

Challenges and contributions of the non-mandatory internship in the training of pedagogy students¹

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Abstract

The objective is to examine how the non-mandatory internship contributes to the training of future teachers, highlighting its advantages and challenges. To this end, the present research is qualitative and exploratory in nature, the data was collected through an online questionnaire, containing 10 open questions with dissertation purposes sent to Pedagogy students at the Federal University of Espírito Santo, who are at the non-mandatory internship development situation. The responses were treated through content analysis. From the analysis it was evident that the extracurricular internship contributes to the training of future teachers, highlighting its advantages and challenges, based on 4 emerging categories that allow us to analyze the phenomena: a) Motivations for carrying out the internship, this portrays the elements that led the interns to develop the non-mandatory internship; b) Knowledge developed during the internship, portrays the knowledge that the interns acquired during the internship that contributed to their training; c) Activities/Actions developed during the non-mandatory internship, addresses what actions the interns develop during the internship and how they affect their training; d) Socioeconomic recognition and remuneration in the internship, this shows how socioeconomic issues influence the choice and stay in the internship. This work considers the importance of non-mandatory internships in the training of pedagogues and their intersections with knowledge, motivations, actions and socioeconomic interactions.

Keywords: contributions to teaching; training challenges; non-mandatory internship; pedagogy students; teacher training.

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Desafios e contribuições do estágio não-obrigatório na formação de estudantes de pedagogia

Resumo

Objetiva-se examinar como o estágio não-obrigatório contribui para a formação dos futuros professores, destacando suas vantagens e desafios. Para isto, a presente pesquisa tem por natureza ser de cunho qualitativa e exploratório, os dados foram coletados através de um questionário online, contendo 10 questões abertas com fins dissertativos encaminhado a estudantes de Pedagogia da Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, que encontram-se na situação de desenvolvimento de estágio não obrigatório. As respostas foram tratadas por meio de análise de conteúdo. Da análise evidenciou-se que o estágio extracurricular contribui para a formação dos futuros professores, destacando suas vantagens e desafios, a partir de 4 categorias emergentes que nos possibilita a análise dos fenômenos: a) Motivações para a realização do estágio, esta retrata os elementos que levaram as estagiárias ao desenvolvimento do estágio não-obrigatório; b) Saberes desenvolvidos durante o estágio, retrata os saberes que as estagiárias adquiriram durante o estágio que contribuíram para sua formação; c) Atividades/Ações desenvolvidas no estágio não-obrigatório, aborda quais são as ações que as estagiárias desenvolvem no exercício do estágio e como afetam a sua formação; d) Reconhecimento socioeconômico e remuneração no estágio, esta apresenta como a questão socioeconômica influencia durante a escolha e a permanência no estágio. Considera-se com este trabalho a importância do estágio não-obrigatório na formação de pedagogos e seus atravessamentos com saberes, motivações, ações e as interlocuções socioeconômicas.

Palavras-chave: Contribuições na docência; Desafios formativos; Estágio não-obrigatório; Estudantes de pedagogia; Formação docente.



Retos y aportes de la práctica no obligatoria en la formación de estudiantes de pedagogía

Resumen: El objetivo es examinar cómo la pasantía no obligatoria contribuye a la formación de futuros docentes, destacando sus ventajas y desafíos. Para ello, la presente investigación es de carácter cualitativo y exploratorio, los datos fueron recolectados a través de un cuestionario en línea, que contiene 10 preguntas abiertas con fines de disertación enviadas a estudiantes de Pedagogía de la Universidad Federal de Espírito Santo, que se encuentran en la pasantía no obligatoria. situación de desarrollo. Las respuestas fueron tratadas mediante análisis de contenido. Del análisis se evidenció que la pasantía extracurricular contribuye a la formación de los futuros docentes, destacando sus ventajas y desafíos, a partir de 4 categorías emergentes que permiten analizar el fenómeno: a) Motivaciones para realizar la pasantía, esto retrata los elementos que llevó a los pasantes a desarrollar la pasantía no obligatoria; b) Conocimientos desarrollados durante la pasantía, retrata los conocimientos que los pasantes adquirieron durante la pasantía y que contribuyeron a su formación; c) Actividades/Acciones desarrolladas durante la pasantía no obligatoria, aborda qué acciones desarrollan los pasantes durante la pasantía y cómo afectan su formación; d) Reconocimiento socioeconómico y remuneración en la pasantía, esto muestra cómo las cuestiones socioeconómicas influyen en la elección y permanencia en la pasantía. Este trabajo considera la importancia de las prácticas no obligatorias en la formación de pedagogos y sus intersecciones con conocimientos, motivaciones, acciones e interacciones socioeconómicas.

