

The Group as a Source of Development: Rethinking Professional Development in a Collaborative Perspective

Fabiana Marques Barbosa Nasciutti

Faculty of Education, State University of Campinas, Brazil

Nikolai Veresov

Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia

Ana Maria Falcão de Aragão

Faculty of Education, State University of Campinas, Brazil

Abstract

Since the later decades of the 20th century, Brazilian psychologists have been questioning a theoretical and interventional model in educational contexts, which consider psychological phenomena apart from their cultural contexts, in order to develop an approach based on a contextualized viewpoint. Despite progress having been made in educational psychology, as a result of this critical paradigm, this area still has problems to overcome: Psychologists are becoming increasingly separate from schools, and it is now common to find psychologists who are professionally unprepared to perform in this context and furthermore, school principals do not always understand the role of psychologists in educational settings. However, educational demands exist in psychologists' daily work in a range of contexts, indicating the relevance of this field and the urgency to improve psychologists' qualifications. Considering that Brazilian professional development programs for educators and psychologists are usually restricted to technical learning, often ignoring professionals' real needs and claims, this research aimed to develop a special type of professional development program looking at the group as a source of development, in order to rethink professional development process from within a collaborative perspective. Research data was generated from a professional development program offered for psychologists and professionals who work within educational settings. This programme involved collaborative group work and was organized and conducted in such a way as to create conditions for change. Concepts of cultural-historical theory – social situation of development, crisis and perezhivanie – were used as analytic tools for data analysis. Analysis indicated the importance of the group as a source of development through dialogue and the co-construction of new ideas and possibilities.

Keywords: Professional development, cultural-historical theory, drama, crisis

Initial Considerations

This paper presents research that has been developed at *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (State University of Campinas – Brazil) to investigate the professional development of psychologists and other professionals who work with educational demands, through a collaborative work group. The paper begins with a brief discussion of Brazilian Educational Psychology and the professional development field, followed by a discussion of concepts of cultural-historical theory as analytic tools for data analysis. The second section presents the research methodology and research data analysis.

Brazilian educational psychology and professional development topic: A brief contextualization

In Brazil, psychology is a relatively new profession; it only gained legal status in 1962 (Law 4.119/62). Nevertheless, Antunes (2007) indicates that psychology, as a subject, has existed in the country since the colonization period, around the 18th century, when the themes of emotions, childhood education and human behaviour were discussed in publications such as books, monographs and theses. During those times, psychological knowledge was strongly related to the educational field. Consequently, schools and other educational institutions became an important working area for psychologists in Brazil. Unfortunately, extensive use of intelligence and others psychological tests was common practice, with less attention being paid to broader social and cultural aspects of learning problems (Patto, 1984; Pfromm Netto, 1996). Since the later decades of 20th century, Brazilians psychologists have been questioning the perspective, which considers psychological phenomenon apart from it's social and cultural context, in order to develop a new approach based on a critical and contextualized viewpoint (Patto, 1996, 2005; Machado & Souza, 1997; Bock, 1999; Tanamachi, Proença & Rocha 2000; Martínez, 2007; Meira, 2012; Guzzo, 2014).

Currently, Brazilian psychologists are gaining credibility in different settings, such as health institutions and social services. However, they are becoming increasingly separate from schools. It is still common to find psychologists who are professionally unprepared to perform within this context and, furthermore, school principals do not always understand the role of psychologists in education settings. Nevertheless, educational demands exist in psychologists' daily work in a range of contexts (Tanamachi & Meira, 2003). Thus, a psychologist who works in a health or social service will often assist with cases related to educational issues. Moreover, a critical and contextualized perspective in educational psychology is gaining increasing strength and many psychologists are working not from an individualistic point of view, but in collaboration with teachers and other educational professionals. This indicates the relevance of and the urgency to improve psychologists' professional development in order to deal with educational demands.

After this brief contextualization, the question arises: “What do we mean by *professional development*”? Professional development is a complex process, which is not restricted to undergraduate courses, embracing the entire professional trajectory. Regardless of the background, every professional is constantly learning, considering that the initial professional education cannot embrace all challenges demanded by a future job (Aragão, 2010).

Professional development is a term related to teachers' continued education. Nóvoa (1995, 2009) argues that teachers' training is usually indifferent to educators' contributions and dependent on external experts to improve professional practice. According to this author, there is a massive lucrative market related to teachers' training, through seminars, courses and activities, ignoring teachers' knowledge and capacity to deal with practice issues. Nóvoa (2009) indicates that the only way to overcome this situation is to arrange practices in a collaborative perspective, based on sharing and dialogue about professional performances. Thus, Nóvoa (1995) suggests *professional development* as a more coherent term, one that involves, beyond technical aspects, *the personal dimension* as well as the *collective dimension* (context and working conditions), valuing teachers' potential to produce knowledge through everyday work. The main idea is to develop the professional practice inside the personal aspect once an occupation goes beyond the technical or scientific knowledge, including personal features in a complex relation (Nóvoa, 2009).

Similarly, Ponte (1998) suggests that teachers' training is a process that "*involves multiple steps and, ultimately, it is always incomplete*" (p. 2, own translation). The term *professional development* would be a way to disclose how professional improvement can happen at different times and spaces, through several activities, which may or may not happen in formal contexts. Moreover, professional development also means that the protagonist is the professional him/herself and not only an external expert. Furthermore, professional development provides an integrated view between theory and practice, emphasizing not only what is lacking, but first and foremost, what is potential. Therefore, the professional development process demands an effort to think about practice, strengthening it collectively, in order to effectively change reality.

Overall, international literature introduces professional development topics from within two different perspectives: Analysing professional development programs created beforehand or developing an intervention study to understand and discuss strategies as well as practices in professional development field. The majorities of studies fit in the first perspective – they have analysed the impact of professional development programs proposed specifically for teachers, through interviews, surveys or focused groups. For instance, Armour and Yelling (2007) discuss the role of informal and collaborative learning on a continuing professional development program for physical education teachers, analysing teachers' diaries as well as individual and group interviews, in order to understand participants' insight into their own learning process. Findings indicate that teachers consider professional development as an ongoing process, in which various educational activities, both formal (a professional development program) and informal (peer interaction and collaboration) are relevant. Other studies suggest important findings concerning the professional development process from within a collaborative perspective, such as the importance of sharing experiences or focusing on dialogue, interaction and peer support as successful practices in professional development programs (Killeavy & Moloney, 2010; Guldborg, 2008; Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, 2007). Online professional development programs are the main topic in some studies, which discuss the impact of blogs and other online support methods on teachers' ability to express and reflect about their learning process, as well as sharing experiences and learning from each other (Killeavy & Moloney, 2010; Guldborg, 2008; Duncan-Howell, 2010; Koop, Hasenbein & Mandl, 2014; Ernest et al., 2013).

