

The centrality of didactics in teacher education and the contributions of sensitive didactics

A centralidade da didática na formação de professores e as contribuições da didática sensível

La centralidad de la didáctica en la formación docente y los aportes de la didáctica sensible

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RESUMO

O artigo tem como objetivo analisar a centralidade da Didática sensível na formação de professores pelo dispositivo do Ateliê Didático, discutir o papel da Didática geral e das didáticas específicas na formação de professores, abordando os reflexos de sua desvalorização nos currículos e na educação, e evidenciar a contribuição da Didática sensível para a formação de professores universitários por meio das ressignificações promovidas na experiência dos Ateliês Didáticos. A motivação para sua escrita parte da verificação do papel que vem sendo subsumido pelas Didáticas específicas. Não obstante, a Didática possuir centralidade na formação de professores, esta disciplina científica vem sendo invisibilizada, quando não desaparecida dos currículos dos cursos de Licenciatura. Nesse interregno, interessa trazer as contribuições da Didática Sensível para a formação de professores, uma abordagem inovadora, baseada no pressuposto da integralidade da constituição dos seres humanos (corpo-mente-emoções) que necessita ser mobilizada e respeitada nos espaços educacionais, seja na Educação básica ou superior. Para o artigo em questão, apresentou-se o exemplo dos Ateliês Didáticos (AD), um dispositivo formacional voltado para professores universitários, baseado na Didática sensível. Metodologicamente empreendeu-se uma pesquisa-formação suportada por *survey* eletrônico, interpretada pela análise de conteúdo temática, disposta em três categorias: Didática Sensível, Formação docente

e Ressignificações. Depreendeu-se dos resultados da pesquisa com professores envolvidos nos AD, não somente seu teor inovador, mas também ressignificações importantes sobre a formação docente e o papel de centralidade da didática sensível nela.

Palavras-chave: Didática; didáticas específicas; Didática sensível; formação de professores.

ABSTRACT

The article aims to analyse the centrality of Sensitive Didactics in teacher education through the Didactic Atelier device; to discuss the role of General Didactics and specific didactics in teacher preparation, addressing the effects of their devaluation in curricula and in education; and to highlight the contribution of Sensitive Didactics to university-level teacher education through the resignifications promoted by the experience of Didactic Ateliers. The motivation for writing this article stems from the observation of the role that has been subsumed by specific didactics. Although Didactics plays a central role in teacher education, this scientific discipline has been made invisible, if not removed entirely from undergraduate teaching degree curricula. In this interregnum, it is interesting to bring the contributions of Sensitive Didactics to teacher education, an innovative approach based on the assumption of the integrality of the constitution of human beings (body-mind-emotions), which needs to be mobilized and respected in educational spaces, whether in basic or higher education. For this article, it was presented the example of the Didactic Ateliers (DAs), an educational device designed for university professors, based on the Sensitive Didactics. Methodologically, the study adopted a research-formation approach supported by an electronic survey and interpreted through thematic content analysis, structured into three categories: Sensitive Didactics, Teacher education, and Resignifications. It was deduced from the results of the research with professors involved in DAs, not only its innovative content, but also significant resignifications regarding teacher education and the role of centrality of Sensitive Didactics within it.

Keywords: Didactics; specific didactics; Sensitive Didactics; teacher education.

RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la centralidad de la Didáctica Sensible en la formación de profesores a través del dispositivo del Taller Didáctico, discutir el papel de la Didáctica General y las didácticas específicas en la formación docente, abordando los reflejos de su desvalorización en los currículos y en la educación, y evidenciar la contribución de la Didáctica Sensible a la formación de profesores universitarios mediante las resignificaciones promovidas en la experiencia de los

Talleres Didácticos. La motivación de su escritura proviene de la constatación del papel que ha sido subsumido por las Didácticas específicas. A pesar de que la Didáctica es central en la formación docente, esta asignatura científica ha sido invisibilizada, cuando no desaparecida, de los planes de estudio de los cursos de pregrado. En este interregno, es interesante acercar los aportes de la Didáctica Sensible a la formación docente, un enfoque innovador, basado en el supuesto de la integralidad de la constitución de los seres humanos (cuerpo-mente-emociones) que necesita ser movilizada y respetada en los espacios educativos, ya sea en la enseñanza básica o superior. Para el artículo en cuestión, traemos el ejemplo de los Talleres Didácticos (TD), un dispositivo formativo dirigido a profesores universitarios, basado en la Didáctica sensible. Metodológicamente, se realizó una investigación-formación apoyada en una encuesta electrónica, interpretada mediante análisis de contenido temático organizado en tres categorías: Didáctica Sensible, Formación Docente y Resignificaciones. De los resultados de la investigación con docentes involucrados en el TD se dedujo no solo su contenido innovador, sino también importantes resignificaciones sobre la formación docente y el papel de centralidad de la didáctica sensible en ella.

Palabras clave: Didáctica; didácticas específicas; Didáctica sensible; formación de profesor.

Introduction

Didactics is central to teacher education. Let us unravel the reasons that support our argument; first, Didactics constitutes, beyond a scientific discipline, an epistemological field. From both perspectives, one can understand that its centrality in teacher education lies in its object: the teaching process (and learning, though not inexorably). Teaching is its focus, and its direction is always guided by the processes that potentially lead to learning and its consolidation. In this sense, we consider this field of knowledge not only investigative but also of an interventive–mediational nature. Furthermore, it is a subject of teaching; thus, Didactics teaches how to teach.

Supported by other authors (Ausubel, 2009; Vygotsky, 1993), it is learning that drives teaching, along with everything that involves the act of learning. And there is a difference here between the act of learning (which involves ritual, individual behavior, idiosyncrasies, and aptitudes) and learning itself (as a process that takes place in the brain, bodily senses, and the soul of the person). The act of learning is behavior — it

is the action that must be stimulated. Learning is the internal process that develops and consolidates within the subject. And, in order to learn, it is first necessary to desire to learn. Let us consider the Freudian idea that desire is the engine of all things: the primal beginning, the driving force, and, with its impulses, the motivational force. Thus, the role of the teacher is to move this desire in the classroom: to try to awaken it if it is unconscious, to stir it if it resides within the subject.

The learning process is mediated, first of all, by culture and its cultural artifacts, the symbolic world of culture. And the most important symbol of human culture, according to Vygotsky (1993), is language: initially spoken language and later written language, which allows us to approach the symbolic universe that constitutes the knowledge historically produced and accumulated by human beings.