Palabras clave: aportes a la docencia; desafíos formativos; prácticas no obligatorias; estudiantes de pedagogía; formación docente.



Introduction

The teaching profession is of paramount importance in our society, as within the school environment, the teacher plays a fundamental role in the formation of citizens. Amidst so many social, environmental, ethical, aesthetic, and political problems, it is necessary to pay attention to the ways of forming citizens, thus requiring reflection on teacher education for the challenges of the 21st century (Morin, 2000). In such a scenario, there are many tensions that guide the initial training of the pedagogue, such as insecurity, lack of autonomy, maturity to act in troubled situations, the development of experiential knowledge, and even involving oneself as a subject of one's work-performance (Goodson, 2000).

Such implications affect initial training in university spaces as a set of experiences that lead us to elaborate disciplinary, curricular, and professional knowledge; however, the short experience of curricular internships is not always sufficient for the development of experiential knowledge (Tardif, 2002). Consequently, it is perceived that one does not learn to be a teacher in college—regarding the aforementioned set of teaching knowledge (Tardif, 2002)—so that this “becoming a teacher” occurs through the learning acquired daily while acting in the classroom, in the daily practice within the school environment. It goes far beyond the knowledge acquired during graduation in its disciplinary, curricular, and professional aspects, as experiences of approximation between these and experiential knowledge, practice, and teaching praxis are necessary (Freire, 2004).

Thus, we see that Tiscoski and Bittencourd (2017, p.118) situate this gap in training as follows:

Teacher training is a complex and continuous process, since a degree in Pedagogy is not enough to guarantee the quality of the teacher's training. It is necessary to unite what is learned in graduation with the school context, that is, in practice. The subject who intends to be a teacher needs opportunities to make this connection between acquired knowledge and school practice, as there is a need for learning



and practice, contact with reality to understand what is taught at the University.

From this perspective, there are experiences that are necessary for the development of experiential knowledge and the approximation of theoretical and practical aspects. Among them, the non-mandatory internship stands out. The non-mandatory internship (remunerated or otherwise) has become an enriching experience in the training of Pedagogy students, as it enables the integration between theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom and practice in real teaching contexts for longer periods. This modality of internship, carried out outside the mandatory curricular requirements, offers students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge, develop pedagogical skills, and broaden their understanding of teaching practice and the dynamics of the school environment. From this viewpoint, the non-mandatory internship has allowed future pedagogues to experience different teaching realities, building a reflective and critical practice, in addition to favoring insertion into the labor market.

The non-mandatory internship may present numerous benefits and formative contributions as mentioned above, but it also presents significant challenges, such as the reconciliation between academic activities and the internship—a classic challenge rooted in the dissociative process of modernity between work time and study time. Such challenges are reflected in the process of reconciliation and time optimization, as well as in the accumulation of work and the overload imposed on the subjects.

From this perception regarding the contributions and challenges of the non-mandatory internship, this investigation emerges, considering the researcher's own experience during the development of the internship in the school environment. My perceptions, the knowledge, actions, and activities that I developed throughout the process allowed me to experience its contributions and challenges.



In this regard, this work aims to understand the benefits and challenges faced throughout the journey of the extracurricular internship by Pedagogy students in the northern region of Espírito Santo, and how this experience can influence the construction of professional identity. To this end, the present work is organized into: i) Regulatory Law of the non-mandatory internship, in which it is intended to present Law No. 11,788 of 2008; ii) Methodological pathways, in which the methodology used and the categories of analysis are presented; iii) Results and discussions, bringing and discussing the results of the applied questionnaire; iv) Final considerations, in which the reflections on the research results are presented.

Regulatory Law of the Internship

Law No. 11,788 of September 25, 2008, regulates the guidelines for the conduct of internships by students. In its Article 1, it determines that “Internship is a supervised school educational act, developed in the work environment, aimed at preparing students for productive work” (Brasil, 2008). Within this same legal framework, internships are classified as mandatory—being a requirement for obtaining degrees or certifications in specific courses—and non-mandatory, which is developed by the student as an optional activity with the purpose of training, qualifying, and enabling them for professional practice.