Furthermore, literature also shows intervention studies, which have created and analysed professional development programs from within a collaborative viewpoint. Masuda and

Ebersole (2012) discuss how study groups may support teachers in the beginning of their careers, indicating that a supportive context where teachers may have time to think and reflect about their own practices is essential to learn new practices and strategies. In addition, Orland-Barak (2007) analyses a one-year program for educational mentors, suggesting that instead of a professional model oriented only toward technical training, programs should focus on conversation processes, creating a safe space, where professionals feel free to demonstrate their needs, conflicts, ideas and valuing peer interaction. Hindin et al. (2007) also develop and analyse a professional development program, however they go beyond the analysis on group process, observing teachers' performance in classrooms as well, in order to understand how they apply what they have learnt in the program and concluding that collaboration in groups is essential to improve teachers' practice.

We have found common points between literature and the present research. Most of the articles have discussed professional development valuing social interaction between participants, through dialogue and peer learning, allocating them as protagonists in this process. However, only one paper discusses professional development of psychologists in clinical contexts (Bradley et al., 2012) and another study analyses interprofessional peer learning in a health context, involving psychologists, nurses and others (Phelan et al., 2012). Moreover, although some papers make reference to cultural-historical theory (Hindin et al., 2007; Gleeson, 2010; Horn & Kane, 2015), they do not conduce and analyse data with cultural-historical concepts as the main analytical tools, and the major Vygotsky affirmative about the relevance of social relations to human development is only used as a theoretical support for their findings. This might indicate the relevance of this study, which discusses the group as a source of development, from a professional development program offered for psychologists and other professionals who work within educational settings.

Literature has also shown the complexity and relevance of professional development topics – professional development programs are extremely important for those who work in a field as challenging as education. However, Brazilian professional development programs for educators and psychologists are usually restricted to technical learning, ignoring professionals' real needs and claims, allocating them as passive subjects in the development process. This is even worse in the educational psychology field where there are few graduates or specialization courses (Souza, 2010).

Nevertheless high quality practices with excellent outcomes can also be found in teacher education contexts. Through a formative-investigative project with educators in a Brazilian public school, Aragão (2010, 2012) claims that if the way in which many teachers conduct their work in the classroom based on knowledge transmission is criticized, the continued education quality offered for those teachers also needs to be reviewed and changed. Therefore, effective changes in school contexts require more opportunities for discussion and reflection about education, psychology and other subjects, in order to improve teachers' educational practices. *Collaborative groups* practice (Fiorentini & Gama, 2009; Fiorentini & Creci, 2013) is another successful example developed for educators and consists of a system of dialogues about professional work in order to overcome dilemmas and challenges collectively. Thus, instead of an expert transmitting a set of theories and techniques chosen by the expert himself, the whole group of professionals is equally responsible for the process, selecting discussion topics and constructing a collective sense of analysis and deliberation. These successful practices

indicate that instead of learning isolated concepts and techniques, educators should be considered in a broader perspective, by respecting their needs, feelings and experiences, in order to overcome challenges faced and improve their professional development.

The brief contextualization and review presented above indicates several challenges in professional development programs for those who work in educational settings. The research presented in this paper aimed to meet some of these challenges, looking at the group as a source of development, in order to rethink the professional development as a complex process, which includes the personal dimension as well as the collective dimension. This article will focus mostly on these two dimensions of professional development. In the following section, theoretical tools related to these issues will be discussed.

Cultural-Historical Theory: Main analytical concepts

As mentioned before, this article intends to analyse personal and collective dimensions of the process of professional development. As a collective dimension, a group will be approached as a source of development for professionals who work with educational demands. In doing this we explore several concepts of cultural-historical theory (CHT). Why then is CHT the chosen perspective for analysis? Firstly, the complex and dynamic process of human development is a subject matter of CHT. Since our research is focused on the process of professional development in its personal and collective dimensions, we consider CHT as highly relevant theoretical framework. Secondly, we see the group not as a simple factor, but as the source of professional development and this coincides with the core concept of cultural-historical theory that “*social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties*” (Vygotsky, 1934/1998, p. 203). Finally, the core principle of CHT defining the process of development as the path of how social becomes individual (Vygotsky, 1934/1998) informs our study aimed at better understanding of the role of the group in the professional development of an individual.

Vygotsky’s framework offers complex tools to analyse various aspects of the development process. Vygotsky’s theory has a process of development of higher mental functions as a central subject; however, Vygotsky’s theory is not focused on outcomes, but on the very process of development (Veresov, 2010). Each concept of CHT reflects a specific aspect of the whole complex process of development. In this way, every concept is always related to other concepts, expressing the entire complexity of the process. Moreover, Veresov (2010) claims that mental development is not a linear and simplistic process, but it is “*a complex process of qualitative change, reorganization of a certain system*” (p. 84). Therefore, a researcher must be aware of which changes happened through a given situation of development, how they happened and what the outcomes are.

Social Situation of Development (SSD)

According to Vygotsky (1931/1997), traditional methods in psychology have failed in explaining psychological phenomenon since they considered only a superficial description of external features:

The whole difficulty of scientific analysis consists in that the essence of things, that is, their true, real relation, does not coincide directly with the form of their external manifestations; for this reason, processes must be analyzed, and through analysis, the true relation that lies at the

base of these processes, behind the external form of their manifestation, must be disclosed. (Vygotsky 1931/1997, p. 70)

The “true relation” Vygotsky refers to is the social relationships that stand behind every psychological function. Therefore, one crucial difference between CHT and traditional psychological theories is that it considers social contexts to be not merely a factor or as having an influence on an individual’s development, but as a source of development.

From within a cultural-historical perspective, the social and the individual are two dimensions dialectically related to each other (Veresov, 2015). Accordingly, in this research we consider personal aspects and collective aspects of the process of professional development as two dimensions of “personal-collective” space.

Qualitative change in the system of mental functions in the individual depends on a social situation of development:

The social situation of development represents the initial moment for all dynamic changes that occur in development during the given period. It determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing them from the social reality as from the basic source of development, the path along which the social becomes the individual. (Vygotsky, 1934/1998, p. 22)

In this quotation, Vygotsky indicates that the social situation of development is an initial form of changes in the development process. Thus, the social context itself is not an automatic source of development, but relations and interactions in a given context are the source that enables a significant change in the developmental path. The social situation of development is not the situation itself, but the system of challenging interactions within that situation. Consequently, any qualitative change in the psychological system must be explained from the social situation of development as its initial moment, in order to understand the social genesis of that outcome.

