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Oudin, Mónica A.

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Learnings in the professional initiation of graduates from the Teacher Training Careers at the FCEQyN - UNaM - At Secondary Schools

Los aprendizajes en la iniciación profesional de los graduados de los profesorados de la FCEQyN-UNaM- en las escuelas secundarias

Mónica A. Oudin

Facultad de Ciencias Exactas, Químicas y Naturales (FCEQyN). Universidad Nacional de Misiones (UNaM). Argentina.

E-mail: monicaoudin@yahoo.com.ar

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Abstract

The research had as its object of study the “Learnings in the professional initiation of graduates of the FCEQyN-UNaM - At Secondary Schools”. The objectives were: To know and understand the significances that graduates have about their workplace as a field of professional learning. To describe the resources, modalities and processes that enable the learning processes at the moment of initiation into professional life in secondary schools; to detect and analyze the place of graduates learning in school and the meaning they give to their own action; and to provide theoretical underpinnings and referential elements to broaden the conception of professional teacher training. The methodology was framed within the qualitative logic, from an interpretative-critical approach. The actors’ perspective was considered, taking into account what they expect, how they are received, what they feel and what they believe they learn. We sought to deepen what is behind these situations and learning. The research had to look at the current institutional context where the graduates work. As research techniques, workshops with the graduates and in-depth interviews with registration were favored.

Keywords: Threshold; Professional socialization; Trajectories; Initial teacher training; Learnings.

Resumen

La investigación tuvo como objeto el estudio de “Los aprendizajes en la iniciación profesional de los graduados de los Profesorados de la FCEQyN-UNaM- en las escuelas secundarias”. Los objetivos fueron: Conocer y comprender las significaciones que tienen los graduados acerca de su lugar de trabajo como campo de aprendizaje profesional. Describir los recursos, las modalidades y procesos que permiten el desarrollo de aprendizajes en el momento de iniciación en la vida profesional en las escuelas secundarias; Detectar y analizar el lugar que tienen los egresados aprendiendo en la escuela y el sentido que otorgan a su propia acción; y proporcionar aportes teóricos y elementos referenciales para ampliar la concepción de formación profesional docente.

La metodología se enmarcó en la lógica cualitativa, desde un enfoque interpretativo-crítico. Se consideró la perspectiva de los actores, teniendo en cuenta qué esperan, cómo son recibidos, qué sienten y qué creen que aprenden. Se buscó profundizar qué hay detrás de esas situaciones y aprendizajes.

La investigación tuvo que mirar el contexto institucional actual donde se desempeñan los graduados. Como técnicas, se privilegiaron los talleres con los graduados y entrevistas en profundidad con registro.

Palabras clave: Umbral; Socialización profesional; Trayectorias; Iniciación laboral docente; Aprendizajes.

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to focus on the learning process in the professional initiation of graduates of the FCEQyN-UNaM- Teacher Training Programmes in secondary schools. We believe that teacher training involve

not only undergraduate education and teacher or further training, but also the place where teachers work, which generates the learning that will shape their professional career. There are aspects that make up the institutional and daily life of school institutions. They collaborate in the construction of the teaching activity, constituting signifi-

cant elements for professional development.

In this sense, we understand professional socialisation as the instance of learning that takes place in the institutional space of schools, in the teaching workplaces. We know that this is not the only training instance or phase, but it is recognised as some of the main ones, together with undergraduate training and the other stages of the biography.

Bachelor's degree program or initial training has recently been the subject of the most reformist actions which are mainly focused in changes of the curricula.

With regard to in-service training, phase that constitutes labour socialisation, we can see that the different political administrations have generated training proposals, with different logics, either through projects focused on "updating" content or on didactic improvement, which have accompanied the different school reforms of recent times. In general, these reforms have not taken into account the institutional forms that organise labour socialisation in schools.

With regard to the training and support of graduates in this instance of labour socialisation, there have been, in recent times from the politics, some actions in the form of pilot experiences of support for new teachers¹ through the National Institute for Teacher Training (INFoD). However, they have not yet been extended to the entire field of teacher training.

It is recognised that the process of professional initiation that takes place in schools is a very complex network, a place where different practices intersect and generate multiple and varied learning for professional performance.