This first mediation of a symbolic nature was called cognitive mediation by Vygotsky (1993), and, going beyond Piaget's genetic epistemology, he conceived of this cognitive mediation — learning — as interrelational from the beginning: from the outside in (interpsychic), internalizing what is perceived and seen in the environment; and later from the inside (intrapsychic), generating transformations in one's thinking and reasoning abilities. This Vygotskian elaboration seems to leave out the sensitive aspect.

Vygotsky (1993), Piaget (1965), and other constructivists state that, in order to learn, we need a cognitive structure that allows us to intellectually understand various objects of knowledge—to decipher them, to transform them into thought schemes, located, theoretically, in the cerebral hemisphere associated with logical-mathematical-linguistic reasoning: the “rational” side of the brain.

However, at this point, we wish to add other elements beyond the intellect, as mentioned by other authors (Gardner, 1995; Winnicott, 1975): emotions, the senses and their impulses, and corporeality; in a single word, the dimension of the sensitive: feeling through the body, through emotions, and also through reason. Or, concretely, the cerebral hemisphere associated with emotion, the arts, music, colors — the “sensitive” side of the brain. Thus, we bring together aspects of the human condition inextricably linked to the act and the entire process surrounding learning.

The school already carries out a type of mediation that we may call school mediation; that is, students learn social and cultural values through the school, within its walls. But in the classroom, more actors come into play — among them, the other students, the educational materials, and especially the teacher. This mediation was termed *Didactic Mediation* by Lenoir (1996), as it relates to teaching, the object of Didactics. To this concept we add the pedagogical element, which expands the understanding of the didactic to a broader phenomenon: the educational. Hence, we adopt the expression Didactic-Pedagogical Mediation.

In this way, Didactics holds a central place in teacher education, which, in the context of professional undergraduate programs, undergoes other mediations. Let us consider: the mediation performed by the university and the program itself, through the relationship it establishes between the student and the sociocultural world (place); the mediation fostered in school by other students, future professional peers (peers); the mediation enacted by educational materials, books, authors, films, the internet, and immersion in cyberculture (materials); the mediation of a didactic-pedagogical nature carried out by teachers in general (general educators); and the mediation carried out in a more specific and therefore more central way by the Didactics teacher (Didactics educators).

In summary, Figure 1 seeks to illustrate, in a "didactic" manner, the mediated universe in which the student is situated.

Figure 1 – The Student's Mediated Universe



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The present study aims primarily to analyze the centrality of Sensitive Didactics in the education of university teachers, as materialized in the experience of the Didactic Atelier — a continuous pedagogical training device currently in development at the Federal University of Bahia (*Universidade Federal da Bahia* – UFBA). Additionally, it also seeks to highlight the contribution of Sensitive Didactics to university teacher education through the resignifications promoted by the experience of the Didactic Ateliers.

The article is organized as follows: we begin with the introduction, including the research problem that motivated the study; next, we present the theoretical framework regarding Didactics, specific subject Didactics, and Sensitive Didactics (its training process and operational principles); following this, we outline the methodological choices, which are then followed by the data analysis, thematically categorized into: Sensitive Didactics, Teacher education, and Resignifications; finally, we conclude with final considerations and references.

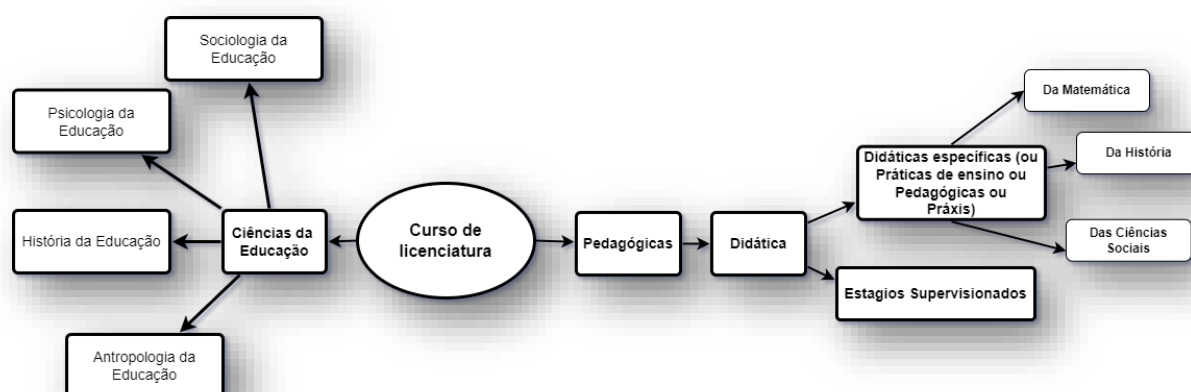
Theoretical Framework

Didactics, specific subject Didactics, and their role in teacher education

What role do Didactics and specific subject Didactics play in the undergraduate degree programs that prepare teachers (teaching practices, internships, and subjects drawn from the educational sciences such as Sociology, Psychology, and the History of Education)? The difference lies in the fact that Didactics is the field from which pedagogical subjects originate. These subjects, by definition, form teachers, such as specific didactics and supervised internships. Didactics is the science of teaching, understood in a broad spectrum; and the specific curricular components focus on teaching directed at the particular subjects to be taught. We are therefore referring to two important disciplinary blocks in teacher education.

Figure 2 summarizes, in general terms, the subject groups found in undergraduate teacher education programs.

Figure 2 – Subject blocks in undergraduate teacher education programs



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Didactics plays a fundamental role in teacher education, as do specific subject didactics. One does not replace the other. Both have enormous potential “in” and “for” the education of future teachers, across all educational areas.

However, this equation reveals a problem of inversion (or substitution). There is a mistaken belief that specific subject didactics replace the role of general didactics, which has led to the devaluation of Didactics in teacher education curricula. Specific subject didactics teach didactic content related to specific disciplinary content — Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, etc. However, they do not replace general didactics.

Perhaps this conceptual and practical mistake in teacher education curricula reflects a problem of “streamlining,” a strategy useful to a technicist conception of education, which is evident even in the National Curriculum Guidelines for undergraduate teacher education programs, instituted by Resolution No. 02/2019 (Brasil, 2019). In line with the conservative movement in Brazil at the time, post-parliamentary coup and the rise of a far-right government, this document assigned to Didactics a role fully aligned with the pragmatist neoliberal ideology underpinning Brazilian educational policy post-2016.

The opinion issued by the National Council on Education (*Conselho Nacional de Educação* — CNE), approved in December 2019 (Brasil, 2019), redefined the National Curriculum Guidelines (*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* — DCN) for Initial Higher Education Teacher Training for Basic Education and established the Common National Base for the Initial Teacher Training for Basic Education (*Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Inicial de Professores da Educação Básica* — DCN-BNC). The Guidelines and the BNC-Training are based on the implementation of the National Common Curriculum Base for Basic Education (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular da Educação Básica* — BNCC), endorsed by CNE – Full Council (CP) Resolutions No. 02/2017 and No. 04/2018 (Brasil, 2017; 2018).

