

Against the learnification of teaching: an analysis of policies for teacher education and the teaching profession in Brazil and Scotland

Contra a learnification do ensino: uma análise de políticas para a formação de professores e a profissão docente no Brasil e na Escócia

Contra la learnification de la enseñanza: un análisis de las políticas de formación del profesorado y de la profesión docente en Brasil y Escocia

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of educational policies in influencing teachers' profession and teaching through the analysis of two policies for teacher education and the teaching profession: the Scottish Standard for Full Registration and the Brazilian Common National Base for initial teachers' formation. A central concern is to reflect about manners for overcoming the culture of performativity in education. The question addressed is: "For what purposes are teachers supposed to teach in Brazil and Scotland?" We focused the analysis on what is written about teaching in those policies, raising questions and comments on the parts where there is an emphasis on learning but in which we understand teaching should be included. Both policies prioritise learning, barely mentioning teaching and almost ignoring studying. Indeed, teaching seems to be submitted to a process of learnification, having as its main objective reaching measurable learning outcomes foreseen in the curriculum. Hence, these policies show no conceptions of teaching that could overcome the culture of performativity in education.

Keywords: Teaching. Education. Performativity.

RESUMO

Este artigo explora o papel das políticas educacionais em influenciar a profissão docente e o ensino, por meio da análise de duas políticas para a formação de professores e a profissão docente: o Padrão para Registro Pleno escocês e a Base Nacional Comum para a formação inicial de professores no Brasil. Uma preocupação central é refletir sobre formas de superar a cultura da performatividade na educação. A questão discutida é: "por quais propósitos os professores no Brasil e na Escócia devem ensinar?" Concentramos a análise no que está escrito sobre o ensino nessas políticas,

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levantando questões e comentários nas partes em que há uma ênfase na aprendizagem, mas nas quais entendemos que o ensino deveria ser incluído. Ambas as políticas priorizam a aprendizagem, mal mencionando o ensino e quase ignorando o estudo. De fato, o ensino parece estar submetido a um processo de *learnification*, tendo como principal meta alcançar os resultados de aprendizagem mensuráveis previstos nos currículos. Logo, essas políticas não mostram concepções de ensino que possam superar a cultura da performatividade na educação.

Palavras-chave: Ensino. Educação. Performatividade.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el papel de políticas educativas en influir en la profesión docente y la enseñanza a partir del análisis de dos políticas para la formación del profesorado y la profesión docente: el Estándar para Registro Pleno escocés y la Base Nacional Común para la formación inicial de profesores en Brasil. Una preocupación central es pensar en formas de superar la cultura de la performatividad en la educación. La cuestión es: “¿con qué fines los profesores en Brasil y Escocia deben enseñar?” Centramos el análisis en lo que está escrito sobre la enseñanza en estas políticas, haciendo preguntas y comentarios en las partes donde hay un énfasis en el aprendizaje, pero donde creemos que debería incluirse la enseñanza. Ambas políticas priman el aprendizaje, poco aluden a la enseñanza y casi ignoran el estudio. De hecho, la enseñanza parece estar sujeta a un proceso de *learnification*, con el fin mayor de lograr los resultados de aprendizaje mensurables fijados en los currículos. Así, estas políticas no muestran conceptos de enseñanza que puedan superar la cultura de la performatividad en la educación.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza. Educación. Performatividad.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to contribute to the debate regarding the teaching profession and teaching in Brazil and Scotland. We intend to comprehend what is expected from Brazilian and Scottish teachers, paying special attention to the purposes of teaching in their professional practice. Regarding this, we are considering teaching as a specific role or occupation that may or may not be oriented towards educational purposes (Carr, 2003). The question addressed is: for what purposes are teachers supposed to teach in Brazil and Scotland?

We shall discuss this question by analysing the main national policy for teacher education and the teaching profession in the mentioned countries, focusing on understanding how these policies approach teaching and what is written about teaching purposes in their texts. With very good reason, the literature on teaching continues to burgeon (Biesta, 2017, 2022b; Larrosa, 2019). There are multiple reasons for this expansion — from the complexity of teaching techniques and the expectation of good results and ranking from the school’s point of view to the ‘ethical dilemmas’ of teaching work. Furthermore, the debate on the importance of looking for ways to foster the artistry of teaching in opposition to the idea of teaching as a technical activity oriented to produce learning remains topical (Stenhouse, 1988; Lutzker, 2021; Biesta, 2022a, 2023). The Brazilian policy is the Common National Base for Initial Teacher Formation in Basic Education (Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Inicial de Professores da Educação Básica — BNC-Formação), launched through resolution CNE/CP 02/2019 of the National Education Council of the Ministry of Education of Brazil (MEC) in December 2019. According to the referred resolution, all Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

in Brazil should implement the guidelines established in the BNC-Formação within two years of the date of its publication. However, through Ordinance CNE/CP 22/2022, published by MEC in August 2022, the deadline for all HEIs to adapt their programmes to meet the requirements demanded by the policy was extended to 2024, due to issues provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Later on, through Resolution CNE/CP 01/2024, launched in January 2024, MEC postponed that deadline to March 2024. The Scottish policy is the Standard for Full-Registration (SFR), first established in 2000 and whose last version was published by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTSC) in August 2021 (GTSC, 2021). Both policies serve as the major national references for the teaching profession and establish the guidelines for teaching work in those countries. However, the Scottish one is more incisive in that it determines what all teachers must do to be professionally registered, while the Brazilian one is focused on setting up what teachers are expected to do as teachers, but they do not depend on that to be professionally registered. Moreover, although the Brazilian policy is national in scope, it is important to keep in mind that Brazil is a federated country; consequently, there are significant distinctions in the ways in which the formation and professional performance of teachers occur in different states and municipalities.

