Aspectos valorizados por estudantes adolescentes nas relações estabelecidas com seus professores

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Resumo

O presente estudo busca apresentar os aspectos valorizados por estudantes adolescentes nas relações estabelecidas com seus professores e o ideal de atuação docente construído por esses ao longo de sua trajetória escolar. A análise do questionário entregue aos estudantes de uma turma de nono ano do Ensino Fundamental aponta para a presença de três elementos mais valorizados nas relações estabelecidas com seus professores: os aspectos técnicos da profissão docente, os aspectos (inter)subjetivos e éticos desta profissão e a utilização de metodologias variadas. Dessa forma, conclui-se que o ideal docente construído ao longo da trajetória escolar de estudantes adolescentes baseia-se nas manifestações de afetividade presentes nas relações estabelecidas com seus professores, aliadas à formação adequada e constante destes.

Palavras-chave: Adolescentes. Aprendizagem. Relação professor-aluno

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Aspects valued by adolescent students in the established relations with their teachers

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Abstract

This study seeks to present the aspects valued by adolescent students in the established relations with their teachers and the ideal of teaching performance built by them throughout their school trajectory. The analysis of the questionnaire delivered to students in a class of the ninth grade of Elementary Education points to the presence of three most valued elements in the established relations with their teachers: the technical aspects of the teaching profession, the (inter) subjective and ethical aspects of this profession and the use of varied methodologies. In this way, it is concluded that the teaching ideal built along the school trajectory of adolescent students is based on the manifestations of affection present in the established relations with their teachers, combined with their adequate and constant training.

Keywords: Teenagers. Learning. Teacher-student relation.

Aspectos valorados por los alumnos adolescentes en las relaciones establecidas con sus profesores

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Resumen

Este estudio busca presentar los aspectos valorados por los estudiantes adolescentes en las relaciones que establecen con sus docentes y el ideal de desempeño docente construido por ellos a lo largo de su trayectoria escolar. El análisis del cuestionario entregado a los alumnos de una promoción de noveno grado de Educación Primaria apunta a la presencia de tres elementos más valorados en las relaciones que se establecen con sus docentes: los aspectos técnicos de la profesión docente, los aspectos (inter) subjetivos y éticos. de esta profesión y el uso de variadas metodologías. De esta manera, se concluye que el ideal de enseñanza construido a lo largo de la trayectoria escolar de los estudiantes adolescentes se fundamenta en las manifestaciones de afecto presentes en las relaciones que se establecen con sus docentes, conjugadas con su adecuada y constante formación.

Palabras clave: Adolescentes. Aprendiendo. Relación profesor-alumno.

Introduction

Identifying the characteristics of a teacher considered ideal by students and incorporating them into teaching practices is a challenging task, as there are no fixed or uniform traits applicable to all situations and contexts. In their work, teachers interact daily or weekly with more than twenty students on average, each of whom brings a unique set of experiences and worldviews. What may be appropriate for one student might be perceived as entirely inappropriate by another. Therefore, there is no ready-made formula for being a "good teacher," but students do offer clues about the aspects they value. One just needs to pay attention and listen.

Whether due to insufficient teacher training, changes in the conception of teacher-student relationships, or the need to seek theoretical foundations that support the importance of these relationships in the classroom as well as their impact on how students construct their own ideal of a teacher research on the characteristics of a "good teacher" has grown significantly in recent years (ALMEIDA; CABREIRA, 2019; KRUG, 2018; MESQUITA, 2018; VARGAS, 2018.).

However, the most recent research on the subject tends to focus on institutions of Higher Education, often driven by the need to evaluate teaching practices within those institutions. Moreover, these studies are usually based on theoretical premises and often overlook listening to studentssomething that is also necessary at other levels of education as a way to ensure the continuous assessment of teaching practices. In this sense, the present study is relevant as it offers adolescent students the opportunity to express their perceptions regarding the characteristics, attitudes, and practices of their teachers, at an educational level where research on this topic is still scarce.

In light of this proposal, ninth-grade students from a private school located in a city in the northern region of Rio Grande do Sul were the protagonists of this investigation, sharing their views on what they most value in their teachers' practices and describing which aspects contributed to the formation of their ideal teacher profile.

