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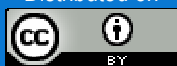
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## Challenges and tensions of the supervised internship in early childhood education: Paraná experiences

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction/Objective:** the article analyzes the role of supervised internship in Early Childhood Education in the Pedagogy course of two public institutions of university education in the State of Paraná, specifically in the cities of Guarapuava and Maringá. **Methodology:** it is a qualitative research, of documentary character, which initially considers the specificity of Early Childhood Education and teaching with children, the purpose of the supervised internship in the formative context and, from the analysis of the configuration of this discipline in the two courses, problematizes characteristics, challenges and tensions that mark the constitution of the teaching professionalism. **Results:** the analysis revealed difficulties that are similar in the two institutions, especially aimed at the configuration of the internship field, the conceptions of Early Childhood Education and the devaluation of professionals. **Conclusion:** we conclude that it is urgent to think about the necessary articulation between universities and internship fields, as well as expanding the workload dedicated to this task as a way to overcome the social marginalization of children and the professionals who work with them.

### KEYWORDS

Teacher training. Early childhood education. Supervised internship.

## Desafios e tensões do estágio curricular supervisionado na educação infantil: experiências paranaenses

### RESUMO

**Introdução/Objetivo:** O artigo reflete acerca do papel do estágio curricular supervisionado na Educação Infantil no curso de Pedagogia de duas instituições públicas de ensino superior do Estado do Paraná, especificamente nos municípios de Guarapuava e Maringá. **Metodologia:** trata-se de pesquisa qualitativa, de caráter documental, que considera inicialmente a especificidade da Educação Infantil e da docência com as crianças, a finalidade do estágio supervisionado no contexto formativo e, a partir da análise da configuração dessa disciplina nos dois cursos, problematiza características, desafios e tensões que marcam a constituição da profissionalidade docente. **Resultados:** a análise revelou dificuldades que se assemelham nas duas instituições, especialmente voltadas à configuração do campo de estágio, às concepções de Educação Infantil e à desvalorização dos profissionais. **Conclusão:** concluímos ser urgente pensar na necessária articulação entre as instituições formativas e aquelas campo de estágio, bem como ampliar a carga horária dedicada a essa tarefa, como forma de superar a marginalização social das crianças e dos profissionais que trabalham com elas.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Formação de professores. Educação infantil. Estágio supervisionado.

## Retos y tensiones de la pasantía curricular supervisada en educación infantil: experiencias de Paraná

**RESUMEN:**

**Introducción/Objectivo:** El artículo reflexiona sobre el papel de la pasantía curricular supervisada en Educación Infantil en el curso de Pedagogía de dos instituciones públicas de educación superior en el Estado de Paraná, específicamente en los municipios de Guarapuava y Maringá. **Metodología:** Se trata de una investigación documental cualitativa, que considera inicialmente la especificidad de la Educación Infantil y la docencia con niños, el propósito de la pasantía supervisada en el contexto formativo y, a partir del análisis de la configuración de esta disciplina en los dos cursos, problematiza características, retos y tensiones que marcan la constitución de la docencia profesional. **Resultados:** El análisis reveló dificultades similares en las dos instituciones, especialmente enfocadas en la configuración del campo de la pasantía, las concepciones de Educación Infantil y la desvalorización de los profesionales. **Conclusión:** Concluimos que es urgente pensar en la necesaria articulación entre las instituciones de formación y las del ámbito de la pasantía, así como ampliar la carga de trabajo dedicada a esta tarea como una forma de superar la marginación social de los niños y profesionales que trabajan con ellos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:**

Formación de profesores. Educación infantil. Pasantía supervisada.

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## 1 Introduction

We begin this reflection by demarcating our defense about the importance of the supervised curricular internship in the Pedagogy course as a way to insert the student in the future field of work and to bring the university closer to the different work contexts. We understand this internship as an action that allows us to evidence the intrinsic relationship between theory and practice and as an opportunity for the students to understand in a more comprehensive and assertive way the complexity of teaching, the peculiar characteristics of their public and the factors that interfere in the learning relationship. However, we know how challenging it is for the university teacher, the interns, and the internship field that receives them to conduct the supervised curricular internships, in the sense of making this process a booster for an adequate and expected professional development.

In this sense, we argue that the supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education presupposes exploring a very specific universe that, historically, has always been relegated to a second level in relation to other educational levels, focused much more on care than on education. These aspects and our experience as teacher educators in the Pedagogy course in public universities motivated us to dedicate a more attentive and reflective look at the internship, trying to identify how it is organized, the amount of time dedicated to it, and the practical unfolding of its execution.

