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Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira and Magda Becker Soares: interwoven Biographies at the Federal University of Minas Gerais¹

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Abstract: Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira (1904–2006) and Magda Becker Soares (1932–2023) were two professors from Minas Gerais who worked at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and played an active role in the Faculty of Education (FaE) since its foundation. Thus, this article aims to analyze their professional biographies within UFMG, identifying the relationships they established with each other and the influence they exercised in different spaces within the institution over two decades, from 1959 to 1979. This time frame was chosen because 1959 marked the beginning of Magda Soares' tenure as an Assistant Professor of Didactics at UFMG, working alongside the head of the field of study, Full Professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira. Meanwhile, 1979 corresponds to the year of Oliveira's retirement and her recognition as an Emeritus Professor at UFMG, a period in which Soares served as the Director of FaE. The primary historical sources analyzed for this article were obtained through a review of the Alaíde Lisboa and Magda Soares archival collections at the Research, Memory, and Documentation Center (Cedoc/FaE/UFMG). Additionally, class diaries from undergraduate and graduate courses taught by Oliveira and Soares at UFMG, also preserved at Cedoc, were consulted, along with autobiographical texts written by the authors.

Keywords: Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira; biography; Magda Becker Soares.

1 Introduction

Writing a person's biography is always a challenge! By examining different sources, intertwining dates and facts, many gaps are filled and others remain permanent in the research. The biographer, as Lira Neto (2022) states, “will never have the gift of omniscience” and deals with the inevitable: the documentary gaps exist, even though he is “[...] well trained in controlling the various mechanisms of his storytelling machine [...]” (Lira Neto, 2022, p. 132).

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It is a fact that “[...] there are no definitive biographies” (Dines, 2012, p. 12). Those who write them need to put an end to it, sometimes deluded by the feeling of having explored everything possible about the subject of the biography or, at other times, pressured by a deadline for submitting the texts. Regardless of the context, in biographical writing “[...] new questions and new clarifications arise at every moment” (Dosse, 2022, p. 11). Thus, this article presents itself as an attempt to answer new questions and explore sources that we did not previously have when writing about the life and work of two women from Minas Gerais, professors working at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte/MG: Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira (1904-2006) and Magda Becker Soares² (1932-2023). Their biographies have already been the focus of our analyses in previous articles (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel, 2023; Cassiano; Rocha; Goulart, 2023; Maciel; Rocha, 2023; Rocha; Maciel, 2024; Rocha; Maciel; Silva, 2024). Therefore, when comparing extensive documentation throughout the investigations, we observed that mentions of them in work partnerships were not uncommon. Likewise, the professional paths they follow present many similarities.

The fact that Oliveira and Soares worked in the same place and worked in the area of Didactics may have been the link that united their intertwined trajectories at and through UFMG. Furthermore, we note that these writers and teachers, with their particularities, have left their mark on generations of teachers and researchers not only in their regional contexts but also nationally. They are known and referenced for their scientific publications and for a history of engagement in the educational field.

The relationship between them began when Soares was Oliveira's student in 1954, in the Portuguese Didactics course at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Minas Gerais (UMG)³, which, from 1965 onwards, became known as the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Magda Soares graduated from this institution with a Bachelor's Degree in Neo-Latin Literature in 1953 and, the following year, returned to study pedagogical subjects, completing her degree. During her Bachelor's degree, she had already been a student of Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira's husband, Professor José

² Until the first half of the 1970s, Soares signed as Magda Soares Guimarães. From then on, she began to sign as Magda Becker Soares. In documents signed with the surname Guimarães, we have inserted [Soares] in square brackets to facilitate the reader's understanding throughout the article.

³ From now on, we will only use the acronym UFMG to refer to this institution, since it is the same place, differing only in name. It is worth clarifying that the federalization process of UFMG occurred in 1949, and before that, the institution was under state regime (Pereira, 2012).

Lourenço de Oliveira, Professor of Latin Language, who, upon recognizing Soares' performance, wanted her to apply for selection as Assistant Professor in her discipline. However, as Magda Soares reports, the meeting with Alaíde Oliveira transformed her choices and influenced her professional trajectory:

[...] as a recent graduate in Neo-Latin Literature, completely captivated by literature, I faced with little enthusiasm the year in which I would have to complete the pedagogical subjects that would make me licensed and accredited to be a teacher. Pedagogical subjects... what a barren world it must be, so different, I supposed, from the rich world of literature! But then... I met her! The subject was called Portuguese Didactics, and the teacher was her [Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira]... and what was she talking about? About literature... of poetry... showing us that the fascination that literature, poetry had awakened in us, we could also awaken in children and young people. She cited authors, works, brought beautiful texts, poems, which she read with emotion, and then guided us on how we could generate and develop this emotion, this enchantment, in the children and young people we would have as students (Soares, 2013).

