioned, this is in fact the most widely used data. The fact that four of the SEs we visited have their own evaluation systems, should be noted.

Only one example of direct evaluation of teachers was found in this study. In one SE of the South (SES), when participants in the evaluation do not achieve scores deemed sufficient by the central team, the course is not validated, and consequently the teachers do not move forward in their careers. This SE focuses on three aspects in its evaluation:

attendance, participation during the course, and handing in or presenting assignments. Systematic visits to schools carried out by “reference teams” composed of a teaching supervisor and coordinators responsible for CPD in different subject areas are one strategy that this SE uses in order to make sure that activities can be followed up. Each one of these reference teams is responsible for five schools. Every Monday, according to a previously defined schedule and observation agenda, certain schools are visited. The reference teams and the school management work together to analyze the teaching practices carried out in those schools. This work, although it does not intend to evaluate the impact of training actions on school practices, provides very detailed information about what goes on in schools, enabling identification of whether the disseminated content is being fulfilled. Furthermore, it allows new demands to be identified, thereby guiding the planning of future CPD activities. This strategy in particular favors the development of a committed position and the commitment to school results, on the part of both the SEM trainers and the managing teams as well as the teachers themselves.

Another strategy used by five of the SEs we investigated is a supervised follow-up by the trainers themselves, who carry out scheduled visits to the schools. The SEE of the Midwest region (SECO) is a case in point: trainers who work in the training centers are responsible for following up on two, three or four schools and must be in weekly contact with them. Visits and follow-ups by higher authorities (such as agencies and other groups linked to the SEs) are not uncommon in schools, and was the case in eight of this study’s SEs. The SEM of the Southeast region (SMSEcap), for example, is responsible for training teachers; monthly (or bi-monthly) visits to schools have two goals: to see whether and how teachers apply what they have learned in the course to their teaching practice; and to identify the most fragile schools in each region for will require the greatest help.

FINAL REMARKS

The results show an important interface between CPD proposals, the teams working in CPD, schools and teachers. If linked together, these dimensions enable everyone to participate in the CPD process with interesting and promising results from the point of view of the SEs. The fact that there are political actions recognizing and providing continuity for successful experiences and projects in CPD is meaningful: in the SEs where this happens, CPD programs tend to be improved so as to meet the needs of both schools and teachers. Valuing and

maintaining well-prepared CPD teams is key in this process, because the experience acquired generates more accurate criticism to diagnose what is going on in schools and between teachers, creating an expertise from which the training actions benefit. Having professionals who are linked to the education systems, makes SEs less vulnerable to interference from changes in governments.

Efforts by the MEC to regulate CPD in Brazil should be acknowledged for their efforts in creating policies and strategies, for it has attempted to identify the major demands and define modalities and conditions leading to the success of the actions undertaken, all while monitoring their implementation and evaluating their results. However, all this risks becoming innocuous if there is a lack of suitable coordination and association with other programs and policies geared for teachers. There is certainly an awareness in Brazil that this is an urgent issue, as borne out by the draft proposal submitted to the bicameral commission of the National Council for Education (2009) with suggestions for the construction of national guidelines for CPD.

In the secretariats we visited, the trend seemed to be the valuing of long, systematically-offered courses for sporadic actions really do leave a lot to be desired. While CPD actions will be much more effective if they are systematic and long-lasting, often there is little coherence between goals, actions and results; and they have not yet been linked with other teaching policies. These two aspects have often meant that few people have taken up the offer of continuous development or carried through with it. For this to happen, SEs must create training policies with internal coherence (between objectives, methods and the desired results) as well as other policies for professional development of teachers, comparing them with the teaching career and salaries, among other factors. One welcome aspect is that the SEs studied are already aware of the importance of strengthening the school as a whole, and not merely the teacher. This seems to be a promising development, and is already being implemented in a number of SEs that have been working to set up and consolidate a group identity within their schools, with standards for interaction that aim to strengthen collaborative work.

