

**Teacher training from an international perspective:
an analysis of the Santa Catarina State Education Plan¹**

*A formação de professores sob a perspectiva internacional:
uma análise do Plano Estadual de Educação de Santa Catarina*

*Formación docente desde una perspectiva internacional:
un análisis del Plan de Educación del Estado de Santa Catarina*

Morgana Bada Caldas²
Universidade do Extremo Sul Catarinense

Naiara Gracia Tibola³
Universidade do Planalto Catarinense

Abstract: The overall objective of this research was to understand the epistemological conception of teacher training expressed in the Santa Catarina State Education Plan (PEE/SC), reflecting on its goals and strategies in the context of its implementation and from the perspective of international organizations. Specifically, it sought to analyze goals 15 and 16 of the PEE/SC, related to teacher training, and to consider data from the PEE/SC Monitoring Panel, taking into account national experience and international influence. Using a qualitative approach, document analysis was adopted as the methodological procedure. It was concluded that the PEE/SC, in line with the National Education Plan (PNE) and under the influence of international organizations, is based on the epistemology of practice as a theoretical conception for teacher training. It was also found that the provision of initial and continuing training in the state is linked to the area of teaching activity, and that the achievement of the goals is far from what was planned for the period of validity.

Keywords: Teacher Training; Public Policies in Education; International Relations.

Resumo: O objetivo geral da pesquisa foi compreender a concepção epistemológica de formação de professores expressa no Plano Estadual de Educação de Santa Catarina (PEE/SC), refletindo sobre suas metas e estratégias no contexto de sua execução e sob a perspectiva das organizações internacionais. Como objetivo específico, buscou-se analisar as metas 15 e 16 do PEE/SC, referentes à formação docente, e os dados do Painel de Monitoramento do PEE/SC, considerando a experiência nacional e a influência internacional. Com abordagem qualitativa, adotou-se a análise documental como procedimento metodológico. Concluiu-se que o PEE/SC, em consonância com o Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE) e sob influência de organismos internacionais, fundamenta-se na epistemologia da prática como concepção teórica para a formação de professores.

¹ Translated by Silvia Iacovacci. E-mail: siacovacci@gmail.com.

² Ph.D. in Education from the Universidade do Extremo Sul Catarinense (UNESC). Tenured Faculty Member in the Graduate Program in Education at UNESC, Criciúma, Santa Catarina (SC), Brazil. E-mail: morgana.bada@unesc.net; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4364222001061498>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4554-5461>.

³ Ph.D. in Education from the Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI). Tenured Faculty Member in the Graduate Program in Education at the Universidade do Planalto Catarinense (UNIPAC), Lages, Santa Catarina (SC), Brazil. E-mail: profa.naiara@uniplaclages.edu.br; Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4772526675180055>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9938-8997>.

Verificou-se, ainda, que a oferta de formação inicial e continuada no estado está vinculada à área de atuação docente, e que o cumprimento das metas se mostra distante do planejado para o período de vigência.

Palavras-chave: Formação de Professores; Políticas Públicas em Educação; Relações Internacionais.

Resumen: El objetivo general de esta investigación fue comprender la concepción epistemológica de la formación docente expresada en el Plan de Educación del Estado de Santa Catarina (PEE/SC), reflexionando sobre sus metas y estrategias en el contexto de su implementación y desde la perspectiva de las organizaciones internacionales. Específicamente, se buscó analizar las metas 15 y 16 del PEE/SC, relacionadas con la formación docente, y los datos del Panel de Monitoreo del PEE/SC, considerando la experiencia nacional y la influencia internacional. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo, se adoptó el análisis documental como procedimiento metodológico. Se concluyó que el PEE/SC, en consonancia con el Plan Nacional de Educación (PNE) y bajo la influencia de las organizaciones internacionales, se fundamenta en la epistemología de la práctica como concepción teórica para la formación docente. Asimismo, se constató que la provisión de formación inicial y continua en el estado está vinculada al área de actividad docente, y que el logro de las metas dista mucho de lo previsto para el período de vigencia.

Palabras clave: Formación del Profesorado; Políticas Públicas en Educación; Relaciones Internacionales.