The political-pedagogical orientation in the DCN-BNC reflects a commitment to a neotechnicist model translated into a competency-based curriculum ideology. Hallmarks of this pedagogy include: pseudo-scientific neutrality, an emphasis on market-oriented pragmatist training, and the foundations of behaviorist psychology based on Skinner.

It is worth noting that the core of the apparent “unimportance” (devaluation/inversion) of general Didactics in favor of specific Didactics lies in a neoliberal strategy of educational dismantling: streamlining and budget cuts disguised as efficiency. Quality, depth, and formative density are lost; the central focus on teaching (Anastasiou; Alves, 2003) and learning is diverted toward secondary concerns. Nevertheless, it caters to the demands of the performance-driven, burnout-prone, and neoliberal psychopolitical society (Han, 2017; 2023) through resource cuts and temporal abbreviation — which, on a large scale, results in a reserve army of labor force willing to earn less (since they are early-career professionals, among other socioeconomic factors of financial dependency), who together contribute to the degradation and weakening of education, especially public education, thus enabling the consolidation of neoliberal work in the educational domain (Ball, 2022; Dardot; Laval, 2016; Laval, 2019).

Figuratively speaking, we refer to a tree (education) through whose trunk runs sap via a wide central conduit (general Didactics), which branches into axillary branches through narrower vessels (specific Didactics). The sad reality we currently face is the near-total suppression of the central sap flow. It should not be difficult to infer the fate of this tree under such conditions, nor its likely trajectory.

We also believe that many find it difficult to perceive this reality precisely because of the effects of an impoverished education resulting from the severing of the Didactics sap; it becomes difficult to discern the political-economic-ideological underpinnings of Education when teacher training is precarious and superficial. When the central nutrient sap is cut or rationed and is replaced by a more diluted or insufficient flow, a nutrient deficiency sets in.

These nutrients then begin to arrive artificially, introduced through supplementary programs developed according to capitalist paradigms, offered in postgraduate programs — usually in distance learning format — and/or parallel courses, also online, mostly provided by non-governmental and/or private foundations, whose underlying interest is to ideologically strengthen neoliberalism in teacher

practice and thinking (suppressing critical and emancipatory knowledge) and to shift the focus toward “behavioral modeling” as “demanded by the market.”

To this end, a resilience ideology is mobilized, one that is necessary to normalize task overload, quantification, productivity pressures, and motivational engagement, all within a culture of positivity, thereby achieving the erasure of critical consciousness and the consequent naturalization of (self-)exploitation.

Reversing this Dantesque facet of reality is complex, but we venture to say that it requires restoring the value and centrality of general Didactics, with emphasis on its object (the teaching process), grounded in its constitutive dimensions: human, technical, and political-social (Candau, 2012).

To assume that the debate about Didactics, its reduced curricular space, and the resulting exaltation of specific Didactics, among other aspects, is trivial may be: naïveté (a consequence of precarious training) or a deliberate strategy to “neoliberalize” education.

The Potential Contributions of Sensitive Didactics in the Process of Teacher Education.

Returning to the mediational process that configures didactic knowledge, it is necessary to consider a dimension often undervalued in higher education: the dimension of the sensitive as another type of rationality, one that does not separate the intellectual aspect from the sensory and emotional ones (d'Ávila, 2022).

Among the motivations that led to the development of Sensitive Didactics (SD), it is worth mentioning the nefarious legacy left by instrumental rationality. Originating in Modern Age science, which denied or relegated the emotional dimension since Cartesianism, this disbelief and exaggerated emphasis on intellectual reason became frozen in time and entered schools and universities with full force.

A second motivation is that, following the scientific and technological revolutions, the emergence of new sciences such as neuropsychology has brought with it other possibilities for interpreting human intelligence, including other capacities,

especially sensory, kinesthetic, and emotional capabilities, thus freeing us from the historical anesthesia that had numbed us.

The third motivational pillar lies in the knowledge of the theories of Edgar Morin (2016), Maffesoli (2005), Duarte Junior (2004), and Paulo Freire (1980; 2000), which enabled d'Ávila (2022) to assemble the elements composing the construct of Sensitive Didactics. Notably, Freire's dialogue pedagogy plays a central role. Indeed, in SD, dialogicity is a structuring element—a shared dialogue between teachers and students in an all-with-all relationship: "Love is at once the foundation of dialogue and the dialogue itself. It must necessarily unite responsible subjects and cannot exist in a relationship of domination" (Freire, 1980, p. 83).¹

Finally, a fourth possible motivation resides in the characteristics of youth, adults, and children in their erotic drives. In attempting to explain the need for new didactics that brings about positive outcomes in shaping a new kind of teacher for this old world, we conclude that things are not inert. Life is pulsating and calls, here and now, for the "we" — everyone together in search of transformative paradigm shifts.

As essential conceptual assumptions of SD, we highlight the idea of Sensitive Knowledge — as developed by Maffesoli (2005), a scholar of contemporary society who understands it through its impulses, and erotic and sensitive affiliations among youth in today's world. Sensitive knowledge is a deep and organic form of knowledge, prior to intelligible knowledge, and present on a subtle level of being — something that cannot be explained but is grasped through intuition and the body. These are empirical anticipations that open paths for the intelligible apprehension of knowledge objects. Put simply, intelligible knowledge is the knowledge abstractly articulated by the brain, mobilizing logical and rational signs, while sensitivity refers to the wisdom of the body and manifests in various everyday situations. It is the teacher's task, through mediation, to narrow the gap between a holistic apprehension of reality and the intelligible understanding of knowledge objects (d'Ávila, 2016).

¹ Original: "*O amor é ao mesmo tempo o fundamento do diálogo e o próprio diálogo. Este deve necessariamente unir sujeitos responsáveis e não pode existir numa relação de dominação*" (Freire, 1980, p. 83).