To investigate, reflect upon, and discuss this topic, it is necessary to understand some basic concepts that will help clarify the focus of this research while also demonstrating its relevance to discussions previously addressed by other authors. Whether in studies conducted within academic settings or in more complex works by renowned authors and researchers such as Tardif and Lessard

(2011), António Nóvoa (1992), Leite (2011), Freire (2013, 1987), Charlot (2009), among others, teaching practices are consistently treated as an urgent matter for debate and restructuring. Just as the understanding of the school structure has been evolving with new forms and perspectives, pedagogical practice an inseparable element of that reality must also undergo transformations.

Recognizing the classroom as a space shaped by interactive relationships and subjectivity brings a new perspective to the teacher's role and, consequently, to the needs of their training. This process does not disregard the technical aspects of the profession, but instead acknowledges a significant space for the subjective dimensions of teaching.

Although many schools maintain a "common language" in how they handle certain classroom situations, it is impossible to define a fixed, universal standard among all professionals in the school. Each teacher carries a personal history of experiences and beliefs that influence how they act in specific situations. The same action such as enforcing a rule set by the institution may be carried out by different teachers in very different ways. One may be more affectionate, another may place greater importance on the situation, and one may devote more or less time to it. In this sense, "it is impossible to separate the professional self from the personal self." (NÓVOA, 1992, p. 17)

Any profession that involves working with people is permeated by intersubjective relationships, and its boundaries are often not clearly defined, since each professional—and each individual—holds different conceptions, perceptions, and ways of acting. In other words, any profession that serves people is, by nature, dynamic and relational. Whether in occasional interactions with salespeople, healthcare providers, or bank employees, or in daily encounters with teachers, therapists, and other social service professionals, the relationships established are multiple and distinct from one another. These interactions characterize the work of teachers as well as that of the other professionals mentioned as interactive work (Tardif & Lessard, 2011). As previously stated, although these relationships are subjective and dynamic, teaching cannot be conceived or mistaken as a merely moral occupation. Rather, it is a relational and interactive profession, involving the connection between the professional and their object of work between the teacher and the student.

Teaching should therefore be recognized as interactive work, as it involves many aspects that are coded yet flexible (Tardif & Lessard, 2011). It is coded because it must follow rules and standards established by others who envision education as a means of social transformation and structuring. Yet

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it is also flexible, as it is directly influenced by subjective factors that affect how these rules and standards are applied.

It is also through these interactions that affectivity manifests in teaching practice, allowing relationships to enhance learning. Such interactions bring students closer to the teacher and vice versa and it is precisely in this proximity between the worker and their raw material that the success of the work emerges, ensuring that the objectives set by the teacher are achieved and that effective student learning takes place.

One need only ask any young person or adult about their school memories to immediately notice, among the elements mentioned, the presence of affectivity as a decisive factor in those memories. Whether in relationships with classmates and friends or with school staff, the connections formed within the school environment are always infused with affectivity and occupy a significant place in individuals' memories.

Some studies in the field of neuroscience (Bartoszeck, 2006) have shown that the way information is stored in the brain is closely tied to the emotions experienced at the time of learning. That is, if moments of euphoria, surprise, joy, nostalgia, or even insecurity were present in a given experience, the information associated with that situation is more easily retained by the brain.

There are countless ways in which affectivity can be expressed: gestures, speech, actions, decisions, behavior, looks, and even attentive listening can all be considered manifestations of affectivity in the school environment. The absence of such expressions can also take on significance, resulting in negative memories of certain experiences that become particularly impactful. In this sense, "it is not enough to consider what is said and done, but above all, how it is said and how it is done." (TASSONI, 2011, p. 70)

It is generally in the teacher-student relationship that these manifestations of affectivity occur and where the most significant school memories are formed. It is in the classroom and through relationships established with the teacher that meaningful learning takes place—often going beyond the objectives set by the educational institution—since classroom practice is usually grounded in the teacher's autonomy and authenticity (Furlani, 2004, p. 61). It is with the teacher, in their uniqueness, that relationships are built in a concrete and lasting way.

