

## **A Formação continuada do Professor Diretor de Turma (PDT) das escolas públicas estaduais do Ceará**

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### **Resumo**

O Projeto Professor Diretor de Turma (PPDT) é uma estratégia de melhoria educacional da rede pública de ensino estadual do Ceará, que busca o acompanhamento sistemático e individualizado dos alunos com vistas à melhoria do ensino e aprendizagem. O objetivo deste artigo é verificar se a Secretaria da Educação do Ceará oferta formações continuadas com vistas a maior qualificação dos professores que exercem a função de Professor Diretor de Turma (PDT). Para isso, investigou-se, a partir de uma pesquisa com 511 PDT, de que modo tais profissionais avaliam as formações recebidas e quais temas ainda não foram tratados e que são relevantes para o melhor desempenho da função. Os indicadores encontrados foram contextualizados com autores de referência indispensável e com suporte em documentos legais relevantes, que cuidam da importância da formação continuada docente. A pesquisa identificou que os PDT, de maneira geral, veem as formações ofertadas com características mais positivas que negativas, além de avaliarem que elas contribuem para qualificar sua atuação profissional e fundamentar seu ofício em princípios da formação dialógica.

**Palavras-chave:** Professor Diretor de Turma. Formação Continuada Docente. Melhoria do Ensino e Aprendizagem. Qualificação Docente.

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## Continuous formation of the Class Director Professor (PDT) of state public schools in Ceará

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### **Abstract**

The Class Director Teacher Project (PPDT) is an educational improvement strategy for the public education system in Ceará, which seeks a systematic and individualized monitoring of students with a view to improving teaching and learning. The purpose of this article is to verify if the Education Department in Ceará offers continuing formation aiming a higher qualification of teachers who perform the role of Class Director Teacher (PDT). Therefore, it was investigated, from a survey with 511 PDT, how these professionals evaluate the training received and which topics have not been addressed yet and that are relevant for the best performance of the function. The indicators encountered were contextualized with authors of indispensable reference and supported by relevant legal documents, which deal of the importance of continuing teacher education. The research identified that the PDT, in general, see the training offered with more positive than negative characteristics, in addition to evaluating that they contribute to qualify their professional performance and base their craft on principles of dialogic training.

**Keywords:** Professional enhancement. Demassification of teaching. Learning Improvement. Dialogical Formation.

## **Formación Continuada del Profesor Director de Clase (PDT) de las escuelas públicas estaduais de Ceará**

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### **Resumen**

El Proyecto Profesor Director de Clase (PPDC) es una estrategia de mejora educativa para el sistema de educación pública de Ceará, que busca el seguimiento sistemático e individualizado de los estudiantes con el objetivo de desarrollar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje. El objetivo de este artículo es verificar si el Departamento de Educación de Ceará ofrece educación continua con el objetivo de mejorar el desarrollo de los profesores que actúan como Profesor Director de Clase (PDC). Para ello, se investigó, a partir de una encuesta con 511 PDC, cómo estos profesionales evalúan la formación recibida, qué temas aún no han sido abordados y cuáles son relevantes para el mejor desempeño de la función. Los indicadores encontrados fueron contextualizados con autores de indispensable referencia y sustentados en documentos legales pertinentes, que cuidan la importancia de la formación continua docente. La investigación identificó que los PDC, en general, ven la formación ofrecida con características más positivas que negativas, además de evaluar que contribuyen para la calificación de su desempeño profesional y fundamentan su oficio en principios de formación dialógica.

**Palabras clave:** Profesor Director de Clase. Formación Continua del Profesorado. Mejora de la Enseñanza y el Aprendizaje. Calificación del maestro.

## Introduction

Teacher training is an essential action in the pursuit of educational quality, as it provides the necessary foundation for these educational agents to perform their roles with the aim of improving the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, teacher education ensures the concept of professionalism, which "[...] involves the continuous development of skills for activities associated with teaching, revealed in concrete situations" (GATTI; BARRETO; ANDRÉ; ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 79). In this way, it guarantees the conceptual and practical framework necessary for the exercise of teaching.

