

# Formação, saberes docentes e identidade profissional: o que dizem as professoras do município de Mamanguape-PB?

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## Resumo

O trabalho em tela discute o processo de formação docente, evidenciando os saberes que perpassam a profissão e a construção da identidade profissional do professor. A pesquisa de cunho qualitativo foi realizada com professoras que atuam nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental, no município de Mamanguape-PB. O aporte norteador dessa reflexão encontra-se na Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional nº 9394/96 e em teóricos que tratam dos saberes e da profissionalização docente, tais como Nóvoa (1995); Imbérnon (2005); Freire (1996); Tardif (2002) e Pimenta (1997). A pesquisa revelou que a profissão docente requer saberes próprios a essa profissão e que os conhecimentos dos professores são oriundos de um processo formativo que percorre todo o processo de atuação do profissional. Nesse sentido, os conhecimentos adquiridos no processo de formação inicial, de sua prática e de seu processo contínuo de reflexão, orientam a sua ação, sua prática como profissional docente.

**Palavras-chave:** Formação de professores. Identidade profissional. Saberes docentes.

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## **Teacher education and professional identity: what do the municipal teachers of Mamanguape-PB say?**

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### **Abstract**

The present work discusses the process of teacher education, highlighting knowledge that permeates the profession and the construction of teachers' professional identity. The qualitative research was carried out with teachers who work in the early years of elementary school in the city of mamanguape-pb. The guide of this reflection is found in the reconfiguration of the law of directives and basis for national education n° 9.395/96 and also in theorists that deal with the subject about teacher's professionalization: nóvoa, 1995; imbérnon, 2005; freire, 1996; tardif, 2002; pimenta, 1997. The research revealed that teaching requires specific knowledge, and it comes from a training process that runs through the entire process of professional performance. In this sense, their practice as teachers is led by the knowledge acquired in their initial training process and their continuous process of reflection.

**Keywords:** teacher training. Teacher's knowledge. Professional identity.

## **Formación, conocimiento docente e identidad profesional: ¿qué dicen las maestras del municipio de Mamanguape- PB?**

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### **Resumen**

El trabajo, en pantalla, discute acerca del proceso de formación docente, destacando conocimiento que atraviesan la profesión y la construcción de la identidad profesional del profesor. La investigación, de carácter cualitativo, se realizó con profesores que trabajan en los primeros años de la educación primaria en la ciudad de mamanguape-pb. El aporte orientador de esta reflexión se encuentra en la reconfiguración de la ley de directrices y bases de la educación nacional nº 9394/96 y teóricos que se ocupan del conocimiento y la profesionalización docente: nóvoa, 1995; imbernon, 2005; freire, 1996; tardif, 2002; pimenta, 1997. La investigación reveló que la profesión docente requiere conocimientos propios de esa profesión y que los conocimientos de los profesores se derivan de un proceso formativo que recorre todo el proceso de desempeño profesional, en este sentido los conocimientos adquiridos en su proceso de formación inicial, de su práctica y de su proceso continuo de reflexión conduce a su acción, su práctica como profesional docente.

**Palabras-clave:** formación de profesores. Identidad profesional. Saberes del docente

## Introduction

This article aims to discuss the teacher formation process, highlighting the knowledge that permeates the profession and the construction of the teacher's professional identity. The qualitative research was conducted with teachers working in the early years of Elementary Education in the municipality of Mamanguape-PB, and it stimulates reflections from the teachers' perspectives regarding the teacher formation and teaching practices. Throughout the research, experiential knowledge (TARDIF, 2002) emerged as being of great importance in the construction of teacher identity. This knowledge is acquired throughout the teacher's formation and professional experience.

In Brazil, teacher formation is shaped by historical, political, and social issues. In this perspective, in the 19th century, teacher formation was limited to a process of knowledge transmission. Teacher training courses were offered in normal schools, and the model provided by these schools persisted for a long time in the country, undergoing some adaptations in the 20th century due to social changes. Despite this, the same technical training perspective prevailed, and the teacher was viewed as a mere reproducer of techniques, and knowledge was considered fixed and completed.

The 1971 Law 5,692 established a technical education system for teachers during that period. It required a minimum qualification of specific high school certification and/or higher-level specific qualification, represented by a bachelor's degree obtained in a short-term course. This technical aspect was revoked with the advent of Law 9,394/96, which sought to rethink education from a politicized premise, focusing on the development of the student in various cognitive, affective, social, and moral dimensions.

To meet the social needs and the pluralities that permeate the school environment, it became increasingly necessary to have a qualified professional. In this light, the role of the teacher has evolved into one that requires a formative process, as it is in this formative space that the professional builds their identity. In this perspective, it is within teacher formation that the teaching profession is produced. "More than a place for acquiring techniques and knowledge, teacher formation is the key moment for socialization and professional configuration" (NÓVOA, 1995, p. 18).