Drama and crisis

Veresov (2010) argues that although the social environment is the source of development, dramatic events are key moments in development of psychological functions:

Such emotionally experience collisions can bring radical changes to the individual’s mind, and therefore can be a sort of act of development of functions – the individual becomes different he becomes higher and above his own behaviour. Without an internal drama, an internal category, such mental changes are hardly possible. (Veresov, 2010, p. 88)

Therefore, dramatic collisions are related to crises we experience in daily life. Vygotsky (1934/1998) states two types of crises during the course of development: Age-related crises and everyday life crises. The first type is related to the specific chronological period determined by a set of characteristics in the child’s development in a certain cultural context. The second one is stated by Vygotsky as a crucial feature to development process, once it is related to emotional and intense events: “*Development takes on a stormy, impetuous, and sometimes catastrophic character that resembles a revolutionary course of events in both rate of the changes that are occurring and in the sense of the alterations that are made*” (Vygotsky, 1934/1998, p. 9).

Crisis is not only a combination of external or internal factors, but is a complex interaction between those two aspects. Neoformations are the result of this process, through a drastic qualitative change on the psychological system as a whole. Thus, outcomes of crisis are reconstructions of conscious processes as well as changing an individual's relation with context and with himself. Moreover, when this change happens, the social situation of development also changes and becomes an initial point of other crises. Therefore, every higher mental function, every special trait of one's personality is the result of dialectical relations to social situations.

Perezhivanie¹

Transition from the social to the individual depends on the way each one experiences social situations of development – collisional, emotional and dramatic events throughout life. *Perezhivanie* is a concept, which explains this process, once it can be theorized as a way in which an individual refracts² various components of a social situation (Vygotsky, 1934/1994).

However, *perezhivanie* must not be understood in a dualist perspective, as though the social was an external factor coming through the individual as an internal dimension. This concept must be considered from a dialectical point of view. As Veresov puts it, what is important is that *perezhivanie* is a tool (concept) for analysing the influence of the social-cultural environment, not on the individual per se, but *on the process of development* of the individual (Veresov & Fleer, 2016).

Thus, *perezhivanie* should be considered not merely as something that happens to the individual, neither as something that is inside the individual. *Perezhivanie* is a theoretical concept to understand the dialectic and complex way through which dramatic social situations become an internal psychological function. Therefore, this concept can only be understood in close relation to other concepts, first of all the social situation of development and drama (crisis).

Therefore, *perezhivanie* is a key concept for our research, as it provides us with the opportunity for better understanding development process, helping to disclose its history and social context through the analysis of social relations that constitute the phenomenon: “*Thus, we might say that through other we become ourselves (...) The individual becomes for himself what he is in himself through what he manifests for others*” (Vygotsky, 1931/1997, p. 105).

Methodology

This study is a qualitative research, which aims to contextualize the focused subject throughout the whole process, analysing data in a meticulous and detailed way, considering process to be more important than results themselves (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994; González-Rey, 2002). Veresov (2014) argues quantitative methods have

¹ The decision to keep this concept in Russian idiom is in accordance to the recent literature (Veresov, 2016), as a translation to English language could not embrace the complexity of this terminology.

² The idea that the individual *refracts* social context is in opposition to the concept of *reflection*, challenging a dualistic view about “internal” and “external” categories (Veresov & Fleer, 2016).

methodological limitations to measuring human traits, such as intelligence or personality, which indicates the urgency to rethink the approach to studying personal dimensions of professional development, in order to find more accurate methods to express the dynamics and the wholeness of human development.

However, focusing on process and singular subject traits on qualitative studies should not lead to a mere description of a particular situation. Rather, the aim is to analyse local realities in order to understand its multiple components – social, historical, cultural and so on. Therefore, scientific rigour, curiosity and a critical dialogue to the theoretical framework are essential aspects in order to articulate scientific production to daily life and social needs.

Project design and data production

This research aimed to meet some of the challenges found in continued educational programs for psychologists and educators in Brazil in order to present a special type of professional development program through a collaborative work group, organized and conducted in such a way as to create conditions for change.

In 2014, we proposed a formal project, through the Extension University Agency of State University of Campinas (Unicamp through *Escola de Extensão da Unicamp – Extecamp*), whose major function is to share scientific production with the external community, improving professionals' training in several areas. The proposal was accepted in early September 2014, and the meetings began at the end of the month. The following table presents the main group characteristics and its development:

Table 1 – Main characteristics of the group

Initial proposal	1) <i>Formative proposal</i> : To offer a group of dialogue and studies about educational psychology, improving participants' professional development. 2) <i>Investigative proposal</i> : To produce Ph.D. data from the group, analysing contributions of a collaborative context to professional development process.
Target audience	Psychologists who work with educational demands in different contexts
Meetings schedule	<i>Dates</i> : From 24 th September to 13 th November 2014 Weekly, from 6pm to 8pm <i>Local</i> : Faculty of Education – Unicamp, Brazil
Number of registrations	18 registrations
Number of participants on first meeting³	10 participants

³ Discrepancy between number of registrations and participants on the first meeting was due to agenda incompatibility.

Number of participants at the end	8 participants
--	----------------

Firstly, the invitation was extended to psychologists who work within the domain of education. However, we also had registrations from other professionals, such as teachers, phonoaudiologists, educational supervisors and so on. Considering psychology as a non-isolated field demanding various scientific subjects to analyse and contribute to a certain reality, the researchers decided to include other professionals. The following table presents participants' fictitious names, as well as their professional background:

Table 2: Participants' pseudonyms

NAME⁴	PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND
Valentina	Psychologist
Abayomi	Psychologist
Ana Elisa	Psychologist
Lícia	Phonoaudiologist
Luísa	Psychologist
Alice	Kindergarten teacher
Peter	Psychologist
Tadeu	History teacher in basic education
WITHDRAWALS⁵	
Rosa	Teacher in basic education (she also has a background in psychology)
Isadora	Psychologist

A collaborative group proposal requires an intentional researcher's effort to create conditions for dialogue and learning, considering participants not as merely 'data informants', but as active subjects throughout group development. According to Certeau (1984), scientific research should investigate everyday life practices, proposing mechanisms of social transformation. Educational context is an important everyday practice, comprised of people who share similar experiences at the same time and space. Therefore, interventionist research methodologies in this field are crucial not only to understand it, but also to develop better working conditions for professionals who are part of it. Elliot (2004) discusses a special type of intervention study called action research, whose major aim is to study a particular "*social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it*" (Elliot, 1991). The author highlights that the primacy of this kind of research is to improve the educator's effort to change learning and teaching conditions in their work place, by developing a deeper understanding of practices through scientific and systematic analysis of daily life. Furthermore, action research is an attempt

⁴ Participant's pseudonyms were selected by themselves, for this reason we decided to present them in the article by the names they have chosen.