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Introduction

Since the 1990s, Brazilian education has been influenced by international recommendations and strategies aimed at strengthening the country's economy. In response to the demands of capital, Brazil began incorporating an empiricist approach to education into official documents, focusing on achieving educational indicators strictly controlled by government assessment systems. According to Moraes and Torriglia (2003, p. 55), the epistemological framework of the teaching profession in Brazil was conceived for the “development of competencies to ‘use, do, and interact,’ as recommended by the ECLAC/UNESCO document (1992).” This shift is evident in the alignment of the World Bank's objectives with those outlined in the Law on Guidelines and Foundations of National Education (Brazil, 1996), as well as in teacher training guidelines that have emerged since then. A standardization movement took hold, reinforcing the instrumental curricular logic of the competency-based model. This model is based on the assumption that teacher education is geared toward solving practical problems.

Following the approval of the current National Education Plan (Plano Nacional de Educação - PNE) in 2014, states and municipalities were given one year to develop or revise their education plans in line with the national plan. During this time, the 2030 Agenda was introduced. It comprises 17 goals that the 193 UN member states aim to achieve between 2015 and 2030. These goals include Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015, p. 23). In this context, this study aims to understand the epistemological conception of teacher education expressed in the Santa Catarina State Education Plan (Plano Estadual de Educação de Santa Catarina - PEE/SC) and to reflect on its respective targets and strategies in the context of its implementation and from the perspective of international organizations.

We conducted a documentary analysis of the PEE/SC (Santa Catarina, 2015) using a qualitative approach and examined data from the PEE/SC Monitoring Panel (Santa Catarina, 2024). Both were used as data sources.

Using Bardin's (2016) content analysis and the categorical technique, we understood the epistemological conceptions of teacher education in goals 15 and 16 of the PEE/SC. We then extended this understanding to statements about teacher education in the other PEE/SC strategies.

According to Bardin (2016), the unit of record corresponds to the unit of meaning to be coded and must be analyzed in accordance with the unit of context in which it is embedded. Thus, units of record referring to teacher education were grouped by meaning within their respective contexts. The following categories of analysis were developed considering the units of record interpreted within their context and identified in the strategies for Goals 15 and 16 of the PEE/SC: a) provision of initial and continuing teacher education, b) teacher education determined by the area of practice, and c) funding for teacher education.

The literature review revealed two primary epistemological approaches to teacher education: the epistemology of practice and the epistemology of praxis. Based on the meanings identified in the categorized material, we determined which conception predominates in the PEE/SC. Next, we deemed it equally relevant to examine the available PEE/SC Monitoring Panel data (Santa Catarina, 2024) on the achievement of Goals 15 and 16, thereby fostering reflection on the results obtained. The analysis revealed the complexity of the epistemological phenomenon underlying teacher education, which extends beyond the local context and enables reflection on the influence of the international landscape.

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This paper is organized into two main sections. The first section discusses the primary epistemological conceptions of teacher education in Brazil and the adoption of international recommendations and strategies in this area. The second section presents an analysis of Goals 15 and 16 of the PEE/SC, contextualizing them in terms of implementation and the perspective of international organizations on teacher education.

Considerations on Teacher Education in Brazil: Its Epistemological Conceptions and the Adoption of International Recommendations and Strategies

Legislation guiding teacher education in Brazil did not emerge until the 1960s as part of the country's liberal democratization process. The first Law on Guidelines and Bases for National Education (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional - LDB*), Law No. 4,024, was enacted on December 20, 1961 (Brazil, 1961). However, the political climate resulting from the 1964 military coup led to several amendments to align the LDB with the developmentalist ideology of the time. During this period, teacher education took on a technical and utilitarian character. In this context, Law No. 5,540 was enacted on November 28, 1968. This law promoted university reform and established the Federal Council of Education's authority to set the minimum curriculum and duration of undergraduate programs nationwide (Brazil, 1968).

In 1971, Law No. 5,692 was expediently passed by the National Congress due to the dictatorial regime. It established guidelines and foundations for primary and secondary education with the primary objective of training a skilled workforce to support the country's industrialization process (Brazil, 1971). This pragmatism moved away from a preparatory approach to education, giving upper secondary education a terminal nature and thereby limiting student progression to higher education. In turn, teacher training was designed to serve the utilitarian interests of the period and was implemented on a large scale in upper secondary education.