In this study, we found no mention of this trend, greatly explored in the literature (HARGREAVES, 1995), to strengthen an ethical position and professionalism, the responsibility for the collective that is inherent to the teaching profession, and the exercise of citizenship through CPD actions. Likewise, CPD actions catering to those teachers at different

moments of their teaching career are still in beginning stages. It should also be pointed out that the evaluation and following-up of CPD actions are aspects requiring further improvement: without them, there is no way of coordinating different theories and practices concerning student learning, the responsibility of pushing through what was agreed on in the political pedagogical project, or the pedagogical practice and problems faced in the school, taking part in the decision-making process as to how to face them. In a country in which the initial training of teachers is acknowledged as precarious, the SEs, if they are to have an effective CPD policy, must meet both the needs of the teachers themselves (in terms of subject-matter content and themes that are relevant to everyday school life, teaching skills, classroom management and so on) and the school (the demands of its political pedagogical project, support for teachers at different moments of their professional development, and attempts to meet the demands of the SE and the students' families and so on). All of this requires a balance that many of the SEs we studied have yet to attain.

Finally, it should be pointed out that everything that is taken for granted goes unnoticed; and because it goes unnoticed, it can be forgotten. The analyses worked out in this paper go to remind us that enhancing CPD depends on a well coordinated set of initiatives, all of which are already well known. If we are to contribute to the professional development of teachers, we must urgently consider them to be active subjects who are able to play the role of the specialist in the teaching-learning process and who are committed to the education of future generations. The task of CPD is neither to center only on mastery of curriculum subjects nor to focus on the teachers' personal characteristics. Other goals must be taken into consideration: to foster teachers' positive attitudes towards their profession, their school, their students and their students' families, all while expanding their ethical awareness. To reinvigorate the struggle for improvements in the workplace, while being more aware of directors in their working context, they can achieve a more consistent political involvement; and also to set up new patterns of relationships with their managing teams, their peers and the community, so that the democratic school can become a reality.

Again, for this to happen, it is worth stating that there must be massive investment in the initial training of teachers, so that continuous professional development is not obliged to work retroactively and thus address past failures. There must be prospective continuous training which grants teachers more autonomy and allows them to give their opinion as to which aspects their professional development will focus on and how it will be given. Initial

training must be linked to continuous training, so that the latter can rest on the former, bringing the teachers – among other goals – into step with changes that have occurred in the field of education. The provision of CPD must be coordinated with stages in teachers' professional lives, through the offering of targeted programs: for teachers starting out their career (providing assistance and follow-up so they can assimilate the school's ethos, its work dynamic, and aspects where it needs strengthening); for those who are changing from one segment or level of teaching to another (so they will receive support throughout the process of adapting to the new demands they will have to face and be encouraged to obtain the necessary will so they can play an active part in school planning, create their lesson plan and execute it). CPD programs must also be created for teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience who can go back to university and perfect their skills so they can help train their peers, ultimately recovering the motivation to teach.

It is also worth remembering how important it is to create policies that train and strengthen the teaching staff and the management team (directors and pedagogical coordinators) together, making use of the skills available and placing them at the service of the school's pedagogical project. Managers and pedagogical coordinators also need to benefit from actions geared to their respective roles, above all when they work in the final years of primary school and in secondary school and when they work with specialist teachers. Investing in training these professionals means acknowledging that the school will not become one of the privileged loci of CPD without their active participation. Similarly, the provision of CPD must be extended so as to cater to those working at all levels and in all modalities of teaching, not being restricted to Portuguese and Mathematics, which are privileged because they are the target of system evaluations and are therefore the main components of the IDEB evaluation.

The role of universities in CPD remains fundamental. It is essential for them to strengthen proposals favoring their interaction with school communities, so that they can be fully aware of their needs and demands. In these conditions, universities will better contribute to the actions of education systems, helping them, among other aspects, update themselves with new knowledge from the field of education, bringing the academic debate into schools; planning activities, courses and events on campus so that school teachers can become familiar with the university environment, simultaneously enabling them to have a more objective – because a more distanced – view of their work places of work; overcoming problems and/or

dealing directly with their work profession, and thus not accepting ready-made proposals that do not concern them directly.

