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Empowering teachers in the public system in Piaui through

the NewClassroom - Brazil/Canada Project for Professional

Development

by

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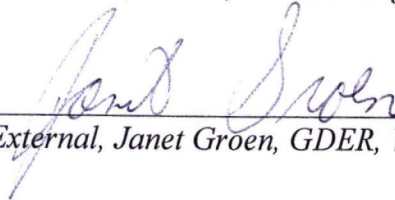UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate
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Abstract

The current research thesis emerged from a volunteer-based educational project develop by the author, called "NewClassroom - The Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development" in Piaui, one of the poorest regions in Brazil.

The research uses qualitative methods such as auto-ethnography, ethnographic pictures, audio-recorded interviews and observations. The researcher uses the local Brazilian teachers' 'voices' (Pink, 2007) to guide a search on how professional development programs like Newclassroom may be effective on improving the quality of teaching in public schools in Piaui.

This paper will discuss the NewClassroom Project results, its influence in the teachers' teaching practice, and thus the impact of this project on improving the quality of teaching in public schools in Piaui, Brazil

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This work is dedicated to my personal believe that every human being carries within themselves what it takes to succeed and all they need is an opportunity.

Hope, faith and work are the key words for a life full of meaningful accomplishments!

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The research emerged from a previous pilot professional development project, a volunteer-based educational project developed by this researcher and author, called "NewClassroom - The Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development". This chapter brings a brief description of Brazilian History and its influence on education. A background of the NewClassroom – Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development concerning its organization and history will be discussed in relation to this research study.

This study is significant in that it brought a new understanding of the internal and external factors that influence teaching performance in the public schools settings in Piaui State, Brazil. The information gained in the research provides the knowledge needed to further develop this volunteer professional development program to give the teachers a better teaching support for public school teachers in Piaui State, Brazil.

This research paper aims to study the program and the impact it has on improving the quality of teaching in public schools in Brazil. A Professional Development Project has a practical curriculum where the facilitator used a dialogue Freirian approach (Freire, P. 1970) by sharing teaching experiences, introducing new methodologies, approaches, curriculum, classroom management and teaching techniques.

The NewClassroom – Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development took place in Piaui State in the Northeast region of Brazil from 2006 - 2009. However, the idea or first draft of the NewClassroom Project was created in 2000 by this author. She used the many years of teaching experience working for public schools in Piaui State to develop a curriculum that would meet the needs and challenges of local teachers. The project curriculum is substantially influenced by the Freirian dialogue approach to education (Freire, 1970).

Brazil: History & education

Brazil is the largest country in South America with a population of over 190 million people, in 27 States. The country was first colonized in 1500s by Portuguese people being the only country in South America whose official language is Portuguese. The country is divided into the northern and southern parts which are socially and culturally diverse.

The white South and the dark North

Since the end of the 19th century, Brazil received more than 5 million European immigrants mainly Germans, Italians and Portuguese to settle in the southern region. They brought their working skills, their savings and their dreams to start a new life in a free and prosperous land. That they were culturally strong and community oriented are two of the important factors that might have contributed socio-economically to the development of the Southern region.

Tthe southern region still has some social-economic challenges such as large internal migration as every year many northern people migrate to the big cities in the southern part of Brazil searching for better life opportunities. There is still a large social and economic discrepancy between the south and the under-developed northern region. They are popularly called among Brazilians the white South and the dark North (IBGE, 2000).

The Northern region of Brazil was settled mainly by Portuguese, Africans (slaves) and the Native Brazilians or First Nations. One of the economic assets in the northern region is tourism as it covers the largest part of the Brazilian coast. Its tropical weather and the extensive coastal area make tourism the base of the local economy in many cities. Tourism contributed to the main cities growth and development, despite the visible socio-economic gab between the wealthy and the poor. Although tourism has a positive economic impact as investments in the tourism industry creates jobs for local communities, there is a deficit of qualified skilled workers and the salaries are still very low in comparison to similar occupations in the southern region.

Employment opportunities in the north are scarce. Besides the tourism industry, the local government provides most of the job opportunities in the northeast region. Subsistence agriculture is often used by rural communities as the main economic activity in some more isolated areas of the northern part of Brasil.

The differences between the north and south of Brazil can be seen in many different aspects including education. The developed southern region has the highest literacy rate in the country and southern students score much higher in the national exams than the northern region students. In terms of professional development programs, the southern region leads most of the educational projects in Brazil. For instance, some southern universities have started action research projects for teacher professional development, although on a small scale and often not implemented in public schools as this is considered costly (World Bank Document, 2001).

Northeast Region

The NewClassroom Project took place in the capital of Piaui State, Teresina. Piaui is considered the least developed state in the northeast region. Contrary to others states in the northeast region, Piaui has the smallest coastal area and despite having a beautiful untouched natural landscape, it lacks infra-structure thus contributing to a low financial investment on tourism. Especially in small towns the economy is based mostly on subsistence agriculture or a few local factories with the most important source of employment being government jobs.

The small possibility of employment opportunities in isolated towns contribute to the migration into larger cities. For instance as a result of this migration especially to Teresina, the capital of Piaui, an increase in population (IBGE, 2008) has also increased social problems. Many ghettos were created where the majority of people live in poverty living conditions

without minimum sanitation, housing, health care, education, and employment (Attacking Brazil's Poverty, Report, March 31, 2001). This results in a very distinct social gap between the well off and the poor.

As these migrants move to the larger cities searching for better life conditions, they are challenged by the numerous social-economic and cultural problems found in the big cities. The majority of the students who attend the public schools are the children whose under-educated parents struggle on a daily basis to find a job or keep the one they have.

Although education in Brazil has changed in recent years and become more accessible as the number of public schools has increased (k-grade 12), the quality of the education offered is still low. According to an evaluation study done in 2002 by the Ministry of Education 59% of the students in grade four didn't know how to read or write (Bello, 2001).

According to the Ministry of Education (MEC – Ministerio de Educacao e Cultura) recommendations, a grade 1 – 4 classroom should not have more than 25 students, however, in some Brazilian states such as Amazonas the average number of students in a classroom is 35 (Retrieved from Ecos da noticia website) . In Canada by comparison, David Cracknell, president of the Calgary Catholic Teachers' Association, has suggested that students benefits from smaller classes and a classroom with over 16 students may compromise teaching (retrieved from Calgary Herald).

Students whose parents can not afford to pay for private schools attend the public school system. According to Selma Garrido Pimenta, vice-

reactor of the University of Sao Pauol(USP – Universidade de Sao Paulo) and one of the most important universities in Brazil, of students who attended public schools, on average, less than 20 percent achieve a university degree compared to 80 percent of the students coming from private institutions. Students at public universities in Brazil do not have to pay tuition (retrieved from Carta na escola website edicao 27, 2008/2009).

However, with the competitive three-day university entrance test, where students are tested on all subjects studied in high-school, the low quality of teaching and learning in the public schools makes it hard for students who attend public schools to have a guaranteed place in a tuition-free post-secondary institution (retrieved from Wikipedia website).

Recently, in order to improve the quality of education the Brazilian government has increased investment in teacher professional development programs, aiming to increase classroom performance in the public schools. Recent government investment in new technologies resulting in new computers and internet access in the public schools upgrading teaching curriculum has apparently had a positive impact on students and teachers (World Bank Document, 2001).

In centralized teaching centers many government professional development programs have been designed by government staff or consultants and implemented throughout the country. However, they are not always suitable as they do not address the unique needs of teachers' localized needs. These programs are usually developed using a unilateral educational

where approach where local teachers play the role of passive agents (Freire, 1970) in the decision making process as their 'voices' are not included (Pink, 2007), meaning that the opinions or suggestions of classroom teachers do not plan ain important role in the educational decision making process.

NewClassroom – Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development

In order to understand the needs and concerns of the teachers who participated in this research and why the NewClassroom Project was chosen to be the base of our study of the professional development programs in Brazil, it is important to understand the concept of the NewClassroom Project. This humanitarian project involved volunteer teachers from Canada as instructors/facilitators and Certified Brazilian English teachers from the public educational system in Piaui State, Brazil as participants. Canadian volunteer instructors/facilitators, mostly, certified ESL teachers and CBE (Calgary Board of Education) teachers were recruited by the project director through analyses of resumes and an interview process that focused on international teaching experience and credentials. Brazilian teacher-participants were certified English teachers teaching for the public schools from various towns in Piaui and the neighbouring State of Maranhao that registered to attend the month-long program in July from 2006 - 2009.

The project started with a pilot project in 2006 with seventy-five – teacher-participants. In 2007, the following year, the three module project program had been fully developed. The year we started Module I, the project

had an unexpected increase in the number of participants creating a few management challenges, but the NewClassroom Project had established trust through its professional commitment to improve quality in education and the program ran more smoothly. In the following year, 2008, the project expanded the approach in the teachers' experiences of problem-solving, re-thinking the practice of teaching and implementing changes into their classrooms as their main goal of their learning. In the two first years of the NewClassroom Project it emphasised education practice over theory due to local cultural issues.

In 2009, the teacher-participants were ready to move from practice to theory. Its curriculum included the theoretical approaches of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jean Piaget, Liv Vygotsky, and Noam Chomsky to education that were taught in Portuguese. The last year of the program teacher-participants had an exhibition with pictures and samples of their work in classrooms and also how the students have responded to the teaching/learning process.

Even though the project's main focus was not teaching language, the classes were taught only in English for the first 3 years, this helped enormously the teacher-participants to develop their language skills in English especially in listening and oral conversation. In the last year of the program the classes were taught half in Portuguese and half in English because of the language difficulties involved in the discussion of academic level theories and approaches to education in English only.The course

consisted of an intensive a hundred-twenty hour monthly course every July 2006-2009 at of the Universidade Estadual do Piaui.

Although, the Project did not receive any funding, the program was made possible with the help of Canadian volunteer facilitators/instructors; Brazilian host families provided accommodation and food. The foreign volunteers and local volunteers helped as support staff, along with the support of a local Brazilian university, Universidade Estadual do Piaui that provided the teaching facilities for four years.

The practical curriculum was developed to meet the needs of the local Piaui teachers, it was a 'developing or ongoing curriculum' that was flexible and adaptive with the teacher-participants' input helping to build or shape it with their unique contribution focusing on curriculum development. It started with the belief that every individual has his or her previous social-cultural learning experiences to add to new ones learned in school (Dewey, 1897-1952). The overall goal of the program was to bring useful information and skills for teachers returning to their own classrooms (Brush and Saye, 2000), thus enabling them to implement a realistic version of what they have learned in the project.

The project used a Frierian dialogue approach to curriculum, a teaching/ learning approach with a practical curriculum in a seminar style class. Teacher-participants and facilitator-instructors had the same opportunity to express their views on teaching. By exchanging teaching experiences this increase their knowledge level as they watched, participated

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and interacted with each other through active teaching activities, thus absorbing and adapting what has been demonstrated to them to their own classroom.

The project curriculum also included theory as teacher-participants and facilitator-instructor studied the literature on important educational thinkers and allowed time for discussing of their ideas. Aside from the thinkers that were introduced by the curriculum, there were other thinkers' names suggested by the teachers/participants, thus resulting in new information being shared and discussed during the class time. They also shared and exchanged their unique teaching experiences of problem-solving, re-thinking the practice of teaching and implementing changes into their classrooms.

Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature

A study and comparison of past educational programs that looked at social and educational benefits, along with the challenges was necessary to better understand the needs and aspirations of teachers in Piaui. According to Freire (1970) " looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future" (p. 72).

Education in Brazil

Brazil has striking cultural and social differences between the north region and the south region since its colonization. Historically, slavery and colonial domination has always been part of the Brazilian social and cultural roots of the northeast region. Piaui State is located in the northeast region and is considered the least developed part of Brazil, thus differing from the developed south both cultural and economically. De Kadt (1970) remarks that "the economic and cultural domination was in part a legacy of the 'patron-dependent' or 'patron-client'. relationship which pervades "certain significant and widespread patterns of behaviour in Brazil" (p. 9).

During the military dictatorship in the 1960's, a significant educational program called MOBRAL (Moviemento Brasileiro de Alfabetizacao) was created by the Brazilian government. Its mandate was to improve the literacy of adults and youth in Brazil. Its vision was to "conduct the human person to acquiring techniques of reading, writing and calculation as to integrate in its community, allowing better life conditions". (Retrieved

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from Wikipedia website). MOBRAL had many similarities with Freire's method, where a dialog approach to the 'word' as an inserted part of the social and cultural aspect of education, that is integrating the students' own experiences to teaching.

According to Bello (1993) the main concern of the MOBRAL was to teach students how to write and read omitting social-cultural factors in the formation of man. However, MOBRAL failed to educate one in critical thinking "as education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of the students" (Freire, 1970, p. 65). The project ended in the beginning of 1980's leaving a legacy of negative results due to high costs, poor management and its inefficient "traditional" curriculum, where a teacher-center curriculum was based on what Freire (1970) described in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as banking education in that teachers retain all the knowledge and students are empty vessels.