With this understanding, the teacher becomes capable of using affectivity as a means to strengthen relationships established in the classroom and as a tool to facilitate student learning. It is the teacher who accepts mistakes as attempts at learning, conversation as a tool for expression and dialogue, and conflicts as opportunities for reflection on lived relationships situations that are often viewed negatively by educators.

It must be emphasized that affectivity is present in everyday situations not in the situations themselves, but in how they are addressed and managed. For this reason, it is undeniable that teaching is a profession in which relationships are, or should be, permeated by affectivity, with the teacher as the main mediator of these interactions. Therefore, it is no longer acceptable to conceive of pedagogical practices that focus solely on the cognitive dimension, excluding affective and emotional aspects. Instead, we must embrace practices that value the student as a subject and protagonist of the learning process, a bearer of rights both as a student and as a human being. It is time to listen to students as individuals capable of reflecting on and evaluating the teaching practices that are truly effective for their learning.

Methodological Approach

This study involved 26 adolescent students from the ninth grade of a private elementary school in the city of Erechim, Rio Grande do Sul. The choice of the educational institution for this research is justified by the employment relationship between the school and one of the researchers during the period in which the study was conducted. This connection facilitated access to carry out the investigation within a private school setting. The class of 26 students was selected because they were at the final stage of a level of schooling. Having experienced early childhood education, the early years, and now the final years of elementary school, these students are thus capable of reflecting on and discussing their experiences across all the stages that make up basic education.

Of the 26 adolescent students, 17 had been enrolled at the school since early childhood education, while the remaining nine were admitted between Pre-K II (the final year of early childhood education) and the 4th grade of elementary school. Among these latter students, only two had previously attended public schools in the region. The group of students who participated in the study was predominantly female (17 girls and 9 boys), and as of June 2018 the month in which the

questionnaires were administered their ages ranged from 13 (11 students), 14 (13 students), to 15 years old (2 students).

With the approval of the school administration, the students received a questionnaire containing questions related to their school memories, the characteristics, attitudes, and practices they value in their teachers, and their concept of the ideal teacher. For each question, students were asked to justify their responses in order to provide more detailed insights into their perspectives. The questionnaire was administered by one of the researchers at a time previously arranged with the school's leadership team, allowing them to clarify any doubts that might arise during the students' participation. The questions included in this questionnaire are listed below:

1. What classroom situations from your school journey do you remember most easily? Describe and justify these memories by explaining why they have stayed in your memory.

2. List some characteristics, attitudes, and practices adopted by teachers you have encountered that contributed to your learning and development as a student/person. Explain why and how they made a difference for you.

3. What would an ideal teacher be like for you? Describe the characteristics, attitudes, and practices of this teacher.

After each student completed their questionnaire, they returned it along with the Informed Consent Form, initially signed by themselves and subsequently by their respective families. The questionnaire also included questions that allowed for the collection of sociodemographic data about the research participants. This set of data provides fundamental elements for interpreting the students' responses regarding the relationships they established with their teacher.

Only after the Informed Consent Forms were signed and submitted by the students' legal guardians did the analysis of the collected data begin. To ensure the anonymity of the adolescents, as agreed upon in the consent forms, the information obtained from the questionnaires was identified solely by the term "Student" followed by a randomly assigned number.

In order to identify the aspects valued by adolescents in their relationships with teachers and to understand the ideal teacher they envision, the content of the questionnaires—analyzed through an

approach inspired by Bardin's Content Analysis (2016)—revealed three main categories that guided the organization and interpretation of the data: technical aspects of the teaching profession; (inter)subjective and ethical aspects of the profession; and methodological practices valued by the students.

Results and discussion

The data collected from the students revealed three relevant categories for analysis: (I) Technical aspects of the teaching profession; (II) (Inter)subjective and ethical aspects of the teaching profession; and (III) Methodologies valued by students in teaching practices. These three categories proved to be significant, as they relate to the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of education professionals, reinforcing Nóvoa's (1992, p. 17) assertion that "it is impossible to separate the professional self from the personal self."