Following the country's redemocratization after the military dictatorship and the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution, an intense debate about national education began. This debate revealed ideological issues, conceptions of society, and conflicts between public and private interests (Jung & Fossatti, 2018). Following this debate, the new LDB (Basic

Education Law) was enacted through Law No. 9,394 on December 20, 1996 (Brazil, 1996). This LDB guaranteed teacher education at the higher education level, marking an important milestone in teacher training in Brazil.

Universities were entrusted with the task of overcoming the fragmentation of teacher-training curricula, an aspiration reaffirmed by Resolution CP No. 1, dated September 30, 1999. This resolution highlights concerns regarding the quality of teacher training for basic education (Brazil, 1999). In 2002, the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Training of Basic Education Teachers at the higher education level were established, reflecting aspirations for developing teachers' personal, social, and professional competencies (Brazil, 2002).

The new LDB represented a significant transitional moment for education, reflecting a concern for teacher training at the higher education level. However, this period was also marked by the expansion of higher education programs based on guidelines from international financial institutions (Shiroma, 2018). Since the 1990s, Brazilian education has been influenced by international recommendations and strategies aimed at strengthening the country's economic sector. Investment in education as a means of combating poverty underpinned World Bank loans to developing countries. It enabled the implementation of educational reforms aligned with international guidelines—a movement tied to technical progress toward which education was expected to direct its efforts.

Beginning in the 1990s, under the influence of international organizations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Latin American countries, including Brazil, began aligning their educational policies with the demands of the global market. They did so by incorporating an empiricist perspective focused on achieving educational indicators measured by assessment systems. This movement directly impacted teacher education, aligning national guidelines with the recommendations of organizations such as the World Bank and solidifying the concept of developing instrumental competencies (Moraes & Torriglia, 2003).

In this context, initiatives such as the Higher Institutes of Education emphasized a technical approach to teacher training over a critical perspective (Saviani, 2008). The 1996 National Education Law (LDB) and the 2001 National Education Plan (PNE) began guiding the organization of the national education system by defining priorities and goals for the sector (Saviani, 2000).

Starting in the 2000s, teacher training policies intensified with the expansion of CAPES's role (Law No. 11,502/2007), the establishment of the National Teacher Training Policy (Decree No. 6,755/2009), and the creation of Pibid (Decree No.

7,219/2010). These policies strengthened the link between universities and schools. The 2014 National Education Plan (PNE), particularly Goals 15 and 16, restructured these policies, resulting in Decree No. 8,752/2016. This decree consolidated teacher education under a federal collaborative framework.

Simultaneously, Brazil's national landscape has aligned with global agendas such as the Incheon Declaration (2015) and the 2030 Agenda⁴, the latter of which reaffirms the commitment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education. This agenda highlights the central role of teacher education in this process.

This context shows that the PNE draws on historical achievements in education and guidelines from international organizations such as the World Bank. The 2030 Agenda, with UNESCO's active participation, serves as a reference for implementing the PNE and guides national efforts in line with global commitments. While acknowledging the influence of standardization trends, the central role of teacher education in the international agenda, as expressed in Target 4.c of SDG 4, is emphasized.

By 2030, substantially increase the number of qualified teachers in developing countries, especially the least developed countries and small island developing states, through international cooperation on teacher training (UNESCO, 2016, p. 53).

CNE/CP Resolution No. 2/2019 (Brazil, 2019) established the National Curriculum Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education and the BNC-Formação. This resolution was later amended by Resolution CNE/CP No. 1/2024 (Brazil, 2024c), which reinforced a movement toward curriculum standardization based on a competency-based model with a focus on practice. In 2024, CNE/CP Resolution No. 4 repealed the previous regulations and established new guidelines for initial teacher education. This highlights policy discontinuity and the ongoing efforts to align curricula with educational demands. There is an emphasis on integrating theory and practice and on fostering closer ties between teacher-training institutions and schools (Brazil, 2024a; 2024b).