The history of education in Brazil has its roots in colonization, as stated in a document published by UNESCO (1975 - Document 5, MOBRAL) which comments that "serious social problems undoubtedly subsist in Brazil, and of these illiteracy is only one aspect. Brazil is more than a dual society, such as is frequently to be found in Latin America; it comprises a number of different economic, social and cultural areas. There is a gulf of many centuries between the culture of the Amazon aborigines, for example, and the civilization of the coastal areas" (p. 8). Especially achieving a post-secondary education degree, in the northeast region was a far

achievement for those who depend on attending the public schools in Brazil. However, this has been changing in the last decades, as there is more investment on educational programs, thus improving methods the teaching in the public schools.

Professional Development in Brazil

In recent years, the need for teacher professional development has increased in order to better qualify teachers to teach in a more effective manner. The traditional teacher-centered approach where the teachers only transmit knowledge has been replaced by a more student-centered one where there is openness to the students' needs and that integrates their social and cultural factors to teaching.

Grand and Thompson (2003) quotes Feinman-Nemser (2001) in order to "identify four purposes for professional development:

1. Deepening and extending teachers' subject matter knowledge for teaching.

2. Extending and refining teachers' teaching repertoires so that they can connect ever more effectively with students' needs and interests.

3. Strengthening the dispositions and skills of teachers to study (and improve) their own teaching.

4. Expanding responsibilities for leadership development so that teachers can participate (as leaders) in the larger life of schools and the profession" (p. 5)

In Brazil, the most popular professional development approach is the traditional system of professional development, usually identified as in-service training where the government establishes the project goals, the curriculum design and implementation is done by university professors, employers or consultants. These teacher professional development programs are usually based on short-term courses and/or workshops, which many times are not necessary related to teaching or classroom practical issues as it is usually on the job training focused on an specific skill training (Villegas-Reimers, 2002). According to Ingvarson (1998) even though the traditional system is essential, it is no longer sufficient as it does not meet the teachers' needs nor broaden their knowledge with valid teaching information or practice that can be implemented in their classrooms.

The literature in professional development programs does not specify the best way to design and implement teacher professional development programs. Different studies debate about how to achieve better outcomes such as constructivism for bringing teachers together and effective teaching results, even though, not showing the same positive results when implemented in different contexts. Some studies conclude that professional development show better results when implemented on a smaller scale, while others state that the use of a larger system approach scale proved to be more effective (World Bank, 2001). According to Villegas-Reimers (2003) "professional development has to be considered within a framework of social,

economic and political trends and events" (retrieved from website education.com 2006-2009)

Currently, the majority of the professional development projects are created in the southern part of Brazil and implemented throughout the country by the federal and local governments. It proposes changes and improvements in the quality of teaching offered in public schools as "educational authorities remain concerned about the evidence of low teacher quality and the prevalence of poor teaching practices that constrain progress, as wide differences in student performance persist across regions and school systems." (World Bank, 2001, p. VII).

Numerous programs claim to use the dialogue Freirian (Freire, 1970) approach or a critical practice where inquiry and investigation are part of learning; even though there are similar characteristics in their curriculum design, it proves to have subtle and core differences in its implementation. According to the World Bank Study "given the huge numbers to be trained, it is questionable whether conventional methods will suffice. Brazil is a leader in the use of technology and distance education to train teachers". (Pro-formacao, TV Escola, Proinfo, etc,2001, p. 31).

Teachers in Brazil are trained mostly by government-based professional development programs and universities. A Study of the World Bank (2001) on Professional development in Brazil focusing on teacher preparation concluded that those "who goes into teaching and how they are

trained explain much of why teachers often do not meet the needs of the classroom." (p. IX)

The current Brazilian professional programs are still created at centralized centers by specialist in education without taking into account each local community cultural and teaching needs, reaching for general terms of region needs dictated by federal or regional educational authorities. As we can read in study done by World Bank (2001) "over the past decade, Brazil made important investments in in-service teacher upgrading and professional development, but many of these programs reflect an old paradigm of teacher training: top-down, off-site, one size-fits-all, one-shot interventions based on a "skills deficit" and passive *("bancario" Freire, 1970)* transmission model, and seldom reinforced in the classroom." (p. XII)

These are some samples of professional development programs implemented in Brazil:

Fundagao Marinho's Telecurso 2000, CENPEC's and Fundacao Ayrton Senna's Classes de Acelerado teacher training, Procap in Minas Gerais are examples of teacher professional development programs that are broad and lack clear guidelines and rarely based on research study on what would improve teaching performances or bring effective teaching outcomes in the classroom in the north and northeast of Brazil (World Bank, 2001).

Teia do Saber (Sao Paulo) is one of the professional development programs created in the southern of Brazil. It shows, per instance, how a

professional project developed is designed and implemented by the State of Sao Paulo: (Retrieved from Teia do Saber Website)

Teia do saber: created by the local government in the southern state of Sao Paulo. Its goal is to combine theory and teachers' practice in public schools; to keep the teachers updated with methodologies, technologies, teaching practice and challenges in the classrooms. The Teia do Saber Project is designed and implemented by centralized and decentralized centers:

1.   Centralized Actions: Interactive media (teleconference and videoconference) and also through forums, meetings, seminars and publications.

2.   Decentralized Actions: they are initially connected to the centralized actions. They are developed by Regional Teaching Boards to meet the needs and expectations of each region. They are implemented by members of teaching boards and universities especially hired to design and implement the continuing education teacher training projects accordingly to the needs formulated by the teaching boards.

University Teaching Programs (Teaching Degree Programs)

According to a World Bank Report (2001) the majority of Brazilian teachers are under-qualified/trained. In 1999, even after a decade of upgrading, forty-four percent of the teachers had finished only a secondary education and 42 percent of Brazil's "professores do ensino fundamental" (Elementary school teachers) did not pass the national exam of tertiary

education qualification level. Achieving a teaching degree from a faculty of education is also not a guarantee that teachers are well prepared as the teacher preparation programs are academically weak, often only theoretical and disassociated from teachers' experiences on their daily classroom practice. (World Bank, 2001, p. IX)

There are a few post-secondary institutions developing educational research based programs that are more systemic in approach, focused on the teachers' training needs, and school based, but none have been subjected to a cost-effectiveness analysis. Some examples of these are the programs developed by the Teacher University in Parana, teacher distance upgrading in the Federal University of Mato Grosso, and Ministerio da Educacao e Cultura's pilot programs Parametros em Formando de Professores Alfabetizadores (World Bank, 2001).

Parallel to the lack of appropriate training, teachers face other challenging factors that also influence teaching performance. According to the World Bank (2001) teachers' average salaries vary greatly depending on region and type of system. Salaries depend upon whether they teach for public schools, sate schools, municipal schools or private schools. The variations in salary appear to be greater than for other countries. The greatest differences in salaries were found among the most qualified teachers in the cities and the ones in rural areas. Rural teachers are mostly the ones paid below market. Thus, teaching is not considered as a good option in some parts of the country. Some special programs are established to provide staff

to cover the more challenging/less attractive teaching positions such as recruiting locally, offering scholarships (estagiarios), and short-term teaching contracts.

The schools are responsible for teaching evaluation and curriculum delivery. Thus, teaching performance relies mostly on the school environment. According to World Bank document "A considerable body of research points to the fact that schools should be the target of efforts to drive quality improvement" (p. XI).

Another factor that also influences education in Brazil is the lack of a clear rule system for teacher evaluation and/or recruitment in public schools. This appears to differ greatly from what happens in many countries such as Canada, where there is a strong teaching certification process (World Bank, 2003).

In terms of school support, a document of the World Bank, (1997 cited in 2001 study) showed that some schools, mostly in the southern part of Brazil have implemented a democratic system where school-level councils are elected, however, with a less power and a limited budget. However in many areas such as the northeast, school management is more traditional as shown in a report called "A Call to Action Report" (1997). The report shows that the governance in many schools in the northeast region lacks leadership skills and was not able to manage a student-centered learning approach. The report adds that, regardless of all the advances on selecting school principals, and attempts at involving parents and community members in school

management, the majority of schools in Brazil are not organized for learning due to factors such as lack of "leadership, sense of direction, teamwork and results orientation are insufficient to achieve the required cultural change". (World Bank, 2001, p. IX).

According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) in order for teacher professional development to demonstrate effective outcomes in educational reforms, teachers have to be involved on the decision making process and these decisions must be supported by educational policies. This support is needed along with a well-defined set of rules on required teaching competencies, clear recruitment process, and effective academic training provided by educators that combine theory and classroom practice. In order to improve classroom performance, as part of their academic training, future teachers need to have supervised internship and applied research based on inquiry, dialogue and experimentation (World Bank, 2001).

In conclusion, there is a little written related to professional development in Brazil, especially in Portuguese and most of the articles or documents found are published by international agencies such as UNESCO or World Bank documents due to the lack of research in this specific area in Brazil. Consequently, the majority of the professional development programs in Brazil have similar curriculum layout and methods. None of them showed effective teaching outcomes.

This study will provide more information on how professional development programs such as NewClassroom Project influences teachers' performances in their classrooms in Piaui.

Chapter 3 – Method & Design

Specific aspects of the Brazilian culture such as the reluctance for video-recorded interviews and well-accepted pictures taken were carefully considered previous to the research methods being chosen. When using qualitative methods, in order to have a more accurate data, it is necessary to be aware of the surrounding social and cultural aspects (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

The main ethical research goal 'was to give something back' meaning that the researcher uses the participant-teachers' contributions to learn how to improve the teaching efficiency and positively to affect the local community by offering more teaching quality in the public schools in Piaui (Pink, 2007). The teacher-participants' needs, social and cultural aspects were prioritized in the research by using research methods accepted in its context. A reading in to the Brazilian culture suggested that qualitative research methods would be the most suitable ways to collect the data. In addition, the researcher's background was disclosed to the teacher-participants as an insider since the researcher is a Brazilian who worked as a local public school teacher for over five years and an outsider observer. The research techniques used in the study and reasons given by the researcher for choosing the topic gave tangible support to the data. (Goldman-Segall, 1994).

The data collection consisted of   auto-ethnography consisting of the researcher's narrative based on her experience, ethnography using the

teacher-participants' voices to tell their experiences, daily observations made by the researcher and teacher-participants; audio-recorded interviews and digital photos, which were taken by the researcher and the participant-teachers and used to support the interview process and to engage participants into a reflective approach about significant learning points (Pink, 2007).

Participants in the research, referred to as teacher-participants were attendees of the Newclassroom Project in the past three years. They taught English subject from grade five to secondary education in public institutions in Piaui, Brazil. They were recruited voluntarily in the month of July 2009 during the implementation of the last module of the NewClassroon Project.

The researcher uses the local Brazilian participant-teachers' 'voices' (Pink, 2007) to guide a search for understanding of how professional development programs like NewClassroom Project may be effective in improving the quality of teaching in public schools in Piaui. This research will be used to discuss how the NewClassroom Project may influence public education in Piaui, Brazil considering the three research questions:

(1)What does it take to empower teachers in order to improve teaching performances/outcomes in the public schools in Piaui?

(2)How does a project such as NewClassroom - Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development promote teaching empowerment?

(3)How could a professional development program like "NewClassroom - Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development ignite

teacher empowerment without interfering in the local culture and respecting previous local teachers' teaching experience?

Method

Ethnography uses the teacher-participants' voices to gain a better understanding of other factors such as culture in the data through participants' interviews and observations. It differs slightly from autoethnography as autoethnography is an autobiographical narrative focused on the researcher's subjectivity on the topic based on their own experience.

One of the most important aspects to auto-ethnography is 'voice' because it gives a narrative approach describing authentic data through participants' experiences. Most of the questions surrounding the research made more sense when inserted in the social and cultural grounds, as it took into account the report of lived experiences by those who had a 'voice' (Pink, 1997).

Some of the reasons for choosing auto-ethnography rely on the fact that many questions necessary in the research subject were very subjective and not suitable to be analysed using quantitative methods.

Even though, some researchers raise concerns regarding qualitative research data due difficulties on evaluating autoethnography data some factors that may alter the authenticity such as narcissism (Holt, 2003). The researcher doing auto -ethnography might express bias in recounting ethnographic data. For instance, the researcher was an insider adding their own experiences, in addition to socio-cultural elements that may be

incorporated to the data. However, bias is not always a negative factor as the report of lived experience by a participant, whether it is the researcher or/and other participants who has 'voice' can only enrich the data collection.

According to Fisher (1986) auto-ethnography works as an instrument to explore the discursive possibilities of interpretation and identity of a non-authentic subjective data. Pink (2007) quotes Russell (1999) to talk about three different types of 'voices' in auto-ethnography: the speaker - the 'voice' which tells the story out of memory of lived experiences; the seer - the 'voice' which through an image interprets and reports a story; the seen – which is the visual record such as a video or a picture that does not depend on the participants' memory or interpretation to have a 'voice', but it is open to different interpretations. Outsiders can enrich the data, as it is connected to the social and cultural context.

