

SUDDENLY, TEACHER! PATHS TAKEN BY NURSES SEARCHING FOR TEACHER TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to know the paths taken by the nurse-teachers of the Nursing technical course in search of their training for the teaching career.

Method: a qualitative and cross-sectional research study, carried out with nurses who teach at the Nursing technical course of a Technical School of the Unified Health System in Ceará. The data were collected through a focus group in October 2019, and analyzed according to Bardin's thematic content analysis, with the aid of the *Qualitative Data Analysis Software*.

Results: the paths for nurses' teacher training permeate their motivation to enter the teaching career, whose reasons are related to the difficulty finding a job in the assistance area, invitation to teach, job opportunity or existence of some need; initial performance in teaching, which emphasizes mid-level; and by training itself, which had its need confirmed and, from the participants' perspective, met through participation in institutional qualifications and personal search for specialization courses.

Conclusion: the paths taken by nurse-teachers in search of their training for the teaching career are related to the reasons why they enter teaching, with their initial performance in teaching and with teacher training itself, regarding verification of their need and ways accessed for such qualification. The nurse's prior training for the teaching practice ultimately points to professional excellence and appreciation and commitment to the Unified Health System. Thus, it becomes imperative to (re)formulate policies that consider the complexity and professionalism of teaching, with a view to expert teaching training and performance.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing teachers. Teachers. Practice of the Nursing teacher. Technical education in Nursing. Nursing. Unified Health System.

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DE REPENTE, PROFESSOR! CAMINHOS PERCORRIDOS PELOS ENFERMEIROS EM BUSCA DA FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE

RESUMO

Objetivo: conhecer os caminhos percorridos pelos enfermeiros docentes do curso técnico de Enfermagem em busca da sua formação para a docência.

Método: pesquisa qualitativa, transversal, realizada com enfermeiros professores do curso técnico de Enfermagem de uma Escola Técnica do Sistema Único de Saúde do Ceará. Os dados foram coletados através de grupo focal, em outubro de 2019, e analisados segundo análise de conteúdo temática de Bardin, com apoio do *Qualitative Data Analysis Software*.

Resultados: os caminhos para a formação docente do enfermeiro perpassam pela sua motivação para inserção na docência, cujos motivos relacionam-se com a dificuldade de empregar-se na assistência, convite para lecionar, oportunidade de trabalho ou existência de alguma necessidade; atuação inicial no ensino, a qual confere ênfase ao nível médio; e pela formação propriamente, que teve sua necessidade constatada e, na visão dos participantes, suprida mediante a participação em qualificações institucionais e busca pessoal por cursos de especialização.

Conclusão: os caminhos percorridos pelos enfermeiros docentes em busca da sua formação para a docência guardam relação com os motivos pelos quais ingressam no ensino, com a atuação inicial no magistério e com a própria formação docente, referente à constatação da sua necessidade e vias acessadas para tal qualificação. A formação prévia do enfermeiro para o exercício docente aponta, em última análise, para a excelência e valorização profissional e compromisso com o Sistema Único de Saúde. Assim, torna-se imperativa a (re)formulação de políticas que considerem a complexidade e profissionalidade do ensino, com vistas a uma formação e atuação docente experta.

DESCRITORES: Docentes de enfermagem. Docentes. Prática do docente de enfermagem. Educação técnica em enfermagem. Enfermagem. Sistema Único de Saúde.

¡DE REPENTE, PROFESOR! CAMINOS QUE RECORREN LOS ENFERMEROS EN BUSCA DE FORMACIÓN DOCENTE

RESUMEN

Objetivo: conocer los caminos que recorren los profesores de enfermería en el curso técnico de Enfermería en busca de su formación docente.

Método: investigación cualitativa, transversal, realizada con enfermeros profesores del curso técnico de Enfermería en una Escuela Técnica del Sistema Único de Salud en Ceará. Los datos se recopilaron a través de un grupo focal, en octubre de 2019, y se analizaron de acuerdo con el análisis de contenido temático de Bardin, con el soporte del *Qualitative Data Analysis Software*.