This scenario reinforces an instrumental perspective on teacher education, centered on performance and the resolution of practical problems, to the detriment of the profession's social, cultural, and political dimensions (Dias, 2021). This orientation aligns with a utilitarian, technocratic epistemology of practice. This epistemology reduces teachers to mere mediators

⁴ The Incheon Declaration was a document signed in May 2015 at the World Education Forum, held in Incheon, South Korea. It represents the international community's commitment to achieving SDG 4 of the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2015).

of knowledge (Tardif & Lessard, 2014) and reinforces mechanisms of control, meritocracy, and standardization (Magalhães, 2019).

This trend is not new. It resulted from educational reforms initiated in the 1990s that contributed to the reconfiguration and precariousness of teaching work (Shiroma, 2003; Nóvoa, 2017). Chauí (2003), for example, criticizes the primacy of practice over theory, highlighting its links to the capitalist logic of teacher education. In contrast, the epistemology of praxis proposes critical, reflective teacher education that integrates theory and practice and values the historical and social dimensions of teaching (Wagner & Cunha, 2019, p. 255).

The first is conservative and focused on reproduction, in which training is used to align teachers with the dominant social logic, prioritizing external interests—such as those of the institution. The second is emancipatory and critical, preparing teachers to be agents of change and to actively shape their own professional development, guided by the trainee's internal interests.

The epistemology of praxis conceives of theory and practice as inseparable experiences, adopting an emancipatory perspective in the process. This approach to teacher education takes a more humanistic view, considering the individual within their specific context. This approach encourages reflection on professional development needs, beliefs, and values. Consequently, teachers can identify their current and desired pedagogical competencies (Wagner & Cunha, 2019).

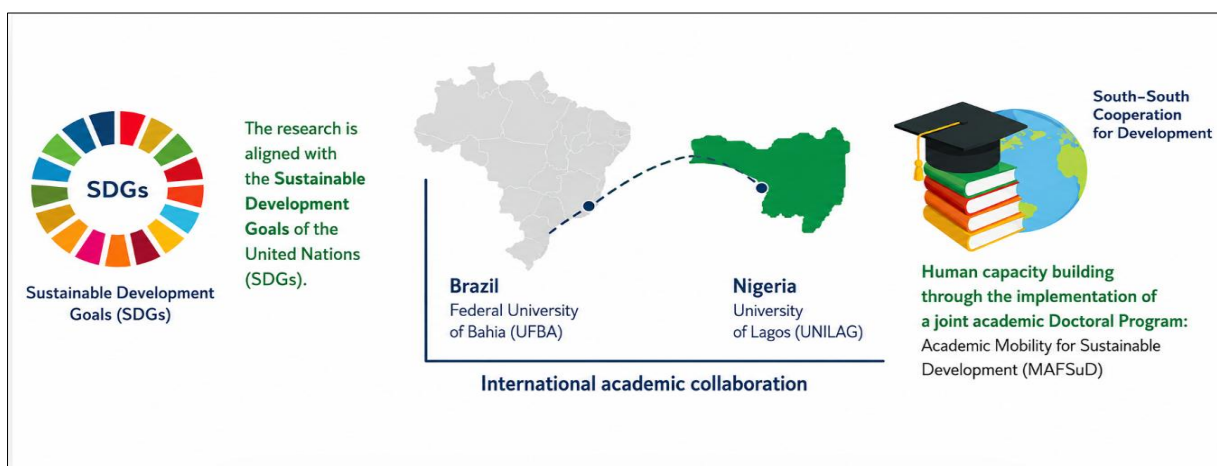
Magalhães and Souza (2018) argue that the epistemology of praxis is mediating and requires initial and continuing teacher education to integrate theory and practice. This fosters an understanding of the theoretical value of practice and the practical value of theory, thereby highlighting the importance of theory-practice unity. Chauí (2003) argues that teacher education must be grounded in this epistemological framework. She argues that true intellectual work occurs when what we have learned demands questioning, reflection, and critical analysis. This elevates what was initially experienced as a problem to the level of a concept.

While scholars may label epistemological conceptions of teacher education differently, identifying their meanings reveals that these conceptions are rooted in practice, or praxis. This corresponds to an objective, technical perspective or an interpretive, critical perspective, respectively. The latter, however, enables teachers to actively participate in their training process and engage in a shared, emancipatory pedagogical process.