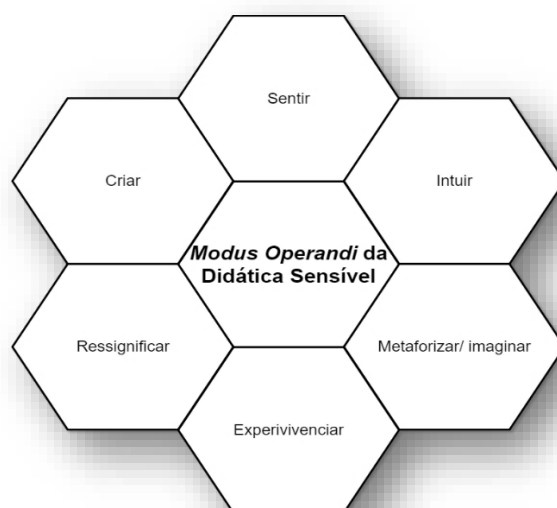
Maturana and Varela (1997), and many other scholars in neurology, psychology, and neuropsychology, such as Gardner (1995) and Antonio Damasio (2009), are important references for the development of SD.

Damasio (2009) concluded that the ability to express and feel emotions is essential for adopting rational behaviors. In other words, there is no separation between thinking and feeling when we think and engage. Moral values and context are always at play. Why, then, disconnect reason from emotion in the teaching and learning process? What is the potential of SD for teacher education? And, furthermore, how can SD be applied in practice?

Sensitive Didactics: the operational principles

In Sensitive Didactics (SD), it is understood that learning involves feeling, intuiting in order to understand and act. It involves imagining, to release creative thinking and empower people to produce new content. There is no linearity in these processes. D'Ávila (2022) draws attention to the fact that these processes may intertwine and follow a subjective and singular choreography. Figure 3 attempts to synthesize the *modus operandi* of Sensitive Didactics, which is described in more detail below.

Figure 3 – *Modus operandi* of Sensitive Didactics



Source: Extracted from d'Ávila (2022, p. 97), authors' own elaboration.

- a) **Sensitization** - Through feeling what is desired is to move from the aesthesis (the sensitive) to the aesthetic (artistic language); and from aesthetic expression to the rationality of knowledge. Aesthesia comes from the Greek *aisthesis*, which means to feel. Thus, its opposite – Anesthesia (from ancient Greek *an-*, *an-*, "absence"; and *αἴσθησις*, *aisthēsis*, "sensation") - means not feeling. Science, scientific statements, and also education in its pedagogical processes must awaken feelings and intelligibilities;
- b) **Metaphorization and imagination** - We advocate entering through creative metaphors as a stimulating path to reach the aesthetic dimension and thus bring students closer to knowledge objects. Playful and artistic metaphors open paths for imagination and creative thinking. Morin (2016) affirms that aesthetics is a fundamental feature of human sensibility before being a proper characteristic of art. The use of creative metaphors is mobilizing for learning, as it provokes in participants an openness to learning and a feeling of enchantment or of displacement to a sphere that is not only rational. Metaphors allow imagination – the initial basis of creative thinking. To

imagine goes beyond simply observing; it depends on contemplating or enjoying. A contribution of the playful metaphor is the possibility of a cognitive-sensory association that interconnects the metaphorical reference to the new content that reaches the individual, moving emotions;

- c) *Problematization* - Problematizations arise from the experience of dilemmas, contradictions, and conflicts carried by learners. The dilemmas are dramatized, reflected upon, and evoked in collective discussions, being worked on first individually and later transformed into collective polemics. This work offers, therefore, an important opportunity for the resignification of praxis. Meaningful learning, according to Ausubel (2009), is challenging. Like a riddle, the problematization of knowledge mobilizes logical reasoning, entertains, and leads each subject on their own intellectual journey toward possible solutions;
- d) *Resignification of knowledge and creation* - The level of elaboration in the re-signification process by students will depend on the ability to review, differentiate, coordinate, and relate pertinently what is already known and what can be learned, as well as the progression of learning. The modification of knowledge schemes needs to be provoked by teachers, by mobilizing the problematizing “experiviving”. The sensitive dimension of learning does not happen separately from the cognitive dimension. What matters here is the teacher’s mediation, who must explore knowledge through sensitive methods, aiming at apprehending knowledge objects from a global, sensory-aesthetic, aesthetic, and playful perspective. This stage aims to stimulate and allow the emergence of new understandings, behaviors, and the authorship of one’s own thinking.

These are the operational principles that guide the sensitive approach in pedagogical practice, as we have developed it so far. It is important to consider that the steps of the didactic choreography may always change direction; its logic is not linear.

Methodology

From a methodological point of view, this work was developed by researchers who adopt a qualitative investigation approach, supported by the interactionist and critical paradigm (Mineiro; Silva; Ferreira, 2022), with thinking constructed by dialogical and inductive logic, of a theoretical nature, and whose objectives are exploratory.

This was a study in the field of didactics, more specifically in Pedagogy, and procedurally mixed: epistemologically grounded in Research-Training (Ferreira, 2015; Josso, 2007, 2008) to portray a formative experience (developed at UFBA for university educators, in the format of didactic workshops) (d'Ávila; Madeira; Guerra, 2018) and materialized pragmatically for data production (due to remote/hybrid teaching conditions – during and post-pandemic) through an electronic survey (opinion research^I) (Babbie, 1999; Mineiro, 2020).

The Didactic Ateliers^{II} (DAs) constitute a training device linked to the Center for Pedagogical Support and Training (Núcleo de Assessoria e Formação Pedagógica – NUFAP), dedicated to the training of university professors and institutionalized in 2021.

The didactic-sensitive work in the ateliers brings to light the self-narratives or biographical writings through which it is expected:

- a) To analyze the implications of the training narratives in educational practices from the self-writing revealed in the narratives of schooling trajectories;
- b) To recognize that the learning of teaching happens, first and foremost, through self-knowledge, allowing access to different memories, representations, and subjectivities that the identity process comprises.

Training in this perspective is carried out in two axes: a) The individual enters the process of objectification and, through reflection, identifies as a learner; b) He/she compares his/her ideas and theories with those of the group or of the trainer involved in his/her experience and develops syntheses (Josso, 1991). Thus, investigating life stories encompasses a movement that reconsiders training as reflective work on life

trajectories (Nóvoa, 2002), and can be considered a new approach to training and self-training.

Even though Zabalza (2004) draws attention to the work done with teacher diaries – referring to studies on identity, dilemmas, and subjectivities of individuals – in the research conducted, the identity-related part of the narratives remained restricted to the participants themselves, that is, personal elements were suppressed to prevent identification, characterizing the format permitted by legislation without requiring submission to the Ethics Committee for opinion research and/or for exclusively educational, teaching, or training purposes.

Thus, in this article, we present excerpts from statements by higher education teachers who voluntarily enrolled and experienced the formative process of the DAs in 2021. They were not identified (only referenced by combining the term “Participant” and the order number of their submission, for example, “Participant 3”), joined freely, and expressed their opinions by producing autobiographical narratives through the electronic tool “Online Diaries,” available on the Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Moodle) platform at UFBA. There were 97 registrations for the training; however, not all participants adhered to or remained in the DAs until the end. Only 25 voluntary submissions were collected, predominantly from women (72%).

