

## Continuing Teacher Education: Enhancing the Teaching and Learning Process

Formación continua del profesorado: mejorando el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje

doi: <https://doi.org/10.35997/saberser.v3i1.71>

Fecha de recepción: 17/09/25

Fecha de aceptación: 28/11/25

Fecha de publicación: 25/02/26

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Cómo citar:

Quadros, S. C. de O., & Link, R. de F. Continuing Teacher Education: Enhancing the Teaching and Learning Process. *Saber Ser - Revista De Estudios Cualitativos En Educación*, 3(1), 1–19.  
<https://doi.org/10.35997/saberser.v3i1.71>



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## Resumen

Este artículo presenta parte de un estudio realizado con seis docentes de Lengua Portuguesa que trabajan en el área de Producción Textual en los últimos años de la Educación Primaria en seis escuelas pertenecientes a una red educativa confesional ubicada en la región sur de Brasil, en el estado de Santa Catarina. El objetivo fue implementar talleres teórico-prácticos y sesiones de planificación para apoyar la formación docente desde la perspectiva de la evaluación formativa. Se empleó la metodología de investigación-acción y se ofreció a los docentes participantes una formación continua centrada en la aplicación de estrategias en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, orientada al uso de metodologías activas alineadas con las prácticas de evaluación formativa. La formación consistió en talleres teórico-prácticos con un total de 30 horas y talleres de planificación con una duración de 18 horas. Tras finalizar los talleres, los docentes respondieron a un cuestionario sobre sus experiencias y la aplicabilidad de las prácticas realizadas. Los resultados revelaron que el uso de estrategias como mapas conceptuales, debates y la metodología de la problematización se considera un enfoque eficaz para la enseñanza de la producción textual. Así, el estudio destaca la importancia de la formación continua del profesorado para mejorar la práctica pedagógica y, consecuentemente, elevar la calidad de la educación ofrecida.

## Palabras clave:

Educación básica; formación continua del profesorado; investigación-acción; producción textual.

## Abstract

This article presents part of a study conducted with six Portuguese Language teachers working in the area of Text Production in the final years of Elementary Education at six schools belonging to a confessional educational network located in the southern region of Brazil, in the state of Santa Catarina. The objective was to implement theoretical-practical workshops and planning sessions to support teacher education from the perspective of formative assessment. Action research methodology was employed, and participating teachers were offered continuing education focused on applying strategies in the teaching-learning process, aimed at the use of active methodologies aligned with formative assessment practices. The training consisted of theoretical-practical workshops totaling 30 hours and planning workshops totaling 18 hours. After completing the workshops, teachers responded to a questionnaire regarding their experiences and the applicability of the practices carried out during the sessions. The results revealed that the use of strategies such as concept maps, debates, and problematization methodology are considered effective approaches for teaching text production. Thus, the study highlights the importance of continuing teacher education for improving pedagogical practice and, consequently, enhancing the quality of the education provided.

## Keywords:

Basic education; continuing teacher education; action research; text production.

## Introduction

The present study originated from a concern with teacher education related to the teaching of text production. Teachers who work with Text Production (TP) must engage in ongoing professional development so they can offer students meaningful experiences with written production and continually reassess their own pedagogical practice. As emphasized by Lopes and Silva (2020, p.

18), it is essential for teachers “to reflect on their own work and to evaluate it.” Beyond reflection, TP teachers must master linguistic strategies and content that support effective instruction in text production, guided by the orientations set forth in the Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC (Brasil, 2017). The BNCC outlines the progressive development of students’ ability to produce texts in different genres, always emphasizing interaction and authorship. It also reiterates that formative assessment is a continuous process integrated into educational practices, designed to promote student learning and to enhance teaching practices (Brasil, 2017).

Within the context of basic education, it is also necessary to consider formative assessment in relation to teaching practices in text production. When thinking about text as production, Bakhtin (2003, p. 286) highlights “the conception regarding the formal configuration of the utterance as a whole—that is, how a given speech genre guides us in the process of our discourse. [...] The chosen genre suggests the types and compositional linkages appropriate to it.”

From this thematic perspective emerges the research problem guiding this study: How are teaching and learning strategies for text production perceived as meaningful within a formative assessment process by Portuguese Language teachers in the final years of Elementary Education?

