

The Teacher Training at Schools: The Role of the School Principal

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Abstract: The present study analyzes the role of the school principal in the process of the elementary school teacher's training and identifies the actions of the school principal in the construction of spaces in the school that guarantee this training for the teachers. This school principal is observed as able to commit himself seeking resources and being involved in the pedagogical process. It is identified, however, that he often appeals to the bureaucracy, being distant from the pedagogical practice, abdicating to establish valuable dialogues for the daily school routine improvement and the teacher training, he/she gets himself hidden. The methodology used in the research is qualitative with referral for case study. A semi-structured interview and a questionnaire were used as collection instruments. The researched school belongs to the private education network and it is located in the city of Santos, State of São Paulo/Brazil. The collected data indicate that the teachers point out the principal with a fundamental role in the teacher training, mainly a pedagogical role and besides the administrative function, he/she should accompany the teaching practice and the learning process, highlighting the excess of bureaucracy that involves the daily routine of this professional. The teachers demonstrated that they understand the demands that involve the role of the school principal, but they stressed the importance of this professional being closer to the teachers.

Key words: school principal, teacher training, democratic management

1. Introduction

The present study is a result of a master's degree research and its objective is to reflect and analyze the role of the school principal in the elementary school teachers' training in the school context. It was sought to identify the action of this principal school in the construction of spaces in the school that guarantee this permanent training. It was observed yet the school principal as a professional able to commit himself/herself to his/her team, to the internal and external community, having as a mainly point of his/her work the training of the people by means of actions and attitudes that prioritize and value the teacher training in service, seeking resources, being involved in the pedagogical process.

It was identified, however, that most time, the school principal appeals to the administration bureaucracy, being distant from the daily contact with the teachers especially with regard to the pedagogical aspect, that justifies the present study, inquiring himself/herself on the role of the school principal. Abdicating the possibility of establishing valuable dialogues for the improvement of the daily school routine and the teacher training, he/she

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gets hidden, keeping himself/herself in his/her leadership space, reproducing a culture that naturalized him as a figure of power.

The methodology of this study is qualitative with referral for case study, it was used as collection instrument a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. The researched school belongs to the private education network and is located in the city of Santos, in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. The participants of the interview were the principal school, the pedagogical coordinator and the teachers of the early and late years of elementary school.

In this work, initial training and training in service were addressed, highlighting the democratic management in the school and the principal as an agent of change.

2. The School Principal and the Teacher Training in the School

In the study on the role of the school principal in the teacher training in the school it is fundamental to address educational policies and teacher training policies, observing the conditions under which they are formulated and implemented, emphasizing the existence of a political game permeated by tensions and antagonistic forces, where these policies are becoming a scenario of constant changes linked to the current power, thus disregarding the participation of the teachers.

For that purpose we used research from Figueiredo (1986), Oliveira (2010), Hofling (2001).

In Brazil, throughout history, teacher training policies are often separated not only from the reality experienced by teachers, but also from their professional needs. On the one hand, initial training has been shown to be linked to a matrix of competitiveness by higher education institutions, focused on the commercialization of undergraduate degree courses, on the other hand, continuing education, has demonstrated, over the years, to serve the interests of higher administrative bodies, to which schools are linked.

There are, however, studies that indicate a perspective of change concerning continuing education in service, enabling a strengthening of teacher education, according to studies by Ribeiro, Teixeira, Ambrosetti (2004), who affirm that the concept of continuing education is associated with the idea of systematicity, regularity and sequence of actions, as opposed to the casual and episodic character of more traditional education..

The expression suggests methodological-investigative options, based on the analysis and interpretation of reality, and considers teachers as subjects of their own education and professional practice as a source of theoretical reflection in this process. The characteristics of the teachers, their professional and personal expectations, the work context and the school culture becomes considered. In this process, the following stand out: school, as a locus of education, teacher knowledge, considering teachers as owners and producers of knowledge and the person of the teacher, their identity, seen as a subject of the process.

In this sense, it is believed that the social and political performance of the school principal, committed to the quality and values of training in the educational space, contributes to the formation of more and more meaningful spaces of training in the school. When training establishes itself as the main activity in the educational environment, it not only seeks to overcome the higher commands to which schools are normally subjected, but also to value teaching knowledge.

In this aspect, the school management takes place of relevance in the educational space, being the democratic management a way for the construction of a project of training that has meaning for the teachers. Veiga (2013) defines democratic management as a principle that comprehends the pedagogical, administrative and financial dimensions, requiring a thorough understanding of the problems related to pedagogical practice, emphasizes that

in this sense the educational space has a leadership that becomes more important, as its action turns to the subjects as main elements in the constitution of a school that is thought and questioned from the teacher training and the dialogue in the search for the construction of a proper identity.

The profile of the school director, according to Bordignon and Gracindo (2001), must reconcile the technical and political dimensions, seen as essential. According to the authors, technical qualification requires mastery of the fundamentals of education and pedagogy, with its indispensable teaching base, and knowledge of the management processes of an organization. On the other hand, political requirements require sensitivity so that the principal perceives the movements of reality and anticipates them, without denying the differences, coordinating the institutional forces in the direction of her/her purpose.