Even though auto-ethnography may be seen initially as a subjective 'voice' (the speaker), the other two parts of the voice (the seer and the seen) gives it a tangible body to the data. The combination of these three 'voices' generates a rich and diverse data (Russell, 1999). According to Goldman-Segall (1994), the veracity of the auto-ethnography comes from different interpretations within the context combined to socio-cultural factors and technology.

These are some of the questions that founded my experience with auto-ethnography: How can the experience be explained? The experience that cannot be counted as it is subjective but still exists? How can we question the

'voice', the memory account engaged by a picture, the experience for not being considered objective or tangible? How can this experience be considered something to be taken into consideration?

The authenticity of auto-ethnography may rely on an investigation of different perspectives on what can be considered 'pure' or 'authentic' data (Pink, 2007). In a social-cultural aspect, it might be also a "breakdown on the colonialist precepts of ethnography emphasizing a critical perspective on facts in a form of anti-documentary". (Renov, "The Subject in History," p. 4).

Visual methods

The use of visual methods in qualitative research can help the researcher get more authentic data as visual brings more concrete elements to auto-ethnography such as images and voice-recorded data which can be analyzed in different moments. Furthermore, the use of images associated with auto-ethnography may provide more authenticity to the data analyse.

The ethical implications of using visual methods were given serious consideration to help to decide what would be the most culturally acceptable research method for initiating the fieldwork. The location of the research study, along with the local culture, social and political context have aspects that should be considered as it might compromise the outcomes, and even interfere socially in the informants' lives. For instance, the informants in this research were very concerned about video-recording or tape-recording their voices and images because of fear that there might be political repercussions.

For example, if their honest remarks were known in their work place they might find themselves losing their job or getting in trouble.

Visual methods were used in the research as a 'trigger' for the participant-teachers' memory releasing their autoethnography 'voice' and engaging them to interpret the data. The visual methods, such as showing appropriate photographs,were used also as an instrument to help the researcher to have more enhancied and diverse data. The hope was that this might have disclosed further information by inserting a tangible perspective in the socio-cultural aspect of the fieldwork (Pink, 2007).The use of images worked as an instrument that ignited in the participant-teachers' memories of lived experiences by an articulation of memory and testimonial elements giving the data its truth and authenticity (Russel, 1999). For instance, images may aid both the participants' and the researcher's "memory" helping them to go further and see what is hidden in our own past experience as a valid data.

The use of multimedia tools may compromise the authenticity of the data, however, when they are associated to socio-cultural elements in the context, it brings enormous beneficial elements to the data collection (Goldman-Segall, 1994). For example, teacher-participants showed pictures of themselves teaching and describing how the students interacted with these teaching activities.The use of visual methods in the auto-ethnographic data account provided the researcher with the supportive tools aiding in a more

accurate interpretive understanding and more tangible and authentic data (Pink, 2007).

Observations

During the observations the researcher used her experience as an insider/outsider to help her to interpret the data collected during the fieldwork. The researcher was immerged in the culture and shared similar experiences to the teacher-participants. The researcher is primarily an insider . However, she may be also considered an outsider for having experienced different socio-cultural contexts, thus giving a reflective approach to new knowledge acquired. This proved to be challenging given to the researcher's insider status for her not to allow emotions to be ignited by memories along with personal perspective on the data so as not to interfere with the observation of important non-bias details from her own auto-ethnography account. For example, I could relate to the teacher-participants' experiences dealing with violence in the classrooms as I taught mostly adults at risk classes.

Morphy and Banks (1997) sugests that when we move from one context to another we are, in a sense, transformed; although the content remains the same, in the new context "the conditions in which they are viewed are different"(p.16). On a bias base we expect that a combination of the teacher-participants' lived experiences and socio-cultural elements integrated to the context will represent the "truth" in the interpretation in this study.

Ethnography photos

Among the visual methods, photography is commonly accepted in the local culture, where taking pictures is a common practice and it does not interfere in the teacher-participants' behaviour or routine. The use of still images was also chosen to broaden and enhance the subject study by giving it different interpretations.

"Photography is socially constructed" because it is influenced by socio-cultural elements (Denzil & Lincoln, 2003, P. 192). For instance, there are numerous factors that play a role in this interpretation such as culture, genre, social, and etc. Looking into the same photograph teacher-participants can see and interpret the same image in many ways and have different points of view. The use of ethnography photos contributes to the research as a key instrument as it facilitates and amplifies the participants' voice (Pink, 2007)

Even though photos do not narrate facts they help to engage the teacher-participants' memories of place and time, thus making the photography life- like and bringing forward meanings by trigging the voice behind the image (Berger, 1980; Bach, 2001). The various images used in this study increased the varied situations and helped to focus a point of view for a particular event which might be differently interpreted. These pictures taken by the researcher and the teacher-participants were used to create a more comfortable atmosphere and trigger memories during the digital-recorded interviews. Photography proved to be the most socio-cultural accepted visual method as it is part of daily lives in Brasil.

During the audio-recorded interviews, the ethnography photos helped to explore the social-cultural integration among teachers, furthermore, it aided in identifying teaching professional development assets acquired by teacher-participants throughout the project. Most of the photos showed teacher-participants during teaching activities. The photos also showed teacher-participants' engagement in finding different ways to incorporate their new teaching experiences in the classroom teaching practice as the teacher-participants had to teach a class for other colleagues attending the NewClassroom Program.

Audio-recorded interviews

It was important to the researcher to think well in advance, about how the use of this technology would affect the teacher-participants' lives and also how they might perceive these methods in their culture. My main aim was to be able to access the effectiveness of the visual methods to suit the researcher's specific aims of the research (Pink, 2007).

The use of such recording technology gives the data an opportunity to multiply the interpretations, activating the teacher-participants' memories of lived experiences. Furthermore, it helps to the researcher to revisit the data and explore new elements that might have been unnoticed during the interviews by giving the researcher the opportunity to listen to the recorded interviews many times for nuances. Even though digital audio-recorded interviews are not as well accepted by participants as as the use of pictures due to their political worries, it was chosen because it is still one of the most

culturally acceptable methods of collecting data in the teacher-participants' social and cultural context and does not necessary imply political implications to the participants. During the recruiting process, the teacher-participants' asked the researcher many questions regarding the interview process.

The main concern among them was the fact that the researcher had to record their voices, thus causing hesitation on their voices' being identified during the interviews. They were afraid that the recording of their voices could cause the participants' problems at work as politics are an important aspect in Brazilian culture. An orientation meeting was held by the researcher previous to the interviews, addressing questions regarding the teacher-participants' confidentiality concerns such as the ethics and the responsibility the researchers has to the data; the purpose of usage, when and how the data could be used. The researcher clarified that the interview questions were about how the experience of attending a professional development like Newclassroom Project had affected their teaching practice and that the interview did not have any political intentions or implivctions attached to the questions.

Teacher-participants' were assured by the researcher that anonymity would be maintained by using pseudonyms in the tape recorded interviews and pseudonyms in the written transcription of the data. After this meeting between the researcher and teacher-participants' regarding the research confidentiality in the taped interview, the participants felt comfortable and

spoke freely about the challenges in teaching, the changes in the teaching practice, and their plans for future endeavours.

To conclude, culturally speaking while photography is easily accepted by the teacher-participants, this changed when they are asked to record their voices. The most frequently asked question was regarding confidentiality as they were afraid to express their opinion or make comments that were not politically accepted that could affect their careers or social life. Since digital recording is still considered much more culturally acceptable than other technological methods such as video-audio recorded interviews, the digital voice recording was chosen over video-recorded interviews.

Chapter 4 – Analyses of results

The NewClassroom Project

The NewClassroom Project uses teacher professional development to improve the quality of teaching in public schools. Applying qualitative methods the researcher uses the local Brazilian participant-teachers' 'voices' to design the curriculum and to guide teaching (Pink, 2007).

These 'voices' came from sixteen public school teachers out of the fifty-five who attended the NewClassroom project for 3 years in the state of Piaui, Brazil. The teacher-participants were a very distinct group as they were mostly from different cities and teaching a varied range of students from grade 5 to undergraduate students. Their teaching experience varied. About 25 per cent of the teacher-participants had less than ten years of teaching experience and the great majority of teachers had between fifteen to twenty-five years of teaching experience.

For example: 'Dinda', a teacher that has been teaching for 25 years was nearing retirement and was one of the most engaged students during these three years. She mentioned that at the end her career she felt tired and frustrated with her profession and that the project meant a personal achievement for her. She also said how she was strictly traditional, prioritising a teacher-centered approach that brought so many problems to her classroom. She had never experienced positive outcomes, and this affected her self-esteem and her health. She also told us she attended the project because it helped her to rethink her teaching practice and made her to feel motivated to teach. In her own words she says that 'slowly, I overcame

the fear of interacting with my students, engaging them in teaching activities that I had learned during the project'. The students seem to appreciate her work better and she felt each year her teaching had improved and she felt that as she ended her career she felt embraced with a sense of mission accomplished'.

Another teacher-participant called 'seashore man' is a man in his early forties who has been teaching for about 15 years. He works in two different cities, and struggles to handle the time intervals to travel in the bus and be able to keep the two jobs. He mentioned that 'time is scarce as well as money and even though it was really hard to take the only time off in July to study in the project, it proved to be worth it'. He continues by saying that the project made him aware of new possibilities in teaching such as teaching did not have to be a stressful job if teachers could interact with their students and both, students and teachers could share responsibility for teaching and learning. Seashore Man also said: 'teachers do not have to have all the answers or are always right'.

Junior, one of the teacher-participants, told us how he loved teaching and that the negative results in the public schools made him to feel frustrated and unmotivated. He confessed to have attended public schools and be the first one in his family to achieve a university degree. He described his experience while taking his teaching degree as a 'tough road', trying to handle a full-time low pay job and being a full-time student. He mentioned that he had a few good professors. However, he had a difficult time at the university having to deal with some of the strict and under-trained professors who relied on authority and lack of respect to teach. Imposing seminar style classes where students would take all the

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responsibility of 'teaching the class' without guidance or teaching materials, other than faded and out-of-date photocopy texts. He mentioned that some of his professors used to interrupt the presentations to make negative comments on students' potential and level of intelligence, embarrassing them in from their classmates when they made mistakes or lacked language skills during the seminary classes. As a consequence of this teaching behaviour, many students would quit.

Sandrera, is in her late thirties and she has been teaching for about ten years without university qualification. She achieved a teaching degree recently through an intensive teaching program popularly called 'Summer Degree Course' (Curso de ferias) which is a government supported program run by public universities. The Summer Degree Course is focused mainly on qualifying teachers working without university teaching qualification where students attend an intensive teaching program only during their summer break for fours years. This program was implemented in different cities throughout the State. She talked about the deficiencies of the intensive teaching program such as little time to work the content and unprepared instructors. After finishing her teaching degree, she was assigned to teach English to high-school students. She mentioned that was very difficult to teach English to high-school students when her major and previous teaching experience was in Portuguese teaching mostly from kindergarten to grade four. She said to feel lost and unhappy with the outcomes.

Amar, another female teacher-participant in her early forties, had almost twenty years of teaching experience and shared similar experience with Sandrera.

Duda is in her early twenties and has less than five years of teaching experience. She told us during the interviews that she finished her teaching degree and she loved teaching. However, except for the fact that in her "heart she will always be a teacher" the teaching profession does not offer much. She cited low wages, over-load of work, under training and lack of recognition or respect by the community as some of the key reasons for her to try a different career in the future.

Girasol has been teaching for over fifteen years. In her late-thirties, she said that she still teaches because she married someone whose salary can support the family. She mentioned how she loves working with teenagers at risk. She narrated an experience that for her makes to think of teaching as worthwhile profession.

"After work, I stopped at the drug store by the school I worked at. One of my former students walked in. In a first moment, he didn't notice my presence as I was browsing through the shelves. He had a gun in his hands and was about to go to the cashier. Once I noticed him I called his name. He turned to me visibly drugged. For a second, I looked in his eyes. He turned his head and looked down. Seeming ashamed he responded: "teacher" (professora) and ran away". She ended the narrative by saying that she wished she could do more so her students would have better opportunities in life.

Curio is in his early sixties and has been teaching for almost twenty and five years in public schools. He mentioned how he felt "refreshed and motivated" to teach after attending the project. He crossed the Teresina city in his bike to attend the project and be 'on time'. Getting up as early as five in the morning in order to be 'on time', he enjoyed the three years in the project.

Porquinho da India, comes from a city five hundred kilometres away from Teresina, where the project took place. She emphasised the many difficulties of staying a month away from her family to attend the project for three years. However, according to her, the experience in the project was a unique opportunity to 're-discover' the joy of teaching after fifteen years teaching.

Teacher-participant Val, in his early sixties, recalled that for a happy coincidence in three years, he stayed in a classroom where he was the only male. He was also one of the most excited teachers participating in the extra activities offered by the project. He comes from a very isolated town about six hundred kilometres away from Teresina in the south of Piaui. However, he was proud to say that he never missed a class while attending the project. Teaching for over twenty years, he also mentioned that he graduated years after he had been teaching through the summer teaching programs. He said that the actual educational system does not provide teachers with what is needed to have a good performance in the classroom, especially in small towns.