In recent years, teacher training has been based on a multifaceted perspective, meaning a formation constituted by different types of knowledge, acquired through a continuous process of

professional development. In this trend, teacher training for the 21st century, rooted in a technical bias (the teacher as a reproducer), becomes anachronistic, as it would certainly leave gaps in the teaching-learning process of students. In contrast, the proposal of thinking about continuous professional development, grounded in the conception of a profession supported by daily studies, adaptation, and reflection on the new, will contribute to the development of critical and reflective thinking.

Reflecting on practice implies understanding that the teacher is the subject constructing their professional identity. The construction of this teacher identity is not something that happens naturally, but through a continuous process influenced by historical, political, cultural, social, and other factors.

The results presented in this work stem from qualitative research conducted with four teachers who graduated in different periods and currently work in the early years of the municipality of Mamanguape-PB. To define and delimit the research field, contact was made with teachers from two schools in the municipality of Mamanguape through electronic resources such as email and telephone. In this first contact, the year each teacher began their career and the area of their expertise were investigated. The criterion for selection was the length of time in the profession, so four teachers were chosen: one who started their career in 1980, another in 1990, one in 2000, and another in 2010. In this perspective, the aim was to reflect on their training process and the experiential knowledge acquired throughout their careers.

The adoption of the qualitative research method in this work is justified because this type of investigation explores the particular and intrinsic aspects of each teacher's experience. Minayo (1994, p. 21) states that qualitative research "answers very particular questions [...] it works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values, and attitudes." Thus, qualitative research enables the researcher to study the different particularities of the chosen subject, providing a deeper and more detailed understanding of the investigation.

For the development and constitution of the data, the use of the interview was selected as the most suitable research instrument, since the purpose of the research was to share and reflect on the different experiences presented through the words of others. The interview instrument enables the researcher to analyze information derived from the interviewees' statements. Lakatos (2003, p. 195)

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states that an interview is "a meeting between two people, with the aim of obtaining information on a specific subject through a professional conversation."

In this context, to better address the central theme, the article is organized in two stages: initially, it discusses teacher formation and knowledge based on the conceptions of authors such as Nóvoa (1995), Imbérnon (2005), Freire (1996), Tardif (2002), and Pimenta (1997), and then reflects on the process of formation and the construction of professional identity, based on the perspectives of the teachers who contributed to the research.

### **Teacher Formation and Knowledge: Dialogues in/with Doing/Knowing**

Reflecting on the knowledge that shapes teaching implies reflecting on the singularities that permeate teaching practice, which is thus modified by the time and space the profession occupies. The constitution of a teaching career is shaped by the subjectivity of the professionals who practice it, incorporating their lived experiences into their practices, acquired throughout their professional journey and social relationships. Teaching knowledge is broadly constituted, relating to the knowledge, skills, subjectivities, and attitudes that constitute the teacher's persona. In this sense, the knowledge that forms the profession is temporal, historical, and social, addressing the demands of the era in which it exists. Tardif (2002, p. 20) affirms that "to say that teachers' knowledge is temporal means, initially, that teaching implies learning to teach, that is, progressively mastering the knowledge necessary for performing teaching work." Furthermore, it becomes evident that it is crucial for the teacher to master the knowledge that constitutes their profession, knowledge that comes from their training, continuous practice, and exchange of experiences with other professionals in the field.

Freire (1996, p. 6) states that "teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibility for its production or construction." In this way, it is emphasized that the teacher must understand that, as a mediator of knowledge, they have the responsibility not only to know the content they will teach but also to understand the students they will work with. Knowing the students allows the teacher to integrate the content required by the school curriculum harmoniously with the students' lived experiences and realities, showing that they (the students) can be active participants in the teaching process, contributing to critical and reflective formation.

The knowledge of the teaching profession comes from different areas, such as those acquired in the school environment, knowledge gained at the university, etc., knowledge that is lived, learned, and experienced throughout the teaching profession. Thus, the teacher, in the process of their continuous formation, has the opportunity to experience, create, and recreate knowledge that allows them to expand their teaching perspective, reflecting on their practice. In this sense, Tardif (2002, p. 36) acknowledges that “the relationship of teachers with knowledge is not reduced to a function of transmitting already constituted knowledge. Their practice integrates different types of knowledge, with which the teaching staff maintains different relationships.”

The relationship between teachers and knowledge transcends the barriers of technicism and their view as mere reproducers of knowledge thought by others. In their daily relationship with their profession, teachers must recognize that all beings are unfinished, in a continuous process of construction. Thus, the teacher will strive to work with the perspective that, on a daily basis, they need to seek knowledge about their function and the importance of their profession. Teachers' knowledge is not a set of defined content but a process under construction that spans their entire professional career.

Based on Pimenta's (1996) thinking, teachers need to have the discernment to reflect on the importance of their role as mediators of knowledge, as this process has the power to contribute to a possible social change. When the teacher presents knowledge broadly, not limiting necessary information for learning a particular content, or when the knowledge is contextualized and exemplified, the student gradually learns and, consequently, will be able to build a critical and reflective view of the society in which they act.