It is considered that the school principal and the pedagogical coordinator, if engaged and committed to the pedagogical process carried out in the educational space, can provide not only a continuous education that supports and makes possible the expansion of teachers' knowledge, but also the acquisition of resources and the revision of school spaces and time for the improvement of an increasingly significant teacher training.

For Fusari (2004), continuing teacher education will be more successful if the school staff, led by principals and coordinators, face it as a basic value and condition for the professional development of teachers. Structure and democratic management are essential elements, since they prioritize the participation and involvement of teachers and other employees.

In considering the aspects pointed out by Fusari (2004), Lück (2012) highlights management as a process that is linked to the idea of the participation of people acting together in the direction of a certain situation. It is associated with mobilization and collectively organized efforts, to the joint constructive action of its components.

Paro (2004) conceptualizes management as a rational use of resources to achieve certain ends and, according to the author, the foundation of the school is to provide conditions for the student to learn through the appropriation of culture, that is, to form personalities, to produce a historical human being.

In this sense, it is confirmed the importance of the role of school management in the training process carried out in the school, considering both the education of the student and of the teachers as integrated processes of reflection, is confirmed, since the school as one of the basic institutions of society of knowledge, according to a study by Bonilla (2009), needs to transform into a learning school where not only the students who have what to learn, but also the teachers, the community and the institution itself need to be in a permanent learning process.

From this perspective, the contribution of school management to the education process is based on the organization of pedagogical work in harmony with the Political Pedagogical Project, whose goals and actions converge towards student learning, establishing time, spaces and conditions that favor the development of the planning actions of the practice by the teachers.

It is reiterated that the democratic management, inside the school, has, in the school principal, a possibility of commitment with the change of the educational space. In other words, the principal leaves the common place to build, together with the pedagogical coordinator, a teacher training course that establishes its bases in the daily school routine, taking as a starting point the practice of the teachers. Thus, democratic management becomes the fundamental principle for the construction of a permanent teacher training project in the school.

The daily exercise of democratic management offers conditions for the school principal to perceive himself/herself as a professional in continuous construction, being possible to reflect on his/her performance continuously, from the daily contact with the school actors, seeking to break with a culture that naturalized the school principal as a figure of power, unrelated to existing relationships in the educational environment, to

exercise the higher commands.

When this professional manages to break with this culture and leaves his/her place of comfort to actually experience conflicts and relationships in school, he/she assumes himself/herself as an agent of change.

3. Results

The researched school belongs to the private education network and is located in the peripheral region of the city of Santos, State of São Paulo, Brazil.

The teaching unit serves students from the 1st to 9th years of Elementary and High School, and the students from the 1st to 5th years remain full-time at school.

The management team is composed of the director and two pedagogical coordinators, one of the coordinators attends the teachers of the initial years of elementary education, who are part of full-time integral education, and the other attends to the teachers of the final years and high school.

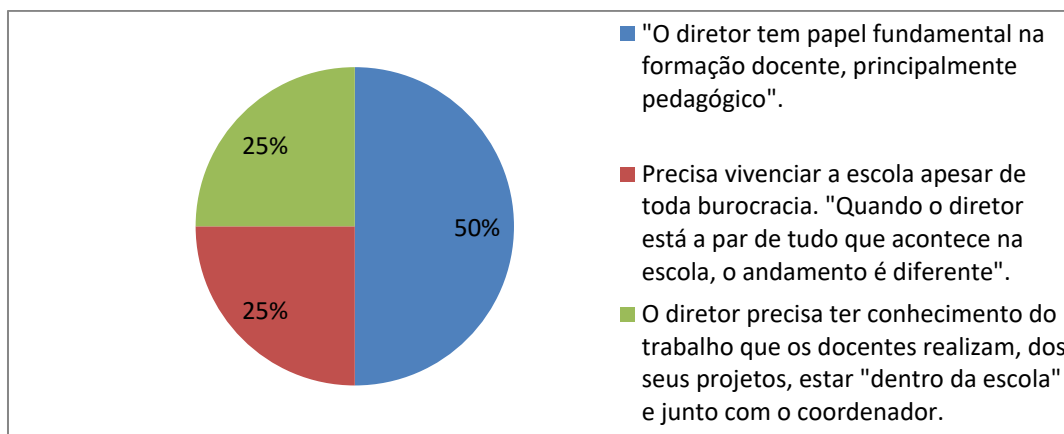
The subjects of the research were the director of the school, pedagogical coordinator and teachers of the Elementary School, being two teachers of the initial years and two of the final years.

They were used as the interview data collection instruments and questionnaire as a way to get the representations of the participants about the role of school principal in teacher training at school.

From the collected data, it was observed that the role of the director in the training of teachers is linked to their involvement with the people who are part of the pedagogical process, providing conditions for, in partnership with the pedagogical coordinator, to constitute and build a culture centered on the work with students.

