

Teacher professional development in a Brazilian context: navigating critical literacies

*Desenvolvimento profissional de professores em
contexto brasileiro: navegando letramentos críticos*

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Abstract: This article explores the findings of an investigation about a teacher professional development course for elementary school teachers of English as an additional Language (EAL), from public schools in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. This qualitative-interpretative teacher research is grounded in ethnographic and auto-ethnographic views and supported by theories of digital and multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2013; KALANTZIS; COPE, 2008; GEE, 2000), critical literacies (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001), and critical literacies pedagogies for bilingual contexts (MONTE MÓR, 2010, 2011, 2013; JORDÃO, 2013; MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2011). The research design aimed at promoting a shift in the views of the teacher research in a teacher education course. Collaborative teacher education work considers the co-responsibility and agency of the teacher-collaborator, in a globalized world characterized by the ephemerality and the velocity of choices posed by connectivity. Research data point to the relevance of continuous education that considers rethinking hegemonic and acritical education. There is a call to question acritical education that does not lead to inquiry or awareness raising about how power relations influence and define teachers' theoretical frames and practices. The possibilities for continuous education emerge in practical contexts when experiencing encounters and mismatches of practices and thoughts

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about what it means to teach and learn the English language as an additional language for the youth. *The aim of this study is to promote more contextualized, informed and critical reflections and practices, while building collaborative relationships. These findings emphasize the importance of further investigating teacher education programs that consider the challenges and possibilities of a contemporary, connected, complex, and globalized world.*

Keywords: Collaborative Spaces, Critical Literacies, Teacher Professional Development.

Resumo: *Este artigo explora os resultados de uma investigação sobre um curso de formação continuada para professores do ensino fundamental de inglês como língua adicional (EAL), de escolas públicas de Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brasil. Esta pesquisa qualitativa-interpretativa do professor é fundamentada em visões etnográficas e auto-etnográficas e apoiada em teorias de multiletramentos (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2013; KALANTZIS; COPE, 2008; GEE, 2000), letramentos críticos (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001) e pedagogias da de letramentos críticos para contextos bilíngues (MONTE MÓR, 2010, 2011, 2013; JORDÃO, 2013; MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2011). A pesquisa teve como objetivo promover uma mudança nas visões de professores em um curso de formação de professores. O trabalho colaborativo de formação de professores considera a co-responsabilidade e a agência do professor-colaborador, em um mundo globalizado, caracterizado pela efemeridade e pela velocidade das escolhas colocadas pela conectividade. Os dados da pesquisa apontam para a relevância da educação continuada, que considera repensar a educação hegemônica e acrítica. Há um chamado para questionar a educação básica que não leva à investigação ou à conscientização sobre como as relações de poder influenciam e definem as estruturas e práticas teóricas dos professores. As possibilidades de educação continuada emergem em contextos práticos quando ocorrem encontros e incompatibilidades de práticas e pensamentos sobre o que significa ensinar e aprender o idioma inglês como língua adicional. O objetivo deste estudo é promover reflexões e práticas mais contextualizadas, informadas e críticas, por meio de colaborações. Os dados enfatizam a importância de mais investigação sobre programas de formação de professores que considerem os desafios e as possibilidades de um mundo contemporâneo, conectado, complexo e globalizado.*

Palavras-chave: *Espaços Colaborativos; Letramentos Críticos; Formação de Professores.*

Teacher Professional Development: Navigating Critical Literacies

Globalization has brought challenges and opportunities in many areas of our lives. We are living in ever-changing times. Social, economic, environmental, and political challenges scroll across our screens every day, and are part of our lived experiences. Now more than ever, there is a call for education to guide students negotiating their way through the turbulence of our

times as they experience it in physical and digital spaces. There is such a paradigmatic transition because, as Portuguese sociologist Sousa Santos (2008) puts it, the present is a time of strong questions and weak answers. The author emphasizes that people are faced with huge challenges, huge questions, huge issues, and the weak answers would be the ones that do not carefully consider the pros and cons of all the possibilities. Sousa Santos describes the intensity and variety of power asymmetries in a world influenced by globalization. In response to these huge issues and the questions they raise, we need to expand our approaches and ways of thinking. The author believes that Science focused on the questions it could answer. Science could not answer such questions as whether God exists, the purpose of life, the model or models of society, and the search for happiness. Then, the epistemological crises that the modern science brings also put local knowledge in contrast with hegemonic global knowledge. In other words, this new approach makes possible to rebuild other versions of history that question the coloniality of the Eurocentric knowledge² activating voices from localness of and to an epistemological plurality.