As will be shown throughout the text, both policies barely mention or discuss teaching, in addition to defining learning as a priority, even in the few topics where something about teaching is stated. This finding is clearest in the Scottish policy, but also present in the Brazilian one. Therefore, it can be understood that, rather than teaching, teachers are expected to manage pupils' learning, which reinforces the urgency of finding ways to bring teaching back to education, as warned by Biesta (2013b, 2017, 2022b). In addition, these policies establish that teachers must assume the responsibility for ensuring that learners achieve abilities and competencies foreseen in the curriculum, which is more evident in the Brazilian policy, but appears in the Scottish one. In this regard, it can be argued that in these policies teaching is understood from a technical perspective, as a skill oriented towards the production of other skills (Carr, 2003) — more precisely, the measurable skills established in the curriculum. Furthermore, although none of these policies are prescriptive, they might contribute to strengthening the culture of performativity (Ball, 2003) insofar as both constantly express that teachers are expected to guarantee that learners accomplish the measurable learning outcomes foreseen in the curriculum and required in assessments. In fact, these policies show no conceptions of teaching that could overcome or even defy the culture of performativity in education, which can be seen as a missing point.

There are two more absent points worth highlighting. In the Scottish policy there is absolutely no mention of studying, whilst in the Brazilian one studying is mentioned only once, as an activity related to ensuring that teachers guarantee pupils' learning. Although we are not going to explore it deeply in this paper, we could at least question why a practice that is essentially educational and should be done daily in schools by teachers and students (Ruitenberg, 2017; Larrosa, 2019) is not addressed in these policies. Additionally, the term *learning* is frequently used in both documents, often following complements such as *environment*, *experience* or *communities*, which evidences the priority given to learning and an insufficient concern with teaching. Hence, considering the prioritisation of learning, the poor attention given to teaching and the apparent lack of concern for studying, these policies can be said to have submitted teaching and the teaching profession to a process of learnification — a concept created by Biesta (2010) to refer to a tendency to define everything in educational discussions and practices in terms of learning and learners, expressed by the rise of a 'new language of learning' that redefines teaching as *facilitation of learning* and education as the provision of *learning opportunities* or *learning experiences*.

Now that we have announced the main characteristics and absence points of these policies, it is time to report how we located them. We begin by presenting some arguments on the importance

of examining policies to discuss educational issues, giving special attention to the influence of the culture of performativity in shaping and constructing policies in a neoliberal context. Next, we provide a general overview of both policies, describing their structure and parts. Our main focus is on what is expressed about teachers and teaching, as well as on the parts focusing on learning, which we believe should include teaching.

Then, we will analyse and discuss the main aspects of each policy, highlighting which conceptions of teaching are predominant in the texts and questioning whether such conceptions are educationally desirable or not. We also intend to provoke reflections on if and how these policies can help or hinder teachers to build their own teaching strategies in order to challenge the culture of performativity (Ball, 2003).

Rather than simply criticising these policies or pointing out what is supposedly wrong with them, we would like to suggest possibilities for thinking differently about what they express about teaching, adding new perspectives that have not yet been explored or that are somehow absent. Moreover, although we are looking at two specific national policies, our aim is to raise some thoughts that bring relevant information and findings for researchers, policymakers, and readers from other national contexts (beyond Brazil and Scotland) to reflect on their own educational realities. Hence, we will leave some open-ended questions to stimulate the debate on the teaching profession and the role of teaching in fostering educational purposes other than reaching measurable learning outcomes imposed by the culture of performativity, questioning how educational policies can be useful in improving it.

PERFORMATIVITY, TEACHING AND WHY POLICY MATTERS

We begin this session by proposing a discussion on how the ways of being a teacher and teaching approaches can be influenced by educational policies, as well as the importance of debating the purposes behind the policies. One important point to consider is what happens when teachers are submitted to the external authority of experts from academia or politics, in a top-down technocratic perspective of teaching, as a result of a conception that considers teaching as a technical and scientifically determined activity, as questioned by Carr (2003). One of the consequences of this is that the policies have their focus steered to controlling teachers' activities in schools (Carr, 2003). Another consequence we would like to stress is that, in this context, the policies are likely to prioritise non-educational purposes, often related to economic outcomes. In this respect, looking at the construction and implementation of policies for teachers, it can be affirmed that although education involves a combination of social, political, and economic processes, policymakers tend to prioritise the latter, neglecting the first two (Ozga, 2000, p. 14).

Furthermore, in the neoliberal context that has dominated the political scenario around the world since the early 1980s, educational policies are centred on the economic agenda and on performance objectives aimed to tighten the connection between schooling and paid work (Apple, 2019). A current way to do that is writing policies aimed primarily at developing competences meant to be predictable and measurable. This form of constructing policies is typical of the context of educational reforms underpinned by performativity targets, which have an important influence in aligning public sector organisations with the methods, culture and ethical system of the private sector (Ball, 2003, p. 217). To better understand this, we will briefly explain the concept of performativity in education.

Shortly speaking, performativity can be defined as a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that make up a system of *terror* that “implies judgement, comparison and exposition, taken respectively as forms of control, friction and change — based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)” (Ball, 2003, p. 216). In that sense, the performance of individuals

and organisations serves to measure productivity or results, as a means of exposing quality or moments of rise and inspection. Moreover, Ball (2003, p. 217) stresses that performativity shows up as something misleadingly objective and hyper-rational. Additionally, the translation of complex social processes and events into elementary figures or categories of judgement is essential for the functioning of performativity (Ball, 2003, p. 217). In this respect, accountability and performance measures for teachers have contributed to strengthening the culture of performativity in education, in addition to making pedagogy more technical and encouraging teachers to concentrate on those pupils who are closest to achieving the desired levels while ignoring the others (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). Likewise, Apple (2019) stresses that performance has been a frequent criterion for evaluating teachers' work worldwide. Consequently, in our point of view, teaching also turns into a technical practice. Furthermore, performativity thinking in education, especially where it refers to attempts to reduce education to a controllable process through measurable learning outcomes as a way of chasing performative purposes, has been significantly criticised by authors like Biesta (2013a, 2013b, 2022a) and Larrosa (2019).

