Meanings attributed by teachers to continuing training in the pandemic[1]

Significações atribuídas por professores à formação continuada na pandemia

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RESUMO

Tendo como problemática as demandas para assegurar a continuidade dos processos educativos e o direito às aprendizagens de todos, este estudo buscou compreender as significações que os professores de uma escola pública da rede municipal de ensino de São Paulo atribuem às iniciativas de formação continuada realizadas em 2020 para a implementação do ensino remoto. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas. A análise ocorreu mediante o procedimento dos núcleos de significação, cujo embasamento teórico se dá nos estudos da psicologia histórico-cultural e com foco nas categorias sentido-significado e necessidades-motivos. Os resultados evidenciam os limites e as potencialidades do processo experenciado, mediante as condições objetivas e subjetivas de trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Formação continuada de professores. Profissão docente. Pandemia de Covid-19.

ABSTRACT

Having as a problem the demands to ensure the continuity of educational processes and the right to learning for all in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this study sought to understand the meanings that teachers of a public school in the municipal teaching network of São Paulo attribute to the ongoing training initiatives carried out in 2020 for the implementation of remote teaching. The research, of a qualitative nature, had its data collected through semi-structured interviews. The analysis took place through the procedure of meaning nuclei, whose theoretical basis is given in studies of historical-cultural psychology, focusing on the meaning-meaning and needs-motives categories. The results show the limits and potential of the experienced process, through the objective and subjective working conditions.

Keywords: Continuing training of teachers. Teaching profession. Covid-19 pandemic.

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1 Introduction

We have been going through an unprecedented period in history. On the 11th of March of 2020, Covid-19 was characterized by the World Health Organization as a pandemic, imposing the need for social distancing. Supported by recommendations of national and international research, healthcare and sanitary surveillance organs, in order to contain the Coronavirus contagion, governments decreed the suspension of presential activities at schools.

Such as it happened in several countries, states and municipalities, remote teaching was adopted by the Municipal School System of São Paulo (RMESP is the Portuguese acronym for Rede Municipal de Ensino de São Paulo) in order to enable the continuity of the teaching and learning processes.

On the 16th of March of 2020, The Municipal Decree number 59.283 (SÃO PAULO, 2020a) was published which declared an emergency situation in the city and determined in its article 16 that the Municipal Education of Department of São Paulo (SMESP in its Portuguese acronym) had to promote "the gradual interruption of classes in the public school system [...]" (clause IV) and adopt "measures aiming to operationalize distance teaching and learning " (clause VI).

This swift operationalization, carried out in an unprecedented scenario marked with a risk to life situation and concomitant changes in social relationships, brought the need to reorganize the educational work with technological tools, despite the fact that many teachers had very little or no familiarity with them, and furthermore, many didn't have the necessary equipment and resources or had them with some restriction.

Therefore, amidst the new demands to ensure the continuity of the education processes and the right of everyone to schooling, continuous training was promoted for teachers. Within this context, this study aims to understand how the teachers of city school in the city of São Paulo signify the continuous training adopted by the Educational System, in 2020, for the implementation of remote teaching in the period of the pandemic of Covid-19. Intending to identify how these teachers respond to the challenges imposed by the pandemic, we seek to verify how much the continuous training carried in 2020 met its goals and

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needs, in the goals and needs, in the remote teaching, giving it a personal meaning or not to the teaching activity.

We set out with the hypothesis that continuous training, anessential condition in the presented context, must have a personal meaning which corresponds to the social meanings that this process represents. Otherwise, there is a risk of not constituting for the person that participates a manner by which he or she can overcome the hardships and the challenges spawned from the the organization of teaching work, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and, therefore, signify an activity devoid of meaning, in other words, its fulfillment is only motivated by carrying out a bureaucratic tasks that is the the working shift of a teacher.

We consider that the contributions of this study which brings the understanding of the psychic movement of teachers may benefit the organization and the improvement of training and formative processes for teachers in school systems.

2 The phenomenon of the pandemic and remote teaching

The declaration of the emergency situation imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic in March, 2020, besides representing a crisis of historic proportions, culminated in exacerbating social and educational inequalities, especially in the public school system. In order to contain the contagion and the spread of the new Coronavirus, schools adhered to the so-called remote teaching [4] with diverse consequences for the learning processes and the students development.