In this regard, the guidelines indicate that the granting party—the institution in which the internship will occur—must establish an agreement with the higher education institution and produce an internship commitment term, outlining the conditions under which the internship will take place, the schedules, and its purposes.

Chapter IV of Law No. 11,788/2008, regarding the intern’s activities, indicates:

Art. 10. The internship activity workday will be defined by mutual agreement between the educational institution, the granting party, and the student intern or their legal representative, and must be stated



in the commitment term as compatible with school activities and not exceed:

II – 6 (six) hours daily and 30 (thirty) hours weekly, in the case of students in higher education, professional secondary education, and regular secondary education.

Art. 11. The duration of the internship, at the same granting party, may not exceed 2 (two) years, except when dealing with an intern with a disability (Brasil, 2008).

Such indication demonstrates that it is of utmost importance for interns and granting parties to have access to and knowledge of the law regulating non-mandatory internships from the beginning of the undergraduate program to prevent task overload. The institution that hires interns must recognize that students are in a process of learning and formation, and thus susceptible to error, and should not assign them functions and responsibilities that were not agreed upon in the internship contract.

An essential field for the articulation between theory and practice in teacher education is the non-mandatory internship scenario, which provides students the opportunity to develop fundamental skills for teaching.

During the non-mandatory internship, the responsibilities and functions performed by the intern can contribute significantly to teacher formation. Pimenta and Lima (2004) highlight that the internship offers future teachers a practical experience that complements the theoretical education they receive at the university. Throughout the internship, the intern will have to perform a variety of tasks and responsibilities.

This includes preparing lessons, observing the pedagogical methods of experienced teachers, applying teaching techniques, and interacting with students and colleagues. These activities are essential for future teachers to learn how to manage the classroom, adapt teaching to students' needs, and use different assessment methods. The purpose of the non-mandatory internship in Pedagogy courses lies in developing the professional competencies of future

teachers, offering students a space to experiment with pedagogical practices and develop a teaching identity based on direct experience with school reality.

Although the non-mandatory internship is crucial for teacher formation, it faces challenges that must be overcome for its formative potential to be fully realized. Pimenta and Lima (2004) state that inadequate or insufficient supervision can compromise the intern's development, as without proper guidance, there may be an overload of functions for the intern, often resulting in insufficient support to face the challenges encountered. Furthermore, low remuneration and reconciling the study routine with the internship are also difficulties that interns may face.

Methodological Pathways

The present research consists of a qualitative investigation, as it seeks to identify elements of the studied phenomenon considering the contingency, specificity, and singularity of the characteristics outlined herein. This nature of research does not aim to exhaust the theme but to identify, within the qualitative elements and formulations derived from the studied phenomenon, elements that can be envisioned and utilized as analytical tools (Lakatos; Marconi, 1996). Such a conceptual foundation, as indicated by Gerhardt and Silveira (2009), seeks to examine singularities and specificities based on the social relations that allow for the attribution of qualities to the investigated phenomena.

This study was conducted with an exploratory bias, aiming to explore elements of the theme and provide subsidies for future research. It is observed that exploratory research, according to Gil (2002), demonstrates a degree of flexibility in the instrumental uses of research, employing multiple tools for the exploratory process of the subject.

To this end, the present investigation took place between July and August 2024. During this period, the research was designed seeking the participation of subjects who: i) have completed or are currently enrolled in a Pedagogy course in the northern region of Espírito Santo; ii) have developed or are currently



developing a non-mandatory internship in their area of training/activity; iii) agree to participate in the research. Based on this profile, three research subjects were selected and agreed to participate.

After selection and prior invitation, formalization occurred, and the participating subjects were invited to take part in this investigation via the “WhatsApp” messaging application, through which the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE) was sent. After agreeing to participate and sending the signed form, the participants were provided with the electronic address of the questionnaire, created with the support of the Google Forms® platform, containing 10 (ten) open-ended questions with a discursive bias, as follows (Chart 1):

Chart 1 - Research questionnaire guide

Questionnaire	
1	Choose a fictitious name to use in the survey
2	Are you doing a non-mandatory internship at a private or public educational institution? If you have worked at both, could you tell me what differences you noticed between them?
3	What stage of your teaching degree are you at? How long have you been doing your non-compulsory internship and what motivated you to do it?
4	What activities do you do during your non-mandatory internship? What is your routine like? How do this routine and these activities affect your training?
5	What knowledge have you developed during your internship and how does it contribute to your training as an educator?
6	We understand that internships are opportunities to gain experience and learn about the field in which we are training. In this sense, how would you say that the non-mandatory internship affected your interest, motivation, and perception of working in education? Could you tell me one or two stories from your life that illustrate this effect on your training?
7	How did the non-mandatory internship affect your academic performance and progress in the regular teaching course?
8	How do you balance work and your degree, and what obstacles and contributions are involved? How did you develop strategies to balance the two?



