

# LEARNING ABOUT MENTOR SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES FROM TUTORS IN A HYBRID MENTORING PROGRAM

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## ABSTRACT

The scope of this study was to analyze the knowledge constructed about mentoring and professional development of mentors, from the perspective of tutors of a Hybrid Mentoring Program (HPM). The research is of the exploratory type with a qualitative approach. The analyzed data come from narratives of three tutors who acted as mentors' educators in the PHM. The analysis process was inspired by content analysis techniques. The study of the written narratives revealed some constitutive elements of the knowledge base for mentoring mentors: the writing of formative and reflective *feedback*; development of sensitive and empathetic listening; knowledge about the formative demands of mentors; reflections on how to help mentors build autonomy; knowledge about the importance of reflection and about how to promote reflective processes; as well as about the power of narrative writing in the training/research of/with teachers.

**Keywords:** teacher educator; professional learning; knowledge base.

## RESUMO

### APRENDIZAGENS DE TUTORAS SOBRE OS PROCESSOS DE ASSESSORAMENTO E DESENVOLVIMENTO PROFISSIONAL DE MENTORAS

O escopo deste estudo foi analisar os conhecimentos construídos sobre o acompanhamento e o desenvolvimento profissional de mentores, na perspectiva de tutoras de um Programa Híbrido de Mentoria (PHM). A pesquisa desenvolvida

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é do tipo exploratória de abordagem qualitativa. Os dados analisados são provenientes de narrativas de três tutoras/TT3 que atuaram como formadoras de mentores no PHM. O processo analítico foi inspirado nas técnicas da análise de conteúdo. O estudo das narrativas escritas revelou alguns elementos constitutivos da base de conhecimentos para tutoria: a escrita de *feedbacks* formativos e reflexivos; desenvolvimento de uma escuta sensível e empática; conhecimento acerca das demandas formativas das mentoras; reflexões sobre como ajudar as mentoras a construir autonomia; conhecimento sobre a importância da reflexão e acerca de como promover processos reflexivos; bem como sobre o poder da escrita de narrativas na formação/investigação de/com professores.

**Palavras-chave:** formador de docentes; aprendizagem profissional; base de conhecimento.

## RESUMEN

### APRENDIZAJES DE TUTORAS SOBRE PROCESOS DE ASESORÍA Y DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL DE MENTORES

El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar el conocimiento construido sobre la tutoring y el desarrollo profesional de los mentores, desde la perspectiva de los tutores de un Programa Híbrido de Mentoría (PHM). La investigación desarrollada es de tipo exploratorio con un enfoque cualitativo. Los datos analizados proceden de las narraciones de tres tutores/TT3 que actuaron como formadores de mentores en el PHM. El proceso analítico se inspiró en las técnicas del análisis de contenido. El estudio de las narrativas escritas reveló algunos elementos constitutivos de la base de conocimientos para la tutoría: la escritura de *feedbacks* formativos y reflexivos; el desarrollo de una escucha sensible y empática; el conocimiento sobre las demandas formativas de los mentores; reflexiones sobre cómo ayudar a los tutores a construir autonomía; el conocimiento sobre la importancia de la reflexión y sobre cómo promover procesos reflexivos; así como sobre el poder de la narrativa en la formación/investigación de/con profesores.

**Palabras clave:** formador de profesores; aprendizaje profesional; base de conocimientos.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This article comes from a broader research conducted with the master's program in Education at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) in São Paulo – Brazil. The Hybrid Mentoring Program (HPM)<sup>2</sup>, the *locus* of the research, was a teacher induction program

developed between 2017 and 2020. The scope of the program was to promote the professional teaching development of beginning and experienced teachers. From this perspective, experienced teachers underwent ongoing training to serve as mentors and assist novice teachers (NT) in the professional insertion process.

The experienced teachers were selected based on the recommendation of their peers and because they were considered to have good

1 English translation by Brenda Karla Reis de Carvalho, graduated in English from State University of Piauí.

2 The research-intervention was approved by the UFSCar ethics committee (case number: 68415717.8.0000.5504Y).

practices. In addition, the length of teaching experience in the respective teaching modality in which they worked was considered, namely: Early Childhood Education, Elementary School - initial years, Youth and Adult Education. It is understood that experienced teachers have a broader, more solid and flexible knowledge base “about the content to be taught, teaching in general, diversified teaching practices, knowledge about students and the school, to favor the construction of mentoring practices and simultaneously teach other teachers how to teach” (MIZUKAMI; REALI, 2019, p. 121).