According to a study by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística ((IBGE - Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics) (2021)), "Síntese de Indicadores Sociais: uma análise das condições de vida da população brasileira-

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[4] According to the coordinator of Distance Learning of Ifal (Federal University of Alagoas), Luiz Henrique Lemos, while Distance Learning is consolidated modality in the institution, remote teaching has a temporary character. "The remote activity or class, at this moment of the pandemic, is a temporary solution to go on with the educational activities, in order to reduce the impacts on the students learning of the presential mode". Available on https://www2.ifal.edu.br/noticias/profissionais-explicam-a-diferenca-entre-ensino-remoto-e-ensino-a-distancia /. Access on May 28. 2021.

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Synthesis of Social Indicators - an analysis of the living conditions of the Brazilian population", these inequalities "were intensified by internal factors of the school system itself in its capacity of proposing alternatives, as well by external factors due to the different realities of access to these activities by students" (IBGE, 2021, p.73). The data reveals that, because of the pandemic situation, most of the Basic Education students, especially in a social vulnerability situation, depended on the public school system to have any access to some form of educational content. However, the capacity of this system is affected by several factors, ranging from the objective work conditions of the teachers to the logistical issues of the regions to be served.

Gatti (2020), alerts that over 48 million students linked to public schools went through social isolation situations and the expectation of the presential return to classes. He states that there is no evidence of good solutions in this emergency for the vast population of children and youngsters of public schools. Likewise, it points out that, due to the conditions and teaching training for the implementation of remote teaching, there were several difficulties, such as "the usage of media for the development of manners of active involvement of students, development of shared activities, and even the students performance assessment" (GATTI, 2020, p.32).

Oliveira and Pereira Junior (2021), in their study about the teaching work in pandemic times, enlighten data which problematize the lack of teachers preparation to develop educational activities in remote mode, highlighting two crucial elements: the objective conditions of work, represented by equipment and the technological resources e teachers training.

Khatib (2020), states that the existing literature about the impacts provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic at all levels of education, point to an emergency remote teaching, marked by countless difficulties associated to a deficient online teaching infrastructure, inexperience of teachers and several information gaps related to both students and teachers.

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Romanowski, Rufato and Pagnoncelli (2021, p.5) assert that: "Nobody was prepared to make decisions on how to carry out the classes: families, teachers, administradors".

Almeida and Dalben (2020) investigated the experience of a public school in the state of Paraná in the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. To do that, they analyzed work and official documents, field records, observation and taping of planning meetings and virtual groups, besides questionnaires applied to teachers and members of the management team that agreed to take part of the study. The results allow one to envisage the potentiality of the reinvention of the school, boosted by participatory processes, despite the limits in face of the objective conditions of those involved and the historic troubles of the Brazilian educational and social systems.

In face of what has been exposed, according to the researched literature, several authors (ALMEIDA; DALBEN, 2020; GATTI, 2020; KHATIB, 2020; OLIVEIRA; GOMES; BARCELLOS, 2020; SILVESTRE, 2020) that probed into education in the pandemic context, although they state that there are limitations caused by the precarious conditions that both teachers and students were submitted and also due to teachers training as well as infrastructure for remote teaching, they also point out to opportunities that must be looked into.

3 Theoretical references: Historical-cultural psychology

This study is based on historical-cultural psychology. Using this psychology, to support the analysis and the data discussion, we focus on the categories sense-meaning and needs and motives having as references the writings of Vigotski and Leontiev.

According to the assumptions of historical-cultural psychology, the evolution of the human being is social and historical, as, based on the interactions, humans transform the world and themselves thus producing their subjectivity.

This subjectivity is constituted socially and historically based on a totality of elements which are intertwined with the social, economic and cultural aspects

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of determined context. Thus, the elements for the psychological constitution of humans are directly related in a way that "the understanding of the internal world demands an understanding of the external world as they are two aspects of the same movement" (BOCK, 2011, p. 22).

Within this perspective, in order to understand the singularity of each individual, we must examine his or her process of constitution which doubtlessly is expressed by the means of the word with meaning (AGUIAR, 2006).

Therefore, it is in the meaning of the word that we find the indecomposable unit between language and thought. Thus, meaning, as a speech phenomenon, is a constituent and indispensable part of the word and also the thought. Hence, "the word without meaning is not a word but an empty sound." (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 398). From the point of view of thought, the word meaning corresponds to a generalization or concept and can only be a thought phenomenon as long as the thought relates to the word and it materializes in the word. "Any generalization, any formation of a concept – is unquestionably a specific and true act of thought." (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 398).

The understanding of meanings, according to the assumptions of historical-cultural psychology, results from the articulated apprehension of senses and meanings that a person attributes to a certain fact or situation. Senses and meanings are considered to be dialectal pairs, as, albeit different, they complement each other, in a manner that one does exist without the other.