Based on this problem, the study proposes to analyze Portuguese Language teachers’ perceptions regarding formative assessment in the teaching and learning of text production, drawing on the application of strategies implemented as part of a continuing education program—specifically, Concept Maps, Debate, and the Problematization Methodology.

Concept Maps, as a teaching and learning strategy, can serve as a valuable tool for helping students organize information and develop critical and creative thinking skills. A Concept Map is a visual representation of connections among concepts and ideas, enabling students to identify and understand relationships among different concepts and thereby construct deeper comprehension of the subject matter. This representation is grounded in meaningful learning, which involves integrating new concepts into the learner’s existing cognitive structure “[...] with the purpose of establishing interrelated learning” (Ruiz-Moreno et al., 2007, p. 454), insofar as these new concepts can be connected to prior knowledge.

From this perspective, the use of Concept Maps can be seen both as a teaching strategy and as an evaluative tool, among other multifaceted possibilities. They may be generated from different viewpoints, contexts, or experiences, and can be employed to devise creative and/or innovative solutions to more complex challenges. Concept Maps are schematic structures that visually represent sets of concepts and their interconnections through propositions. Meaningful learning may occur through the identification of concepts, ideas, or cognitive anchors already present in the student’s mental structure, which serve as a basis for constructing new knowledge and integrating new information with prior learning.

The second strategy examined in this study is Debate, which positions students as active participants in the learning process, allowing them to contribute more effectively and meaningfully

to the construction of knowledge (Guedes et al., 2015). As an efficient pedagogical technique, debate enables interlocutors—including teachers and students—to confront differing points of view. Prior to the debate, however, it is essential that students gather relevant information on the topic to be discussed, and the teacher must mediate the discussion clearly and objectively. Oral language plays a key role in the development of linguistic and communicative abilities and is an essential component of the teaching and learning of languages. Marcuschi (2010, p. 25) states that “orality is an interactive social practice for communicative purposes, manifested in various forms or textual genres grounded in sound reality; it ranges from informal to formal realizations across diverse contexts of use.” Orality is fundamental to human communication, enabling the exchange of information, ideas, and emotions.

Debate centers on the exercise of argumentation as “a social discursive activity carried out through the justification of points of view and the consideration of opposing perspectives (counter-arguments) with the ultimate goal of promoting changes in participants’ representations of the topic discussed” (De Chiaro & Leitão, 2005, p. 350). Debate encourages imagination and critical analysis, especially when teachers pose intellectual challenges such as comparisons and foster respect for diverse opinions. This study thus incorporates debate as a strategy capable of encouraging students to analyze situations critically—an essential competence in contemporary education. With adequate moderation and student preparation, debate becomes a valuable learning technique that enhances critical thinking and deepens understanding of specific topics.

The final strategy addressed in this applied study is the Problematization Methodology, which consists of presenting students with problems relevant to their lived reality in order to motivate them to seek answers through different sources of information. Colombo and Berbel (2017) present Magueres’s Arc as a model for exemplifying this methodology, which uses reality as both the starting and ending point in the process of solving problems. Problematization is a pedagogical approach aimed at developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It is grounded in action and critical reflection on reality with the purpose of transforming it. According to Colombo and Berbel (2017), the Magueres Arc consists of five stages: observing reality, identifying key points, theorizing, formulating hypotheses, and applying solutions back to reality.

Considering these three proposed strategies, the demanding nature of the teacher’s work becomes evident, as noted by Gatti (2017). Teachers work with individuals who possess their own lived experiences, challenges, and difficulties. Therefore, teachers must develop competencies related to knowledge, practice, and engagement; mobilizing school-based knowledge alone is insufficient. They must cultivate reflection-in-action, a process that allows teachers to reflect on their own practice and identify ways to improve their skills and competencies. Through this exercise, teachers can identify areas for improvement and continually seek to refine their practice, becoming more effective agents in building a high-quality educational environment—one that recognizes students’ capacity to think and act (White, 2008).

According to Imbernón (2009, p. 39), “the fundamental axis of a teacher education curriculum is the development of the ability to reflect on one’s own teaching practice, with the aim of learning to interpret, understand, and reflect on social reality and the teaching profession.” From this standpoint, this study assumes that the construction of such knowledge requires bringing to the classroom situations that reflect who the intended reader will be, what the purpose of writing is, and in which medium the text will circulate. Additionally, the role of orality must be emphasized. Marcuschi (2010, p. 22) notes that “in contemporary society, both orality and writing are indispensable.” The BNCC recognizes that learning occurs through discourse, speaking and listening strategies, and interaction with others. It is the teacher’s role to promote intentional discussions—debates, conversation circles, seminars, among other strategies.