It is understood that the beginning of teaching, from Marcelo’s (2002) perspective, corresponds to the first five years of performance. It constitutes a stage in the professional development of teachers that has its own characteristics and needs a closer look. This is because often beginning teachers feel lonely, insecure, and unprepared for teaching (HUBERMAN, 2000; MARIANO, 2006; LIMA, 2007). From this perspective, mentoring can be a promising opportunity for beginning teachers, mentors’ support and professional development.

The HMP was developed in a hybrid perspective, as it involved face-to-face and virtual education elements junction (VAUGHAN, 2010). In addition, it sought to establish stronger links between theory and practice, as well as to bring together school and university as privileged spaces for knowledge construction (ZEICHNER, 2010; NÓVOA, 2019). At the virtual level, the context of HMP was the UFSCar Teachers’ Portal (Portal dos Professores (ufscar.br)), a website that provides access to various types of information on education, as well as training processes for teachers at different career stages, developed by professors and graduate students at the UFSCar. At the face-to-face level, weekly meetings were held between the program’s research group and the mentors.

HMP was part of intervention research funded by the São Paulo State Research Support Foundation (FAPESP). One of the theoretical program assumptions is constructive collab-

oration, which considers the knowledge of both teachers and educators relevant to the research construction and development (COLE; KNOWLES, 1993). Another important aspect of the HMP is that it had an “open curriculum”. This means that there was no pre-designed training for beginning teachers. Thus, the mentors organized the activities and orientations for the novices according to the demands they brought with them about their performance in the classroom and based on the training needs perceived through the monitoring process.

The program also included the participation of FAPESP level-three-technical-training fellows (TT3), who accompanied the development of the mentors and the mentoring processes with the novices. Among the functions performed by the tutors, we can highlight: interacting with the mentors through feedback, offering guidance, suggesting materials, exchanging ideas; mediating, when necessary, between novice teachers and mentors; collecting, systematizing, and analyzing data; offering details on the status of the interactions of the dyads (mentors – novice teachers) to the research team; and making suggestions for the research intervention. The tutors who worked in the program were selected through an evaluation of their participation in a training course before the exercise of the tutoring work, the research methodology, and the data collection and analysis procedures.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to analyze the knowledge constructed about mentoring and the professional development of mentors from the perspective of tutors in a hybrid mentoring program (HMP). Given the theoretical and methodological contextualization of the research scenario described here, it is worth pointing out the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Concerning teaching knowledge, it is emphasized that it is built up throughout life in continuous learning processes (COLE; KNOWLES, 1993). Multiple situations and contexts can be configured as opportunities for

learning how to teach. The established stages of teacher development are prior socialization to the profession as a student, initial training, teacher induction, and continuing education (VAILLANT; MARCELO, 2015). These processes involve different factors that can influence learning, including cognitive, affective, ethical, performance, beliefs and values of teachers, and the context in which they work (COLE; KNOWLES, 1993).

This article draws on Shulman's (1987) work on the knowledge base for teaching. According to Shulman (1987), teachers at different levels of performance need to have a knowledge base for teaching, which consists of a set of understandings, knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for the teacher to teach. This base includes knowledge of specific characteristics essential for teaching because it is under constant construction and development. Initially, it is limited, but with the continuous developmental processes, it becomes deeper, more diverse, and more flexible (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987; MIZUKAMI, 2004).

The purpose of Shulman's (1986;1987) studies "is to develop an explanatory and descriptive model of the components that underlie teaching, particularly how the teacher change representations about educational contents into teaching practices." (ALMEIDA *et. al*, 2019, p. 132). Thus, it is possible to identify the contributions of these studies to teaching and learning. More specifically, the research deals with the knowledge required for teaching and the processes involved in learning it.

The knowledge required for teaching can be classified into content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational goals, purposes and values. These categories have been grouped into three: specific content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. These kinds of knowledge assume a relationship

of interdependence and must be articulated among them to have good teaching because they are not effective in isolation (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987).