Each school, where the graduate begins his or her profesión, generates several learning situations that lead to the construction of the professional trajectory with others in a particular and situated way. Hence, the things that subjects experience, which involve common sense, meanings, established practices, such as rituals, innovations, values, modes of relationship and communication that make up the knowledge of everyday life at school, should be considered part of the training process.

The object of research was constructed on the basis of knowing and deepening the representations that the graduates have about their workplace as a field of professional learning. This allowed us to look at the network of meanings, which involves not only how and in what way the institutions collaborate in the process of professional initiation, but also the expectations that the school has of the new graduates, and to investigate: what, how and with whom they learn.

The problem posed covered questions such as: What do

graduates of the FCEQyN-UNaM teaching programmes learn when they begin their professional life in an educational establishment?; what, how and for what purpose do they learn?; with whom and from what sources do they learn?; how do they construct the teaching activity in the school at that moment that they begin their professional life?; what does the school enable them to learn about the teaching profession?

Objectives

- To know and understand the meanings that graduates have about their place of work as a field of professional learning.
- To describe and analyse the resources, modalities and processes that enable the development of learning at the time of initiation into professional life in secondary schools.
- To detect and analyse the place that graduates have in school learning and the meaning that they give to their own action.
- To provide theoretical contributions and referential elements to broaden the concept of professional teacher training.

Materials and methods

The epistemological perspective from which the research is approached is framed within the interpretative and critical paradigm. In this sense, the same formulation of the problem looked for contributing and giving concrete empirical content to the object of study proposed; it guided a design that set out to understand and comprehend these issues from the perspective of the actors involved in the research: the graduates.

It is interpretative, in that it sought to understand the reasons why the protagonists of this process say and do, situated in a historical, economic, political and cultural time and space that both constrains and enables them (Bourdieu 1988). [1]

It is also critical, because in this process we are favouring through the workshops, the reflection-action-transformation of the practices of the subjects involved; because the aim is not only to understand and comprehend the learning in the first work performances of the young graduates, but also to shed light on the complex web of their practices and to educate those of us who are concerned with investigating it, leading us towards the continuous revision of our own practices.

Authors such as Carr W. and Kemmis (1988) [2], Elliot, J. (1990) [3], (1993) [4] and Mc Laren P. (2005) [5] have contributed to this research from the perspective of critical educational theory. In order to enrich this perspective, we

1- Through INFoD, in 2008, a support program for new teachers was started, aimed at graduates of primary education teachers. This was developed in some teacher training institutes (ISFD) of the Province of Misiones, selected for this purpose, such as ISFD Normal 1, 13, 5, 9 and 10.

have also drawn on the whole critical current of sociology and social anthropology, especially those researchers who study different problems in the field of education, such as Rockwell (1995) [6] and the team of researchers from CINVESTAV in Mexico, such as Ezpeleta (1992) [7], Ezpeleta (1992) [8], Ezpeleta (1992) [9], Ezpeleta (1992) [9] and Ezpeleta (1992) [10]; Ezpeleta (1992) [7], Sandoval (2009) [8], Remedi (1988) [9], Bertely Busquets (2000) [10]; as well as Achilli (2005) [11] and Milstein (2009) [12], in Argentina. Thinkers enrolled in the current of cultural studies such as Hall (2006) [13] and Tadeu da Silva (2007) [14], among others.

At the time of this research, we worked with graduates who had no more than five years of experience in secondary schools, in order to see the different appropriations and meanings of professional learning in the workplace.

Methodological strategies

As a methodological strategy, the perspective of the actors was considered taking into account what they feel, what and how they believe they learn. The aim was to go deeper into what lies behind this learning and to recover the anecdotes and life stories as a social fact. The research looked at the current and historical institutional context in which the graduates work. It also considered the characteristics of the schools in their field.

As research techniques, a semi-structured questionnaire was constructed and used first, in which seventeen new graduates answered individually. This was applied in order to obtain the initial impressions of the subject. The resource of evocation and narrative became a necessary tool and perspective for the students to be able to relate the “experiences” which, in their opinion, are conducive to learning for professional development.

This is a research that sought to understand and generate theory, not just verify it. For this reason, the focus was on meetings in workshops with the graduates and in-depth recorded interviews so that the graduates could explain what and how they believe they are learning. Interviews were also used with the principals of the schools where the graduates work. This made other triangulations possible, gathering information about the different activities carried out by the graduates and finding out the expectations that the school has of the new teachers.