The historical course of Early Childhood Education reveals the conceptions that have supported and still support legal and practical approaches for and with children under 6 years of age. In Brazil, since the implementation of the Law of Directives and Bases for Education (LDBEN) 9.394/96 (BRASIL, 1996), Early Childhood Education is considered the first stage of basic education, representing an important achievement in legal terms, and expanding the visibility of this educational stage. Although we have advanced in the legislation, the daily life of educational institutions has revealed weaknesses as indicated by Lucas, Saito, and Lazaretti (2019), Moreira, Saito, Volsi, and Lazaretti (2020), Dominico, Lira, Saito, and Yaegashi (2020), Artur (2015), Buss-Simão and Mafra-Rebello (2019), among other researchers whose reflections signal situations also verified in the different moments of monitoring of the students during the internships. Among these weaknesses are the problematic and/or deficient physical structure, the precariousness of teacher training, the regulatory forms and little child participation, the anticipation of schooling practices and, especially, practices that separate the actions of care and education.

Considering what was raised previously, the text has the intention to opportune reflections about the role of the supervised curricular internship in Infantile Education in the Pedagogy course, having as clipping the discussion of the daily practice in the Brazilian institutions and, in special, in the State of the Paraná, specifically from courses of graduation in Pedagogy in public institutions of superior education in the cities of Guarapuava and

Maringá<sup>1</sup>. It presents a quanti-qualitative approach, with a documental analysis of the teaching plans of the mentioned subjects and a report of the experiences as internship teachers.

For this, in a first movement, we will deal with the specificity of Early Childhood Education and teaching with children of this stage. After that, we will address the role of the supervised curricular internship in teacher education and, next, we will report the experiences of two state universities in Paraná with supervised curricular internship in Municipal Centers for Early Childhood Education, as a way to demonstrate the possibility of carrying out an appropriate work with the disciplines that involve this internship and understand how this initial training can become a differential in the formation of the pedagogue. As a result, we will highlight the fact that the supervised curricular internship represents a formative experience permeated by challenges and tensions that involve the approximation of the formative instance at the undergraduate level with the field of action and the multiple aspects that intersect them.

## 2 Early Childhood Education and teaching children from 0 to 6 years old

In Brazil, the right to education for children under 6 years of age was legally outlined with the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988) and reaffirmed in the legislations that succeeded it. Since LDBEN n. 9.394 (BRASIL, 1996), Brazilian Early Childhood Education has been organized to attend children from 0 to 6 years of age, in day-care centers (0 to 3 years) and preschools (4 to 6 years), being the first stage of basic education. It is worth noting here that the legal ordering of the educational character was the result of intense debates and movements of researchers, professionals, and family members engaged in defending the rights of the child<sup>2</sup>, including the right to education, although in practice access is confronted with a lack of vacancies. As Flores (2017, p. 219) records:

[...] the national legal framework, as well as the normative and guiding documents referring to this offer, at the same time that they affirm the progressive expansion of coverage considering equity and the right to quality as two inseparable aspects in the access to education, when used as reference for the analysis of the reality, they evidence the distance between the positivity declared in the legal plan and the guarantee of the individual right.

The legal advance, inserting Early Childhood Education in basic education, along with the articulation of various instances in defense of the child led to the preparation of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEIs), whose first version was published in 1998, updated in 2009 (BRASIL, 2009). The DCNEIs, in line with a conception of a capable child, protagonist, who actively participates in the educational process, conceive the education for young children with sociopolitical and pedagogical

<sup>1</sup> A version of this text was presented at the III Meeting The formation of educators and teachers at the UniverCidade de Évora/II International Conference on teacher training in Early Childhood Education (Portugal), which took place from October 13 to 16, 2021, online.

<sup>2</sup> On the historical issues that permeated the care, especially welfare, of children under the age of 6, see Kuhlmann Jr.

function, establishing ethical, political, and aesthetic principles in order to guide the proposed actions. In face of these understandings, the children's human formation is valued, along with pedagogical work that enhances a critical look from the child to reality, the strengthening of relationships among the subjects involved in the educational process and the appreciation of culture in all its diversity.

In this sense, the curriculum is conceived as a set of practices, which are expected to be organized and anchored in the interactions and in play, axes that should guide the pedagogical work. These premises are supported by the understanding of the inseparability of the care-education actions, i.e., the daily work with children necessarily includes this binomial and its fragmentation must be overcome. About DCNEIs, Carvalho and Fochi (2017, p. 27) state:

[...] the curriculum document defends the pedagogical perspective that the processes of knowledge construction by young children in institutions of Early Childhood Education should occur through their effective participation in daily practices. In this sense, it is to the children's protagonism in their research, experimentation, discoveries, inventions, and theorizations, based on the ordinary situations experienced in the day to day of day care and preschool, that the guidelines refer when they give centrality to the daily routine.

The care is understood as intrinsic to human relationships, it presupposes attention, affection, welcoming, and its exercise takes place in the teaching that is attentive to the children's specificities and needs. Education is revealed through the pedagogical routes manifested in the experiences with the children, in the organization of the space, that is, in the practices organized and proposed by the professionals that in our understanding must be thought out, expanded and privileged experiences. We defend the fact that care and education are articulated in the measure in which we consider all the potentialities and needs of children from 0 to 6 years of age, as well as their right to have access to knowledge, culture, and situations in which the diversity that characterizes us as human beings is lived in a healthy and constructive way.