The teacher training process generally consists of two complementary stages: initial and continuing education. The first, of a structural nature, is called "licenciatura" (teaching degree) and aims to develop in future teachers the basic and necessary competencies for their function. During this phase, teachers will have the opportunity not only to deepen their knowledge in their specific field, incorporating relevant and current concepts related to their subject matter, but also to develop pedagogical skills. In this realm, teaching methods and learning evaluation techniques will be further explored, providing the theoretical and conceptual support for their professional practice.

This training requires certain assumptions for it to be structured with quality, such as establishing a creative, flexible, and critical education system that focuses on the reality of the school and the needs of students. Consequently, it must overcome the tensions between theory and practice, successfully blending these two perspectives. For this to happen, it must be developed in scientific entities, such as universities and research institutions, as well as in professional environments, such as schools, aligning itself with the constant changes of the contemporary world. It must foster the development of competencies that integrate pedagogical, sociological, and philosophical concepts in line with intercultural needs, with the aim of addressing real-world demands (GATTI; BARRETO; ANDRÉ; ALMEIDA, 2019).

This set of competencies helps to solidify the profession of future teachers. However, it is important to note that the increasing influence of neoliberal principles within universities contributes to the de-professionalization of teachers, characterized by the growing incorporation of business principles through management by private entities and the pursuit of efficiency, driven by numbers and educational outcomes, as well as the incorporation of Fordist and/or Taylorist principles in education (NÓVOA, 2017; RIBEIRO; ARAÚJO, 2018). These characteristics lead to a training model focused on the principles of technical rationality, detached from educational reality, seeking solutions solely in the "[...] rigorous application of scientific theories and techniques," which can result in the "[...] reduction of the process to its technical dimension, particularly in the fields of

FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas curriculum, didactics, and teacher education" (GATTI; BARRETO; ANDRÉ; ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 181). This could negatively impact the quality of teacher training and, consequently, diminish their professionalism.

To move away from these principles, it is necessary to "[...] advance toward a professional university education, it is necessary to build a new institutional place" (NÓVOA, 2017, p. 1114), aiming for an increasingly closer connection with the reality of schools, so that this relationship serves to strengthen educational praxis. In this context, initial teacher training, through reflection and reflection on practice, should situate the teacher within the various educational realities by incorporating programs like supervised internships. These internships promote a practical framework that, in conjunction with learned theories, enables the development of creative and effective teaching actions to improve educational quality.

The second stage of training, known as continuing education, should occur throughout the teacher's professional life, at appropriate times, with the goal of addressing gaps left by initial training. This stage should serve as a continuation of the initial formation, breaking away from concepts such as "capacity building," "retraining," or "training," and should be organized to address change and contextual needs (NUNES; NUNES, 2013).

Therefore, continuing education should not be isolated or disconnected from its practical day-to-day context. It should deepen relevant themes to enhance teaching action, conceived as a continuum of the professional journey, given that much of the theoretical framework was initiated in the initial training phase (GARCIA, 1999). One of its key features is that it should always promote reflection on practice, fostering a *modus intelligendi*, that is, a critical view in the formulation of increasingly refined teaching methods and techniques. Continuing education activities have "[...] become the most dynamic, rich, and productive component in recent years" (GARCIA, 1999, p. 136) and are carried out individually or, especially, in collaboration with other teachers, with the aim of improvement, research, and solving everyday problems.

It is within continuing education that relevant themes, such as the development of socio-emotional competencies, neuroscience, and digital culture, are explored as cross-cutting concepts (NÓVOA, 2017). These conceptualizations must address the need for teachers to refine their practice from an educational praxis perspective, mobilizing theoretical concepts that allow them to reflect upon and improve their teaching practice. This improvement "[...] refers to how teachers are currently developing and have developed in their personal and professional lives in various contexts, shaped by social, historical, and cultural conditions" (NUNES; NUNES, 2013, p. 92). It is essential to emphasize that cross-cutting concepts should never diminish or detach the teacher's work and action

Continuous formation of the Class Director Professor (PDT) of state public schools in Ceará from disciplinary knowledge but rather provide a foundation to "[...] seek new paths to think about school and education" (NÓVOA, 2013, p. 1120), fostering continuous improvement of teaching practices to respond more effectively to contemporary demands.