9	Have you completed the mandatory internship? If so, could you tell me about the similarities and differences you found in both internships in terms of developing knowledge, skills, and perspectives in the field of education? If not, could you tell us about the similarities and differences you imagine between both internships in terms of developing knowledge, skills, and perspectives in the field of education?
10	Finally, would you like to mention any life stories or aspects that were not asked about but that you would like to be considered in this research?

Source: The Authors.

The responses were analyzed using Content Analysis (Bardin, 1977; Moraes, 1999), organized into three stages: i) Pre-analysis, involving the organization and “skimming” (floating reading) of the material in alignment with the research objectives; ii) Material treatment, where in-depth readings, material coding, and the identification of recording units and aggregation were performed; iii) Based on the aggregation into categories, movements of interpretation, inference, and analytical-textual organization were outlined. Coding was conducted by assigning the letter “E,” representing “student” (*estudante*), followed by the number corresponding to the order in which the questionnaire responses were received, resulting in the subjects being coded as: E1, E2, and E3. During data analysis, at the moment of identifying recording units, these were coded using the subject’s identification (E1, E2, and E3), plus the letter “U,” referring to “recording unit” (*unidade de registro*), and a number in ascending order of identification—for example, E1U1, E1U2, E2U1, E2U2, and so forth. Three analytical categories emerged from the analysis, as presented in the results and discussions.

Results and Discussions

The three students who responded to the questionnaire are enrolled in different periods of the Pedagogy course at the Federal University of Espírito Santo: 3rd, 7th, and 9th semesters. Student E1 interned exclusively in a federal public educational institution; student E2 interned only in a private educational



institution; and E3 has completed internships in both municipal public and private educational institutions.

Based on the analysis, it was possible to identify the operations of four emerging categories (presented in Chart 2): A) Motivations for undertaking the internship, which portrays the elements that led the interns to develop the non-mandatory internship, encompassing professional and socioeconomic aspects; B) Knowledge developed during the internship, which depicts the knowledge acquired by the interns during the non-mandatory internship that contributed to their formation as pedagogues, involving pedagogical knowledge, theory aligned with practice, and school routine; C) Activities/Actions developed in the non-mandatory internship, which addresses the actions the interns perform in the exercise of the internship and how they affect their training, involving aspects of organization, assistance in the pedagogical process, childcare, and document preparation; D) Socioeconomic recognition and remuneration in the internship, which presents how socioeconomic issues influence the choice and retention in the internship, involving workload and low remuneration.

Chart 2 - Emerging categories and Registration Units.

CATEGORIES	RECORDING UNITS
A Motivations for undertaking the internship	Experience; Internship grant
B Knowledge developed during the internship	Theory and practice; School routine; Pedagogical knowledge.
C Activities/Actions carried out during the extracurricular internship	Organization of the classroom; Assistance with educational activities; Hygiene and care of children; Preparation of meeting minutes and documents.
D Socioeconomic recognition and remuneration during internships	Working only one shift; Low pay.

Source: The Authors



Regarding Category A – **“Motivations for undertaking the internship”**, it portrays the elements that led the interns to develop the extracurricular internship, encompassing professional and socioeconomic aspects. This category consisted of 5 recording units, represented by the codes E1U4, E1U5, E2U4, E2U5, and E3U3, composed of statements made by subjects E1, E2, and E3. We see the following as representative recording units:

The main motivation was the income factor; I needed to work and help my family, but a full-time job was very complicated. The internship allowed me to maintain college and work without overload – E3U3.

My motivation for applying for the internship vacancy was the experience I could acquire in the area of Special Education, which interests me a lot, and also the internship grant, which is very good. At the time of registration, I worked in two different places, and my routine was very busy, as there were still college classes. Since the grant for this internship was very good, it would allow me to work only one shift and have more time to study, besides the experience, so I decided to try – E1U4 and E1U5.