More recently, the Common National Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017) contemplated guidelines regarding the organization of Early Childhood Education, goals, and children's rights<sup>3</sup>. It guides that the pedagogical work considers five fields of experience, understood as a proposed curricular arrangement that includes the experiences<sup>4</sup> of children from 0 to 6 years of age. This document incorporates, in parts, the provisions of the DCNEIs and it is worth noting that its preparation participated in a series of clashes and tensions that have exposed weaknesses in the area, whose constitution and conceptions are still in the process of defense, reflection and appropriation by researchers in the area, teachers and organized civil society.

In parallel to this panorama of legal and guiding advances, the teaching of children in Early Childhood Education was also being built and reflected upon. If before, care services of

<sup>3</sup> Socialize, play, participate, explore, express, know yourself.

<sup>4</sup> The self, the other, and the we; Body, gestures, and movements; Strokes, sounds, colors, and shapes; Listening, speaking, thinking, and imagination; Spaces, times, quantities, relations, and transformations.

a welfare nature prevailed, with unqualified professionals, LDBEN n. 9394 (BRASIL, 1996) indicated the necessary training to work at this stage:

Art. 62: The training of teachers to work in basic education will be done at a higher level, in a licentiate course, of full graduation, in universities and higher education institutes, admitting, as minimum training for the exercise of teaching in Infant Education and in the first four grades of basic education, which offered at a medium level, in the Normal modality.

The legislation, although admitting the formation in Medium Level, indicates the formation in Superior Level as desirable, being defended by the area the Pedagogy course as the main locus. However, as Drumond (2018, p. 290) reminds us, the discussions about Early Childhood Education are still peripheral in Pedagogy courses, and universities need to assume "[...] the commitment to rethink their curricular projects, propose courses that train teachers of children from 0 to 6 years and 6 to 10 years, with the specificity of daycare, preschool [...]". He also comments that "[...] in the curricula of pedagogy courses [...] the knowledge disseminated about the education of young children does not contemplate the knowledge and doings that characterize teaching with children in this age group" (p. 290).

The research of Santos (2019, p. 97-98) focused on the investigation of how in-class courses of Pedagogy of the state universities of Paraná address in their curricula the oral language, reveals the following situation:

From the presentation of the syllabuses of the courses from the several state universities in Paraná and the exploration of the subjects related to Early Childhood Education, literacy, and psychology, we verified that they are, in their majority, thought and elaborated in a way to be aligned with the other levels of education, that is, they are organized and thought in the same way that Elementary School I and II are structured, which, sometimes, can characterize the child from CEI as the one from Elementary School (EF), with the same needs, same development, and, therefore, the same organization of education. However, this work brings as one of its discussions exactly that. We understand that at each stage a new need arises and at each need a different look is taken at the one who is learning. It is necessary to consider and guide the singularities of Early Childhood Education in initial training.

The author notes a subordination, both in the understanding of the child and the training of early childhood education, to the teaching practice of elementary school. These studies show us that despite different legal advances, the care provided to young children still needs to be articulated in the sense of seeking the effectiveness of the binomial care and education. In Brazil, as in other parts of the world, historically the care for children from 0 to 6 years old has been conducted from initiatives linked to the welfare sectors, with professionals without specific training, usually mothers and women. Therefore, the law was presented as an important indication to overcome this condition, although in practice, more than 20 years after its enactment, we still find professionals without the minimum training working with children.

If the legal changes have brought new understandings about children, advancing in many aspects determining Early Childhood Education, there are still issues that deserve our attention, such as the need for more investments, both to better structure the institutions and



to value the professional. As Souza and Pérez (2017, p. 299) remind us, "When the rights guaranteed by law are not reverted into social practices, we run the risk of losing them. In this sense, it is necessary to expand the debate so that public policies for young children are fulfilled." That is, it is in the field of practice that the legal dimension and the conceptions need to materialize, because it is not enough to indicate the right, it is necessary to have concrete conditions for its implementation and this goes through, especially, municipal administrations and teacher training.

Another aspect to be highlighted and that is associated to the professional profile concerns the prejudice directed to male teachers, with space for speeches that neglect the legislation which highlights the education as a requirement for teaching and not the gender of this professional. According to Baliscei and Saito (2021, p. 318):

[...] in a society whose cultural practices are crossed by patriarchy, the presence of male teachers in early childhood education contributes not only to destabilize the negative aspects of hegemonic masculinity, but also to cause cracks in the most rigid understandings about professions, which tend to generify them according to the skills they require and the status they hold. Thus, the existence of male teachers in early childhood education is an opportunity for children to learn, from an incredibly early age, that men can also be kind, patient, delicate, didactic, affective, and caring with children without their masculinities being diminished. It is a possibility for children to experience the many characteristics of social relationships and, therefore, to humanize themselves through the actions of early childhood education.