Resultados: los caminos para la formación del docente de enfermería pasan por su motivación para la inserción en la docencia, cuyas razones se relacionan con la dificultad de ser empleado en tareas asistenciales, invitación a enseñar, oportunidad laboral o existencia de alguna necesidad; desempeño inicial en la docencia, que enfatiza la educación secundaria; y por la formación propiamente dicha, cuya necesidad fue corroborada y, a juicio de los participantes, suplida a través de la participación en las cualificaciones institucionales y la búsqueda personal de cursos de especialización.

Conclusión: los caminos que recorren los profesores de enfermería en busca de su formación docente están relacionados con las razones por las que ingresan a la docencia, con el desempeño inicial en la docencia y con la propia formación docente, en cuanto a la constatación de su necesidad y las vías de acceso para dicha cualificación. La formación previa del enfermero para la práctica docente apunta, en última instancia, a la excelencia y la valoración profesional y al compromiso con el Sistema Único de Salud, por lo que es imperativo (re) formular políticas que consideren la complejidad y profesionalidad de la docencia, con miras a la obtención de formación y actuación docente especializada.

DESCRITORES: Docentes de enfermería. Docentes. Práctica del profesorado de enfermería. Educación técnica en enfermería. Enfermería. Sistema Único de Salud.

INTRODUCTION

Concerns and debates about teacher training have been constant, since they are one of the protagonists of the teaching-learning process; therefore, their training path and professional performance exert a significant repercussion on educational quality¹⁻². Specifically in the setting of Mid-Level Technical Professional Education (*Educação Profissional Técnica de Nível Médio*, EPTNM) in Nursing, such concerns and discussions become even more necessary and urgent, for dealing with the training of a fundamental worker in health care.

The duties and actions of Nursing technicians assume a prominent place at all health care levels, as they quantitatively represent the largest workforce in Nursing, corresponding to 57% of all its workers, and acting on the front line of care³⁻⁴. Thus, their professional training and performance are significantly important for quality of care in Nursing/Health and, consequently, for the Unified Health System (*Sistema Único de Saúde*, SUS). It is to be noted that the SUS Technical Schools (*Escolas Técnicas do SUS*, ETSUS) occupy a relevant space in this training context, due to the commitment assumed to ground their training processes on the guidelines of this system⁵⁻⁶.

In this context, there is the nurse-teacher, whose teaching practice involves the responsibility of training Nursing technicians to work in the labor world with a critical attitude, humanization and ethics, meeting the population's health demands and respecting the SUS principles. Therefore, the training quality of the nurse-teacher is related to the quality of education, then, with the quality of the Nursing technician's training and, ultimately, with quality of care and effectiveness in the practice of the current health policy itself.

In this sense, the training of nurse-teachers deserves attention, especially because most of them do not have specific training for the teaching practice and usually enter this career abruptly and unexpectedly⁷⁻⁸. Teaching performance based only on specific technical-assistance knowledge in the Nursing area and a search for qualification mostly centered on graduate courses whose contents allow theoretical deepening to develop the professional practice are frequently observed⁹⁻¹⁰.

However, the necessary training for the teaching practice involves knowledge that exceeds the limits of the specificity of a given area, so that they comprise at least seven categories of basic knowledge for teaching, according to Shulman's theoretical framework, namely: general pedagogical, content, students, curriculum, pedagogical content, educational contexts and the objectives, purposes and values of education¹¹. Thus, the need for training for the teaching career becomes evident, so that nurses can access and add knowledge that sustains and qualifies their performance as teachers committed to training Nursing technicians prepared to exercise their profession with technical competence, ethics and politics, committed to health care in and for the SUS.

Given the above, this study aims at understanding the paths taken by nurse-teachers of the Nursing technical course searching their training for the teaching career.

METHOD

A qualitative and cross-sectional study, extracted from a doctoral thesis entitled "Training for the teaching career in Nursing in the SUS Technical Schools: Possibilities in the Practice Community". It is noteworthy that the study was developed according to the precepts set forth in the *Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research* (COREQ).

Currently, Brazil has 41 ETSUS and, of these, only five have ongoing Nursing technical courses, which are located in Acre, Amazonas, Ceará, Paraná and Santa Catarina. The research was conducted in 2019 at an ETSUS located in Ceará, Brazil, which had a class in progress in the aforementioned course, a characteristic considered as a criterion for inclusion of the school in the research. It is worth mentioning that this ETSUS from Ceará had already been included in the first phase of a research

project developed between 2018 and 2021, during the period when one of the authors was undergoing her doctoral studies, which had the aforementioned schools as locus. Its selection is justified because Ceará stands out nationally, as it occupies the second place in the number of ETSUS (4), only behind São Paulo (7). In addition, the proximity element is cited, due to the development of the PhD course in Bahia, and the school's prompt acceptance of being the setting for this research.