My motivations were the possibility of integrating theory with practice in the classroom throughout the week and still being able to earn a bit with the internship grant – E2U4 and E2U5.

From these recording units, we can infer that the search for an extracurricular internship occurs due to at least four elements: i) interest in approaching school reality; ii) the application of theory to practice; iii) growth and experience in the teaching field; and iv) financial factors (the latter being intertwined with the other categories).

It is perceived, however, that beyond the experience on the school floor and the approximation of theoretical and practical aspects for the development of teaching praxis, there is a need to remain in college, which is met by the internship grant. Thus, the results corroborate the study by Costa (2016), as it demonstrates that throughout the non-mandatory internship, one undergoes experiences that allow an approximation to the labor field in different axes of the pedagogue’s performance (from early childhood education



to management), seeking to experience training at work and on the school floor, thereby gaining a more realistic notion and situating oneself regarding professional performance. Furthermore, we see in the writings of Tiscoski and Bittencourt (2017) that the non-mandatory internship is viewed by interns as a possibility to bring together the knowledge learned throughout the course with the experience of acting. Regarding the development of knowledge necessary for teaching and professional identities, we approach the reflections of Maurice Tardif (2002) on disciplinary, professional, and curricular knowledge combined with experiential knowledge, with the non-mandatory internship space being potentially productive for such development.

Additionally, these results also align with the findings of Demschinski and Flach (2022), considering that a large portion of undergraduate students come from the working class and, due to financial needs, work in non-mandatory internships during the training process, selling their labor power to maintain basic needs and invest in the course itself (whether for continuity or improvement). Furthermore, undergraduate courses are more accessible to the working class because they are often offered in the evening, as is the case with the institution to which the subjects of this research are linked.

Category B - "Knowledge developed during the internship" portrays the knowledge that the interns acquired and that contributed to their formation as pedagogues, involving pedagogical knowledge, theory aligned with practice, and school routine. This category consisted of 6 recording units represented by the codes E1U8, E1U9, E1U10, E2U8, E3U7, and E3U8, identified in subjects E1, E2, and E3. We see these elements in the representative Recording Units:

All the activities I have performed so far have taught me a lot; I have learned many things since I arrived, both in theory and in practice. Many things I was studying in college, I could experience in practice, especially in the areas of Special Education (my internship area) and School Management (I have direct contact with this sector of the school in the internship). Even before graduating, I am having the opportunity to experience how relationships within the school occur, the complexity of work in the area of Special Education, and I am learning what it



means to be a pedagogue not only in theory but also in practice, observing the people around me and how they develop their work. I believe the greatest impact of this internship on my training was helping me discover which area of Pedagogy I would like to act in. The possibilities for a pedagogue are numerous, and I had many doubts about which path to follow. Experiencing the internship practice made me discover an affinity and interest in the area of Special Education, so much so that I am now doing my capstone project (TCC) in this research area. I also realized that I do not identify at all with the area of School Management, and this also contributes greatly to the choices I will make in the future regarding my career. - E1U8, E1U9, and E1U10.

I think I can observe children's behavior a lot regarding the things presented to them. Everything I have seen in the classroom is a learning experience. How to talk to parents, how to deal with children in difficult moments - E3U7 and E3U8.

Each child has their own individuality and rhythm. Some have more ease with paper activities and others with practical activities; it is important to observe all of this and develop an environment that stimulates all students - E2U8.

The non-mandatory internship, in some cases, may not guarantee the financial maintenance of students; however, it brings the student closer to the school reality and routine of the future profession—in the development of experiential knowledge and the use of learned knowledge (professional, curricular, and disciplinary) (Tardif, 2002). Working theory alongside practice provides for the construction of teaching practice, as it opens a space for the reality of the school environment and the teacher's work life, with reflections and critiques substantiated by experience, thus assisting in consolidating the options and intentions of teaching (and management, when applicable), contributing to the formation of the teacher's identity.

According to Borges and Bitte (2018), the teacher is a person in constant construction; their identity process is dynamic and complex because we become teachers day by day, in the exercise of teaching—the teacher's identity is built in practice as teachers in training.



Witnessing and experiencing these situations within the school environment—observing planning and how it develops in classes (which does not always occur as expected, producing exceeded expectations or disappointments, and understanding the dynamism of professional reality beyond the idealized)—participating in pedagogical meetings with parents, teachers, and management, and knowing that teachers succeed and fail (in relation to parameters set in planning), better prepares the teacher in training (in the internship condition) to deal with the tensions that exist at the beginning of a teaching career. These are elements that make the non-mandatory internship perceived as a potential experience in the formation of pedagogues and teachers (Pimenta, 2012; Pimenta; Lima, 2004).