In this regard, the Ceará State Department of Education (SEDUC/CE), in recent years, has regularly promoted training sessions for its network of teachers with the perspective that these actions will enhance their work. The *Projeto Professor Diretor de Turma* (PPDT, Homeroom Teacher Project) is one such initiative. It aims to enable a more directed approach by teachers towards their students, moving away from mass education and focusing on the specific needs of students, thereby fostering more equitable and effective educational actions.

The PPDT has been implemented since 2008 in the state public school system of Ceará, initially applied only in High Schools Integrated with Professional Education (LIMA; PEREIRA; SÁ, 2019). Today, it has expanded beyond this educational modality, reaching around 12,099 classes across 731 part-time and full-time high schools in the state of Ceará, establishing itself as an important policy for educational quality. As a result, the training and development of professionals working in this role — while it may seem logical, it is important to reiterate — becomes essential for their qualification, as it is through these actions that they will structure the necessary competencies to respond to the demands imposed by the project.

The training policy, therefore, reaffirms itself as essential for improving teaching and learning, as it focuses on the figure of the teacher, not just the school manager. This focus ensures the effectiveness of the teaching work, as it assists teachers in addressing the challenges posed by the curricula demanded by contemporary society (BAUER, 2012). Moreover, it aligns with a set of characteristics inherent to more qualified training, such as the integration of theory and practice, the teacher's investigative attitude, the establishment of learning communities, and the pursuit of social justice (GATTI; BARRETO; ANDRÉ; ALMEIDA, 2019).

## **Objective and Research Methodology**

The objective of this article is to determine whether the Ceará State Department of Education provides continuing education programs aimed at improving the qualifications of teachers who serve

FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas as Class Director Teachers (PDT). To achieve this, a survey was conducted with 511 PDTs from Ceará's state public school system to investigate how these professionals evaluate the training they have received and to identify which topics, not yet covered, are considered relevant for the better performance of their roles.

The aforementioned experiment, of a quantitative nature, was conducted in May and June 2020, with the 511 participating PDTs representing 8.4% of the total 6,101 PDTs in the mentioned network. The data was collected remotely using a structured electronic questionnaire via Google Forms, covering teachers from both the capital of Ceará – Fortaleza – and other municipalities in the state, across various school modalities that offer this project.

The research form consisted of a 20-item questionnaire divided into three sections: the first part, up to question nine, characterized the respondents, aiming to understand their gender, education, and exclusive dedication to teaching. The next segment sought to clarify how long the teachers had been serving as PDTs and to understand the general characteristics of the training they received, such as the time at which the training was held, whether it was offered in person, online, or in a hybrid format, and the relevance of the training for their role. The third section, comprising open-ended questions, aimed to capture respondents' perceptions of the training, identifying the positive and negative aspects, which topics were deemed most important for further exploration, and their perspectives on whether they intend to continue in the PDT role.

For the presentation of the data, the results were divided into three stages. First, the characteristics and importance of the PPDT in improving the quality of teaching and learning were discussed, based on documents and relevant authors. Next, the respondents were characterized to understand how these agents are constituted within the project. Finally, the most representative results of the research regarding the positive and negative aspects of the training received by these professionals were presented.

This report primarily addresses the quantitative results from the questionnaires but also aims to understand the subjective and more specific individual needs of these teachers through open-ended responses, thus qualitatively analyzing the data. As a result, it is characterized as quantitative research, but it employs the concurrent embedded strategy, which "collects both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously" (CRESWELL, 2010, p. 252). The quantitative data supports and gives meaning to the qualitative analyses, which are fundamental to the experiment, as they provide depth and insight to the quantitative indicators.

In addition to these understandings, the results expressed here are based on an observation of reality, thus grounded in a pragmatic methodology, as they reflect on the research findings

Continuous formation of the Class Director Professor (PDT) of state public schools in Ceará (JOHNSON; ONWUERGBUZIE, 2004; TALEBIAN; VAISI; ELLAHI, 2020). In conclusion, it is understood that these results stem from the characterization of a specific educational reality; however, they are generalizable to similar contexts. The overarching idea is that the findings are shaped by the worldviews and personal characteristics of both respondents and researchers, thereby resting on a critical paradigm (SAMPIERI; CALLADO; LUCIO, 2010).