I) Technical aspects of the teaching profession: One of the technical aspects mentioned by students is the need for a teacher who can explain content clearly and use speech as a means of capturing students' attention and conveying knowledge. Some students emphasized the importance of a strong tone of voice: "An ideal teacher, for me, would need to speak more loudly in order to explore the content in depth" (Student 6). Others highlighted the way in which speech is used: "An ideal teacher? I think it's someone who knows how to explain well and speaks clearly" (Student 19); "An ideal teacher would be someone who can explain things easily [...] and knows how to manage the class" (Student 4). Some students even attributed their own academic achievements to this quality, making it a meaningful experience that left a lasting memory: "I remember an excellent history teacher who basically taught through speech. He was uninhibited and really inspired me, and I'm almost certain it was because of him that I lost my fear of speaking in front of the class" (Student 3).

Attributing one's success in a subject or even the development of life skills to a teacher is a recognition that the teacher has effectively fulfilled their role as a mediator of learning experiences. This process of "inspiring" the student, as the student themselves describes it, is in fact a process of "mobilization" (Charlot, 2009), which many teachers are capable of achieving through their speech alone.

The mobilization that Charlot (2009) discusses is distinct from merely motivating a student. While motivation involves persuading the student, through various strategies, to study what is being

proposed, mobilization refers to the student's own interest and inner drive. It is the teacher, attentive to this mobilization, who identifies the factors that lead the student to invest in their studies and who then creates similar opportunities (Charlot, 2009). It is clear from the students' responses that their descriptions of good teachers reflect their personal preferences in the classroom. If the teacher is able to recognize these preferences, they can use them as a strategy to build rapport, encourage acceptance of pedagogical proposals, and engage students more deeply in their learning process.

It becomes evident that speech, in these cases, is not just about what the teacher knows and can teach, but is also a teaching strategy. Speech is tied to other characteristics, such as confidence, clarity in explanations, and classroom management. That is, coherent, organized content delivered effectively through speech can be considered meaningful when presented in a cohesive way. A similar result was identified in a study by Petersen (2008, p. 39) on teaching qualities valued by high school students, where the highest-ranking aspect was "having command of the subject matter."

Another point raised by the students in this study is knowledge related to assessment methods. In addition to clear and coherent explanations, they also emphasized the need for assessments that follow the same logic. For some students, an ideal teacher is one who "explains ideas clearly and assigns graded assignments (not just tests)" (Student 25), as well as "a teacher who includes in the tests what was explained in class" (Student 24).

Contrary to what was believed in the past, assessment should not serve the purpose of quantifying results and ranking students, but rather of mobilizing and supporting their cognitive development. According to Luckesi (1996, p. 176), assessment plays this role because, for him, "[…] assessment can and should be motivating for the student, by recognizing where they are and enabling them to envision future possibilities." In this sense, assessment should "[…] provide opportunities for action-reflection-action through continuous monitoring" (Veiga, 2003, p. 117); that is, it can and should be conducted in varied ways and on a regular basis.

Within the context of this study, it is possible to observe that the practice of quantifying and classifying students is still used by some teachers, and that students frequently call for more flexible or alternative approaches to replace this practice. This suggests that students themselves recognize

that using assessment methods solely as a means of quantifying results is ineffective for learning and serves as a source of demotivation.

Beyond assessment, the methodologies required and appropriate for learning vary from class to class, school to school, and across different times. According to the students, the ideal teacher or the one who made a lasting impression on their educational Journey is someone "who uses other sources of knowledge and not just the textbook" (Student 24); "who seeks out new technologies" (Student 22); "[…] who finds easier ways for us to understand the content" (Student 16); and "who mixes different types of teaching methods" (Student 18). Thus, the methodologies used by teachers reveal their underlying conceptions and knowledge about the learning process—which, in some cases, appear to be rigid and uniform, disregarding the diverse ways through which knowledge can be constructed.

It is extremely important that, in addition to knowing and mastering the content they teach, teachers also understand how learning occurs (Antunes, 2007), considering that learning does not happen in a single way. As requested by students, teachers should seek, through the provision of diverse experiences, to identify the most effective methodologies for their students' learning. Experience is capable of ensuring learning because, according to Jean Piaget's theory (De Pádua, 2009), it is through experience that synapses occur and the information acquired undergoes the processes of assimilation when the brain captures new information and accommodation when that new information is connected to previously acquired knowledge, thus becoming learning.