Historically, teaching children from 0 to 6 years old has been a women's profession, but what enables a professional to work is their education. Children have much to gain from male teachers, both formatively and relationally. Besides this, other historical issues have compromised the understanding of how to guide the practices with the children, configuring two situations: for the younger children, hygiene and feeding actions predominate, in large groups, without conditions to offer the special and individualized attention that babies need; for the slightly older preschool children, activities on paper, manual training and literacy exercises, with letters and numbers, prevail. This situation is due to several factors, among them the lack of understanding of the inseparability between care and education and the weakness of teacher training. As Drumond (2018, p. 292) points out, it is important that professionals understand that teaching in Early Childhood Education is permeated by specificities and takes a different direction from working with older children:

The right to Early Childhood Education requires trained professionals, committed to knowledge, with a project of education with content; however, not school, child centered. For such an endeavor, the teacher of the first stage of Basic Education does not teach classes, is not a teacher at school subjects in a curriculum [...].

In this direction, we argue that the teacher should act in the organization of cultural and pedagogical practices that do not put playing and learning on opposite sides, having an important role of mediation in a process whose centrality is in the child. In this sense, as Drumond (2018) warns, teaching in Early Childhood Education is not conventional, and it is especially important to abandon the teacher's position of power and the child's role of

subordination, because it is a collective and collaborative task that demands participation to become meaningful.

[...] the challenge [...] to teachers is to articulate the experiences and knowledge of children with socially produced knowledge, thus radically differentiating the Early Childhood Education curriculum from a propaedeutic vision of early schooling of children for the subsequent stages of basic education. This statement demands that teachers actually understand and, above all, value the peculiar ways children know themselves, others, and the world, supported by a myriad of powerful languages with which they question the adult-centric view that historically has constituted the practices of children's education in our country (CARVALHO; FOCHI, 2017, p. 27-28).

This need is explicit in the guiding documents of the area, which even reinforce that the pedagogical work in the first stage of basic education cannot be schooling or subordinate to the preparatory interests of elementary school. However, despite the legislation, research, and guidelines, the challenge persists, because in practice there are difficulties in getting away from traditional approaches focused on content and the production of 'little jobs'. This is what Samia (2018, p. 117, emphasis added) explains as school logic, in which the interaction of adults with children is limited to telling them what they should do, without clarity of their fragile role in the formation of professional identity:

[...] the diversity of conceptions presents in the daily life of institutions, arising from different views of the child and the function of Early Childhood Education, reflects in a professional identity that needs to be defined in a better way, not in search of plastering, but to collaborate for the strengthening of the logic of childhood, recommended in guiding documents [...].

Other aspects associated with the training and daily attributions of the professionals also contribute to this panorama. We have, for example, the separation between the regular teacher, responsible for planning and conducting activities, and the auxiliary teacher or interns, dedicated to advice, hygiene, manual tasks, mistakenly understood as non-pedagogical. This division between what is or is not pedagogical - all actions teach things - also manifests itself in the organization of the routine, with classroom activities linked to learning and recreational activities, outside, seen as relaxation, relaxation. In other words, we have a mistaken separation that affects the functions of the professionals and the organization of the routine of the institutions, which results in a compromised quality of Early Childhood Education. According to Carvalho and Fochi (2017, p. 24-25), "[...] it is in the way times and spaces are thought out, how materials are chosen, and the management of social play that the school communicates its beliefs about the meaning of educating children in collective spaces. Thus, the authors point out that it is the conceptions of child and Early Childhood Education that support the organization of pedagogical practices, the structuring of spaces, and other aspects that have a direct impact on the work developed.

Based on this understanding, discussing teacher training for Early Childhood Education implies assuming the specificity of the education of children in this age group, understanding the constitution of teaching with this group as a field under construction. It is



worth highlighting here that the teacher needs to understand that the child is a being that has different formative dimensions, as Drumond (2018, p. 299) points out:

If we want an education in which the teacher works with the several dimensions of human formation, that is not restricted only to the cognitive, this implies broadening the educational matrix to be able to form a human being that is, besides being cognitive, affective, creative; that invents; that has a body; that is plural. So, I am talking about a broader education than the one that boils down to a training to guarantee the learning of reading and writing; I am talking about an education that respects children and their forms of expression and thought.

As educators, we have been continuously called to reflect on what really needs to be privileged in this formative process and, in this sense, some important questions stand out: How to organize time and routine in order to establish a script inviting to knowledge and stimulating adventures in Early Childhood Education? How can the teacher establish a participatory and mediating relationship in the routine, with interventions that trigger interesting actions for the children and not merely controlling or limiting? How can we overcome the expectation of Early Childhood Education as preparatory, making room for play and interaction?