However, expecting teaching to be controlled and measured by predefined standards and goals oriented towards an expected performance means to ignore that risk and uncertainty are part of education, and that being able to deal with the chances of failure is an important ability for teachers (Biesta, 2013c; Silva and Rohr, 2018). In addition, teachers ought not to forget that accepting the risks and uncertainty of education also means being open to the possibility of unexpected success. Besides, is it possible to determine any universal ensemble of teaching approaches and purposes that would suit all teachers in all contexts? We can look for general educational purposes and values, but the ways in which teachers pursue that would differ according to the context and the resources available to them. Furthermore, depending on the contexts and needs of each educational community, particular purposes and values could be added to those general ones.

Nevertheless, although a single definition of *how* to teach would unlikely be found, it is possible to reflect on *what* general educational purposes teachers should teach *for*, and provide them with appropriate material and structural conditions to work towards achieving such purposes, without forgetting, for sure, the particularities inherent in each specific context. And that depends on well-structured policies on which teachers can rely to guide their practices. Thus, it becomes relevant to understand if the policies addressing the teaching profession support teaching as an activity that can meet educationally desirable purposes.

What constitutes an educationally desirable purpose is a broad and open question, especially when education is analysed through the lens of other areas, such as sociology, philosophy, psychology, politics, economics and so forth. Hence, it is crucial to think of education as a field of knowledge that can dialogue with other fields while keeping its own purposes. Although defining what a purely educational purpose is is no simple task, an effort to find it should be sustained to prevent education from subjecting itself to the aims of other fields. Obviously, other knowledge areas can contribute to the development of education; however, when one is concerned about educational policies, research or practice, the priority ought to be on meeting educational objectives (Dalbosco, 2014; Teixeira, Pires and Vitorino, 2020). Consequently, as an educational practice, teaching should also respond first and foremost to educational purposes. Can we affirm, though, that the ways in which teaching is constructed in policies are primarily geared towards educational purposes?

We can debate this by examining different policies for teachers' education and the teaching profession across the world. We have chosen to analyse a Brazilian policy and a Scottish one, but, as was stated in the introduction, we hope our findings will offer contributions to people from other nationalities who are thinking about their own contexts too. The Scottish policy was chosen because Scotland was a pioneer in legally regulating the teaching profession, since, in 2012, the

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) became the world's first independent professional and regulatory body for teaching (Matheson, 2015). The Brazilian one, in turn, was chosen because basic education in Brazil has been deeply reformulated during the past seven years, mainly with regard to the curriculum, to teachers' education and the teaching profession. Actually, the BNC-Formação (Brasil, 2019) for initial teacher education was elaborated to ensure that teachers are able to respond to what is required in the new national curriculum for basic education, named National Curricular Common Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular — BNCC), approved by the Federal Government through the Resolution CNE/CP 02 on 22 December 2017. As can be seen, these policies are inserted in the context of the educational reforms problematised by authors like Ball (2003), Rizvi and Lingard (2010) and Apple (2019). Moreover, two other reasons influenced our choices. The first is the ten-year experience of one of the authors of this paper as a high school teacher in Brazil, having also recently concluded his PhD in education under the supervision of another author. The second is the period he stayed as a visiting postgraduate researcher student in Scotland between September 2022 and February 2023, working with the same supervisor.

We hope to contribute to the debate on the relevance of policies for the teaching profession and teaching not only in Brazil and Scotland, but in other countries too. Furthermore, we wish to make clear that policies play an important role in providing teachers and students with the conditions to dedicate themselves to educational purposes rather than having them respond to external expectations raised by neoliberalism and the culture of performativity. In addition, our interest in thinking of ways to overcome the influence of neoliberalism and performativity in education is sustained by the educational conception we rely on. We consider education as an endeavour that is marked by risks and uncertainties and oriented towards the development of at least three dimensions: qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2010, 2022b). The first is related to the knowledge people need in order to have a profession and to be inserted in the world of culture. The second refers to the ways in which people take part in a social order and how they live with each other, especially with those they have nothing in common with (Biesta, 2013a). The third refers to the question of *how* people can be relatively independent of the social order in which they are included and *how* they can use their knowledge and abilities, but also their non-knowledge and inabilities, to live in and with the world in a proper — ethical (Freire, 2019) — and mature way (Biesta, 2017). The flourishing of such dimensions, especially subjectification, is important to develop education from an existential perspective, since there is a concern with how people live and exist in and with the world. Moreover, we understand that these dimensions must be built not only in students, but also in teachers. Therefore, the ways in which policies for teacher education and teaching are constructed become even more relevant. Taking these thoughts into account, in the subsequent section we will provide a general overview of each policy we have chosen to analyse.

THE STANDARD FOR FULL REGISTRATION

Established by the General Teaching Council for Scotland in 2000, this policy was last updated in August 2021 and determines the requirements for teachers' professional registration in Scotland. According to the policy text, the SFR is the base of the professional standards and the benchmark of competences that all teachers in Scotland must achieve in order to be registered. Moreover, such professional standards determine entrance in the profession and establish the teaching standards in which parents, learners, the profession itself and the wider community can trust (GTSC, 2021).

The document's introduction expresses that the professional standards for teachers in Scotland have multiple purposes, concerned mainly with developing and enhancing teachers' professionalism. Besides the introduction, the policy is organised into three parts.

The first is entitled *Being a teacher in Scotland* and is divided in three sections: professional values, professional commitments and standard for full registration. The professional values fall into three categories — social justice, trust and respect and integrity — each one presenting principles teachers are expected to develop professionally.

