



The paths of the teaching profession: The identity and narrative of the teacher in his trajectory

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to reflect and discuss the construction of teacher identity. In the educational environment, it is considered a relevant theme, since the quality of the teaching-learning process permeates the initial or continuing training of the teacher. The teacher becomes the author of his human and scientific training, needing historically accumulated knowledge that supports the construction of pedagogical practice and professional identity. The main objective is to seek, through authors such as Morin (2007); Ciampa (1984); Nõvoa (1992); Meksenas (2003); Marcelo (2005); Huberman (1995), Imbernóm (2009), understand the importance of the life trajectory of teachers, as well as their relationship with the profession; the importance of applying life histories and (auto)biographical studies to unveil and rescue the memory of teachers, seeking a greater understanding of their trajectory. Teachers are in constant construction and (re)construction of their professional identity, constituting an interaction between the person and their individual and professional experiences. The professional identity is constructed from the social meaning of the profession, as well as from the revision of its social meanings and traditions, based on practices in which they resist innovations, because they are full of knowledge valid to the needs of reality, thus confronted with theories and practices in the light of existing theories, as well as the construction of new theories.

Keywords: Education, Teacher training, Teacher identity.

1 INTRODUCTION

The unexpected surprises us. And when the unexpected manifests itself, we must be able to revise our theories and ideas, instead of forcibly letting the new fact enter the theory incapable of receiving it (MORIN).

When we talk about the teaching narrative, we can't help but think about the meaning of "identity". We are all formed by a set of identity, genetic, cerebral and affective in a context of cultural, social and product diversities of the society in which we are inserted.

In Morin's (2007) view, we, human beings, must dedicate not only to dominate, but also to condition to improve and understand the social context in which we are inserted. It is important to incorporate three types of consciousness: "anthropological consciousness (unity in diversity); ecological awareness (socializing with other individuals); civic awareness (social responsibility); spiritual awareness (criticism,



self-criticism and mutual understanding)" (p.76).

According to the author, it is necessary to learn to "*be here*". It means living, sharing, communicating, and socializing everything you learn with other people. These elements make up the identity of each one of us, contributing to the trajectory becoming a search for constant improvement between the reunion of the future with the past.

The search for a better future must be complementary, not more antagonistic, to the reencounter with the past. Every human being, every collectivity, must irrigate its life by the incessant circulation between the past, in which it reaffirms its identity by re-establishing the link with its ancestors, the present, when it affirms its needs, and the future, in which it projects aspirations and efforts. (MORIN, 2007, p.77)

The identity of the individual is a complex issue that involves all situations experienced in daily life. It is through identity that we see ourselves, we perceive ourselves as we want others to see us. The subject molds himself according to the social environment in which he is inserted, differentiating himself from others in the capacity to transform continuously. "Identity is movement, it is concrete development. Identity is metamorphosis." (CIAMPA, 1984, p.74)

Difference and equality. It's a notion of identity. Successively, we differentiate and equalize ourselves according to the various social groups of which we are a part. [...] Self-knowledge is given by the reciprocal recognition of individuals identified through a given social group that exists objectively, with its history, its traditions, its norms, its interests. (CIAMPA, 1984, p.64-65)

According to Ciampa (1984), identity is a process of representations based on two aspects, the first is associated with the set of psychological, social, biological elements that characterize an individual; the other refers to the symbolic and mental duplication that expresses one's identity. It is a continuous process established by a network of relationships in which "each identity reflects another identity, and any possibility of establishing an original foundation for each of them disappears." (CIAMPA, 1984, p.67). It is considered a network of social relations, which reflects a social structure that transforms and preserves it.

We can be considered as a social and historical being, the relationship between subject and society are inseparable, which together make up the identity of each one. It is a process of metamorphosis that takes place in the context of transformations in the face of social movements and established relationships, anchored in the changes and conflicts of everyday life.