The whole research involved a double hermeneutic. In this sense, the aim was to interpret the meanings of the graduates in dialogue with the knowledge of reference that, as a researcher, I hold here.

Finally, an unavoidable component in the whole research process was reflexivity, which allowed us to broaden the objectification that, from a methodological point of view, implied doubt and, consequently, criticism in the construction of the object of study.

Results and discussion

Learning that is recognised in the “threshold” “umbral”² space.

“I learnt that school is not only our subject and the students” (Graduate 6).

“...there are issues that are not learnt at university, but simply lived and experienced” (Graduate 13).

Thus, we ask ourselves:

Which are the contributions that school provides that were significant in this instance of the first teaching performances?

The graduates recognise that they have to go through the experience in order to learn issues related to the teaching activity.

In some cases, the learning in these first teaching posts is centred on questions of how to manage the bureaucratic network that runs through the school. They learn about their place, about the position of “novice” or “beginner” in which the actors in the institution place them, and they also learn about the complex web of institutional relations, the “hidden curriculum”, “power relations”, and the political-partisan crossroads.

Regarding the hidden curriculum, one graduate commented on the tension they experience with “pedagogical” issues in relation to the evaluation of their own work,

“...the implicit issues that are in the school, what is hidden means that at a certain point, as a teacher, you feel that your role is just to regulate the classroom at a certain time. Because you don’t comply with the planning and they tell you: ‘well, it doesn’t matter if you didn’t comply with your planning’. But you say: half of my class didn’t pass’, so they say: ‘you have a problem. It’s a school that tells you a lot: ‘it’s the teacher’s fault’”. (Workshop 1)

They also learn about power struggles, about the interests at stake, about the place of what they call “party politics” in the school, about certain routines or practices installed at school’s day-to-day life. They learn about the position occupied by “new” and “older” teachers, they perceive that the latter have more rights and freedoms.

Thus some graduates tell us:

“I learned that school is not only our subject and students, is a whole, sentimental, economic, routine, historical and each school is different in this respect.” (Graduate 6.)

“I learnt that politics is very much a part of the school, that the contacts one has influence a lot, that teachers with more seniority have more rights or take more liberties. The figure of the ‘newcomer’ is seen as a professional who doesn’t know much, without experience, and is therefore labelled as lesser” (Graduate 8).

“...I learned from the influence of the union at school” (Graduate 3).

They also learn certain rites of the institution or initiation rites (Bourdieu, as quoted in Landreani, 1996) [16] about what it means to be inserted in a school and espe-

cially in this bureaucratic network. Some of the graduates consulted tell us:

"I learned that there really is the famous right of the floor, that it is hard to enter the world of work and understand it (how it works), that you have colleagues as colleagues who do not like you." (Graduate 8)

"I learned from the flag salute, the ephemeris, prayer (as it is a school with religious beliefs), dictating notes in the communications notebook, completing the subject book, giving warnings, collecting pay slips and signing up them, closing the term's grades and uploading them to a computer programme, notifying me of the circulars, organising events, participating in departmental meetings, drawing up minutes, participating in the IEP, among other things. All of that I learned." (Graduate 9)

The aforementioned author tells us that "the insertion of the teacher in schools is based on the implicit: the unquestionable imposition of the hierarchical structure, and the uncritical compliance with the established rules" (Landreani, *Ibidem*). [16]

"if you don't adapt to the system, the others expel you from the group. For example, it happens to me when the bell rings and I automatically go to class. But I have to wait about fifteen minutes for the students to enter the classroom and the other teachers automatically don't talk to me. Because they stay for about 20 minutes in the staff room drinking mate and talking while the kids mark me as the demanding teacher because I enter the classroom early, because I always make them work, which makes them tired, they complain because I don't do what the others do. How can you not adapt if everyone is against you? So far the only person who has said to me 'how nice that you do that' is the principal". (Workshop 2)

As they do short substitutes in these first years, they also go back to work in each school where they get a job, and they go through the process of finding a job again. This is what one of the graduates told us. "I have experienced the process of initiation within the institutions, "being the newcomer", attracting attention, having to learn the rules of the institution" (Graduate 7).