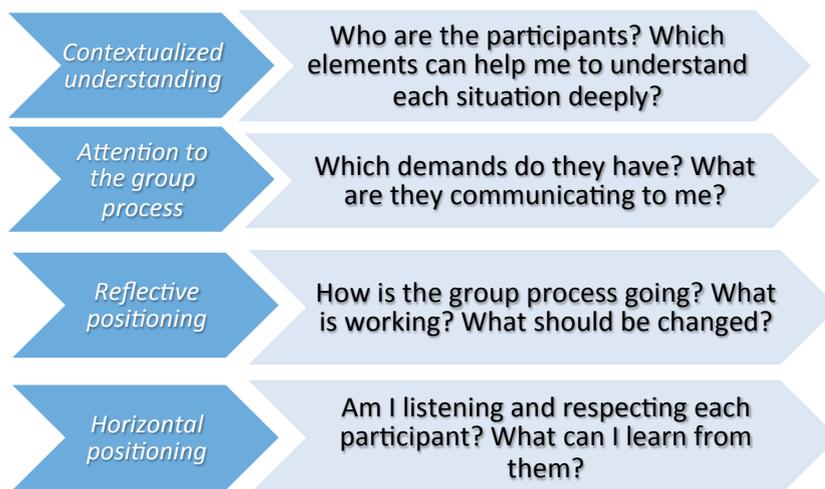
⁵ Two participants gave up on the second/third meeting due to agenda incompatibility.

to overcome the dualism between theory and practice inasmuch as “*improving the quality of action in such situations involves the development of theory*” (Elliot, 2004).

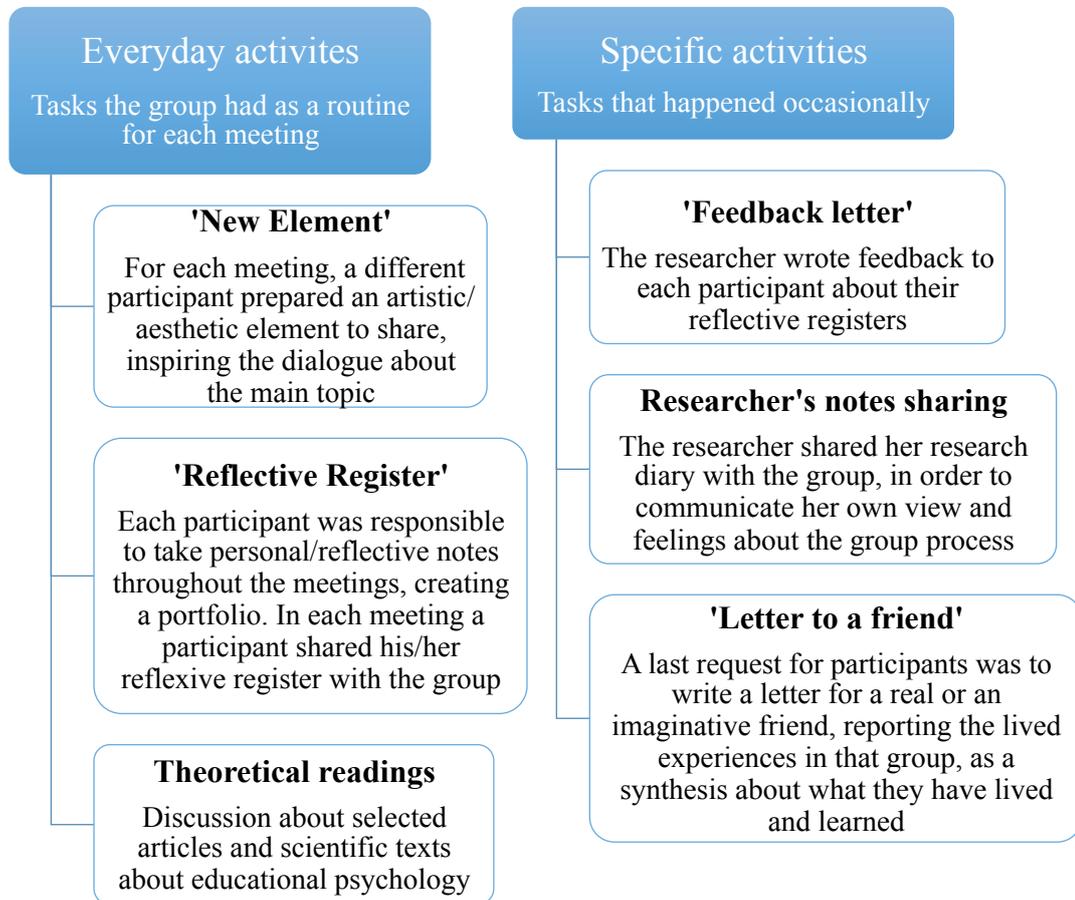
Intervention studies developed from school life or from a formative practice are a current methodology in the researcher’s group in Brazil⁶ (Cunha & Prado, 2007; Aragão, 2010; Ferreira, 2014; Pierini, 2014; Prezotto, 2015), involving, foremost: a) a strong commitment to social demands, seeking for significative changes in a given situation; b) a genuine respect for participants, considering them as knowledge producers as well as part of the investigation process; c) an attempt to strengthen relations between academy and community, such as schools and other institutions, considering theory and practice are dialectically related.

This research might be defined as an intervention study, as it proposed a special social situation for professionals, whose primary aim was to create conditions for their professional development, as well as investigate the impact of a professional development group based on a collaborative principle. Thus, the research methodology is based on collaborative group practices (Fiorentini & Gama, 2009; Fiorentini & Creci, 2013), developed in Brazilian context, defined as systematic meetings developed by a group of professionals who are connected by a common goal, whose main intent is to exchange ideas and overcome dilemmas collectively. Based on theoretical discussion already presented about interventionist methodology (Certeau, 1984; Elliot, 1991, 2004; Fiorentini & Gama, 2009; Fiorentini & Creci, 2013; Cunha & Prado, 2007; Aragão, 2010; Ferreira, 2014; Pierini, 2014; Prezotto, 2015), the following diagrams were created to show how this specific group was conducted throughout meetings, pointing out researcher attitudes towards managing the group as well as the main activities developed during this process. Some activities were planned from the beginning and some were proposed throughout the meetings, according to group demand, however they were all previously discussed and deliberated among the group.

Diagram 1: Researcher’s attitudes towards a collaborative process



⁶ Group of Studies and Research on Continued Education (GEPEC - Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação Continuada, of Faculty of Education, Unicamp).

