

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL  
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

**CO-TEACHING IN THE ENGLISH PRACTICUM COURSE: AN EXPERIENCE  
REPORT**

ANDRÉ TRINDADE FONSECA

PORTO ALEGRE  
2018

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL  
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

**CO-TEACHING IN THE ENGLISH PRACTICUM COURSE: AN EXPERIENCE  
REPORT**

ANDRÉ TRINDADE FONSECA

Trabalho de conclusão de curso de graduação  
apresentado como requisito parcial para obtenção  
do grau de Licenciado em Letras pela  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

Orientadora: Prof<sup>a</sup>. Dr<sup>a</sup>. Simone Sarmento

PORTO ALEGRE  
2018

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL

INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

**CO-TEACHING IN THE ENGLISH PRACTICUM COURSE: AN EXPERIENCE  
REPORT**

Trabalho de conclusão de curso de graduação  
apresentado como requisito parcial para obtenção  
do grau de Licenciado em Letras pela  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

Orientadora: Profa Dra Simone Sarmento

**BANCA EXAMINADORA**

---

Simone Sarmento  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

---

Anamaria Kurtz De Souza Welp  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

---

Paula Cortezi  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

### CIP - Catalogação na Publicação

Fonseca, André Trindade  
CO-TEACHING IN THE ENGLISH PRACTICUM COURSE: AN  
EXPERIENCE REPORT / André Trindade Fonseca. -- 2018.  
42 f.  
Orientadora: Simone Sarmento.

Trabalho de conclusão de curso (Graduação) --  
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Instituto  
de Letras, Licenciatura em Letras: Língua Portuguesa  
e Literaturas de Língua Portuguesa, Língua Inglesa e  
Literaturas de Língua Inglesa, Porto Alegre, BR-RS,  
2018.

1. co-teaching. 2. teacher development. 3.  
docência compartilhada. 4. desenvolvimento docente.  
5. estágio. I. Sarmento, Simone, orient. II. Título.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I strongly believe that any work done is a result of many important people who surround you.

Firstly, I would like to thank my parents, Bina and Nelso, for supporting every crazy decision I have taken in life, including becoming a teacher, the profession I love! Also my sisters, Giceli and Lisandra who, as big sisters, guided my path always holding my hand so I would not get lost.

Pedro, my dearest teaching partner. I hope you get the chance to read this, so you can see how much you taught me! Thanks to teacher Francine, who opened the doors of her classroom and trusted her treasure to us!

Giovana, thanks for encouraging me to become a teacher! I love you, my friend! Also Felipe, my college partner and friend to whom I shared great laughs and some tears! Also in college I met some very brilliant minds such as Álvaro, Fernanda Soldatelli, Máira, Carol Doré and Jonathan, who now are my friends! There is also Polly, who is here to prove that the world goes round! Thanks for being there (again).

Talking about friends, thanks to Marinna and Maria, because you girls know my soul! My P.O.V.Ã.O: Fer Loka, Kenne, Ana, Goula, Públio, Luiz, Lauren and Fê Souza, who have been on the road with me for twenty years! P.O.V.Ã.O rocks! Thanks to this beautiful soul, Fernanda Zinger, who taught me life has always the perfect songs to sing and dance, no matter what! Thanks to my triangle, Blenda and Athus. You were always there, through thick and thin!

Thanks to the darlings from SIMONETES, who inspire my academic life. Special thanks to Marine and Ana Vial, who were my glasses on this paper. Thanks to Paula, who cared so much about this work and were always there for us! Thanks to Larissa, for showing me there are no boundaries when you learn how to fly. Thanks to Denise, for being such a positive example and for never losing tenderness.

Thank you, Anamaria Welp, for being there in my very first class and for presenting me the LwB program. Professor Ana Bocorny and Professor Ana Fontes who also taught me so much at the LwB program at UFRGS. Thanks to Professor Sandra Maggio, for sharing her passion for teaching. You are an inspiration! Thanks to Professor Luiza Milano, who I

stopped calling “Professor” some years ago and now I simply call her “friend”. Thanks for doing everything with love!

Last but never least, my dearest mentor, inspiration and rock in the academy, Simone Sarmento. Thanks for being so patient, so professional and, yet, so lovely when guiding me and my ideas. Thanks for showing me it is possible. Thanks for showing me that the winding roads are the best and the most exciting ones!

*Suave coisa nenhuma*  
*Secos e Molhados em Amor*

## ABSTRACT

This final paper defends the notion that the practice of co-teaching can be used as a means to foster teacher development in teaching majors. It portrays the yearlong experience of two pre-service teachers in an English Practicum course in 2017 at UFRGS. The main objective of this report is to illustrate how collaboration between two undergraduate students can function through the experience of co-teaching, one among many other techniques in pedagogical development. In this study, two undergraduate student-teachers alternate roles as trainers and trainees of their own practicum as teachers-to-be in a Public State School in Porto Alegre, RS. Bringing along the practice known as Scaffolding (GIBBONS, 2015), the two pre-service teachers designed a project, taught lessons and provided feedbacks to each other in order to improve their development and, to foster student learning towards meeting the objectives. Along with the theoretical background earned in the practicum course, the co-teaching arises as another way to improve their teaching techniques inside and outside of the classroom. The intent is to show that: a) collaborative work among pre-service teachers can be provided in undergraduate teaching majors; b) undergraduate students can be responsible for their peers development; and c) this is a practice that can be spread to other majors. Using co-teaching as a way to develop teachers' careers can benefit the entire school community: Professors, pre-service teachers and, most importantly, students.

Key words: co-teaching; teacher development; practicum; collaboration;



## RESUMO

Este trabalho de conclusão defende a noção de que a prática da docência compartilhada pode ser utilizada como formação de professores em cursos de licenciatura. É o retrato da experiência de um ano de dois estagiários da cadeira de Estágio de Docência em Língua Inglesa em 2017 na UFRGS. O principal objetivo deste relatório é ilustrar como a colaboração entre dois estudantes de graduação pode funcionar através da experiência da docência compartilhada, uma entre várias formas de desenvolvimento pedagógico. Neste estudo, dois alunos da graduação alternam papéis de orientador e aprendiz de seu próprio estágio enquanto professores em uma Escola Pública em Porto Alegre, RS. A partir da prática conhecida como *Andaimento* (GIBBONS, 2015), os dois estagiários desenvolveram um projeto, deram aulas e forneceram *feedbacks* um ao outro de maneira a melhorar seu desenvolvimento e fomentar o aprendizado dos alunos através dos objetivos concretizados. Em conjunto com um suporte teórico desenvolvido na cadeira de estágio, a docência compartilhada emerge como uma forma de melhorar as técnicas de ensino dentro e fora de sala de aula. A intenção é mostrar que a) o trabalho colaborativo entre estagiários pode ocorrer nos cursos de licenciatura; b) estudantes de graduação podem se tornar responsáveis pelo desenvolvimento de seus pares; e c) é uma prática que pode ser difundida para os demais cursos. Utilizar a docência compartilhada como forma de desenvolver a carreira docente pode beneficiar toda a comunidade escolar: professores, estagiários e, o mais importante, os alunos.