Titled *Professional Knowledge and Understanding*, the second part of this policy sets out a list of contents in which teachers are required to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding. These contents are organised into two sections. The first is called *Curriculum and Pedagogy* and is divided into four subsections. The initial subsection addresses pedagogical theories and professional practices and is composed of nine topics, eight of them mentioning objectives related to learning purposes, such as pedagogical and learning theories, interdisciplinary learning and outdoor learning. The second subsection is composed of three topics requiring teachers to engage with educational research and professional enquiries. The following subsection is oriented towards curriculum design, and presents nine topics informing how and for which purposes teachers should engage with the curriculum and the curricular areas. The closing subsection focuses on the objective of *planning for assessment, teaching and learning* and includes five topics that are oriented towards evaluating and measuring teachers' work by looking at the outcomes demonstrated by learners (GTSC, 2021, p. 8).

Section two of that part of the document is entitled *Professional Responsibilities*. Its first subsection has five topics stating that teachers are expected to have deep knowledge and understanding of a range of policies and the politics informing the education system. Subsection two, on the other hand, is oriented towards *learning communities* and is composed of three topics basically focusing on relationships and environmental management.

Structured in three sections, the last part of the document is entitled *Professional Skills and Abilities*. Section one is called *Curriculum and Pedagogy*, just like the first section in the previous part. What is remarkable at this point is the fact that all four subsections of section one start with the word *effectively* to describe how teachers should relate to curriculum and pedagogy, a term typically used to address concerns with performativity.

In this regard, subsection one, for example, called *Plan effectively to meet learner's needs*, is organised into six topics, three of which express that the teacher's objective is to plan learning. The only topic on planning teaching says it should address the needs of all learners. Composed of six topics, the following subsection is focused on effectively using pedagogical resources and approaches, and first establishes that all teachers are supposed to "create meaningful contexts for learners through a range of different learning environments" (GTSC, 2021, p. 9).

The third part of this section has eight topics describing some supposedly democratic ways of participation aimed to be developed in schools, focusing mainly on relationships and supporting practices that involve the school community in order to ensure students' learning and wellbeing. Finally, in subsection four, teachers are expected to "effectively employ assessment, evaluate progress, recording and reporting as an integral part of the teaching process to support and enhance learning" (GTSC, 2021, p. 9).

The second section on the third part is called *The Learning Context*, and its first subsection has six topics determining that teachers should organise and manage learning effectively. The following subsection expresses that teachers ought to promote learners' participation, but does not discuss which kinds of participation would be educationally good, nor for which purposes. Also, one might wonder why there is no explanation on why or how teaching should encourage learners' participation.

The final subsection has six topics indicating that it is expected that teachers construct positive and respectful relationships oriented to learning, which once more evidences learning as the central purpose of the policy, since nothing is said about building positive and respectful relationships focused on teaching or studying.

Titled *Professional Learning*, the last section is divided into two parts. The first is organised into six topics stating that teachers must engage critically with literature, research and policy. The final has seven topics expressing that teachers must “engage in reflective practice to develop and advance career-long professional learning and expertise” (GTSC, 2021, p. 11), which demonstrates again a trend towards the learnification of teaching and the teaching profession.

Next, we shall present a brief overview of the Brazilian BNC-Formação.

THE BNC-FORMAÇÃO

The BNC-Formação is part of Resolution CNE/CP 02/2019, a policy released by the National Education Council of the MEC of Brazil to provide the guidelines for both teacher education and the teaching profession for Brazilian basic education teachers. That document explores three main subjects. First, it presents the curricular guidelines and foundations on which teachers’ formation should be based. Then, it sets out the benchmark for the curriculum development of teacher education programmes. Finally, there is an annex (precisely, the BNC-Formação) displaying the competences and abilities that teachers are supposed to achieve, underpinned by the objectives expressed throughout the document. We will focus on that part of the document because it is where the professional standards are described.

The annex lists ten general and 12 specific teaching competences, divided into three different dimensions: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement.

Starting with the ten general competences, it must be highlighted that only competences number one, two and five are clearly and directly related to teaching practices. Considering our focus on teaching, although many questions could be raised on each of the general competences, we will prioritise these three.

The first general competence expresses that teachers must be “able to teach reality with engagement in student learning and in their own learning, collaborating towards the construction of a free, just, democratic, and inclusive society” (Brasil, 2019, p. 13). The second general competence, in turn, states that teachers are expected to “select, organise and plan challenging, coherent and meaningful teaching practices” (Brasil, 2019, p. 13). Finally, the fifth general competence affirms that the teachers are supposed to “understand, use and create digital technologies of information and communication [...] in various teaching practices as a pedagogical resource and as a training tool to [...] produce knowledge, solve problems and enhance learning” (Brasil, 2019, p. 13).

The first specific competence on the dimension of professional knowledge requires teachers to master the objects of knowledge and know how to teach them. Organised in seven abilities, this competence demonstrates concerns about teaching and learning; however, teaching is clearly submitted to learning purposes. The second specific competence in this dimension has six abilities determining that teachers are supposed to master a range of knowledge and abilities regarding how students learn. Still in the same dimension, specific competence number three has four abilities expressing that teachers should identify and recognise the contexts of the schools in which they work. They are also required to link the objects of knowledge to the student’s contexts, aiming to provide meaningful learning and the development of general competences.

Finally, the last specific competence on this first dimension states that teachers must know the structure and governance of education systems. In general, its four abilities say teachers’ ought to focus their practice on ensuring pupils’ learning through the development of the competences and skills foreseen in the curriculum.

The first specific competence on the dimension of professional practice states that teachers must plan teaching actions focusing on effective learning, and is constituted by seven abilities. Interestingly, the BNC-Formação refers to *planning teaching*, unlike the SFR, where teachers are

expected to *plan learning*. However, as will be argued, that does not mean that teaching is really valued in the Brazilian policy, since achieving learning results remains the unique purpose of teaching.