All these factors, complicated and magnified by the production and sharing of knowledge through the internet bring challenges and opportunities for both educational settings and teachers' roles. According to postcolonial scholar Brydon (2011) people are connected virtually and globally even without leaving their cities, places, and locals. As people move through networked spaces, entrenched and emergent global and local configurations, and relationships shape possibilities for living, interacting and participating in society. Brydon (2011) states that even if people never move themselves, their lives are affected by decisions taken elsewhere and their imaginations interact with ideas and images that may have travelled the globe. Several possibilities emerge from this exposure, which might make people consider truths in plural, not only a truth or the truth. This dynamic also affects power relationships involved in curriculum initiatives and teaching and learning process. This dynamic also leads us to question what we should value, teach and learn in a changing,

² For more on Eurocentric knowledge, see Mignollo (2012).

complex and plural society. This is a society that encompasses physical, digital, and networked spaces. Those concerns are at the core of this paper.

Inquiry Questions

I designed this study with the purpose of thinking about teacher education for professional development as collaborative spaces that invite teachers to value local stories and knowledge, becoming conscious of how one understands and participates in the world, while fostering critical reflections and pedagogical practices. The questions I hoped to answer were:

- I. What may a collaborative work for teacher education reveal about teaching English in a digital and globalized society?
- II. What possibilities may emerge inside a literacies-based context to contribute with a teacher development project?

I begin with a brief description of my experience as an English teacher in Brazil and discuss how I theoretically understand collaborative spaces and relationships, teacher education, and critical literacies. Subsequently, I describe the purpose of the study, and then present four episodes to illustrate a teacher education course as a collaborative space for collaborative relationships. Finally, I outline several considerations about the way teacher education courses might contribute to teachers' critical understanding and practices, that encompass local knowledge production with the youth.

My Brazilian Educational Context

I have worked as an English teacher in Brazil for almost twenty years, in various contexts (public and private schools and universities). I have extensive experience in private English language schools in Brazil. I owned a Language School, where I worked as a Pedagogical Coordinator for fifteen years. This experience helped me to develop an awareness of the importance of teacher professional learning and its challenges in teachers' practices. I also had the opportunity to work as a volunteer in a Teacher Association where we invited professors from different universities to talk to English teachers from public and private sectors. This experience contributed to expanding my views of

theoretical frameworks that informed practices in different contexts of teaching and learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Brazil. In fact, one of my main concerns has been the need for continuous teacher development for EAL teachers and teacher educators.

During my studies for Master Degree in Linguistic and Literature Studies in English, I conducted a study of a group of elementary school teachers (Grades 6-9) from municipal public schools in Campo Grande, a city situated in the West Centre of Brazil. I inquired about how continuous teacher education might become a collaborative space for teachers and teacher educators. I also analyzed how teacher education courses impacted these teachers' views about teaching English in a globalized world that demands even more informed pedagogical practices. I collected data through interviews and teachers' participation in a teacher education course. Data showed that continuous teacher education is necessary in order to discuss teachers' roles in participating and leading students in their own engagement of the critical, pedagogical and technological aspects of a constantly changing world. Teachers play a crucial role in society and need an opportunity to take courses where they reflect about and question beliefs and practices that do not critically respond to this constantly changing world. In this context, practice becomes a field of experimentation marked by teachers' commitment to critical thinking within a growing understanding of how local contexts are always situated in global, historical, social and political contexts. Building on that study, I wished to explore how continuous teacher education might become a collaborative space for teachers and teacher educators to think about and respond to youth local practices.