Pimenta (1996) tells us that:

Knowledge is not reduced to information. This is the first stage of knowledge. To know involves a second stage, which is to work with the information by classifying it, analyzing it, and contextualizing it. The third stage is related to intelligence, awareness, or wisdom. Intelligence is related to the art of linking knowledge in a useful and relevant way, that is, producing new forms of progress and development; awareness and wisdom involve reflection, that is, the ability to produce new forms of existence, of humanization (PIMENTA, 1996, p.8)

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Thus, when the teacher is able to acquire the knowledge of working with content in a broad way, aligning it with the context in which each student is situated, consequently, the student will be able to broaden their perspective on their role in society. When the teacher is able to work with knowledge while stimulating the student's curiosity, they will certainly be creating possibilities for change in those individuals, as the stimulated curiosity is an interesting opportunity for knowledge and learning.

The continuous process of stimulating curiosity enables both the teacher and the student to acquire more knowledge. When feeling curious about a particular subject/theme, it is common for motivations to arise to discover and, consequently, understand "something" about the object to be learned. In their continuous professional development, the teacher should always seek to stimulate knowledge to guide their actions and performance.

Following this line of reasoning, Freire (1996) indicates that:

The construction or production of knowledge about the object involves the exercise of curiosity, its critical capacity to "distance" itself from the object, to observe it, delimit it, surround it, or make its methodical approach, its capacity to compare, to question (FREIRE, 1996, p.85)

In accordance with the author, it is observed that curiosity constitutes the first step in seeking knowledge. Both the student and the teacher, when stimulated, will seek ways to learn and recognize that knowledge permeates their daily lives, from their family environment to their work space. In this process, the teacher is shaping their professional identity.

In this perspective, experiential knowledge is highlighted as the knowledge that guides the entire process of continuous teacher formation. The teacher has the power to create, modify, and expand the knowledge that has been part of their daily routine, as experiential knowledge is acquired from the beginning of their training, through daily contact with other teachers, students, parents, the school community, reflections, action and reflection on action, as well as the organization and development of pedagogical practices, etc:

Experiential knowledge also acquires a certain objectivity in its critical relationship with disciplinary, curricular, and professional training knowledge [...] practice can be seen as a learning process through which teachers retranslate their training and adapt it to the profession, eliminating what seems unnecessarily abstract or unrelated to the lived reality and retaining what can serve them in one way or another.



Experience thus causes a critical feedback effect on the knowledge acquired before or outside of professional practice (TARDIF, 2002, p.53)

Among the peculiarities or characteristics of experiential knowledge, when compared to curricular and disciplinary knowledge, stands out its relationship with the teacher's continuous practice, since experiential knowledge is knowledge created and lived by the teacher, rather than merely thought out by others. In this construction of experiential knowledge, teachers are able to show who they truly are, taking ownership of their ideas and thoughts regarding the issues that involve their profession.

### **Teacher Formation, Teaching, and Identity: The Teachers' Perspective**

Starting from the premise that the construction of teacher identity goes through the lens of subjectivity, experience, and lived reality, this section presents reflections on the data collected through contact with teachers working in the early years of Elementary Education in the municipality of Mamanguape-PB. Throughout the work, the teachers will be identified by the letters "A, B, C, D." The following table outlines the profile of the interviewed teachers.

**Box 1:** Profile of the Interviewed Teachers

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Year of Beginning of Teaching</b>
<b>Teacher "A"</b>	56 years old	She completed the LOGUS <sup>3</sup> program to obtain certification for her professional practice. In 2017, she graduated with a degree in Pedagogy. She has been working for thirty years as a teacher in the early years of education in the municipality of Mamanguape	1980
<b>Teacher "B"</b>	45 years old	She completed a teaching course (middle school level); in 2005, she graduated in Pedagogy; in 2009, she completed a specialization in Psychopedagogy. She has been teaching the early years in Mamanguape for twenty years and participates in the continuous training projects of the Literacy at the Right Age program.	1990

<sup>3</sup> The Logos II Project aims to, through supplementary education using instructional modules and ongoing evaluation, enable teachers at the secondary level to teach the first four grades of primary education.

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<b>Teacher “C”</b>	49 years old	She has completed a teaching course (middle school level) and holds a degree in Pedagogy. She has been working for seventeen years as a teacher in the early years and participates in the continuous training projects of the Literacy at the Right Age program.	2000
<b>Teacher “D”</b>	32 years old	She completed her degree in Pedagogy in 2015. She has been teaching the early years in the municipality of Mamanguape for seven years, specifically working in early childhood education and daycare.	2010

**Source:** Data from the researchers' personal collection

It is possible to perceive that, in each historical period, teacher education has been shaped by social needs. Looking at the trajectory of teacher training from 1980 onward, education was designed within a more technicist model. During this period, the possibility of teacher training through short-duration courses with qualification for teaching was opened. Upon reviewing the initial training described in the table above, it is clear that all four teachers completed the initial teaching course.