Diagram 2: Activities proposed for the group

Therefore, research data was produced from: a) *Audio recording and transcription* from eight meetings; b) *Reflective Registers* produced by each participant; c) Researcher's *feedback letter* about Reflective Registers; c) *Researcher's personal notes*; d) *Letter to a friend*, as a final synthesis on the experience of being part of that group.

Analysis

Concepts from cultural-historical theory are the analytical tools for this research. They are key to understanding the professional development process in its personal and collective dimensions. Although data organization and analysis is still ongoing – so far, only half of the meetings are transcribed and analysed – we already have a preliminary data analysis to present, particularly about *how the group, as a source of development, contributes to rethinking professional development processes*. Thus, data examples for each concept will be selected and analysed in order to disclose some preliminary relations between them.

Social situation of development

The construction of a collaborative group was not a natural and linear process. It demanded several deliberate acts from the researcher to create conditions for development in this direction, as well as participants' responses to these conditions. Initially,

participants expected to improve their knowledge about educational psychology through the group in order to better deal with students' learning or behavioural problems, family issues and other educational demands. Also participants have described how lonely they usually feel in their daily work, not having opportunities to share their concerns with colleagues in everyday practice. Thus they also expected to find in the group an opportunity for dialogue and peer learning:

We have many problems to overcome and I need an update on the educational psychology field (...) that is why I would like to talk to people who are working within this field and, through this dialogue, I would like to improve my knowledge. (Luiza)

Initially, there were some traditional and decontextualized conceptions shared in the group about educational topics – some participants blamed teachers or families for educational problems, as we can see in the following example:

The educational system today is completely lost (...) parents do not have authority anymore and the school has lost its value. The school should teach and the family should educate. (Rosa)

Considering this initial setting the researcher has created conditions for development, throughout the meetings in such a way that new and contextualized understandings about educational psychology also emerged in the group. The *new element* was an intentional activity suggested since first meeting. Basically, in each meeting – at the beginning or the end – a different participant was responsible for sharing an artistic/aesthetic element (e.g. a short movie, a poem, or a piece of music) related to a discussed topic of that day. On the fourth meeting, Tadeu brought a short movie based on a Spanish book, *Por Cuatro Esquinas de Nada*⁷ (*Four little corners*, own translation), which tells the story of a square shape who wants to play with his circle-shaped friends in their house. However, the door is round and the square shape could not pass through it. At first, his friends decided the best option was to cut off the square's corners, changing his shape and transforming him into a circle. Then they asked themselves if this was really the best option, as it would hurt the square shape, changing him into something that he is not. This *new element* elicited a debate about the role of psychologists and educators, as illustrated in the following example:

Tadeu: Maybe the role of a psychologist is to be the one who asks: "Is there any other way to let the square shape be part of the group?" I think this is very interesting. Not just interesting, but important. Because sometimes we [teachers] do not see other possibilities in regards to school issues.

Researcher: What does the group think about this?

Peter: (...) usually, the school complaining presents a wrong look on the child, demanding the child's adaptation to an unbalanced system. So, our main challenge is to make people look at the system and not to the child only.

⁷ Ruillier, Jerome. *Por cuatro esquinitas de nada*. Juventud: Spain, 2014. Short video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IikZuOFfar4>

Researcher: Is anybody thinking something else about the video?

Lícia: I'm thinking about inclusion, which is a reality we have nowadays. Sometimes we put the square shape inside. But, what's the point? Is this enough? Maybe this is just the first step, we need to include the square shape, but also change the door, change the collective conditions to welcome the square. I think inclusion is the major challenge nowadays...

In this example, we may highlight three major points: a) The content of this dialogue; b) the researcher's attitude conducting the conversation; c) the role of the participants in the development of this situation.

Differently from the first meetings where some decontextualized understandings about educational psychology can be found, the content of the example above shows a collective reflection on what psychologists and educators can do to improve educational system, not merely adapting children, but changing learning conditions. Moreover, the emergence of this conversation depended on the intentional activity ("new element") proposed by the researcher in order to allocate participants as protagonists of the group process. Different from a traditional professional development program in which the facilitator has a pre-determined agenda to communicate information, techniques and concepts to participants, the example shows that the researcher proposed a horizontal context where participants were equally responsible for knowledge generation, creating a collaborative sense in the group through an active learning process. Furthermore, the way she conducted the discussion, encouraging the group to deliberate on the topic, asking them "*what does the group think about this?*", was important to encourage participants' dialogue.

Nevertheless the researcher's attitudes are not the social situation of development (SSD) itself, but the interaction between the condition created through the *new element* activity and the participants' response to that situation. According to Vygotsky (1931/1997) SSD is the initial form of the development process and this initial form is the interaction between people. Thus in this particular example we understand that the participants' response to conditions created by the researcher – bringing a *new element* to share as well as actively engaging in the conversation, producing new understandings about educational psychology – is a social situation of development, in which knowledge shared in a collective dimension becomes a source for personal change. This is coherent with Vygotsky's premise about the path of human development, which is from the social to the individual (Vygotsky, 1929/1989); thus instead of asking how the participants have acted in a social situation, we must analyse how the social situations in the group, such as the *new element activity*, may create new understandings for individuals.

Crises

As a live and complex system formed by human relations, professional development groups cannot be explained in a simplistic way. On the contrary, the outcomes of this process can only be disclosed by considering the contradictory and dramatic relations throughout the meetings. The following example illustrates a dramatic situation in the group; a collision and an emotionally intensive situation between people (Vygotsky 1934/1998):

On the second meeting, beside a collective deliberation on which topics should be examined over the meetings, there were also two articles to be discussed. However, the group spent almost the whole time talking about the troubles and challenges they

experience in daily work, in a hopeless way, as the group did not raise any solution that day, only problems, complaints and concerns. Despite the researcher's effort to change the subject and refocus on the initial goal, the group could not overcome the "moment of complains". However, at the end of this meeting, a participant raised a question:

Lícia: What is your research methodology? What is your main intent in this research? Is it just hearing our narratives? I'd like to know a little bit more about it...

Researcher: This is a good question! (...) The purpose is to build this group together. (...) I have my intentions, but I want to develop a horizontal attitude. All these concerns you are talking about are my concerns too, I also have questions and doubts. And I do not have a ready-made solution. We'll have to think together.

Lícia: (...) I feel that today we talked a lot about the teacher, the family, the student... and we didn't think about what we can do as professionals to help them. (...) I was wondering what we are able to do about this...

Researcher: [questioning the group] Do you all agree with Lícia? Is this a concern for you too?

Isadora: This is what I was going to say. I feel that we are blaming everybody and not finding a solution... you got it...

Researcher: Yes, I think I got it, Isadora! It is very nice you say this, because it is my concern too. I let you talk about these problems today, because I'd like to know what you think and what you need. (...) I think if we focus on the papers I suggested maybe we could find some solutions to these problems...