II) (Inter)subjective and ethical aspects of the teaching profession:Almost always intertwined with the technical aspects of teaching are its (inter)subjective dimensions. This aspect of teaching can be characterized by the interactions between teachers and students, which are at the core of the profession (Tardif & Lessard, 2012), and by the fact that, being a human-centered profession, teaching is inherently infused with subjectivity. The presence of affectivity in the (inter)subjective aspects of teacher-student relationships appeared in nearly all of the questionnaires completed by students and therefore became the central element in understanding the ideal teacher constructed by them throughout their school experience.

For a long time, affectivity has been studied as a factor in learning. Whether directly or indirectly, several major scholars who contributed to the field of education such as Wallon (Tassoni

& Leite, 2013), Freud (1976), Piaget, and Vygotsky (Souza, 2011) discussed in their theories how affectivity influences the learning process, recognizing its impact. Affectivity can be manifested in various ways through emotions and feelings that arise from interactions and relationships established between individuals. It can thus be affirmed that affectivity is also present in the classroom, as it emerges from the interactions built between teachers and students.

Among the (inter)subjective aspects of the teaching profession mentioned by students are the personal, unique, and authentic characteristics of each teacher. These characteristics vary from one teacher to another, and their acceptance depends on each student, but elements such as ease, playfulness, and good humor appear frequently in their responses.

In teaching, the choices regarding how to act, which methods to use, how to behave, and how to address students are often noticed by students and are crucial to fostering acceptance and productivity in these interactions. These (inter)subjective choices are part of the "uncodified aspects of the work" (Tardif & Lessard, 2012, p. 41) and relate to the "floating areas" of teaching, revealing its complexity.

According to some students, the ideal teacher is "demanding, relaxed, with a sense of humor, [...] polite and someone who doesn't judge a student solely by their grades" (Student 25); "[...] someone who teaches in a practical and fun way" (Student 20); "An extravagant, fun teacher who knows when students are lying or going through psychological difficulties" (Student 11); "Playful, cool, a partner" (Student 9).

The previous accounts show how these characteristics vary depending on who describes them. The classroom is a space filled with relationships. Normally, for these relationships to exist, it is necessary to establish norms, rules, or agreements in order to ensure that everyone acts in a coordinated way and, as a result, that these relationships are "regulated." Beyond morality, teaching practice must be guided by ethics. "We speak of the presence of an ethical dimension in the classroom when actions are guided by principles of respect, justice, and solidarity, which promote dialogue" (Rios, 2008, p. 80), going beyond mere commands given by the teacher.

Teachers' ability to understand the diverse situations experienced by students is also part of the aesthetic dimension of teaching practice and, consequently, is closely linked to the ethical

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dimension of pedagogy. This was highlighted by students as a fundamental element in their relationships with teachers. One student recalled, as one of the most meaningful memories of their school journey, the teacher's empathy during difficult moments: *"When I felt sad, the teacher's hug felt just like a hug from my mother or father"* (Student 1).

Attentive and active listening allows teachers to understand students' feelings, which can be conveyed through their words, gestures, or posture. Listening is part of the aesthetic dimension of pedagogical practice. The act of active listening means "capturing what lies behind the words. It's not just hearing what is said, but perceiving what the body is revealing [...]. It's capturing the emotions behind the message, the speech especially the feelings present in that specific moment" (Mahoney & Almeida, 2002, p. 68–69).

Four other students addressed this same topic, but in a negative light that is, they recalled memories in which teachers failed to be understanding, and these moments left a negative mark on them:

"I remember [...] some oral presentations [a methodological strategy used by teachers for assessment] done by my friends, when the teacher didn't realize they were nervous and got upset because the presentation didn't go well" (Student 24). This situation is similar to the one described by Student 16:

> I remember the day I had to give an oral presentation. I was so nervous and distressed that I forgot my lines. The teacher asked me to leave the classroom, and once I stepped out, she said unpleasant things about me to the class. [...] That experience stayed with me because it was traumatizing. (Student 16)