Vigotski (2009) states that the French writer rendered a great service to psychological analysis to introduce the difference between the sense and the meaning of words:

> He showed that the sense of a word is the sum of all psychological facts que it awakened in our consciousness. Thus, the sense is always a dynamic, fluid and complex form which has several zones of varied stability. The meaning is only one of these sense zones that the words acquire in the context of a given discourse and, furthermore, a more stable, uniform, exact zone. [...] But the meaning is an immovable and unchangeable point which remains stable in all the changes of meaning of the word in different contexts [...] The real sense of a word is inconstant. In one operation, it appears with one sense, in another one, it acquires another sense. [...] This enrichment of words that the sense gives

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them based on context is a fundamental law of the meaning dynamics of words (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 465).

According to Asbahr (2014, p. 267), "Vigotski advances by introducing the concept of sense in the investigation regarding the relationship between thought and language and by relating it to human consciousness, but it is an inconclusive concept in his works". The author points that it is Leontiev who deepens the analysis of the concept, naming it "personal sense" and it directly relates to human activity and consciousness. "All the psychic reflection results from a relationship, from a real interaction between a living material being, highly organized and the reality that surrounds him or her" (LEONTIEV, 1978, p. 93).

Within perspective, Leontiev explains the psychic reflection for the person depends on the relationship that he or she establishes with the reflected object. It brings as an example the action of a scout hunter whose immediate goal is to scare away the prey. Although this isolated action does not meet his needs, for instance, kill the prey and obtain the food, it represents a certain link to a determined relation which will enable the escape of the prey and its later capture. Thus, these established relationships by social activity find a correlation that gives sense to its doing.

According to Leontiev (1978), the concept of sense had several orientations based on bourgeois psychology and, despite these divergences, there is a common point in all of them: in order to analyze the senses all the authors use as a starting point the phenomena that belong to consciousness. "That is the reason that, in a historical study of consciousness, the sense is, above all, a relation that is created in life, in the activity of the person" (LEONTIEV, 1978, p. 97). Still with the author, this specific relationship is established in the development of the activity so that the conscious sense is constituted by the relationship that happens in the brain of the individual, among to what drives him or her to act (motive) and what his or her action is aimed at. This is, therefore, the existing relationship between motif and end, resulting in the production of senses.

Hence, agreeing with Vigotski, Leontiev (1978, p. 97) asserts that "in order to find the personal sense, we must discover the motive that it corresponds to".

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On this path, the categories necessities and motives are fundamental so that we can apprehend the process of the sense constitution.

Based on Leontiev, Asbahr (2005, p. 109) reinforces that, "only when an object corresponds to the need, can it regulate and orient the activity". Thus, we bring the saying of Leontiev (1978, p. 80) when he states that, "henceforth, it is present to the individual the link that exists between the object of an action (its end) and the generator of the activity (its motive)".

Leontiev (1978) differentiates what he considers to be motives generators of senses or really effective motives, stimuli motifs or motives merely understandable. For the author, the efficient motives give personal sense to the realized activity, constituting a conscious relationship between the motives of the activity and the end of the actions. On the other hand, stimulus motives do not generate meaning to the activity, they only drive it, positively or negatively, to action. Therefore, it can be said that they are reasons external to the individual's activity.

In this research, we consider it essential to capture what needs were awakened in teachers in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, as, through them, it is possible for us to understand whether the continuous training initiatives adopted in 2020 for the implementation of remote teaching in the municipal system of São Paulo were able to meet these needs, as well as understand what motives and meanings these professionals attribute to the continuous training offered.

It is a fact that a person's individual experience is not always marked by meanings that correspond to the senses. Asbahr (2005, p. 112) explains this idea by stating that, "[...] for the worker, although the social sense of his or her work is to produce certain products, the meaning of working is different, it is to obtain a salary because only that way you can survive."

Thus, using Leontiev's (1978) reflections on alienated work, Basso (1998, p. 6) argues that:

> [...] the teacher's work will be alienated when its sense does not correspond to the meaning given by the effective content of this socially foreseen activity, in other words, when the personal

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> meaning of the work is separated from its signification. If the meaning of teaching work attributed by the teacher who carries it out is just to ensure their survival, working only for the paycheck and without being aware of their participation in the production of objectifications from the perspective of genericity, there will be a split with the socially fixed signification. This signification is understood as a mediating function between the student and the cultural instruments that will be appropriated, with the aim of broadening and systematizing the understanding of reality and enabling objectification in non-everyday spheres. In this case, the alienated work of the teacher can de-characterize school educational practice.

