ABSTRACT
This work reports some of the steps covered by a Master thesis that problematized the possibilities for changes in the educational processes for teacher training in the Lato Sensu Specialization Course in Gender and Diversity in School (GDE), in the Distance Education (EAD) modality. This study used, methodologically, document analysis to identify knowledge produced and registered in pedagogical situations and in the GDE course, and questioned the empirical material, considering the post-structuralist studies, cultural studies and Foucault’s conceptual tools for speech analysis which referred to “learning inflections”, allowing us to observe and point out that the teaching-learning process made by the GDE course allowed identification of learning times and redirecting of “learning on gender”, producing “new knowledge”.

KEYWORDS
Teaching; learning; inflection; public policy; teacher training.

To begin with...
This text seeks to report some of the steps of a qualitative research by a Master thesis in Education, which proposed to recognize, verify and deepen teaching-learning processes through Distance Education (EAD) course with continued teacher training, in the Lato Sensu Course of Specialization in Gender and Diversity in School (GDE), offered by the Department of Education (DED) of the Federal University of Lavras (UFLA).

The GDE is the result of a set of public policies offered by the Brazilian government that include gender and diversity – the result of major social movements and actions arising from the federal government, which came to power in 2003. In this same year there was the creation of the Special Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM) and in 2004, the creation of the Department of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity (Secad).

In 2006, the SPM started the Program for Gender and Diversity in School, a pilot project, at distance modality, for public school teachers to guide them in how to deal with diversity in the classroom, combat prejudiced attitudes and behaviors regarding gender, race/ethnicity and different sexual orientations.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Education – MEC\(^2\) established the Education Network for Diversity, with actions to be implemented by public institutions of higher education. From the Edict number 6/2009, the institutions proposed to offer extension, training or special-
ization courses, through distance learning, on the theme of education for diversity, through the System of the Open University of Brazil (UAB). In this context, the Federal University of Lavras approved the Post-Graduate Lato Sensu course entitled “Gender and Diversity in School – GDE”, which was offered by two Education Network courses for Diversity: a basic course - Education for Diversity - and a specific course - Gender and Diversity in School⁴.

Thus all this work was carried out to establish a space to reflect and recognize what we call “learning inflections” - an internal movement of change - translated into (re)cognition and transformation of knowledge. Through research, we sought to identify and discuss moments of gender learning inflections in teacher training in the GDE.

The focus and interest of this study was due to my active participation in the construction of the GDE process and because of my role as a distance education teacher, being part of a group of collective teaching and/or multi teaching, a concept that Mill (2010, p. 25) proposed us to think, when considering teaching that characterizes the Distance Learning (EAD), as a “unit formed by the work of a professional team.”

Perceptions gave rise to curiosities and questioning related to the teaching-learning processes that took place in the EAD, such as: Is learning effective through distance education? Did the GDE course enable significant learning? Is it possible to (re)learn about gender? And what about diversity? What moments and course situations can be identified as inflection learning in gender? Can learning be (re)directed and (re)built? Is it possible to identify this (re)targeting? These questions were in the checks and experiences because when I participated in dialogues with some course participants and analyzed their work, I could realize that there was learning, so it was possible to identify the paths and to map the trajectories of such learning, pointing out their lines, their designs and identifying signs of change and (re)knowledge of learning.

Therefore, the study was based on verification of documents generated during the course, that is, an analysis of written records, that were considered prime material for analysis and interpretation, enabling to map and identify “speeches - set of statements” which referred to “learning inflections” of/from participants. According to Foucault (1986, p. 135) “we will call ‘speech’ a set of statements that support the same discursive formation”. Thus, the objective in this writing was to recognize that there was significant, experiential and reflective learning, resulting in the construction of “new knowledge”.