This same student, when speaking about their ideal teacher, stated that "an ideal teacher for me would be someone honest, fair, passionate about their work, patient, and relaxed" (Student 16). It is important to pay attention to characteristics such as honesty, fairness, and patience qualities that the teacher did not demonstrate in the situation previously described by the student. This reveals the significant impact that students' memories of their teachers can have. Another student also reported:

> I can easily remember the times when I was ignored by a teacher. Every time I raised my hand to give an opinion or ask something, she simply acted as if I didn't exist, and when she did respond to me, she was extremely rude and impolite. During the time I had classes with her, I felt insecure, incapable, and completely unimportant. (Student 15)

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The student's situation feeling insecure and lacking in confidence was attributed to the teacher who did not allow them the space to participate or contribute in class. Once again, this highlights the necessity of an ethical dimension in teaching. As expressed by the students, the ideal teacher the one who truly fulfills their role is not someone who works solely for themselves, but someone who is also good *for* others: *"Good work is work that does good that is, that we do well from a technical and political standpoint, and that does good for us and for those with whom we work, from an aesthetic and, above all, ethical point of view"* (Rios, 2008, p. 86).

Speech can also be considered an essential tool in establishing teacher authority in the classroom. This is a widely discussed and debated topic in education, as many believe that the authority of teachers over their students has diminished over time, creating a crisis. In doing so, the possibility is often overlooked that, instead of seeking to recover a disfigured concept of authority, we could establish new conceptions and relationships of authority ones suited to the needs of our time through speech, listening, and dialogue (OHLWEILER; FISCHER, 2013).

As seen so far, students generally emphasize the importance of interaction with their teachers through relationships marked by affectivity and ethics in achieving success in the learning process. The personal characteristics of each teacher and the relationships they establish evoke emotions that are easily remembered by students and contribute to the construction of their ideal teacher image.

These feelings and emotions, stemming from various characteristics, also support learning (Bartoszek, 2006), as they facilitate the memorization of lived experiences and, consequently, the content developed. As one student put it, *"a teacher who is a friend to the class can teach and convey lessons in a way that's very different from someone who acts like a rival"* (Student 22). Conversely, *"we wouldn't be able to pay attention in class because we'd think they're boring and difficult"* (Student 4).

Some students attribute their academic interests, preferences, and success to the work developed by their teachers and the relationships they formed with them: *"The teachers I had up until sixth or seventh grade valued me more than my classmates, so I became passionate about science"* (Student 3);

> Many of the teachers I had explained things in a funny, entertaining way, which made the subject content stick in the students' memory. [...] In 8th grade, our history teacher used to explain the material by making jokes about the historical figures and events we studied, and that helped students do really well on the tests. Today, I'm very interested in history and do very well in the subject. (Student 10)

These statements confirm how much affectivity manifested through sensitive listening, playfulness, and humor can influence students' cognitive and personal development. Sensitive listening and an attentive gaze forms of affective expression. also enable teachers to identify the practices needed to help students understand the material being taught, as well as to recognize their individual needs, thereby facilitating interaction. As Freire (2013, p. 111) states, *"the educator who listens learns the difficult lesson of transforming their discourse, at times necessary for the student, into a dialogue with the student."*

Affectivity, therefore, can be expressed in many ways, as described by the students in their questionnaire responses. Despite its multiple facets, the significant importance attributed to it in relation to student learning is clear. Students stated: *"[...] it's way easier to learn when you have a teacher who makes jokes—then you remember things better in class, you know?! You're taking a test and see a question... oh yeah, the teacher made that joke, and then you remember. It's much better"* (Student 3, in an interview); *"When I need that content, I'll remember the teacher explaining it, and that's why I won't forget it"* (Student 18); *"One of the most striking traits of one of my teachers is their spontaneity they make class fun and interesting, even if the topic isn't. They get students to rethink how they speak and behave"* (Student 19).

These traits were also mentioned in the students' construction of their ideal teacher. In most cases, there was a reference to affective characteristics in their answers. Students thus stated that an ideal teacher is *"an extravagant, fun teacher"* (Student 14), and that such characteristics can make a teacher *"unforgettable"*: *"One of the teachers who had the greatest impact on my life was outgoing, made me feel good, helped me with any difficulties I had, and was a friend to the class"* (Student 15).