In this direction, relying on Vygotsky and Leontiev, we understand that, despite their differences, there is a convergence regarding the production of meanings. Aguiar (2011) asserts that Vigotski makes a distinction between sense and meaning, highlighting the dialectic between them. Meaning is a more stable social construct available to man from birth. Sense is a construction that arises from the confrontation between social meanings and each person's experience. Leontiev (1978) also states that signification is the generalization of reality, socially constituted, reflected, and fixed in language, giving it stability. Personal sense is directly related between what drives man to act and what his activity is oriented towards. We understand that the action that guides the activity is a social construction, constituted and developed in and by the activity, through the experiences of each individual, therefore it also reflects the dialectical relationship between sense and meaning.

4 Methodological path

The study was based on the experience of a school located in the southern region of the city of São Paulo that expressed interest in participating in the research. The institution operates in the morning and afternoon serving around 650 students from elementary school and middle school. The management team, selected through public tender, is permanent. The team of teachers is made up of 41 professionals, most of whom have been at the school for more than three years, with staff turnover being low.

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Four teachers who voluntarily agreed to take part in the study were interviewed using a semi-structured script, one teacher from the literacy cycle (1st to 3rd year), two from the interdisciplinary cycle (4th to 6th year) and one from the authorial cycle (7th to 9th year). The choice of teachers from different cycles sought to verify the existence of similarities and/or differences related to the object under study and how they were configured in the various segments of the Educational Unit. It was also established as a criterion that participating teachers should have worked at the school in the 2020 academic period and, preferably, participated in collective schedules intended for continued training in that same year.

The interviews focused on teachers' perceptions regarding the continuous learning carried out in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, on the initiative of the school and São Paulo Municipal Department of Education (SMESP) (*Secretaria Municipal de Educação de São Paulo)*; previous knowledge and experience of remote teaching; the objective working conditions existing in the remote teaching modality; the organization of the pedagogical work carried out during the period and its articulation with the School Unit's Pedagogical Political Project, (PPP*) (Projeto Político Pedagógico),* for the implementation of remote teaching.

Due to the social distancing established to minimize and contain coronavirus contagion, the interviews were collected virtually. Regarding ethical procedures, the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the university that hosted the study under assessment no. 4,870,719.

The data was analyzed based on the framework of cultural-historical psychology of Vygotsky and collaborators, especially with regard to the categories of meaning-sense and needs-motives, using the procedure of the meaning nuclei of Aguiar and Ozella (2006; 2013) and Aguiar, Soares and Machado (2015).

The analysis work was organized in stages. The first consisted of carrying out repeated readings of the collected material, undertaking an analytical effort towards a constructive-interpretative process, that is, we sought to overcome the empirical, starting from itself, capturing in the statements of each of the

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participants the contradictions, hesitations, ambivalences, existing gaps, as well as the most emotionally charged content. According to Aguiar and Ozella (2006), this initial stage allows researchers to identify what they call pre-indicators.

The second stage consisted of bringing together the contents of the initial stage, based on their similarity, complementarity or opposition, forming indicators and their thematic contents. It should be noted that this articulation sought to understand the historical and social conditions in which the participants live and produce their experiences.

The third stage consisted of constructing the meaning nuclei and allowed us to understand the so-called zones of signification of the participants. The result of an analytical effort to move from the empirical to the interpretative, this stage represents the systematization of the data that enabled us to unveil the constitutive determinations of the teachers taking part in the research, in other words, to understand them in their ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

Following the recommendation of Aguiar and Ozella (2006; 2013), initially the teachers' speeches were organized and then the analysis focused on each nucleus individually, a process called by the authors intranucleus analysis, to later advance to an articulation between them, constituting in this synthesis movement, the internucleus analysis.

The data we present in this text brings together not particular aspects of each teacher, but the meeting points of the internucleus analysis, that is, what was common in the discourse of the interviewed teachers and illustrate the meanings attributed by them to the continuing education carried out in 2020.

5 Data analysis and discussion: what teachers' meanings reveal

The work of analyzing the data enabled the four teachers interviewed to construct meaning nuclei that reveal the contradictory and dialectical movement marked by the relationship between meaning-sense and needs-motives related to the phenomenon under investigation.

When examined as a whole, the data produced in the nuclei make up a synthesis that expresses shared aspects, points of encounter between the four

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teachers. At the same time as this dialectical and contradictory movement reveals limitations, it also presents possibilities for overcoming them. Thus, we observed that there are moments in which the meanings attributed by the teachers to the training activity are distant from their meanings and others in which they come closer and correspond.