## **The Class Director Teacher Project (PPDT) in Ceará**

The Class Director Teacher Project (PPDT) in Ceará was implemented in 2008 in 25 High Schools Integrated with Professional Education, inspired by the Portuguese model established in 1968, "[...] with the approval of the Preparatory Statute for Secondary Education, through Decree No. 48.572/68" (LIMA, 2014, p. 328). Ten years later, in 2018, according to information available on the SEDUC/CE website (Available at: <https://www.seduc.ce.gov.br/projeto-professor-diretor-de-turma-ppdt/>), the project expanded to 627 public state schools, including 111 Full-Time High Schools, 119 High Schools Integrated with Professional Education, and 397 Part-Time Schools.

his model aims to de-massify education through the diagnosis and monitoring of students' individual needs, focusing on addressing difficulties and promoting the enhancement of teaching actions to improve student learning. The approach centers on the disciplinary guidance of students and direct contact with their families, aiming to improve their academic performance (LIMA, 2014; LIMA; PEREIRA; SÁ, 2019).

The qualification process focuses primarily on deepening the teacher's understanding of the students' school and personal situations. A designated teacher is assigned to systematically monitor a specific class, acting as the Class Director Teacher (PDT). The PDT seeks to understand each student's individual needs, working with other teachers to implement targeted actions to combat academic failure and contribute to students' academic success by addressing both cognitive and socio-emotional barriers.

Lima (2014), in research conducted with PDTs in the state public school system in Sobral, and Leite, Martin, and Lima (2017), in a study in Aracoiaba, describe the initial design of this project within SEDUC/CE. Five hours per week of a teacher's total workload are allocated for the systematic monitoring of students in a specific class where the teacher also delivers a core subject. Of these five hours, two are dedicated to organizing individual and collective information collection tools that form a dossier on each student; one hour is set aside for guiding and supporting student monitors who assist



FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas the PDT in following up with the class and its students; one hour is reserved for individual meetings with students and their parents or legal guardians. Lastly, one hour is devoted to teaching the subject “Citizenship Education,” a curricular component focused on relevant social integration themes and fostering students' critical reflection on contemporary society.

To be designated as a PDT, a teacher must meet certain minimum profile requirements. These include being a strong leader, motivator, active, responsible, sensitive, prudent, and passionate about education (LIMA, 2014, p. 330). As such, the PDT should be able to effectively monitor students, encouraging them to overcome challenges and improve their learning outcomes. The teacher’s training should emphasize the development of socio-emotional competencies and dialogic learning, where teachers and students engage in a horizontal relationship, fostering mutual growth and knowledge exchange. This bond-building process enhances trust between teacher and student, encouraging student development and positioning the teacher as a trusted guide (AUBERT; FLECHA; GARCÍA; FLECHA; RACIONERA, 2016). This relationship must transcend the outdated traditional model in which the teacher is the sole possessor of knowledge and the student a "blank slate" to be filled. According to Freire’s concept, in a dialogic relationship, both are learners and knowledge holders, and together, they enhance each other’s growth and overcome cognitive challenges. This creates a "psychological significance" that adapts and aligns new learning content with the knowledge that students bring with them, allowing for a connection between what is already known and what is newly taught” (AUBERT; FLECHA; GARCÍA; FLECHA; RACIONERA, 2016, p. 51).

From this perspective, it is crucial that the Class Director Teacher (PDT) adopts a horizontal position in their relationship with the student, as this bond is fundamental to the effective performance of their role. Establishing this connection is essential for the PDT to fully develop their function, with the student and their learning as the central focus and guiding principle.

## **Characterization of Respondents**

The respondents of this study are all Class Director Teachers (PDT) from public schools within the state network of Ceará, located both in the capital and in other educational establishments across the state. They were actively teaching and assigned to this role in 2020. The majority, approximately 305 individuals, are cisgender women, representing 59.7% of the respondents, while cisgender men account for 39.3%, and only one respondent (0.2%) chose not to disclose their gender.

Most respondents, about 41.1%, are adults aged between 30 and 39, while a minority (13.7%) are over 50 years old. It is noteworthy that a small portion, 20.9%, are between 20 and 29 years old, indicating that they are in the early stages of their careers. This phase is often marked by uncertainties, potentially reflecting "feelings of insecurity and a desire to leave the profession" (ANDRÉ, 2018, p. 7), especially when faced with situations where their limited experience may not help them overcome challenges. According to the author, these professionals need to be encouraged to develop projects that yield positive responses from students, as this fosters a sense of fulfillment in their profession and helps reduce the likelihood of career abandonment.