When we affirm that, as a historical being, as a social being, man is a horizon of possibilities, we are thinking of all dimensions of time. Even an event that has occurred, which is definitively unappealable, has unpredictable developments and meanings, as well as endless transformations. On the one hand, man is be-put; on the other, it is becoming. It's concrete. (CIAMPA, 2005, p.207)



Throughout life, the individual develops his identity, producing different characters, and can be considered active and critical, exercising a relationship of collectivity, through possibilities, desires and plans before society, manifested in some moments in the work environment. "Work is one of the predominant characteristics in relation to identity" (CIAMPA, 2005), it is part of the constitution of the subject, differentiating or equalizing it in relation to other professionals.

Identities that are defined by the learning of new values, new norms, produced in the very process in which identity is being produced, as the sameness of learning (thinking) and acting (acting). Identities that are supported by communities in which everyone has the same opportunities as each individual. (CIAMPA, 2005, p.249)

The professional identity permeates the individual's being, being and doing, values, actions and attitudes that produce a behavior that is materialized in the process identity of the subject. They go through the analysis of the social aspects of the profession, as well as its history, customs, contradictions.

Therefore, the professional identity is established from the constant reflection of the social meanings of the profession, and is mainly built by the awareness of each individual as an author and actor of his daily life, which emanates from the relationships with other subjects.

A professional identity is constructed, therefore, from the social meaning of the profession, from the constant revision of the social meanings of the profession; of the revision of traditions. But also the reaffirmation of culturally consecrated practices that remain significant. Practices that resist innovation because you are pregnant with knowledge that is valid to the needs of reality. From the confrontation between theories and practices, from the systematic analysis of practices in the light of existing theories, from the construction of new theories. (GARRIDO, 2005, p.19)

According to the author, professional identity permeates the meaning that each teacher has as an actor and author, of their teaching action, from their daily lives, from their values, from the way they are situated in the social context, from their life history, from the networks of relationships with other teachers, their anxieties and from the meaning that their professional life has in the face of these factors. It is an ongoing, unfinished, changeable process.

According to Marcelo (2005), professional identity can be characterized by four points. The first points to professional identity as an evolutionary process of interpretations and reinterpretations of experiences, a learning process that takes place in the trajectory of life. The second is based on the person/context relationship; Teachers are differentiated *"according to the importance they give to the characteristics, developing their own response to the context (p.12)."* The third indicates that professional identity is composed of sub-identities, in which they are related to the contexts in which teachers move. The fourth, and last, determines that identity is influenced by personal, cognitive, and social issues, contributing to a *"perception of self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (p.12)."*

Professional and personal identity complement each other. An organization of the pedagogical work



is essential, because aspects such as intellectual knowledge, posture, attitudes, competence, ethics are indispensable factors in the construction of the teacher's identity.

Teacher identity can be understood as a set of different discourses and social subjects, which, associated with their actions, constitute a synchronous process of relations in the way teachers are and act, within the exercise of their functions in educational environments:

It is necessary to understand the concept of teacher identity as a reality that evolves and develops, both personally and collectively. Identity is not something that one possesses, but rather something that develops during life. Identity is not a fixed attribute for a person, but a relational phenomenon. The development of identity takes place in the realm of the intersubjective and is characterized as an evolutionary process, a process of interpreting oneself as a person within a given context. Thus, identity can be understood as an answer to the question "who am I at this moment?" Professional identity is not a stable, inherent, or fixed identity. It is the result of a complex and dynamic balance where one's own image as a professional has to harmonize with a variety of roles that teachers feel they must play. (MARCELO, 2009, p.112)

Anchored in the conception that in order to unveil the teacher's identity, it is necessary to take into account the personal and professional dimensions, Nóvoa (2009) highlights five essential dispositions to define a good teacher today. They are: knowledge; professional culture; pedagogical tact; teamwork; social commitment.

It is necessary to consider the teacher's identity as a reality that evolves and develops individually and collectively, and can be influenced by the school, by the educational political contexts, by the availability to learn to teach the values, knowledge and beliefs about the contents they teach and how they are taught, aggregating the lived experiences.