Since school is a space for the diffusion of knowledge, every effort made in it must converge to the learning of those for whom it was created [...]. So many are the problems of practice, that management runs the risk of diverting from this seemingly so simple purpose. Of losing oneself in the tangle of the ball threads [...] And this, as well known, can not and must not occur. The success of a school management, in the last instance, is only achieved through the success of all students (Vieira, 2007, p. 67).

It is observed that the management team contributes significantly in the training process, in that it understands this process as a continuous movement that requires investment; as it engages with pedagogical work, organizing and managing resources (including humans), expanding spaces, acquiring useful and meaningful materials for teaching and learning, in a political attitude of active participation.



The Role of the School Principal

Source: Questionnaires and Interviews - Data Collection

The school principal has a fundamental role in the teacher training, especially pedagogical.

It is a need to experience the school, despite of all bureaucracy. “When the school principal is aware of all what happens in the school, the progress is different.”

The school principal needs to be aware of the work that the teachers do, of their projects, to be “inside the school” and together with the coordinator.

The collected data indicate that the teachers point out the school principal with a fundamental role in teacher education, mainly pedagogical. Emphasize the importance of the school principal to participate more actively in the pedagogical work in school, claim that it is for him, as well as administrative function, follow the teaching practice in partnership with the pedagogical coordinator, monitor the daily challenges of the school community and learning, highlighting the excess of bureaucracy that involves the day to day of this professional. Teachers have demonstrated an understanding of the demands that involve the role of the school principal but have stated the importance of being closer to them.

Reflecting about the raised aspects by the interviewed teachers, it is considered the study of Paro (2004), when he says that managing is mediated, it is an effort to reach certain ends, being fundamental the concern with the people who are part of the pedagogical process - students, teachers and everyone else involved.

In this sense, it reinforces the idea that the base of the school is to provide conditions for students to learn through the appropriation of culture, that is, to form personalities, to produce a historical human being.

Paro (2004) emphasizes the need for everyone to participate, in the sense of not denying this principle, whether in colleges, in class councils, in parental meetings or in other school activities.

With regard to the pedagogical coordinator, the data indicated that the teachers expect the principal school to be in line with the teaching staff, assisting them, bringing content and activities, deepening and improving what is already in progress in the teacher training.

As for the school principal, the data analyzed indicated that teachers expect them to play an interaction role with the pedagogical coordinator, to get involved with the pedagogical process of the school, to know their community and the profile of the students and to develop a greater dialogue with the students.

The data showed that the school principal sees herself as a professional who, in her practice, seeks to help teachers to strengthen their daily teaching practice, stating that the teacher realizes the importance of their participation in the formation and knowledge of the school as a whole; she states that the director must position himself as a training agent “because otherwise you will not succeed, you lose credibility. Do not you know the school and want to train without knowing the school?” (School Director).

4. Final Considerations

The constant search for teacher training leads us to frequent inquiries and analyzes of the reality experienced, providing us see possibilities for the different situations encountered in everyday life, becoming a kind of belief.

In this sense, this “belief” renews and “gives strength” to the daily confrontation of the challenges present in the educational environment, which shows itself as a living organism, composed of thinking subjects, with sometimes of contradictory and conflicting interests, forming a field of tensions and disputes.

In this panorama, it is considered the possibility of a struggle for teacher training within the educational space, as a perspective of change, because it is believed that there is a knowledge that is linked to the teachers' practices, but is often not accessed by the educational institutions, for these, most of the time, are focused on

curricula and didactic materials that shape the teaching and distance the school from a rich and present social context in the students' daily lives. There is a school that needs to become a learner, turning not only to student learning but also to teacher learning.

The objective of this study was to analyze and reflect on the role of school principal teacher training school, enabling, through their analysis, with regard to reflections on school management, where for often unintentionally, teachers, coordinators and other professionals of education are distanced from the social function of the school, where in the challenging dynamics of day to day school, end up reproducing models distant from nature and educational purpose.

One of the aspects that was also evidenced in this study was the lack of autonomy of the school in relation to the referral of their daily needs and difficulties, showing that they gain a lesser space of discussion due to the demands coming from the higher administrations, and bureaucratic end up invading the educational space, configuring itself as a strong, controlling presence, reflecting on all movements performed within the school.

However, it is emphasized that the nature of the school movement is knowledge, which is fundamentally pedagogical, "does not accept" any fragmentation, since it is a basic condition for professional practice in the educational environment.

In this respect, the great importance is not in the school principal's participation at the time the trainings occur, but the school principal is, in fact, responsible for the pedagogical process worked with a view to the main foundation of the school, which is the formation of human-historical personalities. For this purpose, to be achieved, it is a logical condition his/her approximation to the teachers, knowing their desires, difficulties and formative needs.

We conclude that school professionals expect the school principal exercise of a position not yet exercised, regardless of the duties provided by central governments; posture of a professional who is involved in the educational environment, coming out of his place "command" to interact with school actors, "opening the door" of your office space, which is essentially educational, for the fact that individuals are the school and ratify its existence as an educational space.

This attitude defines the role of the school principal in school and in teacher training, and a political positioning of a professional who participates and gets involved with the educational environment, because without knowing the school and throughout the community, there is no possibility of exercising a management committed to people, with knowledge and with learning.

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