From this meeting, Soares became, in 1959, Assistant Professor of Oliveira, working in the area of General and Special Didactics, in which she was a Full Professor. Until the University Reform of 1968, the title of Full Professor was the highest in the university career in Brazil. Whoever occupied this position was responsible for the Chair or Course of an area and had Assistant Professors, who helped with bureaucratic tasks, in addition to replacing them or taking on classes under their supervision. In the case of UFMG, it was common for the Professor of General and Special Didactics to be responsible for teaching General Didactics and for being Director of the *Colégio de Aplicação*, while the Assistants taught the Special Didactics classes – which were disciplines aimed at the specific methodological approach of the different areas of knowledge in Teacher Formation Courses. In addition, the Assistants also worked at the *Colégio de Aplicação* (Trindade, 2012). Soares, in turn, due to her academic background, worked in the Portuguese Didactics discipline in undergraduate courses and, at *Colégio de Aplicação*, taught Portuguese, Latin and French. In her words,

[...] the professor was in charge of General Didactics, and we, the “assistants”, were in charge of Special Didactics, in my case, Special Didactics of Portuguese. We had complete freedom to define the program, methodology, evaluation procedures. At that time, the professor was, by law, the director of the *Colégio de Aplicação* and the “assistants” were responsible for teaching, at that college, the subject for which Special Didactics they were responsible (Soares, [199-] *apud* Lima, 1997, p. 50).

From that moment on, the lives of Oliveira and Soares intertwined on several occasions. Therefore, this work aims to analyze the professional biography of both within the scope of UFMG, identifying the relationships they established between themselves and the influence they exerted in different spaces of that institution over two decades, from 1959 to 1979.

The time frame is justified because, as explained, in 1959 Magda Soares was admitted as a professor at UFMG and began working alongside professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira. 1979 corresponds to the year of Oliveira's retirement and title as Professor Emeritus of UFMG, at which time Soares was Director of the Faculty of Education (FaE).

To this end, we used documents from the Research, Memory and Documentation Center (Cedoc) of FaE/UFMG as historical sources, with emphasis on the Alaíde Lisboa and Magda Soares funds. Furthermore, the class diaries of these teachers were inventoried and analyzed, referring to the subjects taught in the undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the UFMG School of Education, also under the custody of Cedoc. No less important, we used autobiographical texts and writings containing excerpts from Oliveira and Soares' memoirs, published in different formats, comparing them with the identified documentation. It is important to clarify that, when analyzing all these sources, we observed that the dating of events in the lives of these teachers presents some inconsistencies. For this reason, all dates were inserted based on a careful cross-referencing of press sources and Cedoc/FaE/UFMG documents, however some inaccuracy may still occur.

As the life of each of them is permeated by many paths and incursions at UFMG and beyond, analyzing the extensive documentation explored so far, we chose to organize the article based on the institutional environments that were the setting for the work they developed. In view of this, we initially explain Oliveira and Soares' work at the *Colégio de Aplicação*, then at the Faculty of Education and, finally, at the Postgraduate Program in Education. In all items, we do not lose sight of the history of UFMG and FaE, as well as the educational context of Brazil and Minas Gerais.

2 The *Colégio de Aplicação* and the subject of Didactics in the life of Oliveira and Soares

Oliveira and Soares are today recognized as a mandatory reference in studies of children's literature and literacy. However, their first scientific productions and their initial work in higher education were in the area of Didactics, a circumstance that undoubtedly brought them closer together. Soares' professional career, reported in the previous item, is very similar to Oliveira's.

Alaíde Oliveira joined UFMG on June 1, 1951 as Assistant to the Chair of Didactics, Professor Filocelina Matos de Almeida. Alaíde Oliveira joined UFMG on June 1, 1951 as Assistant to the Chair of Didactics, Professor Filocelina Matos de Almeida. Six years after joining UFMG, Oliveira defended her doctoral thesis in Didactics in 1957, entitled "Education and Language", before a panel composed of professors Aires da Matta Machado, Alda Lodi and Maria Luíza de Almeida Cunha (Oliveira, 1957). Soares took part in the competition for a postgraduate degree in the area of Didactics in 1962, with a thesis entitled "Directed Study", having on the examining board, in addition to Professor Alaíde, Professors Antônio Augusto de Mello Cançado, Emanuel Brandão Fontes, Luiz de Alves de Mattos and Mário Casasanta (Guimarães [Soares], 1962).

Graciani (1984) clarifies that, according to the legislation, generally after two years of experience, Assistant Professors should submit to the free-teaching competition, which coincides with Soares' path at UFMG. At that time, a doctorate was not a requirement for the competition, being more commonly offered in Medicine and Law. Sucupira (1977) highlights that "in times when doctorates were episodic and without great expression, the postgraduate course functioned as a true device for training doctors" (p. 27). In other words, those who obtained the title of associate professor received the same academic recognition granted to a doctor.

The free-teaching competition followed national rules, but each higher education institution established its own ritual (Sucupira, 1977). At UFMG, candidates had to present a thesis, which was examined by an examining committee, in addition to being subjected to a proficiency test in two foreign languages and a written test on one of the topics in the competitive civil-service examination.

All of the aforementioned professors who formed part of Oliveira's doctoral committee and Soares's postdoctoral committee, in some way, actively contributed to the creation of UFMG. Teachers who played a significant role in Belo Horizonte society, especially in the fields of education and literature, highlighting the “social networks” (Sirinelli, 2003) of Oliveira and Soares. Furthermore, many of them were defenders of the principles of the New School movement, whose influences were also present in their trajectories. It is worth highlighting, as an example, that Mário Casasanta was a signatory of the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Escola Nova* (1932).