The teacher is a person. And an important part of the person is the teacher (Nias, 1991). Therefore, it is urgent to (re)find spaces for interaction between the personal and professional dimensions, allowing teachers to take ownership of their training processes and give them meaning in the context of their life stories (NÓVOA, 1992, p. 13)

The teacher's identity "is constructed by the meaning that each teacher, as an actor and author", assessing the teaching activity to their daily lives. *"Their values, ways of situating themselves in the world, life history, representations of knowledge, anxieties of the meaning they have in their professional life* (PIMENTA, 1996 - p.19)." Identity The professional approach is constructed from the social meaning of the profession, as well as from the revision of its social meanings and traditions, based on practices in which they resist innovations, because they are full of knowledge valid to the needs of reality, thus confronted with theories and practices in the light of existing theories, as well as the construction of new theories.



TABLE 02 – Essential points to define a good teacher

KNOWLEDGE	The teacher's work consists of the construction of teaching practices that lead the student to learning.
PEDAGOGICAL STATE	Ability to relate and communicate without which the act of educating cannot be fulfilled.
PROFESSIONAL CULTURE	It is in school and in dialogue with other teachers that the profession is learned.
TEAMWORK	Professional practice is increasingly organized around practical communities, within each school and in the context of pedagogical movements.
SOCIAL COMMITMENT	Communicating with the public, intervening in the public space of education, is part of the <i>Ethos</i> professional teacher.

(Source: NÓVOA, 2009, p.12)

Faced with this reality, Nóvoa (1995) states that "the identity process also involves the ability to exercise our activity autonomously. [...] The way each of us teaches depends on who we are as a person." (p. 17).

It should be noted that teachers, according to Huberman (1995), go through six perceptible phases in the construction of their identity and teaching career, throughout their professional life cycle: stabilization (exploitation); diversification; to question yourself; serenity (affective detachment); conservatism (lamentations) and disinvestment. The author emphasizes that the development of a career is a process and not a series of events and, therefore, are directly linked to the experiences as well as the characteristics of each individual in which they can be identified whether or not to exert influence over your organisation. Thinking and talking about the "teacher's life cycle" requires us to think about the meaning of the words teacher and *profession*.

According to Meksenas (2003), the words "*teacher and profession*" are connected in their meanings. "*The first designates the subject who professes. [...], the second designates a specialized occupation or activity focused on the act of professing* (p.3)." Both are directly linked to the construction of an identity, where "*a space for the construction of being and being in the profession*" is configured (NÓVOA, 1992, p.15), characterizing the way each one feels and says he or she is a teacher. It is a process in which the identity of the teaching profession cannot be separated.

Teacher identity results in the mastery of specific skills and capacities that make the teacher



competent in his actions, that is capable of linking him to an organized professional group, that is, "he should not be a technician who develops or implements prescribed innovations, but should become a professional who must participate critically in the innovation process from his own context" (IMBERNÓN, 2011, p.24).

Teacher identity can be considered a mutant process, as it is full of feelings, experiences, biographies, values; All taking into account the collectivity, which allows us to discover more meanings both in the social and educational contexts, thus favoring training throughout the teaching trajectory in order to make the teacher the protagonist of his or her own training and professional development.

Personal identity is interrelated with collective identity or collective or institutional professional development, i.e. the development of all staff working in an educational centre. The centers have an educational and cultural identity, since the real and the symbolic enter into the subjectivity of each person who works in them with a bond with others that varies according to the context. (IMBERNOM, 2009, p.78).

Imbernóm (2009) points out that *the "(re)knowledge of identity"* contributes to clarify and better interpret the teaching work, interacting better with the other subjects in the context in which it is inserted, since *"the life experiences of the teachers are related to professional tasks, and teaching requires personal involvement (p.75)"*. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the teacher's narrative into the their training process, valuing social facts and their interpersonal relationships, claiming *"a teaching identity as that in which I recognize myself, in which I feel accepted and recognized by others (p.81)"*.

The teacher's identity is in constant transformation *"it is a place of struggles and conflicts, it is a space for the construction of a way of being and of being in the profession"* (NOVOA, 2013, p. 16), so it is essential to understand and reflect on all the elements that make up the trajectory of the teacher in the construction of his identity, the way he recognizes himself as a subject in the professional environment in which he is inserted.