The current research also indicated that about 62% of respondents have more than two years of experience as PDTs, which suggests that the majority have already gained experience with the project and that continued professional development is necessary to further enhance their practice, building upon the practical knowledge they have already acquired.

Regarding the academic background of these professionals, approximately 47.5% of the respondents hold specialist degrees, while 12.9% possess master's or doctoral degrees. This demonstrates a certain level of research experience, which undoubtedly contributes positively to their performance as PDTs. The theoretical knowledge they already possess adds to the expertise they can acquire during training sessions, ultimately improving the quality of their work. Imbernón (2010) emphasizes that the academic preparation of these professionals must be closely aligned with the needs of schools, enabling them to be better equipped to tackle the challenges they will face in their teaching roles, and allowing them to draw on their theoretical knowledge to address the practical and routine situations of the school and the teaching-learning process.

Finally, the majority of respondents (62.8%) have a teaching workload of up to 40 hours per week at the same institution, and more than 90% have exclusive dedication to the teaching profession. This provides greater commitment to the school's pedagogical activities and to the continuous professional development processes offered to them.

The data presented above are essential for outlining the profile of professionals who serve as Class Directors (PDT), which is crucial for understanding how these professionals are selected and whether this has a direct impact on their performance. It helps assess their level of engagement with the project and their more or less significant contribution to achieving its objectives. The following sections will present the results of the other two parts of this research.

## Results and Discussions

The investigation revealed that 270 respondents, equivalent to 52.8%, have undergone some form of training to certify their performance as Class Directors (PDT). However, it is undeniable that a significant portion, about 47.2%, are still carrying out this role without the necessary training. This lack of training could lead if these professionals do not receive proper and systematic supervision from the school's management to questionable performance in their role as PDT, potentially resulting in inadequate performance and lower-quality outcomes in achieving the project's objectives.

Of the total number of teachers who have received some form of training for the PDT role, the majority, around 81%, reported that this training took place during their weekly planning hours. This is valuable information, considering that Brazil's Law of National Education Guidelines (LDB 9394/96), in Article 61, Section I, establishes that teacher training should involve "[...] the association between theory and practice, including in-service training." Additionally, Section V of Article 67 mandates that teachers should have "[...] time reserved for study, planning, and assessment, included in their workload" (BRASIL, 1996, emphasis added). This highlights that the training offered by SEDUC/CE complies with current legislation and does not require additional hours beyond the teacher's regular workload, which would otherwise conflict with their personal responsibilities. This alignment positively impacts their performance in the classroom.

Regarding the characteristics of the in-service training received, 81.8% of respondents indicated that it was either entirely or almost entirely conducted in person, occurring, as previously mentioned, during their weekly planning hours. Furthermore, in 83.3% of cases, the trainers were either SEDUC technicians or teachers from the same school, highlighting that peer-to-peer training is a reality and positioning the school as the center of the teacher's formative process. According to Nunes and Nunes (2013), identifying the characteristics of these "trainers of trainers" is of great importance, as it is through their worldview, societal understanding, and teaching and learning methodologies that trainers align themselves more or less with the conceptions necessary to overcome the difficulties encountered in schools, with a focus on improving education. The authors emphasize the importance of trainers being reflective and engaged, ensuring that their practice aligns with the experiences and needs of the teachers they are training. This process should foster reflective teachers who are capable of finding solutions grounded in their own praxis. These trainers, thus, can be characterized from a critical and reflective perspective, where "[...] the role of the trainer evolves from a change focused on individual development to a stronger commitment to the school" (NUNES;

Continuous formation of the Class Director Professor (PDT) of state public schools in Ceará NUNES, 2013, p. 95). Typically, these trainers are colleagues from the same school or educational system and begin from the premise of teaching practice and its characteristics. Therefore, this finding of the research shows that the trainers distance themselves from the perspective of the "instructor-trainer," who, according to the authors, adheres to technical rationality and fosters dependence on the trainees, treating them as passive recipients in the training process, thus contributing less effectively to improving their professional performance.