Lulex is also a teacher coming from a small town. In over fifteen years of teaching experience, he has taught mostly in rural areas. He talked about the challenges teachers have to be more creative and focus their teaching on the students' needs. He pointed out the lack of support and training:

"I wanted to teach using technology, I had a hard time to prove to coordinator that a TV and video could be used with educational purposes. As I taught in rural area besides renting a DVD at my own cost I had to borrow a car to take the TV and video to the school on in order to use it to teach a class."

The participant-teacher Reis is in her late forties and has been teaching for over twenty years in a small town of Piaui State. She said the friendship and teaching experiences shared during the project helped her to build her confidence as a teacher.

Chris is in her early twenties and has been teaching for less than five years. Creative and practical, she said that the project helped her to implement ideas with her students such as collecting plastic bottles and making recycled objects out of them to sell during the annual school exhibit. The money from the sold objects would go to buy supplies such as paper for the school.

Pinto did not recall for how many years she has been teaching. She is her early fifties. She talked about her difficulties in being a teacher. It is difficult for her as a single mother from a small town to support her family and pursue an education granted through the summer courses.

"Many times there was not even enough money to buy food so I would depend on the kindness of my classmates sharing their lunches. The summer courses are very deficient but for some teachers, especially the ones in small towns are the only opportunity to achieve a teaching degree."

Silver Moon has been teaching for twenty-five years and is about to get retired. She shared her love and frustrations after so many years of teaching in public schools. "I have so much hope on my students and wanted to do more but it is very hard to work with the system that does not offer you the support needed."

Floquinho has been teaching for over fifteen years. She mentioned her high expectations about teaching when she first started teaching. "The lack of support and the bad administration in the public school system cools down all your excitement for teaching".

In my own auto-ethnographic experience, I had a similar experience while taking my teaching degree. Asking questions or willing to know more that what was taught during the classes, being critical of the teacher-centered style and out-of-date faded text photocopies proved to be considered having a defiant attitude. I noticed that many times professors would overlook the work of those who asked 'too many questions'.

While the researcher was listening to teacher Junior during the interview process, she remembered an interesting fact that happened to her as she was attending university. It was an English class in which none of the students but the professor could speak English. We had to read Shakespeare's plays in original old-English version during the class so we could present a seminar later on. The majority of students, including myself would fall asleep, discreetly, during the class. In order to make out a 'seminar presentation' the students would get a compound Portuguese version of the Shakespeare's texts out of the internet to read, without the professor's knowing it, and use a lot of pictures to cover for the lack of oral English skills. Otherwise, we would probably have all failed the class; no questioning regarding the teaching method used by this professor would get you better grades. The NewClassroom project made me to reflect on my own teacher

training during my education degree and how it was reflected in my teaching practice.

Discussion on the meaning of the NewClassroom Project stimulated the teacher-participants to reflect on its importance and how it affected their careers as teachers. According to one participant-teacher, the project was like a 'recycling'. She remarked:

"For teachers, (the project) is initially a great 'recycling' (upgrading); it is like a specialization, much better! It might be in the same level of a Masters degree. I haven't done my masters but I believe that for us it is a masters degree, because many times getting a masters degree we only focus on the title and not in the real learning. However, this experience (project) is very valuable because it awakes on us a certain conscientization of innovation, that we are in a globalized world and our students need the experience and not only the content". Teacher-participant: Pinto.

"Para os professores de inicio e uma grande reciclagem, e uma especializacao bem melhor, talves ate a nivel de especializacao. E mestrado, eu ainda nao fiz um mestrado, mas acredito que para nos e um mestrado, porque muitas vezes o mestrado so visa titulo e nao real aprendizagem mas no intanto, essa experiencia e valiozicismas porque desperta na gente uma certa conciencia de inovacao, que agente ta num mundo globalizado e os alunos precisam de experiencia e nao somente de conteudos" Professora Pinto

Cultural exchange:

Another positive aspect of the NewClassroom Project articulated by the teacher-participants is the cultural exchange between Canadians teachers and

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Brazilians teachers and how it benefits both sides. For instance the Canadian and Brazilian teachers who attended the NewClassroom Project whether as instructors or as students (teacher-participants) learned from each other different perspectives on teaching and were introduced to a new language and culture. For some participant-teachers it also gave them the opportunity of working with former classmates, thus further building a professional or/and friendship bond.

Sense of self-worth as an educator

For the great majority of the participant-teachers the project brought a sense of self-worth as a professional educator and ignited their excitement to teach and self-motivation to learn, to put into practice in their daily classrooms what they had experienced during the NewClassroom Project. The teacher-participants noticed through their experience in the NewClassroom Project an increasing improvement in their teaching outcomes. This made them proud to be a teacher.

According to the teacher-participants the changes were felt primarily in their teaching practice as they slowly made the transition from teacher-centered approach to more student-centered teaching methods. Every year, the NewClassroom Project was 'a work in progress' for them, as they experienced something new and felt motivated to implement this new teaching experience in their daily classrooms. For some of the participant-teachers, the project was very demanding in terms of time and content. However, they felt this was necessary in order to be more effective and did prove to be worthwhile at the end.

Here is the narrative of Curio on his experience attending the NewClassroom project:

"...And I will tell you, honestly, for me... it has been a great honour everyday to get up early morning to attend the project classes...sometimes I get up at 5 in the morning (as he had to ride his bike across the city to be on time for the classes starting at 8 am) and my wife/husband always says – it is still too early! And she asks if I want to be the first to get to there....I answer to her ' I want to be the first to get there and the last one to leave because this project is a reason for much happiness and I am starting to feel sad that it is ending". Teacher-participant Curio.

"...E eu te digo com toda sinceridade que para mim tem sido muita emocao todo dia eu acordar com o proposito de vir para ca...as vezes eu levanto 5 horas da manha, e "mulher, fala ta cedo demais tu quer ser o primeiro a chegar la" eu digo " eu quero ser o primeiro a chegar e o ultimo a sair". E um motivo de muita alegria e eu ja estou ficando triste de saber que vai terminar agora." Professor Curio

Reflective teaching practice

The NewClassroom Project helped the participant-teachers to analyze their own teaching practice. They claimed that some of the more liberal teaching approaches to education such as social constructivism, the Freirian dialogue approach, Dewey's educational theories among many others were only 'vaguely mentioned' when they were taking their teaching degrees. Consequently, they did not have a broadened knowledge of these theories or implementation of these theories before the NewClassroom Project.

"I have no doubts that I had a different attitude, I was more formal(behavioural) because of what it was imposed...and now with those 'changes' that I put into practice. That's what happens... when we see Vygostky's

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(theory) we reflect (on our teaching practice)...and nowadays seeing Dewey's (theories)... (I thought)...I used to do it, I agreed with this 'guy' (Dewey), I 'fought' for his ideas but I didn't know I was agreeing with this 'guy'. Teacher-participant Porquinho da India

"...nao resta duvida de que antes, tinha uma postura mais formal, ate pela impossicao e hoje que com essas mudancas que ja coloquei ai, o que que acontece vendo o Vygostky agente ja analisa assim ... e hoje vendo o Dewey... e poxa eu usava isso, eu concordava esse 'carinha (Dewey) aqui antes, eu ja "brigava" por essas questoes aqui antes e eu nao sabia que eu tava concordando com esses carinha aqui (Theorists)..." Professora Porquinho da India

Curriculum

In terms of curriculum, initially the NewClassroom Project focus was that of teaching practice transitioning into theory. There was not an immediate cultural openness to study unknown or unpopular liberal approaches. The project used a Freirian dialogue approach to education because of the social context in what the teacher-participants were immersed. Numerous teacher-participants mentioned that they were unaware of the Freirian dialogue approach used in the NewClassroom Curriculum. According to them, Paulo Freire, who comes from the same northeast region mentioned in his books describe some of the very familiar situations experienced by people in Piaui. He is seen as a revolutionary and his ideas about education were considered as utopia. They frequently mentioned that Freire's approach or philosophy was not studied during their teaching degree at the post-secondary institutions they attended. Some of these teacher-participants mentioned that they had a misconception or a hidden prejudice against Freire's ideas. Not

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knowing much about Freire, they associated him only with 'a name' used by intellectuals with unrealistic ideas. For instance, a participant-teacher Reis told us that Freire and all the dialectical discussion of the oppressed versus the oppressor was so much present in her teaching practice, but she never associated it to any thinker. She did not realize where all those democratic ideas were coming from or how to develop them.

During the interviews, some of the teacher-participants demonstrated lack of knowledge of educational theories. For instance, some attributed the Freirian dialogue approach to Jean Piaget (1896-1980) as Piaget is the most studied thinker in Brazil and his cognitive developmental theory was very popular among teachers in Piaui (retrieved from learning and teaching website at June 16, 2010). As Pinto remarks:

"About the social aspect of education, I identify myself with Piaget and Freire, when they talk about society the search for change and transform society, values, the oppressor and the oppressed. Our clientele (students) come from poor areas, from humble families, many times the families do not support education (illitarete or semi-illitarate parents that do not believe in education). There is no appreciation, (or trust) in education itself, to dialogue, or to interacting teachers" teacher-participant Pinto.

"questao social, eu me identifico muito com o Piaget e com Freire quando ele fala da sociedade em si, dessa busca de valores, da sociedade mudar as coisas, da valorizacao, essa questao do oppressor do oprimido onde nos vemos la a nossa clientele que vem la de bairros muito podres, de familias humildes, assim que as vezes, que as vezes nem tem essa familia para suporte ai tambem

quando vai la para valorizacao da educacao em si, do dialogo, do professor interagindo". Professora Pinto.

Reflection on education in Piaui through the teacher-participants' experiences through meaningful auto-ethnographic pictures

The researcher used ethnographic pictures in the beginning of the tape-recorded interviews. In response to these pictures the participant-teachers narrate emotional responses re-count their impressions, expectations, hopes and the challenges regarding education (Pink, 2007). For example: a teacher brought a picture of a rural classroom. She said that picture reminded her of her students in a rural area. They could not attend classes during the harvest because they had to help their parents to provide for the family. Many of them would take Evening classes and would go to school after work, tired and hungry. They could not focus and ended up falling asleep during the classes.

Teacher-participants also used the pictures to reflect on how they felt as being public school teachers; their hopes to make teaching a worthwhile career.Some of teacher-participants talked about their challenges and professional hopes to improve their classroom practice and to find meaning for the teaching profession, which they love, even though they still think though that teaching was not seen by the society as a worthwhile career.Other teacher-participants mentioned that after the NewClassroom Project, their picture of their role as an educator and views on the teaching-learning process had changed. This came with the belief that even if the

teaching profession still does not receive the recognition or respect deserved, they felt more joy and a sense of self-accomplishment on being a teacher.

During the three years of the Project, they had the opportunity to develop, acquire and share their teaching skills. They felt they were important contributors to enable their students to reach a better life by making teaching a fulfilling career.

One of the teacher-participants, who used a photo taken during one of the presentations, demonstrated how the opportunity of being both a teacher and a student changed their perspective on how one sees their students in the classroom (McLaughlin and Zarrow, 2001). The teacher-participant mentioned that thist experience helped them to see that not only the teachers but the students also have things to teach.

"We also want to feel respected and listened to." teacher-participant Val

"Nos tambem queremos nos sentir respeitado e sermos ouvidos" Professor Val

Teaching: Challenges & Hopes

Such meaningful pictures generate a comparison between the past and present meaning before and after participating on the NewClassroom Project. For instance, looking at classroom pictures, some of the teacher-participants mentioned the names of those colleagues who were unable to attend the Project full-time, pointing out financial difficulties. The most frequently mentioned was such teachers being dedicated professionals that work hard under demanding conditions, many of them living in isolated areas in Piaui that could not financially afford to relocate temporarily to Teresina (Guskey and Huberman, 1995).

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Regardless of all the challenges they faced in order to attend the three-year Project, the teacher-participants affirmed that attending the NewClassroom Project proved to be worthwhile. For them, it has changed their lives and careers for the better by not only improving their self-esteem, but also developing their teaching skills. However, teacher-participants also addressed negative factors which they believe influenced their teaching performance and the low teaching outcomes in the public schools in Piaui.

The teacher-participants cited their main concerns and considerations regarding the poor management by under-trained professionals and the lack of clear guidelines in the public school system.According to the teacher-participants, there was a lot of resistance from the actual public educational system (school coordinators and Principals) to implementation of new ideas. Ideas such as using a more liberal approach in education focused on the students' needs contrary to the conservative and traditional teacher-centered approach practiced in most public schools, based on the teachers detaining all the knowledge and only transmit it to their students.