Across schools and universities at all educational levels, working with text production presents challenges for both teachers and students due to the diverse learning abilities involved in the process. These competencies vary significantly among learners due to factors such as prior educational experiences, cognitive development, sociocultural context, and individual motivation.

Educational practice requires highly qualified teachers who are prepared to address students’ needs and the emerging complexities of contemporary society. Today’s educational landscape calls for reflective teachers capable of examining their practices, ideas, and pedagogical choices within their everyday school context.

Teaching text production can be particularly challenging for teachers who lack specific training in this area, making it difficult to apply adequate strategies and methodologies. To evaluate and provide constructive feedback on students’ textual production, teachers must possess the necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, teachers must be willing to adapt their pedagogical approaches to student needs and to promote the development of writing skills. It is therefore essential that teachers receive training that prepares them to adopt innovative and dynamic pedagogical methodologies that stimulate student interest and foster the formation of critical and reflective citizens.

This is the purpose underpinning the present study: teachers engaged with the proposed methodologies and applied them in their practice in order to make the teaching–learning process more effective through the use of diverse strategies. Continuing teacher education is a learning process aimed at updating and enhancing professional knowledge and skills in a given field. This form of training provides opportunities for direct interaction among participants and facilitators, enabling the sharing of experiences and exchange of ideas. Accordingly, this study is organized into the following sections: Methodology; Results—presented in three parts (Teachers’ perspectives on in-person and online continuing education; Teaching–learning Strategies; Formative Assessment of the Teaching–learning Strategies); and, finally, the Conclusions.

## Methodology

The research was grounded in a qualitative approach, which enables a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved and supports a comprehensive and contextualized analysis of the phenomena under investigation (Ferri, 2001). In this study, interactions took place between the participating teachers—specialists in Text Production—and the facilitators who conducted the theoretical–practical and planning workshops, both in person and online.

Six teachers (identified in the study as D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, and D6) of the Portuguese Language discipline, working with Text Production in the final years of Elementary Education across six schools of a confessional educational network in the Southern Administrative Region of the state of Santa Catarina (Brazil), were invited to participate.

The choice of action research as the methodological framework is justified by its reflective nature, as it seeks to analyze educational realities and foster decision-making that may lead to improvements in pedagogical practice (Mion & Saito, 2001). This reflective process was made possible through structured moments of reflection provided to the participating teachers during both the in-person and online training sessions.

The study unfolded as follows: in the planning phase, the structure for implementing teaching–learning strategies—Debate, Concept Maps, and the Problematization Methodology—was defined, treating these strategies as evaluative instruments within a formative assessment perspective. In the second phase, defined as the action phase, these practices were implemented during the Planning Workshops for students in Text Production classes in the final years of Elementary Education. Subsequent reflection on the process enabled adjustments and refinements wherever necessary. These cycles occurred both in person and synchronously online via Zoom during the first academic term, and were repeated in Cycle 2 (second term) and Cycle 3 (third term).

The implementation of the Teacher Training Program in the Portuguese Language discipline consisted of two stages:

- First Stage: identification of participants, research setting, work strategies, and data collection instruments; securing research authorization; and designing the theoretical–practical workshops and planning workshops focused on Concept Maps, Debate, and the Problematization Methodology.
- Second Stage: execution of the theoretical–practical workshops, totaling 30 hours, and the planning workshops, totaling 18 hours.

All Text Production teachers participated in both workshop types. They were subsequently divided into pairs for the planning workshops, where they were responsible for developing a didactic sequence that incorporated the teaching–learning strategies and formative assessment practices intended for students in the final years of Elementary Education.

Once the materials were developed, each pair presented its planning, activities, and proposed assessments to the facilitators, who—together with the group—analyzed the teaching–learning strategies and formative assessment components. When necessary, plans underwent revision before being shared with the pairs again. These presentation sessions supported the validation of the revised planning materials among the participants.

Data on the teachers’ perceptions were collected through questionnaires and focus groups. At the end of each focus group, a summary of the discussion was presented to participants, allowing them to add information they deemed necessary, correct any points, and validate the content.