We don't have the answers to all these questions, but they undoubtedly go through the revision of our conceptions of children and Early Childhood Education. This is because the teacher's conception guides choices that can collaborate to an integrated development in the most varied aspects of child development or, in the opposite direction, limit learning and actions focused on the domestication of children's behavior. The predictability desired by the teacher ends up confining the children in closed spaces, between four walls, depriving them from appropriating the external environments with their infinite possibilities, especially the contact with nature. Play, relegated to a few moments and with a scarcity of toys, is seen as destabilizing actions, needing the teacher's authorization to happen. In doing so, we deny the very essence of being a child, its main language, and the way it gets to know the world and relate to other people.

In the Brazilian reality, the urgency is to establish more effectively the necessary changes in university and continuing education, so that they favor the construction of a singular professional profile, for the performance with children, at the same time that structural conditions are created so that this quality care can occur (SAMIA, 2018, p. 129-130).

The author reinforces the importance of initial and continuing education in the construction of professional identity and in the problematization of relevant aspects of teaching, which is in line with the discussions presented here about the relevance of the internship. Côco (2018) verified, based on what the academics participating in research she coordinated exposed, that the training course needs to be deepened, because the students suggested that the Pedagogy course should deepen the knowledge related to Early Childhood Education. The researcher found that at the beginning of the course, among the attributes declared by the students for the performance, the affective ones stood out, and throughout the

graduation, others were added such as training, recognition, and engagement, causing a tension between predicates that are often conflicting.

### 3 The role of the supervised curricular internship in teacher education

As we have already registered, we defend that the supervised curricular internship has a central role in teacher education, and should, therefore, necessarily compose the curricular grid of the Pedagogy course with a relevant workload and with a special emphasis. In our understanding, it strengthens and allows the link between what the students are studying in the undergraduate course and the reality experienced in educational spaces. In other words, the internship is a way of linking theory with practice, putting the intern in direct contact with his/her future field of work. In this sense, the university has a unique role in guiding this approach, which requires a serious and committed work with the supervised curricular internship and a strong link with the internship field that must be welcoming and inspiring for new formative learning.

Guimarães, Marchiori, and Mello (2019), when discussing the power of collaborative relationships between universities and institutions in teacher education, highlight that the articulation between the different subjects and the daily experiences are central axes in the formative processes. We agree with this position, because we argue that the supervised curricular internship, as an initial formative process, is a way to achieve this articulation, in addition to allowing the experience of the teaching reality, thus enabling future professionals a broader perception of the pedagogical practice with children in Early Childhood Education through the association between theory and practice.

Gatti (2020) analyzes the place of practices in teacher training for teaching in basic education and stresses the need for change of perspective, as a way to break with traditions rooted in training curricula, causing review of habits and beliefs. Overcoming simulacra of participation includes thinking and collaborating effectively with managers and teachers, starting from real problems and situations, in the direction of change and not conformism with what is given.

In this same direction, Drumond (2018) understands the internship as a space for experience and living, whose contact with reality stimulates reflection and research, acting greatly on training. In the guidance and monitoring movement organized by training institutions, the author argues that it is important to build an approximation practice with the field of action that will promote the possibility of observing, interpreting, and acting in this context based on the references that underpin the teaching of children from 0 to 6 years old.

Ostetto and Maia (2019) understand that the curricular internship is an almost unquestionable learning opportunity for new teachers in any area; through it, in general, the approach to the professional field is given. For the Pedagogy degree, a course that, according to the legal determinations, should be focused on teaching, the immersion in the school, in

institutions of Early Childhood Education or in other educational spaces, is an essential part of the training.

In Samia's (2018, p. 131) view, "[...] if teachers experience a participatory pedagogical model in their formative paths, it will be possible that they can take this methodology into their practices, becoming teachers who found a new pedagogical (re)action." In this same line, Saito (2019, p. 44), when investigating central aspects that subsidize the actions of the group coordinated by teacher Júlia Oliveira-Formosinho<sup>5</sup>, comments that this researcher:

It reinforces the idea of practical training, since it considers that it has been largely forgotten in the initial training courses, not contributing to the effectiveness of a positive action in the educational routine, since it does not bring the academics closer to the real context that they will find. He also warns that practical training should be centered on reflection of the action, its components, the possibilities, the requirements of ethics in this action, the rights of children and the duties of teachers, that is, he argues that we should create contexts of practical training for students to see and experience real actions with children. For this reason, the allocated educational institutions (such as academic spaces) should be differentiated in what concerns the pedagogy of everyday life and the teacher apprentices should know, study, and apply in their formative actions the pedagogical grammar focused on everyday pedagogical praxis.

In this sense, for the researcher Júlia Oliveira-Formosinho, we need to requalify practical training, giving it a new place in the formative curriculum, being careful to choose the most welcoming, appropriate, and differentiated places to be our partners in the training process of our interns. Ostetto and Maia (2019) defend the internship as a curricular component that enables a formative opportunity by promoting the displacement of the student to the institutions, a movement that (re)places, widens and re-signifies the look to the daily life, in a fruitful reflective exercise of research that captures meanings and opens the possibility of a dialog about the ways of being a teacher of children. The authors draw our attention to the fact that a great and necessary learning for the professional is to build a sensitive and committed look at children.