It is important to consider that "teaching is a profession whose object is not made up of inert matter or symbols, but of human relationships with individuals capable of initiative and endowed with a certain ability to either resist or participate in the teacher's actions" (Tardif & Lessard, 2012, p. 35). Thus, the characteristics and elements present in interactions between teachers and students can either facilitate or hinder both teaching and student learning.

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Learning that is enhanced through interaction with teachers who possess the traits cited by students can be explained by the fact that "emotions play a role in communicating meaning to our interlocutors and can also contribute to cognitive orientation and message comprehension" (Santos, 2007, p. 181). Therefore, the qualities present in teacher-student interactions serve as additional elements that aid in the memorization of content. Furthermore, "the underlying emotions and feelings that permeate classroom interactions are key factors in student engagement and motivation" (Santos, 2007, p. 184).

III) Teaching methodologies valued by students in classroom practices: According to several students, the ideal teacher is one who uses alternative spaces for instruction: "An ideal teacher would take us outside the classroom to do activities in the schoolyard or even beyond the school grounds" (Student 11); "For me, an ideal teacher would be someone who [...] does different things to help us better understand the content, such as activities outside the classroom, which we would take part in" (Student 17); "An ideal teacher would conduct diverse lessons, outside the classroom, in different places" (Student 26); "[...] who assigns pair work, uses the courtyard, and includes dynamic activities" (Student 25).

In order for a lesson to be meaningful and for learning to take place, students believe it is essential to "conduct more hands-on classes, with experiments and/or in places other than the classroom" (Student 2). "Practical lessons and concrete demonstrations of the content" (Student 18), as well as the use of alternative learning environments, were cited by most students either as memorable classroom experiences or as practices associated with the ideal teacher. These situations suggest that the use of other spaces helps to break the routine and go beyond the conventional, which for them is usually confined to the classroom setting.

Using different strategies and learning environments encourages students to break away from the "routine" of traditional learning and to remain attentive to the new features of the space or materials used. The use of alternative spaces is, in most cases, associated with the implementation of diverse activities, hands-on lessons, or experimental practices. Employing such spaces, along with innovative teaching strategies, opens up new possibilities for knowledge construction. According to Antunes (2007, p. 15), learning "can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behavior resulting

from experience." In this context, experiences refer to all lived situations from which new information can be identified and transformed into knowledge through the stimuli present in the situation.

Of the 26 students who answered the questionnaire, 20 identified as positive the fact that teachers develop dynamic and varied activities to meet their learning needs or those of their peers. Each student, with their unique characteristics, generally acknowledges the importance of the teacher knowing their students and developing effective methods for each one. They also suggest that teachers can use a variety of methodologies precisely to understand and test different learning styles.

In this sense, students point out that an ideal teacher is someone who "understands the student and finds methods to explain in the best possible way" (Student 12); "Uses varied activities to test whether I could actually retain what was being taught" (Student 8). It is important to remember that "teaching is working with human beings, about human beings, and for human beings" (Tardif & Lessard, 2012, p. 141), and that each student—each human being in the classroom is unique, with different strengths and needs. Therefore, the methodologies valued by each student may vary significantly.

Other students, then, identify their own "preferences" or teaching methods that, in their view, are most effective: "Movies, vídeos those almost always work, or also dynamic assessment activities" (Student 6); "[...] handing out handouts, summarizing the material" (Student 14); "One of the most effective ways to really learn is to practice the content taught in class. [...] Finding new and creative approaches can help students memorize the material along with the academic content" (Student 8); "That the teacher gives several chances to improve the grade" (Student 4).

Another frequently highlighted practice is peer interaction as a way to learn through the sharing of experiences and conclusions, or to reinforce understanding of the content through the exchange of information acquired by each student. In students' accounts of teaching practices they considered valuable and supportive of their learning, comments emerged regarding student-to-student interaction through discussions or group work, as illustrated in the following statements: "Teachers who organized classroom discussions about the lesson topic, gave many structured assignments, summaries, group projects" (Student 7); "Activities in pairs/groups, exchanging ideas with others and asking questions" (Student 11); "Teachers who bring in dynamic activities help with learning and

group interaction" (Student 16); "[...] documentaries, group tests/assignments greatly contributed to learning [...] working in pairs is productive in class" (Student 24).

