

CONCERNS RELATED TO TEACHING: PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PREOCUPAÇÕES RELACIONADAS À DOCÊNCIA: PERCEPÇÕES DE BOLSISTAS DE INICIAÇÃO À DOCÊNCIA EM EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to analyze the concerns of scholarship holders starting to teach in Physical Education participating in an edition held during Covid-19 social isolation. Eight scholarship holders from the Institutional Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program of the Physical Education subproject of the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC) participated in the investigation. The collection and analysis of information occurred through the Qualitative Research Technique - Interview, Transcription, Categorization and Interpretation. The results revealed that concerns about the task and self were more evident among the scholarship recipients, both at the beginning and at the end of their participation in the program. At the beginning, the scholarship holders were concerned about issues related to communication, the fear of failure, the experience in remote teaching and the changes in Education resulting from the pandemic, in addition to being concerned about the task in terms of controlling the class and students. In the end, concerns about insecurity and anxiety prevailed, in addition to concerns about the task in terms of lesson planning. It was observed that self-concerns decreased throughout participation in the project, giving greater space to concerns about the task.

Keywords: PIBID, Restlessness, Scholarship Holders, Teacher training.

RESUMO

O estudo teve como objetivo analisar as preocupações de bolsistas de iniciação à docência em Educação Física participantes de edição realizada durante o isolamento social da Covid-19. Participaram da investigação oito bolsistas do Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência do subprojeto Educação Física da Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (UDESC). A coleta e a análise das informações ocorreram por meio da Técnica de Investigação Qualitativa - Entrevista, Transcrição, Categorização e Interpretação. Os resultados revelaram que as preocupações com a tarefa e consigo se apresentaram mais evidentes entre os bolsistas, tanto no início quanto no final da participação no programa. No início, os bolsistas se preocupavam com questões relacionadas à comunicação, ao receio de fracassar, à experiência no ensino remoto e às mudanças na Educação advindas da pandemia, além de se preocuparem com a tarefa no que tange ao controle de turma e dos estudantes. Ao final, prevaleceram preocupações consigo de insegurança e ansiedade, além de preocupações com a tarefa em termos de planejamento das aulas. Observou-se que as preocupações consigo diminuíram ao longo da participação no projeto, dando maior espaço às preocupações com a tarefa.

Palavras-chave: PIBID, Inquietações, Bolsistas, Formação Docente.

Introduction

The initial training period for undergraduates is a complex, diverse and subjective time in which the student goes through situations of personal, social, educational and professional development, entering a space that allows them to get to know the profession they will be working in^{1,2}. Thus, in initial training, the dilemmas experienced by students are often related to resolving dualities, overcoming conflicts between being a student and being a teacher, as well as a greater articulation between theory and practice³.

In the Brazilian educational scenario, training strategies have been implemented in teacher training to overcome and reduce the dilemmas mentioned. Among them is the Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships (PIBID)⁴, which has enabled students to get closer to their future profession. According to Resolution 90 of March 25, 2024, the PIBID aims to encourage students to become teachers and contribute to improving teacher training in higher education, as well as improving the quality of basic education⁵.

The program aims to bring undergraduate students into the everyday life of schools, creating possibilities for experiences in the future field of work and bringing together the spaces of higher education and basic education, as well as teaching theory and practice⁶. In addition to integrating scholarship holders (undergraduates), public school teachers (supervisors) and university professors (coordinators), PIBID also enables collaboration between different dimensions of teacher training: initial; continuing; research/extension^{7,8}.

In addition, PIBID provides innovative experiences about teaching, enabling knowledge and reflections on professionalism and teacher identity, which are essential for working in basic education⁹. The project integrates the scholarship holders into the intervention context, enabling contact with teachers who have been working in the profession for a longer period of time and providing an exchange of knowledge about working conditions, the possibilities and limits of the profession, as well as the pedagogical challenges in the teaching scenario^{8,10,11}. Positive results are evident from the development of the program, as it has offered highly qualified instruction, as well as raising the quality of initial and continuing training, contributing to the training of scholarship holders as future teachers and supervising teachers in their pedagogical practice^{12,13}.