It is worth mentioning that the creation of this school in Ceará, in 2005, meant an advance in the National Policy for Permanent Education in Health in the city and region where it is located. The school develops its educational processes based on the mission of implementing intervention strategies in the field of technical training and qualification of health workers, with a view to promoting and producing health and strengthening quality education¹².

A total of 12 nurse-teachers from the current class of the course in focus took part in the study. The inclusion criteria were as follows: being a Nursing graduate and having already worked in teaching, being teaching or scheduled to act as a teacher in the ongoing class of the aforementioned course. The exclusion criteria were the following: being on leave, on vacation or away from work at the data collection time.

The stage for approaching and inviting the participants took place in September 2019, through the creation of a group in a message exchange application, with support from the school secretariat and from the pedagogical and technical coordination offices of the Nursing technical course. After the invitation, from the universe of 21 nurse-teachers, 57.1% (12) agreed to participate in the research, as 38% (8) claimed unavailability in their schedules and one did not answer the invitation. It is noted that contact with the ETSUS was previously made in January 2019 by sending a Cover Letter, Declaration of Authorization from the Co-participating Institution and a copy of the entire project.

The data were collected in October 2019, using the Focus Group (FG) technique, whose dynamics of the meetings, especially regarding days and times, was defined according to the participants' availability. The FG allows producing data in a collective space, contributing to a broad thematic problematization, construction of knowledge and approximation of the research to the reality experienced by the participants¹³.

There were six meetings, during the night period, in a room at the ETSUS itself provided by the school board, lasting a mean of 1 hour and 55 minutes each, totaling 11 hours and 28 minutes of data collection. The meetings were led by a moderator, one of the authors of this paper, with remote support from a researcher with expertise in FG. It is noted that the moderator has knowledge about the FG technique, established at the time of her master's degree. In addition, when conducting the first phase of the aforementioned PhD research project, the moderator was able to approach the potential participants, allowing them to get to know each other, and of being included in the study setting, drawing a situational diagnosis.

Each FG meeting was guided by scripts with triggering questions, which had teacher training as the main theme and issue, being audio recorded in the voice recording applications of two smartphones strategically positioned in the room, with subsequent transcription by the moderator and validation by the participants. In addition to that, a field diary was employed to record the activities developed from some of the participants' statements, for later resumption, as well as from the FG's perceptions, reflections, feelings and impressions.

For data systematization and analysis, the theoretical framework of Basic Knowledge for Teaching proposed by Lee Shulman¹¹ was used as a basis. Thematic content analysis was employed according to Bardin, which follows three chronological poles: pre-analysis, in which there is floating reading and initial organization of the research *corpus*; exploration of the material, for coding and categorization; and treatment and interpretation of the results obtained, supported by the reflection method¹⁴. It is

important to highlight the use of the web-based *Qualitative Data Analysis Software* (webQDA®) for assistance in this stage.

From this process, 91 registration units emerged, organized into nine subcategories and, consequently, three categories referring to the paths taken by nurses in search of their training for the teaching career, as shown in Figure 1 below. It was evidenced that such paths permeate the motivation for insertion and initial performance in teaching, as well as teacher training specifically, which includes verification of this need and of the training strategies.



Figure 1 – Categories and subcategories from the analysis of the research corpus. Salvador, BA, Brazil, 2019.

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee in September 2019, since the guidelines and standards established by Resolutions 466/2012 and 510/2016 regulating studies involving human beings were considered. All the participants signed the Free and Informed Consent Form and, to ensure confidentiality of the information, they were identified by the nominal code EP referring to nurse-teacher (*Enfermeiro(a) Professor(a)* in Portuguese), followed by an Arabic numeral corresponding to the speech order in the meetings.

RESULTS

The nurse-teachers (12) were aged between 29 and 49 years old, the majority being female, and 91.6% (11) had a contractual relationship with the school for a specified period. The mean time since completion of the undergraduate studies was 10 years, and 16.5% (2) were Bachelors in Nursing.