**Contextualizing learning inflections**

Educational activities offered in the GDE course allowed learning by quite complex mental processes. Some of these processes began in the educational environment provided by the GDE course, and they were taken up in future times clippings, through the intense experience in disciplines’ processes that intentionally enabled to experience and reflect on some

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⁴ The GDE has the purpose of promoting debates on education as a fundamental right that must be guaranteed to all, without any discrimination, promoting citizenship, equal rights and respect for socio-cultural, ethnic-racial, age and generational, gender and affective-sexual orientation diversity. Its political, social and educational objective is to develop the capacity of teachers from the elementary school […] in order to understand and position themselves on the political, economic and socio-cultural changes that require recognition and respect for socio-cultural diversity from Brazilians and from people worldwide. (BARRETO; ARAÚJO; PEREIRA, 2009, p.263).
facts related to locked discussions, leading us to establish relations among these facts, the lived reality and the knowledge that each student already brought with them.

Thus, many reflections of learning could not be verified during the learning process, but may have occurred in moments of reflection about what the students were learning and experiencing, meaning that at a certain time the person came to understand an idea, or a certain concept, or the relation among the facts. Thus, when someone recognized that he/she learned something, a “new knowledge”, during a pedagogical action, which is not simply the ability to represent or repeat what was exposed. It is the result not only of that experienced pedagogical action, but a composition of the pedagogical action with so many other events and past memories in an internal transformation movement and (re)construction of the way of thinking, the way of knowing.

Thus, we can characterize such moments using and re-creating the concept of “inflection point” that, here we know or recognize and identify as something larger, arising out of statements produced by the teacher-participant in response to what they were encouraged to reflect and learn, moments that we have identified and mapped as ‘learning inflections’.

An inflection point and/or inflection is equivalent to an inner movement that allows to changes to be noticed. It is a concept used in different manners to designate that, at some point, there were movements and changes. Thus, we can sustain our thoughts, according to the concept of the inflection point that proposes us to think. Machado (2011), the author who seeks in the works and thoughts of Gilles Deleuze subsidies to recreate and propose a new perception for this concept, as an idea of what is to come or that ‘becomes’ the ‘becoming’:

> Preliminarily it is understood as an inflection point, any (virtual) curve space where it is impossible to determine the trend of the movement. Contrary to the extreme, maximum or minimum points, the inflection point does not refer to coordinates: it is not at the top or at the bottom, or right or left, or in regression or in progression [...] inflection is the pure event at a line or point, the virtual, the ideal par excellence. The inflection point is the (non) place, that according to coordinate axes, as becoming, it is not in the world: it is before the world, its beginning, the place of appearance, non-dimensional point, point between dimensions. An event that would be event waiting (MACHADO, 2011, p. 2).

Still, according to the author, this definition of inflection refers to the scope of Deleuze’s thoughts, which always sought to combine the concepts that, even metaphysical, do not try to fix or determine, but rather forward and derive.

These are times of changes, “pure event” or “events waiting for events”, sense of meaning, (re)direction and consequently transformation of ideas and thoughts, we seek to know and/or recognize within proposals and speeches experienced in the GDE, referring thus to a possible new understanding of the concept of “inflection point” that we dare derive in “learning inflections”.

**Understanding the GDE course learning processes...**

Before going through the identifications and the GDE course, one must first understand how learning took place in the Distance Learning, a space - heterotopic - that was building possibilities, (de)constructing and (re)constructing the learning process and then trying to map and point these events.
On “other spaces”, we are already encouraged to reflect on Foucault (1967), when he stated that the present, or in his words “the present time, would perhaps preferably be the time of space” from other spaces, or “another space”. The prospects of these thoughts allow us to understand and consider the EAD as a “heterotopic space” of learning, i.e., another space to learn. Michel Foucault called the invention of other areas as heterotopic, because, according to him:

We are at the time of the simultaneous, we are at the time of juxtaposition, the near and the far, side by side, the time of the dispersed. We are at a time when the world experiences itself [...] less as a major route that would develop over time than as a network that reconnects points and intersects its plot (Foucault, 2009, p. 411).