However, in 1996, Law 9.394/96, Article 62, determined that the training of teachers who would work in the early years of elementary education should be done in a full bachelor's degree course, and the minimum qualification for teaching was the completion of the normal high school program.

During the introduction of the new law, a nationwide issue arose in 1996: what would happen to the large number of teachers who were working in the early grades of elementary school but did not have higher education? This requirement of the new law led to a great demand for Pedagogy courses. In other words, "unqualified" teachers started seeking this higher education qualification. Likewise, different possibilities for expanding continuing education courses were created to provide diplomas to teachers who were already working and had only completed the teaching course at the high school level.

In 2013, a change in the law allowed the teaching qualification at the high school level to be considered valid for teachers working in the early years of basic education. However, it also established continuing education as mandatory for teachers in active service. Law 12.796, Article 62, Paragraph One highlights:

Continuous training will be ensured for the professionals referred to in the caput, at their workplace or in basic and higher education institutions, including vocational education courses, full undergraduate or technological degree courses, and postgraduate courses.

In the first two versions of Law 9.394/96 (1996 and 2013), it was stipulated that teacher training for the first five years of Elementary Education should occur in a bachelor's degree course, in universities and higher education institutes. In the version given by Law No. 13.415 of 2017, it reads: "The training of teachers to work in basic education will be done at the higher education level, in a full degree course," however, it does not specify the institutions where this training should occur. This omission raises different questions and intensifies the discussion regarding the importance of training based on principles such as: "a) solid theoretical and interdisciplinary training; b) theory-practice unity; c) collective and interdisciplinary work; d) social commitment and professional recognition of educators; e) democratic management; f) evaluation and regulation of training courses" (Brazil, 2015, p. 8).

In this context, it is apparent that training has come to be understood under a new conception. Nowadays, the training process is based on a professional conception, which increasingly requires teachers to have multifaceted and situational professional knowledge.

At the core of the discussion about the role of the teacher, there is also a question about the social function of schools and education. There is no consensus on this issue, but one possibility is that the goal of education is "to help make people more free, less dependent on economic, political, and social power. And the teaching profession has this intrinsic obligation" (IMBÉRNON, 2005, p. 27). In this sense, the figure of the teacher is seen as an "emancipatory" being for the people who constitute society. However, in order for the teaching professional to fulfill his "emancipatory" role, he needs to go through this technical, scientific, reflective training process in the unity of theory and practice, which is committed to social issues.

## **Understandings about Teaching**

It is possible to understand, from the statements of the interviewed teachers, that each teacher characterizes as specific to the teaching role elements that individually highlight their understandings of the profession.

A lot of research, having love for the profession, enjoying what you are doing to make a better impression because the students see in us a mirror, the awakening often comes from the teacher, as in the beginning, I admired my teacher, and that's what sparked my desire to be a teacher, and a lot of research, courses, always striving

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for improvement to provide better work and better performance for the students.  
(TEACHER "B")

First and foremost, the teacher has to ensure that their students not only receive the content but also think critically. They need to find ways to effectively transmit this content to their students (TEACHER "D")

It can be observed that the statements from Teachers "B" and "D" present similarities regarding the way in which the teacher should perform their role to achieve an emancipatory process with their students. The teachers highlight the didactics, the way the teacher seeks to transmit content to their students, and how the teacher awakens the student to the development of thought as elements of good teaching practice.

When the teacher is aware that their role in the classroom is not limited to transmitting finished content and that this content can be expanded, seeking ways to contribute to the construction of critical and reflective thinking in their students, the teacher will work with methods that bring their students closer to the everyday school life. In this sense, Freire (1996, p. 26) tells us that "these conditions imply or require the presence of educators and learners who are creators, instigators, restless, rigorously curious, humble, and persistent."

Being aware that the student is a thinking being, who, in the teaching process, is and can contribute with their culturally and socially experienced knowledge, does not make the teacher a professional without knowledge. On the contrary, it makes them a more qualified professional, as they are sensitive enough to see the student as an active subject in society, someone who can influence the teaching-learning process with their unique contributions.

Teacher "B's" statement reveals the teacher as an influential subject through their actions in the classroom. Here, we can highlight the influence of the hidden curriculum that the professional carries when performing the role, the way the teacher interacts with the student in the classroom, and the teacher-student relationship, which directly influences the learning process.

In this perspective, Freire (1996) tells us that:

I cannot be a teacher without placing myself before the students, without revealing, whether easily or reluctantly, my way of being, of thinking politically. I cannot escape the students' judgment. And the way they perceive me is of crucial importance for my performance. Therefore, one of my central concerns should be to seek an ever-increasing alignment between what I say and what I do, between what I seem to be and what I am truly being (FREIRE, 1996, p. 59)

It is understood, therefore, that the teacher cannot go unnoticed in the life of the student, as they need to contribute positively to the student's emancipatory process, making use of the knowledge that shapes their teaching practice, since the knowledge acquired since their undergraduate education will underpin their actions in the classroom.