Given that PIBID involves undergraduate courses in different areas of basic education, such as: Chemistry; Languages/Portuguese; Pedagogy; Mathematics; Physics; Biology; History and Physical Education¹⁴, the Physical Education curricular component stands out, since it has specificities that differentiate it from others in the school environment¹⁵. The participation of Physical Education undergraduate students in teaching initiation activities makes it possible, among other experiences, to acquire knowledge and skills, have direct contact with teaching and lesson planning, get involved with students in classes, organize and help the supervising teacher develop activities and classes⁷.

Through contact with and observation of the reality of teaching, the fellows' experiences awaken in them concerns that are typical of the training period, as well as being influenced by teachers' concerns that can distinguish PIBID fellows from other students who do not experience the day-to-day training of this program. Concerns related to teaching are defined as feelings, worries and problems that affect teachers and future teachers during their training or professional development¹⁶. However, from a formative perspective, they can be associated with the focus that the student teacher gives to teaching.

Thus, looking at the concerns that the scholarship holders have is relevant in order to understand the relationship between initial training and intervention in the PIBID. The theoretical matrix of concerns originated from the proposals of Fuller¹⁶ and Fuller and Bown¹⁷, and is systematized through three dimensions of concerns that occur during the process of initial teacher training, namely: with oneself; task; and impact. Concerns about oneself affect the first contacts with teaching, usually during an internship or at the start of one's career, corresponding to insecurity about the role of teacher, the fact of being evaluated and the fear of being observed and of failing.

Concerns about the task are associated with the excessive number of students, the lack of materials, inadequate physical space and class time, and are more pronounced throughout a teacher's career. Finally, concerns about impact, characteristic of more experienced teachers, are linked to the results achieved by students through the proposed activities, the recognition of student needs by teachers and the identification of learning problems, which need to be included in teacher planning¹⁶⁻¹⁸.

Especially in Brazil, Fuller's¹⁶ and Fuller and Brown's¹⁷ theoretical matrix on teachers' concerns has been revisited, based on empirical and theoretical research that reveals the level of adequacy of the theory to different teaching realities, which consequently leads to the proposal to expand the theoretical framework^{19,20}. Thus, new dimensions have been presented, such as public policy, which addresses governmental, budgetary and labour issues that affect

teaching practice, and social problems arising from the social context in which students, teachers and the school are inserted, which end up impacting the school reality²⁰.

Based on the research published, there is a lack of research on the theme of teachers' concerns, especially those carried out with scholarship holders from government programs for training Physical Education teachers. This lack of studies justifies and encourages this research. What can be found in the literature are investigations with teachers²¹⁻²³ and student trainees²⁴. These studies have shown that experienced PE teachers are more concerned with the impact dimension²¹⁻²³, while less experienced teachers have shown greater concern for themselves²³ and for the task²¹. In relation to student trainees, there were concerns about themselves and the impact of the task²⁴.

Thus, in view of the above and considering the relevance of the theme about teaching concerns in the teaching initiation program and the gap presented, this study has as its guiding question: what are the concerns of teaching initiation scholarship holders in Physical Education, from the State University of Santa Catarina (UDESC), participating in an edition held during the social isolation of Covid-19? To this end, the aim is to analyse the concerns of undergraduate teaching fellows in Physical Education, from UDESC, participating in an edition held during the social isolation of Covid-19.

Methods

This study is characterized as descriptive research with a qualitative approach to the data. Descriptive research is concerned with portraying the perspective of those being investigated in an interpretative way, while qualitative research allows the participants to have a voice and the researcher to reflect in order to provide a more in-depth description and interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated²⁵. Eight students from UDESC's Physical Education degree course took part in the study. They were part of the PIBID program from October 2020 to March 2022, carrying out the program's activities remotely. The research project was approved by UDESC's Human Research Ethics Committee (4.320.054/2020).

The figure 1 shows the main characteristics of the scholarship holders, with two being female and six males. At the start of the activities, six students were in the first phase and two in the second phase of the course. At the end of their participation in the program, they were in the fifth and sixth phases, respectively. With regard to professional experience, six students had experience in various fields (barista, delivery man, waiter, gardener, motorcycle courier, etc.), but all of them had no connection with education, while two students said they had no previous professional experience.