"I think that the (educational) system is complicated, because as Paulo Freire used to say 'all political actions are also pedagogic". However, I think that our (educational) system preaches lots of things...lots of things... too much theory even if the thinkers teach concepts that are valid nowadays but what they(educational system) want us to teach all the time...I mean I got to the media and say '-I(referring to the politicians) want my teachers to be creative, engaged with

teaching, that teaching must be meaningful to the students' .However they do not offer us the support needed for that to happen". Teacher-participant Amar

"Eu acho que o sistema e complicado, ate mesmo porque nenhum ato deixa de ser politico, como dizia Paulo Freire, 'nenhuma acao politica nao deixa de ser pedagogica assim como nenhuma acao pedagogica deixa de ser politica.'(Paulo Freire) Mas acho assim que a questao do nosso sistema prega muita coisa ...muita coisa..., muita teoria que apesar dos teoricos tambem dizerem que ensinar conceitos e falido hoje, mas e o eles querem que agente ensine o tempo inteiro, quer dizer eu chego aqui para midia, meus professores e digo que eles tem de ser profissionais criativos, de que eles precisam ser comprometido com o ensino, que eles tem que ver que o ensino tem que ser parte integrante da vida do educando, que o ensino tem que ser significativo para o aluno. Mas eles nao oferecem as condicoes p que isso aconteca". Professora Amar

Some of the teacher-participants argued that it is hard to break the traditional, teacher-centered approach or banking education described by Freire (1970) . This traditional approach has been used for many years in public schools, even though it is a requirement to implement strategies to improve teaching outcomes.

In terms of working conditions, overall the teacher-participants felt stressed and overwhelmed. They attributed being under paid and over worked as two of the most important factors for low performance in the public schools. These conditions have been the cause for almost annual strikes among the teachers. An average student rates per teacher is around 500 students per week. Furthermore, teachers usually have to work more than two shifts in different schools to complement their salaries.

They also mentioned the lack of support from the public school boards in many areas such as:

Curriculum support

Teachers-participant pointed out that the lack of good communication and flexibility instead imposing ideas among Public Schools Coordinators. Even though the majority of the school coordinators have a liberal speech, they have a traditional (teacher-centered) teaching approach background and their actions do not reflect liberal or student-centered ideas to teaching. These factors make it difficult or even prevented most of the participant-teachers from implementing a more student-centered approach learned during the NewClassroom Project. This was in their own words as a teacher-participant narrated their experience:

" I asked for help/support (to the school coordinator) for my (adult) evening class students, so they could get more interested in learning my subject (English) because they did not have time to study at home as they work the whole day (and most of them have families to take care of). The school coordinator told me that I should 'let go' and that my subject (English) was not that important such as chemistry or physics and that I should approve everyone 'no matter what' and 'forget about it' ". Teacher-participant: Pinto.

"Eu pedi uma ajuda (para que) os alunos do turno da noite tivesse uma ajuda maior, por que eles se interessassem mais em relacao a lingua... porque eles nao tinham tempo para estudar, pois eles trabalham o dia todo. Minha coordenadora disse que eu deixasse de mao porque ingles nao era tao importante quanto a disciplina de quimica e fisica e que passesse todo e que deixasse para la." Professora Pinto

According to some participant-teachers, the majority of their students have deficiencies in other subjects besides what they teach. The system implemented by the school to help these students was called "recuperacao" or 'recover' which was an extra-time for students after a few class reviews, to re-do exams in order to go into the next grade. Teachers were strongly advised by the school to pass all students, independently of the students' learning process. The results were usually ineffective in terms of learning outcomes. Especially among English teachers, it was very common to hear their students say:

"Teacher, why should I learn English if I do not even know Portuguese (mother tongue)?" Teacher-participant Lulex.

"Professor, porque que eu vou aprender ingles se eu nao sei nem portugues?" Professor Lulex.

The teacher-participants stressed the importance of a good lesson plan. However, they did not have much time to prepare their lessons or evaluate their teaching practice. Therefore, this greatly influences teaching outcomes.

"How do I want my students to learn? What's the best way to instigate learning on them? How can I get their interest on learning? What is the best way for them to learn using their own daily experiences and needs?" Teacher-participant Amar

"Como eu quero que meus alunos aprendam? Qual e a forma que eu vou instigar? Chamar a atencao deles? Qual sera a melhor forma deles aprenderem para que eles possam aproveitar aquilo ali para o cotidiano deles?"

The teacher-participants also articulated that probably as a consequence of these poor teaching outcomes in the public school system, there is a lack of trust and integration between school and community. Furthermore, the teacher-participants stated that they found that the community does not trust the public school system as they feel that if their children attend public schools, they have very slim chances to reach more than a Junior high diploma ('ginasio diploma'). One of the teacher-participants argued that most of the parents of children in public schools are illiterate or have very few years of schooling.

Here is a story by one of the participant-teachers that illustrate the lack of support in the home:

"Teacher, I could not bring my homework because my dad used the paper to make himself a cigarette" Teacher-participant Lulex

" professora, eu nao pude trazer minha tarefa porque o meu pai usou o papel para fazer um cigarro para ele" Professor Lulex

"... the family (of the students), perhaps for not having had the opportunity to study, they do not give too much credit to school(education). They might think that, at least this happens in most of the small cities (parents usually say)'my kid will finish high school and then what...?' " Teacher-participant Amar

"A familia, talves por nao ter tido a oportunidade de estudar ela talves nao der muito credito a escola e tm as vezes pensa assim, pelo menos isso acontece na maiorira das cidades pequenas, meu filho vai terminar o ensino medio e vai estudar para que ?" Professora Amar

Post-secondary Teaching Institutions: The problems with the present teaching degrees.

The teacher-participants felt under-trained or unprepared to teach even after achieving a teaching degree from an accredited post-secondary institution.

"The majority of teachers, when they start teaching, they are still 'raw'! Even, when they have finished a university teaching degree! They are not prepared yet to deal with 40, 50, 60 students in a classroom" Teacher-participant Junior.

"A maioria das pessoas que entra "cru" na sala de aula, na maioria da vezes quando voce termina o curso universitario e nao esta preparado para lidar com 40, 50, 60 alunos numa sala". Professor Junior

"We get into the university very anxious, with high expectations and

When we see the reality (in the post-secondary teaching institutions), it is not they way we pictured...cascade effect (two related problems)...the system(public educational system) that does not give you opportunities to grow as a teacher and the post-secondary institutions that do not get you (the teacher) prepared to be teaching efficiently in the classroom". Teacher-participant Amar

" A gente entra na universidade com um anseio muito grande, com a expectative e quando a gente entra agente ver que a coisa nao e do jeito que agente esperava... efeito cascata, tipo assim os sistema que nao me oportuniza e a instituicao que nao me prepara para sala de aula" Professora Amar

According to the teacher-participants, some of under-trained and/or uncompromised professors, even though there are also excellent professors in the universities, along with the inefficient teaching curriculum offered by credited post-secondary teaching institutions added to an ineffectively supervised practicum. This is one of the factors that contributed to a low level of teaching. A teacher-participant made an emotional description of his experience while attending university in Brazil. Junior explained in the quote that his professors ask them to present seminars without providing the students with guidelines or discussing about her expectations. The feedbacks the students got during and after the presentations were usually negative and not explaining why or what to do to get better results.

" You have to be lucky to meet a good professor that is actually prepared to teach, that is interested to teach...I had a professor for two semesters that never taught one class...she would come in and out....split the students into groups and expected the student to teach instead of them. The other ones that were the opposite they would make us over-work exaggeratedly and had no sense of limits... I had classmates that almost had nervous breakdowns when they had to present seminars or takes exams." Teacher-Participant Junior

"Que voce tem pedir para dar sorte para encontrar um professor que e preparado, que tem interesse de realmente repassar o assunto... eu tenho uma professora que ela foi minha professora dois semesters seguidos, no qual ela nao deu uma aula, ela chegava e saia...e ai... so chegava dividia os grupos e agente dava aula no lugar dela. Entao ja tive outros que era o contrario potava voce para trabalhar de uma forma exagerada e nao tinha nenhuma medida de limite, ja chegava...eu tive amigos que chegaram a beira de ataque de nervos...quando era para aprensentar um trabalho ou para fazer uma prova" Professor Junior

Furthermore, some teacher-participants stated that besides the inefficient training they received from the teaching degrees, there is not a clear official curriculum document to guide their teaching. The existing educational law guide called the Law, Guidelines and Bases for education (LDB – Leis de Diretrises and Bases da Educacao). They found this guide confusing and unclear as the teacher-participants could not relate to it in their daily teaching practice.

According to a World Bank Study (2001), a study on teacher preparation conducted by MEC (Secretaria de Educacao e Cultura) on *"Referenciais para Formacao de Professores" document* (published in 2000) resulted in Proposed Guidelines *("Proposta de Diretrizes").* This study also showed that "there is a lack of integration between the initial and continued teacher education: in terms of teacher preparation, when it is delivered by the schools; they are academically weak and once it is delivered by universities, it presents an excessive theoretical bias content" (p. 22).

In terms of Professional Development in Brazil, there is a gap between the local teachers' real needs and what it is offered. According to a World Bank Study (2001), establishing teacher networks has been used in many countries as a critical strategy for improving teacher performance.

During the audio-recorded interviews the teacher-participants mentioned the many challenges the local teachers faced in a daily classroom situations. Discussing with other teachers about the common problems related to teaching helped them to understand the problems and a solution. Furthermore, by reflecting on their teaching practice, they hoped to find hope in order to seek for improvements.

"...Too much theory and not much effective action...than they (public educational system) preach democracy in the schools, direct election (for School Principal), they say that their politics are democratic. However, this does not happen. A lot is required a lot from teachers but little support is offered the support needed". Teacher-participant: Seashore Man.

"E muita teoria e pouca acao efetiva de acao...entao hoje das escolas hoje agente(sistema publico) prega democracia, eleicao direta, que a gestao tem que ser uma gestao democratica, mas continua sem acontece. Eles exigem muito dos professores mas nao oferecem um supporte real" Professor Seashore Man

Most the teachers in the project mentioned having issues with their low self-esteem. This is usually related to the low teaching outcomes and the sense of feeling of being under-trained before attending the NewClassroom Project. These teachers hoped for and depended on an effective professional

development support to improve and build new pedagogical theories and practices (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Schifter Russell and Bastable 1999) to help them to develop and improve their teaching skills, in order to provide better teaching outcomes (Dadds, 2001) but the teachers did not receive it from the educational system in place.

Sandrera, one of the teacher-participants, told us that she came from a very humble background and she was the first person in her family to receive a university degree. She added that as when she finished the teaching degree she felt under-prepared to teach, not ready to be an English teacher. This teacher-participant felt a lack of respect from her students what she attributed to poor teaching performance.

Furthermore, the lack of teaching support from the schools, the constant criticism and humiliation from other colleagues after asking for help contributed to their low self-esteem.

Lulex, another teacher-participant talked about his caution of using technology in their teaching practice. For him, it was unfair to teach by using technology when he felt that the students were more current in terms of new technologies than the majority of the teachers. He continues to explain that the great majority of students attending public schools do not have computers at home but low price internet access provided by internet cafes or the 'LAN houses' (Local Area Network) has made internet popular among the lower classes. He mentioned that even though many of the public schools are equipped with computers and internet, that the teachers are under-trained as

for the courses provided by government program Technology Center (ENTEC - Nucleo de Tecnologia) are inefficient in training teachers to integrate and use new technologies in their teaching practice.

Besides the inefficient training in the use of technology, there is still a myth in most schools regarding the use of technology. For some more traditional schools, the use of technology such as TV, Video, or even an Audio player is seen as a way to 'gain time' and not teaching, thus should not be used for educational purposes. Their experience during the NewClassroom Project helped them to overcome the fear of using technology. In the words of Calderhead and Shorrock (1997), in addition to 'knowing what' and 'knowing how', teachers must also be competent in 'knowing why' and 'knowing when' meaning besides knowing technical part of how to use a computer, they should know how to include it in their teaching practice.

This knowledge gained on the use of technology gained stimulated the teacher-participants to use technology in their teaching practice by incorporating technological resources that were available in their classrooms. During the project, the teacher-participants saw how resources could be used and how effective they could be when supported by a clear lesson plan. For instance, the teacher-participant encouraged their students to research, in small steps at first, on given project topics and found different sources to base their work upon.

One of the questions the research tries to unveil is what has changed in the teacher-participants' teaching practice after attending the NewClassroom

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Project.The NewClassroom Project helped the teacher-participants to reflect on their own teaching practice and compare with the teaching experience they had from before attending the project. As suggested by a number of authors, 'teachers are reflective practitioners' as they expand their knowledge by incorporating their prior knowledge with their new teaching experiences (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001: Jenlink and Kinnucan-Welsch, 1999; Lieberman, 1994). This seemed to be there for the teacher-participants.

As a consequence of attending the NewClassroom Project, the teacher-participants mentioned many changes and the new teaching experiences were added to their previous knowledge. This resulted on improvements in their daily teaching practice. A self-reflection on their teaching practice showed that by improving teaching outcomes it also improved the teacher-participants' self-esteem.

Other aspects that also improved in their teaching practice were lesson plan, assessment and evaluation. According to the teacher-participants, for instance, the use of realia such as teaching materials made out of recycled paper, improved their relationship with their students and other teachers by sharing and working together on teaching projects. It also increased the teacher-participants' concern with teaching outcomes, teaching evaluation, and a reflection on their teaching practice.