Foucault’s position that the way we know the space today, how we aim it in our theories, in our subjects, is not an innovation, because the space has its own time and its own history. One cannot ignore the vital interweaving of time and space. Thus, EAD emerged as another area of education in the educational setting, a heterotopic space or heterotopic space for learning, by juxtaposing distance learning and in the teaching-learning process, proposing new hierarchy of possibilities in Education itself.

Learning, according to Deleuze (2009), is the movement that covers the gap between the not knowing and the knowing, in which the importance of the process dissolves the result. To him, learning is going by one’s-self in paths that lead to problem solving.

Learning is the name that befits the subjective acts operated in light of the problem’s objectivity (Idea), whereas knowledge designates only the generality of the concept or the calm possession of a solution rule [...] Learning is to penetrate the universal of relations, which constitute the Idea and the singularities that correspond to them. [...] This combination determines to us a threshold of consciousness at the level of which our real acts adjust our perceptions of the real relations of the object, providing then, a solution of the problem (Deleuze, 1998 apud El Khouri, 2009, p. 3).

The learnings, in the GDE Course, occurred from a rhizomatic perspective, referring always to the multiplicity of forms of knowledge that interact with each other within historical and cultural contexts, to the emergence of the subject’s thought, so the learning put into practice the “questioning” and “thinking about” exercise.

As such, in this process of learning, we identified in the written records of the knowledge exchange - in speeches and transcripts as set out text corpus, learning moments where one’s (re)learning influenced the learning of another person. The teaching process adapted itself and complied with the conditions and the reality of those students that learned, taking into account all the socio-historical context of the individual who teaches and also learns receptive to always learn.

The invitation is [was] to destabilize the certainties that are rooted in binarisms: right and wrong, can and cannot, normal and abnormal; to deconstruct ways of teaching/learning and making up methodological possibilities. (RIBEIRO & SOUZA 2008, p.24)

From these ideas, this research proposed to lean on a documentary analysis, a method for qualitative analysis of empirical material in order to go beyond the described, a method that
can be divided into two stages: document collection and analysis (Flores, 1994). Such analysis sought the various operating possibilities of what was expressed and verbalized in statements that composed the discourse and discursive practices and the GDE, from their knowledge.

Understanding the spoken or written words, present in the studied documents as a source of our data can be seen as small fragments of text and/or textual excerpts. We sought to understand the discourse, specifically the set of “statements”, following Foucault’s steps, articulated to “navigate” through ideas anchored in post-structuralism and cultural studies, that contrast and challenge traditional ideas that engender the understanding of what is established as fact(s). Truth is an invention, a creation (PARAÍSO, 2012), there is no “truth”, but there are the “regimes of truth”, ie, “discourses” that society accepts and therefore such discourses act as true (FOUCAULT, 2000).

In the speech analysis proposed, under the concept of “critical discourse analysis” or Foucault’s analysis, it was essential that we had in mind that knowledge would be tied to the “power relations” and its versions of “truth”, and that these relations were built by the subject in its historical plot. This leads us to reflect Araújo (2007), when analyzing the genealogically discursive formation, seeking a form of history that takes into account the constitution of knowledge, discourses of objects domain [as Foucault writes] urging us to walk to the “story” built, taking into account its indispensable dual role in the discourse analysis: the events in the knowledge order, and what should be taken into account [the story that recreates the context that our study subjects live in] - teachers in their continuing teaching training and the truths they have learned to believe.

The speech is not a close contact surface, or confrontation, between a reality and a language, the intricacy between words and experiences; I would like to show, through specific examples that, when analyzing the speeches themselves, we see the unravelling of seemingly strong links between words and things, and standing out a set of rules, its own discursive practice. (...) No longer treating discourses as a set of signs (significant elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects that they talk about. Certainly the speeches are made of signs; but what they do is more than using these signs to designate things. It is this more that makes them irreducible to the language and the speech act. It is this “more” that it takes to appear and it is necessary to describe (Foucault, 1986, p. 56).