We tried to capture in these teachers' statements the needs and motives for carrying out the training activity, in order to understand the personal significance attributed to these activities based on their social meaning. The unveiling of the meanings produced by each teacher interviewed allowed us to find five meeting points, common to the four teachers, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Meeting points of the meanings produced by teachers - prepared by the authors.

1-	1- Social meaning of continuous learning
2-	2- Training needs revealed by teachers
3-	3- Objective and subjective working conditions
4-	4- Pedagogical Political Project as an articulator of work to achieve objectives
5-	5- Correspondence between the motives and ends of actions: production of personal meaning

Source: Prepared by the authors

The first meeting point is related to the social significance internalized and attributed by the participating teachers to the continuous learning carried out during the school's collective hours, known in the São Paulo Municipal Education System as the Special Full Training Day (JEIF) [5] (*Jornada Especial Integral de Formação*). For the four interviewees, identified below as P1, P2, P3 and P4, in summary, continuous learning is an instrument that helps progress, that adds value and is rewarding when it is well conducted and structured, enabling reflections, exchanges and interactions that culminate in the alignment and improvement of work. The following statements are illustrative:

> P1 – The first reason that I find very rewarding is the interaction with the group, the exchange of ideas between the teachers. Because the daily routine is very busy, some teachers you can only meet, talk to, and exchange experiences at JEIF.

[5] JEIF: The working shift consists of 25 hours of teaching and 15 hours for training and planning. Of these 15h/a, 8h/a are set aside for collective training hours at the Educational Unit.

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> P2 – I think that when training is well structured, we can make great progress in our work.
> P3 – It's fundamental, thinking about the professional gain we get when we share collectively.
> P4 – I consider it very important. It's a very good training, it's a moment when we exchange experiences, it's a moment when we receive information from the coordinators that they bring from the courses they take so that we can develop another method, have a new methodology, a new teaching style, so I think it's important.

Davis et al. (2011), when commenting on the study carried out by Nóvoa (2007), agree with the existence of a discursive consensus on the importance of continuous learning for improving the quality of teaching, as well as understanding that it is the articulating axis of interventions at school. This consensus would be the result of the production of knowledge in the area and the political speeches and actions adopted in recent decades at national and international levels, which contribute to the delineation of this consensus and, therefore, its social significance.

Although teachers share the same social significance regarding continuing education, it was possible to verify that the meanings produced by them do not always correspond to this meaning, as it can be seen below:

> P1 – You go super willing, then when you arrive you think: This isn't what I wanted. You get stuck in the bureaucracy. I understand that it's just a demand, bureaucracy.
> P2 – There are always new regulations or new guidelines or new roles, and you deal with this extremely bureaucratic part and end up not looking at the student.
> P3 – During this pandemic, we met and it was really cool because there was this exchange between Fund I[6] and Fund II[7]. I thought this was really cool. I made incredible partnerships during this pandemic with Fund I teachers, something I didn't imagine in everyday school life.
> P4 – The coordinators tried to do the best they could, but they also had no training... so it was complicated. How am I going to teach something I've never seen? For them, remote teaching was also new, so it's not their fault, that's when we created this help network among ourselves.

Based on these excerpts, it can be seen that, for P1 and P2, training is not seen as a transformation device in the pandemic context, as, in addition to

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[6] Elementary school
[7] Middle school

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lacking specific training for the implementation of remote teaching, teachers assert that bureaucratic demands take precedence over the object of study. For P3, the possibility of holding out collective training at the same time, with the entire group of teachers via virtual means, established a link between the group and the establishment of previously non-existent partnerships. It is noteworthy that P3 did not participate in collective continuing education schedules (JEIF) before the pandemic but began to do so after the publication of Normative Instruction No. 17, of April 28, 2020 (SÃO PAULO, 2020b), and Municipal Education Department of São Paulo (SMESP) (*Secretaria Municipal de Educação*) Circular Memorandum No. 19, of June 26, 2020 (SÃO PAULO, 2020a), which required teachers to hold virtual meetings to plan and insert activities on the Google Classroom platform at different times than those held in person. Therefore, the school was able to organize virtual collective schedules, within the teachers' working hours, ensuring that everyone could participate in collective moments. This new configuration allowed and democratized the access and participation of teachers who traditionally did not take part in these moments because they did not meet the criteria determined by SMESP for the composition of the JEIF journey. Likewise, P4 considers the help and exchanges established by the group in collective meetings to be positive, however, he highlights that not even the pedagogical coordinators had training for this new teaching situation.