Collaborative Spaces and Relationships

In educational settings, collaborative spaces invite participants to teach and learn with each other. To think about collaborative spaces and relationships in the educational setting, I draw from Gee's (2000) notions of 'distributed knowledge'. Gee defines this concept as a movement of collective work in order to produce knowledge collaboratively, with results and values that expand through the system. Gee also explains that this system, which is in a context of

rapid changes puts emphasis on problem solution, productivity, innovation, and adaptation having more horizontal and fewer centralized power relations. There is a demand on processes and on the reengineering of these processes, as well. Once knowledge becomes distributed, the expectation is that educational contexts, including contexts like teacher education courses, do not continue to reproduce experts' identities and practices. Instead, education spaces become sites where people work collaboratively to produce knowledge through 'distributed knowledge' and non-authoritarian systems.

Under this 'distributed knowledge' approach, teacher education courses might be reconceptualized. The move to decentralize knowledge is to provide "a field of practical interactions (that is, with practical objectives), where the ecology of knowledges happens" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2010, p. 548). He explains that an ecology of knowledges expands the view on all forms of knowledge, including the relations between scientific and non-scientific knowledge. The aim is to favor "pluraristic, propositive thinking" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2007, p. 75). In the ecology of knowledges, there is a context-dependent hierarchy of knowledges. When there is a need to put this hierarchy in practice, "preference must be given to the form of knowledge that guarantees the greatest level of participation the social groups involved in its design, execution and control and in the benefits of the intervention" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2007, p. 36). For example, to have teachers actively engaged in the design of a teacher development course is to recognize teachers' knowledge in how they look at and respond to their contexts, and collaboratively think about different approaches to their needs.

Teacher development courses can materialize 'distributed knowledge' and 'ecology of knowledges' by creating opportunities for attentive listening. Freire (1985) explains that one needs to listen to the other to learn, and to be critical when facing diverse readings and uncertainties. Menezes de Souza (2011) corroborates Freire and adds that one should listen to oneself from listening to the other. This listening considers that each individual is situated in a socio-historical context and participates in diverse communities that influence the way one reads the words as well as the world around oneself. The way one

reads the world reflects on how one makes meaning, produces knowledge, deals with power relations, listens to oneself, and acts in the world.

Teacher Education

Monte Mór (2011) affirms that certain teacher education programs designed through traditional frameworks and emphasizing the use of conventional methods and methodologies, do not work for contemporary teachers. Monte Mór argues that transformations in society have brought new language and new modes of communication, interaction, and knowledge production, which all interfere in the search for epistemological uniformity. The search for epistemological uniformity imposes a central and right way of understanding and producing knowledge. In this context, the right content, curriculum, teaching method. Instead, the diversity of pedagogical and curricular possibilities - as well as the need of reexamining practices based on educational philosophies and pedagogies - seem to be more coherent with these changes. Yet, Monte Mór (2011) reiterates that teacher education projects should focus on a knowing and a doing that are not necessarily ready. The development of abilities that lead to teachers' and students' agency should be central to these projects.

Maciel and Rocha (2013, p. 19) corroborate Monte Mór (2011) and advocate for:

[...] the urgency of searching other paradigms in the field of linguistic education, research and teacher education. Other possibilities that make it possible to see the world through more pluralist lenses that take into account the complexity and the contradiction, the discontinuity and the incompleteness as valid ways of how one relates to the world and to the knowledge production.

Teacher education programs should therefore promote dialogues that encompass the diversity and uncertainties of current times. In having the opportunity to reflect on the origins of thoughts and beliefs, and the way knowledge is produced, teachers and teacher educators revisit the way they see, understand and act in the world and in their classrooms.

Taking a Critical Literacies Lens

Teachers face different challenges when thinking and rethinking ethics, morals, individualism, relations with nature/planet, harmony, conflicts and relationships in times of constant change. Recent studies highlight the need to develop critical thinking in order to have more participative citizens (CROOKES, 2010; ROCHA, 2014; MATTOS, 2012; MORGAN; RAMATHAN, 2005; MORGAN, 2011). In a globalized and connected world, what kind of critical thinking may teachers foster? Monte Mór (2013) points out that one of the most common understandings of critical development is associated with the criticism taught in specific disciplines, which is related to some kinds of criticism such as, literary or artistic criticisms.