Teacher Training in the PEE/SC: Goals and Strategies in the Context of Its Implementation and from the Perspective of International Organizations

In our investigation of the epistemological conceptions of teacher education adopted in the PEE/SC, we found results that reflect the national perspective. Similarly, since the PNE is one of the main mechanisms for achieving SDG 4 of the 2030 Agenda, the indicators used to monitor the PNE and the PEE/SC also align with the global perspective on teacher education.

Figure 1 – The Influence of the International Perspective on the PEE/SC.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

Thus, the documentary analysis of the PEE/SC made it possible to identify categories that highlight the overall complexity of the epistemological phenomenon guiding teacher education. This goes beyond the local context, facilitating reflection on the influence of the international landscape.

According to Bardin (2016), the unit of record is the unit of meaning to be coded. Analyzing goals 15 and 16, as well as the related strategies, in the PEE/SC enabled the identification of units of record related to the epistemology of practice and praxis. These units were then analyzed within context units, and the results informed the development of the analysis categories presented.

Goal 15 aims to ensure that, within one year of the PEE/SC's entry into force, a state policy on initial and continuing education is in place to guarantee the professional recognition of teachers. This will be achieved by providing specific higher education training in the field of knowledge in which they work as part of a bachelor's degree program, as well as opportunities for periodic participation in continuing education courses.

Goal 16 aims to provide 75% of basic education teachers with graduate-level training by the final year of the PEE/SC's implementation, while also guaranteeing continuing education in their field of practice for all basic education professionals. This will take into account the needs, demands, and contextual realities of education systems.

The documentary analysis of the PEE/SC offered an insight into the contextual framework within which the strategies were developed. It was therefore possible to identify the units of analysis related to the epistemology of practice and praxis within the scope of the strategies for the researched goals. The strategies for Goals 15 and 16 of the PEE/SC were categorized as follows, considering the contextual units: a) Provision of initial and continuing teacher training; b) Teacher training determined by the area of practice; c) Funding for teacher training.

The first category of analysis, the provision of initial and continuing teacher training, was identified in strategies 15.1, 15.2, 15.4, 15.5, 15.8, 15.9, 15.12, 15.13, 15.14, 15.17, and 15.18. 19, 16.2, and 16.7 of the PEE/SC.

Many strategies in Goal 15 relate to ensuring a state policy for initial and continuing teacher training that guarantees specific higher education for teachers in their field of practice and the opportunity for periodic continuing education. These strategies focus on providing these training programs by creating, ensuring, or promoting relevant initiatives.

Regarding Goal 16, which focuses on training basic education teachers at the graduate level and ensuring continuing education for all basic education professionals in their respective fields, the State of Santa Catarina has demonstrated a commitment to providing these training opportunities by encouraging public and community institutions of higher education to offer graduate programs that are organic and aligned with state and municipal training policies (16.2). The state has also ensured training programs for teachers and basic education professionals in their respective disciplines, as well as the availability of places in postgraduate courses (*lato sensu* and *stricto sensu*), and access to, and conditions for, continued enrolment at public and community higher education institutions (16.7).

It was also observed that the provision of initial and continuing professional development for teachers in the state of Santa Catarina is closely linked to their areas of practice. This reflects a clear commitment to teacher certification and accreditation. However, it does not address elements related to reflection on teaching practices, improvement of teaching and learning processes, or comprehensive professional development for teachers and/or students.

The second category of analysis, teacher training determined by area of specialization, was identified in strategies 15.1, 15.2, 15.4, 15.5, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 15.12, 15.17, 15.18, 16.2, and 16.6. These strategies contain key provisions regarding teacher training in relation to teachers' areas of practice. While it is important to tailor teacher training to teachers' areas of practice, the PEE/SC's perspective on this is limited. Goals and strategies related to teacher training, adopted from a utilitarian perspective and strictly designed to meet training demands defined by the area of practice, align with the epistemological perspective of objectivist practice. While the goal establishes the percentage of teachers to receive initial training based on state-identified needs, the strategies do not demonstrate a commitment to the future of the teaching profession or a concern for adopting innovative teacher training models.