The second meeting point is related to the needs revealed by these teachers. In this aspect, we also identified that the interviewees presented common needs regarding continued training, namely: greater listening - they emphasize that bureaucratic, prescriptive training actions, which overlap with the object of study, make the training activity devoid of meaning and incapable of overcoming difficulties encountered when carrying out remote work and producing digital content, therefore are not able to meet your needs.

The participants' statements express that the lack of listening and dialogue, especially on the part of SMESP, generated points of tension between the teaching and management team and that, in the desire to meet SMESP's bureaucratic demands, a pace of work marked by actions that did not correspond

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to the needs of the group, as we can see in the speech of one of the teachers interviewed.

> P1 – But how can we make ourselves understand that there needs to be more discussion. These moments of listening were very few. And the pressure was so heavy.

Thus, participation in continuous learning generates a feeling of alienation because the actions carried out are not aimed at satisfying teachers' needs and, therefore, there is a rupture between the social meaning and the meaning sense. This meaning is related to the idea that, as mentioned by P1, "group sessions end up being for you to solve external and bureaucratic problems". The teachers express the demand for a training that allows them to find ways of catering for all the students in the remote modality:

> T1 - You need a different training, you need to talk, to see what your student needs. It's not only opening the school and putting the student inside.
> T2 - Actually, I think that when we sometimes manage to get a break in the middle of all this bureaucracy, we can think a bit about how to assist these children who are at home.
> T3- My difficulty was related to the student not having access to the platform. So the teacher's first fear was: I've lost my student.
> T4- I need to get someone who speaks the language so that a lay person like me can understand the technology.

All report difficult and challenging moments in the midst of a disruptive scenario in which remote teaching has emerged as an emergency alternative, imposing on everyone the urgency of replacing a culture that is mediated by eye-to-eye interactions for a culture that is mediated by the virtual, with physical and geographical distancing.

Consequently, it was necessary to learn and/or improve the use of technologies to produce digital content, post videos and activities, and use the platform for synchronous and asynchronous classes. Contradictorily, as the interviews revealed, in addition to the lack of training for remote teaching, many

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of the courses offered did not engage with the teachers' needs, as can be seen in the following statements.

> T1 - I had access to the courses offered by the *SMESP* but I didn't want to take them. The last thing I wanted to do was sit and watch.
> T2 - I don't know what training would be like in this respect (remote context)... Perhaps using some kind of tool that helped in explaining mathematics, for example.
> T3 - I missed something more pedagogical related to teaching, not to using the platform.
> T4 - There is a teacher who is married to another teacher who knows a lot about technology, so when we had a problem I would call her: is your husband available?

T1's words reveal that even though she had access to the courses offered by the *SMESP*, she didn't feel motivated to take them. Her statement leads us to infer that the format of the courses did not meet her needs, as she understood that she would be left in a passive position.

While T2 and T3 point to the need for more pedagogical training, focused on the specifics of remote teaching, T4 reveals the need for training more focused on using the platform. In addition, she says that the training offered by the school and *SMESP* were unable to meet her needs, and that she had to resort to the help of third parties, outside the school.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that for the four teachers interviewed, the training offered by both the school and the *SMESP* is not seen as a means of transforming teaching practice, as it did not meet their latent needs.

The third focal point refers to the psychological suffering caused by the feeling of loneliness expressed by the participants. The teachers reveal resentment towards *SMESP* as a result of the limitations of objective and subjective working conditions on the implementation of remote teaching, as the following statements illustrate:

> T1 - I got mentally exhausted, I would get very tired, because it was kind of new for me, this world of discovering how to deal with the toold and some things, it was consuming.
> T2 - I had depression. I'm still taking medication and the school took me in at that point, you know? The school preserved my life. The network didn't take care of us.
> T3 - There were times when we cried. My God, what do I do?

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> T4 - I had to help the children in the evening, because that's when the parents got home. There were times when I would stay up until midnight, 1am, talking to a parent, talking to the children, on Saturdays and Sundays. The year 2020 was complicated. In the year of the pandemic I ended up in Psychiatry. Because I thought I was going to go nuts, that I couldn't handle it.

We emphasize that there is no way of talking about teaching work, which has the action of teaching at its core, without considering the specificities of this work and the conditions in which it takes place.

The act of teaching something to someone is an intentional, planned action aimed at achieving a specific goal; until a certain point, this action ensured the legitimacy of the teacher's autonomy, as they had the knowledge, means and resources to promote such action. Nevertheless, over time, the school has been going through a series of changes, both in terms of its structure and organization and the roles it should play, according to the hegemonic concepts and interests of each moment.