The other perspective, according to Monte Mór (2013), is connected to the capacity of critical perception that citizens have about the society in which they live, and this capacity does not necessarily have to do with advanced academic study. Critical literacies are concerned with the perspectives through which inequity, exclusion, and issues of power are examined. Critical literacy theories acknowledge that our cultural, social, epistemological and historical experiences shape the way we view, understand and experience the world. This perception influences our understandings of reality and leads to reflections and considerations on what is right or wrong in diverse contexts of knowledge production.

Within a critical literacy framework, “reading is an act of coming to know the world (as well as the word) and a means to social transformation” (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001, p. 5). In this way, the text presents more than the author’s intentions, it starts to generate interpretations that acknowledge social and historical contexts, as well as power relations. Similarly, Menezes de Souza (2011) questions the understanding of critical thinking proposed by critical pedagogy. He brings in local inquiries about who wants to manipulate whom, what it is to be right or wrong, who emancipates whom, in spaces marked by the multiplicity of meanings, things, and possibilities of the post-modern era. Menezes de Souza asserts that the queries about critical pedagogy proposed do not consider contemporary societal characteristics. Given current realities, as globally connected and locally

situated, Menezes de Souza argues that a critical literacy proposal embraces the author, the reader, the text and the context that they participate in, allowing interpretations that depart from local reality with such questions as: “Who am I as a reader? Why am I reading this text? What are my objectives as a reader?”

Critical literacies perspectives recognize the process of meaning making and expanding critical perceptions of the world based on cultural, social, epistemological and historical experiences. One considers truths, and not only a truth or the truth (MENEZES DE SOUSA, 2011; JORDÃO, 2013; MONTE MÓR, 2011). Truths are situated, and present variations according to historical and social contexts. This is a perspective aligned with one of the main tenets of postmodern theories: the notions of no single truth with capital T. In this perspective, knowledge is not considered natural or neutral, but rather ideological and inserted in discursive communities where reality is not definitive or universal (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001). Meanings of a text are always multiple, contestable and produced in relation to power. Maciel (2013, p. 240) states that “it is important to admit that notions of unity and totality, transcendental notions of beliefs about knowledge are contingent when one seeks to problematize among other aspects”. The author suggests asking questions that provoke responses to the reasons why we think the way we think, why we construct certain particular views of reality, whose interests are being served by various versions of truths.

Research Background

This study was conducted as an interpretative qualitative research study that was ethnographic in nature, and in the design of teacher research. The purpose was to study what happened when EAL teachers revisited their theoretical frameworks and practices, participated in and elaborated activities informed by critical theories in a course aimed at public school teachers, and my interactions with the process as a teacher educator. The continuous teacher education aspect of the course was characterized by the audience who attended the course: in-service teachers who were pursuing ongoing professional development. I also intended to explain the events in the lens of anchor theories through a subjective perspective (TAKAKI, 2011).

For the research, I designed a teacher education course focusing mostly on pedagogical aspects of teaching English as an additional language in the context of public schools. I tried to bring possibilities where participants and I could construct the course collaboratively. We decided together what aspects of TEAL could be revisited, and we elaborated activities for the classroom based on critical literacy theories. I used reflective diaries and field notes to reflect on my role as a teacher educator and how I tried to challenge established beliefs and practices of teaching English as an additional language.

In this article, I focus on research moments that address how a teacher education course might acknowledge teachers' existing practices, while inviting reflections on how practices privilege or marginalize diverse knowledge. I interpret these episodes as responses to collaborative spaces and relationships informed by critical literacies theories. I also envision these episodes as catalysts for classroom practices in which teachers consider youths' local contexts as well as their responses to these contexts.

Thinking of Collaborative Relationships and Spaces through Critical Literacies Lenses: Four Research Episodes

Based on such assumptions, I discuss next four episodes of my research process and how I interpreted them as follows: 1) valuing local stories and knowledges, 2) reading the world, 3) being with the world, and 4) being critical. Names of the participants are pseudonyms.