Palavras-chave: docência compartilhada; desenvolvimento docente; estágio; colaboração;

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Tripp's inquiry cycle.....	24
Figure 2: Practicum 1 - Google Drive organization.....	28
Figure 3: Practicum 2 - Google Drive organization.....	28
Figure 4: Professor and pre-service teachers WhatsApp interaction.....	29
Figure 5: Lesson plan WhatsApp combination.....	29
Figure 6: First class plan - Practicum 1.....	30
Figure 7: Sixth class plan - Practicum 2.....	31

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**ETAs** – English Teaching Assistants

**EwB** – English without Borders

**LwB** – Language without Borders

**PFP** – Portuguese for Foreigners Program

**SwB** – Science without Borders

**TISP** – Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program

**UFRGS** – Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

**ZPD** – Zone of Proximal Development

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1. The Practicum Courses.....	15
2.2. Languages without Borders (LwB).....	16
2.3. My story.....	17
<b>3. THE ART OF CO-TEACHING.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4. CO-TEACHING IN THE PRACTICUM COURSE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1. This is a beginning.....	26
4.2. The group - 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students and school teacher.....	27
4.3. Co-teachers: building solid structures.....	27
4.4. Learning from mistakes: the projects of Practicum 1 and 2.....	32
4.5. Co-teaching leading to a better individual teaching: my perceptions on this project.....	37
<b>5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>40</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The English teaching practicum is a mandatory course for undergraduate students taking the Language Teaching degree (Linguistics and Literature) in Brazilian universities. It consists of theoretical lessons held in the university campus and teaching practice performed by the students in regular schools under the supervision (at least theoretically) of both university Professor and school teacher. It is a defining moment in the life of a teacher-to-be<sup>1</sup> when they first perform their teaching tasks through the theoretical background acquired in the college classrooms. The main idea with this study is to present, through my own experience, a different teaching development practice that can be adopted in practicum courses: co-teaching.

Throughout the undergraduate years, the practicum course may be the first and, sometimes, the only time student-teachers<sup>2</sup> face the teaching practice. It shows how important the practicum course is for students pursuing a teaching degree. The lessons attended, lessons observed and Professor's supervision are fundamental for the course development, as well as for the lessons pre-service<sup>3</sup> teachers will design and teach in regular schools. Nevertheless, it is essential to point out that the practicum course is not a simulation but a real task involving real students and teachers in Brazilian, mostly public, schools. Thus, in some cases, undergraduate students feel lonely and pressured through this unique and defining period of their academic lives.

Professors in the practicum course support their undergraduate students to apply teaching methods reflected in class. English Practicum Professors at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) allow their students to perform the teaching practice sole or in pairs, which is to be decided by the undergraduate students themselves.

In my project, as a suggestion from the Professor, knowing I was interested in the study of co-teaching, I decided to perform my practice in pairs in order to design a project which would fit the demands from the school where the practicum would take place. Besides being a moment in which I would learn from a peer, working in pairs would mean I would also participate actively in a colleague's pedagogical development, as he would do in mine. My classmate and I worked in a process of co-teaching where class preparation and teaching

---

<sup>1</sup> The term teacher-to-be refers to undergraduate students from teaching majors.

<sup>2</sup> Student-teacher refers to the undergraduate student taking a teaching degree major.

<sup>3</sup> The term pre-service teacher refers to the undergraduate student enrolled in the practicum course.

were performed together during the entire process, with the supervision of one of the Professors of the course.

As time goes by, we start noticing that working collectively offers more benefits and can bring better results when compared to working individually. Institutions where the collective is preconized is not only good for the students, who will have more than just one point of view and one type of experience brought along, but also for the teachers who will have the unique moment where they can experience the other's point of view. According to the Rio Grande do Sul State Curriculum, it may be positive for the entire community surrounding the school (Rio Grande do Sul, 2009, p.19):

At school, the learning of the one who teaches is not an individual process. Even in the corporate marketplace, the institutions increasingly value the capacity of working in partnerships. The advantage of the education is that few human activities pull off less to the logic of competitiveness as much as the school education, especially teaching. The product of the school is necessarily collective, even when collective work is not a valued strategy.<sup>4</sup> (Rio Grande do Sul, 2009, p.19)

Likewise, we also started developing the idea of co-teaching applied to our context of teachers under development. As a pre-service teacher, I had an idea of what co-teaching could be. However, it was only during my practice, planning, teaching, and discussing methods alongside my peer, that I could realize what co-teaching really was and how it affected my own development. This will be shown in the next sections of this paper.

We can also understand the process of co-teaching using the expression coined by Burner (1978) and wisely defined by Gibbons (2015, p. 16) as a *scaffolding* process: "Scaffolding is thus the temporary assistance by which a teacher helps a learner know how to do something so that the learner will later be able to complete a similar task alone". In my case, the experience of co-teaching was not officially performed by a teacher and a learner, but by two pre-service teachers. Anyhow, as we were both working in order to scaffold the practice of each other, there were times I performed the role of the learner and times I was the teacher. Those roles were adjusted naturally and we kept on observing and pointing out each

---

<sup>4</sup>"Na escola, a aprendizagem de quem ensina não é um processo individual. Mesmo no mercado de trabalho corporativo, as instituições estão valorizando cada vez mais a capacidade de trabalhar em equipe. A vantagem da educação é que poucas atividades humanas submetem-se menos à lógica da competitividade quanto a educação escolar, particularmente a docência. O produto da escola é obrigatoriamente coletivo, mesmo quando o trabalho coletivo não é uma estratégia valorizada." (Rio Grande do Sul, 2009, p.19)

others' performances, scaffolding our own professional development throughout the yearlong practicum.

The dialogue among teachers, in fact, has always existed, but the use of this dialogue as a practice of a continued teachers' development is difficult to put up into action, considering the reality faced by teachers, especially in Brazilian public schools. A high number of public school teachers work up to 60 hours per week due to low wages and, sometimes, in different schools, which makes the co-teaching and co-planning practices difficult tasks to be performed. Gathering teachers in Brazilian public schools for cooperative activities is like setting a puzzle, mainly when public administration does not seem to praise collaborative work.

The idea of presenting my experience in a co-teaching process among student teachers in a practicum course is to foster this dialogue among teachers as real practice, where teachers participate actively in each others' career development. If pre-service teachers learn and understand the importance of collaborative work for their teaching practice, not only considering co-teaching, but also other cooperative practices, it will be easier to put it into their regular practice even when facing an unfriendly scenario.

As stated by Nóvoa (2009, p. 23): “it is useless to claim for mutual, interpeer, collaborative development, if the definition of the pedagogical careers are not coherent with this purpose”<sup>5</sup>. As a pre-service teacher, it is important, to start this movement now. Student-teachers need to know that they can learn from a peer. Working collectively might bring positive elements for their careers and improve what they have already learned through the pedagogical theories.

Having said that, in section 2 I will provide some personal motivation and background in order to contextualize how co-teaching can be inserted in practice. In section 3, the methodology for this study will be portrayed. Finally, in section 4, my own experience in class with my partner as a co-teacher will be shown. In the Final Considerations, some personal proposals will be presented so Professors and students can take more advantages of the collective work in college.

---

<sup>5</sup>“É inútil reivindicar uma formação mútua, inter-pares, colaborativa, se a definição das carreiras docentes não for coerente com este propósito.” (NÓVOA,2009, p. 23)

## 2. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Apart from the mandatory practicum courses, there are some additional teacher development programs at UFRGS. In these programs, meetings are held and theoretical background is provided. According to Nóvoa (2009, p,31), the search for more complete and collaborative development can culminate in a group of teachers who are truly prepared for the 21st century educational issues. The author claims that teacher development programs should not be limited when it comes to their students' preparation for school work. Fortunately, UFRGS counts on a number of teaching programs besides the practicum course, such as LwB (Languages without Borders)<sup>6</sup>, PFP<sup>7</sup> (Portuguese for Foreigners Program), and TISP (Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program)<sup>8</sup>. For the purpose of this paper, the practicum courses and the LwB will be further explained in the next sections, followed by my own personal trajectory as a co-teacher.

### 2.1 The Practicum courses

As mentioned previously, the practicum course is mandatory for all teaching majors in Brazilian universities. It consists of weekly meetings to convey the theoretical approach held along with the practicum performed by the teachers-to-be in regular schools. Different universities address their practicum in distinctive ways.

At UFRGS, the resolution number 31 from 2007, regulates the practicum as a discipline at the University. At the Modern Language Department there are two English Practicum courses (English Practicum I and II). As stated in article 3 of the resolution:

The teaching practica are teaching activities of both theoretical and practical features, mandatory in order to fulfill the minimum requirements for all of the teaching majors at UFRGS, according to the pedagogical project of each course; and comprehend a set of activities of the teacher's performance, involving interaction with the scholar community, comprehension of the school organization and planning, execution and evaluation of the teaching activities, according to the present legislation.<sup>9</sup> (UFRGS, 2007)

---

<sup>6</sup> LwB website: <http://isfgestao.mec.gov.br/>

<sup>7</sup>PFP website: <http://www.ufrgs.br/ppe>

<sup>8</sup>TISP website: <http://www.capes.gov.br/educacao-basica/capespibid/pibid>

<sup>9</sup>“Os Estágios de Docência são atividades de ensino de caráter teórico-prático, obrigatórias à integralização de qualquer um dos cursos de licenciatura da UFRGS, conforme projeto pedagógico de cada curso, e compreendem um conjunto de atividades para a atuação como professor, envolvendo interação com a comunidade escolar; a



Besides being a moment when undergraduate students start their teaching practice in regular schools, it also brings together students, Professors, regular schools, university and the community as whole. This opportunity of interaction seems to be extremely important as it helps the pre-service teacher understand their role as a community agent while acting as a school teacher, cooperating with the regular class teacher, reporting to the principal of the school and, sometimes, attending to Parent-Teacher Association meetings.

## 2.2 Languages without Borders (LwB)<sup>10</sup>

The English without Borders (EwB) program was founded as a complementary program to Science without Borders (SwB)<sup>11</sup> in 2012. Even though SwB was discontinued in 2015, EwB remained teaching English and evolved to become Languages without Borders (LwB) in 2014, providing courses in other additional languages in public universities around Brazil. It is now an important player when it comes to teacher development as it provides both theoretical and practical support for those undergraduate students in Languages Teaching majors:

The program became an important initiative to assist the internationalization process and to contribute to the development of language policies in Brazilian universities, besides enabling teaching residency to future foreign languages teaching professionals.<sup>12</sup>(BRASIL, 2014)

The program provides 16, 32, 48 and 64 4-hour-weekly-courses (General and Academic English). Besides the language courses to the university community (students, Professors and staff), LwB is also a residency program for teachers-to-be who are usually undergraduate or graduate Languages students. Teachers from the program work under the

---

compreensão da organização e do planejamento escolar; planejamento, execução e avaliação de atividades docentes, de acordo com a legislação vigente.” (UFRGS, 2007)

<sup>10</sup>IsF - Idiomas sem Fronteiras in Portuguese.

<sup>11</sup>SwB - was a mobility program from the Federal Government that offered scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students. The aim was to promote exchange of knowledge and internationalisation of Brazilian universities. <<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/duvidas-frequentes>>

<sup>12</sup>“O Programa tornou-se uma importante iniciativa para auxiliar no processo de internacionalização e para contribuir para o desenvolvimento de uma política linguística nas universidades brasileiras, além de promover residência docente para os futuros profissionais do ensino de línguas estrangeiras.” (BRASIL, 2014) <<http://isf.mec.gov.br/idiomas/24-programa-isf>>

supervision of three coordinators who are Languages Professors at UFRGS. The LwB also counts on a partnership with Fulbright Scholar Program<sup>13</sup> and annually receives English Teaching Assistants (ETAs), who are recently graduated American students. The ETAs provide LwB teachers with assistance inside and outside the classroom and work in a co-teaching format with LwB teachers. They also contribute to the cultural and linguistic exchange amongst the academy community.

The teachers have a 20-hour per week contract, which involves teaching three 4-hour classes a week and participating in pedagogical meetings where they discuss techniques, policies, strategies and teaching methods focused on the program. As claimed by Kirsch (2017, p.167) “[...] the pedagogical meetings were moments where relationships formed and developed”. That means, in pedagogical meetings student-teachers and Professors (coordinators of the program) can create and reinforce bonds.

Co-teaching, as mentioned, happens regularly between a LwB teacher and an ETA. However, in the LwB program co-teaching can also develop in other formats:

(...) co-teaching can also happen with other arrangements, such as an experienced teacher and a student teacher, or two peers with different levels of instruction or different levels of experience. The co-teaching format, however, implies that both individuals (or all the individuals involved) fully participate in teaching the class. In this community, the practice of co-teaching, as mentioned earlier, was instituted by the coordination as a way to involve the ETAs in the classes while giving them opportunity to learn a little more about EAL<sup>14</sup> teaching from student teachers, whose major is on English teaching. (KIRSCH, 2017, p.170)

Thus, we can see that LwB does not only go above what student teachers study in classroom, but also helps integrating them with peers and Professors. Thus, they are stimulated to share practices and learn from others: coordinators, ETAs, peers and co-teachers. LwB integrates the university community and gives undergraduate students another possibility to practice their teaching skills.

### 2.3 My story

---

<sup>13</sup>The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by then-Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. <<https://www.cies.org/about-us>>

<sup>14</sup>EAL: English as an Additional Language

I have been an English teacher since 2008. It all started long before I joined the Language Teaching degree major. I used to be a Law student who could speak English fluently. It is a quite common (and legal) practice in Brazil working in free languages courses without having a diploma, this way, I applied for a job as a teacher in an English School (free course)<sup>15</sup> in Porto Alegre, RS. Eventually I got the teacher position, even without any experience in the area. I started enjoying the job of a teacher and, as I felt I would need a formal development in a university if I wanted to reach higher positions, in 2014 I decided to drop Law school and change the focus of my studies. I discovered a new world. I realized a Languages teaching Program in a university could be more challenging than it seemed.

In 2015, I took part of the English teachers' staff of LwB. I decided to apply for the program because it would be a great chance to have a teaching experience in a university and I would be in contact with some great Professors. At that time, co-teaching was already a common practice among teachers and ETAs. The coordinators of the program used to promote and encourage the existing practice.

Due to the shortage of classrooms in the university<sup>16</sup>, the LwB program UFRGS could not count on enough classrooms for its groups. To fulfill its demand, some teachers who had groups with the same proficiency level and at the same time, were encouraged to work in a co-teaching system, putting their groups together and, temporarily, solving the issue of the lack of classrooms. Thus, my first experience as a co-teacher happened with another LwB student-teacher. Together, we started the English for General Purposes 48 hour-course with, approximately, 20 students. The course was successful and more than 15 students<sup>17</sup> finished the module. Besides, we also had the chance to share our work as undergraduate student-teachers, preparing lessons and teaching them throughout the entire process. Quite instinctively, we adjusted our flaws and gave each other feedbacks during this cooperative

---

<sup>15</sup>Free languages courses are very popular in Brazil. There is a strong belief in Brazilian society that additional languages (mainly English), cannot be learned in regular schools. For the past years, English school franchisings have grown and they represent very important players in the educational market.

<sup>16</sup>Due to structural issues in 2015, a building was closed at UFRGS. Classes had to be relocated and the shortage of rooms affected the entire university community. There were no classrooms available even for the undergraduate courses. Due to this incident, classes had to be performed in public schools in the surroundings of the university. Even after providing classrooms, the number was not compatible to the courses offered and co-teaching was the emergencial possibility for these groups.

<sup>17</sup>LwB groups are composed of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 students per group. Considering it is a free course, dropout rates tend to be high. Finishing a course with 75% of the students taking the final tests was considered a reason of collaboration for us as co-teachers.

experience which was new for both of us. Without even noticing, we had become agents of our own learning.

In 2016, a classmate from college asked if he could join me and co-teach some of my groups. He was applying for a teacher position at the LwB, and needed more experience in the courses offered by the program. Once again, but now in a voluntary way and with the approval of the program coordinators at the time, we started the A2<sup>18</sup> English for General Purposes, a 48 hour-course. The paper “Co-teaching at the Languages without Borders program as a practice of teacher development” was presented at the *12th UFRGS Teaching Conference in 2016*<sup>19</sup>. We narrated the successful co-teaching journey, where two student-teachers with different backgrounds refine their teaching techniques as partners through the teaching route. This paper received an award in this conference.

Considering that experience proved to be positive for student-teachers and the students of the courses offered by the program, who did not differentiate between the main teacher and the volunteer one (the most and the least experienced teacher), we decided to continue the partnership in a Conversation Course for the intermediate level B1. This experience resulted in the paper presented at the *13th UFRGS Teaching Conference 2017*<sup>20</sup> entitled “World Englishes: the interaction between students from the Portuguese for Foreigners and Language without Borders programs inside the classroom”.

On that occasion, we presented how positive the interaction of the anglophone students from PFP and the English learners (Brazilians and Colombians) from LwB could be, based on the experience of the co-teaching. Using “World Englishes”<sup>21</sup> as the main theme for the 16-hour-course (four four-hour lessons), we emailed the PFP team and requested the voluntary help from anglophone students. Seven students replied to our request, being one from Jamaica, two from the UK, two from the US, and two from Barbados. We would start every class introducing the anglophone country which would be studied on that day and, after that, the anglophone students would come in and talk about their countries, culture, religion, politics, university life. The talks of the anglophone student which was supposed to last for an hour, ended up lasting for over two hours. Brazilian students got extremely interested in the

---

<sup>18</sup>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR is an internationally recognized pattern to describe and measure the proficiency of an additional language.

<sup>19</sup>XII Salão de Ensino UFRGS 2016. Abstract available at: <<http://www.lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/153585>>

<sup>20</sup>XIII Salão de Ensino UFRGS 2017. Abstract available at: <<http://www.lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/178033>>

<sup>21</sup>Expression coined at the TESOL Conference in 1988.

culture and in the English variety from those PFP students. At the same time, PFP students also wanted to know more about the Brazilian culture and the life in Porto Alegre. What was supposed to be a means of teaching English, using anglophone countries as a background, became a cultural and linguistic exchange for both sides, including the co-teachers.

After those positive actions which improved my own experience as a teacher-to-be, I decided to keep this practice in English Practicum 1 and 2. Stimulated by the Professor, I started a partnership with a classmate. The partnership happened during the two courses (practicum 1 and 2) with the same partner and the same group of 5th grade students in a primary public school run by the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Throughout the entire year, we built our journey improving our methods, discussing pedagogical proposals over the theoretical background debated in the undergraduate classroom, setting the internship projects and lesson plans always in collaborative work. Every task used in classroom with the 5th graders was shared and approved by the Professors of the course.

Hence, I intend to show how positive the use of the co-teaching technique can be in Practicum courses. In this paper I portray my experience as an English student-teacher. Through my own experience, co-teaching will be discussed and enlightened so, hopefully, others can also take advantage of this approach as an apprenticeship method for teachers-to-be.

### 3. THE ART OF CO-TEACHING

Guise *et al* (2017, p.370) draw a historical line of co-teaching dating from 1850 in Australia. For the authors, co-teaching is not a “new trend” or a “revolution”. Different from other teacher development practices, co-teaching is that the pre-service teacher, besides all the theoretical background received in class from a professor, will practice alongside their partner “planning, instructing, and assessing” in conjoint actions. The authors state “Co-teaching is one reform effort that allows for a pre-service teacher to co-teach alongside a cooperating teacher - collaborative planning, instructing, and assessing.”(2017 p. 370) .

Calling on Gibbons (2015) who based her scaffolding theory on Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), she points out:

(...) this pedagogical approach emphasizes the social and collaborative nature of learning and language development. It sees learning as occurring between individuals. The roles of teacher and learner are interrelated, with both taking active roles in the learning process. (GIBBONS, 2015, p. 12)

As stated by Nóvoa (2009, p.31) “teachers’ development programs must go back to the ‘inside’ of the profession, in other words, development programs must be based on the acquisition of professional culture, conceiving the most experienced teachers a central role in the development of the younger ones”<sup>22</sup>. Considering the co-teaching experience here analysed, even though there was not a more or a less experienced teacher, as mentioned before, as socio-historical individuals we acted differently both in the professional and personal fields, which was perfect for a combination of strengths resulting in a better and more solid development in our teaching careers.

Mateus (2013) presents in her study a case of collaborative practice among English student teachers in a Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program (TISP) environment. She reinforces the importance of the sharing practices among peers, stating that “collaborative teaching potentially produces common bases”. She claims that this conjoint analysis of the co-teaching practice in a one-on-one format, is also part of the learning process provided by the collaborative work among peers.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Original text: “a formação de professores deve passar para ‘dentro’ da profissão, isto é, deve basear-se na aquisição de uma cultura profissional, concedendo aos professores mais experientes um papel central na formação dos mais jovens.” (NÓVOA,2009, p.31)

<sup>23</sup> “o ensino colaborativo potencialmente produz as bases comuns” (MATEUS, 2013)

The active roles of both co-teachers are central in order to understand how the process works and take advantage of it. It is not about the most experienced teacher indicating the way to the least one. Co-teaching is about collaboration, which involves active dialogue, being important to call out the figure of the “reflective practitioner” (SCHÖN, 2000). Costa (2013, p. 27) elucidates that:

The reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action [...] considered the analysis the practitioner will perform after their practice on the characteristics of their own actions. In this case, the knowledge is used to describe, analyze and evaluate their memories from previous interventions. Without conditioning the practical situation, the practitioner can take distance from it in order to comprehend and reconstruct their practice. In terms of professional development, reflecting on the practice is permanent and fundamental.<sup>24</sup>(COSTA, 2013, p. 27)

It is interesting to notice that, through the analysis of the “reflective practitioner” coined by Schön in 1983 and applied by Costa (2013), the educator starts becoming the author of their own development. Through the co-teaching process, besides becoming the author of their development, the pre-service teacher also becomes responsible for the development of a third element, in this case, their partner/peer. When thinking individually about our own practice, some details may be blurred in our lonely interpretation. This “blur” is usually less frequent when we become responsible for others in our pedagogical practice/learning. As Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) points out:

an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. (VYGOTSKY, 1978,p. 90)

It is possible to see co-teaching as an extra way of enhancing teacher development, but as Vygotsky (1978) proposes with his Zone of Proximal Development, the peer interaction may bring benefits that other ways of learning may not enable. The co-teaching idea is to propose a more critical analysis and the observation of a practice that has existed for centuries, dating back from 1850 as mentioned before. Using this technique as a formal way

---

<sup>24</sup>“A *reflexão-sobre-a-ação e sobre-a-reflexão-na-ação* [...] considerada a análise que o profissional vai realizar posteriormente sobre as características da sua própria ação. Neste caso, o conhecimento é utilizado para descrever, analisar e avaliar suas memórias de intervenções anteriores. Sem os condicionamentos da situação prática, o profissional pode distanciar-se para compreender e reconstruir sua prática. Em termos de formação profissional, refletir sobre a prática é permanente e fundamental.”(COSTA, 2013, p. 27)

of pedagogical development may enable teachers or even pre-service teachers to reflect on their own practices in a more accurate observation.



#### 4. CO-TEACHING IN THE PRACTICUM COURSE

Kirsch (2017) claims that, while researching the LwB as a teacher development program, he did not perceive, in a first moment, the dichotomy between formal vs. informal learning among peers. The author describes informal learning when observing a case of two teachers talking in the teachers' room about how they used to prepare powerpoint presentations for their lessons. Formal learning would be those moments in which coordinators and teachers would schedule a meeting or a specific training. As example are the microteaching<sup>25</sup> sessions where student-teachers present a lesson plan to their peers and collect comments and feedbacks from them. Considering that in the case of co-teaching these spectrums tend to be even more blurred, it is also necessary to focus on "everyday interactions in informal contexts" (KIRSCH, 2017, p. 66). That is the reason why researchers usually go beyond the classroom in order to follow pairs of teachers who work together. The informal interactions between co-teachers need to be explored so that one can understand the process and complete the entire cycle of this type of experience.

One way to do that is by using an action research approach. According to Tripp (2005), "Educational action research is principally a strategy for the development of teachers as researchers so that they can use their research to improve their teaching and, thus, their students' learning". In the words of McTaggart (1994), action research is:

a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to Improve the rationality, justice, coherence and satisfactoriness of (a) their own social practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the institutions, programmes and ultimately the society in which these practices are carried out. (MCTAGGART, 1994, p. 317)

In my specific case of co-teaching, my peer and I were more focused on our own social practices as pre-service teachers and the understanding of those practices. Using the model of the Inquiry Cycle brought by Tripp (2005), we guided our path through the yearlong practicum in a 5th grade group. In the Inquiry Cycle: (a) researchers will plan an improvement ; (b) so they will act to implement it; (c) then they will monitor and describe the

---

<sup>25</sup>A moment where teachers present a mock lesson plan for purposes of professional development or in a teachers' selection in schools. The teacher presents a lesson plan and how they would conduct their class.

events; (d) in order to evaluate the outcomes of that practice, so the cycle can restart again. For Tripp:

Action Inquiry is a generic term for any process that follows a cycle in which one improves practice by systematically oscillating between taking action in the field of practice, and inquiring into it. One plans, implements, describes, and evaluates an improving change to one's practice, learning more about both the practice and action inquiry in the process. (TRIPP, 2005)

In this co-teaching experience we were constantly observing and improving “in the process” (TRIPP, 2005), hence, we instinctively followed that cycle. It is common to notice educators using the cycle in order to improve their own practice and a way of collecting data.

**Diagram 1:** The 4-phase representation of the basic action inquiry cycle

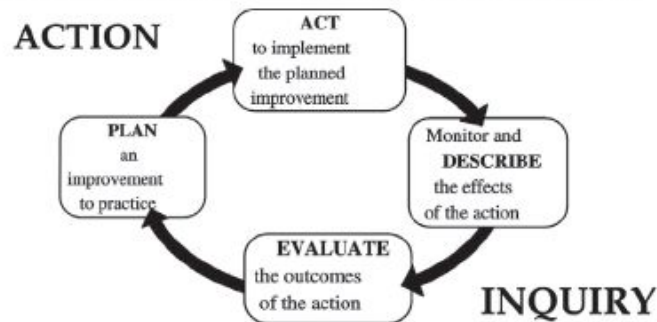


Figure 1: Tripp’s inquiry cycle (TRIPP, 2005)

From the moment we designed the first practicum course plan, we started the cycle. Considering our classes took place only on Tuesday mornings, we would prepare classes collectively on the weekends. After planning a class, sometimes, we would share the planned tasks with the Professors before the class and would get feedback. During classes, we would put our plan into action. There were times we would have to change the ongoing class plan due to lack of time, for instance. After every class, we would meet for around twenty minutes to reflect on our performance and predict possible changes. When class planning for the following class, we would first evaluate the previous class plan comparing to what was effectively done in class. It was not a difficult task, but it demanded time and willingness to accept criticisms. The results, though, showed to be positive, as we could change and remodel class plans in order to improve the following classes.

#### 4.1 This is a beginning

Besides being a way for students to practice their knowledge outside the university boundaries, the practicum also inserts future teachers in the educational community as stated previously. It is positive for both, the undergraduate students who will learn the daily tasks of a regular teacher; and for the school students who will have a different experience in class besides their regular teacher(s).

This experience happened in 2017, during the two mandatory English Practicum Courses. During the first term of 2017, the Professors of the course presented the subject and how we could perform our practicum in public schools in the city of Porto Alegre, RS. The Professors let undergraduate students choose if they wanted to perform their practice alone or in pairs. They brought some advantages of working in pairs, in a system of co-teaching, being this arrangement considered to be positive since student-teachers could discuss and improve their practice amongst themselves. That was the first time I heard the expression “Scaffolding” (GIBBONS, 2015), when each pre-service teacher would function as a “scaffold” to their classmate practice, helping each other to achieve higher positions in a safer way.

Since I wanted to further explore the practice of co-teaching, I invited a classmate to work with me. Besides knowing this classmate from past courses at the university, we were coworkers at the same English language School in Porto Alegre, so our schedule would probably match for the purposes of the practicum performance.

The practicum consisted in 10-hour-class observation and, later on teaching 20 hours, with the course plan designed by the pre-service teachers and approved by the Professors. Our next step as co-teachers was to choose the school to teach. The school was chosen by the student-teachers taking into consideration three relevant aspects: a) school location; b) indication from other undergraduate classmates who had performed their practice there; c) school teacher’s willingness to accept the practicum project.

After observations, we would teach every Tuesday from 8 am to 10:10 am. Considering the 20-hour-class plan, we would take seven classes to finish practicum 1. Practicum 2 would happen the same way, in the same school and group, but on the second term of 2017. The fifth graders knew they were part of a practicum project and they showed excitement to have English as a subject, since it is only a mandatory subject in Brazilian

schools from sixth grade on. Besides having a different subject in their curriculum, they were joyful to have two pre-service teachers from UFRGS.

#### **4.2 The group - 5th grade students and school teacher**

The thirteen students ranged from 10 up to 13 years old in a fifth grade group of a Public State School<sup>26</sup> in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. Students were already literate in Portuguese and had few or no knowledge in English. Even though they did not have a formal knowledge of English, most of the students were acquainted with the language due to movies, music and mainly *YouTube* channels.

The group had a 37-year-old teacher, who was graduated from Pedagogy, and would be responsible for teaching all the subjects apart from Physical Education. She was welcoming and willing to help. She understood the practicum would be an important step for both of us and she built a nice environment so we could feel free to create and teach and, at the same time, be supported by her pedagogical experience.

The majority of the students claimed they had contact with English through the internet, online videos, videogames and most of them had had practicum English teachers in third grade. Nevertheless, none of the students would take English outside the school, in language courses or with private tutors<sup>27</sup> for instance. Therefore, their formal knowledge of English was quite limited. Since English was not part of their regular curriculum, there was no textbook or English syllabus for the 5th grade group, so we had to plan our entire practicum from scratch.<sup>28</sup>

#### **4.3 Co-teachers: building solid structures**

As different socio-historical subjects, we had different stories. I have been an English teacher for almost 10 years. My classmate and, now, co-teacher, has been an English teacher for nearly 7 years. I had had a previous co-teaching experience. He had not. In common,

---

<sup>26</sup>The school was located in an upper middle class area in Porto Alegre, RS, but attended mostly students from lower middle class.

<sup>27</sup>Studying English in private English Schools (free courses) or having private tutors is a common practice among Brazilian middle-class families.

<sup>28</sup>Even though English is not a mandatory subject until the 6th grade in Brazilian Public Schools, some schools manage to teach the language as an extra subject.

neither of us had taught in a regular public school before. Besides learning how to work together, we would have to learn how to act in that new environment. For Gibbons (2015, p. 16), “the scaffolding is temporary, but essential for the successful construction of the building”. We knew if we did not support each other properly, with solid structures, we would both fall. Excitement turned into anxiety.

In the words of Schlatter and Garcez (2012), “in order to teach and to learn, it is necessary to have partners to whom you can talk to, reflect, refute, argue and match”<sup>29</sup>, and, by the course of the practicum experience, I found out I had that partner the authors claimed. It was not an easy path, concerning teachers have to deal with feedbacks and there must be readjustment of space and time in classroom when there are two teachers sharing the same spot. However, along the way, we both learned how to adjust the tune and the tone, how to respect each other’s ideas and how to defend our own. Even though we knew each other from before, sharing the same project and the same classroom was quite a challenge.

When you start a co-teaching partnership, you might have an idea of what it is, but you just understand what is happening once you are performing, proposing ideas, analyzing your own and your partner’s performance in a critical way, making mistakes and knowing when and how to correct them. Fernandes and Titton (2008), when narrating their own experience, express the same feeling I had:

Working side by side is, doubtlessly, a gratifying way of learning and teaching, teaching and learning, without knowing well when it starts one or the other activity. On this account, the greatest truth is that one is inherent and indispensable to the other.<sup>30</sup> (FERNANDES, TITTON, 2008)

This could be felt in practice. There were times I acted as the most experienced teacher, who would make suggestions and propose different arrangements to my partner. There were moments he would do that to me.

One clear example of those changes in scaffolding was the organization of our work. Since we worked and studied, we had to find a way to prepare the lessons together. Technology was the answer to that. Using the text message application *WhatsApp*® and

---

<sup>29</sup>“Para ensinar e para aprender, é necessário ter parceiros com quem conversar, refletir, analisar, refutar, brigar, combinar” (SCHLATTER, GARCEZ, 2012)

<sup>30</sup>“Trabalhar lado a lado é, sem sombra de dúvidas, uma forma gratificante de aprender e ensinar, de ensinar e aprender, sem saber bem quando começa uma e outra atividade. Pois, a grande verdade é que uma é inerente e indispensável para a outra.”

*Google Drive®* we saved time. My partner was more organized than I was and he created a folder with our lessons, projects, articles and all the material we would need. Thus, in this particular moment my partner was the one providing the guidance, whereas I was learning from him (see figures 2 and 3).

Nome ↓	Proprietário	Última modi...	Tamanh
Plano Geral	F [redacted] R [redacted]	7 de mai de 2017	–
Estágio II	eu	16 de out de 2017	–
Estágio I	eu	16 de out de 2017	–
artigo_warwick	eu	25 de mar de 2018	–
Artigo Bem Legal_FonsecaeR_2018	F [redacted] R [redacted]	24 de mar de 2018	–

Figure 2: Practicum 1 Google Drive Organization

Nome ↓	Proprietário	Última modi...	Tamanh
aula VI	eu	20 de nov de 2017	–
Aula V	P [redacted] R [redacted]	13 de nov de 2017	–
Aula IV	eu	5 de nov de 2017	–
Aula III	P [redacted] R [redacted]	29 de out de 2017	–
Aula II	eu	22 de out de 2017	–
Aula I	eu	16 de out de 2017	–
Apresentação Projeto	P [redacted] R [redacted]	29 de out de 2017	–
School description	P [redacted] R [redacted]	3 de dez de 2017	–
Proposta de estágio de docência.docx	P [redacted] R [redacted]	3 de dez de 2017	–

Figure 3: Practicum 2 Google Drive Organization

The *WhatsApp®* application was more used when we had one of the practicum Professors observing our classes. We created a conversation group where we would share

pictures and important information, such as when one of us were late, as seen on figures 4 and 5:



Figure 4: Professor and pre-service teacher WhatsApp interaction<sup>31</sup>



Figure 5: lesson plan WhatsApp combination<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Professor says: Good morning, I'm already here.(7:45 am); There go the pictures from today (1:39 pm); Thanks for having me in your group (1:39pm). I answer: Thanks! We appreciate it! (2:26pm)

<sup>32</sup>I say: We need to send a paragraph the context of our school (space, teacher, students, social contexts, etc..) to Simone (Professor) until Sunday afternoon. Also, I posted our class plan on drive. I recycled some material. Check it out. (12:14pm) --- Partner says: Okay, buddy (12:18 pm); I'll check it out (12:18 pm).

As we got more used to each other, I noticed our classes would flow more naturally and we would respect each other's time and space in a better way. On clear notice of this better engagement also happened when planning lessons. Below there are two figures: the first one (figure 6) is the list of modifications with date of our very first class plan in Practicum 1; the second one (figure 7) represents the sixth out of seven class plan in Practicum 2. Class plan one would happen on the course of days exchanging ideias until we would finish it. The sixth one, on the other hand, took only a few hours to be done:

Figure 6: first class plan. Practicum 1.

Above (figure 6) it is possible to see our lesson plan model. On the left side of the figure, it is seen “Class 1 out of 7”. On the right side we can see some modifications even after the class had already happened. The document was created on the 7th of May 2017 and it was last modified on the 28th of May 2017. That was quite common because, since we had no practice, time management was a problem for both of us. We would prepare a lesson with content for three, sometimes more classes, so we would go back to the previous plan and modify it according to what we needed to change or bring back for the following class.



Figure 7: sixth class plan. Practicum 2.

On the other hand, on figure seven, it can be seen the plan of class number six from practicum 2. We opened the document on November 20th 2017 at 2:30 pm and the last modification was done on the 21st at 12:38 am. It took us less than 12 hours to create our class plan. Of course we had talked before and probably made some decisions previously, but since we were used to each other's style and the group, preparing a class became faster by the end of the practicum 2 experience.

These changes and exchanges would happen so naturally that the classes were never affected. Those moments would occur when designing the project, when preparing lessons and even during classes. After a while, we knew who was best fitted for each specific activity and the process of changing positions began to be more natural along the path.

#### 4.4 Learning from mistakes: the projects of Practicum 1 and 2

In Brazil, the public education system usually offers the additional language subjects (English or Spanish) from the sixth grade of Elementary School on. We had a chance to take our teaching practices with students that belonged to a fifth grade group, and, one of our main concerns was to create a safe and comfortable environment that would provide them with a sense of appropriateness of English according to their needs: ,

(...) every citizen is entitled the right to learn an additional language through opportunities to get involved with relevant texts in other languages, learners will be able to comprehend better their own realities and transit with clearance, flexibility and autonomy in the world they live and, therefore, being more active individuals

in the contemporary society, characterized diversity and cultural complexity. (Rio Grande do Sul, 2009, p. 127)

However, it is a fact that children at that age are used to receiving inputs in English from games, TV shows, internet, etc; making it easier to work with both oral and listening skills in class. As pointed out by Bakhtin (2003, p.278)<sup>33</sup> “all the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language”, so we took advantage of the elements that would make more sense in students’ realities.

The idea behind our project in practicum 1 was to bring students the idea that they, independently of their school, living conditions, or economic status, could learn an additional language. The objective of the student-teachers was to empower students by giving them early access to the English Language, which would start officially on the 6th grade. As a part of that, we decided to create a series of flexible class plans that would present them new information and allow them to process those pieces of information in their own paces.

The title of our project in practicum 1 was “Why can I learn English?”. During the classes we worked with anglophone countries (the USA, England, Ireland, India, South Africa, Jamaica and Canada), the alphabet song, numbers song, personal statements using likes and dislikes verbs. We wanted to go from a wider idea of English until getting to their world and their context, so they could answer the final question.

We built a world panorama of English speaking countries. With the help of a world map and pictures, flags and souvenirs that represented several English speaking countries around the world, students would have to firstly, locate themselves on the map, and then located the images in their respective countries. The names of the countries were written on the board and we had a number of group repetitions. Halliday, Macintosh & Stevens (1974, p. 332) claim that:

"English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans, but an international language which increasing numbers of people adopt for at least some of their purposes [ ... ] in an increasingly large number of different varieties". Halliday, Macintosh & Stevens (1974, p. 332)

---

<sup>33</sup>“Todas as esferas da atividade humana, por mais variadas que sejam, estão sempre relacionadas com a utilização da língua.”(BAKHTIN, 2003, P. 278)

This first exercise was very important to show students that English is spread around the world and they will be able to use it in its different varieties, being all of them well accepted. To finish this class, we introduced them the question *What's your name?* . We asked them if they had heard that question before and if they knew its meaning. We were constantly appealing to students' previous knowledge in order to check their real level of English. After a few repetitions, students were introduced to its most common answer: *My name is... .*

We began the second class by reviewing what had been studied in the previous class. After that, students were given a worksheet on which they would have to write "*My name is*" and their hyphenated names, as if they were ready to spell them. The last activity of the day was the *Alphabet song*. We worked on the pronunciation and sang the song. In order to engage students in the activity and to make it more fun, we made some vocal warm ups before singing it.

On the third class, we made an activity using uncolored flags. We used the flags of the English speaking countries that had been used on the first class. We taught them the names of the colors and, after that, they had to identify the colors from template flags on the board.

The fourth class was dedicated to numbers. After having the numbers 1 to 20 written on the board and doing repetitions, students were introduced to the *How old are you?* question and we practiced orally both question and numbers with the students paired up. The students, then, produced a banner in which they had to write down the question *How old are you?* and answer it.

Our fifth and sixth classes focused on the verbs *like*, *dislike* and *love*. Our idea was to have students state some personal information in order to produce some conversation in English. We, by this point, already knew the group well enough to gather the information from them in Portuguese and then, extend this to the English language. On the board we drew a hand and each finger was one of the statements: *I like*, *I love*, *I dislike*, *I don't like*, *I hate*. Then, we had a brainstorming activity in which students would say the things they liked, disliked, loved, etc; and also actions they liked, disliked, loved to do. After that, we gave each student a sheet of paper in which they had to draw their hands and write a sentence such as the ones written on the board on each finger.

The objective was to have students answering the central question by the end of the term, but this was not possible. Some students could create simple answers, but mostly in

Portuguese. I believe our main flaw was that, even though the classes had a common path, they were not connected, not enabling students to be able to understand the main topics. Our lessons worked as separate blocks that we would build with students but, since we decided to set them up only on the last days and we did not have bonding structures, such as discourse genres, our construction was not solid enough. The students received all of that linguistic input but, since they were loose, they did not know how to use them in their speech.

As teachers we were extremely worried because we noticed our project did not succeed the way we intended. Knowing that students, after the course of 21 hours, were not able to answer the core question of our project, made us feel all of our work and project was not as successful as we had hoped for. By the end of the semester, after presenting the final paper and talking to the Professors, we discovered what our main mistake was: we did not have a pre defined genre. The defined genre would work as the bond for those inputs we had worked previously. Even though we worked with the notion of texts with students, our project did not follow a genre approach According to Rio Grande do Sul State Curriculum (2009, p. 161), the use of discourse genres in classroom will bring advantages to the students, who will experience the language in real use and, through that, comprehend how language. After all, it is our belief that all communication happens through genres. As co-teachers, we realized that was a flaw in our project.

Since we made bonds with the group and the teacher from this school and we wanted to keep up with the project of co-teaching, my classmate and I remained at the same school with the same group for practicum 2. We got together to design our second project for the students we already knew and trying to improve our first experience. What was supposed to be easier became more difficult due to the willingness to . Having some mutual support, we were then able to find out what we could do in order to improve the second practicum. As Nguyen and Ngo (2017) say, the peer mentoring is an import support amongst co-teachers:

Peer mentoring is referred to as a reciprocal supportive process in which both pre-service teachers play the role of mentor to each other, providing psychosocial and career-enhancing support. (NGUYEN & NGO; 2017, p.2)

For practicum 2 project we knew we would have to find a genre that would fit our students' needs and, therefore, we would truly succeed in English language learning. We were quite ambitious and we both decided it would be interesting to work with the Brazilian series

of comic book *Mônica's Gang*<sup>34</sup>, considering there is a translation of the series available in English. That would be the perfect theme considering all students knew what *Mônica's Gang* was and some of them were readers of the comics in Portuguese, their native language.

When we got together with one of the Professors in order to present our project, she told us a comic book as students' first genre in an additional language could be too difficult for them. Frustration came along the way once again. Nevertheless, as our mentor, she suggested we should work with comic strips and that way we would not have to change our project completely. That was what we did: we changed our genre from comic books to comic strips and kept using the same background from the *Monica's Gang* series.

The project seemed to be very positive and, along the way, some changes were necessary. We searched comic strips that would fit students expectations to be linguistic triggers for their learning. The structured discourse genre, even as simple as it may seem, worked as a link in every class and students were able to realize the English language working in the real world, even in the fantasy land of *Mônica's Gang*.

Nevertheless, by the end of the practicum, as a final product, students were requested to create their own comic strips. Using their previous knowledge and what was taught in class with the help of the teachers, they were able to produce their own strips. We were pleased considering that the students even used figures of speech, such as irony and onomatopoeia, taught during our period. We can see that our improvement came from the mentoring process received from Professors and peer mentoring, after realizing our own flaws. As stated by Nguyen and Ngo (2017):

Peer mentoring also enabled the pre-service teacher to evaluate both their peers and their own teaching practice from multiple perspectives, and to provide suggestions for improvement. The development of reflection at all levels seems to be the result of peer support through which pre-service teachers share their common teaching difficulties and learn from each other. (NGUYEN & NGO; 2017, p.8)

The peer mentoring, as stated by Nguyen and Ngo (2017), was actually fundamental for the success in our practice. Not only for improving our own development as teachers-to-be, but also and, most importantly, the lessons for the students. Those were simple but, valuable moments, when we would talk for twenty minutes or so after every class and

---

<sup>34</sup>Series of Brazilian comic books launched in 1959 as strips and in 1979 as comic book. The series is about *Mônica*, an eight-year-old girl and her friends. It portrays the typical Brazilian families. It is also known as "Monica and Friends" in the U.S.A..

make new plans, especially if something needed to be changed. Later on, when planning a new class, we would use tools such as *Google Drive* and *WhatsApp* to keep on track. Reflecting about our own practice is easier if we can share with someone who is in the same position and facing the same obstacles as you are.

#### **4.5 Co-teaching leading to better individual teaching: my perceptions on this process**

The yearlong co-teaching demonstrated to be positive in my teaching career and my development as a teaching undergraduate student, making me realize I can and I should count more often on the support of my colleagues. Having a partner that encourages you to succeed, even when facing adversities, is the key to achieve good results in your practice.

Even though I had other two co-teaching experiences, as mentioned in the previous sections, I left the practicum course knowing what pair work really meant and how this could be used in order to improve one's practice. The difference between my past practices and the practicum one is that, besides the pair work, we had Professors supporting us so we could "scaffold" (GIBBONS, 2015) our development through the fourteen-lesson period in a safer land.

I also realized that co-teaching is not as difficult as it seems. Sometimes teachers are comfortable with their practices and they do not realize updates are necessary. Whenever co-teaching, either the pre-service teacher or a regular experienced teacher will notice highlights and lowlights in their performance. Sometimes, these improvements can be perceived alone and, sometimes, through the peer-mentoring. Nguyen e Ngo (2017, p. 8), when bringing the results of his research with pre-service teachers in Vietnam, the authors claim that peer-mentoring brings positive results, as he states:

In brief, it was generally believed that the peer-mentoring model promoted activities for pre-service teachers to critically reflect on their teaching. Pre-service teachers reported a move from descriptive practice to comparative and critical reflection in the process of discovering the advantages of peer support. (NGUYEN & NGO; 2017, p. 8)

Knowing what, when and how to provide feedback in a co-teaching practice is extremely important for the sake of the professional relationship established by the teachers and for the ongoing project. Also, as importantly as providing feedback, is receiving it. The

pre-service teacher must understand their peer's point of view and as brought by Nguyen and Ngo (2017, p.8), reflect critically about their practice. Those were also important lessons learned.

Our feedback sessions, as mentioned previously, would usually take place right after the class, as we would go to our regular job together. There were also moments when Professors observed us and later we would talk about the class. We would also make positive comments and praise each other whenever something worked better than planned. One specific example about it was when in practicum 2 students notice the following class (class number 3) would be on October 31st, Halloween, and they proposed a special class about it. We had to change our original plan and we had to search Halloween comic strips, but we both considered the students request should be taken into consideration. We also taught them the "trick or treat" tradition and the kids brought candies to class. We did not expect this moment to be so worthy, so that was a moment we had positive feedbacks from each other, from the regular teacher of the class and from the Professor who observed us that day.

As mentioned by Nóvoa (2009, p. 19), "the conjoint learning eases the consolidation of professional collaboration devices"<sup>35</sup>. My peer and I learned how to work together, from designing a project, to planning classes, teaching them and providing feedbacks to each other, even when we had to change a class from one week to another. We supported each other and we knew we had to walk on the same pace. I believe, after this decisive project, I am a more opened teacher, ready to collaborate more with my peers, take feedbacks in a more positive way and provide a workplace with a better sense of collectiveness.

---

<sup>35</sup>“A aprendizagem em comum facilita a consolidação de dispositivos de colaboração profissional.”(NÓVOA, 2009, p.19)

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After this personal process in my professional development, I believe changes are needed when it comes to teacher development, especially in college. Even though many Professors try to promote collaboration in its different formats in teaching majors, especially at Languages School, this is not a consensus yet. Teaching is still a lonely profession.

If co-teaching starts to be the rule in the practicum courses, teachers at work will already be used to working collectively through peer-mentoring, feedbacks and scaffolding. Collaboration at work in different professions has been bringing positive results, for both the professionals and organizations. Nóvoa (2009, p.45) who has been defending collaborative work in education for several years, mentions the figure of the “collective teacher”, a professional who is ready and has learned how to work collaboratively. The author mentions this is already a practice in other areas such as Law and Engineering, but in teaching, it has not been validated yet, “despite [...] some collaborative practices”

Nóvoa (2009) defends that collaboration is not only possible, but needed in present times in education. In more recent examples, we can see Guise (2017) bringing practical examples of co-teaching applied in regular education and Nguyen and Ngo (2017) sharing the experience of peer-mentoring.

We hope the experience and reflections here presented can help in the consolidation of co-teaching as a common practice especially for novice teachers. More studies are needed so, hopefully one day, collaboration and co-teaching will not be seen as revolutionary movements in teacher development, but as regular actions in teachers' lives.



## REFERENCES

BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Estética da criação verbal. São Paulo, SP. Ed Martins Fontes, 2003.

BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. Conselho Nacional de Educação. Parecer CNE/CP 21/2001, de 6 de agosto de 2001. Available at: <[http://portal.mec.gov.br/dmdocuments/cnecp\\_212001.pdf](http://portal.mec.gov.br/dmdocuments/cnecp_212001.pdf)> . Access on: 08/04/2018.

BRAZIL. Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Resolução UFRGS 31/2007, de 29 de agosto de 2007. Available at: <<http://www.ufrgs.br/cepe/legislacao/resolucoes-normativas/resolucao-no-31-2007-de-29-08-2007>>. Access on: 18/06/2018.

BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. Programa Idiomas sem Fronteiras. Available at: <<http://www.ufrgs.br/cepe/legislacao/resolucoes-normativas/resolucao-no-31-2007-de-29-08-2007>> Access on: 20/06/2018.

BRAZIL. Ministry of Education. Programa Ciência sem Fronteiras. Available at: <<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf/duvidas-frequentes>>. Acesso em 20/06/2018.

COSTA, E. V. Práticas De Formação De Professores De Português Língua Adicional Em Um Instituto Cultural Brasileiro No Exterior. Dissertação de Mestrado, 1–162; 2013.

COSTA, E. V, & Schlatter, M.. Eventos de formação de professores: uma perspectiva etnográfica sobre aprender a ensinar. Trabalhos Em Linguística Aplicada, 56(1), 37–63; 2017.

FERNANDES, Denise Armani Nery. TITTON, Maria Beatriz Pauperio. Docência Compartilhada: o desafio de compartilhar. Rede Românticos Conspiradores – SP, 2008.

GIBBONS, Pauline. Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning : teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom / Pauline Gibbons. — Second edition. Portsmouth, NH, USA, 2015

GUISE, Megan; HABIB, Mireille; THIESSEN, Krystal; ROBBINS, Amy. Continuum of co-teaching implementation: Moving from traditional student teaching to co-teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 66, 2017 .

HALLIDAY, M. A. K.. MCINTOSH, Angus. STREVENSON, Peter. As ciências linguísticas e o ensino de línguas. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1974, 352p.

KIRSCH, W. Teacher Development In A Community Of Practice In Southern Brazil. Tese de Doutorado, 1– 256; 2017

LEMOS, F. C.. A Formação Do Professor Para Ensino De Língua Adicional Em Ambientes Digitais Com Docência Compartilhada. Dissertação de Mestrado, 1 – 122; 2014.

MCTAGGART, Robin. Participatory Action Research: issues in theory and practice, *Educational Action Research*, 2:3, 313-337, DOI: 10.1080/0965079940020302; 1994.

MATEUS, Elaine. (2013). English Language Teacher Collaborative Practices: Representations of an Experience within Pibid

NGUYEN, Hoa Thi Mai. NGO, Nga Thi Hang. Learning to reflect through peer mentoring in a TESOL practicum. *ELT Journal*; Oxford University Press; 2018.

NÓVOA, A. (1995). Formação de Professores e Profissão Docente . In *Os Professores e a sua Formação*. Lisboa: Don Quixote.

NÓVOA, A. (2009). Professores: imagens do futuro presente. Lisboa: Educa. Lisboa: EDUCA. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>. Acesso em: 10/04/2018.

RIO GRANDE DO SUL. Referenciais Curriculares do Rio Grande do Sul. Linguagens, códigos e suas tecnologias. Porto Alegre; SE/DP, 2009. Disponível em: [http://servicos.educacao.rs.gov.br/dados/refer\\_curric\\_vol1.pdf](http://servicos.educacao.rs.gov.br/dados/refer_curric_vol1.pdf). Acesso em: 02/04/2018.

SCHLATTER, Margarete. GARCEZ, Pedro M. Línguas adicionais na escola: aprendizagens colaborativas em inglês. Erechim: Edelbra,2012.

TRIPP, David. Action research: a methodological introduction. Educ. Pesqui. vol.31 no.3 São Paulo Sept./Dec. 2005.

UNITED STATES OF AMÉRICA. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Fulbright Scholar Program. Available at: <<https://www.cies.org/about-us>>. Access on 20/06/2018

VYGOTSKY, Lev. Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1978. 159 p. (The development of higher mental).