Pedagogical content knowledge (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987) consists of knowledge of the curricular component that the teacher teaches. It includes mastery of the concepts, terms, processes, procedures, and structures inherent in the discipline. It also includes substantive structures, defined as explanatory models of a knowledge domain, and syntactic structures related to standards that guide research in that domain (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987).

General pedagogical knowledge implies knowledge of theories and principles related to teaching and learning processes, student characteristics, educational contexts, transversal issues, public policies, curriculum, among others. This type of knowledge is fundamental for a teacher because it allows him/her to plan the context and content in a way that is appropriate to the subject matter and its supporting materials and methods (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987).

Pedagogical content knowledge (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987) is one of the categories of greatest interest to researchers. This is because it involves "the interweaving of content knowledge and pedagogy in understanding, for example, how particular topics, problems, or subjects are organized, represented, and adapted to learners' various interests and skills in teaching contexts" (ALMEIDA *et. al.*, 2019, p. 134). Thus, the teacher is central to the construction of pedagogical content knowledge, the development of which is fundamental to the learning processes of teaching (MIZUKAMI, 2004).

The knowledge base (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987), is built gradually and includes some provider sources, such as: content knowledge areas, materials, and organizational structures; literature on the processes of schooling, teaching and learning, and human development, as well as on the normative, philosophical and ethical foundations of education; and finally, practice, a privileged source of learning to teach.

The teacher educator's knowledge has the purpose of facilitating another teacher's learning to teach. It presupposes

- i. knowledge of the specific content for mentoring - that is, mastery of the areas related to the training needs of the beginner; knowing what he or she should learn;
- ii. knowledge of school training contexts;
- iii. knowledge of the learning processes of teaching to promote them in different contexts being essential to know how to use tools that enable the beginner to engage in reflective processes;
- iv. knowledge about public educational policies, their historical processes of construction and their theoretical bases;
- v. pedagogical content knowledge (SOUZA; REALI; 2020, p. 1918).

Although the reference makes explicit mention of the mentor knowledge base, it is possible to transpose such definitions to think about the knowledge base of the tutor who contributes to mentors' training since educators are understood as "all professionals involved in the formative processes of learning to teach future teachers or those who are already developing teaching activities" (MIZUKAMI, 2010, p. 3).

Learning how to learn through reflective processes about experiences is essential for teachers' professional development. Practice can be a rich space for knowledge construction. As Schön (1983) suggests, practice is not just a place for applying technical knowledge, because that would mean ignoring the complexity of specific situations in each context and the uniqueness of each experience:

(...) it is important to consider, therefore, the knowledge of experience as a category of the knowledge base. Experience is present in the whole process of pedagogical reasoning and is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the construction of pedagogical content knowledge by the teacher (TANCREDI; REALI, 2011, p. 42).

Obviously, technical and scientific knowledge is fundamental and indispensable for professional practice, but it is not sufficient for successful and assertive practice, because it requires reflections that give meaning to the experience of practice (SCHÖN, 1983). Reflecting

on experience is a way of assigning value to life situations. Reflection is therefore a process of making meaning between one experience and another, leading the individual to make understandings and relationships between theories, ideas, and experiences. This process allows learning continuity (RODGERS, 2002). Reflection can be built on the activation of knowledge in action, a knowledge that is difficult to grasp and codify. It is put into action in complex professional practice situations requiring rapid resolution and more than technical knowledge.

The reflection process pushes the professional to become more aware of what is tacit, to better perceive his practice, to evaluate his actions and redefine their meanings, to find out if his referential is coherent with his beliefs and personal understandings, and even to produce new knowledge from the reflections (MARCOLINO, 2009, p. 18).

Reflection in action is a rigorous form of thinking linked to a routine action that requires another, qualitatively different action. In this sense, it is a very specific type of thinking, focused on practice (SCHÖN, 1983; MARCOLINO, 2009). Thus, reflection can also have a more intentional character, when the individual reflects on his practice later in an organized, systematic and analytical way, a process called reflection on action (SCHÖN, 1983; MARCOLINO, 2009).

Given this, professional knowledge can be built in a continuous movement involving technical and scientific knowledge and reflection on practice. It is emphasized that the reflective processes should occur collectively with a view to individual and collective growth; moreover, it presupposes individual characteristics such as open-mindedness, sincerity, willingness and curiosity to learn (RODGERS, 2002).