Following data collection, analysis and interpretation were conducted based on the content analysis framework proposed by Bardin (2011), who defines content analysis as “[...] a set of techniques for analyzing communications that employs systematic and objective procedures for describing message content.” She notes, however, that this definition alone does not fully capture the details of content analysis, adding that its intention is to infer knowledge about the conditions of production (or reception) of messages through the use of indicators, whether quantitative or not. Chizzotti (2006, p. 98) clarifies that “[...] the objective of content analysis is to critically understand the content and meaning of communications, whether their content is manifest or latent—explicit or hidden.”

Bardin (2011) identifies three phases in conducting content analysis. The first, pre-analysis, involves organizing the material to make it operational and to systematize the initial ideas. The second, exploration of the material, consists of coding, classification, and categorization. The third phase, treatment of results, allows the researcher to propose inferences and interpretations by drawing on the theoretical framework and the study’s objectives. These three phases guided the treatment of the qualitative data in this study.

## **Results**

The data were organized into three analytical categories: Continuing Education in in-person and online formats from the teachers’ perspective; Teaching–Learning Strategies; and Formative Assessment of the Teaching–Learning Strategies. Below, we present a summarized selection of the results emerging from both the questionnaires and the focus group discussions.

### **1. Continuing Education in In-Person and Online Formats**

Regarding the in-person and online continuing education program, participant D2 stated the following:

*“Formação continuada appears in the daily routine of teaching practice in two ways: both in the possibility of exchanging experiences with other teachers who know much more than I do, who are there—at the reach of my keyboard—to help me out. ‘How do we solve this?’ And*

*in the theoretical aspect, of renewing the knowledge we already have, but in a way that is more directed toward this group, which for me is still new.”*

D2 further added:

*“In the training I learned a great deal; the contribution was enormous, as this is my first year as a teacher and my first experience with a regular school—that is, with grades, parents, and everything else.” She continued by saying she is “very grateful for the opportunity to exchange with the group of teachers, especially because everyday experience is very different from theory.”*

Teacher D3 noted that the workshops offered clarifications that would assist in developing innovations for classroom lessons and assessment activities. The workshops also fostered dialogue and the understanding of shared challenges. As D6 remarked:

*“I see this exchange as essential, because you notice that other schools in the same association are going through difficulties that we often face and overcome.”*

Similarly, D1 emphasized that:

*“every exchange of information and experience enriches our teaching practice.”*

D5 added that the workshops provided insights that would support the innovations to be implemented in both lessons and assessments.

When asked about the thematic approach used in the workshops, D1 highlighted the importance of creating more meaningful lessons for students through active methodologies. D2 stated that the theoretical and practical components offered numerous possibilities to enrich and give more meaning to her teaching practice. Participants generally perceived the workshops as dynamic, as evidenced by remarks such as:

*“I loved the in-person workshop we did at the beginning of the year, where we were able to engage in practical work. Normally, we attend many lectures and do little production, and I found the methodology excellent—the facilitator gradually led us to produce.” (D5)*

*D4 also noted “the importance of using different evaluation instruments to spark students’ curiosity and consequently strengthen the teaching–learning process, as well as the way the various assessment tools and possibilities for integrating active methodologies were addressed.”*

Overall, the teachers valued the theoretical–practical workshops and the variety of assessment tools explored. Their statements revealed that collaborative lesson planning promotes an enriching environment in which shared experiences, ideas, and strategies help strengthen and support teachers in addressing educational challenges.

Regarding collaborative planning, participant D2 commented:

*“I think that planning with colleagues allows you to carry out more challenging tasks—activities and assignments you had not considered. You choose other ways to work with the content, and it gives you confidence because it was designed collectively, so you feel you can experiment more.”*

D6 further explained:

*“In developing the first lesson plan—considering everything was new to me since I come from another field—I was amazed by the methodology. First, because it gave me credibility, authority, professionalism... We all spoke the same language; I found that very positive. (...) This exchange was very valuable; it brought ease and reduced stress for me because I could take a plan and trust that I wasn’t the only one working that way. I found that very, very good.”*

D3 echoed these sentiments:

*“I agree with everything D6 said, but one very important aspect is this exchange—knowing you are not alone. If you make a mistake, someone will be there with you, and we are all following the same path. Planning together was very important because ideas emerge, and from there, we continue discussing. It was very, very good.”*

Likewise, D4 stated:

*“To summarize, it was a very good experience; it brought ease and reduced stress because I could pick up a plan and feel confident and secure knowing I wasn’t the only one working that way. I found it very, very good.”*

In summary, the teachers’ testimonials indicate that collaborative planning fosters an enriching and supportive environment. Sharing knowledge and experiences strengthens teachers’ confidence and contributes to more consistent, innovative work aligned with educational goals. This collective approach also enhances the effectiveness and satisfaction of implementing planned activities.