The ideals of those who defended the *Escola Nova* went against a school considered “traditional”, which valued teaching through repetition, without concern for the practical application of the content taught, in addition to emphasizing disciplinary order and the permanence of physical punishments. They therefore defended, based on scientific principles, especially in Psychology studies, that the student should be an active agent in the learning process, that the school should teach content in tune with the demands of students' lives, without practicing any type of punishment. Furthermore, they promoted debate on new school methods and materials, as well as seeking a new organization of teaching (Valdemarin, 2010). In Minas Gerais, legislation on public education, from the mid-1920s onwards, was marked by these ideals, highlighting teacher education as a central element for the dissemination of *Escola Nova*. The School of Improvement was officially opened in 1929 and came to fulfill this purpose. “It was created in Belo Horizonte, as a post-secondary course, lasting two years, aimed at training an educational elite to propagate the *Escola Nova* movement” (Rocha; Maciel; Silva, 2024, p. 18). This course was aimed at training teachers and was recognized as equivalent to higher education. Several teachers and former students of the School of Improvement worked as professors at UFMG.

As explained in Trindade's research (2012), the *Escola Nova* movement marked the principles of the creation of the Didactics course at UFMG. Furthermore, these ideas are strongly present in the theses defended by Oliveira and Soares, as well as in the academic background of both. Oliveira, for example, was a student at the School of Improvement between 1933 and 1934 and incorporated these principles into the organization of her practices at UFMG. This can be seen in the teaching programs of the subjects he taught and in the content recorded in her class diaries, materials that are part of the collection of Cedoc/FaE/UFMG.

In her autobiographical writings, Oliveira (2000) highlights that, when she began her career as a university professor, she took the learning from the School of Improvement to her classes, which, according to her, remained alive within her. Her Catholic education, received in the traditional Colégio Nossa Senhora de Sion, in the city of Campanha/MG, did not prevent her from adopting the *Escola Nova* principles defended at the School of Improvement. This is due to the fact that five teachers from this institution – Amélia de Castro Monteiro, Alda Lodi, Benedita Valadares and Lúcia Casasanta – studied at the Institute of Education at Teachers College, at Columbia University, in New York, and returned to Belo Horizonte tasked with spreading the *Escola Nova* principles (Rocha; Maciel; Silva, 2024).

Unlike Oliveira, Soares was not a student at the School of Improvement and her primary and secondary education was at Colégio Izabela Hendrix, in Belo Horizonte, a Methodist Protestant institution inspired by liberal ideology (Soares, 1991). Soares, being a student of Oliveira and her Assistant, also brought to her work an *Escola Nova* inspiration, an aspect that she herself reevaluated when writing her Memorial for promotion to Full Professor, in 1981. Soares (1991) explains that her training in pedagogical subjects in the Neo-Latin Literature course was permeated by “[...] Dewey's pragmatism, translated into the methodologies advocated by *Escola Nova* (Didática)” (Soares, 1991, p. 55). He believes that he had a *Escola Nova* phase, so that the beginning of her teaching activity was permeated by these ideals:

The proposal of the *Escola Nova* – ideological as it was, like any and all pedagogical proposals – it presented itself to me, and to almost all educators at that time, as a logical and coherent set of ideas and values, capable not only of explaining pedagogical practice but also, and above all, of regulating it, providing rules and norms so that it could develop in a “scientific” and “fair” way” (Soares, 1991, p. 56).

In her Memorial, Soares (1991, p. 54) highlights that her thesis for a postgraduate degree was the “last documentary record” of this *Escola Nova* phase, recognizing the ideologies present in her career as a teacher and researcher. At the time she defended her post-doctorate, she was already working at *Colégio de Aplicação*, which represented her gateway to UFMG.

The foundation of the *Colégio de Aplicação* came to meet the need of the Faculty of Philosophy (FAFI) to have a field for the internship of undergraduate students, in compliance with Decree-Law 9.053, of March 12, 1946 (Brazil, 1946).

Initially, the institution did not receive this name, but rather *Ginásio de Aplicação*, being officially inaugurated only on April 21, 1954 (Collares, 1989). The aforementioned legislation recommended that the Professor of Didactics take over the management of the establishment, a role that was performed by Professor Filocelina Matos de Almeida until 1956. With her retirement in 1957, Oliveira, who was already working as Almeida's Assistant, was appointed Professor of General and Special Didactics at UFMG (Oliveira, [1957]⁴), also taking on the management of the Gymnasium, which, from the following year, 1958, received the name *Colégio de Aplicação*, since the first class of the gymnasium cycle had completed the 4th grade (Collares, 1989). In Alaíde Lisboa's documentary collection at Cedoc/FaE/UFMG, we find a 17-page report by Oliveira written in pencil about her experiences at the institution. According to her notes, the first teachers at the Gymnasium were chosen by the Professors of the respective areas of the undergraduate courses offered at FAFI, considering criteria such as best grades, responsibility, leadership skills and interest in the subject (Oliveira, [19--]). This information is also corroborated by the study of Collares (1989).

In 1959, Oliveira took a competitive exam and became Professor of Didactics at UFMG, being approved with honors and hailed by the press and by several government agencies of Minas Gerais, including the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais. The Chair gave her the right to have assistants, which marked Soares' entry into the institution that same year.

As Cisalpino (1991, p. 81-84 *apud* Lima, 1997, p. 49-50) explains:

[...] this professor was self-taught. (...) There was a tradition of being linked to certain groups that formed around some teachers who were true leaders. We, of this generation, were formed around these people. The professors were in charge of professional training. Classes were a regimental requirement. The professor was responsible for the quality of teaching – provided by all members of his or her group. The professor would give the discipline a doctrine that he considered most appropriate, a way of conducting teaching and research.