There are also other bureaucratic and instrumental learning processes that enable them, in some cases, to defend their labour rights. One graduate in the workshop told us:

"There was a resolution that cut displacements for a while, but it specified for which areas and Physics was not in that Resolution. So I went to get the paper, I defended myself and they appointed me and I was very well received". (Workshop 2)

We see here that the question about teaching the discipline, the knowledge, is diluted or not prioritised by the institutions in these instances of the first job performances. But this does not seem to be the main concern of the new teachers either. Of the 17 graduates consulted, in only two cases do they question teaching or the work around the knowledge to be taught.

Those who are interested in this consider that when they begin, there is a desire to implement everything they learnt at the faculty and this is in tension with practices already in place in the schools, with colleagues who show them another side of being teachers.

"When you start, you want to do everything they were told and taught at school. I continue to work on experiences in my classes. When I went to Buenos Aires, I bought a lot of things for my classes. I thought about my students, I bought didactic kids, prisms, lasers, stuff that they really liked. Once, an old teacher told me: 'I used to be like you' and I said, 'Oh, ¡I guess I'm going to be like you! She said: I don't know, maybe.'" (Workshop 2)

So we can see that they have to put themselves in a situation of creating, recreating, innovating in their practices, because applying linearly what the undergraduate teacher training gave them does not give them results.

They notice that, when they teach with enthusiasm and from practices where they put students in a situation to make them think and be protagonists, students show interest and work. They show commitment to teaching, they look for resources, teaching strategies and ways of teaching to arouse students' interest. They are concerned about students' learning. Also on this "pedagogical" level, we see that they get involved in institutional projects that challenge them, that engage them beyond their class hours. They seem to recognise that learning also takes place through pedagogical proposals in which the principals are the coordinators of these projects. In this sense, we observed that, in the process of starting work, the institution, with its projects and, above all, the presence of the directors, re-emerges strongly. One graduate told us:

"Today was not my school day, but the principal asked me to go to school anyway. I told him: whatever is for the improvement of the institution, I will make a sacrifice and I believe that all colleagues make that sacrifice, because it has repercussions for the school, if the directors work together. I believe that if the head of the institution works, school works". (Workshop 1)

Another issue we noticed is that there are mechanisms to control teaching practices. In private schools, to regulate teachers' work is explicit and strict. In public schools it is sometimes implicit, but it is also present. In these testimonies, they show us how they experience these control practices at the beginning of their work placement:

"...for me it was a shock to be in that school... The nuns, in the Biology area, would sit and watch my classes, all the classes! They would always give me feedback about my class, they would tell me to look at a student that has some special problems. They were always talking, giving their opinions, once they told me that the end of the class was missing, I thought it looked like XX (because of the practical teacher) and so on" (Workshop 2).

"They called me to teach but as I have never had contact with a nun, and I was received by a nun. She asked

me about my private life, even if I had a boyfriend, I said yes. She asked me if I lived with my boyfriend, I told her I didn't. She told me that in the eyes of the nuns that I did not have a boyfriend. She told me that in the eyes of God that is not seen well. Then he started to tell me that if I wanted to work there I would have to get married and no one was going to force me to get married. ... I couldn't stand all that system of control, because that's what happens, it's a system of control, it's not even a system of containment, it's control. ... The stress these nuns caused me! They controlled how I got dressed and my makeup! No, I couldn't stand that for a low salary. On top of that, I had to travel and the money that I earned didn't suit me. "Once, I was teaching and when I opened the door there was a hidden nun listening to me. I couldn't stand it anymore. I asked myself if she was a teacher there or a nanny for those kids, that the nun should teach the class for me" (Workshop 2).

Another graduate mentioned a similar situation, in this case in a public school:

"The coordinator asks the educational psychologists to leave everything on the agenda and that is in the coordinator's office. Everything they talk to everyone they have to write down, they have the obligation to write down everything and when they went in, the coordinator gave them a list of the teachers they have to go to observe the classes and schedule, which coincidentally are all those teachers who don't do what she wants them to do". (Workshop 2)

With regard to starting work in public schools, they recognise that settling in the institutions is very important. On the other hand, they often go for months without being paid for the first hours of substitutions they get. A Physics teacher told us about the hours in public schools:

"The first year that I worked, there were new hours, because the technical modality was starting in the school and the courses were split up because there were so many students in them. Now in the school, everything is an arrangement, even to get paid. It was hard for me to get paid for the hours I worked. For example, the year after I started at that school, 8 more hours were created. I worked for a year without being paid anything and then I was reinstated. Then, 3 more hours were created and I was paid for 11 hours and the debt from the previous year was paid. After 2 years of work, they created the other three hours that were missing and that I had not been paid for two years, I was paid retroactively from 2012 and 2011 was missing and I worked all of that year. I am now in a process for three hours that I have not been paid since 2011, through an in-service recognition, but in the meantime I took other hours, what am I going to do". (Graduate 8)

We note that the tension over the meaning and content of teaching work is part of the "social struggle" that unfolds in the conceptions of being a teacher.