All the participants are graduates, with 33.3% (4) having specialized in the area of instruction and/or teaching. 66.6% (8) reported having more than 6 years of teaching experience and, for half of them, entrance to the teaching career occurred within one year after graduation.

The categories and subcategories, presented below, emerged from the speeches of the participating nurses and present the paths they followed in search of their training for the teaching career.

Motivation to enter the teaching career

The nurses' motivation to enter the teaching career was broken down into four subcategories, described below:

Difficulty finding a job in Nursing assistance

According to the nurses, the difficulty finding a job in Nursing assistance, after completing their undergraduate studies, was one of the reasons that led them to become teachers. Due to this difficulty, some even moved to other states and started teaching in higher education or in professional education, even in areas other than Nursing.

[...] as soon as I finished, I also didn't find anything in assistance, my first job was at the higher education institute (EP2).

After finishing my undergraduate studies, in the city where I live, I had difficulty finding a job, so I ended up going to another state [...]. I distributed some CVs around the city and was called to teach a technical course on work safety (EP5).

Job opportunity

Entrance to the teaching career by nurses had the motivation of being another job opportunity, although some had never imagined themselves in teaching. The participants did not associate this entrance with any other condition, for example, the difficulty finding a job in Nursing assistance; therefore, it was exclusively due to the glimpse of being a job possibility.

[...] the opportunity to do a recruitment exam, a selection for teacher in the Nursing area, it was an opportunity (EP9).

[...] I never imagined going into teaching. It was kind of, it's not even a question of opportunity, it was like something, how can I tell you, it ends up being an opportunity, it opened the way (EP13).

Invitation to teach

The invitation to teach a class in the technical or undergraduate Nursing courses was pointed out as a motivation for the nurses' entrance into the teaching career. This invitation was based on the performance of their duties through their professional practice as nurses.

[...] I started teaching in the Nursing technical course [...]. Because I worked there in the city, I was a nurse, and they invited me to teach there (EP4).

In this specific activity as a nurse, the then course coordinator invited me to teach at the university, in the Nursing course, and so, from the beginning, I've been here (EP6).

Existence of some need

The existence of some need, whether personal or not, was pointed out by the nurses as the reason why they entered the teaching career. In certain cases, this need was considered a priority factor over the choice of the teaching career itself.

But, now that I'm starting to identify with it, but teaching didn't appeal to me very much. It wasn't a choice, no, it was also a need (EP3).

[...] it was a personal need, it arose from a personal need to return there from another municipality where I did my training, my graduate studies, to my hometown. So, it was a need [...] (EP9).

Initial performance in teaching

The nurses' initial performance in teaching was concentrated at the technical and higher levels, according to the subcategories described below:

Technical level

The study indicated that the nurses' performance as teachers can be initiated in the EPTNM modality, and that the course does not always belong to their knowledge area.

So, during my professional life [...] I selected the technical course, another course that I had here at the school, I taught an academic subject (EP3).

I was called to teach in the technical course on occupational safety, because I was specializing in the area of Occupational Nursing and there was a technical school there (EP5).

Higher level

The nurses' initial performance in the teaching career also took place at the higher level, exclusively in the Nursing course. For them, entering the teaching career in the EPTNM modality, commonly understood as the first gateway to teaching, was after this initial performance.

So, I started teaching Nursing at the undergraduate level and, immediately after that, I entered technical education in the vocational school [...] (EP6).

In 2011, I underwent a selection at the university [...] that it was even a friend of mine who told me: "there will be a Nursing course in workers' health". Later on, I also taught in the technical course [...] (EP7).

Training for the teaching career

The participants recognized training for the teaching career as necessary for this performance. From the participants' perspective, they met this need by participating in institutional qualifications and personal search for teacher training mostly in *lato sensu* graduate courses, according to the subcategories below:

Verifying the need for teacher training

According to the participants, the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing provides specific knowledge in their area, which, exclusively, does not qualify them for the teaching career. Thus, there is a clear need for teacher training, especially linked to the acquisition of didactic-pedagogical knowledge.

Because I took a bachelor's degree in Nursing, so, when we take on our graduate studies, we're taught to go to the assistance area. [...] you're not taught to make a lesson plan, to teach a class in the technical course (EP4).