Although it did not last long, the *Colégio de Aplicação* left its mark on the professional careers of those who worked there, as well as on the academic and professional lives of its students. It was created with the aim of disseminating teaching practices considered innovative. The *Nova Escola* ideology, as well as the debates on

⁴ The document is not dated, however, from its content, it is possible to conjecture the year in which it was written, which is why we put it in brackets.

modern didactics, laboratory practices, and methodological experiments were shared by the Professors and their Assistants. It was to be expected that, given so many innovations in a markedly Catholic state, there would be some dissent. Collares (1989) explains that, when analyzing the institution's regulations and interviewing people who worked there, he realized that in the beginning, more traditional proposals remained. The classes followed an expository format and reflected a conservative Christian spirit, aligned with the precepts of the institution's first Director, Professor Filocelina Matos de Almeida. In the author's assessment, the College was not integrated with the Departments of the Faculty of Philosophy, being restricted to Didactics. However, the teacher of this subject closely monitored the practices of the interns, who had free access to observe the classes and, on scheduled days, also took on the role of teacher.

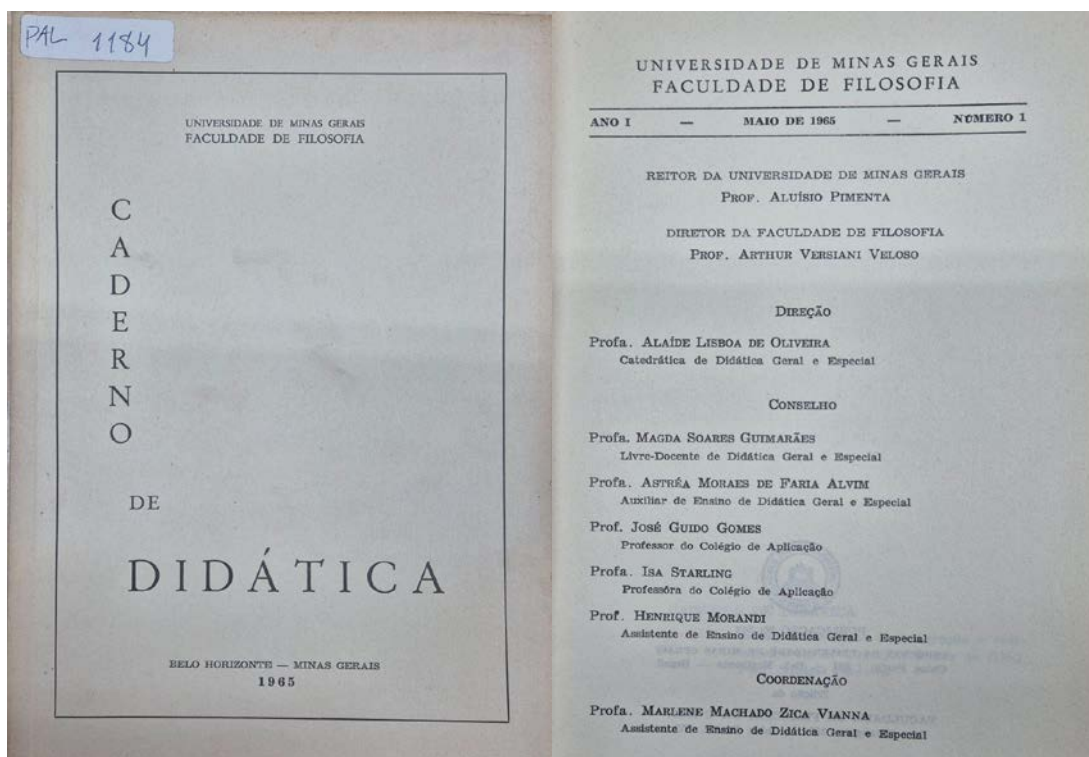
Part of the years in which Oliveira was in charge of the institution as Director, between 1957 and 1969, were marked by the repressive regime of the dictatorship, in addition to a new Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education instituted in 1961, which evidently caused adjustments in its curricular proposal. During this period, the establishment underwent expansion, not only due to the increase in the number of classes, but also due to its daytime operation with Junior High (today, Final Years of Elementary Education) and High School (today, Secondary Education) courses, and later, at night (Collares, 1989). This expansion, according to the same author, led to the creation of other administrative positions, including that of Pedagogical Advisor, held by Soares, responsible for monitoring the work of teachers from 1961 to 1962.

The debates on didactic issues at the College were increasingly heated, as Oliveira attests, so much so that, in 1965, the institution's teachers launched the magazine "*Caderno de Didática*" (Oliveira, [19--]). According to Collares (1989), everything indicates that this magazine had only one issue, published in May 1965. When consulting the printed material, we observed that its editorial board was formed by professors linked to the *Colégio de Aplicação* and the Didactics discipline at UFMG, as recorded on its title page.

As this is a single volume and contains articles by Oliveira and Soares, we will make brief comments on the themes they address in the printed version. With the title "Disciplina", Oliveira (1965) addresses in her text the theme of discipline and its causes, highlighting the factors that can lead to indiscipline, which are related to: a) student; b) teacher; c) school; d) social environment. The author discusses each of

these aspects and presents the models of preventive, corrective and educational discipline. This last model, according to Oliveira, “[...] involves the entire process of the student formation” (Oliveira, 1965, p. 16).

Figure 1 – Cover and title page of the magazine “*Caderno de Didática*”.



Source: Collection of the Professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira Library (FaE/UFGM).