The narrative records were coded with the help of the open-source qualitative analysis software QualCoder (Curtain, 2022), forming three a priori categories: Sensitive Didactics, Teacher education, and Resignification, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Categories and codings



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on screenshot from the QualCoder program.

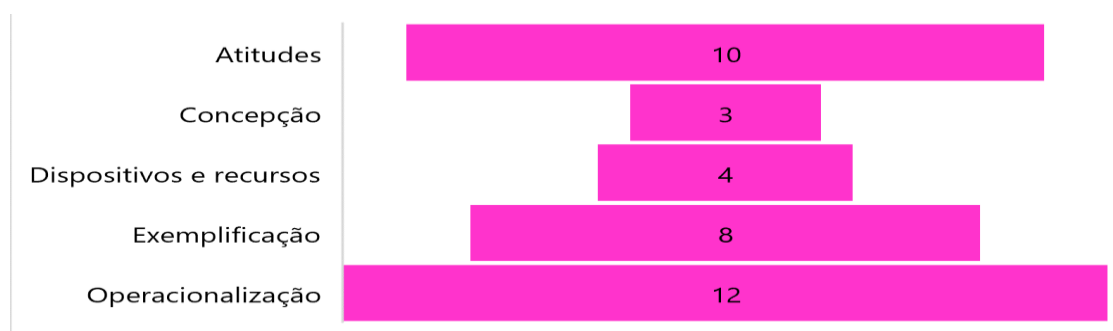
For data interpretation, an initial simple textual analysis was carried out using the AntConc software (Anthony, 2022) to identify recurring words and expressions that could indicate interpretive paths. In this way, it was possible to create some illustrations that made the analytical stage more didactic and sensitive. Subsequently, a thematic content analysis (Bardin, 2011) was conducted, anchored in the assumption that the ADs are based on Sensitive Didactics and Raciovitalist Pedagogy (d'Ávila, 2018; 2022), as they include experience and experimentation aimed at transforming the professional structure: its knowledge, memories, dynamics, identity, and professionalism; they include the playful dimension in teaching and sensitive knowledge.

Data Analysis

Sensitive Didactics

The 37 excerpts from the narratives that referred to Sensitive Didactics were grouped into five codes, whose quantities are described in Figure 5.

Figure 1 – Category "Sensitive Didactics": grouping codes



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The attitudes prompted by Sensitive Didactics, according to the participants, involve mobilizing and fostering the desire to learn, to know more, to go beyond — transmuting languages and enabling “several cool insights” (Participant 4);

associations between knowledge and reality (the experience/reality/context of the other is essential), mediated, among other factors, by participation, welcoming, attentive listening, and high spirits. However, participants acknowledge that “thinking about this is not simple, nor is feeling it. It is necessary to seek serenity in order to position oneself appropriately, learning daily” (Participant 22).

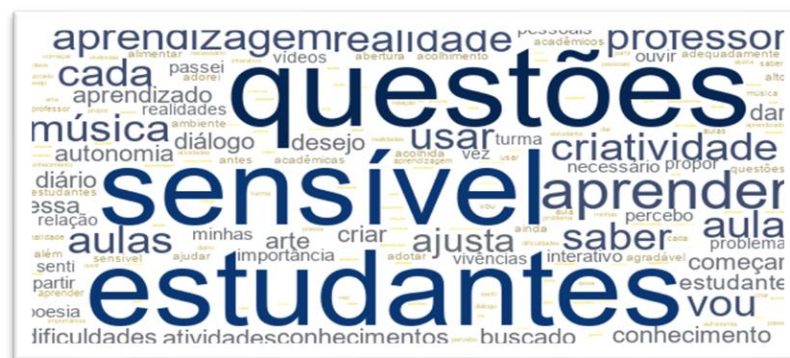
This aligns with Ausubel’s (2009) theory of meaningful learning and with “[...] the raciovitalist conception that considers sensitive experience and criticizes the mind-body, subject-object binarism [...]” (Participant 9). Thus, a didactics grounded in dialogue and autonomy is conceived, emerging from shared and creative experience. Such a conception, logically, stands in contrast to what is currently prevalent in the society of positivity-productivity and exhaustion (Han, 2017), which privileges productivity and quantification, rational production, or the economy of emotion, as this is “dynamic, situational, and performative. The capitalism of emotion exploits exactly these characteristics” (Han, 2023, p. 65). Sensitivity, when unbalanced with reason, facilitates exploitation (Mineiro; Ferreira, 2024), as it does not integrate emancipation, reflection, criticality, rationality, and sensitivity.

The examples provided by the participants predominantly referred to digital activities/devices aimed at interaction-learning, such as Padlet, Mentimeter, and Roulette. It is suspected that, since the DA took place in a hybrid education environment, the didactic and electronic strategies and resources—which were new to the vast majority of participants—stood out more in memory and were referenced in the narratives as functional resources for Sensitive Didactics. Nevertheless, the “Diary” as a didactic-pedagogical instrument was also mentioned by participants, for instance: “I keep thinking about creativity, about freedom, when proposing this diary task” (Participant 3).

In the implementation of Sensitive Didactics, priority is given to attentive listening and prior knowledge of the students, creating opportunities for dialogue and authentic learning (Freire, 2000). By dividing the class into groups for focused discussions and incorporating curated videos (songs, poetry, and other materials), difficulties in writing and tensions are collectively overcome. Including discussions on

personal experiences and expectations regarding the curricular component under study can strengthen bonds with students and reduce tensions. This, combined with solving didactic challenges/problems during classes, promotes a welcoming and collaborative learning environment. As illustrated by Participant 5, who reported a change in their teaching practice due to the Didactic Atelier: “[...] I started listening to the students more, giving more space to their opinions, difficulties [...]” (Participant 5). Figure 6 presents a word cloud built from the text of excerpts coded under the category Sensitive Didactics.

Figure 2 – Word cloud: Sensitive Didactics



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The adoption of devices/strategies with playful potential (digital or not), including the use of pedagogical diaries, allows for greater interaction and understanding of students, giving concrete life (operationalizing) to Sensitive Didactics. All of this is guided by attentive listening to students, providing space for their opinions and difficulties, negotiating tasks amid the proposition and resolution of questions and challenges.