Carvalho and Fochi (2017, p. 29) also recognize the curricular internship as an important instance in the relationship between the academy and the professional field, however, they warn that "[...] the internship is, simultaneously, a window that opens to rebuild the models of teaching and a wall, due to the obstacles it encounters: either because of the deficient training with which the students arrive at the internship or because of the poor conditions of the places of internship practices (the early childhood education schools). The authors, when analyzing the internship reports in this stage, tried to understand how the interventions made by the students promoted a pedagogy that welcomed the participation of the children and how the internship produced formative knowledge. Among the reports, the role of the adult in the transformation of relationships and contexts, the importance of listening, and the promotion of children's participation were highlighted, aspects recognized as mobilizing constant learning practices.

<sup>5</sup> Portuguese retired professor from the University of Minho.

For Côco (2018, p. 106), it is emerging to recognize the importance of teacher training as a process from which we can learn about the teaching work with young children, highlighting the challenges inherent in it. Her defense is as follows: "[...] the formation constitutes an important space for problematizations, with the purpose of overcoming the logics that, even with different names, have been sustaining a sense of donation in the teaching in Early Childhood Education". In turn, Magalhaes (2019, p. 10) defends the following position:

Getting involved in the activities and the fulfillment of the proposed activities is fundamental for the good development of the internship. However, beyond the simple "completion of tasks", it is up to the trainees to seek ways to get involved with the field, with the professionals, and articulate the knowledge from the university with the practices experienced in the internship institutions.

Thus, the relational dimension gains relevance, of the subjects among themselves, with the field and with knowledge. Artur (2015) calls our attention to the fact that in this process, both the university teacher and the intern need to have different professional knowledge, in order to promote challenging interactions that allow the questioning of the perceived reality. Thus, we understand that it is in this intrinsic and close relationship that the internship favors teacher training derived from reflections held on what is observed, what is proposed, and what is implemented from careful and reflective observation. In this sense, we try to demystify the idea that to work in Early Childhood Education it is enough just to like children, since for a good teaching job in this teaching stage it is necessary to have a lot of theoretical knowledge about the different aspects that involve pedagogy and, especially, it is necessary to know the specificities of the child that we will find in this universe.

Supported in these defenses, in the sequence, we will bring the experience of two courses of Pedagogy of two Brazilian public universities of the state of Paraná, in the South Region of the country, about the direction they take for the supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education.

#### 4 Paraná's experiences in Early Childhood Education: challenges and tensions of the supervised curricular internship

The Midwestern State University is located in the central region of the State of Paraná, serving a public from the city of Guarapuava and neighboring municipalities that commute every day for classes. The Pedagogy course has existed for 46 years, representing an important formative instance in the regional scenario and, in this time, it has gone through several reformulations, seeking to adapt the pedagogue's profile to the National Directives and to the reality of its scope, focusing on teaching and educational management. The course lasts 4 years (morning or evening), totaling 3,213h, and in the current curricular matrix the subject "Supervised Internship in Early Childhood Education" takes place in the 3rd year, with a total workload of 102h. In the first and second year of the course, there are two courses specifically focused on Early Childhood Education, one more dedicated to the historical and legal aspects (102h) and the other to the organization of pedagogical work (68h), besides

others, although not specific, that deal with issues related to the education of children under 6 years old, but that are not internship courses. This format has shown an insufficient workload to account for the specificities of the work with children aged 0 to 6 years old, also because the disciplines not explicitly stated for this purpose, according to student reports, marginalize or exclude these discussions, showing that not only Early Childhood Education is on the periphery of educational policies, but also of training courses. Carvalho and Fochi (2017, p. 29) problematize this condition:

The compartmentalized model of disciplines and semesters that leaves the student of pedagogy course the function of connecting everything with everyone, the inadequacy with which children are dealt with in pedagogical disciplines, especially the very young ones, and the absence of pedagogy as a field of knowledge in the pedagogy course itself (which continues, as stated in the history of this field, subordinated to other fields) have in no way collaborated to the reconstruction of learning related to teaching.

The 102 hours of the Supervised Internship are used to discuss general contents about teaching children from 0 to 6 years old (routines, planning, evaluation, etc.), organize schedules, internship groups in each institution, produce materials to be used in the internship, and write the final paper describing the experiences and reflecting on the situations experienced. In addition to this workload in the university classroom, there are 90 hours to be done directly in partnership with public institutions. Of these, 30 hours are set aside for planning with the teacher of the subject in partnership with the institution, and 60 hours for the students to be immersed in the internship field, carrying out observations and teaching assignments<sup>6</sup>. Thus, in the course, we have only one subject of 102 hours dedicated to the internship in Early Childhood Education, plus these 90 hours, which represents 5.98% of the course's total of 3,213 hours.