The discussion conducted by the author is also aligned with her position in the institution. The role of the School Principal was often associated with the responsibility of maintaining order and guiding teachers on practices for better class organization. This topic was addressed in the contents of the Didactics discipline at UFGM and did not go unnoticed by the *Nova Escola* movement. The notes in Oliveira's class diaries, kept in the Cedoc/FaE/UFGM collection, show that the theme of “discipline” was part of the discussions in the initial training of teachers, together with reflections specific to the *Escola Nova* ideals, which defended the importance of working on student motivation so that they could concentrate and participate more actively in the proposed activities. For Oliveira (1965, p. 9),

In traditional schools, as in the renewed ones, a disciplined student is considered educated; only the meaning differs in the two types of schools. Perhaps it could be said that, previously, discipline and education would mean passivity, receptivity, something static; and, today, discipline and education would be linked to the idea of activity, dynamism.

In the magazine “Caderno de Didática”, Guimarães [Soares] (1965) addressed in her article the debate surrounding the uses of didactic language in the classroom. Drawing on two classic authors of the time, Luiz Alves de Matos, in Didactics, and José Lourenço de Oliveira, in Linguistics, in addition to citing writers from philosophy, she analyzes the use of language by teachers in the teaching and learning process. She brings criticisms of teaching centered solely on the teacher's oral presentation and arguments in favor of the use of interrogative language as a “[...] procedure to stimulate students' reflection, a procedure that promotes, like few others, self-activity, a basic principle of current pedagogy” (Guimarães [Soares], 1965, p. 28).

The text by Guimarães [Soares] (1965), according to a survey we carried out previously (Maciel; Rocha, 2023), was one of the first published after she joined UFMG. Her initial productions dealt broadly with education and didactics and, more specifically, the teaching of Portuguese, in line with her educational and professional experiences after being admitted to UFMG. It was only in the 1980s that the author specialized in discussions in the field of literacy, with two major milestones: the publication of the text “The Many Faces of Literacy” (Soares, 1985) and the invitation from the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (Inep), in 1986, to coordinate state-of-the-art research on children's literacy in Brazil. (Maciel; Rocha, 2023).

During the same period in which Oliveira and Soares worked at Colégio de Aplicação, UFMG expanded initiatives aimed at serving a public that had not yet entered higher education. During the administration of Rector Aluísio Pimenta (1964-1967), “[...] in 1965, the University School was created, followed by the Technical School in 1967, and the incorporation of the Agricultural School of Montes Claros in 1968” (Collares, 1989, p. 162). In other words, in addition to the Colégio de Aplicação, in operation since 1954, other UFMG units were responsible for training students in pre-university courses.

The University School is an exemplary case. It was created based on the experience of the Colégio de Aplicação, with Soares serving on the committee responsible for its planning (Collares, 1989). This institution was designed to teach only the 3rd year of high school and to specialize in preparing students for higher education, as the number of candidates who performed poorly in the entrance exams at UFMG was increasing.

Soares, in turn, took over the direction of the University School between 1965 and 1968 (Curriculum [...], 1983, p. 23). According to Collares (1989) her appointment as Director was justified because she

[...] She had extensive teaching experience; she came from a vanguard group of teachers at Colégio de Aplicação; she had worked with Portuguese Teaching Practice and, as a Didactics teacher, she took on a position of renewing teaching by replacing traditional methods with new, modern, more dynamic, individualized methods capable of mobilizing the active participation of students (Collares, 1989, p. 174-175).

In Soares' scientific production in the 1960s and 1970s, one can see her concern with the urgency of debates on the evaluation system for selecting candidates for higher education (Maciel; Rocha, 2023). Discussions surrounding the essay in the entrance exam were recurrent in the 60s and 70s, not only at UFMG, but also in Brazil, and Professor Magda was invited to participate in committees on this topic at a national level.

In 1966, while she was Director of the University School, she took a study trip to the United States of America, to learn about new experiences in the organization and functioning of secondary education in other countries (Fundep, [19--], p. 2). When comparing with Oliveira's CV, we observe that she also made a similar movement in her career, since these trips were common at the time, especially for university professors who held administrative positions.

Within the scope of Soares' productions on the entrance exam, she published some texts and participated in events on the subject, but two books deserve to be highlighted that demonstrate her participation in this debate at a national level. The first, published in October 1967 under the commission of the Council of Rectors of Brazilian Universities, is the book "Establishment of a policy for admission of students to higher education in Brazil", in partnership with professors Aluísio Pimenta, Óder José dos Santos and Lúcia Mercês Avelar. In addition, in collaboration with professors from the University School, in 1968, he launched two volumes of the book "Multiple choice tests" (Maciel; Rocha, 2023).

Regarding this period of her life, Soares (1991) reevaluates it, highlighting the influences she received since her initial education in a Protestant school. In her assessment, this school adopted a teaching model that fascinated her, but which was centered on an individualistic perspective, on "personal responsibility" and "personal

freedom". "Everyone has the right and duty to build their own destiny, they taught me" (Soares, 1991, p. 52). For the author, this resulted in a certain "pedagogical naivety", since, as she herself states, she was unable to "[...] recognize the liberal-pragmatist ideology that informed the *Escola Nova* movement she had joined" (Soares, 1991, p. 55).

With the University Reform of 1968 and the restructuring of UFMG, by force of decree no. 62,317, of February 28, 1968 and decree-law no. 464, of February 11, 1969, the *Colégio de Aplicação* and the University School were integrated and transformed into a Pedagogical Center. With this, a new stage opened in the trajectories of Oliveira and Soares, with the creation of the Faculty of Education.