The searches were therefore based on the history that built the knowledge of each subject, as well as in the material produced and in the results of the relations among knowledge, power and truth, and how it scaled from knowledge and new knowledge, intending to not only find the source of truth or simply the absolute foundation of knowledge.

Thus, the speech goes beyond a simple reference to “things”, it exists beyond the mere use of letters, words, sentences and prepositions. “It has an order, it is subject to rules of common runs at a given time” (FERNANDES, 2007, p. 33), it can be normative and regulatory, putting in place mechanisms of organizing reality through the knowledge and the practices it produces. According to Fischer (2001, p. 200), the speech “cannot be understood only as a phenomenon of mere expression of something, because it has intrinsic regularities itself, in which is possible to define a conceptual network of its own”.

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In this movement of questioning reality, its power relations and the knowledge produced, it became necessary to characterize the speech as a practice of spoken and written production, as a practice of creation and meaning of the subject itself and its modes of subjectivity (PARAÍSO, 2012), understanding that these practices constituted it and mediated its relations - our subjects: teachers in continuing education - subjects that feel, think, live, experience, reflect, express and speak.

Realizing that there were possibilities of transformation of statements built during the GDE course in EAD - recorded in documents and texts where we can point out and map events of learning inflections - we sought to analyze these discursive practices. Intending not the proclamation of the “discovery” of the truth about the experienced reality (NOGUEIRA, 2001), but the “questioning” of what was said and thought about a particular topic (FOUCAULT, 2006), to portray the discursive practices, offering a version that is inevitably partial, since there will always be new possibilities to (re)interpret them.

Mapping gender learning inflections

Our paths now meet the identifications of what we call as “learning inflections”, i.e, mapping and showing the trajectory of the participants’ learning in the GDE course.

In order to do this, as suggested by Fischer (2002, p. 50), one must be aware of the minutiae, “pan texts, images, things said, visibilities (techniques and procedures generated institutionally), accepting the precariousness of those sayings and at the same time, multiplying them relationally and arranging them in temporary units “of meaning; it is not only seeking a source for certain discourse, much less intended to identify those who produce, on the contrary, “it is analyzing why is it said, in that way, at any given time and context, asking about the speech’s “conditions of existence” (SALES, 2012, p.125).

Thus, the discourse analysis aims to “determine what is the position that can occupy every individual to be its subject” (Foucault, 1986, p. 108), this position is contingent, historical, located in time and space, variable, flexible, plastic, permeable, multiple, never fixed, innate, finished, prior and surely determined, single, universal or transcendent (Foucault, 1986).

Thus the “Gender” studied in the course aimed to awaken in the teacher-participant opportunities to meet, identify and discuss the themes and concepts of “gender”, about their meanings in and to society, knowing masculinity and femininity and possible social relations between “gender”- results of interactions that are established between a man and a woman, considering all its implications and historical buildings.

After reading comprehension and analysis of the collected and documented empirical data on the discipline, we observed what the teacher-participant thought, understood and conceptualized as gender, as well as the features built into the formation of these concepts that mostly expressed differentiation of their individuals, restricting them, from a common sense, as the biological difference or their social male or female “models”, seen and accepted as truth.

[...]Gender distinguishes people in the biological dimension of sex ... It is the difference between the sexes, based on anatomy that distinguishes each body... (initial statement – teacher-participant1 GDE, 2012)

[...]Gender, and sexuality, are grounded on socio-historical basis of distinctions based on biological sex ... refers to the social construction of anatomical sex, and was created to distin-
guish the biological dimension, basing that in humans there are males and females ... (initial statement – teacher-participant 2 GDE, 2012)

[...]When it comes to gender, what comes to mind is male and female, a situation that defines a person as man or as woman... (initial statement – teacher-participant 3 GDE, 2012)

Such speeches expressed that in the previous teacher-participant’s historical and cultural point of view, the concept of gender was closely related and restricted and intertwined these two specific situations: the biological sex of each individual, and the differences between male and female - to be a man or a woman.