The promotion of sensitive learning is thus operationalized, and it is important that teaching practice be permeated by various metaphors, corporeality, art, and playfulness as mediators of this process. By evoking the desire to learn and helping students develop a new perspective on their prior knowledge, the educator contributes to the formulation of their own syntheses and understandings. Participant 7 stated: “I

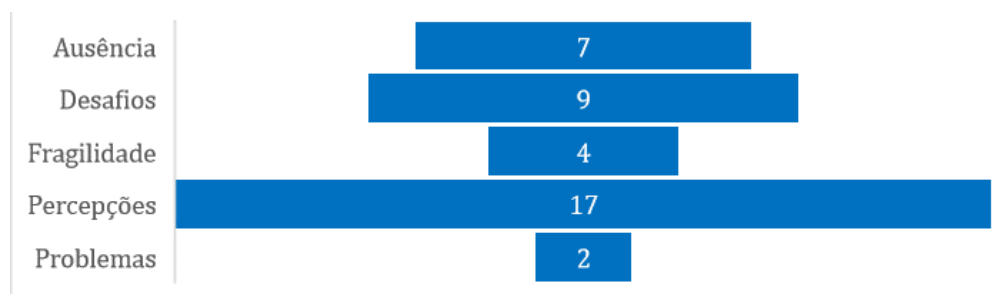
have been trying to increasingly use activities that bring music, poetry, books, and images from different artists for a more sensitive, interactive, and participatory learning.” It is inferred that classroom interactivity and dialogue are fundamental, and that through music, poetry, readings, videos, and nature, the teacher seeks to foster critical thinking and stimulate curiosity, beginning lessons with sensory stimuli (Freire, 2000).

The goal is to enable students to build their own knowledge based on their realities, while simultaneously experiencing freedom of expression, as in the diary task.

Teacher Education

The 39 excerpts from the narratives that referred to teacher education were grouped into five codes, whose quantities are described in Figure 7.

Figure 3 – Category "Teacher education": grouping codes



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Several participants reported that, upon entering the university as professors, they had no prior training in Pedagogy, as expressed by Participant 2: “Entering the university as a professor was without any previous training.”

This was reflected in their lack of knowledge about teaching techniques and other didactic-pedagogical issues when beginning activities in the DA. It was also common in the narratives to report that, even without training in the field, there had always been interest and curiosity about didactics since the beginning of their careers.

Upon becoming acquainted with didactic-pedagogical approaches, some participants expressed having found their “teaching profile.” They emphasized that issues such as interdisciplinarity and flexibility were far removed from the reality experienced during their education, and they lacked the necessary subsumers to understand and implement such transversalities in their teaching practice. It was also reported that teachers, for the most part, do not discuss their pedagogical difficulties in university corridors.

Preparing the teaching plan was a challenge reported by the participants, as in the example: “Preparing the teaching plan was challenging” (Participant 10). This insight shows the participants’ understanding that being a teacher requires more than content mastery.

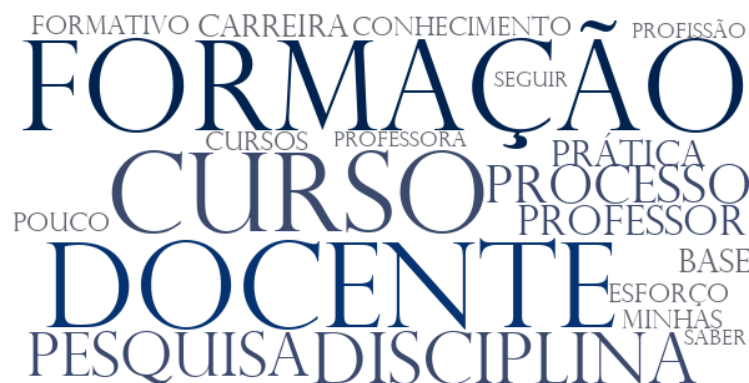
Another reported challenge concerns understanding how to spark in students the desire to learn and how to respond to that in teaching practice. To achieve this goal, it is essential, as the study revealed, to recognize the importance of partnerships and formative support for a playful and fulfilling teaching life. After all, being in environments that share a constructive, participatory, and sensitive conception of teaching fosters professional growth, while environments that value only production and meaningless knowledge transmission lead to fatigue and burnout.

Teacher education and practice must be attentive to the subjectivities of both students and teachers in order to address difference and diversity.

Some participants, despite having taken preparatory training courses, acknowledged the fragility of teacher education in terms of didactics and pedagogical conceptions in Higher Education, as emphasized by Participant 16: “[...] higher education teachers have very fragile training in terms of didactics, of pedagogical positioning involved [...]” (Participant 16).

Their students praise collaborative methodological practices and criticize the intransigent and unethical behavior of other colleagues, revealing the lack of preparation of these educators. In their own education, teachers carry examples of pedagogical practices that do not align with their professional planning goals, reinforcing the need for constant improvement in the field.

Figure 4 – Word cloud: Perceptions



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 8 attempts to synthesize the perceptions that participants reported having experienced regarding their teaching education, substantiating a continuous process that involves active discipline.

Teacher education is a complex process, marked by anguish and uncertainties, but also by opportunities for renewal and growth. The narratives revealed that, upon entering a department or committee, novice teachers often face a lack of welcome and are not even introduced to the program or the desired graduate profile — this can lead to unfamiliarity with the curriculum and student misalignment (beyond gaps in the professor-student relationship).

Moreover, statements such as: “Our education is intertwined with our lives, our personal and professional lives are interwoven, inseparable” (Participant 16), reveal participants’ awareness that education is inseparable from personal and professional life, and the teaching experience is formative for both teachers and students.

However, it is common to encounter difficulties in reconciling teaching, research, and extension, and according to some participants, the requirement of a doctoral degree may limit teachers’ professional development. Overload and lack of didactic-pedagogical strategies are also common challenges. In this context, it is crucial to recognize the importance of incorporating elements that allow students to reflect on

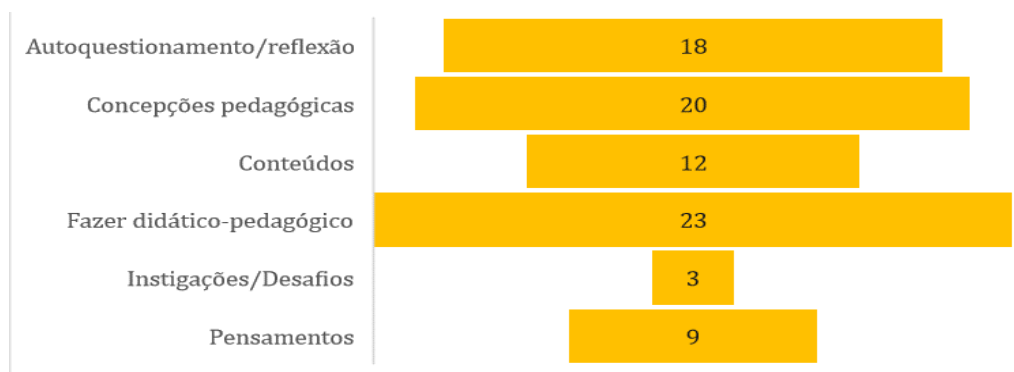
socio-environmental demands and to create spaces for sharing, creating, and exchanging knowledge.