3 Oliveira and Soares at the Faculty of Education

The University Reform of 1968 triggered several changes in the structure and functioning of Brazilian universities, leading to the opening of postgraduate courses. Among the changes, "Lifetime professorships were abolished, the departmental regime was introduced, the academic career was institutionalized, and the relevant legislation linked admission and progression to academic qualifications" (Martins, 2009, p. 16). Soon, the position of Professor was replaced by that of Full Professor, the last position in the academic career, new faculties were created and, within them, new departments. What was previously under the almost unanimous and unrestricted decision of the Professors was then transferred to the administration of a Departmental Board, composed of a greater number of professors, organized in an organic way and in tune with the areas of knowledge.

At UFMG, the restructuring plan was approved by decree no. 62,371, of February 28, 1968, and the changes provided for included the separation of the Faculty of Philosophy (FAFI) and the creation of new academic units, including the Faculty of Education (FaE).

The Department of Pedagogy and Didactics [of FAFI] then also gained its own identity and autonomy, and became the Faculty of Education, following an initiative already implemented at the University of Brasília, thanks to the pioneering and innovative spirit of Darcy Ribeiro, and who found another pioneering and innovative spirit here, the Rector Aluísio Pimenta. This is how the Faculty of Education was created. All this is easy to say, but difficult to live. There was a family spirit in the work relationships at the Faculty of Philosophy, which disintegrated because each group went off to create its own Institute or

its own faculty. And after all, what would a Faculty of Education be? (Soares, 2018 *apud* Faria Filho; Lacerda; Bahiense, 2022, p. 12).

When analyzing the minutes of the meetings of the Congregation of the Faculty of Education held in the 1960s and 1970s, the constant presence of professors Alaíde Oliveira and Magda Soares is noted. Oliveira, in particular, stood out for her remarkable participation in the debates, her positions and her experience, which was respected by her peers.

The first minutes of the installation of the Faculty of Education of UFMG, dated November 26, 1968, record that the institution ceased to be part of the structure of the Faculty of Philosophy, acquiring the status of a new unit. It is worth noting that the minutes mention the names of all FaE professors, as well as the composition of the list of three candidates for choosing the director of the newly created faculty. Professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira (8 votes), Professor Emanuel Brandão Fontes (8 votes) and Professor Magda Soares (6 votes) were elected to the list, with the latter being appointed by the Rectorate as the first Director of the FaE.

The documents point to discussions about the structure and organization of the Faculty of Education, since the constitution of the teaching staff, highlighting Oliveira's concerns with the teachers of the Didactics Chair, consisting of the disciplines of General Didactics and Special Didactics of Pedagogical Subjects, belonging to the Department of Teaching Methods and Techniques. Initially, in 1968, FaE was organized into four departments: Department of Teaching Methods and Techniques, Department of Research Methods and Techniques, Department of School Administration and Department of Sciences Applied to Education. Alaíde Oliveira was appointed to coordinate the structure of the Department of Teaching Methods and Techniques, of which Magda Soares was a member (Congregation of the Faculty of Education, 1968, p. 18). In the course of history, another department was created and some of these were suppressed. According to research by Faria Filho, Lacerda, Bahiense (2022), in 1971 there were five departments in operation. In addition to the four mentioned above, there was the Department of Educational Psychology. However,

First, the Department of Educational Psychology was closed, either because some of the professors migrated to the newly created Psychology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy and Human Sciences (FAFICH), or because, in internal discussions, it became unsustainable to maintain it given the

existence of the Department of Applied Sciences in Education, which should also include the discipline of Psychology. Subsequently, the Department of Research Methods and Techniques was also closed as they understood that research should [be] a fundamental and common component to all departments, and that there was no longer any point in having a specific department for this purpose. Three departments remained – Department of School Administration (DAE), Department of Sciences Applied to Education (DECAE) and Department of Teaching Methods and Techniques (DMTE) – which still structure the Faculty of Education today (Faria Filho; Lacerda; Bahiense, 2022, p. 12).

The Faculty of Education began to house the Pedagogy course and to receive students from other Teacher Formation Courses to study pedagogical subjects. When consulting the class diaries of Oliveira and Soares in the time frame of this article, we found that both taught the subjects of General Didactics and Special Didactics for different Teacher Formation Courses, and Portuguese Didactics for the Letters course. In addition to these subjects, Oliveira taught Educational Guidance; Soares taught Teaching Theories and Introduction to Education. Soares (1991) provides some clarifications on these subjects.

The person responsible for the chair, professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira, and a group of her assistants decided to introduce, in the program of the discipline [General Didactics], a unit on the foundations of Education that would contextualize the problem of teaching, the specific objective of Didactics (later, we proposed transforming this unit into a discipline, Introduction to Education, which was done) (Soares, 1991, p. 70).

The content of the subjects taught by Oliveira and Soares in the undergraduate course was similar and followed the same organizational logic, with great inspiration from the parameters of the *Nova Escola* and a more technical perspective, typical of the historical moment. This emphasis is also named by Soares (1991) as a “liberal-pragmatist” phase of his professional life. The emphasis in the disciplines was on teaching techniques and procedures, more specifically on the organization of a class, avoiding a discussion of the contexts, circumstances and social relations established in school and beyond. With a bibliography of classics of didactics in Portuguese, but especially in English and under North American influence, the subjects followed a content arrangement that initially worked on the concepts of what Didactics and Pedagogy are throughout history, the organization of the didactic field and the objectives of education.