## Knowledge Required for Teaching Practice

The teacher formation process enables the teacher to acquire knowledge of the disciplinary content. Thus, their performance in school settings allows them to gain curricular knowledge, and their teaching practice enables them to acquire new knowledge and experiences. Based on these initial understandings, the Teachers were asked about the knowledge required to practice the teaching profession, as well as about the knowledge that permeates the profession:

We study and gain more knowledge, because in the past it was just a matter of saying 'I'm going to teach' and teaching, as history says, 'the basics'. But today, we study and gain knowledge; studies are more advanced now (TEACHER "A")

It's about getting a sense of what's going on inside the classroom, assessing what each student needs, because each student is different. You have to analyze each one individually, and from there, you develop a practice that best facilitates their learning. Know each student, know the environment, and welcome them well (TEACHER "B")

First, we need to know our students so that we can understand them. I need to know each one of them, from the student to the family. In order to help them, to transform them, to make them want to reach their goals, I need to know them. Each child has a different reality, so I must have this gift, this methodology, this practice, this love. In reality, it's love. Because the children we have, each one has a different reality, and we have to have the love to do it. If we don't have love, we won't succeed (TEACHER "C")

Know the content you're going to teach, but you also need to know your student, their reality. You need to know the context you're going to work in, and always motivate your student so that they achieve results. They have a goal, but in order to reach it, you need to motivate them in different ways. You have to research, you have to always be innovating (TEACHER "D")

The narratives of the Teachers reveal an understanding that the knowledge acquired throughout their careers is considered as guiding knowledge for the successful development of their daily practice. The Teachers seek to present the knowledge derived from their daily practice, as these are the knowledge lived by them, acquired and built during their profession and experience. They also present investigative practice as one of the necessary forms of knowledge for a teaching professional.

The practice of investigating their audience in the classroom and seeking to understand the work environment enables the teacher to have a broad knowledge of their field of activity, and specifically, of their students. The teacher's ability to perceive the need for prior knowledge about the group with whom they will work, before imposing a methodological practice based solely on "guesswork", is

Teacher education and professional identity: what do the municipal teachers of Mamanguape-PB say? achieved through the professional experience. This knowledge is referred to by Tardif (2002) as experiential knowledge, knowledge that is acquired through experiences both in the process of training and in the process of practice.

According to Tardif (2002), experiential knowledge:

The set of updated knowledge, acquired and necessary within the practice of the teaching profession, which does not come from training institutions or curricula. These knowledges are not systematized in doctrines or theories. They are practical knowledges (and not knowledge of the practice: they do not overlap with the practice to better understand it, but integrate with it and are constituent parts of it as teaching practice) and form a set of representations from which teachers interpret, understand, and guide their profession and daily practice in all dimension (TARDIF, 2002, p. 48-49)

The representations about teaching or the knowledge required for its practice are also constructed through the processes of interaction with the profession, with the institutions, and with their daily practices.

## **Paths of Teacher Training and the Teaching Profession**

In their narratives, each of the Teachers presented their conceptions about the knowledge required for the teaching profession. The particularities existing in the time and space in which each one is or has been working throughout their teaching careers are perceptible. This reflection becomes more significant based on the Teachers' conceptions, as well as the aspects that have changed the paths of their teaching practices, in which all highlight experience as a guiding factor for their current practice.

It is very different, today's study is much different from when I started, I already had a lot of knowledge, the teaching we did back then is not like today, it's very different. We used to write very little on the board, but today, children grab the book, do the work with everything from it, all of this has been changing. (TEACHER "A")

I have changed a lot, before I made posters, wrote letters, but it was very limited, then with the training courses, and with the methodologies that the teachers provided, my methodology for working in the classroom improved. Today I work more freely, I can say more open to the students, I use various materials, we need resources, because these resources are taken from us teachers, many times the school doesn't have much, but we work with recycling, practice, go to the back of the school, this is what differentiates it, and before we didn't have these things (TEACHER "B")

Today, I feel like a different person. In the beginning, I didn't have the experience I have today, thank God today I have a very satisfactory experience. As time goes by, I learn more and more, keep updating myself, and keep searching. My

practice today, for sure, is much more modern, especially because I am participating in this project, and as time goes on, we keep updating ourselves. (TEACHER “C”)

When I started, it was one way, then I kept changing more because, besides studying, you could see it, you researched more, some teachers, when they give their lessons, it's always the same way, since they started, but that's not true. Every year is different, you have that year, you teach the first, the second, but it can't be the same lesson, the students are not the same (TEACHER “D”)

The Teachers, in their narratives, present changes acquired in the process of working in the teaching profession. Currently, Teachers “A” and “B” are able to see and point out the differences between the period when they began their careers and today. They highlight the resources and techniques acquired in their professional journey as being few, as we can see in Teacher “B’s” statement “[...] we need resources because these resources are taken from us, teachers [...]”.