It is important to note that until 2018, the supervised internship course was a semester course, and after that, it became an annual course, which provided more time for students to come and go between the university and the internship field. Thus, the positive point of distributing the course throughout the year is that the student goes there, observes, returns to the university, shares his impressions, reflects with colleagues and the internship teacher, and returns again to the internship field with another view. However, even so, the situations experienced are described as insufficient, both by students and teachers, to effectively take over the daily routine of pedagogical work, because the relationship between caring and educating is materialized in a continuous, uninterrupted process, and not in punctual situations. This scenario reveals that the course has been diluted and extended during the year, but it is still a short period of time to provide training in Early Childhood Education.

The State University of Maringá is located in the northwest of the State of Paraná and is composed of the main campus and six regional campuses. At the main campus, the in-class course in Pedagogy, which is 49 years old, has three aspects: the construction of the

<sup>6</sup> The head office defines which institutions will be open each year for internships, and limits the duration of the activities to finish by the end of October; in Brazil the school year is from February to mid-December.

professional identity, teaching, and the formation of a manager of educational processes. It is worth mentioning that, as of 2020, the first class of the new curriculum (5-year curricular grid) started to take effect, but in this work, we will address the experiences with the supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education of the previous curriculum (4-year curricular grid), still in effect.

The course curriculum has six specific courses to discuss the supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education, distributed in the second and third year. In the second year of the course there are two courses in the first semester, entitled "Formation and teaching action: teaching practice in Early Childhood Education I" (34h) and " Supervised Curricular Internship in Early Childhood Education I" (68h), and two more in the second semester, entitled " Training and teaching action: teaching practice in Early Childhood Education II" (34h) and " Curricular supervised internship in Early Childhood Education II" (34h). In the third year, two courses are offered in the first semester: "Teaching education and action: teaching practice in Early Childhood Education III" (34h) and "Supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education III" (68h). Thus, we have a total of 272 hours in a universe of 3,840 hours of the course, i.e., only 7.08% of the course workload allocated to subjects related to teaching children from 0 to 6 years of age.

It is worth pointing out that the courses called Training and teaching action are articulated with those called Supervised Curricular Internships in Early Childhood Education, i.e., they are married. This means that the same teacher teaches both so that one gives support to the other, in order to allow a better articulation between theory and practice. In the training course we discuss theoretical foundations and use part of it to plan the pedagogical practice designed for the intervention in the internship and for the preparation of the final report. In the internship course we also discuss theoretical foundations, but reflections closer to the actions of the interns in loco, we reserve a large part of it for observing the practice of the class teacher, and a smaller period for the actual intervention of the interns with the class being observed, and for preparing the final internship report. This document summarizes and analyzes all the stages carried out during the internship: the interview with the management team of the institution that receives the group of interns, the observations made and the characteristics of the class and the regular teacher, the planning thought out for the intervention, and the intervention process itself with its different developments.

After this brief explanation of the singularity that each university reserves in their curriculum for the development of the supervised curricular internship in Early Childhood Education, we were able to verify some similarities. One of them refers to the fact that thinking about the quantitative issue of the Pedagogy course of both universities exposed, we verified that the workload is very restricted to approach with the students the central comprehensions to the educational practice with children of this age group in a way that contemplates the specificities of child development and the pedagogic work with daycare and preschool. It is worth noting that it is clear that in the Pedagogy course of the State University



of Maringá there are more subjects dedicated to the internship, spread over two years, providing a larger workload than in the course of the Midwestern State University.

The way the part of Early Childhood Education is organized in the courses reveals the fragility and fragmentation in the composition of initial training and, in particular, the specific teacher training for the stage. Nascimento and Lira (2019), when reflecting on the challenges of teaching with young children, problematize the mismatches involved in this task, with gaps in initial training, especially the number of hours dedicated to internships, which reveals a devaluation of the area in teacher training courses.

A particularity common to both courses that is presented to the teachers who organize the internship concerns the fact that, on the one hand, there is a partnership established between the university and the public administration for the internship to take place, but that this relationship also includes conflicts such as, for example, the selection of institutions and classes that will be open to the participation of the students. Historically, there has been a tendency on the part of these managers to direct the internships to less problematic educational institutions in order to cover up the evils of reality, and not to insert the interns in receptive and collaborative places. Another tendency is to make available the internship in classes of older children, 4 and 5 years old, due to an understanding that with children from 0 to 3 years old the practices would be prevalently of care. This distinction between day-care center and pre-school is severely questioned every year by the university, as it is mistaken in the understanding of the objectives and purposes of Early Childhood Education, since care and education should be articulated, being inseparable.

Another similarity of the internships involves the negotiation between the internship organizing agents and the institutions' sponsors, whose guidance is to perform the internship hours in the morning, because institutionally this would be the time for pedagogical activities, and the afternoons would be for recreation. Again, this is an understanding that conflicts with studies and reflections in the area of childhood and early childhood education, which emphasize that playing is a primordial activity for children that enables great learning. It is also worth reflecting on how the way to structure the times and routines are guiding and delimiting the work developed with the children, i.e., they end up interfering directly in the planning and development of pedagogical practices.