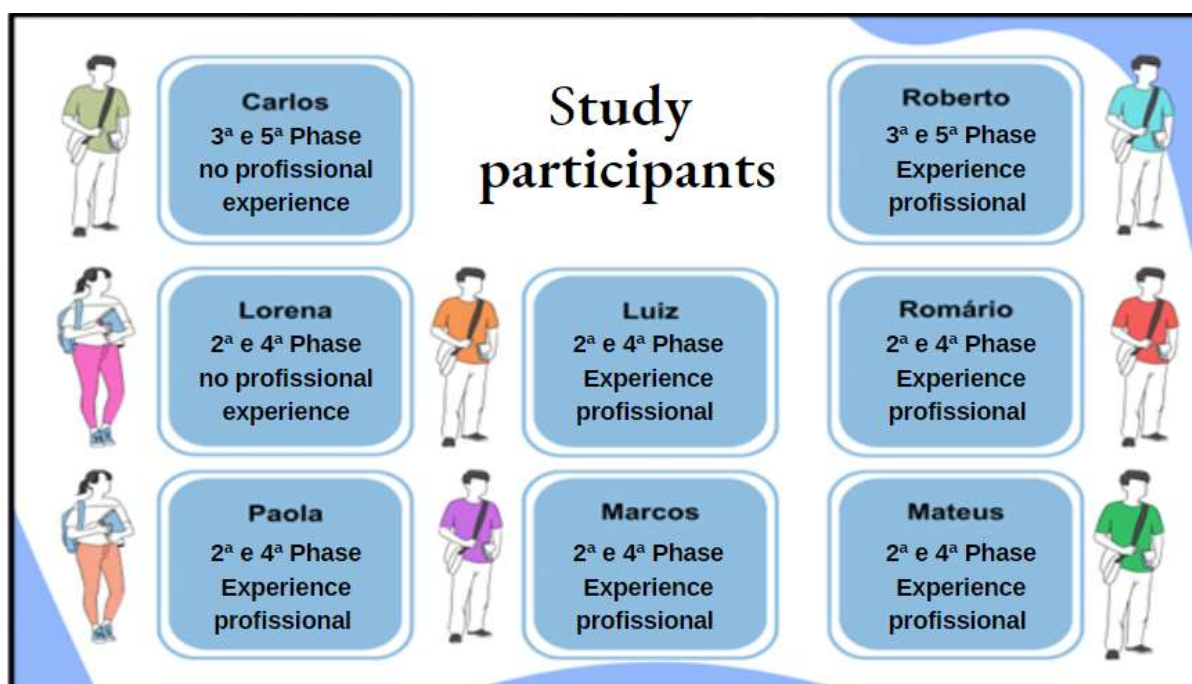


Figure 1. Characterization of the undergraduate teaching fellows in the Physical Education degree course at UDESC.

Note: Fictitious names chosen by the study participants.

Source: The authors.

The fellows were invited to take part in the research on a voluntary basis and signed the Terms of Free and Informed Consent and Consent for Photographs, Videos and Recordings. In order not to identify the participants, they chose fictitious names.

Information was collected using the Qualitative Investigation Technique - Interview, Transcription, Categorization and Interpretation (ETCI)²⁶:

- Construction of the interviews: the script contained predetermined open questions, based on the following dimensions - characterization of the participants (fictitious name, age, year of completion of high school, stage of the course and previous professional experiences); initial teaching concerns (before participation in PIBID); final teaching concerns (after participation in PIBID). A pilot study was carried out with a volunteer student from the program;
- Interviews were conducted in two stages (the beginning and end of the fellows' participation in the program), individually, using the Microsoft Teams online platform (recording), on previously scheduled days and times. The interviews were conducted by two researchers, both graduates and Physical Education teachers in public schools, one of whom is a master's student and the other a doctoral student in the Postgraduate Program in Human Movement Sciences at UDESC. The initial interviews took place in October and November 2020 and lasted an average of 18 minutes, while the final interviews took place in April 2022 and lasted an average of 14 minutes;
- Transcription of the interviews: carried out in full, following the response cards (interview script) and taking into account spelling, punctuation and graphic presentation. The average time taken for the transcriptions, with the help of the Telegram app and proofreading by the researchers, was 1 hour and 53 minutes. In order to validate the data internally, the interviews were sent individually to the participants so that they could add, reduce and/or rephrase any information they deemed necessary, and it should be noted that none of the scholarship recipients asked for their transcripts to be revised, approving the transcribed texts of their speeches.