Although the researcher has pointed out since the first meeting that the group would be a collaborative space where all participants would have the right to talk, decide and help each other, they were not familiar with this format in a professional development program:

When I enrolled in this program, my intention was only listening and absorbing knowledge (...). However, the meetings have instigated me to share my experiences and I realized that it would be impossible to just listen, as each discussion was very inspiring. A mere observing is not enough; we must participate (Alice)

As this participant's quote indicates, there was an initial expectation about this program as a traditional lesson in which members would have to absorb knowledge offered by an expert. Nevertheless the researcher presented a different format based on a collaborative perspective in which the whole group was responsible for the process. The example of the second meeting indicates a crisis resulting from this collision: The way the researcher began the course – respecting participants needs for sharing and complaining – contradicts their initial intentions; finding answers to their professional dilemmas immediately. In this example, a dramatic collision is revealed when Lícia raises the question: 'what is the main purpose of this group? How are we going to find a solution to the problems we have?' After this moment the researcher and participants pointed out ideas to improve the group process, developing a sense of collectiveness. A quote from the *Reflective Register* of one of the participants indicates how intense and significant this experience was for the group:

Among everything that was happening in the group that day, Lícia raised some questions. To be honest, it was uncomfortable for me at the beginning... but then I realized that the group was a space for sharing our experiences. For instance, we got a little bit lost. It was a moment to rethink the group purpose. And how good it was! (Ana Elisa)

The researcher's positioning in this meeting was to listen to the participants' demands in order to understand which direction the group should take. At the same time, the researcher and participants also wanted to overcome the "complaining moment", finding concrete solutions for those problems. Living this dramatic situation was important to develop a collaborative sense in the group as this collision had to be faced and deliberated collectively. More than a training course for professionals, by teaching a range of concepts in a superficial way this group has worked on the relations between participants, negotiating decisions and creating a trusting environment where participants were free to share what they thought and felt. This way, the development course of the group took a revolutionary path (Vygotsky, 1934/1998), including crises as an essential part of the group process.

Perezhivanie

Perezhivanie is the key concept to understanding the dialectic relationship between the individual and the social (Veresov, 2015), explaining that the way the individual emotionally reacts and interprets aspects of the environment will determine the influence of this situation on their development in a unique way, reorganizing the whole process of development. Considering that the non-particular social aspects determine development, but only those aspects, which are refracted through individual's *perezhivanie*, we present an example of a dramatic experience in the group affecting the process of development of one specific participant during the meetings. To access this participant's particular interpretation and understanding, we will present some of her quotes in the *Letter to a Friend*, which was a final activity proposed to the group whose main request was to write an informal and affective letter to a real or imaginary friend, synthesizing the experiences, feelings and learning they had during the meetings. Narratives from this activity were a precious means to access in which sense the group, as a source of development, affected each participant individually.

Abayomi is a psychologist who works in the Educational Department of her city with teachers' further education. In the first meeting, Abayomi said that her degree in psychology was not enough to understand the educational field and, as she is working within an educational context, she wants to improve her knowledge in this area. During the meetings, Abayomi has shown ability to participate and collaborate with the group process – she was going through an important moment in her personal life, and even so she committed herself to attend the meetings as indicated through this quote:

I loved the meetings and I have done everything I could to be there every week. Sometimes I was so tired that I didn't want to go, but I decided to go anyway, considering everything I would learn there. (...) It was a pleasure to be part of this group. (Abayomi)

On the previous topic about crises, we presented a dramatic collision about how to overcome complaints, finding collective solutions to problems shared in the group. As part of the group interactions, Abayomi has lived this collision in quite a unique manner. The

following quote indicates that the crisis lived in the social sphere has affected this participant in a specific and intense way:

At the beginning, we were all excited to share our concerns and dilemmas from the professional practice. This was very helpful moment for me, because I identified myself with all that, it was like the group was part of my work team, many dilemmas of the participants were my dilemmas too. The “cathartic moment” in the group was amazing for me, made me feel relieved, it was like a therapeutic moment for me. (...) This group was remarkable for me and sometimes I find myself thinking about our discussions and I read the texts we discussed again and I still keep learning. (Abayomi)

Abayomi's expectations about the group were primarily to improve her knowledge in the educational field and this example indicates how the “cathartic moment” on the second meeting was important to her in a positive way – in that moment she realized that she is not the only person facing problems in daily work, it being quite important for her to feel welcomed and relieved. Perezhivanie may be defined as how a person emotionally reacts, interprets and understands lived experience (Vygotsky 1934/1994). In this particular example we may see Abayomi's personal attitude to that situation – how she interprets, understands and emotionally reacts to the dramatic collision lived in the second meeting. Vygotsky (1934/1994) states that it is not the factors in themselves that will determine the path of development, but it is how the social factors are refracted through the individual's emotional experiences. Thus, even though the situation itself was an uncomfortable moment for the whole group, by sharing negative aspects about the group process and questioning the meeting's purpose, this crisis affected the participant in a singular manner.

The group as a source of professional development – discussing main outcomes

This research project aimed to meet some challenges in Brazil's further education programs for professionals who work with educational demands, developing a certain type of professional development group, based on a collaborative perspective. Professional development is a broad process that might embrace a range of aspects and it is also a continuous process that is not restricted to a specific course or level of experience. Thus the present group could never achieve all aspects of the professional development process in only eight meetings. However it is possible to point out some particular and relevant outcomes from the group experience, especially considering the theoretical line – *the group as a source of professional development*. Therefore outcomes discussed below may be considered as results of group social interactions, through social situations proposed for the group, crises experienced from these situations and the way these dramatic events were refracted by participants.