## 2. Teaching–Learning Strategies

Each strategy has its own particular characteristics and the potential to transform how content is taught and learned. These strategies encourage student participation and, consequently, enhance the effectiveness of learning. Their success, however, depends greatly on the perceptions and lived experiences of teachers and students.

### **Concept Maps**

Teacher D2 offered a meaningful personal account of her learning process and professional growth through the use of concept maps as a teaching tool. Her statement reflects a journey of discovery and appreciation for the pedagogical value of this strategy:

*“And now I require concept maps; I arrive full of certainty. The students have no idea that until January I used ‘concept map’ and ‘mind map’ as synonyms. I really learned a lot. I am very grateful for the opportunity to exchange with a group of teachers.” (D2)*

Teacher D6 added:

*“The map offered an indicator that allowed me to notice some mistaken concepts (definitions) regarding assessment forms.”*

This suggests that concept maps served as a diagnostic tool, enabling her to identify misunderstandings related to assessment concepts. When students create a concept map, they reveal how they understand and relate key concepts; inaccuracies become visible and can be addressed through targeted instruction.

*From D1’s perspective, concept maps “contribute to organizing ideas, help construct higher-quality texts, and prepare students to read, study, and understand content.” Similarly, D3 observed that “by developing a concept map, students can review and analyze the concepts studied, as well as make connections among propositions, thus facilitating the teaching–learning process.” D5 agreed, stating that concept maps are “an excellent assessment tool, as students are encouraged to think, relate, and reflect on the subject, fostering meaningful learning.”*

### **Debate**

The teachers’ statements below highlight the importance of debate as a strategy for developing argumentative skills:

*“The debate, because the method motivated students to organize the arguments that were required.” (D1)*

*“In the writing course, the debate conducted in the third term showed students how efficient argumentation can influence the opinion of the listener/reader.” (D2)*

*“A strategy that was used and proved extremely productive was the debate. For them to construct plausible arguments, it was necessary for them to have knowledge of the topic.” (D3)*

*“The use of debate as a tool for constructing argumentative essays.” (D5)*

*“The debate, I believe, was the most beneficial in every sense, because according to the standpoint they defended, they had to listen to and understand different opinions.” (D6)*

These statements reflect a clear consensus among teachers regarding the value of debate as an effective pedagogical strategy, although each teacher highlights distinct aspects and potential benefits. Teachers D1, D2, D3, and D6 emphasized the debate’s power in fostering students’ argumentative abilities; they observed that the strategy helped students better organize and present convincing arguments.

D6 highlighted the debate’s capacity to cultivate students’ understanding of multiple perspectives. He pointed out that debate requires not only the capacity to argue effectively but also the ability to listen attentively and consider alternative viewpoints. This contributes to the development of empathy and critical thinking.

Overall, the teachers’ perspectives underscore that while debate is universally viewed as useful, each teacher focuses on different dimensions of its impact—demonstrating the versatility and broad scope of skills that debate helps students develop.

### ***Problematization Methodology***

Teacher D5 stated:

*“I consider the problematization methodology an efficient mechanism, as well as other formative assessment strategies, because they make the student the protagonist of the learning process.”*

According to D6:

*“Problematization methodology is a powerful way to connect writing to real life. It encourages students to think deeply about social, environmental, or personal issues and to*

*express their ideas clearly and persuasively. This has a significant impact on students' motivation and engagement with writing."*

Teacher D4 acknowledged the effectiveness of the methodology but noted:

*"I believe the problematization methodology is an excellent tool; however, it cannot be used in the fourth term due to class time (overload for the student)."*

D5 added that problematization demands more planning and preparation than traditional teaching, but emphasized that

*"seeing my students engaged and thinking critically about real issues is worth the extra effort."*

D6 reiterated:

*"In my writing classes, the problematization methodology is a powerful way to connect writing to real life. It encourages students to think deeply about social, environmental, or personal issues and to express their ideas clearly and persuasively. This has a significant impact on students' motivation and involvement with writing."*

Overall, all teachers recognized the value and effectiveness of the problematization methodology in promoting learning and enhancing students' critical thinking skills. They acknowledged that it requires time, reflection, and careful planning. There is a clear consensus that problematization provides an effective means of linking writing to real-life contexts and fosters thoughtful engagement with relevant issues.