Throughout the course, they focused on a debate around the figure of the teacher and their performance in the classroom, based on elements such as the choice

of method, textbook, texts, activities, teaching resources, without losing sight of the discussion about the teacher's personality and its effects on the decisions they made to conduct everyday situations in the classroom and on the teaching and learning process as a whole. The rights and duties of the teacher, as well as leadership, including its flaws, are present in the subjects.

There was an emphasis on pedagogical practice with specific discussions on annual planning, course plan and lesson plan, current teaching programs, extracurricular activities, excursions, clubs, use of the “blackboard”, among others. Guided study and seminar, as methodologies for organizing classes, were important contents throughout the historical period, and were always present with proposals that extended over several weeks of the disciplines. Regarding the content that dealt with the student himself, the logic was a conception based on the individual evolution of the subject, on his motivation, also considering individual differences and collective practices for school planning. We thus note, from the diaries and undergraduate teaching plans analyzed, that the discussions did not fail to consider the student as the center of the educational process and were in line with the defenses made by Oliveira and Soares in their scientific publications (Oliveira, 1957, 1960, 1968; Guimarães [Soares], 1962).

In addition to the meetings in the subjects they taught, the academic life of these teachers is permeated by affinities and, why not say, “academic complicities”, which began when Alaíde Oliveira, Professor of Didactics, chose Magda Soares as her Assistant Professor in 1959. The minutes of the meetings of the FaE Congregation to which we had access reveal this “academic complicity”, sometimes with Oliveira indicating Soares to form part of a committee, sometimes as his substitute. Furthermore, they mutually supported their actions and shared the administrative and teaching burdens in the Department of Teaching Methods and Techniques.

4 The Postgraduate Program in Education and the work of Oliveira and Soares

Oliveira and Soares' undergraduate career extended to their experiences in the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE) at FaE, since, with the University Reform of 1968, one of the challenges was the creation of Master's courses at UFMG. Therefore, within the scope of the newly created Faculty of Education, Professor Alaíde

was invited by the Rector Marcello de Vasconcelos Coelho to coordinate a group of professors to organize the Master's in Education (Trindade, 2012).

To move forward with the preliminary project to create a Master's degree at FaE, Oliveira spared no effort, seeking to learn about other programs at national and international institutions. According to the minutes of the meeting of the Congregation of the FaE on June 16, 1970a, she requested authorization to be absent for 40 days in order to “observe postgraduate courses at other foreign universities” (Congregation of the Faculty of Education, 1968). Six months after the trip abroad, the minutes of December 18, 1970 record the presentation of the preliminary project for the implementation of the postgraduate course under the coordination of Professor Alaíde (Congregation of the Faculty of Education, 1970b, p. 90). There were several questions and the person responsible for organizing the preliminary project clarified the necessary points, and the project was approved by the institution and, after some corrections, also by the National Education Council.

The Postgraduate Program in Education was officially created in 1971, with Professor Alaíde Oliveira as its first coordinator. To replace her, in 1973, Professor Magda Soares was appointed – Ordinance No. 344 of May 11, 1973 –, who began to work under the exclusive dedication regime at UFMG (Guimarães [Soares], 1973).

Initially, the PPGE faculty was composed of professors linked to UFMG and other guests who acted as collaborators. Based on the analysis of Oliveira and Soares' class diaries, in the collection of the Postgraduate Program in Education, at Cedoc/FaE/UFMG, we inventoried the mandatory and optional subjects offered by them within the time frame of this article.

Table 1 – Subjects taught by Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira in the Postgraduate Program at FaE/UFMG.

Year	Subject
1972	The textbook
1972	Seminar
1973	Directed study
1973	Special Topics in Teaching Methodology: Seminar
1973	Special Topics in Teaching Methodology: The textbook
1976	History of didactic ideas
1977	Evolution of didactic ideas

Source: prepared by the authors based on consultation of Oliveira's class diaries held by Cedoc/FaE/UFMG.

Table 2 – Subjects taught by Magda Soares in the Postgraduate course at FaE/UFMG.

Year	Subject
1972	Teaching Objectives
1973	Assessment of learning. Higher education methodology Teaching Objectives
1974	Assessment of learning Teaching Objectives
1975	Communication and teaching Instruction: systemic approach (with Maria de Lourdes Rocha) Teaching Objectives
1976	Assessment of learning Mass communication and education Communication and teaching History of Brazilian education (with Otaíza R. Romanelli) Language, social class and education Writing scientific papers
1977	Communication and teaching Language, social class and education
1978	Communication and teaching Language, social class and education
1979	Language, social class and education

Source: prepared by the authors based on consultation of Soares' class diaries held by Cedoc/FaE/UFMG.

It is noticeable that the subjects in the postgraduate course have a relationship with what was taught in the undergraduate course and with the area of concentration of the Master's degree, which was initially “Teaching Methodology – Didactics”, under the influence of Oliveira (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel, 2023). In a live stream commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Postgraduate Program of FaE⁵, in 2021, Soares gave a lecture explaining that, in the 1970s, there were new demands in the Program, and the beginning of a debate anchored in the sociological and political aspects of education. The students, in turn, brought many current demands, since the issue of school failure was a very emerging topic. The students, in turn, brought many current demands, since the issue of school failure was a very emerging topic (Soares, 2021).

Therefore, in 1975, the Master's Degree in Education at FaE/UFMG began to have two other areas of concentration: “Social Sciences Applied to Education” and “Higher Education”, focused on a debate about the “external conditions of education”, the “link between education and social change”, always focusing on the “relationship between education and society” (Soares, 2021). From this, Soares (2021) explains that “the school continued to be studied, but in

⁵ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-0M2Q90WYc>. Accessed on: February 20, 2025.

the context of a capitalist society”, with attention focused “on the working classes, on the popular classes” (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel, 2023, p. 6).