Moreover, this appropriation of the institutional culture of schools does not happen overnight. We can recognise,

in the experience of two graduates who have already been teaching for four years and who have achieved a certain permanence and timetable concentration in the institutions, that this situation of job stability allows them not only to settle in, but also to get to know the institution and begin to position themselves with regard to their activity in the schools, especially in contexts of work with the most vulnerable populations. This is what they tell us: *"By spending more time at school, because you take more hours, you realize what is happening there. You begin to get to know your colleagues, the students, the institution better; I stay at school all day and there you know what happens. Just there I met the principal, I had been working there for a year and I didn't know him... I really didn't know anyone. I realized the institutional plot, that we had an institutional head that did not work, you had a problem with a student and you took him to the principal's office and the student is told: what happened? As not doing anything.*

"... there comes a point where you have to take ownership of the institutional climate, otherwise it gets complicated. It makes it easier for me because I have all the hours in one school". (Workshop 1)

In these cases, they feel certain disillusionment, disappointment, when they delve deeper not only into the dynamics and functioning of the school, but also into the activity of teaching itself. They begin to move away from conventional teaching to address socio-emotional issues with their students. In this sense, they are modifying the curriculum and also making their conceptions of being more flexible teachers. They argue that, in some circumstances, teaching is "not possible".

They worry about the students, but do not know how to resolve the situation, as they express:

"I worry about the students, I worry about what tomorrow holds for them. I don't think they have any idea, they are kids who have already repeated up to three times, they are between 17 and 18 years old and they are among 13 and 14 year-old girls. I ask myself: How do they get so many people in? There are already so many repeaters": (Workshop 1)

We also see how the material conditions of the teaching job seem to work against the task of teaching, as they take on more hours and become more and more integrated into the education system. This is how one graduate says:

"...I have 35 hours which mean 8 courses. You leave a course and the students don't want to work, they bother you; you have less than five minutes or one minute between time changes, you enter another course and they do the same thing to you. From there you leave, you have another 5 minutes, you go into another course and they do the same thing to you, in the morning and in the afternoon. It's exhausting, that's why I try to get them to work well during the first two terms and during the last term they're tired, there's not much time left, there are six weeks left, guys, we're going to do our best..." (Workshop 1).

We ask ourselves whether teacher training at undergraduate level has something to do with these representations of students, an homogeneous, single training, which then comes into tension with very diverse, heterogeneous contexts? or is it the biographies of the graduates, their already sedimented conceptions of what it means to be a pupil, a teacher, that are under stress in their first performances?

We thus suspect that school biographies leave traces that, we believe, should be worked on in undergraduate teacher training. These traces are also reaffirmed by a training proposal with more homogeneous tendencies, still very much centred on disciplines.

Another aspect that creates tension is student assessment and grading. Historically, this area has given teachers authority and a certain curricular autonomy. Today, it is crossed by the educational policies of the moment, with regard to student grading systems. We can see how there are different ways of appropriation (Rockwell: Op. Cit. [6]; Landreani, Op. Cit. [16]) of the “inclusion” policies in the área and in the school institutions. Some graduates, who have experienced this situation of interference in their pedagogical decisions about assessment and, above all, about the grading of students, have stated that:

“...I had to take the pre-exams for two 4th year students who were due to move on to 5th year. The principal wanted there to be two stages in the exam, written and oral, but I only wanted it to be written, but as I was “new”, it was difficult for me to put it to her. In that instance, the two students were not about to pass, but in the oral exam, in the presence of the principal, he practically told me to let them pass. I really felt that I was between a rock and a hard place because the students did not meet the requirements to pass the course. I had to make a quick decision and decided that I could not make them repeat because I was not going to be responsible for their lives. The powerful relationship was very direct, so much that if the principal was not present, the two would have been disapproved.”. (Graduate 2)

This idea is reaffirmed in one of the workshops in the voice of one of the graduates