The information was analysed by categorizing and interpreting the data transcribed from the interviews, based on the ETCI technique²⁶:

- Categorization: NVIVO software was used, which is one of the most widely used pieces of software in the Brazilian academic environment²⁷ to help organize and analyse interviews in qualitative research. It offers tools for recording, grouping ideas, searching and exploring data²⁸. At first, the categories were created based on the interview script, with the names given to the terms of the research itself and the theory that underpins it (Teachers' concerns^{16,17,20}). In the second stage, all the interviews were read and coded into the various categories. In the third stage, the interviews were read again, refining and reorganizing the categorization, as well as taking into account the interpretation and ensuring the appropriateness of the answers;
- Interpretation: the results of the research were described, interpreting what was categorized from the interviews, comparing the data with what is present in the literature and extracting the emerging content to make it into scientific content.

The themes resulting from the analysis of the information obtained from the PIBID scholarship holders were concerns on entering the program and concerns at the end of their participation in the program, based on the following categories (and units of meaning):

- Entry: concerns about oneself (communication, fear of failure, class control and relationship with students, emotional and feeling unprepared); concerns about the task (online teaching, changes in school PE post-pandemic, demands of PIBID and planning); concerns about social problems (social realities).
- End: concerns about the task (teaching practice); concerns about themselves (communication, insecurity and anxiety); and concerns about the impact (students' needs).

Results

The teaching concerns of the PIBID Physical Education subproject fellows when they joined and ended their participation in the program, which was carried out entirely remotely, are shown in figure 2. The information obtained revealed that concerns about the task were predominant both on entering and at the end of the fellows' involvement.

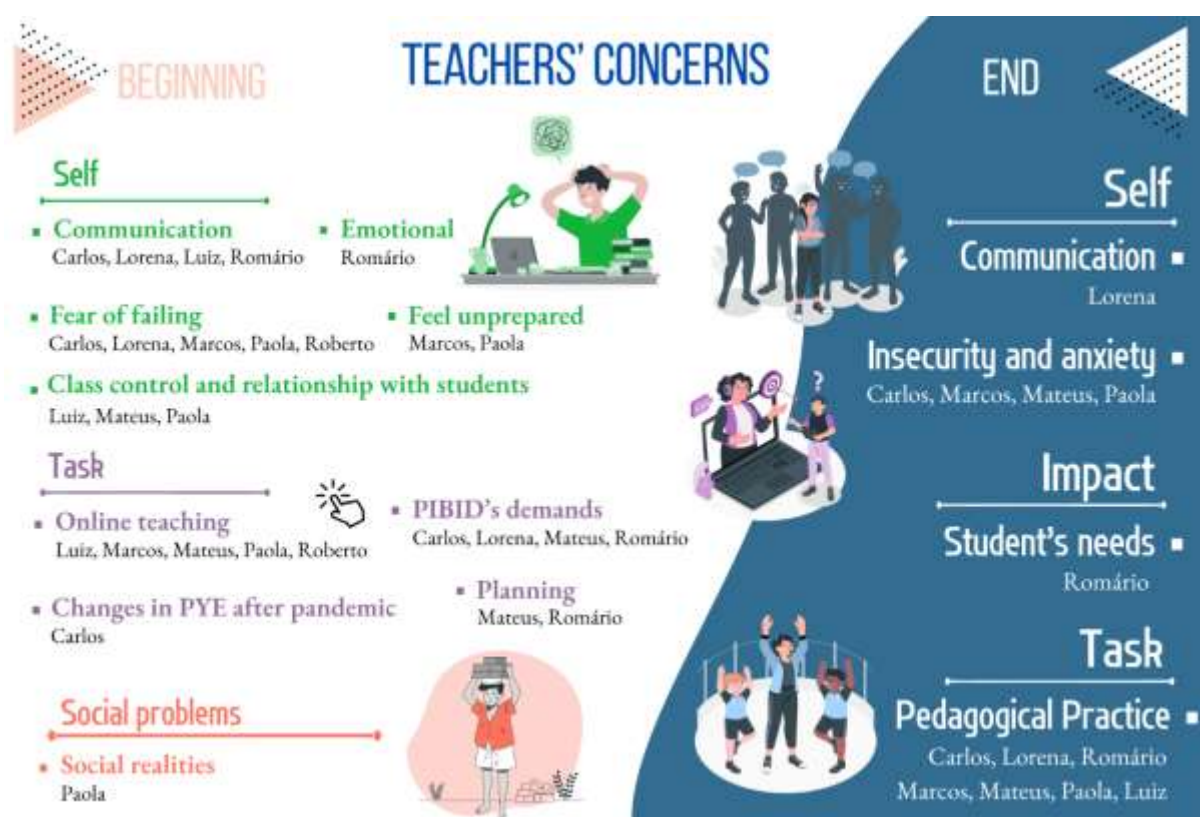


Figure 2: Teachers' concerns at the beginning and end of their participation in PIBID.