Episode 1: Valuing Local Stories and Knowledges

During the course, we talked about concepts of knowledge and what knowledge is valued in educational settings. The first episode I address happened when Helena mentioned that the course prompted opportunities to think about aspects of a certain culture that is more valued in our society, and why it is more valued. Talking about situated truths she reflected that:

Helena: [...] when you come, you know a truth is so situated [...] then the person thinks that for her to be more, to have more culture, have more value, she has to forget it, build another story. And that is not how it works, you become much more valued, you have much more value when you take it, understand your

context and guide it forward, you know other realities, without forgetting your roots.³

From this excerpt, I interpret that she used to think that to have more culture, to have more value, one needed to forget about one's previous life. She associated this previous life with a life that did not have culture that is usually valued by society: the culture of certificate. The culture of certificate gives more value to knowledge that is acquired through courses, courses that offer certificates. She is aware of how her experience as a public-school teacher enriched her with practical experience. This classroom experience helped her to better understand her own practice, and to connect it with theories that considered her practice and knowledge.

She came to the realization that one may be also valued when one understands his/her own context and when one knows other realities but does not forget one's origins. This opportunity also raised interpretations related to the ecology of knowledges proposed by Sousa Santos (2007, 2010), as it becomes a moment of perceiving the validity of knowledge of practice. To problematize social systems of hierarchization of subjects and knowledge is to investigate the meanings of the world and its process of construction, distribution, reproduction and transmission (JORDÃO, 2013). From a critical literacy perspective, schools (teacher education courses) should be constituted as questioning spaces of practices of meaning making and representations of subjects.

Episode 2: Reading the World

In another moment during the course, we talked about places to visit around the world and used pictures to discuss stereotypes. I designed an activity in which I chose images of places from different countries without sharing the place they represented. Some beautiful pictures from South

³ My translation from the original: Porque assim, quando você vem, você conhece uma verdade tão [...] tão dali, NE[...] tão [...] aí a pessoa pensa que pra ela ser, ter mais cultura, ter mais valor, ela tem que esquecer, construir outra história. Ao passo que não é isso, você se torna muito mais valorizado, você tem muito mais valor quando você pega, entende o seu contexto e leva aquilo a frente, conhece muitas outras realidades, né, sem esquecer das raízes.

American countries were presented in contrast with pictures depicting poverty from European and North American countries. Participants were asked to associate the pictures with countries around the world. At first, they suggested names of developed countries for the beautiful pictures and non-developed countries for the “ugly” pictures. The following conversation⁴ between Helena, Sergio and I brought insights into reading images:

K. So now I'll tell you where these places are, okay? This is in Cartagena, Colombia; this is in Cambodia, in Asia, and part of the Vietnam War was there. Here, it is La Paz, Bolivia.

(laughs)

S. It's a wonderful place.

K. Yes, a wonderful place...Here we have Spain. This is a cathedral and it's in Madrid. Here is the underground in France, in Paris, okay? This is a beach in China.

H. China? (showing surprise)

K. China. This is a beach in China. And these are homeless people in New York. [...]

H. It's so beautiful.

K. Have you ever imagined this possibility? Like to have a place like this in La Paz? What's the image we usually have from Bolivia?

S. The poor people.

H. Dirty.

K. What is the image we usually have from Colombia?

S. Violence.

H. Drugs, violence.

⁴ This conversation was originally conducted in English.

K. (...) And here, what is the idea we have about New York? Before this picture, what's the idea of New York?

H. Beautiful place, beautiful people.

K. Skyscrapers. Skyscrapers are the very tall buildings. Yes? I don't want you to have only this view of New York. I only want you to see that there is another way of viewing a place. Okay? Of viewing places. Have you ever thought of going to places people don't go to that often? Do you understand this? Like, for example, Colombia, Bolivia, have you ever thought of visiting these places?