It is important to note that the demands of a society marked by technological advancement and the proliferation of information call for Teachers to broaden their perspectives on the different possibilities of teaching in the school environment. Regarding the different strategies to mediate their daily practices, Teacher “A” mentions the influence of the textbook, which, over the course of her profession, has been modified and expanded to provide greater support for teachers. The textbook serves as an auxiliary resource for Teachers.

Teacher “B” presents the influence of her training as a means of emancipating her practice. Before completing her training, her performance was limited, and she was unable to exercise her profession with the necessary autonomy. In the same line of reasoning, Teacher “A” emphasizes the need for teachers to always be in a continuous process of formation. According to Teacher “A,” when she began teaching (in 1980), the knowledge required to practice the profession was limited, unlike today, when the professional must have the minimum knowledge acquired in their initial training, supplemented by knowledge gained through their work experience, as well as knowledge of the subject/content they will teach. These understandings of the necessary knowledge for the teaching profession are reinforced by Tardif (2002, p. 36), who defines teaching knowledge as plural, formed by the combination of “knowledge derived from professional training, disciplinary, curricular, and experiential knowledge”.

It is evident in Teacher “A’s” statement that she identifies an advancement in the teacher training process. As she presents in her narrative, “in her time, it was just saying you wanted to teach

Teacher education and professional identity: what do the municipal teachers of Mamanguape-PB say? and you were already a teacher,” unlike today, where the professional must have, above all, a minimum qualification in the field. In this regard, as indicated by LDB 9.394/96, the most coherent approach would be that only those who truly understand the role of their profession should teach. That they should have academic training, grounded in scientific, didactic, and pedagogical knowledge.

However, the process of personal change takes time, and no one changes the way they work overnight. In this perspective, Imbérnon (2005, p. 26) understands that “no one changes overnight. A person needs to internalize, adapt, and experiment with the new aspects they experienced in their training.” It is clear that Teacher “A” understands that there has been and continues to be a process of change in her profession, a change that is evident in the teaching process.

Teacher A’s action of reflecting on her training process places her in the status of a teacher who understands that her profession is not something stagnant, but rather something that must evolve and progress. Changes and requirements arising from the Education Guidelines Law (LDB), the PCNs, and currently the BNCC were and are necessary for teaching practice. According to Libâneo (1998, p. 11), it is essential that the school, the place where teachers work, cease to be “merely an agency for transmitting information and transform into a place for critical analysis and the production of information.”

The awareness of her practice as a continuous training process is revealed by Teacher “C,” when she recognizes that “Today I feel like a different person, in the beginning, I didn’t have the experience I have today.” Teacher “C” expresses a professional knowledge conception, as she perceives that the knowledge gained in her work environment provides her with a set of life experiences that contribute to her daily practice. However, experiential knowledge needs to be coupled with reflective practice, from the necessary skills and competencies required to perform the profession. The daily practice of self-assessment allows the professional to be in a full and continuous process of training.

In this sense, Nóvoa (2009, p. 3) argues that “the teacher’s work consists of building teaching practices that guide students toward learning[...] educating is getting the child to overcome the boundaries that have so often been imposed on them as destiny by birth, family, or society.” Therefore, from Teacher “D’s” speech, we perceive the conception of the classroom as a place of



diversity. This Teacher also recognizes that, as a teacher, she must always invest in her own process of training because there is no single “classroom standard.” The classroom is seen here as a place composed of people who bring with them their beliefs, fears, and culture, and it requires the teacher to perform their professional duties, which, according to Libâneo (1998), is not limited to merely transmitting information, but expands to a critical and reflective formation about the society in which they operate. Knowing how to act critically and reflectively places the teacher in the role of being an active member of society.

### **Reflections on Teacher Identity: Is it possible to define and be a good teacher?**

For the teaching professional to teach critically and emancipatorily, it is necessary for the teacher to practice self-assessment daily. Evaluating their performance, their posture, their way of addressing content in the classroom, and assessing whether they are a good teacher. In this perspective, thinking about the figure of the teaching professional, the aim is to understand, together with the interviewed teachers, how they perceive themselves as professionals.

I consider myself a teacher. To be a good teacher, there is still a lot to be done, the teacher needs a master's degree, more courses [...] (TEACHER “A”)

Yes, sometimes I wonder, my God, am I doing the right thing? But in my practice, I say yes, according to my students, I just need to work more on the issue, because I am very emotional [...] (TEACHER “B”)

wouldn't say 100%, but I would say 90%, because I love what I do [...] (TEACHER “C”)

Well, in the classroom, in practice, I consider myself a good teacher, because I always seek to innovate, but I need more, study more, in the sense of reading, to be a good teacher, first, you have to love what you're doing, never stop studying, because by studying, you're innovating” (TEACHER “D”).

Each teacher expresses their concept of what it means to be a good professional based on their own certainty. The image each teacher presents is a remnant of their formation process, and consequently, it reveals the process of constructing their identity. Teacher “A,” in her narrative, reveals that she cannot see herself as a good teacher because “to really be a good teacher, one needs to have ‘a master's degree, more courses’” (TEACHER “A”). The thinking of Teacher “A” reflects an approach that hierarchizes the teaching profession based on the number of titles acquired throughout

Teacher education and professional identity: what do the municipal teachers of Mamanguape-PB say? one's education and, consequently, the hierarchy of theoretical and practical knowledge: those who "think" and those who "execute" the profession.