New understandings of educational psychology

The group offered a space of dialogue and studies about educational psychology, raising, from the beginning, high expectations in the participants as they consider educational psychology to be a challenging field:

We have many problems to overcome and I need an update on the educational psychology field (...) that is why I would like to talk to people who are working within this field and, through this dialogue, I would like to improve my knowledge. (Luiza)

I am here because I want to deal with the challenges I have daily, I want to know how can I help the school, as a psychologist. (Peter)

As the group had an open and horizontal proposal, and discussion was constructed through a collective effort, participants could bring their concerns and conceptions about educational psychology and the group has deliberated together about new possibilities for and understandings of professional practice in this field. At first, understandings of psychology as well as possibilities for interventions in education were hopeless and contradictory – sometimes focused on an individualistic point of view and sometimes on a broader and holistic perspective – the common feeling in these initial moments was that there was nothing they could do to overcome those problems:

The educational system today is completely lost (...) parents do not have authority anymore and the school has lost its value. The school should teach and the family should educate. (Rosa)

We [psychologists] don't have the same professional recognition as doctors have. People always consider what doctors say and psychologists have only a minor participation. (Valentina)

The intense focus on group conversations and interactions was an important aspect when discussing theoretical conception and dilemmas in order, together, to construct new understandings of and possibilities for working with educational demands. Thus, gradually, the group moved from complaints and fatalism to thinking about solutions:

Today we discussed the difference between the expressions “school problems” and “learning problems”⁸. They consist of two different ways of presenting the student to the school team. This is our role: To find another way of seeing that student, in a welcome, careful and optimistic way. (Lícia)

What is clear for me from the discussion today is that, in cases of school problems, we have to consider every instance related to that case. Everyone needs to have voice, collaborating to find the best solution. (Ana Elisa)

About psychological tests and pathologies, how the child feels about it? We have to achieve a human approach and this is what we have been talking about since our first meeting. (Isadora)

These examples illustrate the group development towards new understandings about the work with educational demands, overcoming many of the initial ideas and concerns. Among a range of conceptions, a common ground found by the group was about: a) the

⁸ These two expressions “school problems” and “learning problems” were part of a discussion topic in the fourth meeting. When we present the student as “a student with learning problems” the focus is only in the individual issues. But when we say “school problems”, it means that the problem at issue belongs to the school context and it has many aspects to be considered, not only the student itself.

importance of a work based on a broad understanding about educational processes, considering not just the student but the school, family and the social/cultural context in which the student lives; b) a critical view on quantitative psychological tests as well as psychological labels in order to highlight the individual's potentials rather than the disadvantages; c) the importance of multidisciplinary work in the educational field; in other words, the understanding that psychology always needs different knowledge expertise in order to develop quality work.

New understandings about work in a collaborative perspective

Beyond theoretical learning about educational psychology topics, one outcome in the group was the collaborative work as a central practice for their professional trajectories. As previously mentioned, proposing a professional development program in a collaborative perspective, valuing group interactions and dynamics as a main aspect was not a simple or linear process. On the contrary, to consolidate the group as a collaborative space it was necessary for an intentional effort from the researcher alongside dramatic and contradictory experiences. The following participants' quotes indicate how the collaborative aspect was an important legacy of being a member of this group:

[In the group] I could realize how powerful meeting is to others and I think I must believe in conversation processes, in my peers and in the reflection in a group context. (Valentina)

If I have to choose an expression to define this course it would be "collective construction" (...) Meetings were not ready-made and closed, they were built by the group, according to the initial proposal. It was not a lecture class, such as the traditional classes we usually have, but it was another way of producing knowledge. (Licia)

This group was very important for my professional look, because during the meetings we could share our concerns, frustrations and expectations about educational aspects. (Abayomi)

According to Vygotsky (1931/1997), development is not learning a concept in a passive and mechanistic way, but it is a qualitative change in psychological system, a change in the way someone thinks. Thus, the major result of this process is not simply learning a new technique or a new concept to be applied, but learning the importance of dialogue between peers, exercising critical thinking, sharing ideas with colleagues and trying to find collective solutions.

In general, Brazil's professional development programs are focused on technical learning, demanding an expert who is going to decide what the educators should do or not in their practices in a quite prescriptive manner. This program aimed to turn the attention away from the expert to the subjects in professional development, valuing foremost the needs and knowledge they have to share (Nóvoa 2009). Thus this group proposed an opportunity to create a supportive, safe, trusting and effective environment, in which colleagues were co-responsible to help each other. According to Aragão (2010), this is an important role of continued education programs: It should not be a process of fixing professional disadvantages, but a process of establishing partnerships in order to "*discuss and build knowledge and learn aspects of our daily work, as there is no program which can predict all the aspects and dilemmas lived in daily work*" (2010, p. 430, own translation).

Final Considerations

Concepts from cultural-historical theory were important analytical tools for understanding the group as a source of development for professionals who work within the domain of education. Thus from examples of *social situations of development* proposed for the group, we could access significant changes in participants' development process, concluding that the collective dimension is not a mere factor but a condition of the individual's professional development. Moreover we might state that *crises* and dramatic collisions are essential components of a professional development program based on a collaborative and horizontal perspective; thus different from passive teaching, this group has worked on social relations between participants, recognizing and overcoming crises lived during the meetings. From the social situations and crises we discussed an example of how a participant's *perezhivanie* was affected in a special way, indicating that only those social factors refracted through the individual's emotional experiences can result in outcomes. Outcomes from the group are a source of professional development and we could identify *new understandings of educational psychology* – critical thinking about educational demands, considering student, teacher, family and society as a holistic system developing a new approach to understanding their roles as psychologists and educators and *new understandings of work in a collaborative perspective* – the importance of questioning and critical thinking as well as the importance of peer learning through dialogue and co-construction as a way of overcoming challenges in daily work. This shows how important it is to propose further education programs with group interactions and dynamics as a main aspect.

Our research group in Brazil has a usual practice of presenting the “lessons” of research which consist in few topics synthesizing what we have learned from the present research; the topics have been developed and deepened as well as the legacy from this study for further research. Thus from the preliminary analyses presented, we might emphasize three main lessons related to the professional development experience in a collaborative work group:

- Professionals who work with education face a range of challenges that can be overcome through continued education programs, where they will have a chance to enter in dialogue with their peers and build new understandings and possibilities together.
- In professional development programs it is important to establish a horizontal and respectful relation to the participants, considering them as partners who have plentiful capacity to contribute from their experience. Thus professional development is possible only if the subjects are considered as an active part of this process.
- The group is a singular space for professional development. However a simple set of people is not enough to promote development. It is important to create social situations of development from activities and proposals that allow intense and significant interactions between subjects.

References

Antunes, M. A. (2007). *A Psicologia no Brasil: leitura histórica sobre sua constituição*. São Paulo: Educ.