From this viewpoint, we further perceive in this sense that:

The non-mandatory internship enables greater contact with school life, opening space for reflection through the classroom teacher's attitudes, living with different children and situations every day, learning to work in a team, that is, becoming involved in the school environment. Associating the non-mandatory internship with the Pedagogy course is essential to obtain more learning and to be contextualized in the profession one will follow (Tiscoski; Bittencourt, 2017, p.119).

Regarding Category C – “Activities/Actions developed in the extracurricular internship”, it addresses the actions that the interns develop in the exercise of the internship and how they affect their training, involving aspects of organization, assistance in the pedagogical process, childcare, and document preparation. This category comprises 7 recording units represented by the codes E1U6, E1U7, E2U6, E2U7, E3U4, E3U5, and E3U6, identified in subjects E1, E2, and E3. Representative elements of this category are evident in the Recording Units:

“Assisting in pedagogical activities, hygiene, and care for children aged 4 to 12. The routine ends up being very rushed; institutions end up seeing interns as labor for all moments, so all the things that need to be done end up falling to the intern” – E3U5 and E3U6.



“Classroom assistant; I was present in organizing the room for activities and in their application. Every day I assisted in the routine of caring for the students’ well-being and could closely observe the children’s development at each phase of the year” – E2U6 and E2U7.

The internship I perform is in the area of Special Education, so I have direct contact with students with specific needs at this institution. Part of my job is to assist the Specialized Educational Service (AEE) teachers and these students, according to the demands that arise, and the other part is more on the computer, organizing student documents and recording activities, for example. Among the activities I develop are: accompanying some students in the classroom; accompanying and assisting some students in their activities; assisting in student organization (planners, etc.); participating in meetings; preparing meeting minutes and other documents; organizing and filling out documents – E1U6 and E1U7.

These recording units demonstrate that the non-mandatory internship performed by Pedagogy students shows qualitative potential in academic and professional formation if well-planned, guided, monitored, and focused on supporting the practicing teacher. Under these conditions, the intern experiences real classroom situations, which may represent their first experience in the world of work within a school environment.

By performing the task of ‘assisting the teachers,’ the interns have the opportunity to experience and participate in the school routine, being able to observe planning, the development of activities, and the challenges that appear. They can relate practice and the theory studied in classes more easily, thus adding knowledge to their professional training (Demschinski; Flach, 2022, p.199).

It is important to emphasize the overload that some institutions may place on interns, especially when the student is unaware of Law No. 11,788 of September 25, 2008. Thus, it is necessary for interns and granting parties to have access to and knowledge of the regulations governing non-mandatory internships to avoid task overload and to enable better planning and



development. The institution hiring the intern must recognize that the student is in a process of learning and formation, and thus susceptible to error, and should not assign functions and responsibilities that were not agreed upon in the internship contract. Furthermore, the institution must understand the interns' activities from a formative perspective, with learning objectives aimed at their professional formation (Pimenta, 2012).

Regarding Category D - "Socioeconomic recognition and remuneration in the internship", this presents how socioeconomic issues influence the choice and retention in the internship, involving workload and low remuneration. This category consists of 2 recording units presented by the codes E2U13 and E3U12, identified in subjects E2 and E3. This category finds its support in the representative Recording Units:

I would like to point out how the pedagogy intern is, in a way, exploited in the countryside; while grants in the capital and larger cities reach nearly a minimum wage, here we receive 1/3 of the teachers' salary, and often this workload is heavier and greater than that of the students, besides the treatment of inferiority by the administration regarding interns. - E2U13.

Once I heard the following sentence from a college professor: 'if you get a vacancy in a federal institution, you need to understand that your only obligation is to handle all the proposals given; you cannot work or perform an extracurricular internship.' A total lack of understanding about education; we are in college and need to support ourselves; the clearest solution that inspires our relationship with the college is the internship. The internship grant should be more recognized, the value should be higher, even because we work more than any other employee - E3U12.