Nóvoa (1995, p. 13) states that “formation is not built through accumulation (of courses of knowledge or techniques), but rather through a work of critical reflexivity on practices and the permanent (re)construction of a personal identity.” In this sense, it would be beneficial for Teacher "A" to have formative spaces that promote theoretical-practical reflections, where the teacher is perceived as the protagonist of their profession. Thus, enabling her to recognize herself as an active professional, an author, and not merely a reproducer of techniques.

From the speeches of Teachers "B" and "D," it is understood that both recognize themselves as good teachers and that, throughout the process of teaching, the construction of their professional identity was shaped by the actions carried out in the school setting. Professional identity goes beyond the personal "self," as they express concern for getting to know their students, being comfortable in the classroom, and knowing that their actions cannot go unnoticed. Pimenta (1997, p. 7) tells us that professional identity can be built “by the meaning that each teacher, as an actor and author, assigns to the teaching activity in their daily life, based on their values, their way of positioning themselves in the world, their life history, their representations, their knowledge, and their anxieties.”

Teacher "C" presents a certain romanticization of the profession. According to Teacher "C," she considers herself a good teacher because she loves what she does. The concept of Teacher "C" refers to thinking about an image of an assisting and voluntary professional who does not need economic, social, or political recognition. Moreover, this reference to love could also refer to focus, effort, and dedication. Love here could mean the ability to give oneself to the exercise of the profession and try to be the best possible at it. She understands this as love, but it could also be these other things. This question of love in the teaching profession is an important aspect to be problematized and reflected upon.

The concept of the profession based on “love” makes it vulnerable and lacking credibility. Professionalism in teaching:

It implies a reference to the organization within the educational system and the external dynamics of the labor market. Being a professional, therefore, implies mastering a series of specialized skills and abilities that make us competent in a

particular job, as well as connecting us to an organized professional group subject to control (SCHON, 1992 apud IMBERNÓN, 2005, p. 25)

One sees the need, as a teaching professional, to master different competencies that shape the professional practice, such as the awareness of the unfinished. In other words, the professional must keep in mind that their professional life should be connected to their continuous process of formation and reflection.

### **The conversation continues: challenges, proposals, and idealizations**

The exercise of teaching involves knowledge constructed through different formative processes: initial, academic, ongoing, in-service, and in relationships with peers. In these formative processes and in the exercise of teaching, the Teachers face different perspectives, some of which act as obstacles/cessations, while others serve as catalysts for reinventing teaching and the teacher's identity.

Regarding these issues, more specifically about the barriers in the process of valuing the teaching profession, Teacher "B" pointed out the lack of unity among teachers as one of the obstacles in the process of valuing the profession. According to Teacher "B," the profession will only receive the due recognition when all professionals unite for the struggle of the category. According to Imbernon (2005), isolated teachers are susceptible to the political, economic, and social environment. In the same direction, Freire (1996, p. 66) says that "the fight of teachers in defense of their rights and dignity must be understood as an important moment of their teaching practice, as an ethical practice. It is not something external to teaching activity, but something that is part of it".

The union of teachers still needs to be worked on. One must understand the other, the practice of the other, because many times we use one practice, but in another classroom, that practice doesn't work. Being more understanding of each other, the school should be a collective. Also, what hinders a lot is politics, the political game comes in, sometimes they say it doesn't affect the schools, but it does, because many teachers are persecuted and then work unwillingly, being placed in a school, which causes a lot of harm. In addition to this financial issue, we need to seek the unity of the teachers, because if there is no unity within the class, there won't be the proper recognition (TEACHER "B")

Another relevant point in the Teacher's speech is the school being seen as a collective, with the work of the entire school team. The responsibility for the teaching process does not lie solely with the teacher. It is a collaborative effort that encompasses the school principal, the janitor, the

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lunch lady, and the teacher. Understanding that this collective is interconnected and that each one is a link in the chain that sustains education is essential for understanding the discussions in this thematic area.

A problem highlighted in the Teacher's speech that challenges the daily life of schools, especially in smaller towns, concerns partisan politics—"politicking"—as an influencing factor in the devaluation of the profession. Teachers, once approved in public competitions, are municipal employees, and they remain at the disposal of the Department of Education, which, depending on the electoral processes and changes in administration, leads to a domino effect. That is, with the change of mayors, teachers are reassigned between schools, disregarding all the work previously carried out in the school community they were part of.