The second specific competence in the same dimension has three abilities by means of which teachers are expected to create and manage learning environments. The first is “organising teaching and learning in order to optimise the relationship between time, space and objects of knowledge, taking into account the characteristics of the students and the contexts of teaching” (Brasil, 2019, p. 17). The other ability that can be analysed is the third, which expresses that teachers have “to build a productive, safe and comfortable learning environment for students” (Brasil, 2019, p. 17). In this respect, once again we can see that education is understood as a productive activity, under a performativity perspective. Furthermore, it is worth questioning if it is educationally desirable to think simply of *learning environments*. Should we not talk about an *educational environment* or a *teaching, studying and learning environment* instead?

Next in this dimension, the third specific competence has six abilities that, in short, require teachers to assess learners’ development, learning and teaching and use these assessments to inform their practice. The last specific competence of this dimension focuses on developing the curriculum and learning experiences.

The final dimension of this policy refers to professional engagement. Composed of five abilities, its first specific competence expresses that teachers must be committed to their professional development. The second specific competence is also organised into five abilities, and establishes that teachers must be committed to learning and work based on the principle that everyone is capable of learning. Like the Scottish policy, the Brazilian one does not express that teachers should be committed to teaching.

The specific competence number three on this dimension states that teachers have to take part in the school’s Pedagogical Project, as well in the construction of democratic values. The first of its four abilities is the only one that can be directly related to teaching, and stresses that priority should be given to *learning and the student’s full development*. That makes us wonder which conditions teachers would actually have in order to pursue educational aims that would go beyond learning, especially because throughout the document it is repeatedly affirmed that the learning outcomes that students must achieve are the skills and competences established on the curriculum.

The last specific competence of the dimension of professional engagement affirms that teachers ought to *engage professionally with families and the community*, and is organised into five abilities. Two objectives can be highlighted from this competence. First, it is expected to foster students’ learning and their full development. Second, the school climate should favour the performance of teaching and student activities, which is evidence that this policy is closely related to the culture of performativity.

In the next section, we are going to objectively expose the methodology we have based our analysis on.

METHODOLOGY

Analysing extensive policies demands us to make choices about what to focus on — a tough task since many questions could be proposed for reflection and debate, and important inquiries would inevitably be left aside. Despite recognising this difficulty, instead of discussing every single part of the documents, we shall focus the analysis on what is written about teaching, adding some comments and questions to the parts where there is a concern about learning, but in which we understand some thoughts about teaching should be included.

We have looked at these policies as texts, which means recognising that policies are representations codified in complex manners (through struggles, compromises and authoritative

public interpretation and reinterpretation) and decoded in complex ways too (since the meanings attributed and the interpretation given by an actor to a policy depend on their context, skills, experience, resources etc.) (Ball, 1993, p. 11). Moreover, the text of a policy is often the result of commitments made at various stages, and is rarely developed by a single author or through a single process of production. This means the texts can be unclear, open or incomplete (Ball, 1993, p. 11). Still in this respect, we should clarify that we have not followed the analysis methodology proposed by the British author, but instead we have developed our own way of analysing the policies. To do that, we sought to identify what is absent or not clear enough in these policies, what can be added or rewritten, in order to provide an understanding of possible ways of being a teacher and of the purposes teaching is supposed to achieve.

In the following sections, we will present the analysis and the discussion of the Scottish and the Brazilian policies.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: THE STANDARD FOR FULL REGISTRATION

As was shown previously, the Scottish SFR is organised into three parts, besides the introduction. With regard to the introduction, wherein it is expressed that the professional standard for teachers in Scotland has multiple purposes, especially related to enhancing teacher's professionalism, we wonder why there is no expectation of enhancing teaching. In addition, even if the policy had stated such an expectation, one could ask what kinds of professionalism would be helpful in developing and enhancing teaching. Therefore, the first part of the document, in our opinion, should express some concern about teaching; however, this was not the case.

The next part where a reference to teaching is missing is the section about professional values displayed on the first part of the document, entitled *Being a teacher in Scotland*. Although one could expect that such values would support teaching, learning is placed above teaching even in the few topics in which teaching is mentioned, which shows that learning is the real priority for the development of these values. However, the most remarkable point here is the fact that, within the set of values and objectives teachers are expected to be committed to, listed in the second section, there is no mention of teaching, what can be seen as a sign of the learnification of teaching (Mendonça, Tortella and Silva, 2013; Biesta, 2017).

The second part is named *Professional Knowledge and Understanding*, and has two sections. Right in the first part of the initial section, entitled *Curriculum and Pedagogy*, it is possible to identify the absence of teaching concerns, for it is expressed that teachers must engage with pedagogical and learning theories, but not with teaching ones. Moreover, how does such engagement help them develop their teaching? What kinds of teaching and ways of being a teacher would be fostered by engaging with learning and pedagogical theories alone?

Still in the same section, referring to the curriculum, teachers are supposed to go beyond their own disciplines, which might be an interesting approach, but one that really depends on the conditions they have to do so. What happens to the contents of different subjects when teachers focus on interdisciplinarity? Is it possible that these contents would be taught only in a superficial way? Would any subject have a priority over the others? How would such practice impact teaching? Why is there a concern with applying the curriculum for learning but not for teaching? How could teachers plan their teaching for reaching educationally more meaningful goals than producing measurable learning outcomes?

With regard to the next section of part two, called *Professional Responsibilities*, what concerns us the most is its orientation towards *learning communities*. Would it not be educationally more appropriate to shift the focus to *educational communities*, in order not to reduce education to the learning aspects, giving the necessary space to teaching and studying? It is also important to keep

in mind that teachers are not the sole agents responsible for that, especially because, if they have to take on the responsibilities of other professionals, this could affect their conditions for teaching.