Another aspect which cannot be ignored is the importance of fostering the continuity of successful programs, so that they will not be paralyzed by management changes, or the adoption of partisan policies that do not necessarily benefit the teaching-learning process. This means investing in the socialization of successful continued professional development experiences at different levels and in different modalities of teaching, so that central authorities as well as trainers, teachers, managers and PCs can be inspired to develop and/or enhance their own training actions. CPD activities that help increase teachers' cultural capital should also be carried out since in Latin America, the teaching career has particularly attracted students who have not been able to afford to invest in and/or take part in activities like reading literature (novels, short stories and poems, going to theatres and cinemas, visiting art exhibitions and so on).

Serious consideration should be given to increasing the time devoted to continuous development activities, so as not to limit them to being merely collective pedagogical meetings held in the school. It would be excellent if the school units in each education system were given the opportunity to promote training meetings among themselves, with pedagogical discussions depending on the area of expertise and not only by year or level of teaching. Apart from this, vertical reflection between disciplines – or by areas of expertise – could, whenever possible, involve cooperation between teachers of the early years of primary school and those teaching the final years, and then also between secondary school teachers and those teaching the final years of primary school. It might thus be possible to build a climate of trust and cooperation, leading schools – the management team and the teaching staff – to try out new educational practices (submitting them to critical debate within the education systems) and to employee innovations disseminated through CPD activities.

Finally, it is also essential for the results and therefore the quality of CPD programs to be evaluated, leading teachers to assimilate the content and skills provided, always diversifying modalities of evaluation and freeing training actions from the exclusive aegis of whole-population evaluations. Actions such as observing classroom teaching, systematically visiting schools to discuss pedagogical practices and the problems faced in those schools, and coordinating efforts between central teams and school teams, are rich sources of information revealing the quality of CPD actions and the implementation of changes in pedagogical

practices. Schools can and should incorporate qualitative modes of evaluation within CPD actions and the follow-up of their results; this can serve as yet another training action. In Short, it is essential and urgent to stress the need and importance of educational policies that enable individual and collective development programs to coexist and offer teachers within the public education system the chance to fully develop themselves throughout their profession.

REFERENCES

BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. *Fundamentos para formação do professor da educação básica*. Brasília, 1999. (Ministry of Education, “Fundamentals for training primary school teachers”). Available

at: <<http://portal.mec.gov.br/setec/arquivos/pdf/esbo%E2%80%A1o4.pdf>> Consulted on: 17 September 2010.

BALDOCK, J.; MANNING, N.; VICKERSTAFF, S. *Social Policy*. 2^a ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

BRASIL. Presidência da República: Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos da Casa Civil. Decreto nº 6.755, 2009. Institui a Política Nacional de Formação de Profissionais do Magistério da Educação Básica, disciplina a atuação da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior no fomento a programas de formação inicial e continuada, e dá outras providências. (*Presidency of the Republic, Chief of Staff's Office Sub-division for Legal Matters. Decree 6,755 enacted in 2009. Institutes National Policy for Training Primary School Teaching Professionals and regulates the activities of the Coordinatorship for Improving University-Level Personnel fostering initial and continuous training programs, and other provisions.*) Available at: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2009/Decreto/D6755.htm> Consulted on: 23 November 2010.

CANDAU, V.M. Formação continuada de professores: tendências atuais. (*Continuous training for teachers: current trends*) In: CANDAU, V. M. (Org.). *Magistério: construção cotidiana. (The teaching profession: a daily construction)* Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997.

CHRISTOV, L.H. da S. Educação continuada: função essencial do coordenador pedagógico. (*Continuous education: the essential role of the pedagogical coordinator*) In: GUIMARÃES,