The pandemic and the resulting social isolation brought the need for an unexpected transition to a teaching modality that most teachers were not familiar with, nor did they have the material conditions to continue the work. As an example of the precarious objective working conditions in the pandemic environment in 2020, we can mention the lack of equipment, such as a laptop, microphone, headphones, ergonomic chairs, and adequate internet connection. Teachers who could afford it had to acquire these resources to help them work at home, and those who couldn't, worked under limiting conditions. Even though *SMESP* published a regulation authorizing teachers who didn't have these resources to use them in their school, it is our understanding that this strategy was at odds with a scenario in which social isolation was adopted as a way of safeguarding life. As a result, many teachers were forced to buy such equipment so they wouldn't have to go to the school.

Silva Junior (2015, p. 180-181) reinforces that "[...] much more is asked of public school teachers than what is given to them. The increase in tasks and

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responsibilities is not followed by an increase in pay or an improvement in their working conditions."

Thus, the statements made by the participating teachers reveal a feeling of powerlessness that leads to illness. In addition, the challenge of migrating from the face-to-face to the virtual system unexpectedly, with no prior planning, caused points of tension and insecurity, given that many of the educators had no knowledge of this type of teaching. Although they have gradually learned how to use technological resources, they consider that their use has been more of an instrument, and that the dilemma of how to reach everyone persists.

There is also the consensus that there was a lack of training for both teachers and pedagogical coordinators, especially regarding the mediation of the group according to its context, as mentioned previously.

We understand that the implementation of remote teaching demands procedural knowledge related to the use and functions of technological tools, however, it is clear to us that this is only one of the elements within an educational activity, and that it is essential to encompass aspects related to human development.

The fourth focal point refers to the articulation of the *Political Pedagogical Project, PPP*, in order to achieve the proposed objectives. Vasconcellos (2006) states that the PPP is the systematization, never definitive, of a collaborative planning process, which is perfected and made concrete along the way, clearly defining the type of educational action that one wants to carry out. It is an important way of building the institution's identity and a theoretical-methodological tool for intervening and changing reality.

The teachers' statements make it evident that the *PPP* is not yet seen as a guidance and coordinating instrument for actions within the school. Though they all mention knowing it, only two participants collaborated in its drafting as can be seen in the following statements:

> T1 - I took part in the drafting. But I want to say that the discussion about it was kept under wraps these last few months and what came before it was the whole bureaucracy.
> T2 - I took part in the drafting.

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> T3 - I know the PPP, I didn't take part in the drafting, but I asked to have access to it as soon as I joined the school.
> . Whenever there's something they're going to put in or pull out, they always share it with us.
> T4 - I know the PPP, but I didn't take part in the drafting. The coordinator read the PPP in 2019. It's up to the managing team, but some things they ask us.

As well as being an official document of the school, the PPP explicitly or implicitly reveals a concept and an intention. Thus, of the four teachers interviewed, two said they had not taken part in the drafting. Not having the participation of all the school's staff not only infringes the legal principles of democratic management, but ends up endorsing the loss of group identity. This situation has implications for the teaching work and for the production of meanings, since, once again, there is a feeling of alienation resulting from non-participation in the construction of the project.

The data obtained from our sample allows us to infer that in the school a process of collective construction and systematization of the PPP has not yet been consolidated, which can generate a feeling of lack of direction and clarity as to the directions that should guide everyone's work, and even resisting the external demands that do not dialogue with the priorities established in the project. Therefore, although it is limited to the discourse of four teachers, it is possible to say that for them, the personal meaning is that the PPP is a bureaucratic document and is not seen as a guide for conscious and intentional actions, defined and agreed upon by the whole group.

We see this as a situation in which the actions carried out are motivated only by the fulfillment of bureaucratic tasks, characterizing what Leontiev (1978) describes as motive-stimuli and, therefore, not a generator of meaning.

The fifth focal point concerns a new movement revealed by the participating teachers, when they find ways of resisting and responding to the bureaucratic and prescriptive apparatus that exist in training activities. In this dialectical movement, they find in the actions taken a connection with their individual motives, expressing powerful possibilities for breaking out of this cycle, resisting the rupture between senses and meanings. These moments are

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marked by collaborative and participatory actions, in which the teachers themselves act as protagonists in the training actions, helping each other with the needs that arise as a result of the remote teaching, as can be seen in the following statements:

> T1 - We searched among ourselves, our colleagues, to see who could advise us on how to record a lesson, how to use it, how to do it, which way you use, the question of tiring videos, long videos.
> T2 - We managed to sit down and reach a consensus on how we were going to redesign 2020. We talked about it a lot in the group sessions and then we got together, but it's on the initiative of the teachers themselves.
> T3 - So we had a lot of this, one helping the other, a lot! We were there for everyone who asked for help.
> T4 - We teachers were the ones who gave ourselves support. We set up a helpline.