"...and my students benefit from it....because as I develop myself, I tend to improve my work (teaching practice) I will provide them (the students) with better opportunities". Teacher-participant: Duda

"...e o meu aluno ele ta sendo beneficiado ...porque na medida que eu cresco, eu so tendo a fazer um trabalho melhor e proporcionar a eles mais oportunidade." Professora Duda

One of the common problems mentioned by the teacher-participants was classroom management as they have overcrowded classrooms that sometimes can be more than 50 students per class. The main concern among the teacher-participants regarding classroom management was dealing with a shortage of teaching materials and teaching assistance support.

"How can we deal with a huge and diverse universe of students?" Teacher-participant Duda

"Como agente pode lidar com tantos alunos nesse universo tao diversificado?" Professora Duda

Discussions were generated around the classroom management topic and the response came through the idea of engaging group work and pairing students up. The project demonstrated through examples of concepts such as discussing, exchanging information and working together. Before there had been a misconception that working in pairs and/or that group work was mostly about unequal work load, where some students would do most of the work and others would just get the grade.

One of these examples could be seen during group-work focused in the literature: the "literature circles", where every element has a role and responsibility in the group work. Just like in the beginning stage of this project, there were management difficulties in working in groups. Teacher-

participants mentioned facing the same circumstances in their school classrooms when they tried to implement group work. According to the teacher-participants in the beginning, group work and working in pairs managing the students so everyone takes responsibilities and working together proved to be most challenging. However, after a few 'tries' it gradually became easier. Group work/pairs proved to be a most effective tool in dealing with over-crowded classrooms and obtaining positive teaching outcomes. The teacher-participants affirmed that their students felt motivated by participating in group work. The students found themselves more involved and confident that each role was just as important and that to succeed they should work together.

Some of them mentioned that the unequal educational opportunities caused by the gap between the difference in teaching outcomes in private and public schools increases the socio-economical problems. Freire (1970) mentioned that the root of the social-economic problems within Brazilian society is accentuated by unequal opportunities which creates an unofficial cast society and the semi-slavery work force in Brazil. For instance, as a consequence of this gap, there is a social and economical dependence of most of the Brazilian population on 'families named individuals' that historically have been in power for generations.

Former University of Calgary researcher Zachariah (1986) compares Brazilian society organization to Indian caste society. He also adds that sometimes, it is necessary to "experience other cultures in order to understand

our own". (Zachariah, 1986, p. 17/18). According to the teacher-participants, education plays a vital role in society by influencing the social context and economical progress.

"...my work would be well succeeded if I knew how treat them (students). If I knew their essence, the needs they (students) had. And then I found that they had needs, somebody that would care, and someone that would tell them (students) "you can", "you are capable". Your mind is a mine that more you ask, the more it gives to you". Teacher-participant Amar

"... meu trabalho so seria bem sucessedido se eu soubesse trata-lo se eu soubesse ver na essencia a necessidade que eles tinham, e eu descobri que eles tinham carencia de alguem que se interessasse, alguem que dissesse assim "voce pode" "voce tem capacidade", sua mente e uma mina que por mais que voce puxar por ela mas ela te dar..." Professora Amar

According to Scribner (1999), it is clear in the literature written on teacher professional development that different factors within a workplace and/or context influence teaching outcomes. For instance, school structure and school culture can influence the teachers' sense of efficacy and professional motivation. In this case, the teacher-participants in the project had a professional and friendly environment where they were able to practice their teaching skills in their own pace and implement these new skills in a non-judgemental context.

Teacher-participants stressed the shortage of English text books and other teaching materials, pointing out that the scarce teaching materials available did not meet the students' needs. The project showed how to use

Realia[1] and put their creativity in the service of teaching by building teaching materials from resources available in their context.

The Newclassroom Project teaching experience empowered the teacher-participants to use their knowledge to develop real teaching materials or realia, thus being more meaningful to their students. It helped them to use their creativity to develop teaching materials by using available resources in the own environment such as using collage with papers, recycle bottles, and even selling some of the finished products to buy supplies or help the students with the materials for other learning projects.

The use of realia also helped with the integration of the school into the community by using the students' real experiences and context in teaching. In their opinion, there is a need to integrate the school teaching to the reality of these students attending public schools. According the teacher-participants, most students need to have immediate results, so as to be integrated into real life. They need to be prepared in finding a job to support their families as soon as they finish schools or even before. One the teacher-participants argued that the students do not have any time to be memorizing contents at home but need to learn it while in school. Another aspect in the teacher-participants' teaching practice that changed and developed was lesson plan and assessment techniques. The teacher-participants discussed the importance of a good lesson plan; Similarly, they

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[1] Realia refers to the practice of using real, tangible things in the classroom to help your students connect with English on a different level. It involves visual, tactile and functional methods

stressed the need for student assessment based on effective techniques that would show authentic outcomes instead of a meaningless quantitative student assessment based on monthly objective quizzes that do not represent the students' learning points.

The teacher-participants said that the NewClassroom Project ignited a constant self-reflection of their teaching practice and an increasing search for positive teaching outcomes. They also mentioned how much the project had influenced their teaching practice. However, they felt that the results could not be seen immediately but would be seen in the following years.

Nelson (1999) refers to Cobb, Wood and Yackel, 1990; Franke et al., 1997; Thompson, 1992 to mention that "Teacher professional development influences teachers' beliefs and behaviour. Thus, it is a dialectical process in that it moves back and forth as teachers change their beliefs it reflects in their daily classroom practice" (p.6).

The teacher-participant addressed changes in every way they perceived the students, before and after attending the NewClassroom Project.

Although they tried their best to manage the challenging students, they felt unprepared before attending the project to deal with unmotivated and problematic students. For example, handling the students' need for extra support; proved very challenging especially, for the ones that lived in the harshest poverty conditions and were exposed to numerous social problems. After the project, they focused their teaching more to their students' needs and trying to understand socio-economic factors by using realia.

"Grade five classes had the worst students for all other teachers, however for me they were my favourite students because the subject I was teaching was 'exciting news'...when they would see me coming to the classroom they used to say – here comes the teacher carrying her little CD player to teach by using music. I had to bring the sound player from home because the school didn't have one. The students were so excited for the class but before (I attended the project) they were very unmotivated with the subject." Participant-teacher Amar

"As quinta series, para todos os professores eram as piores turmas, mas para mim eram as melhores. Porque minha disciplina para eles era uma novidade, ... quando eles me viam entrando com um sonzinho na mao eles ja ficavam todos empolgados... "la vem aprofessora a professora com o sonzinho dela. Porque na escola nao tinha, entao eu levava o de casa. Dai eles eram tudo empolgado, antes do projeto eles eram muitos desmotivados." Professora Amar

According to one teacher-participant the NewClassroom Project brought a new perspective on Professional development. The teaching shift from the teacher-participant comfort zone (teacher-centered approach) to a completely different teaching perspective involved a more liberal dialogue approach (Freire, 1970), where they not only taught but learned from their colleagues.

"I think the teacher-participant learned more about teaching development, the teacher development...the teacher-participant learned more through practical new and varied activities experienced during the project...teachers gained something from the project as well as their students

as they applied what they learned in the classroom." Teacher-participant: Chris

"Eu acho que os professores aprenderam mais sobre 'capacitacao de professores', capacitacao de professor...os professores aprenderam mais atraves do lado pratico atividades novas e variadas que tiveram experiencia durante o projeto...os professores ganharam algums coisa do projeto assim como os estudantes como eles (professores) aplicaram o que aprenderam na sala de aula". Professora Chris

Wood and McQuarrie (1999) believed that most successful teacher development opportunities are 'on the job learning', where teachers can work together; to research, share and learn through other teaching experiences and choose from these experiences what it is suitable to implement in their own teaching practice.

According to the teacher-participants, the professional development project had a strong impact on their teaching practice, as they mentioned that the opportunity of being a student during the project is a real life situation comparable to what their students probably experienced in a real classroom. Furthermore, they felt this helped them understand the teaching/learning process much found that the previous experiences were worth being part of the teaching approach.

"I was always committed to my work (as a teacher), even though, for numerous times I could not see the great potential of my students due to the deficient situation in the public schools and the difficulties we faced as teachers. We loose hope (faith)". Teacher-participant: Amar

"Eu sempre fui muito comprometida com meu trabalho, entao eu nem sempre vi no meu aluno um grande potencial que muitas vezes, eu deixava de enxergar pela situacao(ruim) das escola publica e as dificuldades que agente enfrenta as vezes agente perde um pouco da credibilidade." Professora Amar

During the audio-recorded interviews, questions regarding the changes after the project and its implementation in a real classroom context brought a moment of silence and reflection.In terms of leading theories or philosophies, the teacher-participants evaluated their teaching skills and strategies before attending the project. They affirmed that they went from the traditionalism described by Freire as banking education or teacher-centered to a more liberal approach or student-centered approach. The teacher-participants noted scholars they have integrated, thinkers such as among others Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey, and even Paulo Freire's approach into education to their classroom practice. Such thinkers had influence on the teacher-participants' practice as they helped them reflect on the importance of student focused teaching instead of the strictness of a teacher-centered approach.

"It might be audacious from me to say this but I was asked to give a definition to curriculum...I even think you should not define curriculum ... we show curriculum (as we implement it)...and to define curriculum before (the project) was like if I were to work with it the same way for the 'rest of my life'(teaching career)...curriculum has to be flexible and based on the classroom reality... our curriculum is very European, very European. So I see the need for a change in the system but not a kind of 'total' (all of a sudden

change) but a long term change, but this change has to be made by people that show commitment." Teacher-participant Porquinho da India

"E e ate muito ousado dizer isso porque eu fui perguntada agora para uma definicao de curriculum, eu ate acho que agente nao define curriculo... agente mostra curriculo... e definir curriculo antes era como se voce fosse trabalhar com ele a vida toda... e o curriculo e muito flexivel, e (baseado) na realidade da sala de aula, o *curriculo ele e muito europeu, o nosso curriculo e muito europeu.* Entao vejo uma necessidade de que o sistema possa ser mudado, nao e assim essa mudanca total mas e assim a longo prazo, mas essa mudanca so pode ser feito por pessoas que se coloque a disposicao." Professora Porquinho da India

The teacher-participants claimed that the NewClassroom Project discussed different theories and thinkers that went from behavioural to a liberal approach. Furthermore, it was done in a more practical manner, which gave teacher-participants the opportunity to classroom experience by using each theory or theoretical thinker approach, namely, by critically analyzing them and then deciding which theories or theoretical thinkers best suited their own experience.

"Then, I used to think that being traditional (teacher-centered) would not cause me trouble, it would be much easier for me. After lots of reading and talking to other colleagues, I saw that I could be more flexible and these changes and the techniques I learned , with the innovations the project offered I was looking for word to read, re-read, read magazines (educational magazines), seeing..." Teacher-Participant Reis.

"Entao eu achando que aquela forma tradicional eu ia me safar ia ser mais facil para mim. Depois com muita leitura com coversas com as outras colegas eu vi que eu podia ser

mais flexivel e com essas mudancas e com as tecnicas que eu aprendi, com essas inovacoes que o projeto ofereceu e eu fui procurando lendo, revendo, lendo revista, vendo..."Professora Reis

Examples of NewClassroom Impact on Teachers

There are extensive examples of how the NewClassroom project had an impact on the teacher-participants' teaching practice.

The teacher-participants mentioned impressive changes occurred in a large scale and they are reflected in many aspects of their teaching practice. They affirmed that there was a change in the way they organized their lesson plans. There was also changes in how they delivered the content to their students: by making it more interesting, thinking more about the students' needs; reflecting on how to integrate the students into the teaching learning process as they developed their learning projects, they involved the students more and made them more responsible for their own learning process.

Most of the teacher-participants discussed experiences related to the 'fun activities' which was a teaching practice technique used by the NewClassroom Project. This technique showed a different way to teach such as introducing music, theatre, culture and arts to teaching supported by a clear lesson plan. They claimed that the fun activities were a new, engaging, exciting and a creative way to engage teachers and students in a two way learning interaction and thus giving each the opportunity of developing themselves as well as their students.

Since most students come from a very 'harsh violent and poor reality' the traditional 'banking education' (Freire, 1970) is not a good fit in the learning environment. The fun activities gave them the opportunity to deal with real life teaching materials or realia; a teaching focused on the student and their world. For the teacher-participants, it was an opportunity to experience ways to interact with their students and making them a responsible factor in the learning process. The practical experiences with realia during the fun activities helped them to see how it worked and expected outcomes.

Reflecting on the pictures taken during a fun activity, they talked about the experience they had during these fun activities in their classroom. They felt that their students enjoyed and integrated more during the classes when compared to their previous classes before the teacher-participants attended the project. They also discussed the internal changes in the fact that they now viewed their students in a more positive light (Freire, 1970).

In order to understand their students' world, teachers felt the need to self educate themselves on technology by using the resources available in some of the schools. During the three-year Project, the teacher-participants had the opportunity to use music, theatre plays, movies, local cultural folk traditions to integrate teaching and technology. The participant-teachers shared practical experiences and some of them tried for the first time to use internet, videos, CDs, etc in their teaching practice.