Thus, it became evident that it is essential for teachers to be aware of their own continuous education, of the problems and challenges, as well as of the role they play in their own developmental process.

Resignifications

The 85 excerpts from the narratives referring to the resignification experienced by the participants were grouped into six codes, whose quantities are described in Figure 9. This was the largest category, demonstrating the power of resignification that the Didactic Ateliers (DAs) and Sensitive Didactics (SD) possess, as the narratives overflowed with elements that were resignified by the participants.

Figure 5 – Category "Resignifications": grouping codes



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

“I was initially led to think about the teaching and learning process: what is it? how is it done? who is the central actor? [...] At one moment I am a teacher with my students. At another, I am a student with my students” (Participant 1).

The teaching and learning process is a central issue for the newly arrived teacher. At the same time, the teacher also perceives themselves as a student of their own students, in a process of mutual learning. Upon reflecting on their trajectory, the teacher realizes that their training was decisive in shaping the educator they are today,

still with much to learn and develop, but undoubtedly formed by their experiences and the people who were part of their life.

Participant 13 shared their reflection: “[...] have I been fostering reflection in my classes? Awakening critical thinking? Do I stimulate curiosity in learning? Do I encourage imagination? Do I identify the gaps? I am [...] a permanent learner” (Participant 13).

These considerations lead the teacher to question their pedagogical ideals and whether they are fostering reflection, awakening critical thinking, instigating curiosity, stimulating imagination, and identifying gaps in their classes.

These gaps are aggravated by “[...] work overload in teaching. This led me to reflect: how much I feel that I have no time! No matter how much I plan my teaching, research, extension, administrative and supervision activities, there is not enough time! [...]” (Participant 22).

The teacher-participants perceive themselves as lifelong learners, constantly seeking pedagogical conceptions to support them and didactic resources to be used in their teaching process, and, conflictually, something real is brought into this continuous learning.

“[...] Pedagogical conceptions help us to look at these dilemmas with different eyes” (Participant 11), and it is these that prevail in the participants’ reflections, significantly shaping their teaching practices, reflecting approaches and curricula, and allowing the identification of different lines of thought within the same approach. A clear resignification of teaching with regard to pedagogical trends was noted.

The transition from an initially more academicist/instrumentalist approach to a more critical one is a recognized challenge, but the pedagogical theories and conceptions adopted guide course and lesson planning, thus influencing teaching practice: “[...] I feel like I’m in a transition between paradigms/pedagogical conceptions, moving from an instrumentalist approach to a critical one” (Participant 8).

The initially more academicist/instrumentalist practice highlights the challenge of transitioning to a more critical approach. For instance: “[...] my view on teaching

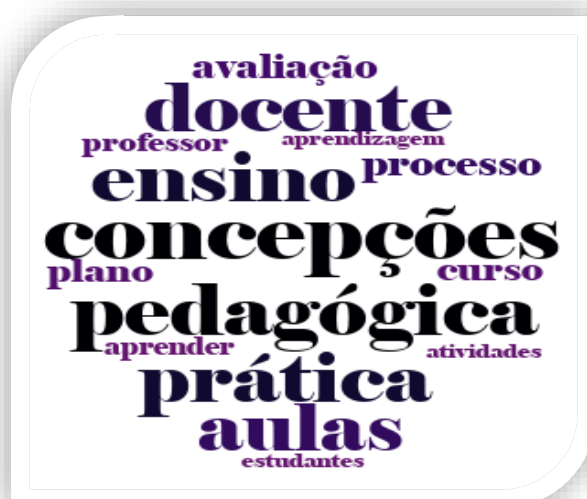
shifted from something technical, procedural, to something dynamic and organic [...]” (Participant 1).

With a clear and defined pedagogical conception, it becomes possible to effectively face current teaching dilemmas, offering a new perspective. The formative work of the DA “[...] made me rethink my pedagogical practice, because when looking at my previous experience as a teacher, I saw that there was a tendency toward more traditional and bookish teaching [...]” (Participant 3).

This shift in perspective was evident in the need to rethink pedagogical practice, especially in the context of so-called “hard” disciplines. Understanding the importance of the learning dimension and the transformation of knowledge, along with reflection on previous practices, revealed that a tendency toward more traditional teaching still persists in higher education.

The importance of seeing teaching and learning as a sharing of meanings, and the teacher as a mediator, was reaffirmed. The most prevalent aspects regarding resignification are summarized in Figure 10.

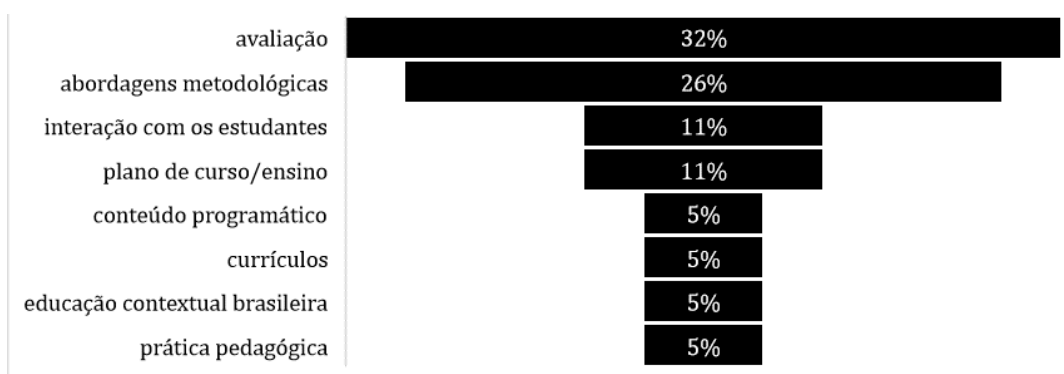
Figure 6 – Word cloud: Resignifications



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Participating in the Didactic Atelier proved to be a moment of complete resignification, even of concepts — or at least of the recognition of didactic field concepts that need to be resignified due to the importance they have or that participants attribute to them.