“...an issue that is very strong at school, which causes a lot of instability and discomfort, is this issue of inclusion, how to evaluate, how to contain them, not to leave them out, to prevent them from leaving the school. It is an issue that is very critical in all schools, you have to look for other strategies”. (Workshop 1)

They denounce the scant and almost null margin of pedagogical authority that is conferred on them with respect to the evaluation system. We observe here an undervaluing of the act of teaching, which is diluted by a bureaucratic system, preoccupied with pupils’ marks. This is what they tell us:

“... when they reprimand, it doesn’t matter what strategies you have used, how you have adapted the content, how much extra time you have dedicated to it. Sometimes they

even reduce the content for students who are not required to do so much, they still don’t commit themselves, they don’t do and don’t copy in class, they still tell you to give them a four. So, from that point of view, you start to get frustrated because if you say, ‘I’ve adapted the content, I’ve tried, I’ve looked for other strategies, you always do what you can, what you know, if that doesn’t matter, the line is: “give him four”, “give him six”, because he has two in the other terms, give him six so, at least, it lifts him up a bit, that frustrates you”’. (Workshop 1)

In this respect, we recognise that teachers deploy their practice in a “hierarchical organisation that transcends the school institution itself by being linked to the state”. “This characteristic of insertion places the teacher as subaltern in a structure in which hierarchically -and from the State- decisions are taken that have to do with the thematic contents, as well as with the didactic and methodological aspects, passing through the disciplinary criteria up to the regulation of all the activities that are “executed” in the school” (Achilli, Op. Cit.. p. 11), p. 11). [11]

Secondary schools are immersed in processes and policies of social inclusion, which have arisen as a result of the education laws of the last two decades, a situation that is strained in daily practice, especially when graduates state that they are not prepared for these processes. One graduate also reports an experience she had in her first job in a school, which was no longer based on qualifications and the evaluation system:

“In my first teaching experience I met a student with Down syndrome (inclusion), but she did not have the tools to be able to learn my subject and I did not know how to dedicate myself to her exclusively, because she needed it and to manage the rest of the group who were hard workers and fast learners. Some time later her private teacher appeared and told me that she would help me to work with her (mid-year).

Another graduate also tells us in this regard:

“This is what is happening, it is the imposition of inclusion. Yes, they are imposing it on us, we have to be careful with that, that a plan comes out and the school raises its hand and says ‘I can do it’. Everything is always the school can, the school can, the food in the school, the school can, that is to say I can, I can” (workshop 1).

We can think that new teachers depend on the circumstances in which they are working and also depend on the experience they have and the context in which they are, on the learning trajectory they have had.

We could also hypothesise that the more homogeneous traces incorporated into the education system generate a feeling of discomfort and powerlessness among graduates in the face of the challenges of inclusion. Perhaps the “elitist” matrix of how secondary school was conceived from its origins produces this tension and feeling of imposition in graduates.

Thus, learning in the professional field at the beginning

of teaching shows us that new graduates learn against their own ideas about the image of the teacher that they have coined, whether this is due to their own biographical processes or to what undergraduate teacher training has given them. It is an apprenticeship “against” their visions of teaching, of teaching, of school, which perhaps merits further reflection on what aspects and how we train them.

Conclusions

Some indications and signs that emerge: the findings of the research.

In the course of this process of enquiry, some knots of meaning emerge that I consider to be findings in this research, namely:

The formative traces of initial teacher training. We asked ourselves: What do we understand by training? where are teachers trained? what aspects of the training are they in? How did they experience this new situation as in-service teachers? Do they know how to make the most of it? will be these experiences an enrichment for the teaching task? What teaching functions did they encounter?

A look at initial teacher training

Here, training that provides them with some resources to help them navigate this situation of threshold, of passage, of transitional space, is of particular value. From the point of view of training, it is valued that graduates can make decisions, self-manage their own processes, participate in curriculum experiences as a socio-cultural field, where they are placed in a situation not of reproduction but of production. In these circumstances, they learn to value the encounter with others; they learn “the rules of the game” of institutions, of teaching.

In this passage, we find that the notion of practice is strained. In the sense of understanding whether the practice is the one they did when they were students at university, or whether it is the practice they are going to do in schools, the question is:

What representations do they have of these practices?