Regarding the third category of analysis, funding for teacher education, it was identified in the following PEE/SC strategies: 15.3, 15.15, 15.19, 15.20, and 16.5. The proposals include the following: Support for access to student loans for students enrolled in teacher training programs that have received a positive evaluation from the National Higher Education Assessment System (Sinaes), including repayment of outstanding balances through full-time teaching in the public basic education system (15.3); Creation of opportunities for language teachers in public elementary and secondary schools to participate in scholarship programs that enable them to conduct immersion research and professional development in countries where the languages they teach are native (15.15); Prioritizing, through cooperation among the federal government, states, and municipalities, a program for training and continuing education in elementary and secondary schools through the establishment of teaching residencies and scholarship programs for teachers in training (Bachelor's degree in education) (15.19); prioritizing training programs for teachers and basic education professionals, establishing scholarship programs that enable them to obtain a second teaching degree (15.20); and expanding and ensuring the availability of full scholarships for graduate studies for teachers and other basic education professionals (16.5). prioritizing training programs for teachers and basic education professionals, establishing scholarship programs that enable them to obtain a second teaching degree (15.20), and expanding and ensuring the availability of full scholarships for graduate studies for teachers and other basic education professionals (16.5).

The strategies for Goals 15 and 16 emphasize a cooperative framework among the federal government, state governments, and municipalities to advance these goals through joint action. The strategies also aim to collaborate with public and community higher

education institutions to provide initial and continuing teacher training. However, meaningful strategies to promote teacher training are lacking at the state level. The State of Santa Catarina has programs that allocate resources to teacher training. However, the PEE/SC is a public policy that transcends administrations and should establish clear guidelines for allocating these resources. As Nóvoa (2017) states, "teacher training is a political issue, not merely a technical or institutional one" (p. 1,111). Therefore, teacher training must be conceived as part of a continuum to avoid discontinuities between administrations. Saviani (2009) asserts that "to guarantee consistent training and ensure adequate working conditions, it is necessary to provide the corresponding financial resources. This is the great challenge to be faced" (p. 153). Otherwise, we will continue to frustrate social expectations regarding the quality of Brazilian education.

The PEE/SC seems to frame teacher education as a form of professional development that addresses emerging social demands from a utilitarian perspective, which is characteristic of the epistemology of practice. This finding is supported by the strategy outlined in Target 4.c, which is a means of implementing Target 4.7 of SDG 4. This target relates to substantially increasing the number of qualified teachers by 2030. According to the document, it is necessary to:

To provide teachers with the appropriate technological skills to use ICT and social media, as well as media literacy and critical thinking skills, and to offer training on how to address the challenges posed by students with special educational needs (UNESCO, 2016, p. 55).

Furthermore, since the indicators used to monitor the PNE and the PEE/SC align with the global perspective on teacher education, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda, there is consistency between the state and national indicators and the United Nations' and Brazil's targets under Target 4.c. This target serves as a means of implementing Target 4.7 of SDG 4. We refer to the Institute of Applied Economic Research's (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada - IPEA) analysis on this topic, which provides definitions of the indicators that align with the perspective adopted in formulating the monitoring indicators for state and national education plans.

Target 4.c

United Nations

By 2030, substantially increase the number of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation on teacher training, in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries and small island developing states.

Brazil

By 2030, ensure that all teachers in basic education have specialized training in their subject area, and promote continuing education through collaboration among the federal government, states, and municipalities, including international cooperation. +

Indicators

4.c.1 - Proportion of teachers (a) in preschool; (b) in the early years of elementary school; (c) in the later years of elementary school; and (d) in secondary school who have received, before or during their professional practice, at least the minimum training (e.g., pedagogical training) required to teach at a given level of education in a given country (IPEA, 2019, n.p.).

The PEE/SC goals monitoring dashboard uses the Report on the 5th Monitoring Cycle of the PNE Goals, the PNE Monitoring Dashboard, and the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), which were prepared and published by INEP and the Georeferenced Information System (Santa Catarina, 2024), as references.