## Methodology and methodological procedures

The qualitative research (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1994), of exploratory type (GIL, 2007), sought

to analyze the narratives written by three tutors who worked in the HMP, in order to know the remarkable moments (BOLÍVAR, 2002) that they experienced in the program, characterized as learning generating situations. The criterion for the selection of the three participants for the research was the time of performance as a tutor in the program, namely: 24 months between the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, in addition to the indication of the HMP coordinator researcher.

Regarding the profile of the participants, we highlight that tutor Lúcia<sup>3</sup> has a degree in pedagogy (2006-2010), and a master's degree in education (2016-2018) and started a doctorate in the same area in 2019. The tutor Marina has a degree in pedagogy (2016-2018), a master's degree in education (2018-2019), and entered a doctorate also in education in 2020. The tutor Eliza is graduated in pedagogy (2010-2014), a master in education (2015-2016), and entered the doctorate in the same area in the year 2018. Lucia has had professional experiences as an Early Childhood Education teacher, coordinator in a non-governmental organization (NGO), and a trainee teacher in higher education in the pedagogy course. Marina acted as a virtual tutor in a program that aimed at intergenerational dialogue among undergraduates, experienced and novice teachers. Eliza, in turn, had no professional experience prior to HMP.

Each tutor was given two scripts to guide the construction of the written narrative. The first asked them to fill in a timeline developed by this article's researchers to indicate at least five remarkable moments they had experienced in the program that in some way influenced their professional learning processes. Later, they were sent the second script, which contained the guiding questions for constructing the written narrative. The questions in the script covered aspects such as academic background, professional experiences, characteristics of the

HMP, tutoring work, and also asked the tutors to construct a narrative about the remarkable moments indicated in the timeline. The contact with the participants was made by email, except in some specific situations of doubt about the narrative's construction, when messages were exchanged via WhatsApp.

After receiving the narratives, initial readings were carried out in order to become familiar with the stories told and to outline the initial analyses (BARDIN, 2004). Subsequently, a thorough reading of each narrative was done to verify the themes that emerged and to select the units of analysis. For this work, some excerpts from the narratives were selected to achieve the proposed objective: to analyze the knowledge built about mentoring and the professional development of mentors from the perspective of HMP tutors. The analytical process was theoretically based on Bardin's (2004) contributions to content analysis. The analysis of the excerpts allowed the development of an analytical axis: the construction of knowledge about the processes of mentoring and the professional development of mentors. The next section is dedicated to presenting the analysis of the narratives.

## Analysis and discussion: the construction of knowledge about mentoring processes and mentors' professional development

The work done by the tutors consisted mainly in proposing and following up the activities carried out by the mentors in the virtual learning environment (VLE), indicating texts and directions that could collaborate with the professional development processes of the mentors and contribute to the support given to the beginners. In this sense, it is possible to conclude that the mentors were able to build specific knowledge about the processes that

<sup>3</sup> To preserve the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used.

permeate the professional development of the mentors in the HMP. Considering that practice is a privileged space for learning construction (SCHÖN, 1983; RODGERS, 2002), the narratives suggest that the tutors work promoted their professional development as educators, the professional category of tutors.

Each mentor had the task of writing in their reflective journal about the activities of the HMP and the school in which they worked. It was the task of the tutor to give feedback on these journals. This was not an easy task, because although they had an initial training that guided them about writing feedback, it was quite challenging for Lucia:

I always wondered if the questions I asked in my feedback contributed to the mentors' formative process. I gained more confidence when they wrote that I was contributing to their work in some way (Written narrative, Lucia, 2020).

I remember one day, after the face-to-face meeting, they said that they expected their NT to give feedback similar to mine because it was well-written and reassuring. That really reassured me! How nice that my feedback brought comfort, questioning, etc. (Written narrative, Lucia, 2020, emphasis added).

Lucia indicates that there was a concern on her part about the formative aspect of feedback for the mentors' development. Formative feedback is a type of response filled with information and knowledge directed to an action and aims to suggest changes in behavior or thinking to improve learning. Thus, it is suggested that it is timely, specific and offers support without an evaluative nature (SHUTE, 2008).