They show a vision of educational practice that is not reduced to school, but is a social, cultural and political construction. They see that all educational practice require the commitment of those involved in it. The graduates show a change of position, a change of place in this formative transition. We can see that an ethical sense appears, a humanist vision.

At this point, we wonder about the tension that arises for graduates when they feel that they are “objects of evaluation” by their colleagues, and not subjects capable of trusting in their own abilities. This way of perceiving that arises here. Is it anything that they may have “learned” to feel at the student stage, under the circumstances of the

development of the first classroom practices? Because, although the instances of the internships in undergraduate training are marked by the weight of assessment, it seems that these same perceptions are now felt in their first performances as teachers in schools. They live the experience as an instance of control, of surveillance, a situation that brings out the positivist, more conservative traces of being teachers. And there are also some aspects of undergraduate training that are identified, such as the applicationist matrix, understood as “delivering lesson”, doing practical work in the last year of training.

We suspect that teacher training teaches graduates about this extreme sensitivity to the external gaze. Insofar as it is very important for them and we see that it collaborates with a perspective, at least initially, for entering the labour market.

We note, in the light of the research, that the school institution where the new graduates work has a very important weight as a generator of practices, but it is not decisive. In any case, it conditions and sometimes puts a strain on undergraduate training and the biographies of the subjects, but it does not determine them. The school where they begin enables them to generate implicit and informal learning which, in some cases, constitutes formative experiences. They learn attitudes, values, norms, strategies, etc. They learn to share, to build with other teachers and students, to carry out collaborative work, to make decisions, to self-manage, not only in teaching matters, but also in the institution. We recognise then that the first performances are also formative, often modelling ways of thinking, perceiving and acting.

There are formative experiences at this stage of threshold and initiation into work where it can be seen that, in many cases, they depend on institutional styles and dynamics - of the types of institution: public, private, urban, rural -, on the instance of formative dialogue between what undergraduate teacher training provided them with regard to innovative ways of teaching science, ways of seeing the world.

Clearly, those situations linked, on the one hand, to how they experience this moment of transition, of inter-conditional life, with respect to working conditions and the institutional culture of the schools they attend, to interpersonal links, to what they call “the big difference between public and private institutions”, to institutional support, are clearly formative experiences that the graduates mean. In addition, they recover experiences related to the curriculum and teaching, where they can, in this transitional space, link the theory and practice that their undergraduate training provided them with. They have interesting resources from the epistemological and didactic point of view, they are generators of participative, democratic and constructive processes.

We thus recovered some experiences in relation to curricular and teaching issues regarding situations expe-

rienced by graduates, as they tell us:

"...between the NAPs and reality...a social commitment...at first I wanted to rush the students, I wanted to fulfil what was in the CBC, the NAPs. But I began to realise that I had to look at the context, that the reality was different. I had to provide content for the third year, but it was impossible. So I had to adapt the level and make decisions". (Graduate 1).

Certainly, in some cases, we have found a reproduction of teaching models and a more conservative way of thinking about teaching, because sometimes new teachers are subject to the pressure of their colleagues, parents, managers, life in schools and the traces of the education system itself. But there is also an interesting formative school space with proposals and visions of new teachers who seek to produce, to build alternatives, to create even in working conditions that might not be conducive to or facilitate more constructive and innovative processes. Some of them are concerned and occupied with issues related to teaching, from a broader viewpoint than that restricted only to the instrumental or to the classroom. They see teaching as a "humanising" job; in the case of managers, they see them as "generators of participatory, democratic and constructive processes".

Distinctive features of the experiences of new graduates in secondary schools

Finally, we note three distinctive features of the experiences of new graduates in secondary schools, in this instance of passage, initiation, of transit between one world, that of the student, and another, that of the teacher. An instance of symbolic frontier and interstitial space between the passage from university to school life.

On the one hand, from the point of view of knowledge, they show us that the teaching profession is a very complex profession that, when teaching, graduates cannot "apply what they have learned", but that with what teacher training has given them, they can create, innovate, recreate in each group of students, in each class, in each school where they work, especially considering in their practices the characteristics of current educational scenarios.

These features that we observe in the new graduates of the FCEQyN teaching programmes, such as the ability to create, recreate, innovate, show us that in their work they do not work from the simple repetition, reproduction of techniques or theories, but that they have the possibility of thinking in situation, recreating in situation, producing in situation and not reproducing, they do rely on the knowledge and techniques learned, but they do not reproduce them.