To monitor Goal 15, which is defined as obtaining specific initial higher education training through a bachelor's degree program in the subject area in which they teach, INEP established four indicators: 1) the percentage of classes taught by teachers with higher education qualifications appropriate to their subject area—Early Childhood Education (15A); 2) the percentage of classes taught by teachers with higher education qualifications appropriate to their subject area—Early Elementary School (15B); 3) the percentage of classes taught by teachers with higher education qualifications appropriate to their subject area—Upper Elementary School (15C); and 4) the percentage of classes taught by teachers with higher education qualifications appropriate to their subject area—High School (15D).

The data show that by 2023, Santa Catarina had only reached 60.6% of Early Childhood Education teachers with the appropriate higher education qualifications, while Brazil and the Southern Region reached 63.3%. This demonstrates an improvement in performance on this indicator over the decade. In the early years of elementary school, Santa Catarina reports a significant increase: 87.9% of teachers have specific training. The Southern Region reaches 81.3%, and Brazil reaches 74.9%. However, performance on this indicator declined in the final years of elementary school. Santa Catarina had only 63.4% of teachers with appropriate higher-education qualifications, while the southern region of Brazil had 69.6% and the country as a whole had 60.4%.

The figures showed a significant decline in high school in 2023. Santa Catarina, which had 64.00% of teachers with appropriate higher education in 2021, saw this share drop to 53.20% in 2023. The southern region of Brazil also declined, falling from 72.4%

in 2022 to 68.2% in 2023. However, Brazil maintained an upward trend, rising from 65.20% in 2020 to 68.40% in 2023.

The figures showed a significant decline in high school in 2023. For example, Santa Catarina, which had 64.00% of teachers with the appropriate higher education for their subject area in 2021, dropped to 53.20% in 2023. The southern region of Brazil also declined, falling from 72.4% in 2022 to 68.2% in 2023. However, Brazil maintained an upward trend, rising from 65.20% in 2020 to 68.40% in 2023.

The Action Framework for SDG 4 – Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016) expressed concern about the future demand for teachers, stating that more than 3.2 million additional teachers would be needed by 2030 to achieve universal primary education and another 5.1 million to achieve universal lower secondary education. The document further reports that in one-third of countries with available data, fewer than 75% of primary school teachers are trained in accordance with national standards. The document also criticizes past decisions to lower standards during teacher shortages. It argues that these decisions contributed to a growing trend of classrooms being staffed by unprepared and nonprofessional teachers.

In this case, data from the monitoring panel clearly shows a gap between the implementation rate and the public policy target, prompting reflection on the need to follow the strategy outlined in Target 4.c. This strategy is a means of achieving Target 4.7 of SDG 4 — Education 2030 — which involves developing gender-sensitive strategies to attract more qualified, motivated candidates to teaching and to ensure they are placed where they are needed most (UNESCO, 2016).

Regarding Target 16, which aims to ensure that 75% of basic education teachers hold a postgraduate degree by the end of the plan's term, as well as guarantee continuing education for all basic education professionals in their field, INEP has established two indicators to monitor progress: 1) The percentage of basic education teachers with *lato sensu* or *stricto sensu* postgraduate degrees (16A); and 2) The percentage of basic education teachers who have completed continuing education courses (16B).

Regarding the first indicator, the number of teachers with postgraduate degrees has increased over the past decade at the state, regional, and national levels. In Santa Catarina, for example, 45.30% of teachers held postgraduate degrees in 2014, compared to 65.00% in 2023.

An analysis of the Statistical Overview of Basic Education (INEP, 2023) reveals that this increase was driven by teacher training in *Lato Sensu* graduate programs. Of the 97,685 basic education teachers in Santa Catarina, the report indicates that 59,153 hold a specialization, 4,331 hold a master's degree, and 1,589 hold a doctorate.

Terrão and Miyahira (2023) analyzed this goal within the context of the PNE. They highlighted the educational investment made by basic education teachers in Brazil across all graduate program levels between 2014 and 2020.

However, it is important to note that a low percentage of teachers have earned master's or doctoral degrees. This demonstrates a lack of recognition of these degrees within the public school system itself, particularly in the financial sector, as a factor in retaining teachers.

In this regard, it is important to note that the Action Framework for SDG 4—Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016) fails to mention strategies for achieving Target 4.c, which relates to substantially increasing the number of qualified teachers or promoting teacher training through graduate programs. The document does, however, refer to the inclusion of policy and legislative measures to make the teaching profession attractive to current and future professionals.