For Lucia, the good evaluation of her work by the mentors helped her to develop more confidence at the writing time. Another important point to highlight is the movement of reflexivity shown by Lucia when she questioned the effectiveness of her feedback about the formative processes of the mentors (SCHÖN, 1983; MARCOLINO, 2009). This reflection may have helped Lucia to analyze her writing in a more focused and assertive way. Thus, to write the feedback, it was necessary for the tutors

to know in detail the mentoring processes carried out by the mentors with the beginning teachers, to know and help develop the activities carried out for the mentors with the HMP researchers, as well as it was essential to have good communication.

It is interesting to note that the mentors - accompanied by Lucia - used the Lucias' feedback as a model to build the one they should offer to the NT. In this respect, the tutor's writing was seen by the mentors as a job well done, and this was reassuring - probably because of some of the stressful situations the mentors had experienced in the mentoring process. (SILVA, 2020). The tutor's work became a model for the mentors she advised.

Another perceptible lesson from the data was the development of sensitive and empathetic listening to the mentors. By taking care to keep in touch with them, asking if they needed help, and reminding them of the tasks they should be doing:

Due to the absence of some mentors in the face-to-face meetings, these messages [those sent to the mentors] were very useful and necessary to inform how the activity should be done and what would be the deadline for posting in the virtual environment. Many mentors would give us feedback that these messages were indispensable, because they forgot and/or got lost in their execution and deadline (Written Narrative, Eliza, 2020, emphasis added).

Eliza mentions that, from an experience with a mentor, she had a new understanding about her approach as a tutor. This mentor had difficulties in fulfilling the proposed tasks and helping the beginner teacher in her demands, demanding a differentiated posture from the tutor:

In view of all this reality experienced with this mentor, I can say that I learned to be firmer in my requests and "demands", trying to understand even more the context of the teacher's performance beyond the mentoring. I believe that all the mentor's experiences influence his or her work at school as well as the mentoring, and therefore I think it is important to know and understand the aspects that surround it.

This, for sure, is part of a good relationship and mentoring (Written Narrative, Eliza, 2020).

In this sense, it is possible to conclude that the tutor learned to develop a more empathic position concerning the way of reporting to the mentor, concluding that it is necessary to consider all her contexts of action, not only the mentoring. For the tutor, the development of this attitude was essential for her work and possibly for the development of the mentor. It is noteworthy that Eliza emphasizes the importance of this positioning for maintaining good interpersonal relationships and for the mentoring processes. On this interface of learning to teach, it is worth noting that

In human development professions, professional performance is interactive, that is, working with people is done through interaction with these same people, and this interaction is the means and significant part of the very content of the performance. Thus, the will, affect and emotion, and intelligence of these same people are natural factors in the success (or failure) of the intervention (FORMOSINHO, 2013, p. 16).

Therefore, Eliza's learning seems to be related to an important aspect of teaching: human interaction, as well as the cognitive and emotional characteristics inherent to it. Thus, these factors are essential for the effective development of the interventions.

Knowing the formative needs of the mentors and the ways to potentiate their learning seems to have been a significant learning for the tutor Lucia:

Regarding the mentors, I also note the importance of every week we address with them topics that generated doubts, remained open, caused difficulties, etc. In fact, this model [open curriculum based on the formative demands presented] demands much more work, time, and partnership from the whole team, but it proves to be much more significant to the formative process (Written narrative, Lucia, 2020, our emphasis).

Still on the formative demands of the mentors, Lucia pointed out an episode that provoked reflections about her work as a tutor:

N<sup>4</sup> had - if I am not mistaken - three mentors: P, C and me. In the interview, [conducted in 2019 by the HMP research group to the mentors] she praised the work of all of them and stated that each one had a way of doing *feedback*. She also stated that when she started giving *feedback* to the NT, she was inspired by the models adopted by her mentors. In the beginning, I made them similar to mine. Then she started to make them similar to P's (taking sentences from the narratives with some questions) and realized that it had more effect on the NT. Her speech brought me the feeling that she had more affinity with this other type of *feedback*. I realized at that moment that with N I could have written *feedback* in this other way, especially in her diaries, since they might have been more meaningful to her. This situation made me wonder if I had ever asked her if she identified with my *feedback* if they were clear, formative, etc. Honestly, I don't remember. I remember doing it in a more general way, "Did you understand the suggestions I wrote?" Or "I hope that was helpful" or "Did I get your question answered?" Today, I would do it differently. I would ask at the very beginning of my relationship with the mentors about my *feedback* to know what I could change, adjust, and improve. I think that *feedback* expresses your identity. The way I write it represents me as Lucia, a pedagogue, doctoral student, and educator/tutor. At the same time, I must also organize that writing in a way that best suits the needs of those I am in formative interaction with. It is not because the way I crafted my *feedback* was great for G and C that it could be equally meaningful for N (Written Narrative, Lucia, 2020, emphasis added).