H. No. (...) because I have no beautiful image of these places.

S. Yes, I never thought of going there, because I am afraid of these people.

K. Aham, and we usually connect to violence. Why aren't these destinations chosen by tourists?

S. Because of stereot...

K. Stereotypes.

S. Stereotype.

K. Who do you think usually builds and reinforces these stereotypes, Sergio?

S. The media.

What I would like to emphasize is how stereotypes are built and reinforced by the media and digital spaces. When teachers choose resources for reading the world, they are influenced by their views of culture, beauty, ugliness, and so on, and the materials they select end up shaping their students' worldviews too. Kumaravadivelu (2012) emphasizes that nowadays people have more chances to know the foreigner's/ other's culture. Another interpretation that emerges is seeing otherwise and conceptualizing the good, the bad, and the ugly in different cultural perspectives. It becomes an

opportunity for reading the world through a pluralistic lens, which leads to an awareness of what narratives are privileged or marginalized in contemporary societies.

Episode 3: Being with the World

As part of the research during one of our meetings teachers were asked to bring texts with images and images with texts. One of the teachers brought an ad for an energy drink, and when I questioned her why she had chosen that text/ image, she answered:

Helena: [...] you know, at school we had a party and the students were drinking this energy drink when they were not supposed to, and I would like to work with something for them to know this drink better. [...] Even I did not know if they could or not drink this kind of drink.⁵

I infer from this conversation that the participant shows a perception of the reality and of the function of language teaching aimed at the formation of more conscious citizens, who are aware of their attitudes in society. I also interpret that the teacher looks at her local environment and faces an issue that she does not know how to respond to. She wants to address this issue because she notices that it is part of her students' lives. According to Monte Mór (2013), New Literacy Studies pushes for more agency for teachers and students, especially when bringing opportunities to review the adversities of daily life and making meanings, when immersed in processes that the participants do not understand. Considering aspects of students' everyday lives in order to stimulate critical thinking and exploring possibilities of meaning making, for the promotion of a more active language teacher, aware of their social and educational role are aspects that can be developed in this process.

Similarly, Pennycook (2004) is interested in the way that educators can promote potential change in their realities through ongoing professional development. In many Brazilian contexts, there is a focus on the linguistic

⁵ My translation from the original: [...] é que, sabe, lá na escola teve uma festa e os alunos estavam tomando energético escondido, e eu queria levar alguma coisa para eles conhecerem mais sobre essas bebidas. [...] nem eu sei se eles podem ou não beber essa bebida, se dá problema.

aspects (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary) of language when teaching EAL students. Through an activity proposed during the teacher development course, a teacher searches for ways of explaining and discussing the possibilities that go beyond linguistic aspects of language. Instead, the linguistic focus exists as a tool for the development of a more holistic perception of the process of life learning (ZHAO; BIESTA, 2011), and includes texts that are local, and relevant to the students' reality. Teachers consider students' realities, and the implications on their attitudes inside and outside the classroom.

Episode 4: Being a Critical Teacher

This episode shows how a course can motivate reflections on developing critical literacies to enhance a critical view of teachers' practices. During one of our meetings, Helena asks how a course could make a teacher grow as a professional and Sergio answered:

You will surely grow, because before the course we face somethings, and we did not.... They have already asked questions and we did not reflect about them, for example, another day, I was ... in the beginning of the book, there was an excerpt of children returning from their vacations, then it was written 'Ask your students this question: Where did you travel to during your vacation?' I will not ask this question because I know that is not their reality. Our biggest challenge is to adapt all of this to their reality. The book is not their reality.⁶

A possible analysis of this episode is how the course prompted a stimulus for a critical and reflexive pedagogical practice. Sergio perceived that he can question textbooks. Critical literacies might lead teachers to become aware about where they are and to where they go (Morgan, 2013). In other words, the teachers feel more empowered to reflect on how themes are presented, the opportunities to use them, what motivates students and teachers, how curriculum is organized, how identities perform in educational

⁶ My translation from the original: Vai crescer sim, porque antes você se depara com umas coisas, antes a gente nem... a gente nem refletia, por exemplo, outro dia eu ali no ... logo no início do ano estava no livro, no livro estava um trecho sobre as crianças voltando das férias, aí estava escrito 'faça essa pergunta para o seu aluno: Para onde você viajou durante as férias?' Eu não vou fazer essa pergunta porque eu sei que a realidade deles não é essa. O nosso grande desafio é adaptar tudo isso à realidade deles. O livro não é da realidade deles.

spaces, and more diverse ways of learning. In addition, there is stimulus to act and develop classroom practices that question knowledge that does not dialogue with or represent students' situated contexts.