Note: Fictitious names chosen by the study participants.

Source: The authors.

At the beginning of their participation in the program, the fellows were apprehensive about the activities and demands (tasks) they would have as a result of taking part in the PIBID, since they joined remotely and didn't know how long their social isolation would last. Still in terms of tasks, they were worried about class control and the relationship with the students, if they had the opportunity to experience the activities in person in the schools.

I think it would be more about controlling the class, not knowing very well how to deal with children because I don't have that experience (Luiz, admission).

I think it's going to be challenging to deal with the children, I think their questions, I don't really know what it's going to be like (Luiz, admission)

I think it's just this lack of contact with the students, which should have already started and because of the pandemic will end up being later, so I think that's my main fear (Mateus, admission).

During their entry, the fellows also showed concerns about themselves, which were related to communication (expressing themselves) during the meetings, especially due to shyness, diction, tone of voice, as well as the fear of failing in front of their colleagues and the supervising teacher, demonstrating the fellows' fear of failure throughout the experience.

I'm afraid that sometimes I'll be a hindrance to my colleagues, I'm quite afraid of that (Carlos, admission).

I think that in the future it might be the question of speech, I feel that it might be different with the students (Carlos, admission).

I think I'll be held back because I'm remote, but I'm actually a bit shy (Lorena, admission).

If I was in a classroom and the student asked me something I couldn't answer, what would I do? I'm worried that a child will see me and trust me with the answer (Marcos, admission).

In the initial phase of the program, it was possible to identify that only one scholarship holder expressed concern about the students' social problems, specifically the social reality in which they would be living.

I think the biggest concern is with the students. How I'm going to deal with the students and the different social realities they have (Paola, admission).

At the end of their involvement in the program, the fellows, who had experienced the 18 months of PIBID remotely, expanded their concerns about the task, especially around pedagogical practice, highlighting the construction of lesson plans and intervention in classes.

I think it's more this concern with theory, planning and assessment that I find most difficult (Lorena, finished).

With regard to the construction of lesson plans, we've practiced a lot, but we're still not 100% (Luiz, finished).

Before I started the PIBID, I had a great deal of difficulty with planning, how I was going to work throughout the school year, how I was going to organize my classes and now my concern is less, but I still have a concern because I believe that we worked a lot on the theoretical part in the PIBID, but we didn't put it into practice very often (Marcos, admission).

A big concern of mine is how I'm going to plan and not just plan, but put into practice (Marcos, admission).

The concerns revolve more around feeling prepared to provide a good experience for the students (Romário, finished).

Their worries about themselves shifted from communication to insecurity and anxiety about acting as future teachers at the end of the program, especially due to the lack of concrete experience in the school and insecurity about returning to the classroom after the social isolation ended.

As much as we did PIBID online, I think my concern now would be to apply it to the students in a classroom, with all of them there (Paola, admission).

My concern is precisely safety, how I would work safely and respecting all limits, because now, for example, we're back in class and we're having some subjects, whether we want to or not, we have contact, we take off our masks and my concern within the role of teacher would be this (Marcos, admission).

My concern would be having a whole class in our hands and needing to know what to do, so I think my current concerns are these, these last few days I was thinking about internship issues, we're about to start internships, this insecurity hits a bit, will I make it? it's where I want to be, but I don't know if I'm prepared (Mateus, admission).

I think this lack of experience at school ended up causing this insecurity (Marcos, finished).

The only thing missing was going to school, which I was very anxious about (Carlos, finished).

The concern about impact, which didn't appear at the beginning of the program, was mentioned only once at the end of participation in PIBID, and was mainly linked to the impact of the classes on the student, on how that class could provide positive experiences for the primary school student.

The concerns revolve more around feeling prepared to provide a good experience for the students, creating good lessons and knowing how to deal well with children and teenagers (Romário, finished).

Thus, it can be seen that the concerns reported changed over the course of participation in the program, showing greater concerns about themselves at the beginning than at the end, while concerns about the task were present from the beginning to the end of participation. It should be noted that both dimensions were highlighted during the course of the study, and were especially related to teaching in the pandemic context.