Named *Professional Skills and Abilities*, the last part of the Scottish policy is divided into three sections. All the topics in this section start with “*As a registered teacher, to demonstrate your professional skills and abilities, you are required to*”, which points to prescriptive actions focused on abilities and skills that are not necessarily oriented towards teaching development. In fact, as will be demonstrated below, the *professional skills and abilities* have little to do with teaching, which once again indicates a process of learnification of the teaching profession. Indeed, among all the 46 topics distributed through this final part of the document, only four explicitly mention teaching, one of them expressing a concern with evaluating teaching and the other three establishing that the purpose of teaching is to *meet the needs of all learners*. But what kind of learners’ needs would it be educationally desirable for teachers to address? Moreover, if teachers are expected to *meet the needs of all learners*, would this not raise the possibility of pupils being treated as customers rather than students?

The first section of the last part of the document is called *Curriculum and Pedagogy*, and its initial subsection focuses on planning learning. However, before identifying potential barriers to learning, as the policy requires, would it not be important to identify the possible barriers to teaching and studying? Moreover, is it possible to plan learning? Might this not be an attempt to control education? In such a scenario, would teachers remain open to the possibility of failing at what they expected students to learn and to the chances of students learning something that was unexpected *a priori*? Would they question the purposes for which students should learn something? Would they even question for which purposes they should teach, apart from trying to make students reach the measurable learning outcomes demanded in the curriculum or in the assessments, or even beyond the requirement for *meeting the needs of all learners* (for whatever that means)?

Furthermore, in subsection two, teachers are expected to “create meaningful contexts for learners through a range of learning environments” and to “create opportunities for learning to be transformative in terms of challenging assumptions and expanding world views” (GTSC, 2021, p. 10). Even though it could be argued that part of the teachers’ work is to encourage students to engage with the world properly (Biesta, 2017, 2022b; Freire, 2019), it is first and foremost a matter of teaching; hence, why not reformulate the requirement in order to include *teaching as transformative in terms of challenging* [...]? Moreover, how far can teachers go to create opportunities for teaching and learning to be transformative? To what extent can they really challenge assumptions and expand worldviews? What should they be committed to transforming through their teaching? And what are the necessary conditions for them to make their teaching potentially transformative?

In relation to the third subsection, focused on developing partnerships for learning and wellbeing, although the quality of the relationships and people’s wellbeing matter, it seems like teachers are expected to take on a large portion of the responsibility for that. However, if teachers cannot rely on other professionals to share with them the responsibility for developing such partnerships, this could be a way of individualising responsibilities and overloading the teachers, harming their conditions to teach. Furthermore, the sole aim of teaching remains to meet the needs of all learners, which is reinforced in the fourth subsection, where there is a clear orientation towards improving learning and making it effective. Besides that, within the seven subtopics displayed into this subsection, teaching is mentioned only once, and not as something teachers should do, but as something that teachers should effectively evaluate, such as one would expect from a performativity perspective.

The second section is entitled *The Learning Context* and seems to put upon the teachers’ shoulders all responsibility for creating and managing the learning environment. Firstly, we question again whether it would not be more meaningful, from an educational point of view, to replace the term *learning* with the term *educational* so as not to reduce education to the learning aspect.

Besides, is it a teacher's individual responsibility to create and manage such an environment? Teachers certainly play a role in providing that, but other professionals should be committed to that goal. In addition, when a concern to stimulate *learners' participation* is expressed, what kinds of participation might be educationally good? For which educational purposes should teachers stimulate learners' participation? Would that depend only on the teachers' judgement? What material and structural conditions should teachers and students be provided with in order to ensure that such participation takes place in a properly educational manner? How could teachers develop their teaching practices in order to promote students' participation at the most appropriate times and in the most appropriate ways to meet educational purposes other than reaching measurable learning results?

Finally, the section named *Professional Learning* is organised into two subsections. In the first, related to teachers' engagement in literature, research and policy, which material and structural conditions would be necessary for teachers to respond to such requirements accordingly, especially to develop their teaching practices looking for more than just achieving predictable learning results? What literature and what type of research are teachers encouraged to engage in? How does that influence their teaching approaches and their ways of being a teacher? In addition, this subsection states that teachers are expected to critically question and defy educational assumptions, beliefs and values of their own and of the system, but what conditions do teachers actually have to do that? For which educational purposes is this kind of attitude expected from them? What if they realise that their teaching is being constrained or that the education system should be deeply rearranged?

In the final subsection, related to *Career-Long Professional Learning and Expertise*, the first topic establishes that teachers have to be committed to *lifelong learning*, a concept originally proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the 1970s, and constantly explored in educational policies raised by organisations whose purposes are essentially neoliberal. In this regard, the very idea of *lifelong learning* indicates that teachers have been submitted to a process of learnification (Biesta, 2010), as it places learning as an indispensable and permanent aim. In addition, once again, there is no expectation that teachers should be committed to teaching. Moreover, this process of professional review seems to consider teachers as the ones responsible for their development, in an individualistic perspective. Finally, if teachers identify issues restraining their practice but that are not under their responsibility, could they complain about that and require support from the responsible people?

Teachers are also expected to reflect on and engage critically in evaluating themselves using the applicable professional standard. But what exactly should teachers consider in order to evaluate themselves, their commitment to the professional standard or their daily teaching? What if, during this process, the teachers notice issues in the professional standards? How could they deal with it? Additionally, teachers are supposed to "maintain a reflective record of evidence of the impact of professional learning on self, colleagues and learners" (GTSC, 2021, p. 11). However, is it even possible to determine or evaluate these impacts? Some can be identifiable or perceptible, but others would not be easily or rapidly perceived, and perhaps they would never be comprehended, especially if one looks at education aiming for more than just meeting measurable learning results.