The use of group work is a learning strategy and can be included in the teacher's planning, as it facilitates communication among students and consequently enhances their understanding of the topic discussed. It also creates opportunities for interaction between peers. Considering that each individual learns differently, and that grouping students is one such approach, the use of groups can be intentional and planned, allowing for targeted interventions. And

> what leads to these interventions in school groupings? The conviction that although every human being can learn, they will not learn in just any situation. Learning situations vary, even if the capabilities are the same. The role of the school, the school systems, and the teaching-learning professionals is to create appropriate mediated learning situations (ARROYO, 2004, p. 349-350).

In addition to interaction with others, the connection to everyday life was also identified as essential for learning to take place. Although mentioned less frequently, some students emphasized that relating the content to real-life situations helps facilitate learning: "A teacher who brings important topics for discussion, like a recent or historical event that was significant—depression, homosexuality, or other subjects students could apply to their lives from that moment on" (Student 19); "I also learn a lot when the content is compared to everyday actions" (Student 26).

Thus, a teacher's ongoing training and updates, along with a reflective attitude and sensitivity to students' needs, can help them better understand their students' realities and enable them to establish connections between classroom content and students' real-life contexts.

Final considerations

This study aimed to foster reflection on the aspects valued by adolescent students in the relationships they establish with their teachers and to identify the ideal image of teaching constructed by these students throughout their school experience. This objective was achieved through theoretical framework studies and content analysis of questionnaires administered to ninth-grade students from a private school located in a city in the northern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

If it is through interaction with others that teachers establish relationships, it is in this interaction that teaching strategies are explored and reaffirmed in their effectiveness. As discussed throughout

this article, conceptions of learning have evolved through research and studies that have revealed the multiple ways of learning and, consequently, of teaching. Therefore, there is no longer room for a traditional and outdated school, but rather for a humane school capable of recognizing its agents of learning.

Teacher education, content mastery, understanding of the learning process, the use of diverse methodological strategies, and the ongoing pursuit of professional development were all highlighted by students in their contributions. To acquire specific knowledge in any field of work, some form of training is necessary.

Teacher training, usually carried out at the secondary level (teacher training programs) or at the higher education level (undergraduate and graduate programs), can take various forms depending on the educational institution's principles and the perspectives of the educators delivering the instruction. This plurality can be beneficial insofar as it meets local needs. However, the years spent in teacher training may be insufficient for the demands of today's teaching profession. Considering the rapid pace of social change, teachers must be able to keep up through continuous training and professional development.

Thus, the teaching profession must strike a balance between technical, (inter)subjective, and ethical aspects recognizing the importance of ongoing learning, understanding the multiple processes of learning, and building meaningful relationships with students in a process that acknowledges their role as co-constructors of knowledge and, above all, as human beings.

Highlighting students' voices is one strategy for recognizing their potential as protagonists in their own learning. Providing them with the opportunity to be heard—if done more frequently—could help prevent conflicts and enhance the learning process. As discussed throughout this article, the subjectivity present in each context shapes many aspects of the school experience; therefore, the responses gathered from the questionnaires are specific to the reality lived by these students and might differ if applied to students from another institution or age group.

Ultimately, it was found that the aspects most valued by adolescent students in their relationships with teachers relate to essential elements for comprehensive learning—those that contribute to both cognitive and personal development. Among the most frequently mentioned were technical, (inter)subjective, and ethical dimensions, all of which stood out in the data gathered

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throughout the study, shaping the ideal teacher figure constructed by students. Accordingly, for the adolescent participants in this research, an ideal teacher is someone who not only knows what they are teaching but, more importantly, knows who they are teaching.

Therefore, it is necessary to pay close attention to the formative aspects of teaching in order to identify opportunities for reflection on practice and on the relationships teachers intentionally build in the classroom. Beyond a focus on methods or content alone, human interactions emerge as essential elements of effective educational practices whether related to teaching or learning and thus deserve a central place in teacher education and professional development.

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