Discussion

When analysing the concerns of Physical Education teaching fellows from the Santa Catarina State University (UDESC), with participants in an edition carried out during the social isolation of Covid-19, the presence of concerns was evidenced both at the beginning and at the end of the program. On entering the program, there were concerns about themselves (communication, emotions, fear of failure and feeling unprepared), the task (online teaching, Pibid's demands, changes in school physical education after the pandemic, planning, class control and relationships with students) and social problems (social realities). At the end, concerns about themselves (communication, insecurity and anxiety) and the task (pedagogical practice) remained, while concern about the impact (students' needs) was incorporated.

The concerns of the PIBID fellows when they joined the program differ from the initial proposal formulated for Fuller's theory¹⁶, which proposes that, during the teacher training process, students in teacher training are initially and more clearly concerned with themselves, then with the task and, finally, with the impact, demonstrating an evolving nature of teaching concerns, based on the experiences gained. However, during their participation in the program, concerns about the task were more present, and were mentioned by the fellows both at the beginning and at the end of their participation in the program. This data is similar to the concerns shown by internship students in Uruguay²⁹, Paraná²⁴ and Santa Catarina³⁰ in Brazil.

Thus, considering the reality and temporality of Fuller's propositions¹⁶ and the Uruguayan²⁹ and Brazilian studies^{24,30}, it can be considered that the context of initial training in Latin America and the educational trends of the last decade reflect the differences found, in which actions aimed at the teaching task become more of a concern for future Physical Education teachers than survival itself or the feeling of professional inexperience. In addition, the concern about the demands of the task, which affected the scholarship holders, is strongly related to the remote teaching format experienced throughout the program, unfamiliar situations that led to greater expectations about how the process of learning to be a teacher would take place.

On the other hand, studies with students in internships in Hong Kong³¹ and Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)³² revealed lower levels of concern with the task, with higher levels of concern with the dimensions of impact and with oneself, which also differs from the sequence of concerns proposed by Fuller¹⁶ and, especially, from the results of this research, since the PIBID scholarship holders did not show any concern with impact when they joined the program and

only one graduate mentioned aspects of this dimension when they ended their participation. Without direct experience in the school environment, the fellows did not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the specific social reality of the students and the school community. Face-to-face practice would provide closer contact with the social issues that affect students' daily lives and school dynamics, allowing future teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges faced by students, as well as the influence of their teaching practice on their education. The lack of direct experience with the school context may have limited the fellows' perception of the complexity and diversity of the social situations present in schools, resulting in less emphasis on the importance of these factors in their perception of teaching.

At the end of the program, after the students had had experience with teaching, through activities and frequent exchanges with the supervising teacher, even though online strategies, the fellows began to express other concerns about the task, these more linked to pedagogical practice, especially with lesson planning. In Brazil, practising teachers have also shown this greater concern with planning^{21,23,33}. Similarly, teachers at the start of their careers, after completing their initial training^{21,33,34}, as well as practising teachers^{22,23}, were more concerned with the task dimension than with the other dimensions. However, North American teachers showed that they were less concerned with the task dimension when compared to the self-dimension, which focused on professional performance issues³⁵.

It can be seen that, in general, the students in the initial situations of contact with the reality of the school intervention show concerns about their survival, such as the insecurity and challenges of the different school spaces^{24,36}. On the other hand, the fact that the fellows investigated in this study did not have direct contact with face-to-face school intervention highlighted concerns about pedagogical practice, especially planning, as this was a key activity during the fellows' participation in this edition of the program, which could not have the planning carried out directly by them in the school.

The specificity of the concerns about the task may be linked, initially, to the fact that the PIBID scholarship holders join and participate in the program in the early stages of their initial training course, without having had any previous experience or knowledge, unlike the students in internship situations who are already in more advanced stages. The internship students had the opportunity to experience most of the subjects on the course and had a greater understanding of their training and teaching practice and, in some cases, of the reality of the school, before they started working in the school. It should be emphasized once again that the students who joined the PIBID program under investigation did so for 18 months in remote education, i.e. without any prospect of direct contact with teaching students, a fact that made them more interested in getting to know the reality of the intervention.