The project stimulated a reflection on the teacher-participants and many self-reflection questions were raised such as the ones quoted below:

"To whom am I teaching? What does my student want from going to school? What are their expectations? How can I get better teaching outcomes from my students? Were my concerns regarding my students raised? Teacher-participant Amar

"a minha preocupacao para o meu aluno? de quem e meu aluno, o que meu aluno quer? Quais sao seus anseios? Como eu chegar no resultado final com esse aluno?" Professora Amar

According to the teacher-participants, the NewClassroom Project also had an impact on the participant-teachers' teaching outcomes. They updated themselves by developing and refining their teaching skills. They found that students also perceived a change in the daily classes. Their teaching improved with a more student participative and enjoyable classes, thus resulting in real learning outcomes.

How the project had influenced a student was seen in the following example given by a teacher-participant Lulex:

"In term of students, the students had a pilot presentation project using slides on Canada, an unknown country for them, about the history, national anthem, national flag, and tourist attractions. After my students worked on this project they went on to develop their own project on cities in their state and other countries such as England, Madagascar and other places they had never been to or even noticed during the traditional geography classes. They built their own knowledge." Teacher-participant Lulex

"No sentido de que o aluno ter feito uma apresentacao de slides sobre o Canada, por exemplo sobre a historia, o hino, a bandeira, os pontos turisticos, dentre entre outras coisas depois eles foram fazer seus proprios projetos, ou seja, falaram de cidades como Teresina, Parnaiba, Floriano, sobre paises como a inglaterra, sobre a ilha de madadascar, quer diser coisas q eles talves nunca tenham visto ou prestado atencao na aula de geografia e no momento q eles estavam criando, construindo ali seu proprio aprendizado." Professor Lulex

The NewClassroom Project also influenced major changes in the student-teacher relationship, including the way teachers perceived their students and the way students related to their teachers. Teachers showed more tolerance by trying to understand where their students were coming from and thus trying to become more flexible. On the other hand students started to show more engagement in the class activities and interacting with their teachers and classmates. In the quote below, the teacher-participant reproduces a comment made by one of her students about her changes in the way she used to teach.

"Teacher, you used to like to tell us off but not anymore" Teacher-participant Dinda

"Professora, voce gostava de brigar e hoje a senhora nao briga muito nao." Professor Dinda

The teacher-participants also believed that the project promoted a change in the way teachers related to each other. For example, the project gave the teacher-participants new perspectives on teaching through interacting

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and sharing teaching experiences in a more professional and respectful way. It also gave them the 'tools' to develop a more effective lesson plan, to create an effective curriculum development and to improve their evaluation methods by sharing with other teachers teaching materials and classroom techniques experiences. Exchanging or sharing teaching ideas among themselves, also helped them to search for help. These exchanges also helped them in dealing with challenging teaching environments and reaching out for their students' needs. They especially addressed concerns for teachers coming from rural areas, which are 'forgotten' and has very little access to technologies. These rural teachers have little opportunities to professional development.

Future possible impact of the NewClassroom Project.

According to the teacher-participants, even in the early stages, they believe the NewClassroom Project had and will have an impact on the public educational system. The project believed each teacher had the potential to integrate and gain credibility. Numerous participants commented on that in the project, they had learned in fact how to develop a clear lesson plan. They felt they were able to develop teaching materials, work with realia, let the students to express themselves what they needed to learn on their own way of learning on what they needed to know, using a dialogue approach instead of only following the traditional strict teaching style based only on a textbook. They were confident they could explain to the educational school coordinators the reasons they were using this approach than the conventional teaching methods.

"Like during the 'Fun Activities' we were trying to show to our colleagues in a certain area, a different way of teaching they had never tried before. In the course, we felt responsible for the teaching-learning project and we really wanted that to work. This experience made also to change the way I saw teaching in my classroom. Because before as a teacher I had a fear of failure before I would even try sometimes, as I felt that I was the only person responsible for the teaching-learning process. But now, whatever the results are, my students and I worked together". Teacher-participant Porquinho da India

"Como nas fun activities como agente buscava uma maneira de mostrar para os outros colegas em uma area determinada dentro do curso e agente se sentia responsavel, agente queria que desse certo, entao do jeito que eu aprendi eu acho que isso mudou dentro da minha sala de aula. Porque antes eu tinha um pouco de medo e eu pensava no fracasso antes ate de mesmo de tentar, agora nao seja qual for o resultado nos trabalhamos juntos." Professora Porquinho da India

The teacher-participants implemented these changes while working with the educational system, through "not going against it but finding a way of working with it or 'around it with responsibility" Teacher-participant Silver Moon.

"nao indo contra o sistema, mas trabalhando com ele de uma forma responsavel". Professora Silver Moon

In the narrative below, teacher-participant Silver Moon added:

"My focus was on the results showed by my students, instead of what the School Principal, school coordinator or pedagogical counsellors are going to say about the way I teach: I want my own identity as an educator. These changes occurred gradually not only with me but (I believe) with everybody who participated in the project." Teacher-participant Silver Moon

"A minha preocupacao com o resultado aqui com meu aluno, nao vou mais ficar preocupada aqui com a linha q a escola ta dizendo p fazer, que as coordenadoras e pedagogos estao me dissendo p fazer, eu vou ser eu mesma, a partir dessas mudancas q foram gradualmente acontecendo nao so comigo, mas com todos q participaram do programa." Professora Silver Moon

There were other aspects that can change in the relationship between the public school and the community that the project participants noted. The teacher-participants also mentioned the importance of volunteering, which is for them a new concept in serving the community by promoting change. They also affirmed that the good relationship with their colleagues that developed during the three-year project helped them not only to improve their teaching practice but also to develop a sense of community.

The impact of the NewClassroom Project on education and community

The impact of the NewClassroom Project reflected mainly on the teacher-participants teaching practice. A reflection on their teaching practice: "I improved the way I used to teach because teaching is like 'Bombril, it has one thousand and one way of usage' (referring to a popular saying from a Brazilian TV commercial Ad). The teacher has to be versatile and I improved a lot as I learned new techniques and approaches and implemented in my

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classroom such as helping my students to know how to work in groups." Teacher-participant Curio

"Professora eu melhorei muito a maneira de ensinar. Porque voce sabe que professor e "bombril, mil e uma ultilidade" ate versatil, e eu melhorei bastante pq e o seguinte eu prendi novas tecnicas de com ensinar e ultilizei na sala de aula por exemplo ajudando meus alunos a trabalhar em grupos" Professor Curio

"I became more aware on how to teach especially using new activities I learned during the three years of the project. I used to think that the activities I used to use to teach were good but honestly now I know they were insufficient." Teacher-participant Reis

"Eu tomei conciencia de como ensina principalmente usando novas atividades aprendidas nesses tres anos, atividades essas q sao ricas em experiencia. Eu costumava pensar q as atividades q eu usava em sala de aula eram boas mas na verdade elas so eram suficiente". Professora Reis

The teacher-participants believe they can make 'a difference' in education if they receive appropriate training through a professional development Project (Newclasssroom Project) that focused on the local teachers' needs. The project's influence has been reported especially in the classroom's approach to teaching. The focus has switched gradually from a strict teacher-centered approach to a more flexible student-centered approach. The positive outcomes support this statement as teacher-participant Val remarked:

"The role of a teacher is to bring new horizons to their students leaving them free to think, to learn and to interact with new information with a clear

and transparent mind (think critically)…young people have a new head, they know how to think. When we had a dictatorship in Brazil, they used to say they 'Brazilians have a short memory' and it is exactly the example of the banking education (Freire, 1970) but things are changing…my students have a new awareness of life if compared to three, four years ago (when the project started), and I am very proud of them. The project influenced this change." Teacher-participant Val

"O papel do professor e despertar mostar outros horizontes para seus alunado a ponto que deixe o jovem de forma ampla e avontade p aprender a pensar e absorver as informacaoes de forma clara e transparente…pessoas novas que tem uma cabeca nova , que nao tem como se diz a cabeca, uma cabecinha oca, ja sabe pensar, antigamente havia no Brazil um ditado, uma dadiva popular, em diz que o "brazileiro tem a memoria curta" e exatamente o negocio do deposito da pedagogia bancaria as coisas estao mudando… meus alunos tem uma concepcao de vida (diferente) com relacao a 3, 4 anos atras q eu me sinto orgulhoso, com muito orgulho. E esse projeto contribuiu para isso". Professor Val

The teacher-participants integrated more with each other and their students and thus engaged in improving their teaching practice.

"We needed new theories, it is not enough to have the students sitting down quiet, all pretty…but we need to re-invent teaching, we have to take advantage of ideas and transform them in something more practical" teacher-participant Lulex.

"Agente precisa tambem novas teorias, nao adianta agente ficar so sentadinho, bonitinho…mas agente reenventar, agente pode aproveitar ideas e transformer em algo mais pratico." Professor Lulex

The NewClassroom Project also will have an impact on the local educational system as the teacher-participants now feel more confident and skilled in order to work with the educational system. They can do what is required in a different way and taking responsibility for real results, in another words, teaching with the purpose of improving the quality of teaching in public schools.

"How can we (teachers) find a teaching balance between the things that are imposed to us by the traditional system and the things we believe? Teacher-participant Amar

"Como nos(professores) podemos encontrar o equilibrio entre as coisas que nos sao impostas pelo sistema tradicional e as coisas que nos(professores) acreditamos? Professora Amar

The teacher-participants also argued that it is hard to "work around" the traditional system that doesn't offer the means or the support for innovations in teaching. However, it is possible to work differently as the teacher-participants worked on a developing effective lesson plans. Furthermore, they stated that 'the classroom' is their 'world' if they can have effective outcomes in one classroom, then the positive outcomes can help many students.

"A 'radialista' with not much education said that everyone could do their part, the change depends on everyone, if you do your part doing what you think is right, it can influence others to do the same and even influence my environment though my example of commitment." Teacher-participant Sandrera

"Um "radialista" sem muito estudo colocando que cada um pode fazer sua parte, depende de como voce quer fazer, entao se eu faco minha parte colocando aquilo, fazendo aquilo que eu acho que ta certo e levando alguem mais a fazer por voce, posso ter essa questao de influencia no meu meio atraves do meu exemplo" . Professora Sandrera

In the closing question, the teacher-participants were asked, what would be the 'formula' for working with other traditionally (teacher-centered approach) guided teachers/local public school boards and at the same time still implementing a more liberal or student-centered approach?

"Firstly, never stop trying. We can work; it might vary from school to school. For instance, in the school I work for I have been able to work more democratically, even though many times I have to suffer criticism from my teaching coordinator such as 'you are wasting your time...getting stressed and frustrated for no reason...'. I want to say we can work on a more liberal approach, however, I don't want to imply we do not have to listen to what is said by the teaching authorities...everything I get I teach as well as I can. But when there is an openning and I can make changes in my lesson plans and implement things differently I will do so." Teacher-participant Amar

"Primeiro, nao disanimar. Pode trabalhar sim, pode variar de uma escola para outra. Mas na minha (escola) eu estou conseguindo de uma forma mais demogratica, apesar de as vezes eu ouco critica do coordenador " ah que isso e perder tempo e voce esta se estressando a toa... Eu so quero dizer que agente pode trabalhar de uma forma mais democratica, (com isso) eu nao quero disser que eu nao possa seguir as orientacoes que vem la de cima da secretaria (governo), eu recebo e repasso tudo que posso. Mas no momento em que eu posso

mudar alguma coisa no meu planejamento, da forma como eu implanto as coisa vao indo".
Professora Amar

To conclude this chapter, according to the teacher-participants the NewClassroom Project helped them to realize the importance of being a teacher and their transforming role in the society by discussing the social-economical problems related to education; the importance and the impact of improving the public education. Despite the socio-economic difficulties, many teacher-participants also affirmed that they were the first ones in their families to receive a university degree. The teaching experiences shared during the project helped them to improve their teaching practice, increasing positive teaching outcomes, therefore building the teachers' confidence as educators and hoping for a better future for their students.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Significance of the study

The study is significant in that it brings a new understanding of the internal and external factors that influence teaching performance and outcomes in the public schools settings in Piaui, Brazil. The study shows how the use of teacher professional development programs focused on the unique needs of the local teachers' effect the educational process. It also presented the importance of the local teachers' needs and the use of the context to guide the choices of efficient professional development processes and technologies and its influence on teaching practice (Villegas-Reimers (2003).

The current research emerged from a volunteer-based educational project developed by this author, called "NewClassroom - The Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development".The NewClassroom Project differs from the many other teacher professional development projects in Brazil in that it has a curriculum focused on the local teachers' challenges, teaching goals and context. The teacher-participants in this project have "the primary voice" to talk about the internal and external factors that influenced the teaching performance in public schools in Piaui, Brazil. Through the NewClassroom Project, the participant-teachers developed their teaching skills, discussed the challenges in education and their hopes for the future. The NewClassroom Project as designed was based on the discussions among teacher-participants that lead to possible curriculum design of what you might

reasonably expect from an effective teacher professional development programs (Pink, 2007).