From an ethical-political point of view, in these circumstances they produce knowledge that is situated, contextualised, closely related to the groups of pupils with whom they work and above all linked to the situations that arise in their work and which they have to face. In this sense, they are very committed to the activity and thus build an identity of the teaching activity that distinguishes

and differentiates them in their daily work.

We also note that it is a job with a strong personal involvement, from the point of view of being a job that they call "humanising". A situation that involves links with others, this involvement with what is happening in their work and the social commitment that they assume. In this sense, things happen to the graduates in the situations they experience, and they act in a committed manner in these circumstances.

Not only do they show technical expertise, but it can also be seen that, in their work, they communicate the possibility they have of thinking with the capacity to operate with others and on others; situations in which they show signs of reflective capacity. In addition to showing how they work with their feelings, with what they feel, a situation that also commits them to what they are doing.

Therefore, commitment includes not only technical-instrumental knowledge, but also situated knowledge, in the sense that it is based on the facts they experience and also includes feelings that link, relate and position them in a way that is committed to what they do.

Not only do they learn about the logic of the bureaucracy of the institution, they also learn that getting the job is a space of struggle. Many of the graduates get their job thanks to other displacements. However, this is not the only learning that has enabled graduates to construct a view of the teaching field. In a more hidden, less visible way, there are very relational learning processes. They integrate affectivities and knowledge, without avoiding or denying the conflict inherent in these appropriation processes. They recognise that they have, for example, to modify the curriculum in order to get to know the students, that they have to work between curricula and reality, living teaching as a social commitment.

Learning is recovered, from the curricular, the pedagogical-didactic aspects in the classroom; but at the same time, institutional socio-educational aspects emerge, the place of power, links, the social spaces occupied by the subjects, the way the teacher looks at the teacher, conflicts, among others. They have to "appropriate the institutional climate".

In this sense, they construct the field as a social space, a space of communication, which is full of uncertainty, instability, singularity, conflict and unpredictability at the same time. They are led to the "shock of practices"³ in these "initiation rites"⁴. It is impossible in these practices

3- Esteve (1993) [17] poses the "Shock of practices" as the shock of beginning teachers with the social, educational, school reality. Situation that happens to them when they start teaching.

4- In order to understand the institutional processes experienced by graduates, we turn to the concept of rites of the institution, "... the sense of institution can be seen as an act, with the vision of the movement, which breaks with the idea of the institution as already given. When something is instituted, it means that a difference that can be natural is installed as legitimate... The rites of institution would be the mechanisms that enable the legitimization of these differences. A certain state can be transformed through ritual acts. We are facing what is usually called in

not to learn from the unpredictability and uncertainties. They strongly considered in the construction itself, the multiplicity of dimensions that operate in it and the simultaneity from which these are expressed.

On the other hand, we observe that the transition towards the social space of professional practices implies the understanding that working in teaching is much more than working in the classroom. That the school in its complexity teaches dimensions of being a teacher that undergraduate training does not teach. It is likely that there is an over-dimension and over-focus on didactic issues in student training.

We note that there is still an education that overvalues the technical aspects, but when they enter schools, they can challenge themselves and redefine themselves from a practical perspective. They have the possibility of re-signifying the resources that teachers should develop during their training. The ability of our graduates to make an ethical, political and ideological reading of the situations involved and of the ideological traps that we are caught in is still very impoverished. We need a return to more practical teacher training and real training from a critical perspective. More consideration should be given to processes such as problem solving, developing initiatives in situated contexts, dealing with immediacy, among others.

The vision of teacher training coined by the graduates involve not only what they have gone through in undergraduate training together with their training at schools during the process of socialisation in the workplace, but also the openness they show in taking on lifelong learning processes that favour their professional development.

This situation meant broadening our conception of the possibilities and limits of a social space that is conditioned: schools and teacher training. These are some clues to continue thinking about undergraduate and in-service teacher training.

We believe that the findings of this research can open up ways to contribute to rethinking the curricular proposal of the University Teacher Training Courses, in teacher training policies that increasingly promote a problematising vision of the socio-educational reality, as well as to think about other training and extensive work with graduates who are working in schools and institutions in the system.

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anthropology 'initiation rites' (for example, practices of passage from childhood to adolescence) Bourdieu, P. 1985 (as cited in Edelstein and Coria, 1995, p. 37). [18]