All the participants agreed that gender can socially define men and women and its masculinity and femininity built in cultural relations, and they were not able to initially express the existence of various masculinity and femininity and all its complexity that constitute the social individual. Generally, these course participants used the concept of gender only to distinguish and describe the man and woman/male and female categories and the relations perceived in their surroundings, as the historically predetermined stereotypes that exists in society.

Therefore, recognizing and studying the concept of gender through the Discipline (GE), reaching its various meanings and definitions was - and is, essential to broaden the understanding of the term that is used to distinguish biological and social dimensions, meaning that men and women are products of social reality and not the anatomy of their sexed bodies.

Gender is understood as a way of referring to “cultural constructions”, the entirely social creation of appropriate roles for men and women [...] gender is, according to this definition, a social category imposed on a sexed body (SCOTT, 1995, p. 75).

Sexed body, made up by the culture, “there isn’t a body that is not [since forever] been said and constructed by culture” (LOURO, 2004, p.81), by the story that constitute the individual. Butler (2003) draws our attention to reflections on “sex” and “gender” because, although sex seems to be intractable in biological terms, always defined by the anatomy of the body, gender is culturally constructed without fixity, thus it doesn’t make sense to interpret gender as a cultural construction of sex. So we can understand that it is not the biological sex that determines the construction of various forms of male and female, man and woman.

From new insights and (re)construction of gender conceptions, possible by the experienced problematization during the course (GE), we observed conceptual changes that have materialized in the positioning of the teachers-participants through changes in their statements that they appropriated and used to verbalize new thoughts and insights when facing the issues involving gender relations, allowing us to see the emergence of new ideas and changes in learning.

[...]I realize now that men and women are products of a social reality and not the anatomy of their bodies. While biological sex differences are natural and immutable, gender is established by social conventions, it varies according time and cultural patterns ... (gender learning inflections – Teacher-participant 1 GDE, 2012)

[...]Gender is a social, historical and cultural construction; the biological difference is just the starting point for this social construction, subtending what being a man or a woman, from the size of the social relations of female and male... (gender learning inflections –
Talking about gender, or better, speaking of gender relations is to talk about the characteristics attributed to each gender by society and culture. Thus, the notion of gender points, therefore, to the extent of social and cultural relations of the female and male, as we can see that there are changes in the cultural definition of what is a man or woman throughout life... (gender learning inflections – Teacher-participant 3 GDE, 2012)

These changes - learning inflections - were mapped and assembled into units of meaning that put together correlated or similar perceptions, which allowed us to identify the implicit and explicit ideas on the (re)construction of the concepts in the statements from the GDE’s course participants. When mapping the text corpus - statements that make up the discourse and discursive practices - we noticed that there were significant changes in learning, which allowed the learning about the gender concept, producing “new knowledge” that address the social, historical and cultural dimension in the conceptual change movement.

(Re)building these concepts and ideas - from the contact with the theoretical framework and discipline content and (re)constructions enabled by problematization in each subject - allowed the GDE’s students to produce statements that (re)dimensioned their vision and understanding of meaning, directing such understandings to possible understandings set out in the learning process. The statements presented suggest and point that there were significant changes in/of way these course participants think and position themselves about gender concepts in social and cultural dimension.

Considerations that do not end...

This was a work that sought to enter the teaching and learning processes in the GDE course, with the enthusiasm to critically analyze the individual - teacher - in another space, heterotopic, of learning, where the set of statements of discourse and discursive practices (re)dimensioned every new experience and living, where signs, meanings, and (re)meanings were possible and, at times, became identifiable.

There was no other intention, except mapping the occurrence of learning inflections in the teacher training process, and pointing out that such inflections lead to changes, (re)actions and expression of a new attitude and subjection condition of these teachers that (re)constituted as discursive practice, in a movement of (re)building their own historical process.

Perhaps, still, there are long ways to go, many routes and possible paths to tread, in order to the gender learning inflections become known as learning movements. But here by now, it is signaled the possibility of changes in learning.

References


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