[...] it's not simply because a person has finished a degree in Nursing – I say this directly – that they're qualified to be in the technical course (EP11).

[...] our training is in Nursing, so we master the content of our area. But, when it comes to pedagogical methods, we don't have them (EP12).

Participation in institutional qualifications for teacher training

The nurses stated that they participate in training meetings offered by their educational institutions, which offer pedagogical training for the teaching practice. They also mentioned that these meetings take place regularly, often defined in a teacher selection notice, recognizing their importance to develop the teaching career.

[...] once approved, the teacher must undergo a pedagogical training of forty hours before entering the teaching activities of the course in question. [...] all of them are required, by public notice, to participate in these training meetings (EP6).

And, also, at the university, we have training, we have a pedagogical meeting. Every semester there's training for us to really develop this role of being a teacher (EP7).

[...] our pedagogical meeting here at the school was conducted in a way to make us aware [...] it ends up strengthening us [...] they help us to exchange experiences, these conversations, finally, we see their importance (EP8).

Personal search of qualification for teacher training

The *lato sensu* graduate course with a focus on instruction and/or teaching was the nurses' choice as a personal search of qualification for teacher training. During this training process, they awoke their attention to the specifics of this activity and also, from their perspective, acquired more

knowledge about the teaching career universe. It is opportune to mention that, although little cited by the participants, the *stricto sensu* graduate course was also pointed out as a teacher qualification possibility.

I attended higher education teaching, so, in this specialization, I got to know more about the teaching world, scholars like Piaget and Vygotsky. I gradually went deeper and thought about improving in this sense (EP2).

And I'm doing a graduate course now in higher education qualification and active methodologies (EP5).

[...] I attended a graduate course in basic and technical education teaching and, really, that's where I had a greater awakening in relation to the pedagogical question, andragogy, the working methods of the teaching part, which is something we don't have a lot in undergraduation. [...] to look for this issue, to do a master's degree, to qualify myself (EP7).

DISCUSSION

The study evidenced that the nurses' inclusion in the teaching career took place, significantly, within a year after conclusion of their undergraduate studies. Such insertion was motivated by several factors, namely: difficulty finding a job in Nursing assistance, invitation to teach, job opportunity or existence of some need.

It is known that the nurses' approach to the classroom universe has been increasingly frequent and commonly occurred in the first years of their professional activity^{10,15}. However, it is interesting to note that the reasons for entering the teaching career have much more to do with work/life dynamics than with choice or preference due to a personal identification with teaching itself¹⁶.

The difficulty finding a job in the area is related to this approach, a problem faced by nurses for some time, especially during the first year after graduating¹⁷. As a consequence, early entrance into teaching is verified, since there is a newly-graduated professional, with no experience in their area of expertise and normally without specific training for teaching.

It was also found that the first step in the teaching career took place through an invitation to teach a class, justified, in certain cases, by accentuated mastery of knowledge and successful professional performance. Such justification supports the mistaken idea that those who have expertise in certain content or broad professional experience necessarily know how to teach and that people learn to teach while teaching^{15,18}. It is undeniable that the teacher must possess depth of knowledge of their subject matter, but not only of it. The theory of basic knowledge for teaching maintains that knowledge of content, of the subject matter, is one of the constituents of this base¹¹.

As for inclusion in the teaching career being motivated by the job opportunity or by the existence of some need, the opening of new professional opportunities is foreseen or, even, of complementing salary income¹⁰. In any case, whatever the reasons, the teaching career has progressively and indisputably revealed itself as an expressive work field for nurses.

Regarding the initial performance in teaching, it was verified that the participants started at the technical or higher levels, with emphasis on the first, since even those who started in the undergraduate level, invariably ended up also teaching in EPTNM. Such emphasis draws even more attention when considering that only 16.5% (2) of the nurses are bachelors.

It is a fact that EPTNM has assumed a prominent place in Nursing teaching, not only because it is a vast field of action for nurses but, above all, because of the responsibility to train workers who, in addition to representing the largest workforce in Nursing, are one of the main providers of direct health care^{15,19}. Associated with this, it is warned about the fact that many enter the classroom without prior training for teaching⁷.