The excerpt from the narrative illustrates Lucia's reflective process about writing *feedback* to one of the mentors. The reflection occurred after the action when Lucia realized that she could have questioned mentor N more about the formative potential of her own *feedback* (Schön, 1983). Through this reflection, Lucia realized that she could have given more direction to her mentoring practice (MARCOLINO, 2009). Lucia seems to demonstrate that it is essential that *feedback* is based on knowledge

4 People mentioned by the participants will be referred to by the initial letter of their first name to preserve their identity.



of the needs of each mentor, taking into account the specificity of each context.

It is worth noting a relevant aspect of tutors' learning related to the processes of helping mentors build autonomy:

I remember once I sent a message to a mentor warning that I would not be able to answer *WhatsApp* for a few days, because I was organizing a congress and, soon after, it would be my brother's wedding. She got back to me saying that I helped her a lot and joked that I couldn't take any time off, it had to be the same as a doctor's shift. This showed the trust she had in my work, but at the same time, it made me think: Am I offering some kind of referral that may not be favoring her autonomy in some respect? This happened in 2018. (Written Narrative, Lucia, 2020).

The excerpt from the narrative shows that Lucia's requests indicate a reflection on how to promote the autonomy processes of the mentors. This refers to the practice of "giving the fish"-offering more targeted information- or "teaching to fish"- offering tasks that emphasize reflective processes and the construction of autonomy (MASSETTO, 2018). This may have broadened the tutor's perspective on teaching learning processes, as it points to her reflections on her practices in relation to the support provided to mentors. Thus, Lucia's reflections also suggest that the practice of mentoring does not mean giving ready-made answers, but rather promoting actions that favor reflexivity and professional development.

Another important aspect relates to learning how to promote reflection in mentors and the power of narrative writing to encourage such processes:

Thus, written narratives are very good for research development. Secondly, the literature suggests that the use of written narratives can be very good for teacher education. Thus, it is striking that the use of written narratives is good for research as well as for mentoring and SIP training. Because narratives have a formative potential (Written Narrative, Marina, 2020).

In this sense, Clandinin and Connelly (2011) explain that working with narrative is a way of

exploring how people experience the world. Narrating such experiences is a way for individuals to validate themselves and construct new stories (OLIVEIRA, 2011). Moreover, narrative can be both a phenomenon to be studied and a research method with formative purposes. It is worth noting that

[...] this perspective of work, [...] is configured as research because it is linked to the production of experiential knowledge of adult subjects in training. On the other hand, it is training because it assumes that the subject becomes aware of himself and his experiential learning when he simultaneously plays the roles of actor and investigator of his own history (SOUZA, 2006, p. 139).

The HMP used written and oral narratives from research and training perspectives. It understands that they are powerful instruments to promote learning processes from experience and reflection, as well as for understanding teaching trajectories and personal theories. Therefore, it is inferred that learning the potential of narratives in teacher education was one kind of knowledge built by the tutors.

Concerning learning about the reflective processes of mentors, the excerpt below indicates Eliza's conception of the purpose of her *feedback*: to promote the mentor's reflection and foster the construction of new learning from an inquiry posture about the mentoring practice:

We read the mentor's activities and built up *feedback* (...) presenting this feedback to them, which was composed of details, theories, and also questions/reflections. One of the functions of the *feedback* given to the mentor was to make him reflect on a certain theme/subject in order to provide different/new ideas and answers. Moreover, these reflections had an impact on the demands that the mentors themselves presented (Written Narrative, Eliza, 2020).

Eliza's narrative seems to indicate that writing *feedback* presupposes a broad knowledge of the activities performed in the VLE by both novice teachers and the mentors who accompany them, as well as their school contexts.