### **3. Formative Assessment of the Teaching–Learning Strategies**

Formative assessment is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning, centered on the continuous monitoring of student progress and the provision of constant feedback. From the teachers' perspectives, the following results emerged:

*"Formative assessment is a process that requires teacher study. It requires constant attention, because when you have a punctual instrument like a test, it is easier to correct and evaluate. But when you have an ongoing process and you are working in groups, it becomes very challenging because you need to make the assessment somewhat more individualized."*

(D4)

*“It is a way of observing student learning in a punctual manner. However, what must be done is objective correction (objective command consequences) and group corrections, aimed at strengthening learning. Yet, it should not be the only evaluation method.” (D3)*

*“A valid and effective strategy. It is capable of involving the student in their own practice. The importance of this type of evaluation is highly constructive and positive for students to gain more knowledge and improve their skills.” (D5)*

Teachers D4, D3, and D5 reveal different perspectives on formative assessment, yet all converge on the view that it is valuable, though demanding. D4 highlights that formative assessment requires significant effort and continuous observation, unlike traditional tests that offer quick correction and classification. In group environments, the challenge increases because assessment must account for individual contributions within collective work.

D3 views formative assessment as a way to observe learning punctually and provide targeted corrective feedback. He advocates a balanced approach combining individual and group evaluations. He also warns that formative assessment should not be the sole form of assessment.

D5 sees formative assessment as an effective strategy for engaging students in their own learning, noting that its constructive nature supports knowledge acquisition and skill refinement.

Collectively, the teachers agree that although formative assessment is more demanding than traditional evaluation, it provides meaningful benefits by offering continuous, individualized feedback that enhances student learning.

Teacher D6 added:

*“It is possible to work on varied skills. I have students who achieve excellent results on written tests, while others excel in teamwork and presentations. In this modality, students who demonstrate competencies aligned with this method of assessment experienced the success they desired.”*

He further explained:

*“Considering strategies, within each student’s limitations and reality, I believe that this work of looking at everyone was very positive, because it opened our minds to how students learn by participating, being part of the process, and also that assessment does not need to be a moment of accountability. Even though it is an assessment, it can be pleasurable and a process of growth—not the final product of a single term as in the banking system.” (D6)*

This reflection emphasizes the value of active learning, student participation, and formative evaluation. By acknowledging individual differences, D6 advocates for a holistic view of student development in which assessment supports growth rather than merely measuring outcomes.

Teacher D2 highlighted an important distinction:

*“One thing is to use a concept map, a debate, or a problematization methodology as preparation for a writing task or the introduction of a lesson; it is something completely different to use them as assessment instruments. This construction was very positive for me, and I would not have done it this way if I had not been part of the project. I would likely have continued evaluating only the debate itself, but not the stages, all the steps as we did.” (D2)*

She continued:

*“It is challenging because it requires the teacher to make constant records of all classroom moments. Writing an essay, for example, is punctual; the grade is given for the final result of the process. In a debate or in the problematization methodology, you do not evaluate only the final moment, the ‘product’, the speeches. It is important to record all the stages and evaluate them.” (D2)*

Her statements reveal a transformation in her understanding of teaching–learning strategies as assessment tools. She acknowledges that formative assessment is more labor-intensive due to its focus on process rather than product, yet she also recognizes its richness and depth as it provides a more complete picture of student learning.

Teacher D1 emphasized that formative assessment functions as a “support center” for the “necessary reconstructions”, illustrating how it encourages students to reflect on their performance and make adjustments. D2 added that formative assessment pushes students out of their “comfort zone,” motivating them to challenge themselves and engage more actively in learning.