It is necessary to rethink how interns are viewed within the school environment; one research participant said they are seen as "labor for all moments" and are treated with inferiority compared to other employees. Through the students' responses, different treatment is noticeable in public and private education institutions. When asked if they perform internships in public or private institutions, one student replied:



I have already done internships in both institutions, both private and public. The main difference I noticed was the treatment as an intern. In the public sector, we are very well received and treated like normal employees of the institution, whereas in the private sector, it is the opposite of all that - E3U1.

When asked about how she reconciles work with college, another student replied:

Thank God my internship contributes a lot to me being able to reconcile work with college activities; I cannot say I have ever been hindered in the course because of this work—quite the contrary. This institution, I believe because it is in the federal sphere, encourages me a lot to participate in courses and training in my area, besides providing various lectures and formative moments throughout the year. My supervisor is also very understanding when I need to perform mandatory internships or when I have a lot of college work; she allows me to flex my schedule to meet those demands and allows me to conduct research within the Institution as well; it is very good - E1U8.

When asked about the differences perceived between the mandatory and non-mandatory internship, another student replied:

In the private network, like it or not, we must walk on eggshells so as not to lose the internship vacancy and even endure humiliating situations for the sake of it, but in the mandatory one, the students' reality was the same or similar to mine, so I didn't feel that need; I could interact and talk more comfortably because I understood their reality and they understood mine - E2U12.

Through these responses, it is noticeable that the interviewed interns felt better treated and recognized in their professional work within public educational institutions, with respect and dignity compared to some private educational institutions. It is understood that such treatment is essential for professional formation and the recognition of interns as workers in their field of activity.

Demschinski and Flach (2022) state that hiring interns to perform functions of formal workers has been a reality, where interns end up assuming the replacement of teachers and responsibilities related to specialized educational assistance. Such an aspect can generate formative obstacles, as there are skills



to be developed throughout the formation that require co-participation and collaboration in the formative process of the non-mandatory internship.

It is emphasized that, according to Law No. 11,788/08, the non-mandatory internship does not establish an employment relationship; only a contract is signed, which exempts the granting company from paying the intern the rights paid to CLT (Consolidated Labor Laws) workers. This leads many internship grantors to hire interns as cheap labor without having to pay CLT labor rights, disrespecting the legislation and making interns perform work for which they are not yet qualified and which was not agreed upon in the internship contract.

According to Demschinski and Flach (2022), due to their socioeconomic situation, interns often end up submitting to exploitation through internship contracts, performing activities for which they have not yet been properly prepared and receiving a low-value grant. This occurs due to the availability of students willing to perform such activities and their financial needs, as well as the profile of undergraduate students being a working public that depends on remuneration for their life maintenance and investment in the development of the course itself.

Final Considerations

The non-mandatory internship is a present reality in the lives of many undergraduate students in Pedagogy. It can be viewed as an opportunity to ensure student retention in higher education institutions, as it provides a grant and is conducted outside of regular class hours, in addition to bringing students closer to their field of study. Through the non-mandatory internship, the Pedagogy student applies the theory learned in college to practice during work, allowing the intern to become acquainted and familiar with their future professional environment.

Thus, the non-mandatory internship goes beyond mandatory curricular requirements; it is an essential opportunity for Pedagogy students to integrate



the theoretical knowledge acquired at the university with the actual practice of the school environment.

Despite its various contributions to the professional development of future teachers, this practice still faces significant challenges. The experiences shared by the students who responded to the questionnaire demonstrate that the internship is a crucial stage for developing pedagogical skills, constructing a teaching identity, and understanding the dynamics of the school environment. However, it also became clear in the interviewees' perception that there is a significant difference in the treatment of interns between public and private institutions, with the former demonstrating greater respect and recognition for the role performed by the interns.

Furthermore, the remuneration offered in internships, which is often low, coupled with an overload of tasks that do not align with the internship contract, highlights the need for a revision of internship policies and stricter oversight of the granting units. It is fundamental that both granting institutions and interns are aware of current legislation to prevent situations of exploitation and to ensure that the internship remains a learning opportunity rather than merely a source of cheap labor.

Therefore, we can conclude that the non-mandatory internship, while a valuable component in the training of pedagogues, requires better regulation, oversight, and appreciation to fulfill its formative role with efficacy and integrity. Valuing the internship, both in terms of remuneration and working conditions, is fundamental to ensuring that future teachers are well-prepared to face the challenges of teaching. Moreover, it is essential to listen to what interns have to say about the institutions where they work and what improvements can be made, thereby creating a more favorable environment.



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