It is evident that there are several barriers hindering the valuation of the profession. However, these barriers have not been, and are not, enough to demotivate the Teachers interviewed from performing their profession. The desire and belief in a better education remain motivating factors for the aforementioned Teachers. Also, regarding motivations, the narratives also express the importance of the social, political, and institutional context. In this sense, the Teachers reveal:

The will that the person has, if they don't have the will to do it, they won't do anything. They may be the best teacher, but if they don't have their work, their curriculum, their materials to take to the classroom, it's as if it's nothing. The teacher comes into the classroom and says, 'I'm not going to prepare my lesson,' they will teach it anyhow, will they give a good lesson? No, they won't." (TEACHER "A")

"The students motivate me a lot, they inspire me, one word can build or destroy a future, and I want to build, I want them to build in their minds the perspective of a better life, and from studying, they will improve their future prospects." (TEACHER "B")

"The love for what I do, love for education, there are these barriers we face, these bottlenecks, but I don't dwell on them when I enter the classroom, I love what I do, I love what I do. And surprisingly, the early phase, because that's where we are shaping that being to go further, to reach the university. So I think the greatest responsibility is in this early phase. I think that's where I fit in, I think that's where my responsibility as a teacher, as an educator, lies." (TEACHER "C")

"When you're in the classroom, and even over time, you find a student who liked you, who liked the way you taught, that's really good. I wish for them to have good teachers, because if they don't, they grow up traumatized, because I was like that. I think that's why I am like this when it comes to reading, it was from childhood, it held me back, it wasn't a teacher like I give my classes, it was a teacher who had to stay in the corner, not giving their opinion. (TEACHER "D").

Each teacher presented a distinct motivation for practicing the teaching profession. Teacher “A” highlights "the will to do" as her motivation. This drive enables her to have a differentiated view on the need for continuous planning. Teacher "A" emphasizes that without planning, a teacher cannot give a good lesson. In agreement with Teacher “A,” it’s understood that in the profession of teaching, the act of planning enables teachers to define their objectives and then create different teaching strategies.

Teacher “B” presents her students as her motivation. The desire to contribute to the emancipatory process of her students drives her to seek ways to improve her performance in the teaching and learning process. By recognizing that, through studies, her students may have the opportunity to change their reality, she is motivated to constantly pursue new knowledge. Freire (1996, p. 69) tells us that "the capacity to learn, not only to adapt but, above all, to transform reality, to intervene in it, recreating it." It is in this perspective that Teacher “B” believes she can contribute to the process of change/transformation for her students.

It is evident in the speeches of Teachers "B", "C", and "D" that their happiness and self-realization are tied to the success of their students’ learning. In this sense, their success as teachers is linked to their students' achievements. Teacher “C” identifies the early years as the space that needs her work, saying, “because it’s here that we’re shaping that being to move forward, to reach the university. So, I think the greatest responsibility lies in the early phase. I think that’s where I fit in.” Freire (1996, p. 77) tells us that "no one can be in the world, with the world, and with others in a neutral way." It is in this perspective that we see Teacher “C” seeking to intervene positively in the teaching-learning process of her students. She aims to provide, through her practice, the means for her students to grow wings and soar to heights that were previously impossible.

Regarding motivations, some similarities are noticeable, such as in the cases of Teachers “D” and “C,” who are motivated when they encounter a former student who learned from them and appreciated their teaching methodology. This motivates them to continue in their profession. However, Teacher “D” emphasizes the desire for her students to have good teachers throughout their educational journey. According to Teacher “D,” the presence of a good teacher influences the student’s interest in continuing their studies, and when students encounter teachers who do not believe in their profession or do not know why they are teaching, it hinders the student’s learning process. In

Teacher education and professional identity: what do the municipal teachers of Mamanguape-PB say? such cases, frustration is created in the student, especially when faced with teachers who undermine their belief in education. According to Teacher “D,” this trauma blocked her own ability to engage with reading.

It is evident from Teacher “D’s” speech that the figure of the teacher significantly influences the lives of students. A teacher who understands their influence in the teaching-learning process can recognize that the art of teaching requires professional competencies, continuous training, reflection, empathy, and the diverse knowledge involved in the teaching profession. Furthermore, “recognizing that teachers can be true social agents, capable of planning and managing the teaching-learning process, as well as intervening in the complex systems that form the social and professional structure (IMBERNÓN, 2005, p. 46).

## **Final considerations**

From the research conducted and the studies on the subject, it was concluded that the process of constructing the teaching professional identity is rooted in initial and continued education. The construction process of the teaching professional identity is influenced by various factors; however, the predominant factors identified in this work are: the initial and continuous formation process, the daily reflective practice, and the knowledge from the different aspects that permeate the profession. It was understood that the teaching profession is one that is built through the daily relationship between teacher/student/teaching environment, and it is this continuous reflection process that will guide the construction of the teaching professional.

Through the voices of the Teachers and their life stories, it was possible to reflect on the process of constructing the teaching profession, which is directly linked to social and historical changes.

In this context, it is believed that it is essential to give voice to professionals working in the early years of Elementary Education and to understand the formative process from their perspectives, dreams, anxieties, and proposals. By learning about their experiences, trajectories, perceptions, motivations, and meanings about teaching, it became evident that there is still much to learn about the image of the teacher and their teaching practice.

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