Some teachers point to the Distance Education Center (CED), a specific coordinator within SEDUC/CE, as a potential trainer, with the primary function of providing ongoing training and professional development for public school teachers. This reflects the concern of the Secretariat to improve teacher qualifications as a strategy to enhance teaching, learning, and student success. The training focuses on the teacher-trainee and their needs, a point that has already been highlighted in this discussion.

A noteworthy aspect is that in 22.7% of the remaining cases, teachers mentioned several institutes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as the main providers of their training. Notable examples include the Ayrton Senna Institute (IAS) and the Aliança Institute (IA). This reflects the growing influence of NGOs in state-run projects, which likely contributes to the dissemination of principles espoused by these organizations, which may or may not align with SEDUC/CE's objectives. Therefore, further study is required to assess whether these trainers are reflective educators, who prioritize the needs and central role of the teacher-trainee, or if they lean toward a more technical rationality. If the latter is the case, the training may distance itself from the professional reality of the teachers, reducing its impact on the performance of PDTs and undermining SEDUC/CE's monitoring and guidance efforts (NUNES; NUNES, 2013).

A relevant finding is that approximately 97.4% of the surveyed teachers—an overwhelming majority—indicated that the training positively contributed to their role as PDTs, addressing key topics necessary for their job performance. Among the most frequently mentioned positive aspects was the focus on the socio-emotional competencies of students. Some respondents noted that the training was important because it allowed them to "[...] learn to understand students from a more holistic perspective" (TEACHER A1, 2020), and it emphasized "[...] centralizing the development of students' potential, placing them as protagonists in their academic, social, and future professional lives" (TEACHER A2, 2020). Others remarked that "[...] this training develops a humanistic education and prepares students for life in general" (TEACHER A3, 2020); it "[...] facilitates closer relationships with students" (TEACHER A4, 2020); and finally, "[...] I learned the importance of socio-emotional competencies for the full development of students. The project allows us to

FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas strengthen the relationship between school and student and gain a deeper understanding of our students' realities (PROFESSOR A5, 2020).

The testimonies reproduced here reveal how deeply concerned teachers are with teachings that go beyond mere cognitive learning of basic content, aiming to develop skills that enable them to address the more holistic development of the student. This aligns the training with the principles of dialogic learning that underpin the role of the PDT and helps foster a more horizontal relationship between teacher and student, where the teacher recognizes the student and their prior knowledge as essential components in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, it emphasizes that this learning is mutual and bidirectional, meaning both teachers and students learn from and teach each other in this relationship (AUBERT; FLECHA; GARCÍA; FLECHA; RACIONERA, 2016).

There are also statements indicating that the training successfully supported the teachers' work by helping them "Develop emotional intelligence to handle the various day-to-day situations at school and with students" (TEACHER A6, 2020), contributing to "The development of routines for the role" (TEACHER A7, 2020), or promoting "The exchange of experiences with peers to learn from other realities and take examples of what to do or not to do in our own school" (TEACHER A8, 2020). This shows that teachers also need the development of topics that provide them with support to address the challenges of their profession, including handling this generation of students with distinctive characteristics, which are often different from the context in which the teachers themselves were trained. Addressing this need is likely linked to a deeper understanding of current pedagogical techniques, which would better equip them for their role.

Therefore, based on this selection of testimonials, it is evident that the training of PDT in Ceará was grounded in the principles of adult education, adhering to the precepts of andragogy, in which "[...] the curriculum is built around the needs and interests of the learner" (NOFFS; RODRIGUES, 2011, p. 285). It is based on the assumptions of learning that emphasize the active participation of the trainee in the teaching-learning process. In this regard, it is clear that the training focuses not on disciplines but on the needs of the profession, serving as a foundation for improving and developing techniques to overcome the problem situations identified in the daily interactions between teachers and students, significantly contributing to clarifying solutions for routine problems. According to the authors, one of the key features of this type of training is the horizontal relationship between the trainer and the teacher (in this case, the PDT), where the former assumes the role of a learning facilitator, "[...] with dialogue, respect, collaboration, trust, comfort, and informality as its main characteristics, ensuring that the learner feels safe and confident" (NOFFS; RODRIGUES, 2013, p. 286). Furthermore, many of the participant-teachers' comments positively highlight the