In this scenario, the bachelor's degree in Nursing gains focus, as it intends to train teachers to work in EPTNM, by bringing together contents that account for the necessary knowledge to train both generalist nurses and nurse-teachers^{3,19}. However, there is maintenance of the graduates' performance as teachers, considering that the offer of a graduate degree in Nursing is expressively predominant when compared to a bachelor's degree.

Historically, the bachelor's courses represent a limited offer. In 2015, there were 18 courses from public institutions (search via e-MEC and active search for contact with universities)⁷. Another research study mentions 12 active courses in e-MEC in 2019²⁰. Despite the need for teacher training and the importance of the bachelor's degree in Nursing as a course that adds to the training of nurses and teachers, this offer needs to be contextualized, considering historical aspects of the Nursing and bachelor's degrees in Brazil.

In any case, based on the participants' speech and on the literature about teacher training, it is necessary to seek knowledge that supports the educational practice. Here, the theoretical contribution of basic knowledge for teaching is retrieved, as it points out that, in order to teach, it is indispensable to possess knowledge inherent to the very act of teaching^{8,11}.

In this perspective of training for teaching, the participants showed a quite clear perception of such need and an important level of self-awareness. As they are mostly graduates with a mean of 10 years as graduates, throughout their teaching activity, they found that a graduate degree and care experience, in fact, do not qualify them for the teaching career.

It is notorious that the graduate degree in Nursing trains future professionals for the development of skills and abilities, whose specificity is aimed at assistance/management. Thus, training for teaching is presented as a necessity for those who are eager to pursue a teaching career²¹. At this point, the bachelor's degree and continuing education courses are resumed, whose intention is to qualify for the teaching practice.

Also in the wake of verifying the need for teacher training, nurses valued the acquisition of didactic-pedagogical knowledge as subsidiary to the teacher's instrumentality. When at stake, the knowledge that underpins the teaching work, and the exclusive acquisition of technical knowledge in the Nursing area, or any other areas, are insufficient^{18,22}. Therefore, it is fundamental to approach and deepen on knowledge that goes beyond the Nursing profession to support and strengthen the teaching practice.

When Shulman¹¹ presents the basic knowledge categories for teaching, he signals the need to tread a path to become a teacher, whose progression involves the acquisition of knowledge not only of the content and pedagogical, generally manifested as the most needed, but also of at least five other areas. Pedagogical knowledge of the content, specific to the teacher, is emphasized since at this point since, by uniting and mobilizing all other basic knowledge areas, it makes the content accessible and understandable to the student.

Given this, it is visible that Shulman's theory militates in defense of the professionalization of teaching, overcoming self-teaching and amateurism in teaching when considering the teaching practice in its complexities and demands. Teacher training, whether initial or continuing, is indispensable for the realization of the commitment to contribute to critical and transformative professional training.

Recognizing the need, and in search of this training, nurse-teachers reported participating in qualifications promoted by their institutions in the format of periodic pedagogical meetings. Actions at the institutional level have been developed to provide the necessary knowledge for the professional practice of the teaching career; however, it is indispensable that such actions gain strength and become concrete projects, institutional policies that enhance training processes which raise critical reflection and accountability for the reality of the teaching practice⁹. Therefore, they need to be much more than moments of initiation to teaching focused on meetings and spaces for pedagogical qualification.

There needs to be an institutional policy for teacher qualification that assumes training for the teaching career as an inseparable action in its processes.

In this context, the fragility of the very policy for training teachers for EPTNM must be pointed out, which places its legal devices under the possibility of non-compliance^{3,7}. There are no robust theoretical conceptions or consistent and continuous public policies; therefore, they are presented by means of lightened actions and programs, of an emergency nature and, consequently, depoliticized²³.

Another issue that deserves emphasis, also in this institutional aspect, is the way in which the professional education schools themselves define and conduct their teacher selection and hiring processes. In this study, the number of bachelor nurses is a minority, as already discussed, and those with specializations in the instruction and/or teaching areas account for only 33.3% (4). In addition, the contractual relationship is mostly for a fixed period of time.

In the first place, this scenario brings to light that hiring is almost always of nurses without teacher training³. In the second place, the fragility of the bond established can discontinue the construction of training processes for teaching²⁴. It can also discourage nurses from investing in their own training, as well as generate dedication to teaching that is deficient due to the need for multiple jobs. Thus, it becomes urgent for the institutions to consider and establish other/new criteria for selecting and hiring their professors, with a view to understanding the complexity that permeates the teacher's knowledge/practice. In addition to that, they need to include periodic and ongoing teacher training actions in their planning and pedagogical practices.