She further observed:

*“A test illustrates a ‘suspended’ moment of the activities developed. For numerous reasons, it can ‘mask’ the diagnosis of the teaching–learning process. It may show more efficient performance or less, aside from the fact that a test only illustrates a fragment of students’ potentialities.” (D2)*

It is evident that she values an integrated and continuous pedagogical process, as she recognizes the importance of using multiple pedagogical tools—such as concept maps, debates, and the problematization methodology—not only as ways to introduce a topic or prepare students for a writing task, but also as assessment instruments. Her statement suggests that implementing this process within the project enabled a significant shift in her pedagogical approach, leading her to consider and evaluate all stages of learning, rather than only the final product. This reflects an appreciation for formative assessment, in which the focus is on the student’s continuous progress over time, and not solely on test or exam results.

In Table 1 below, a general synthesis of the teachers' perceptions is presented in key expressions for each of the categories proposed for analysis:

**Table 1**

*General Synthesis of Teachers' Perceptions in Each Category of Analysis.*

<b>Categories of Analysis</b>	<b>General Synthesis of Teachers' Perceptions</b>
1. In-person and Online Continuing Education	Exchange of experience Contribution Clarifications Dynamism Collaborative environment <b>Concept Map:</b> Teaching tool Diagnostic tool Change in perception <b>Debate:</b>
2. Teaching–Learning Strategies	Organization of arguments Tool for text construction Effective pedagogical strategy Development of empathy and critical thinking <b>Problematization Methodology:</b> Efficient mechanism Excellent tool
3. Formative Assessment of Teaching–Learning Strategies	Integral approach Valuable and challenging tool

The synthesis presented indicates a highly favorable perception of continuing education and of the use of teaching strategies and formative assessment among the participating teachers in the study.

## **Discussion**

According to Gadotti (2011, p. 41), continuing education “begins with critical reflection on practice.” In this same perspective, Freire (2011, p. 40) corroborates by stating that “it is by thinking critically about today’s or yesterday’s practice that we can improve the next practice.” Thus, it can be said that continuing education is the space where discussions and immersive practices occur—elements that allow for a more personalized approach adapted to participants’ needs.

With the aim of fostering reflection on the training and practice of Portuguese Language teachers, and considering the discussions presented thus far, it becomes essential that these professionals engage in more reflective and argumentative approaches when employing teaching–learning strategies aimed at helping students advance in their writing skills.

Among these strategies, during the training, teachers planned and implemented activities with students throughout the 2022 academic year using concept maps, debates, and the

problematization methodology as means to promote the teaching and learning of text production. These were recognized as effective tools for stimulating more active and meaningful learning. Pimenta (2005, p. 26) proposes that “the role of theory is to offer teachers analytical perspectives that enable them to understand historical, social, cultural, organizational contexts, as well as themselves as professionals, within which their teaching activity unfolds, so that they may intervene and transform them.”

In this light, concept maps were described by teachers as useful tools to break the routine of traditional assessment methods. This graphic resource, which enables the representation of hierarchical relationships between concepts, was appreciated for its ability to encourage students to think, relate ideas, and reflect on the content studied, both in handwritten and digital formats. Rather than memorizing information, students needed to understand and establish connections among different aspects of the content—leading to deeper and longer-lasting learning. Concept maps also provided teachers with a visual means to monitor students’ progress and identify gaps or misunderstandings.

Debates, in turn, emerged as one of the most impactful strategies. Debate not only fostered argumentative and counter-argumentative skills but also promoted critical thinking, oral communication skills, and respect for others’ viewpoints. Teachers observed significant progress in students’ argumentative abilities, both orally and in writing. Through debates, students are encouraged to research, organize their thoughts, develop solid arguments, and communicate them effectively.

These observations highlight that active learning strategies—such as concept maps and debates—can have a profound impact on students’ ability to assimilate and apply knowledge, thereby improving the overall quality of learning. By employing these tools, teachers not only facilitate the learning of content but also foster essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and respect for diverse perspectives.

Teachers’ testimonials also revealed a strong recognition of the value of formative assessment and a deepened understanding of how their practices align with this approach. They emphasized that the application of teaching–learning strategies—concept maps, debates, and the problematization methodology—went beyond punctual assessments and became part of a continuous process integrated into daily instruction. They also observed that these strategies encouraged students to think, make connections, and reflect on what they learned, promoting more meaningful learning.

This continuous use of strategies allowed teachers to constantly assess student understanding and provide immediate feedback, both fundamental features of formative assessment. In the case of debates, teachers highlighted significant gains in students’ progress. Debates enabled teachers to assess students’ argumentative abilities, communication skills, and critical thinking throughout the entire process—not only at the end. Regarding the problematization

methodology, even when not mentioned directly, it fits seamlessly within the scope of formative assessment. The strategy encourages students to reflect critically on the issues presented, enabling teachers to assess critical thinking skills throughout the learning process.