So, this group of teachers discovered in a local context new meanings for their work. Their testimonies are unanimous in stating that they found in the collaborative, authorial and dialogical actions motivation to continue with the training activities. Therefore, such actions are a consequence of the needs raised by the teachers, setting meaning-generating motives, as they saw in these actions a connection with their individual motives and with the social meaning that continuous learning has.

The data found reflects an existing movement in the literature in which continuous teacher training from a collaborative perspective is described as capable of contributing to changes in the pedagogical practice and promoting the professional development of teachers, as an alternative to conceptions that prove insufficient to meet the current challenges of the profession (CERICATO; DAVIS, 2013; SILVA; CERICATO, 2022). Therefore, we highlight the promising nature that collaborative, authorial training actions based on an educational project shared by all can achieve, even in a pandemic environment such as the one we experienced.

6 Final considerations

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Facing an unprecedented scenario, in which there was a need to implement remote teaching, this study analyzed the meanings attributed by four teachers from a municipal school in São Paulo to the continuing training carried out in times of pandemic. Aware of the limitations of the research, since the data analysis refers to a portion of the school's professionals, we present some general reflections based on the statements of these teachers.

The participants in this study revealed that the precarious objective and subjective working conditions limited their practice, leading them to psychological distress and a sense of loneliness and powerlessness. The proposed actions were not accompanied by training policies and clear guidelines to the schools, creating a feeling of insecurity and abandonment among the teachers.

In addition, it was possible to observe in the statements of the four teachers, an increase in working hours, going beyond conventional ones to be able to attend to students and families who could only access them in the evenings or on weekends.

Despite working in different areas, literacy cycles - interdisciplinary and authorial - there were no differences regarding the meanings these teachers attributed to continuing education in a pandemic environment. To a greater or lesser extent, they all show moments of disruption between the social meaning of continuous learning and the personal meaning they attribute to this process. These moments are marked by training actions that do meet the teachers' needs and, therefore, are not effective reasons for producing meaning.

Common to all was also the feeling that their needs were not listened to. The data shows that the participating teachers did not feel listened to or welcomed by the Municipal Education Department in the pandemic environment.

In view of the above, we can see how contradictory and dialectical the movement of meanings is. Thus, at the same time as the training courses are not perceived by these teachers as an instrument that contributes to overcoming the challenges and, therefore, to transforming practice, being motivated only by the fulfillment of the working day, another movement is revealed when they state that the collective of teachers, despite the limits due to adverse conditions, finds

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powerful possibilities to resist this rupture, through participatory, authorial and dialogical processes.

In this movement of authorship, of collectively thinking about possibilities based on the concrete reality, they find in their coworkers advanced peers for the exchange of experiences related to the use of technologies.

Therefore, the collective itself finds ways of responding to its needs, reflecting on the processes, and going against the adoption of the bureaucratic logic. New meanings are produced by these teachers who identify in the actions carried out by the collective an equivalent to the individual motives of the activity.

This movement, which may be similar to others in the system, demonstrates the potential that teacher training processes have to act in such a way as to develop both a critical and class consciousness in the fight for better working conditions and the search for training models that aim for a more inclusive school and society.

Based on the data, we conclude that continuous teacher training, supported by collaborative processes, is an instrument that can promote education from a transforming and emancipatory perspective. Therefore, its organization by the education systems must consider that this is a construction, highlighted by conceptions and theories collectively assumed by the subjects that constitute the reality of each specific context, therefore being formed by the limits and determinants, but above all by the potential and intentions that form the foundations of the educational project of each school.

Significados atribuidos por los docentes a la formación continua en la pandemia

RESUMEN
El estudio buscó comprender los significados que los docentes de una escuela pública de la red municipal de educación de São Paulo atribuyen a las iniciativas de educación permanente realizadas en 2020 para la implementación de la enseñanza a distancia. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de entrevistas. El análisis se realizó a través del procedimiento de núcleos de sentido, cuya base teórica se da en los estudios de la psicología histórico-cultural y con foco en

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las categorías sentido-significado y necesidades-motivos. Los resultados muestran los límites y potencialidades del proceso vivido, a través de las condiciones de trabajo objetivas y subjetivas.

Palabras clave: Formación continua de profesores. Profesión docente. Pandemia de COVID-19.

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