Feedback must include aspects such as theories and questions/reflections to encourage new ideas in order to be formative. In this sense, Eliza seems to have learned the relevance of encouraging reflection and developed the understanding that reflecting on routine practices is an essential attitude to transform them by assigning new meanings (SCHÖN, 1983).

An excerpt from Lucia's narrative points out the processes and content she needed to learn in order to perform as an educator:

As the mentors brought up certain topics in the face-to-face meetings and formative activities, I noticed that there were some topics that I did not have and had little knowledge of, such as issues related to special education, autism, [Common National Curriculum Base], and literacy. Realizing their formative needs from classroom situations reported by experienced and novice teachers is very good! It takes me out of a "comfort zone" and makes me think: "If I were a teacher, how would I approach these issues with my students, with their parents? In these situations, I sought help from the research team that was always available to discuss, bring new knowledge, and indicate readings. Such questions also pushed me to study (Narrative, Lucia, 2020, emphasis added).

Participating in the formative processes of the mentors and the NT was a way to perceive her own formative needs. This perception of what she needed to know in order to teach the mentors led Lucia to reflect on her position as a teacher in situations where she might need this knowledge. These reflections provided an inquiring and autonomous position in the quest to build learning, demonstrating her commitment to her professional development and her role as a mentor educator by seeking support from the HMP group and studying the subjects she did not know.

## Concluding remarks

This study aimed to elucidate the learning of three tutors who participated in a hybrid mentoring program, focusing on the supervi-

sion processes and professional development of these mentors.

It is assumed that teachers' knowledge is built processually over a lifetime. It involves formal and informal processes, personal characteristics, contexts, objective conditions of life and work, collective dimensions, etc. (TAN-CREDI, 2009). It also involves the construction of a solid and flexible knowledge base as an indispensable condition for the exercise of the profession (SHULMAN, 1986; 1987). When it comes to the knowledge base of a teacher educator, this construction process can be even more complex, as it involves other specificities, such as: teaching how to teach, to highlight the primary function of teacher educators.

In view of the above, the analysis of the HMP tutors' narratives suggests that they have developed a knowledge base about the training and supervision of mentors. Some elements of this base are: writing formative and reflective feedback; developing sensitive and empathetic listening to direct action; knowledge of the formative demands of mentors; reflections on how to help the mentor build autonomy; knowledge of the importance of reflection and how to facilitate reflective processes; and knowledge of the power of narrative writing in teacher training/research.

Feedback was found to be a promising means of sustaining interactions and promoting reflection in mentors. Given this, being aware of the formative potential of feedback and learning how to use it to promote reflection points to a basic knowledge needed by the tutor of mentos. It is noteworthy, therefore, that writing such feedback required extensive knowledge of the beginning teachers' contexts and the interactions between the dyads (mentor-beginning teacher), having a knowledge base for the practice of teaching.

It is assumed that the knowledge base for the practice of teaching is also fundamental for the tutors since they work with basic education teachers. It is possible that the tutors have a knowledge base that consists of initial

education and graduate education. This is partly due to the fact that only Lucia had worked as a teacher before becoming a tutor, so it can be said that the tutors are novice teachers (HUBERMAN, 1995). Consequently, the interactions with the mentors were also an opportunity to learn about the characteristics of the school, specific contents (related to special education and literacy), and public educational policies (BNCC).

The tutors had to develop a kind of pedagogical knowledge for tutoring: to learn to identify the formative needs of the mentors in order to promote learning processes, to develop sensitive and empathic listening, as well as to choose specific tutoring practices for the development of the mentors' autonomy. It is also worth noting that the formative feedbacks fall into the category of knowledge about the learning processes of teaching (SOUZA; REALI, 2020), a type of knowledge for a teacher educator because it is this knowledge that will promote reflective processes and provide assertive formative strategies.

The learning processes constructed by the HMP tutors confirm that professional learning occurs processually throughout life, through experience and reflection. The processes of knowledge construction were related to the tutoring practice and to the support of the group of researchers of the program, who guided and directed the actions of the group for its development. Bearing in mind one of the crucial theoretical and methodological assumptions of HMP: the collaborative and mutual construction of knowledge.

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