When the teacher states that: "Our biggest challenge is to adapt all of this to their [students'] reality. The book does not represent their reality", it is an opportunity for the "pursuit of critical moments" (PENNYCOOK, 2004, p.335). This brought opportunities for looking for "critical moments" in which teachers could negotiate their knowledge and ideas, histories, beliefs and practices, the possibilities and difficulties brought by their teaching contexts (PENNYCOOK, 2004). In this specific case, the linguistic focus of this unit was the past simple as verb tense. However, the teacher shows critical awareness about the ideas opinions involved in the theme of the class (vacation), and how the book addresses the theme.

The development of critical perception goes through these moments that may be perceived as not as important by participants, at first glance. However, these moments may become opportunities for epistemological ruptures as Monte Mór (2013) points out, making it possible for individuals to broaden their views about their own theories and practices. Drawing on Ricoeur, Monte Mór (2013) notes that the idea of rupture means to reinterpret in different ways from the ones imposed by Eurocentric dominant groups. Reinterpretations consider silenced and marginalized voices to understand contexts, and produce knowledge in more pluralistic ways (SOUSA SANTOS, 2008). The rupture happens when there is a recognition of possible and constant transformations and reinterpretations.

Experiencing Collaborative Spaces and Relationships

These four chosen episodes during a course showed how collaborative spaces and relationships can be developed when participants actively engage with the space, ideas, each other and the teacher educator. In valuing teachers' professional knowledge, stories, and experiences, there was an opportunity to see the course as a collaborative space for questioning the validity of knowledges and inviting local stories and knowledges in 'ecology of knowledges.' In reading the world, there was an opportunity for experiencing

how (media) discourses reproduce stereotyped world views and finding alternatives of rupturing these discourses. In being with the world, there was an opportunity for thinking about situated resources that dialogued with students' reality. In being critical, there was an opportunity for becoming aware of local spaces and being critically engaged with pedagogical choices that considered more active and collaborative participation.

Final Considerations

In experiencing collaborative and dialogic spaces and relationships, as the ones shared above, teachers might feel inspired to create collaborative spaces that question and respond to local pedagogies and practices, considering the connected and globalized world we live in. In this context, being critical is to look at contexts and question theories and practices that marginalize groups and knowledges and reinforce privileged views of society. This view is not confirmed only through readings. It is a more attentive view and a more conscious sharing of observations informed by practiced theories, or theorized practices. It is a critical being that contemplates reality and inquiries, responds, accepts, resists, adds, deletes, analyses, appreciates, and defends.

This research project created opportunities for experiencing a collaborative co-constructed teacher education course, where teachers and teacher-educator developed relations of mutual trust, and an awareness of how agency and responsible choices are central in the educational process. During the course, teachers felt comfortable to share their dilemmas, opinions and ideas, to question their realities and practices, to search for different practices, to be silent, to expose their difficulties and results, that is, to be consciously engaged with their education. Encounters and mismatches on what teaching English as an additional language in a globalized world means become more apparent in a collaborative proposal. A constant dialogue promotes inquiries and reflections about the roles of teachers, teacher-educators, schools and universities in times of constant change.

In contexts of EAL, teacher education courses have a long history of focusing on language objectives, a response to official curriculum documents. Part of this history is a repetition of methods and methodologies that do not

consider changes in society (MONTE MÓR, 2011). This experience shows that when teachers experience professional spaces that listen to their stories, respect and invite plural and critical views, and motivate context-based inquiries during their own development, teachers feel supported to think and do otherwise in their contexts. In EAL contexts, to think of continuous teacher development is to think of teachers as designers of learning environments, self-efficacy evaluators, and researchers (KALANTZIS; COPE, 2008) in order to enhance pedagogical practices that invite youth to explore their own spaces critically and creatively. In fact, partnerships between universities and schools could enhance teacher development courses that consider theoretical frameworks and practices that respond to, and dialogue with global and local contexts of practice for the contemporary student.

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