Unexpectedly, the whole world has had to adapt quickly to the new demands of the pandemic, including public policies on teacher training. Thus, in both the educational and professional spheres, PIBID has had to reinvent itself. Converging with this study, research has shown that this period brought the need to use technology, conducting the program virtually and requiring everyone to become familiar with this new teaching medium. It has also been shown that this time was valuable for the qualification of future teachers and for the ongoing training of those already working in schools, as well as the program supervisors, helping with the planning and interventions carried out with school students^{37,38}.

Another dimension of concern that was evident in the results of the study was concern for oneself. Concerns about oneself at the beginning and end of participation in the program were more in line with the sequential proposal of concerns in Fuller's theory¹⁶ and Fuller and Brown¹⁷. During the PIBID program, the fellows showed that they had acquired knowledge about teaching work, so their perception of their own worries decreased from the beginning to the end of the program. Thus, taking into account the evolutionary nature proposed by the

authors, the fellows reduced their self-concern and maintained a greater number related to the task.

Studies conducted with Uruguayan trainees²⁹ and Brazilian trainees^{23,24,30,31}, as well as US teachers³⁹, have found that there is concern about the first contacts and survival in teaching. Based on this, it can be seen that the first contacts with teaching influence the presence of this concern, and even though they are in the remote format, the feelings related to teaching were also present in the scholarship holders. These feelings about themselves are directly linked to professional competencies. As undergraduates build knowledge and skills, they are susceptible to being contemplated in a socio-emotional way, through their own changes in attitudes and values, creating new behavioural behaviors⁴⁰. Furthermore, socio-emotional development plays an important role in training professionals who are complete and more prepared to face the challenges of teaching. Changes in personal attitudes and values influence professional interactions, promoting a more collaborative and productive working environment.

With regard to the dimensions of social problems (students' social reality) and impact (needs presented by students based on teaching practice), these were mentioned only once and by only one scholarship holder, at the beginning and end of their participation, respectively. In addition, the dimension of public policies did not appear among the concerns experienced by the participants, either on entry or at the end, which may be linked to the fact that they do not experience the routine of teachers and to issues such as high workload and low pay, which are concerns mentioned by some school teachers²⁰. The low level of concern about social problems may also be related to the fact that the fellows did not do their teaching in person at the school. Therefore, they did not have the opportunity to get to know the social reality in which the students and the school were inserted. On the other hand, concerns about social problems have been highlighted in research with teachers in the United States³⁵ and Brazil^{21,33,34}, mainly related to violence, aggression, participation in strikes, students' social problems, their reality and social context.

Thus, the impact dimension showed little concern among the scholarship holders, which may be related to their lack of direct contact with the students and the fact that they had not acquired enough knowledge and experience in the teaching profession to verify the relationship between their actions and their implications for the students' learning. On the other hand, student interns^{29,30,31} and Physical Education teachers^{21,22,23} was concerned about the repercussions of their actions, a difference that may be linked to the fact that the interns and the teachers have had extensive face-to-face experience in schools.

Thus, it was observed that the fellows participating in the research had more evident concerns with the task and with themselves at the beginning of their involvement in the program, as well as increased concerns with the task at the end. To a lesser extent, the dimensions of impact and social problems were observed, as well as concerns about public policies. It is noteworthy that the undergraduates felt more confident in their teaching activities, with fewer indications of self-concern after 18 months of participation in PIBID.

Conclusion

The analysis of the teaching concerns of undergraduate Physical Education teaching fellows at UDESC revealed that concerns about the task and about themselves were more evident, both at the beginning and at the end of their participation in the remote edition of the program. At the beginning of their participation in PIBID, the fellows were concerned about communication and the fear of failure, remote teaching, the changes brought about by the pandemic, as well as class and student control, while at the end, insecurity, anxiety (about themselves) and pedagogical practice prevailed, in terms of planning (task). It was possible to see that the contact with experiences about teaching influenced the concerns to a certain extent,

to the point that concerns about oneself diminished considerably during involvement in the program, giving greater space to concerns about teaching action.

The main limitation of the research involved conducting the interview in an online format, in which the researchers were unable to get closer to the participants, hindering dialog and the expansion of information. It is suggested that further studies be carried out in order to analyse Physical Education teaching fellowships in a non-pandemic context, and that they involve other investigative possibilities (designs) that allow fellows from other Brazilian cities and states to be investigated and can demonstrate, in a more comprehensive way, the teaching concerns developed in this program that contributes to Physical Education teacher training in the Brazilian reality.

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