In view of this perspective, it is important to highlight the importance of studying the life histories of these teachers, seeking to identify, in their trajectories, issues that allow highlighting the relevant points in the construction of the teacher's identity and the existing relations between educational action and public policies. Passeggi, Souza and Vicentini (2011) state that *"individuals give shape to their experiences and meaning to what they did not have before, as they construct the historical consciousness of themselves and their learning in the territories they inhabit and are inhabited by them."* (p. 371).

This movement is promising, considering that rescuing the memory of teachers in training or in action means seeking to understand the meanings of the choice for the career, the training path, the theoretical-practical comings and goings, the contradictions and conflicts in the face of various pedagogical situations, the successes and mistakes, the relationship that is maintained with students, other teachers, managers and others involved in the school community. (BAHIA, 2017, p.89)



When considering this perspective, Passeggi, Souza and Vicentini (2011) point out that it is not only reflecting on "oneself", but attributing form and meaning to the experiences lived in order to "*build a historical awareness of oneself and of one's learning in the territories that inhabit and are inhabited by them, through the process of biographization* (p.371)".

The teacher's reflections on his relationship with identity permeate the being and being of the profession, through the "*unveiling of the subject's perception of himself as a professional and of his responsibility and commitment to education*.(BAHIA, 2017, p. 84)

In this vein, Bahia (2017) also points to the importance of applying life histories and (auto)biographical studies to unveil and rescue the memory of teachers, seeking a greater understanding of their trajectory.

This movement is promising, considering that rescuing the memory of teachers in training or in action means seeking to understand the meanings of the choice for the career, the training path, the theoretical-practical comings and goings, the contradictions and conflicts in the face of the various pedagogical situations, the successes and mistakes, the relationship that is maintained with students, other teachers, managers and others involved in the school community. (BAHIA, 2017, p. 89)

By analysing the past and how it can contribute to the construction of professional identity, the teacher can more clearly identify his or her memory. The resource of searching for the narrative process aims to articulate the professional and personal trajectory, analyzing whether these constitute a characteristic process of a teacher identity. In this way, attitudes, beliefs and practices are transformed into social and personal values at the same time.

According to Nóvoa (1998), teachers' life stories are important to understand the teaching profession and the training process, as they contribute to the construction of new practices. Life stories are composed of actors who take ownership of their transformations.

To speak of one's own experiences is, in a certain way, to tell oneself one's own story, one's personal and socio-cultural qualities, the value that is attributed to what is lived in the temporal continuity of one's being. (JOSSO, 2004, p.48. apud RODRIGUES, 2010, p. 172)

Bahia (2017) points out that "there are few teachers who have the awareness and clarity about the reasons that led them to become teachers and/or about the ways of being and being in the profession (p.83)." In this context, (auto)biographical research presents itself as a source of understanding the individuality and collectivity of the teaching trajectory.

The investigations and studies on being and being in the teaching profession, on the knowledge and practices that are being constructed, permeate the unveiling of the subject's perception of himself as a professional and his responsibility and commitment to education – in addition to broadening the views and analyses of the broader educational context and, especially, from the school routine (BAHIA, 2017, p.84).



The (auto)biographical studies focus on the experience of the teacher training process, on the life trajectory, on the reasons for professional choice, on the phases of the career, on the relations between educational policies and educational actions. It is not at its core to ascertain the veracity of the facts, but to broaden the horizons in such a way that the teacher becomes capable of "reconstituting the historical awareness of the learning carried out throughout life" (PASSEGGI, SOUZA E VICENTINI p. 372, 2011), leading him to reflect on the path of non-formal and formal training.

It is not a matter of studying how individuals shape their experiences and make sense of what they used to have, how they construct the historical consciousness of themselves and their learning in the territories they inhabit and are inhabited by them, through the process of biographization. (PASSEGGI, SOUZA AND VICENTINI p. 371, 2011)

In their studies on (auto)biographical research, Passeggi, Souza and Vicentini (2011) point out two axes and four directions related to the development of self-writing.

TABLE 03 – Axes and directions of self-writing.

AXES	DIRECTIONS	
IT FOCUSES ON THE ACT OF NARRATING AS A FORMATIVE DEVICE.	Adult training	Self-reflexive activities and their repercussions on the processes of education and insertion in professional life.
	Training of the trainer	Biographical mediation as a practice that implies the training of trainers to accompany the writings of the self.
FOCUS NARRATIVES	It comprises the study of the constitution and analysis of (auto)biographical sources.	