Continuous formation of the Class Director Professor (PDT) of state public schools in Ceará training for deepening their understanding of the PPDT's concepts, as it provides "Insight into how the early PDT projects worked, their evolution, and adaptation to our reality" (TEACHER A9, 2020). It also enhances "Knowledge about how the PDT functions and its importance in the school environment" (TEACHER A10, 2020), and qualifies the teacher's work, as "It is fantastic to work as a PDT because we work with students on emotional resilience" (TEACHER A11, 2020). In light of this, it is evident that there is a notable concern among the participants in this academic inquiry to understand how this project was implemented and how it has evolved into its current form. From this, it can be inferred that the teachers involved tend to view knowledge of the project as important for better implementing it within schools, with a focus on achieving high-quality education.

Regarding the negative aspects of the training, many respondents pointed to the challenges they face in implementing the project as areas for improvement, particularly because they are often tasked with roles for which they are not technically prepared, such as acting as psychologists or social workers. Specifically, the most cited negative aspect of the training received was the insufficient duration. Over 40% of the respondents mentioned this as something that needs improvement, given the importance of the project in establishing bonds with students and their families. The teachers expressed that: "There isn't enough time for more in-depth studies" (TEACHER B1, 2020); "The time allocated for the training could be longer" (TEACHER B2, 2020); and that "The training is too short and disconnected from the daily realities of the school" (TEACHER B3, 2020). This highlights the increasing need felt by the respondents to delve deeper into the guiding themes of the PDT's work and the necessity for the SEDUC to offer systematic, in-depth training with the appropriate duration to meet this demand.

Another negative aspect highlighted in the responses is the lack of didactic material to support the work of the PDTs, along with the increasing need to address psychological issues and develop socio-emotional competencies in the training. These topics are essential to the PDTs' daily work. Some excerpts from the responses confirm these findings: "The training could be more focused on daily realities and provide more psychological support" (TEACHER B4, 2020); there is a lack of "Materials (activities and texts) to be used in class" (TEACHER B5, 2020); and "Lack of materials available for our work! Difficulties accessing the class director program through the website, which leaves much to be desired!" (TEACHER B6, 2020). The last comment also points out the challenges in accessing the project's website. Finally, "We could have more training regarding psychological issues so that we can better address this with the students" (TEACHER B7, 2020). These testimonials align with the project's proposal, which integrates cognitive aspects with the need to develop socio-emotional competencies and emphasizes horizontal dialogue as essential prerequisites for effective

FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas actions. In some statements, the PDTs suggest the involvement of professionals - such as psychologists - to better support the training.

Regarding the contributions that training was able to provide for the improved qualification of PDT actions, most respondents highlighted that it helped them interact better with students. The training allowed them to "See the 'student' as a human being, capable of transforming the world around them. And you, as a Teacher/partner, contribute to the awareness of the society in which they are inserted" (TEACHER C1, 2020). Additionally, the training helped "Better understand the students' problems to help them during the process" (TEACHER C2, 2020). Another teacher mentioned that the training "By presenting and creating a discussion space where socio-emotional skills were emphasized as a means to understand the student in their multiple aspects" (TEACHER C3, 2020). These and other comments highlight the PDTs' ongoing concern with understanding the student as a relational being, who already carries a wealth of knowledge. The need to comprehend the student holistically is also evident, promoting a closer connection between these two actors and enabling more effective monitoring and the establishment of parameters to overcome challenges, with the aim of achieving academic success. Therefore, the constant focus of these professionals on student learning is evident, as they understand that their work will be more effective the more comprehensive their knowledge is of the students served by the project.

Regarding the topics that these professionals would like to see addressed and explored in-depth during their training, the majority referred to the need for further exploration of socio-emotional skills and how to engage with families. The PDTs pointed out that these two areas are crucial for the full development of the project, as they provide the foundation for a closer relationship with students, which is essential for teachers' work. This is clearly expressed in comments such as: "It would be interesting to have training that covers family engagement, as we don't focus on the student in isolation; we always need to have contact with the family" (TEACHER D1, 2020); "Courses that contribute to the emotional and mental health of my students and myself" (TEACHER D2, 2020); and "Topics addressing the personal and social development of the student, including family and community" (TEACHER D3, 2020).