To conclude, still regarding the final subsection of the last part of the document, the only topic mentioning teaching states that teachers are required to "enhance learning and teaching by taking account of feedback from others including children and young people and actively engage in professional learning to support school improvement" (GTSC, 2021, p. 11). But it is not clear what to *enhance teaching* means or for what educational purposes teachers are supposed to do this. Indeed, apart from supporting school improvement (which sounds like a performative expectation), there is nothing written about the aims of teaching.

In the following section, we will analyse the Brazilian BNC-Formação policy for initial teacher education.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: THE BNC-FORMAÇÃO

We begin the analysis of the BNC-Formação for initial teachers' formation by raising some questions on the three general competences that, as mentioned previously, are directly related to teaching. First, in relation to the general competence one, instead of expecting that teachers *teach the reality*, would it not be more appropriate to think about how to encourage students to engage with their realities in an ethical and responsible way, as well as to articulate their understandings with other realities? In regard to competence two, while it is important to develop teaching practices, how to define a *challenging, coherent and meaningful* teaching practice? Meaningful, coherent and challenging for what purposes and for who? How would teachers reach such expectation? Finally, in relation to competence five, are teachers encouraged to reflect about the educational purposes of using digital technologies? Are they properly trained to deal with these technologies? Are they prepared to judge in which circumstances it is better to use technologies and in which ones it is better to follow *traditional methods*, especially to better develop their teaching? Furthermore, the ultimate goal expressed for this competence is *to enhance learning*, so it can be argued that teaching is submitted to learning expectations, which is a way of limiting the teaching purposes. Therefore, that competence indicates a process of learnification of teaching.

In the dimension of professional knowledge, the first specific competence does not define what is conceived as *teaching* nor for which educational purposes teachers should teach. In fact, it mentions the importance of a theoretical orientation for teaching, but what kinds of theoretical reference should teachers rely on? What appears as the main objectives are to achieve the competences and skills foreseen on the national curriculum and to promote the students' learning and development, which is an educationally problematic expectation since it might reduce teaching to *facilitating learning and producing skills and competences foreseen in the curriculum* and teachers to *curriculum deliverers*.

As regards the second specific competence, it is clear that expecting teachers to master how students learn has objectives that go far beyond the teaching process and includes concepts that could easily be related to other knowledge areas, like psychology and neuroscience. In addition, teachers have to learn about their students' socio-cultural and economic context, what can be desirable, but this has little meaning if teachers do not use that information in order to develop their teaching. Furthermore, teachers must strike a balance between taking into account the students' contexts and encouraging them to expand their worlds by being open to entering new contexts. Also, in this specific competence the act of teaching has an obvious orientation to reach learning results.

Regarding the third specific competence, in which it is affirmed that teachers must recognise schools contexts, it can be questioned whether and how they could act if they identify problems that hinder their teaching practices. Furthermore, why are teachers expected to be concerned about meaningful learning but not about meaningful teaching? In relation to the fourth specific competence, how could teachers improve their own repertoires to explore the curriculum requirements in original and creative ways, in order to overcome the performativity expectation in education? Finally, is matching the curriculum and achieving measurable learning outcomes enough to develop meaningful education?

The first specific competence in the dimension of professional practice states that teachers must plan teaching. However, such planning focuses on developing effective ways to reach learning outcomes, which can be understood as a goal underpinned by a performative culture and as proof of the learnification of the teaching profession. Moreover, meeting the skills and abilities proposed

on the national curriculum is again cited as the major objective of this policy. Finally, teachers are supposed to have a diverse repertoire of teaching, which is desirable, but what conditions do they have to develop their teaching as based on a diverse repertoire and how would it help them overcome the pressure to demonstrate a measurable performance in their work?

As regards the second specific competence in the dimension of professional practice, the purpose of “optimis[ing] the relationship between time, space and objects of knowledge” (Brasil, 2019, p. 17) sounds like an expectation related to the culture of performativity, too similar to what is expected in productive work. In this sense, by following such requirements, could teaching practices overcome performative expectations?

Still in the same dimension, the third specific competence can be understood as a way of submitting teaching to measurable learning purposes, for it demonstrates a concern about large-scale evaluations and improving the school’s results. Furthermore, none of the six topics in this subsection explains what is expected when assessing *teaching*, neither how or for what purpose this should be done. Finally, concerning the fourth specific competence, what are the real conditions teachers would have to work together with other disciplines, professions and communities? How would that impact the development of each specific subject? And, most importantly, how would it influence their teaching practices?

Then we have the last dimension, named *Professional Engagement*. To begin with, it is worth paying attention to two aspects established in the first specific competence, stating that teachers must be committed to their professional development. First, it seems to define teachers as being individually responsible for their own self-development and the improvement of their practice. While teachers must be committed to their own development, do they have the time, space, adequate material and structural conditions to contest what stifles their development and to demand improvements to their training? Should they not be aware of what other professionals are responsible for helping them develop themselves professionally? Moreover, we believe self-development should help teachers improve their teaching, but the policy says nothing about it.

Furthermore, teachers are supposed to “effectively propose the development of skills and comprehensive education of students” and “search for solutions that contribute to improving the quality of student learning” (Brasil, 2019, p. 19). Clearly, teaching is conceived as a skill for developing new skills in order to facilitate learning. But how should teachers assess it? By looking at measurable results? What concept of quality should teachers rely on? In this regard, in the text of the policy, quality seems to be understood as a synonym of *producing predictable learning outcomes* (Biesta, 2022b). Finally, in which ways do teachers engage in this debate? How does it impact their teaching approaches?

In relation to the second specific competence, which expresses that teachers must be committed to student’s learning, we focused on its first skill, to “understand failure at school not as the fate of the most vulnerable, but as a historical fact that can be changed” (Brasil, 2019, p. 19). But what is failure: not achieving expected grades or results? Beyond that, it is worth remembering that failure is part of the educational process and teachers should not be afraid of taking risks on their practice (Biesta, 2013c; Silva and Rohr, 2018). And, one more time, why are teachers supposed to be committed to learning, but not to teaching?