- A. A. (org.). *O Coordenador pedagógico e a educação continuada*. (“The Pedagogical Coordinator and continuous education”) 5. ed. São Paulo: Loyola, 2007
- FESSLER, R. Dynamics of teacher career stages. In: GUSKEY, T. R.; HUBERMAN, M. (Eds.). *Professional development in education: new paradigms and practices*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1995.
- FULLAN, M. *Change forces with a vengeance*. London: Falmer, 1993.
- _____. The limits and the potential of professional development. In: GUSKEY, T.R.; HUBERMAN, M. (Eds.). *Professional development in education*. New York: Teachers College. 1995.
- _____. *Turnaround leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- FULLAN, M.; GERMAIN, C. *Learning Places*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2006.
- FULLER, F.; BROWN, O. Becoming a teacher. In: RYAN, K. (Ed.). *Teacher education: (74th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education)*. Part 2, p. 25-52. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995.
- GARET, M.S. ET AL. What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, v.38, n.4, 2001.
- GATTI, B. A.; BARRETTO, E. S. S. Professores: aspectos de sua profissionalização, formação e valorização social (*Teachers: some aspects of their professionalization, training and social recognition*). *Relatório de Pesquisa*. Brasília: UNESCO, 2009.
- GATTI, B. A.; NUNES, M. M. R. (Org.). Formação de professores para o ensino fundamental: estudo de currículos das licenciaturas em Pedagogia, Língua Portuguesa, Matemática e Ciências Biológicas. (*Teacher training for primary education: study of teacher-training course curricula in Pedagogy, Portuguese, Mathematics and Biological Sciences*) Textos FCC, n.29, 2009.
- GREGORC, A. F. Developing plans for professional growth. *NASSP Bulletin*, v. 57, p. 1-8, 1973.
- HARGREAVES, A. Introduction. In: CLARK, C. M. (Eds.). *Thoughtful teaching*. Wellington: Cassel, 1995.

IMBERNÓN, F. *Formação continuada de professores*. (“Continuous training of teachers”) Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2010.

MEVARECH, Z. R. Who benefits from computer assisted cooperative learning? *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, v. 9, p. 451-464, 1993.

_____. Teachers’ paths on the way to and from the professional development forum. In: GUSKEY, T. R; HUBERMAN, M (Eds.). *Professional development in education: new paradigms and practices*. New York: Teachers’ College, 1995.

NÓVOA, A. *Desenvolvimento profissional de professores para a qualidade e para a equidade da Aprendizagem ao longo da Vida*. O regresso dos professores. (“Professional development of teachers for quality and equity in Learning throughout Life”. *The return of the teachers*) Lisboa, Parque das Nações – Pavilhão Atlântico – Sala Nónio, 27 and 28 September 2007.

PLACCO, V. M. de S.; ALMEIDA, L. R. *O coordenador pedagógico e o cotidiano da escola*. (“The pedagogical coordinator and the daily routine of the school”) São Paulo: Loyola, 2003

_____. *O coordenador pedagógico e questões da contemporaneidade*. (“The pedagogical coordinator and contemporary issues”) São Paulo: Loyola, 2006.

SÁ, H. A. ET AL. *Coordenação pedagógica e o processo de ensino aprendizagem: as evidências de um exercício acadêmico*. (“Pedagogical coordination and teaching-learning process: evidence of an academic exercise”) 2001. Available at: <<http://www.ichs.ufop.br/conifes/anais/EDU/edu1601.htm>>. Consulted on 20 set. 2010.

SZTAJN, P.; BONAMINO, A.; FRANCO, C. Formação docente nos surveys de avaliação educacional. (*Teacher training in educational evaluation surveys*) *Cadernos de Pesquisa*. São Paulo, n. 118, p. 11-39, mar. 2003.

CLAUDIA LEME FERREIRA DAVIS

(Carlos Chagas Foundation and PUC-SP)

cdavis@fcc.org.br

MARINA MUNIZ ROSSA NUNES

(Carlos Chagas Foundation and Colégio Santa Cruz)

mnunues@fcc.org.br

PATRÍCIA C. ALBIERI DE ALMEIDA

(Carlos Chagas Foundation and Mackenzie Presbyterian University)

palmeida@fcc@fcc.org.br

ANA PAULA FERREIRA DA SILVA

(Carlos Chagas Foundation and Mackenzie Presbyterian University)

anafsil@yahoo.com

JULIANA CEDRO DE SOUZA

(Carlos Chagas Foundation and Nove de Julho University - UNINOVE)

julianacedro@yahoo.com.br

Recebido em: /

Aprovado para publicação em: