

**Continuing professors education: the outcomes of a study group /
*Formação continuada de professores do ensino superior: as influências
de um grupo de estudos***

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present some reflections about how a study group, linked to a research group, has been a fruitful space to the promotion of the continuing foreign language professors education, from different higher education institutions (HEIs), that do not teach teacher education courses, but other undergraduation courses, like the professional higher education courses. I start with an introduction about the scope of the research on teacher education in applied linguistics, to think about the continuing education of professors who do not teach in teacher education courses, because they also need a continuing education that gives support to their professional, social and personal development. Afterwards, I present my own experience with the creation of a research group from which we organized a study group, and then I present how a new English language curriculum proposal for the institutional communication course where I teach was designed, and how my own teaching practices have been influenced by the readings, discussions and reflections promoted in the study group.

KEYWORDS: Continuing teacher education; New literacies; Foreign language teaching.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo apresentar algumas reflexões sobre como um grupo de estudos, vinculado a um grupo de pesquisa, tem se constituído em espaço profícuo e contínuo de promoção da formação continuada de professores de línguas estrangeiras (LE) de diferentes instituições de ensino superior (IES), que não atuam em cursos de licenciatura, mas em outros cursos de graduação, como os superiores de tecnologia. Inicialmente faço uma introdução, apontando alguns aspectos das pesquisas em Linguística Aplicada que tratam da formação de professores, trazendo à tona a necessidade de também se pensar na formação continuada de “professores não formadores”, por esses também necessitarem de uma formação que deve acontecer ao longo da carreira para propiciar desenvolvimento profissional, social e pessoal. Na sequência, faço um relato da minha experiência na criação do grupo de pesquisa a partir do qual surgiu o grupo de estudos, e posteriormente apresento como se deu a elaboração de uma nova proposta curricular de língua inglesa para um curso superior de tecnologia no qual atuo, apontando o modo como práticas de sala de aula têm sido influenciadas pelas leituras, discussões e reflexões promovidas pelo grupo de estudos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação continuada de professores; Novos letramentos; Ensino de LE.*

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1 Introduction

One area of great interest to researchers in Applied Linguistics is teacher education. There are many studies carried out in Brazilian universities, both on initial and on continuing education¹. For Miller (2013), this area of research brings an academic strengthening to teacher education practices, in the sense that it helps to deepen the understanding of education processes. The author, in the same paper, identifies trends in teacher education research, both nationally and internationally, and brings an in-depth discussion about the implications of these studies in the contemporary language educational setting, and stating that, from the 1990s, and strongly from the 2000s onwards, research on teacher education started to include, in addition to the research teachers, either in initial or continued education, the teachers from the research contexts, and also the teacher-educator, so they can begin to conduct their research together, which shows the force of the work done and the presence of reflection that was established (MILLER, 2013).

Most of these studies deal not only with the initial and continuing education of elementary and high school teachers, but also with the continuing education of teacher-educators. However, there is no reference to professors of higher education institutions (HEIs) who do not work in the formation of future teachers in teacher education courses, that is, who work in other undergraduate courses. There are many studies in the field of Foreign Language (FL) teacher education (e.g. conferences and publications

¹ Behrens (2007) discusses the use of the terms “continuing, continuous or in-service teacher education” that, over a few decades and at different socio-historical moments, present different meanings. For the author, in the 1990s, the meanings attributed to these words were influenced by the complexity paradigm that began to be reflected in the “continuous, continued or in-service teacher education”, due to an understanding of the need for the teachers to search for qualification throughout their professional life. This understanding, according to Behrens, was influenced by studies of other authors such as Nóvoa (1991), Schön (1992) and Perrenoud (1993), to the extent that they raised a concern with the professional development of teachers, inside schools and universities, specially in relation to the offer of opportunities “to discuss and find, collectively and individually, ways to transform their teaching practice” (BEHRENS, 2007, p. 449). It is precisely in this sense that I choose to use the term “continuing education” in this paper, knowing that there are others such as “continued education” (MONTE MÓR, 2016) or “permanent education” (FREIRE, 1996). In addition, “continuing education” is the most common expression we find in teacher education literature.

such as AILA, BALL, AAAL, ALAB, and CLAFPL, to name a few), but the education of the “non-educator” professor is not common in this research field².

It is based on this observation, during more than twenty years of experience as an English as a FL in HEIs, working both in private educational contexts and, more recently, in public ones, and on my contact with colleagues, other professors, and researchers throughout my experience as a participant in various conferences and academic events of national and international (as mentioned above) relevance, I question: why is it not common to find studies on the continued development of “non-educator” FL teachers” working on HEIs? These professors, such as peers working at other levels of education, or in teacher education courses, do not require continuing education? Do non-educators, “trained” or “formatted” professors, as Jordão, Martinez and Halu (2011) would say, through their undergraduate and graduate courses - *lato* and *stricto sensu* – do not need continuing education throughout their careers? Is their research sufficient to account for the complexity of their classroom practices throughout their careers? What can guarantee these teachers a necessary continuing education, “which occurs concurrently with the exercise of the profession and assumes the character of constant updating”³ (FREIRE; LEFFA, 2013, p. 64). How is the continuing education of professors working in other higher education courses, such as bachelors or technologists?

I have been thinking about these questions for a few years and my daily contact with fellow non-educator professors working on HEIs raises different perceptions about this subject. One of them is that, as Freire and Leffa state in the following excerpt, it is the teacher’s responsibility to search for his/her continuing education himself/herself.

At the end of the teaching degree course, and therefore, from the specific certification that officially allows qualified entry and continuity in the world of work, the period of *autonomous professional practice* begins, from which the continuity of teacher education is, primarily, under the responsibility of the professional.
⁴ (FREIRE; LEFFA, 2013, p. 64).

² I use the term “non-educator” to identify professors who work in higher education but not in teacher education courses.

³ In the original: “que ocorre concomitantemente ao exercício da profissão e assume o caráter de atualização constante” (FREIRE; LEFFA, 2013, p. 64).

⁴ In the original: “Ao término da licenciatura, e portanto, a partir da certificação específica que oficialmente permite o ingresso e a permanência qualificados no mundo do trabalho, inicia-se o período

Expanding Freire and Leffa's discussion on the aspect that I want to approach in this paper, that is, the continuing education of the non-educator FL professors working on HEIs, I claim that they must also assume ethical responsibility (MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2011) for their own continuing education, committing themselves to it after receiving their master's and doctor's degree. But does this formation happen? Trying to answer this question would be naive and a very simplistic attitude on my part, of course. However, and again from my experience and contact with fellow non-educator FL teachers from different HEIs, for example, I perceive that some of them face difficulties when it comes to rethinking practices that are usually based on structuralist views and adopting teaching materials in this perspective, which are followed to the letter by the teachers, in a context where they are usually free to make their pedagogical choices.

I want to believe that continuing education activities or actions could contribute to the constitution of a thinking, or rethinking, about their own performance and the possibility of agency, in the perspective of Monte Mór (2013), in the constitution of critical reflection practices, for example, about stereotypes, neoliberal capitalist ideologies, etc, that often appear in FL textbooks. In this sense, I believe that contact with and discussion about contemporary questions in the FL teaching-learning area would be an opportunity of continuing education which would contribute to another type of language education, subsidized by post-structuralist (and not just structuralist) perspectives. This perspective integrates the complexity involved when thinking about languages, subjects, society, from the moving, plural and diverse realities of contemporaneity and that imply reflections on the uses of language differently from what is presented by the structuralist view.

In this paper I provide support and stand in favor of a conception of language as discourse, based on the works of Bahktin and Foucault, in which, on the one hand, the issues of dialogism and ideology (among others), and of power relations, ethical issues, and of identities constitution, on the other, are intertwined, and thus have a huge impact on the use of language as a social practice. These complex issues should be an important agenda in the continued education of non-educator FL professors, as they could provide meaning constructions about the complexity of FL educational processes,

de exercício profissional autônomo, a partir do qual a continuidade da formação docente encontra-se, prioritariamente, sob a responsabilidade do profissional". (FREIRE; LEFFA, 2013, p. 64)

and lead us to “new forms of action” (MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2011, p. 287), while promoting viable changes for our contexts of action.

For Behrens,

[the] continuous, continuing or in-service education throughout the career, demands the survey of the needs of university professors and the proposition of continuous sessions of discussion and reflection about the possibilities of change. This movement needs to contemplate the possibility of offering methodologies that focus on the production of meaningful knowledge to build a formation that leads to personal, social and professional development as a citizen. (BEHRENS, 2007, p. 449)⁵.

The author argues about the need to promote “discussion and reflection on the possibilities of change”, that is, of change in the professor’s pedagogical practices. In this sense, my goal in this article is to present my experience in a fruitful space of discussion and reflection that has led to changes in the practices of non-educator professors working on HEIs in the continuing education processes: the creation of a research group - the GPLEM (DGP/CNPq) - and the development of actions related to it.

2 The GPLEM - Modern foreign languages research group

I created the GPLEM in January 2016, but the first discussions about the creation of a new research group at SEPT/UFPR (UFPR’s Vocational and Technological Education College) started in June 2015, following my tenure as a professor of the teaching board, specifically in the English language area, which took place in May of the same year. When I started my activities at SEPT, with a workload of English language subjects in the courses of technology in Secretariat and Institutional Communication, some situations prompted me to create a research group. The first of these moments took place when I was invited by a fellow professor of secretarial-

⁵ In the original: “[a] formação contínua, continuada ou em serviço ao longo da carreira, demanda o levantamento das necessidades dos professores universitários e a proposição de sessões contínuas de discussão e reflexão sobre as possibilidades de mudança. Este movimento precisa contemplar a possibilidade de oferecer metodologias que focalizem a produção de conhecimento significativo para construir uma formação que leve ao desenvolvimento pessoal, social e profissional como cidadão”. (BEHRENS, 2007, p. 449).

specific disciplines, with a degree in Secretariat and a recent PhD in Sociology, to create a research group that could cover secretarial studies (which she had already been developing unofficially) and the area of languages. I was very interested, but doubtful about the functioning of a research group and its objectives. This was due to my lack of experience, which is largely justified by the fact that I had previously only worked in private HEIs, where scientific research is often poorly stimulated.

Despite the invitation, my fellow teacher had personal problems, and could not continue with the idea of the group. In parallel to this fact, throughout the second half of 2015, I came across a difficult reality regarding the teaching of foreign languages, as several teachers from other areas⁶ believed that Celin⁷ was the "place where SEPT students should learn English and Spanish", and therefore criticized the vacancies for FL disciplines. In addition to learning about this belief from FL colleagues, I had an experience that confirmed it. In the teachers' room in that same month of June 2015 when we started the first conversations about opening a new research group, a fellow teacher from another area of knowledge asked me if I was the "new English teacher of the college". After my affirmative answer, this teacher then asked me about the relevance of foreign languages in the education of professionals from different SEPT higher education courses in technology, and if I agreed that "it would be better for our students to study languages at Celin". I was outraged by the question, even though I tried to consider that this teacher was from another area of knowledge and that, in fact,

⁶ Among UFPR's fourteen Colleges, SEPT is a relatively new addition. It was created in 2009, originated from the former UFPR technical school. Since its creation, it has had the active participation of several teachers in the creation of projects of higher education courses in technology, that is to say, undergraduate courses that, as technologists, have as their main characteristic the practical training for a faster insertion in the labor market. According to the description made available on the college's website, it is "the teaching, research and extension unit of the Federal University of Paraná that coordinates the Professional and Technological education courses linked to it at all levels. SEPT offers vocational courses for young people and adults to act in professional technical functions, according to the area of identification, which helps to meet regional demands. The education developed by SEPT articulates regular education to the work world through educational, theoretical and practical actions that are in constant interaction with new technologies. Based on social contradictions marked by specific demands, it contributes to the preparation of individuals who seek to overcome and promote socio-economic and environmental development". (Available at: <<http://www.sept.ufpr.br/portal/historia/>>. Accessed: June 2019).

⁷Celin - the Center of Languages and Interculturality of UFPR - according to the description available on its site (available at: <<http://www.celin.ufpr.br/index.php/o-celin/historia/>>. Accessed: June 2019) is a "Supplementary entity of the Humanities, Letters and Arts college of the Federal University of Paraná. Its actions are extensionist and aimed at both the internal and external community of UFPR. A non-profit organization, CELIN invests in the quality of its faculty, in the facilities of UFPR [1], and provides to the internal and external community of UFPR diverse language and culture courses, with reservation of free vacancies for the education of employees and students of UFPR, and for the vulnerable community, fulfilling an important social role."

might have little understanding of the role of foreign language teaching in a person's educational background. Therefore, I tried to answer straight away. Obviously I do not remember my exact, but I tried to answer based on some of my beliefs about which important aspects should be considered in any reflection regarding teaching and learning FL in any context. Trying to use perspectives from New Literacies and Multiliteracies (NEW LONDON GROUP, 1996; LANKSHEAR; KNOBEL, 2003, 2011; COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000, 2008) and from Critical Literacy (MONTE MÓR, 2013, MENEZES DE SOUZA, 2011), I defended that the teaching and learning processes of FL should be differentiated for each goal of technological education in each course, taking into account interests and needs, and valuing the heterogeneity and plural forms of knowledge and cultures of students, as well as providing opportunities for the development of their agency in a constant meaning-making process. In this process, which takes place in social practices of language use, it is necessary to establish a more appropriate FL teaching agenda for students' education, mainly because we live in a society in which interactions are constituted by cultural and social plurality and diversity.

If the aforementioned teacher understood something of what I said, I do not know. The fact is that, during my speech, he did not ask questions, just made facial expressions as if he doubted my arguments, or let me speak to see how far I would go. At least this was my reading. When I finished, he simply said, "Congratulations, teacher, and good luck here at the University." I thought to myself: what did he mean by "congratulations"? And by "good luck here at the University"?

Well, this episode, along with informal conversations with fellow English and Spanish teachers about the lack of a "direction"⁸ to our practices, was the second major reason for the creation of a study group, linked to a research group. My perception was that a research group in FL could be a space for "strengthening our power" and for "the possibility of exercising our agency" (PIGNATELLI, 1994, p. 128) as FL SEPT teachers, providing a strengthening of our area in the college, and indeed providing a space for our continuing education. And so GPLEM was created in January 2016.

⁸ It seemed to me, at that time, that there was an interest in creating "a direction", that is, a joint planning that would subsidize our classroom practices at SEPT, because I remember one teacher saying: "Each one of us does whatever he/she wants, and we do not have a continuity from one period to another, which impairs the learning of students."

The certification of the group was one of the problems faced as soon as it was created, since one of the criteria for the certification of a research group is that at least three doctoral teachers with a certain number of publications be part of it. Among us, there were only two teachers with this profile. Thus, we sought out the president of the research committee of the college. Even though he was from the Physics area, he had published in linguistic journals and supported us⁹ as the third doctoral teacher for the GPLEM certification. And so it happened. The group was certified by the Pró-Reitoria de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação in March 2016, and in April of the same year we began our activities with an in person meeting.

The years 2016 and 2017 were difficult for the GPLEM. We started with a study group as the main activity of our research group, which was initially composed of three English teachers, four Spanish language teachers (one of them was a substitute), one German teacher, and another Spanish guest teacher who had already been a substitute in the college. We held a meeting every 15 days for the discussion of the texts we chose together, but there was a difficulty regarding the participation of fellow teachers due to the incompatibility of schedules, given the various academic and personal tasks. It was also a time in which participants, including me, as group leader, were able to understand what participating in a research group entailed: taking time for readings, reflections and participation in group meetings, as well as time for reversing our actions in publications, assuming a personal agenda of continuing education which, as stated by Freire and Leffa (2013), is an attitude of freedom of choice that the teacher exercises in relation to their own education. Thus, in early 2018, several SEPT FL teachers disengaged from GPLEM and, with a small number of participants, I started inviting teachers from other HEIs, which greatly strengthened GPLEM from 2018 onwards. Since then, I have also been inviting my master's students, as the development of GPLEM also coincided with my accreditation as a teacher of the UFPR Graduate Program in Letters.

Thus, in 2018, as I said earlier, the GPLEM was strengthened by the participation of more committed teachers interested in getting involved in the group's actions. Another reason for this strengthening was our own understanding and maturity

⁹ In 2016 and 2017, several new research groups were created at SEPT which, as it is a new college and still brings remnants of the old UFPR technical school, do not have a tradition in scientific research. The creation of GPLEM came at a time of great encouragement and support for research and creation of new research groups, driven with a deep commitment and dedication by Professor Thiago Corrêa de Freitas, president of the research committee at the time.

regarding the implications of participating and engaging in actions that may contribute to the understanding of our praxis, in a movement of “permanent education” (FREIRE, 1996), which I have noticed in several of our GPLEM meetings.

Another reason I consider a true driving force for GPLEM's consolidation was the creation of an agenda of activities, not only as a study group, but in that our participation was encouraged to fulfill an agenda with teaching actions, research, and education. However, in this article I chose to introduce how the readings, discussions and reflections made in the GPLEM study group have influenced our classroom practices.

3 Putting readings, discussions, and reflections in practice: the influences of the GPLEM study group

In this section, I present a few thoughts on how the readings, discussions and reflections made by the GPLEM study group have influenced my classroom practices. One of them is the development and proposal of a new curriculum to English language classes of the *Curso Superior de Tecnologia em Comunicação Institucional - Technology in Institutional Communication Course (TCI)*. My masters and PhD research (MATTOS BRAHIM, 2002; 2008), carried out during the graduate program in Applied Linguistics at Unicamp, were based on the critical reading and discourse analysis (BUSNARDO & BRAGA, 2000; FAIRCLOUGH, 1989, 1992, 1995, 2001, 2003; WALLACE, 2003; GEE, 1999), critical pedagogy, (FREIRE, 1996; FREIRE & MACEDO, 1987), and critical literacy (LANKSHEAR, C. *et al*, 1997, among others). I was extremely interested in increasing my understandings on different critical literacies from the perspective of authors with whom I became acquainted in another research group at UFPR¹⁰. My interest was studying the Multiliteracy and New Literacy theories, which were not addressed in my *strictu sensu* graduate research. This led me to suggest these themes to be the first ones for the GPLEM study group's first meetings, in 2016. The participating teachers agreed at the time, which was very important to me, as it helped me confirm my hypothesis that these theoretical perspectives could contribute to

¹⁰ This refers to my participation in the research group *Identidade e Leitura - Identity and Reading (DGP/CNPq)*, led by UFPR professor Clarissa Menezes Jordão.

our understanding of teaching practices and foreign language learning at SEPT. Students from SEPT who took part in the group were from different disciplines, with different goals, but they believed that there was a need to develop coherent practices as a group in a time when “texts, languages and people move, more and more, in hypersemiotic societies, which has led us to think of languages, the language, and who we are in the social world in a different light.”¹¹ (MOITA LOPES, 2013, p. 19).

In 2017, these theoretical perspectives helped me grow and gave me courage to propose a new curriculum for the TCI English language course, as previously mentioned. The basis for this new proposal lies in my perspective that, in light of the production/reception/interpretation of texts from different media, which constitute essentially the learning of TCI students, conventional reading and writing practices cannot support the universe of linguistic diversities available in the many information and communication technological devices during the educational process. As stated by Braga,

we cannot ignore that the interaction that digital technology requires much more than learning how to manage operations and commands (that, in itself, a nightmare initially faced by digital immigrants). There are also significant changes in the ways of reading and writing texts. In digital media, we are all immersed in multisemiotic and hypertextual statements. In webpages, reading is multimodal, it demands path choices and access to content is made in a network, accessing links that lead to other pages and more links. (BRAGA, 2013, p. 41)¹².

Thus, my proposal consists of adding images, audios and videos, in addition to written texts, into the curriculum. Students (and teachers) would then come into contact with new literacies, since meaning-making takes place in various modes (multimodal). In other words, as Rojo points out (2013, p. 08), “if contemporary texts have changed, the skills/capacities for reading and producing texts required to participate in current

¹¹ In the original: “os textos, as línguas e as pessoas movem-se, cada vez mais, em sociedades hipersemiotizadas, o que tem levado a pensar as línguas, a linguagem e quem somos no mundo social em outras bases” (MOITA LOPES, 2013, p. 19)

¹² In the original: “não podemos ignorar que a interação com as máquinas digitais demanda muito mais que aprender a gerenciar as operações de comandos (isso, por si só, um pesadelo inicialmente enfrentado pelos imigrantes digitais). Há também mudanças significativas nos modos de ler e produzir textos. Em meios digitais, estamos todos imersos em enunciados multissemióticos e hipertextuais. Nas páginas digitais da internet a leitura é multimodal e demanda escolhas de percursos e o acesso a conteúdos é realizado em rede, acessando links que remetem a outras páginas e a outros links”. (BRAGA, 2013, p. 41).

teaching practices cannot remain the same”. From the discussions raised in GPLEM, I realized that Multiliteracy and New Literacies are important to English teaching and learning practices in the TCI course. These theories can promote a way of working with students that considers the development of more adequate skills of using language in different media and many production/reception contexts.

Therefore, I assumed that communication processes use different languages, not only spoken language. In other words, other languages make up the complex communication processes in the contemporary world, where many tools are used, and several literacies are needed to minimally subsidize this complexity in different contexts of production/reception/interaction of texts/discourses in the context of the business world (but not restricted to it). In the many different fields of work, vocational institutions and businesses must be well-prepared to show how to negotiate meanings and interact, as well as teach the different skills that are required in negotiation, content creation, and *meaning-making*. Also, people who take these courses must learn how to take the plurality and diversity of society and culture into account during these interactions and meetings.

The reflections briefly introduced in this article, along with the possibility of working with themes from other courses of the TCI in an interdisciplinary way, formed the basis of the new proposal of the English language curriculum, which was fostered by the influences of the readings and reflections carried out in the GPLEM study group. I look forward to the implementation of the new curriculum, which will take place in 2020. For now, there will be challenges, but if I exercise my agency as a teacher, in a process of continuous critical reflection (PIGNATELLI, 1994, p. 128), taking on a crucial role in bringing about change in practice that it will lead to the best results in terms of the availability of language education for my students, I will be claiming my own continuing education, an “autonomous professional exercise”, as stated by Freire and Leffa (2013), which is extremely important for education as a whole.

From this reflection, I see how the meetings of the GPLEM study group have been a space for promoting discussions about the processes of teaching and learning languages that, although often faced with conflicting ideas, the lively debates allowed us to think about our own practices, positions, and beliefs and foster complex educational discussions. These discussions, in turn, led us to reflect and propose viable

practices for our FL teaching processes, problematizing classroom praxis with actions and activities in which teachers and students who, by exercising their agencies, demonstrate their commitment to learning and teaching FL.

The conflicting moments of a study group, natural to teaching, are healthy and inspiring because they lead us to think about our practices and propose others using our own understandings as basis, an important act for a teacher that can be named “rupture”, a term Bohn (2013, p. 85-86) coined inspired by Foucault. For the author, the rupture is a fundamental way to prompt changes in educational practices, which seems to me to be present in my attempt, as well as in those of my colleagues in the study group. We sought to change our practices based on the discussions held jointly, but starting from the reality of each teacher individually.

Another aspect I want to highlight is the way I began to observe more consciously my own perspective of teaching and learning languages, that is, the way I “observe myself” while teaching, while planning my classes, my activities, or my assessments. Also, I began to perceive my reactions to this observation from the feedback of the students. Here the idea of “reading yourself” by Menezes de Souza (2011, p. 296) seems to take shape. Reading oneself is crucial for one to think about the ethical responsibility of the teacher and about new forms of learning and learning critically. Indeed, that should also happen in the teacher's continuing education. In light of this, I find myself often thinking about my own classroom practice, making meanings as this practice occurs.

Undoubtedly my classroom practices have been resignified due to the readings and discussions held at the study group meetings. Particularly, I noticed the influences of new literacy and critical literacy - from a poststructuralist perspective of language -, which conceive of language as discourse, as a social practice, and whose pillars are the notions of meaning-making, agency, and criticality. I noticed that this realization also happened to my fellow FL teachers from different HEIs in the group. From our conversations, it seems clear that they have also reframed their classroom practices, not only in their undergraduate experiences, but also in other contexts in which they operate, such as workshops and foreign language courses like those of Celin.

As has been the case with my colleagues in the study group, I want to emphasize that my participation has also influenced my academic practices, especially research,

with scientific initiation projects in the Programa Institucional de Iniciação Científica (PIBIC - Institutional Program of Scientific Initiation) from 2016 to 2019. My projects were inspired by the readings, discussions, and reflections of the study group, notably the theories of New Literacy, Multiliteracy and Critical Literacy. The projects I spearheaded during the four aforementioned years were approved and my students were awarded a scientific initiation scholarship, which has been a reason for satisfaction and a great incentive, as well as evidence that the GPLEM study group influences my own continuing education process.

4 Concluding remarks: the continuing education of FL teachers prompted by the GPLEM study group

In this text, I have presented some aspects that demonstrate how the continuing education of teachers from different HEIs has been driven and done by their participation in a study group linked to a research group - GPLEM (DGP/CNPq). This continuous education happened mainly through the readings, discussions, and reflections that the texts and debates promoted in the meetings, and also by the commitment and interest of the teachers themselves on their educational processes, by the ethical responsibility that they have assumed regarding their role as language teachers. Inspired by Freire (1996, p. 32), who states that “there is no teaching without research and no research without teaching”, a study group linked to a research group constitutes a space in which teachers can dialogue with other teachers to build understandings from their own experiences, to develop knowledge on theoretical and pedagogical terms. This can significantly impact the proposition of more appropriate pedagogical practices for different higher education realities, as they “provoke” a continuous rethinking of our own classroom practices, and thus can contribute to a process of continuing education. The teachers linked to GPLEM, who were active and committed participants, were engaged in constant theoretical and practical discussions on teaching and learning processes, extremely important in our times of cultural and social diversity, in need of actions that teach citizens.

During my practices and the pedagogical practices of the teachers of the GPLEM study group, I identified what Canagarajah (2009) claims: the importance of

the teacher's role as an ethnographer of their own practice. This implies that the teacher acts as a researcher and an observer who, based on their empirical experiences, classroom practices, and context of teaching and learning, is able to re-signify them and to notice changes based on what they are experiencing. What do I expect from GPLEM? May it continue to be a fruitful space for furthering the continuing education of FL teachers! May it motivate us, drive us and inspire us each day, by sharing our ideas, opinions, reflections, and constructions of meaning to strengthen ourselves as constant researchers of our own teaching realities so that we see ourselves as researchers, not in spite of, but because we are teachers. (FREIRE, 1996, p. 32).

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