A major obstacle we found in the organization of internships and that compromises the planning are the specificities of Kindergarten and the institutions, such as, for example, the prediction of the regency for a period and the internship institution ends up scheduling another activity for that day, failing to inform the students and the teacher responsible for the internship. These situations demand an unexpected reorganization of the internship plan, often destructuring a proposal, and for this reason we recognize that the dialog between the internship institution and the university needs to be improved.

A common aspect experienced by teachers and trainees of both courses is the resistance from some professionals working in the internship field. Many of them do not

empathize with the students, are not very receptive, and, given the working conditions and the lack of professional recognition, end up questioning the choice of training to work in the teaching profession. They ask if they really want that life for themselves, they make it difficult for the trainees to join the class, and they disapprove or even mock the material and immaterial efforts to bring different and challenging experiences to the children.

Despite all these factors that hinder a good development of the supervised curricular internship, we made efforts to minimize such challenges and ensure a positive experience for the trainee in the universe of Children's Education, trying to emphasize the positive aspects verified by the group and critically analyze the real reasons that generated the difficulties and negative experiences, so that the trainees can learn not only from the successes, but also from the mistakes and difficulties that characterize human actions in the development of the actions that involve the profession.

A care we take as organizing teachers of the internship subject is to make sure that the interns' regency/intervention with the children does not take place too late, because there is a need for the student to return to the university and socialize his/her experiences with the classmates, since we defend the fact that the reflection process based on the situations lived becomes primordial in the constitution of the teaching professionalism. With this in mind, we set aside a favorable time at the end of the internship course for the students to be able to socialize with the other colleagues in their training group how the whole internship process was, showing the advances and the obstacles encountered, so that everyone can learn from the progress of the others. As Nascimento and Lira (2019, p. 120) point out, "[...] this educational stage requires a specificity from the teacher, which aims to meet the particularities of young children, which demands knowledge that must be obtained throughout the teachers' training process [...]", especially through the internship.

Considering that in the Brazilian scenario the concern with the formation of professionals of the Child Education is recent, it is important that the courses of Pedagogy consider this field of performance and include effectively in their curricula discussions that contemplate the specificities of the teaching with children from 0 to 6 years old, with compatible workload to the theoretical-practical deepening and themes related to the teaching with children in this age group. The tensions evidenced in the curricular analysis of the specific disciplines of internship in the two courses show recurrent challenges to the area, which has historically been marginalized in public educational policies and the reflexes of this condition are also present in the educational field. With a limited workload and specific issues that shape the internship field, we observed a context that compromises the training for teaching children under 6 years old.

## 5 Final considerations

The task of weaving reflections about the supervised curricular internship aimed at Early Childhood Education in the teacher training university course is a way to highlight its importance for the process of the constitution of teaching and reveal the need to have a well-structured articulation between the university and the internship field, the future field of work. We defend that this process of contact of the trainees with children in educational institutions must be a strategic and organized action so that their insertion in the future universe of work is fruitful and guarantees varied learning, thus allowing an adequate professional formation.

It is worth noting that the education of young children in Brazil presents a reality that expresses its historical process of constitution in the country, as well as international experiences, especially European and American. For these reasons, Early Childhood Education still expresses many gaps and problems because in the country this educational stage has always been relegated and seen as a space for the insertion of international experiences, without considering the local context and the characteristics of the children it serves.

These factors contributed to verify that in Brazil we are still moving towards the appropriate construction of a pedagogical work that meets the specificities of an action directed to children from 0 to 6 years old. In the same way that children and childhood are marginalized by public policies, unfortunately, Early Childhood Education and the training of professionals to work in this stage of education were and continue to be neglected in educational institutions, since the focus of the Pedagogy courses falls on the training of professionals to work in Elementary School and the concerns revolve around the skills of reading, writing, and calculation. The secondary consideration of the children, their needs, and specificities, ends up configuring a weakened teaching, with gaps in the education, leading to a cycle of devaluation of the professional who collaborates with them and of the educational work to be developed.

The reflection proposed here sought to problematize the role of the supervised internship in Early Childhood Education and its configuration in two Pedagogy courses in the state of Paraná. We identified similarities in the organization and access format of the students to the field, including similar situations regarding the workload and challenges faced. Based on the particular contexts presented, we hope to have fostered reflections that may give rise to a rethinking of how we can guide the actions in the initial formation of educators in general. We verified that an adequate initiation in the work contexts through supervised curricular internships can help the future pedagogue to think about the specificity of teaching in Early Childhood Education and how the professional needs to understand the child and organize qualitative experiences with and for the child. It is worth mentioning that for this to happen we defend that the Pedagogy student must do the internship in a universe that welcomes him/her, that allows the visualization of good educational experiences and that puts

him/her in empathic contact with the children, always under the supervision of a university professor and a team from the internship field institution that help him/her to think about all the elements that compose the pedagogical work with children up to 6 years old.

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