Also facing the lack of teacher training, the participants reported seeking graduate courses, mostly *lato sensu*, in instruction and/or teaching. Even so, as already discussed, a quite timid search for these formal qualification spaces is perceived, which are much more accessed from a personal rather than institutional motivation¹.

It is necessary that, once in the teaching profession, nurses recognize themselves as belonging to the area of education, which has specificities and, consequently, demands a particular professionalism, which occupies a central space in developing the educational practice^{1,15,25}. This recognition is translated into a professional identity, whose perception of itself and of the group to which it belongs, as well as its field of work and duties, is well understood²⁶⁻²⁷. Thus, this sense of belonging and the identity understanding may lead to more significant personal and institutional actions and movements, seeking both the knowledge inherent to the teaching career and the development of the necessary skills for its practice.

It is also relevant to consider the participants' mention, even if limited, to the master's degree also as a way of qualification for the teaching practice. The *stricto sensu* graduate course is assumed by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education as a priority place for the preparation for teaching in higher education²¹. Although the locus in focus is the EPTNM and, although the master's and PhD programs prioritize the training of researchers, it is not possible not considering that these courses could also support the construction of knowledge to exercise the teaching practice, with academic training, seen by Shulman¹¹ as one of the sources of knowledge for teaching. Therefore, the Master's and PhD courses in Nursing/Health provide the opportunity for nurse-teachers to have a consistent and in-depth understanding of their profession/area, also fundamental for the teaching career.

It is then understood that, in order to be a teacher, it is indispensable to meet the particularities demanded by this so complex profession. It is necessary to make use of other mastery areas, required by the teaching process itself, developing them, so that the nurse-teacher exercises good teaching practices with a view to meaningful and transformative learning. In this sense, the issue of training for the teaching career is a major challenge both for nurses themselves, who normally enter teaching without proper training and do not recognize themselves as teachers, as well as for governmental and

institutional policies, whose actions fall short from the expected/desired if the demands of professional teaching are analyzed.

In this sense, it is expected to contribute to the debate on the nurses' training for the teaching practice, as well as to the strengthening of teacher training strategies and policies for EPTNM. In this way, a differentiated training of mid-level technical workers is envisaged, being aware of their commitment to quality of care in Nursing/Health and to the defense and consolidation of the SUS as a public health policy.

Finally, the study limitation is the fact that the research locus was only a single school.

CONCLUSION

Knowing the paths taken by the nurses in search of their teacher training requires considering the motivation to enter the teaching career, whose reasons are varied, with the possibility of difficulties finding a job in the assistance area, invitation to teach, job opportunity or existence of some need, as well as their initial performance in teaching, which emphasizes the EPTNM, since nurses end up acting as teachers at the technical level as novices or after other experiences in the teaching career. Therefore, regarding training for teaching itself, the participants verified its need and indicated some of the ways accessed for their teaching qualification, which focused on participation in institutionally-promoted pedagogical meetings and specializations in instruction/teaching.

It becomes clear that teaching is a complex and, at the same time, a challenging action, especially when it comes to the training of Nursing technicians, an essential workers in health care and for the SUS. In this perspective, it is up to the nurses who are part of the teaching profession to provide training for its practice, in order to act with professionalism and rigor, as well as to enable mediation of knowledge and its applicability, effectively, to improve quality of care in Nursing.

Thus, there is a growing need for the formulation/review of well-defined policies, both public and institutional, for the adequate training of professors who are involved with a profile of critical workers and supportive human beings. Therefore, the essentiality of developing studies that bring to light and trigger even more reflection on the problem of the lack of specific training, frequently evidenced, is pointed out, so as to exercise the teaching profession in order to raise visibility and enhance the actions to cope with this problem.

Attention from the nurses is drawn here, as well as from the institutions that train them and from the technical schools that hire them, to the urgent investment in training aimed at teaching career. Therefore, the aim is to contribute to the professionalization of teaching, strengthening and valuing Nursing and the consequent improvement in the quality of health care.

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NOTES

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