The teacher-participants helped to build the curriculum bringing in their own experience and having the opportunity to share that experience with other teacher-participants and instructors-facilitators by using a Freirian dialogical approach to education (Freire, 1970). For instance, the curriculum was based on the teachers' main needs such as to increase their self-esteem by working together with other teachers and having the opportunity to develop their own teaching material with their available resources and use their teaching experience and own style to teach other colleagues. The experiencing of being a teacher and a student at the same time helped them to understand their students better and move slowly from the teacher-centered to a more student-centered teaching practice.

The teacher-participants believed that setting examples of student-centered practices for other teachers was one of the best ways to break through the archaic teacher-centered approaches implemented in public schools. Even though, there are many challenges for the teacher-participants who wish to emphasize student-centered approaches: They believe that good teaching outcomes may help to break barriers with part of those teaching in the public schools system that exercise a more teacher-centered approach. The participant-teachers believe they are important agents to gradually give the public educational schools effective teachings outcomes along student-centered lines and gain the credibility within the community of teachers. One

of the teacher-participants spoke of how to implement changes in their teaching practice as they have to deal with a teacher-centered approach imposed by most public schools and the influence teachers have in their students' learning. According to this teacher-participant, the classroom offers them an opportunity for implementing changes in their teaching practice.

"How can we (teachers) work the way that is imposed and the way we believe we should teach?" teacher-participant anonymous

"there is this small universe that is the classroom and we (teachers) can start this change (for the better) in our (teachers') classrooms and then the change will spread as I have 11 classrooms and 600 students, among these 600, 100 will grow this desire to change and improve, in ten years I will have a bigger universe." Free translation

"Como e que agente pode trabalhar com as coisas que nos sao impostas e as coisas que agente acredita?" Anonymous

"Tem *esse pequeno universo que e a sala de aula e agente pode usar essa mudanca dentro dela e essa mudanca vai se espalhando e a medida que cada um, eu tenho 11 salas de aula, eu tenho uma media de 600 alunos*, desse 600 se 100 ja cultivarem esse desejo de quere melhorar e partir p outro, quando chegar daqui a dez anos eu vou ter um universo bem maior."

Teacher-participant – Curio

Some teacher-participants affirm that their self-esteem was boosted as they became aware of the importance of their role as teachers and how what they do in the classroom would influence the future academic success of their

students. It also increased their confidence in their students' success. A teacher-participant talks about their hopes for a better future for their students as in quote below:

"I hope to see my students working and making some money, even if not much, but living their lives comfortably". Free translation

"Eu espero ver meus alunos trabalhando ganhando o dinheirinho deles, ainda que pouco, mas levando uma vida tranquila."

Teacher-participant - Dinda

Many teacher-participants mentioned the fact that they had students who became teachers because they felt inspired by them.

"What we (teachers) want is the best for our students and this course (NewClassroom Project) helped to encourage our students to see things differently... because I might have said (to my students) five years ago (before attending the project) – You don't want to be a teacher because being a teacher doesn't offer you much in this country – However, nowadays as I think differently knowing the value of being a teacher.

"O que agente quer e o melhor p eles e esse curso ajuda a incentivar os nossos alunos a ver as coisas por um angulo diferente porque talves eu ate dissesse a 5 anos atras antes do curso "rapaz voces nao querer ser professor porque professor nao tem futuro nesse pais" mas hoje eu ja sei valorizar-me como professor.

Teacher-participant - Seashore man

The teacher-participants believed that the NewClassroom Project might also have a long-term impact in the community by bringing socio-economic

changes.Most of the participant-teachers shared stories of their students and their dreams for the future. For the participant-teachers, they have high expectations that their students might have a better life in the future, achieving their career goals.

After attending the NewClassroom Project, some affirmed that they started to see the potential of their students and in order to develop this potential, those attending needed to be guided in the right direction by them. The teacher-participants recognised how important they were for the future of their students. They believed those students had potential to excel given the right opportunity.

Another teacher-participant who teaches evening adult classes talked about their experience sharing their students' difficulties, factors that influence class attendance, thus the increase of school drop-out numbers.

"I teach evening classes for adults they are construction workers, homeless, agriculture workers, carpenters, housekeepers, they work any kind of jobs (the lowest pay and the most physical demanding jobs in Brazil). They attend evening classes after working full-time. Sometimes they tell me they are so tired, they cannot understand it. I try to motivate them to continue to come to school, I write positive messages when give back their exams and tell them they can achieve their goals" teacher participant CurioFree Translation.

"Eu trabalho a noite com um pessoal que sao pedreiros, que sao de rua, que sao da roca, que sao carpinteiros, que sao domesticas que fazem "n" tipos de trabalho humildes e a noite eles dizem "professora to morto de cansado" e agente ver isso, mas eu digo sempre

coloco sempre com resultado de avaliacao alguma coisa que insentivem a eles que eles podem chegar la."

Professora Curio

The participant-teachers believed that the impact of professional development programs like NewClassroom Project will be felt in the social and educational context. On improving the quality of teaching in the public educational system more students (from lower social classes) will have a better opportunity of getting qualified in the competitive work field of their choice, thus furthermore implying important social changes.

Limitations

In the three years of existence, the NewClassroom Project was challenged by the difficulties of implementing a professional development program which would suit the local teachers' unique needs. The NewClassroom Project tried to innovate by bringing a professional development program based on a social and culture building process and not only based on skill training. This was most innovative among the (in-service) teacher training programs in Brazil (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2001).

The Newclassroom Project was a 'teaching experiment' where everyone was teaching and learning from each other on how or what to do to ignite or develop teaching proficiency. The professional development project was conceived as a collaborative process where the author (researcher), the volunteer instructors, and the teacher-participants brought their own bias into the ongoing curriculum (Darling-Harmmond and Mclaughlin 1995). The

main challenge was to learn how to change or/and adapt to this ongoing teaching process and finally how to coordinate it, given the diverse culture and social aspects inserted in the context.

Logistics and Finance

Funding and time management

In terms of funding the NewClassroom program had no financial support provided. Its budget was a hundred per cent volunteer-based. The Project was made possible on the Brazilian side with the help of: the Universidade Estadual do Piaui as a partner providing the teaching facilities, local families volunteering with room and board to host our Canadian volunteers and many other locals that volunteered their time and skills to help during the course of the Project.

The Brazilian teacher-participants received low wages and found it financially challenging to be able to afford room and board in the Capital Teresina City. The other factor was participant-teachers' availability time to attend the program due to odd working conditions. As the region often suffers from natural disasters and also teaching strikes, the participants-teachers have to teach during the first half of July, when it was supposed to be their school break. The Project was always run in July and many teachers had to miss half of the Project classes for that reason.

On the Canadian side, experienced Canadian Teachers donated their time, skills and financial resources such as for paying for travel flights and visa expenses to volunteering as instructors in the project.

Teaching Materials

There is a limited availability of English materials to local university students as the Local library has a very limited number of English text books. During the years the program took place, some books were donated by Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta, that helped the students with additional resource material. The transportation of teaching materials to Brazil was very challenging since shipping was too expensive. All the teaching materials were brought as part of the Canadian volunteers' personal luggage.

Methodologies & Approaches to Education

The NewClassroom project introduced the teacher-participants to new and different possibilities – transition from teacher centred, or as it is called among local Brazilian teachers "traditional teaching or banking education (Freire, 1970)" to liberal approaches that focused on the students' needs.

In terms of methodologies, the main challenge was how to incorporate the teaching perspectives changes encouraged by the NewClassroom Project and implement these in the participant-teachers' daily classrooms.

The local participant-teachers had to deal with a variety of problems such as scarce teaching materials, lack of teaching support, strikes, violence in schools, and a lack of trust in the public educational system.

In despite of many difficulties, the teacher-participants still thought it was possible to successfully apply the new teaching techniques and more a liberal approaches to teaching, they depended, in part, on how supportive the school that they work for is towards these methods.

Language & Culture Barrier:

Only around five per cent of the teacher-participants were able to communicate effectively in English, even though, they were all English teachers. Language teaching is mostly done written, by focusing on basic English grammar points and not on spoken communication.

Although, speaking Portuguese was an asset for the Canadian volunteer instructors, it was not a requirement. Their challenge was to adapt to the local culture and socio-economic limitations. However, the hardest challenge for Canadian instructors was to overcome the colonial bias or the pre-conceived idea of some English native speakers teachers have that all English foreign teachers need is ESL training – English as Second Language.

These English native speakers often did not understand or accept the idea that teaching English as second language was part of the project curriculum but not the main focus. For what the Project curriculum proposed was to exchange teaching experiences, to teach and learn through professional development.

Conclusion

Despite of the difficulties experienced during its implementation the NewClassroom Project presented significant outcomes which will contribute to the improvement in the quality of teaching in the public schools in Piaui. The outcomes demonstrate that the teacher-participant had a substantial gain in their teaching practice and a greater sense of motivation in preparing new material for the classroom. They also demonstrated willingness to implement

the activities that they developed in the course of the project into their respective classrooms and to share their new knowledge with their colleagues.

As the public educational system reaches the majority of the Piaui State population, the outcomes of this project have the power to bring social-economical changes, creating a more fair opportunity system for everyone.

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Apendex A - Ethics Aproval

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
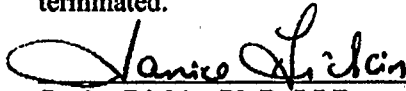
CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human subjects to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on *"Ethical Conduct in Research Using Human Subjects"*. This form and accompanying letter constitute the Certification of Institutional Ethics Review.

File no:	**6091**
Applicant(s):	**Daniela Nascimento**
Department:	**Education, Faculty of**
Project Title:	**Empowering Teachers in the Public System in Piaui State, Brazil Through the Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development**
Sponsor (if applicable):	

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modifications to the authorized protocol must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval.
3. A progress report must be submitted 12 months from the date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the project.
4. Written notification must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated.

_____   JUN 2 2 2009
Janice Dickin, Ph.D, LLB,   **Date:**
Chair
Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

Distribution: (1) Applicant, (2) Supervisor (if applicable), (3) Chair, Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee, (4) Sponsor, (5) Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (6) Research Services.

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Appendix B– Research Recruiting Poster

Wanted volunteers for research purposes

Daniela Nascimento, Masters of Arts student of the University of Calgary is recruiting

volunteers for her research.

Research

Empowering teachers in the public system in Piaui State, Brazil though the

Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development

Participants must be among the students that attended the Brazil/Canada Project for

Professional Development.

For more information, please, contact Daniela Nascimento in person or by e-mail:

ddnascimen@ucalgary.ca

Note: Research volunteer recruiting poster was in Portuguese and English language.

Appendix C – Research written explanation

This is a written explanation that was provided to the teacher-participants by the researcher, previous to participating in this research.

Empowering teachers in the public system in Piaui State, Brazil though the Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development – NewClassroom Project

The purpose of the Study is to empower teachers to teach by improving the teachers' ability to reach the students by bringing new methodologies, theories, approaches, curriculum, classroom management, and teaching techniques.

The study is significant in what it will bring a new understanding of the internal and external factors that influence teaching performance in the public schools settings in Piaui State, Brazil.

Research Methods used with the participants:

1. Digital Audio Recorded Interviews: I will explore the participants' challenges and the changes in the classroom settings.
2. Digital photos: I, the researcher, and the participants will be taking photos. The ethnography photos will help us explore in interviews the development of teaching materials and participants' engagement in finding different ways to incorporate their environment in their classroom teaching.

Participants' involvement

1. Participants:
   - The participants will be among the English teachers that currently are participating in the Canada/Brazil Project for Professional Development. They are adults, English teachers with a minimum of Bachelors degree.
   - No remuneration will be offered.
   - The participants will be required to participate in 2-4 interviews approximately 30 minutes each. The participant will be answering questions and commenting on photos whether taken by them and/or the researcher.
2. Confidentiality:
   a. The Participants' identity will NOT be disclosed in any circumstance. Pseudonyms will be assigned or chosen by the participants.
   b. The participants will be guaranteed that if they withdraw from the research they will not be penalized and that would not affect their participation in the NewClassroom Project.

Note: The research written explanation was in Portuguese and English language.

Appendix D: Interview Questions Guidelines

1. What does it take to empower teachers in order to have good teaching outcomes in the public schools?

2. How a project such as Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development could promote empowerment?

3. How does a professional development program like "Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development could ignite teacher empowerment without interfering the local culture and respecting previous local teachers' teaching experience?

Semi-Structured Research Questions

The interview questions will be based on the general research questions

Interview questions guide

1. Looking at a picture at this photo during the project, how do you feel as a teacher when you see it?
2. What has changed in the way you taught before participating in the Brazil/Canada Project for Professional Development?
3. In which ways do you think the Brazil/Canada Project has helped the teachers and the students?
4. Where do you see your students in ten years from now?
5. What kind of influence do you think a teacher has in their students' academic success?
6. How do you perceive education influencing socio-economically the society?
7. What philosophies do you use in your classroom before the project? After the project?
8. Tell me how did you use to think about your role as teacher in the Public Educational System in Piaui State before coming to the Project ?
9. How do you see your role as a teacher now?
10. Where do you see yourself and 5 years from now?