Finally, regarding the last specific competence, which states that teachers must engage with families and communities, we wonder which concept of *performance* teachers should base themselves on to address the recommendation that the school climate should favour the performance of teaching and student activities. Could this be understood as the neoliberal concept focusing on productive outcomes and on controlling teacher’s and student’s practices, as alerted by Ball (2003)? Would it be a matter of improving the artistry of teaching (Stenhouse, 1988; Lutzker, 2021), against the trends of steering education to reach measurable learning outcomes, as proposed by Biesta

(2022a, 2023), in a more educational perspective? Or could another definition of *performance* be found that would meet the educational aims?

CONCLUSION

We started this paper affirming our wish to understand what is expected from Brazilian and Scottish basic education teachers, paying special attention to the meanings and purposes of teaching in their professional practice. The issue was problematised through the analysis of two educational policies for teacher education and the teaching profession: the Brazilian BNC-Formação for initial teacher formation and the Scottish Standard for Full Registration. We aimed to identify what ways of being a teacher are expected to be followed in Brazil and Scotland, and for what purposes these teachers are supposed to teach. We made it clear that we are against the influence of the culture of performativity and the neoliberal ideology on teacher education and teaching. In addition, we argued that teachers need well-structured policies in which they can rely on in order to develop their practices aiming to reach educational purposes that are not restricted to produce measurable learning results.

Both policies address more learning concerns than teaching ones. In the Scottish SFR, there is a clear interest in developing and taking care of *learning context*, *learning experiences* and *learning environment*. However, nothing is written about *teaching* contexts, experiences or environment. Indeed, it would be educationally more meaningful to replace the term *learning* with the term *educational* in order not to reduce education to learning aspects. Moreover, in the few parts in which an interest about teaching is expressed, learning is mentioned first and there is no mention of teaching purposes other than ensuring predictable learning outcomes. Actually, it is frequently stated that teachers should reach the needs of the learners (mentioned ten times in the document), but how educationally desirable would it be for teachers to meet the learners' needs and which kind of needs should be met? It seems to be a way of limiting the teaching purposes, especially since educating means sometimes doing something that the students themselves do not know they need (Biesta, 2017).

Moreover, it is evident that learning is prioritised over teaching, and teachers are expected to ensure that learners will achieve measurable skills and abilities. There is a considerable amount of skills and abilities that teachers are supposed to develop *effectively*, which takes this policy closer to the culture of performativity. In this regard, we wonder if and how teachers can respond to what is their responsibility as teachers and to create approaches of teachings that could challenge such a culture.

Finally, with regard to language, we argue that using the term *students* would be educationally more desirable than using the term *learners*, since the latter seems to consider learning as the sole purpose of the pupils, whilst the former term would possibly consider them as people who ought to be engaged in study activities with purposes not restricted to learning — for example, to develop the will to be in an with the world in an ethical (Freire, 2019) or grown-up way (Biesta, 2017). However, this is not an automatic consequence, as the Brazilian policy adopts the term *student* despite treating pupils more like learners than as students.

Looking at the Brazilian BNC-Formação, it can be affirmed that teaching has the purposes of developing the competencies and skills required by the national curriculum, focusing on learning and on the needs of the learners, similarly to the Scottish policy. Additionally, the policy is oriented towards achievement of teaching competences, which shows that there is an objective of meeting the culture of performativity, since competences are usually defined as measurable and predictable. However, should teaching address these competences or should it overcome them in order not to be reduced to a tool for reaching measurable learning outcomes? Furthermore, how could teachers appropriate the curriculum, and the guidelines expressed in the policy to develop practices that challenge the culture of performativity?

We argue that, to deal with these questions, it is necessary to view teaching as an educational practice, understood under an artistic perspective steered to fostering the dimensions of qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2010, 2022b) in teachers and students, which means to recognise that the activity of teaching transcends mechanised and objectively predicted techniques, requiring teachers to be creative and to develop a capacity of judgment that allows them to decide what to do (and what not to do) when educating their pupils (Stenhouse, 1988; Biesta, 2022a, 2022b, 2023). We also believe teachers should be studious (Larrosa, 2019) in order to develop their teaching skills from an artistic perspective, since by studying (reading, writing, thinking, debating etc.) they can expand and vary their strategies. And, as we have sustained throughout the text, policies play an important role in providing teachers with information and conditions for developing teaching approaches that could overcome performative expectations in education, pursuing goals beyond reaching measurable learning results.

However, can we expect this to happen when the policies seem to reduce teaching to a development of skills foreseen in the curriculum, in addition to expecting teachers to take on more responsibility than they should, without claiming better material, structural and cultural working conditions? Can we expect teachers to be studious and encourage pupils to become students when the policies show no interest in that? Is it educationally desirable that teachers follow policies focused almost exclusively on learning, rarely mentioning teaching and almost completely ignoring studying? Can we call *education* something that seems to aim for nothing else than measurable learning outcomes? What are the impacts of the learnification of teaching and the teachers' profession and how can we face them? Could teachers develop the dimensions of qualification, socialisation and subjectification both in themselves and in their students if the policies that guide their practice are too restricted to responding to neoliberal and performative expectations?

The discussion on teaching and the teaching profession is complex and wide, but we have tried to present some reflections on why it is important to look at the role of policies in the development of these parts of education. We hope this paper will contribute to the debate on the teaching profession, on teaching and educational purposes more broadly, especially for those who feel uncomfortable with the culture of performativity informing teachers' work and occupying too much space in education. We also hope the questions we have raised will encourage researchers and policymakers from other nations besides Brazil and Scotland to look at their own policies for teacher education and the teaching profession, above all in order to assess if the ways in which teaching and the teaching profession are addressed in these policies are educationally desirable, as well as to develop strategies for overcoming the culture of performativity in education and foster teaching in an artistic perspective.

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