AUTO(BIOGRAPHICAL) AS A METHOD OF INVESTIGATION.	It comprises the study of discursive traditions referring to the different ways of autobiographing.
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(PASSEGGI, SOUZA AND VICENTINI, 2011, p. 375.)

In (auto)biographical research, the teacher becomes both the subject and object of training. When reflecting on their life trajectory, teachers are faced with the problem of constructing professional knowledge according to a reflexive action of practice, interpreting the facts according to the context inserted and their relationships.

The biographical fact is this bias that accompanies everything we perceive and understand throughout our lives. It is an inner space-time, which pre-exists affective writing, but which finds in the narrative of oneself, as an autopoetic act, the author constructs a figure of himself, at the exact moment in which he announces himself as a subject and enunciates himself as the author of his history (PASSEGGI, SOUZA E VICENTINI, 2011, p. 381).

Returning to Bahia (2017), the reflections around the school routine are united by the construction of the teaching identity and the constitution of the profession. They are considered distinct processes, but they develop together. There are many challenges faced by teachers in the face of the demands of today's society, in the professional field, involving different political, social and cultural contexts. "A place of many subjects, with different backgrounds, different knowledge and different ways of thinking about the profession – the context in which professional identity is configured." (p.88)

This movement is promising, considering that rescuing the memory of teachers in training or in action means seeking to understand the meanings of the option for the career, of the training path, of the theoretical-practical comings and goings, of the contradictions and conflicts in the face of the various pedagogical situations, of the successes and mistakes, of the relationship that is maintained with students, other teachers, managers and others involved in the school community. (BAHIA, 2017, p.89)

The school is considered a legitimate place for the teacher's work and the construction of his or her training. It is through the school routine that the teacher builds his identity, contributing to the consolidation of his teaching professionalization, through the diversity of knowledge and practices, whether collective or individual.

The recovery of the teaching identity, through research or as a formative process, is of significant importance not only for the valorization of teaching knowledge and practices, but, above all, for the strengthening of professionalization and professionalism – a strengthening that can help in coping with the difficulties and devaluation of the career, which are present in our educational context (BAHIA, 2017, p.184).



The (auto)biographical researches corroborate the construction of the teacher's identity, the personal and professional experiences are marked by actions that transform our daily lives, providing opportunities for individual and collective growth as authors of their professional trajectories. It can be configured in a reflective moment, in which "the subjects have a very own history – with various memories of the past and present – and the recovery of these, with the resignification of the fragments of the past, in interface with the present." (BAHIA, 2017, p.179)

Through the narrative of himself, the teacher is able to perceive himself as an active subject in the process of constructing his identity. It is considered an exercise in the analysis of different experiences, relationships, different places and contexts that bring out the discoveries as an actor and author of his knowledge and practices, "collaborating for the perception of his ways of better understanding his formative and professional process, his daily work, and also the relationships with his peers – from the individual to the collective." (BAHIA, 2027, p.187)

The teacher's (auto)biography contributes to the strengthening of the formative and investigative practices that take place in the school routine, corroborating a process of edification of teaching knowledge and practices, configuring an important role in the construction of professional identity.

The teacher's identity *"is constructed by the meaning that each teacher, as an actor and author"*, assessing the teaching activity to their daily lives. *"Their values, ways of situating themselves in the world, life history, representations of knowledge, anxieties for the meaning they have in their professional life."* (PIMENTA, 1996 - p.19). We can see that the professional identity is built from the social meaning of the profession, as well as from the revision of its social meanings and traditions, based on the practices in which they resist innovations, because they are full of knowledge valid to the needs of reality, thus confronted with theories and practices in the light of existing theories. as well as the construction of new theories.

Teaching action is directly linked to their training process. It is dynamic and evolving and comprises a set of learnings and experiences that occur throughout the process. Therefore, it is necessary to stimulate critical-reflective thinking, providing conditions for teachers to develop their autonomy and collaboration within the educational environment, in order to become an active agent in the student's training process.



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