The survey of disciplines proves Soares' movement towards the perspective of sociology and the sociology of language, the theme of her book published in 1986, “Language and school: a social perspective” (Soares, 1986), and that of Oliveira, with the historical approach of the ideals of didactics and the textbook that were also contemplated in her publications (Oliveira, 1957, 1960, 1968). The content covered in the postgraduate courses in the subjects taught by the professors was, in a certain way, modifying and reflecting the sociocultural context, as well as the studies and research results of authors in the fields of education, language, sociology, mainly international literature. An in-depth analysis of the diaries will provide researchers with a broader view of the social history of school subjects and the curriculum (Santos, 1995) of the Master's Degree in the Postgraduate Program at FaE/UFMG.

Figure 2 – Professor Alaíde Oliveira receives the diploma of Professor Emeritus from the hands of the Rector. Beside her, Professor Magda Soares



Source: Magda Soares Fund, CX: 03, Location B1.6, Cedoc/FaE/UFMG.

Still within the scope of the Faculty of Education, Oliveira, like Soares, held management positions. Oliveira was the institution's Vice-Director (1975) and Soares was Director (1977-1980). Oliveira, in turn, retired on April 23, 1979. In the same year, everything indicates that, at the suggestion of Soares, then Director of FaE, the

Congregation approved the granting of the title of Professor Emeritus to Professor Alaíde Lisboa de Oliveira.

At the ceremony, Professor Alaíde began her speech by thanking Professor Magda. She then gives a brief retrospective of her academic background and work at *Colégio de Aplicação*, the installation of the Faculty of Education and the creation of the FaE Postgraduate Program, highlighting the following:

The services that have been provided in the improvement of our teaching staff are already incalculable: our field of research has opened up, our technical-administrative capacity has grown, and our connotations regarding the science of Education have broadened (Oliveira, 2005, p. 63).

Soares was responsible for delivering the welcoming speech to the Professor Emeritus, explaining that she had requested this authorization from the Congregation, since, according to the ceremony's rite, it was not usual for the Director to do so. Her considerations were as follows:

I intended that I could claim this honor for myself because of the rights granted to me by the fact that I am perhaps, among all the professors at the Faculty of Education, the one who maintained the longest and closest contact with you during all the years that you dedicated to our University (Soares, 1979, p. 9).

Once again, we check the affinities between the two professors. Soares remained at UFMG as an undergraduate and graduate professor at the Faculty of Education until 1998⁶, year in which she received the title of Professor Emeritus. Upon being honored with this award, Magda Soares praised, in her speech, "the Faculty whose creation I participated in, which since then has become my project and my ideal, and is today this solid institution, nationally recognized as one of the best" (Soares, 2005 [1998], p. 51).

5 Final Considerations

"I make my star without erasing yours."
Oliveira (1988)

"I meet her again, I meet myself again!"
Soares (2013)

⁶ In a previous study, we already explained that Soares remained as a volunteer teacher in the Postgraduate Program in Education at FaE/UFMG until 2009, with 38 years dedicated to the academic training of masters and doctors (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel, 2023).

We bring these epigraphs: the first, taken from a literary work by Oliveira, to express our agreement with it; and the second, by Soares, in reference to her teacher, Professor Alaíde, to demonstrate that, in this article, we meet these two teachers and meet again at different moments in their professional trajectories. In this work, we learn a little more about the biographies of two women who built their careers at UFMG and left their mark on generations of professors and researchers. With such close paths and full of encounters, they did not overshadow each other, they worked in partnerships, which, without a doubt, were decisive in their lives and, also, for the creation and institutionalization of the spaces where they worked, which are today the Pedagogical Center and the Faculty of Education of UFMG. This closeness and influence of both did not go unnoticed by the press, which, on the occasion of the celebration of Belo Horizonte's 100th anniversary, through a survey by the newspaper "*Estado de Minas*", in the "*Caderno Feminino*" column, brought three names of remarkable women who contributed to education and culture in Minas Gerais (Oliveira, 1997). Among these names were Alaíde Oliveira and Magda Soares.

Unlike what Professor Magda predicted in her speech at the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Faculty of Education, in 1988, when she asked who would be present at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Unit, predicting that she and others would no longer be there, and raising doubts about whether the new generation would know them (Soares, 1988), we believe that the names and images of Oliveira and Soares will remain present for several generations. They will not be lost to all of us who seek to understand the history of FaE, UFMG and education in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais and Brazil. Therefore, in this article, our objective was not only to present the facts and events about these women found in the inventoried sources, but also to reveal, revisit the paths they followed as teachers at *Colégio de Aplicação*, in the undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the Faculty of Education at UFMG. These paths were intertwined through their opinions, practices and concepts, thus forming the intertwining of their academic lives.

The connection between these teachers is marked by complicity and respect. Perhaps a reader may ask whether there were disagreements between them. It is likely that there were, after all, disagreements are part of being human and they are what move us towards changes, revisions of concepts, and are levers for incorporating new paradigms. This is an aspect that both, in interviews and in their writings, repeatedly

stated they had no difficulty in facing. The essential thing, visible to all eyes, is that both were pillars, solid columns supporting educational concepts and practices, never forgotten or disregarded by those who have read them, read them and take them as an example.

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