Other suggestions included more playful and varied methodologies in the training, as well as requests for materials and support equipment to work with students, as expressed in the following statement: "[...] the theoretical foundation is very good and guides our work. I would like practical tools, playful activities, that is, suggestions for activities, videos, films. It would be very helpful to provide us, for instance, with a notebook, internet access since most activities are online. Support for more engaging lessons (PROFESSOR D4, 2020).

Additionally, some teachers suggest addressing contemporary issues that are part of students' lives to better equip them for the development of the *Formação para a Cidadania* (Citizenship Education) discipline. These issues include sexual abuse, gender and sexuality, racism, the environment, health education, fiscal education, current politics, and more. This demonstrates that their initial teacher training was insufficient to meet the need to address these everyday topics with young people. It highlights the importance of fostering dialogue and understanding the problems that many of these students face. Moreover, it indicates that the PDTs recognize that their role goes beyond the mere transmission of content in their subject areas, and that cross-cutting themes are crucial in shaping knowledge. The final inquiry of this research pertains to the willingness of these professionals to continue in their role as PDTs. The majority, around 90%, intend to remain in this position. Despite the additional duties and responsibilities, they justify this decision by noting that the role significantly aids in understanding and mapping out students' individual needs. They believe this is fundamental to identifying the root causes of academic failure and developing effective strategies to overcome the obstacles they encounter in their ongoing effort to ensure educational quality and student success.

## **Final considerations**

The training of education professionals is an indispensable step in the teaching-learning process, as it defines the foundational elements for the practice of the profession. However, this training must be aligned with the demands and realities of schools to fulfill its purpose of preparing future teachers for the challenges that await them.

Teacher education is divided into two stages. The first stage is called initial training, which takes place before entering the professional teaching field and aims to mobilize concepts and techniques that equip educators with the knowledge and skills necessary for their profession. It also allows for their first interaction with the realities of the school environment. The second stage, which spans the entirety of a teacher's career, is intrinsically linked to the emerging needs encountered during teaching practice. This is known as continuing education, a fundamental and essential part of a teacher's life, serving as a continuous and strategic effort to meet the demands of enhancing their work to address the challenges of the teaching-learning process. Both phases should be interconnected, forming a comprehensive conceptual framework guiding teaching practice.

Understanding this necessity, the Ceará State Department of Education (SEDUC/CE) recognized the importance of integrating the technical knowledge of its teachers' specific disciplines



FERREIRA FILHO, Luciano Nery; PONTES JUNIOR, José Airton de Freitas with the socio-emotional support required by students. In 2008, SEDUC/CE established the *Professor Diretor de Turma* (PDT) Project, aiming to create a professional role focused on the specific needs of students, distancing education from the mass teaching model. As a result, the continuing education of PDTs has become essential for the success of this new role, given that the initial training was insufficient to equip these professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills for their responsibilities.

The results of the research conducted with PDTs from the state public education system of Ceará were able to establish a profile of these professionals while mapping out their training needs to address challenges. More than that, the training brought numerous positive aspects by clarifying the need for teachers to understand the psychological, social, and emotional aspects of students, which are crucial for enhancing their professional performance.

Moreover, although the training is sometimes managed by organizations external to the Department of Education, it appears to have largely been effective in meeting the identified needs of public school teachers and improving the work of the PDTs. It is also important to highlight that the teachers involved in the study pointed out that many relevant topics still need to be addressed and explored further to support their work. Additionally, the training requires an increased number of instructional hours to sufficiently provide the theoretical and practical knowledge framework necessary for these professionals to perform their roles effectively.

Overall, it is observed that, despite the challenges reported by PDTs in their professional practice, they recognize that this strategic initiative of creating a project to map students' individual needs is fundamental for equitable pedagogical actions aimed at improving learning. By embracing this idea, they also view continuing education as essential to the qualification of PDTs. Finally, supported by their understanding of the importance of the project and the continuous training that underpins their role, they intend to continue in this function, as it has facilitated the development of significant knowledge for their teaching performance. It is understood that continuing education should emerge from the needs identified in teaching practice and be designed with the competence and expertise (from the mobilization of theoretical knowledge, case analyses, and reflections on each teacher's context) to develop the necessary skills for these professionals to enhance their teaching work. This is essential in seeking strategies to improve teaching and learning, as well as contributing sufficiently to the emancipatory education of students enrolled in Ceará's state public education system

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