Figure 7 – Resignification of content



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Among the content addressed in the DA, the assessment process and methodological approaches received 58% of the references (see Figure 11) in the narratives, revealing participants' reflection, importance, and/or fragility in relation to them, as "[...] assessment ceases to be just a content of didactics and becomes part of a daily experience, of experiences" (Participant 16).

Reflection on teaching practice brought to light the predominance of traditional teaching strategies and the need to modify lesson planning to include a more participatory approach. During the DA, aspects of lesson planning were identified by the participants themselves as unsatisfactory, including the lack of space to listen to students. "I will definitely try to change this practice" (Participant 10). Additionally, there was an emphasis on lecture-based classes and the need to reassess assessment activities, but in the remainder of Participant 10's narrative, there was also a commitment to improvement.

Awareness of the range of available strategies and the ability to see previously invisible alternatives proved fundamental to transforming teaching practice. Despite the adoption of various methodological strategies, the lack of reflection on their

underlying foundations was identified as an area for improvement. Diversifying class materials and modifying elements can result in significant improvements.

The value of lectures was acknowledged, but the importance of exploring other teaching methods was also highlighted. Dialogue and learning about teaching and pedagogical practices were identified as crucial to this reflection. The shared experience in the Atelier contributed to the improvement of course plans, although the increase in students' workload was seen as a negative point.

Finally, the reality of formal assessments was recognized as a potential obstacle to implementing changes, as Participant 8 ponders: "The assessment formats included these different activities in an attempt to construct an evaluation of student progress. The negative point of this practice is the increased workload imposed on students [...]" (Participant 8). The procedural format of assessment takes time from both teacher and student and, in the harsh neoliberal reality, represents yet another burden in the tumultuous "educational-productive-performance" process.

Participant 9's narrative pragmatically brings to light the reality that frustrates well-intentioned pedagogical-didactic efforts: "[...] the reality of official reports, exams, and paperwork cooled me down [...]" (Participant 9). It seems intentional to "overcome goodwill" by imposing "the fatigue of overload"; thus, weakening and precariousness prevail (of teacher education, teaching work, learning, the educational process, and society).

Despite the evident challenge of unequal forces, Participant 3 says: "I hope I can organize myself to have those moments of study and reflection [...]" (Participant 3). Even in the face of a productivity-driven, exhausting, and deteriorating reality, a group of participants expresses hope of being able to structure time for continuous study and reflection.

In a constant movement, we share knowledge, experiences, expectations, and aspirations at all times, which leads us to rethink our attitudes, especially toward students and fellow teachers: "[...] to rethink our attitudes, not only with our students but also with our fellow teachers. The way a newly arrived teacher is welcomed by the

institution can greatly contribute to the progress of the course as a whole [...]” (Participant 11).

This institutional welcoming can contribute positively to the teacher’s continuous development, as well as to the continuity and cohesion of the academic community.

Furthermore, it is believed that choosing a profession one enjoys is decisive, since a teacher can have a significant impact on students’ lives — either positive or negative. “A teacher can work miracles but can also leave scars” (Participant 15).

The metaphorical figure of “scars” and “miracles” in teaching is quite poignant, especially after experiencing a pandemic, in which we often pleaded for miracles and, even when saved, ended up carrying scars that stubbornly persist. In short, a teacher leaves “marks”, whether positive or negative. That is the teaching action: to leave a mark, to inscribe, or in the Latin etymology *insignare* (to place an “insignia”, a “mark”). Thus, to teach is to mark.

In this context, we are in a constant learning process, inspired by the practical field, which allows us to develop theories and revise our teaching practices, carefully observing characteristics of the various platforms that claim to be didactic, of the course, and of the dilemmas experienced by ourselves and our colleagues (in an environment that tends to become toxic due to the “intentional” competition and productivity race).

Final Considerations

The learning process is mediated by culture and its artifacts. Learning does not depend solely on teachers, as it occurs in various places. In the classroom, several actors interact: students, materials, and teachers, who carry out the Didactic Mediation. Thus, Didactics is vital in teacher education and is foundational in Pedagogy, being part of specific subjects and supervised internships. There is a mistaken tendency to believe that specific subject courses replace Didactics, leading to the emptying of its content in curricula.

There is a dimension in didactic knowledge that is not valued in higher education: sensitivity as a form of rational thought, a sensitive reason. The aim is to eliminate the distinction between thinking and feeling. The article presents theoretical-practical constructs of Sensitive Didactics (SD) that include neglected components and are based on the idea of the unity of the human being (body-mind-emotions), which should be stimulated and respected in any educational environment, whether basic or higher education.

Based on this, the general objective of the article was to analyze the centrality of Sensitive Didactics in teacher education through the Didactic Atelier device, to discuss the role of General Didactics and Specific Didactics in teacher education, addressing the effects of their devaluation in curricula and in education, and to highlight the contribution of Sensitive Didactics to the education of university teachers through the resignifications promoted in the experience of the Didactic Ateliers.

We presented the motivations that led to the development of SD, from which it is inferred that learning involves feeling, intuiting in order to understand and act. In the theoretical framework, we developed some operational pillars of SD such as: sensitization, metaphorization with imagination, problematization, resignification (which even became an analytical category for the research) of knowledge, and creation.

Methodologically, we conducted a research-formation process supported by an electronic survey. The participants took part in the Didactic Ateliers (DAs), a continuing pedagogical training device for teachers in development at UFBA. The narratives produced were interpreted using thematic content analysis, organized into three categories: Sensitive Didactics, Teacher Education, and Resignifications.

Regarding Teacher Education, some participants reported difficulties upon entering the university as professors without training in Pedagogy, highlighting challenges such as interdisciplinarity and flexibility. They recognized the importance of partnerships and formative support for a fulfilling and playful teaching life. Although reconciling personal and professional life, fatigue, and burnout are present challenges, teacher education also brings opportunities for growth and renewal.

The category Resignifications was the largest in terms of data, leading to the understanding that the DA and SD possess the power of resignification, as the narratives overflowed with resignified elements. The participants reflected on their education, ideals, pedagogical conceptions, content, didactic-pedagogical practice, and thoughts, feeling challenged and encouraged to imagine and identify gaps.

The results of the study with professors involved in the Didactic Ateliers revealed the power of resignification, bringing forth important implications for teacher education and the potential of Sensitive Didactics in this transformative process.

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Notes

¹ According to Article 1, items I and VIII of Resolution No. 510 of April 7, 2016 (Brasil, 2016), public opinion surveys and activities carried out exclusively for educational, teaching, or training purposes do not need to be submitted to a Research Ethics Committee.

² For further details on this innovative and sensitive formative device, please refer to d'Ávila and Madeira (2018).