The problematization methodology is a student-centered pedagogical strategy in which the teaching–learning process is guided by the analysis and resolution of problems. In this approach, students are encouraged to apply critical thinking to real or hypothetical problems, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. This strategy increases students’ motivation while helping them understand and apply theoretical concepts in practical contexts.

However, implementing the problematization methodology can present challenges, especially given that many teachers highlighted the additional time and planning it requires, as well as students’ initial resistance when accustomed to more passive methods. Despite these challenges, most teachers reported that the approach is worthwhile, as it promotes student engagement and helps them develop valuable critical thinking skills.

In summary, although the problematization methodology may require an initial investment of time and energy, it has the potential to profoundly transform the learning process by connecting education to real-life situations and encouraging students to take an active role in their own educational development. It is a strategy that can help prepare students for the complex challenges of the 21st century and empower them to become lifelong learners.

Based on the reflections and experiences shared by teachers, it is clear that formative assessment is a complex and challenging process, yet essential for promoting meaningful and individualized learning. This type of assessment departs from the traditional model based solely on tests and punctual evaluations, opting instead for a more holistic approach that monitors and evaluates student progress over time.

Teachers emphasized the usefulness of formative assessment strategies such as debates, concept maps, and problematization methodology, which give students the opportunity to participate actively in the learning process. These methods require students to demonstrate comprehension, application, and synthesis of content in more complex ways than merely responding to a traditional test.

However, despite their benefits, formative assessment strategies are not without challenges. As teachers pointed out, they demand a high degree of dedication and attention from the educator, requiring constant evaluation of student progress, adaptation of teaching strategies, and the delivery of ongoing, constructive feedback. Additionally, formative assessment can be particularly demanding in group learning environments, where teachers must evaluate individual contributions within the broader context of group performance. In this sense, it aligns strongly with contemporary theories of teaching and learning, which emphasize collaborative knowledge construction and student-centered learning.

As Alarcão (2010) notes, the effectiveness of such strategies is strongly influenced by teachers' perceptions. The author emphasizes the importance of personal and professional development through self-training and autonomy. Alarcão (2010) argues that educators should reflect on their experiences and practices, using this reflection to drive their professional growth and enhance their teaching skills. This implies an active and reflective teaching practice—one capable of learning, adapting, innovating, and continuously improving based on experiential knowledge.

Therefore, teachers' perceptions of the formative assessment process demonstrate a solid understanding of its practical application in the classroom through the use of these teaching–learning strategies. Each strategy helps assess different aspects of students' learning processes, making assessment more holistic and continuous.

## **Conclusions**

This study aimed to analyze the perceptions of Portuguese Language teachers—specifically those focused on text production in the final years of Elementary Education—regarding the formative assessment process applied to teaching and learning in this area of language instruction. The professional development program incorporated strategies such as tests, flipped classroom, concept maps, debate, problematization methodology, and text production.

Based on the research conducted and aligned with the proposed objectives, the findings highlight the importance of continuous development of teaching competencies, particularly concerning the teaching–learning strategies applied in Portuguese Language instruction at the Elementary level. The three strategies explored—the use of concept maps, the promotion of debates, and the application of the problematization methodology—demonstrated significant potential to enrich pedagogical practice by fostering deeper, more meaningful learning among students.

Thus, teachers' perceptions of the continuing education process revealed the need for classroom practice to be supported so that teachers may effectively incorporate the strategies presented in this study as tools for enhancing teaching and learning. When properly aligned with a continuing education program, these strategies serve to enrich teachers' pedagogical skills, strengthening their capacity to stimulate active learning and improve instruction in text production. Investing in such strategies and in the ongoing development of teachers is essential for advancing educational quality.

This study was limited to the implementation of workshops for teachers of the final years of Elementary Education, leaving a research gap concerning teachers who work in High School education. Future applied studies may therefore be conducted with teachers from this educational level, providing a more comprehensive understanding of these teaching strategies and of formative assessment based on research involving educators across Basic Education—particularly those working in High School.

## Conflicto de Intereses y Agradecimientos

No tenemos conflictos de intereses que reportar.

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