A modest investment in these programs, therefore, contributes little to achieving Target 16 of the PNE and, as we have seen, Target 16 of the PEE/SC as well. In this regard,

Indeed, this way of organizing the data makes it possible to observe that investing in master's or doctoral programs is not an educational strategy for teachers in basic education in Brazil, given that indicators on the total number of basic education teachers (early childhood education, elementary school I, elementary school II, and high school) show that 4.05% and 0.87—of teachers working in basic education, holding master's and doctoral degrees, respectively— across all regions of Brazil in 2020, hold degrees from *stricto sensu* programs (Terrão & Miyahira, 2023, p. 657).

Similarly, we would like to highlight the need for in-depth analysis of specialized courses in Brazil. *Lato sensu* graduate programs lack quality indicators, and their regulatory frameworks are not rigorous. Consequently, a wide range of low-cost programs of dubious quality have emerged, facilitating access and certification attainment without providing genuine teacher training.

Regarding the second indicator of Goal 16 of the PEE/SC, it was noted that 33.30% of basic education teachers had not completed continuing education courses by 2023. The situation is even more serious at the national level, where approximately 58.3% of teachers had not participated in continuing education by 2023.

The Framework for Action for SDG 4—Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016, p. 54) emphasizes the importance of allocating time and space for teachers to engage in professional development. Continuing professional development must allow teachers adequate time and

space to reinterpret their prior knowledge; otherwise, it risks failing to achieve the necessary buy-in and/or becoming an irrelevant mechanism for improving the quality of education.

However, it is true that in 2024, the government of Santa Catarina adopted a significant mechanism to promote the ongoing professional development of teachers in the state school system. Through Complementary Law No. 831 of July 31, 2023, the government established the Free University Program, which is "intended to promote higher education at the undergraduate level, provided by municipal university foundations, autonomous agencies, and nonprofit social assistance organizations" (Santa Catarina, 2023). Community institutions that join the program must "promote continuing education programs for education professionals in the state public school system, with a course load of at least 60 hours" (Santa Catarina, 2023).

However, it is necessary to critically reflect on the proposal, considering that continuing education should be contextualized and rooted in teaching practice to promote the re-elaboration of knowledge and its theoretical problematization (Wagner & Cunha, 2019). In this sense, the Free University Program should foster interaction between the university and K-12 education to strengthen the connection between teacher education and the teaching profession, as proposed by Nóvoa (2017). This connection should be grounded in knowledge.

Conclusions

The study revealed the following: 1) The PEE/SC focuses on providing initial and continuing professional development for teachers, but this is strictly tied to the teachers' areas of practice, reflecting a clear commitment to teacher credentialing and certification, without, however, addressing aspects related to reflection on teaching practices and the improvement of teaching-and-learning processes; 2) the percentage of teachers receiving initial training is determined based on the needs identified at the state level; however, the strategies do not demonstrate a concern for adopting innovative models of teacher training nor a commitment to the future of the teaching profession; 3) the goals and strategies related to teacher training were established from a utilitarian perspective, designed strictly to meet the training demands defined by their field of practice, which aligns with teacher training from the epistemological perspective of practice, which is objectivist in nature; and 4) there is consistency between the indicators adopted at the state and national levels and those set for the United Nations and Brazil under Target 4.c. is a means of implementing Target 4.7 of SDG 4, which aims to

increase the number of qualified teachers by 2030. Despite efforts to meet the recommendations of the 2030 Agenda, achieving the targets outlined in the PNE and the PEE/SC falls far short of the objectives outlined for the 2015–2024 decade.

Finally, even though the interests of capital are evident in the adoption of the epistemological conception of practice in the education plans brought to the debate, one cannot dismiss the relevant aspects of Target 4.c, which is a means of implementing Target 4.7 of SDG 4. These aspects include the reference in its indicative strategies to enhancing the teaching profession through better working conditions, higher teacher salaries, and providing teachers with the time and space to take advantage of professional development opportunities (UNESCO, 2016). However, the analyzed data demonstrate that significant challenges remain in implementing the education plans related to this study, as the implementation rate is, for the most part, well below the targets established at the state and national levels.

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