- Aragão, A. M. F. (2010). Reflexividade coletiva: indícios de desenvolvimento profissional docente. (Tese de Livre Docência). Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brasil.
- Aragão, A. M. F. (2012). Ciência e reflexividade: considerações a partir de um projeto formativo-investigativo. *Magis, Revista Internacional de Investigación en Educación*, 5 (10), 17-29. Retrieved from: <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=281024896002>.
- Armour, K. M.; Yelling, M. (2007). Effective Professional Development for Physical Education Teachers: The Role of Informal, Collaborative Learning. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 26, 177-200 Retrieved from: <http://journals.humankinetics.com/AcuCustom/Sitename/Documents/DocumentItem/7376.pdf>
- Bock, A. M. B. (1999). *As aventuras do Barão de Münchhausen na psicologia*. São Paulo: Educ.
- Bogdan, R. C.; Biklen, S K. (1994). *Investigação qualitativa em educação: uma introdução à teoria e aos métodos*. Porto: Editora Porto.
- Bradley, S.; Martin, D.; Destefano, J. (2012). The Relationship Between Continuing Education and Perceived Competence, Professional Support, and Professional Value Among Clinical Psychologists. *Journal of continuing education in the health professions*, 32 (1), 31–38. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22447709>
- Brasil. Lei nº 4.119, de 27 de Agosto de 1962. (1962). Dispõe sobre os cursos de formação em psicologia e regulamenta a profissão de psicólogo. *Diário Oficial da União*, Brasília, DF.
- Certeau, Michel de (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Cunha, R. B.; Prado, G. do V. T. (2007). Sobre pesquisa: um exercício e alguns ensaios. In: Prado, G. do V. T. & Cunha, R. B. (Eds.) *Percursos de autoria: exercícios de pesquisa*. Campinas: Editora Alinea, 2007.
- Duncan-Howell, J. (2010). Teachers making connections: Online communities as a source of professional learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 4 (2), 324-240. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2009.00953.x
- Elliot, J. (1991). *Action Research for Educational Change*. Madri: Open University Press, Milton Keynes.
- Elliot, J. (2004). The struggle to redefine the relationship between “knowledge” and “action” in the academy: some reflections on action research. *Educar*, 34, 11-26. Retrieved from: <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/16555/>
- Ernest, P.; Guitert Catasús, M.; Hampel, R.; Heiser, S.; Hopkins, J.; Murphy, L.; Stickler, U. (2013) Online teacher development: collaborating in a virtual learning environment. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 26 (4). DOI:10.1080/09588221.2012.667814
- Fiorentini, D.; Creci, V. M. (2013). Desenvolvimento Profissional de Professores em Comunidades com Postura Investigativa. *Acta Scientiae*, 15 (1), 9-23. Retrieved from: <http://www.periodicos.ulbra.br/index.php/acta/article/view/346>.

- Fiorentini, D.; Gama, R. P. (2009). Formação continuada em grupos colaborativos: professores de matemática iniciantes e as aprendizagens da prática profissional. *Educ. Matem. Pesq.*, 11 (2), 441-461. Retrieved from: <http://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/emp/article/viewFile/2827/1863>.
- Ferreira, L. H. (2014). Educação estética e prática docente: exercício de sensibilidade e formação. (PhD Thesis). Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brasil.
- Gleeson, C. (2010). Education beyond competencies: a participative approach to professional development. *Medical Education*, 44, 404–411 DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2923.2009.03601.x
- González-Rey, F. (2002). Pesquisa qualitativa em psicologia – caminhos e desafios. São Paulo: Pioneira Thomson Learning.
- Guldborg, K. (2008). Adult learners and professional development: peer-to-peer learning in a networked community. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 27 (1), 35-49. DOI:10.1080/02601370701803591
- Guzzo, R. S. L. (Ed). (2014). *Psicologia Escolar: desafios e bastidores na educação pública*. Campinas: Átomo e Alínea.
- Hindin, A.; Morocco, C. C.; Mott, E. A.; Aguilar, C. M. (2007). More than just a group: teacher collaboration and learning in the workplace. *Teachers and teaching: theory and practice*, 13 (4) 349-376. DOI:10.1080/13540600701391911
- Horn, I. S.; Kane, B. D. (2015). Opportunities for Professional Learning in Mathematics Teacher Workgroup Conversations: Relationships to Instructional Expertise. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 24 (3), 373-418. DOI:10.1080/10508406.2015.1034865.
- Killeavy, M.; Moloney, A. (2010). Reflection in a social space: Can blogging support reflective practice for beginning teachers? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 1070-1076. DOI:10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.002
- Koop, B.; Hasenbein, M.; Heinz, M. (2014). Case-based learning in virtual groups – collaborative problem solving activities and learning outcomes in a virtual professional training course. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 22 (3), 351-372. DOI:10.1080/10494820.2012.680964
- Martínez, A. M. (2007). *Psicologia escolar e compromisso social*. Campinas: Editora Alínea.
- Masuda, A.; Ebersole, M. (2012). Beginning teachers’ study group: a place to continue critical conversations about teaching writing. *The New Educator*, 8 (2), 170-176. DOI:10.1080/1547688X.2012.670570
- Meira, M. E. M. A. (2012). Crítica da Psicologia e a Tarefa da Crítica na Psicologia. *Psicologia Política*, 12 (23), 13-26. Retrieved from: http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?pid=S1519549X2012000100002&script=sci_arttext.
- Meirink, L.; Meijer, P. C.; Verloop, N. (2007). A closer look at teachers’ individual learning in collaborative settings. *Teachers and Teaching*, 13 (2), 145-164. DOI:10.1080/13540600601152496

- Machado, A. M.; Souza, M. P. R. (Eds.). (1997). *Psicologia Escolar: em busca de novos rumos*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Nóvoa, A. (1995). Formação de professores e profissão docente. In: Nóvoa, A. (Ed.) *Os professores e a sua formação*. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote Instituto Educativo.
- Nóvoa, A. (2009). *Professores Imagens do futuro presente*. Lisboa: Educa.
- Orland-Barak, L. (2007). Convergent, divergent and parallel dialogues: knowledge construction in professional conversations. *Teachers and Teaching*, 12 (1), 13-31. DOI:10.1080/13450600500364547
- Patto, M.H.S. (1984). *Psicologia e ideologia: Uma introdução crítica à psicologia escolar*. São Paulo: T. A. Queiroz.
- Patto, M.H.S. (1996). *A produção do fracasso escolar: história de submissão e rebeldia*. São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz.
- Patto, M.H.S. (2005). *Exercícios de indignação: escritos de Educação e Psicologia*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Pfromm Netto, S. (1996). As origens e o desenvolvimento da psicologia escolar. In: Muglia, S. W. *Psicologia Escolar: pesquisa, formação e prática*. Campinas: Editora Alínea.
- Phelan, A. M.; Barlow, C. A.; Iversen, S. (2012). Occasioning learning in the workplace: the case of interprofessional peer collaboration. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 20 (4), 415-424. DOI:10.1080/13561820600845387
- Pierini, A. S. (2014). *Os espaços de conversa: a orientadora pedagógica e a formação com o cotidiano - com prosa e com verso, a experiência de ser ex de si*. (PhD Thesis). Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brasil.
- Ponte, J. P. (1998). Da formação ao desenvolvimento profissional. Conferência plenária apresentada no Encontro Nacional de Professores de Matemática ProfMat, realizado em Guimarães. In: *Actas do ProfMat*, 27-44. Lisboa: APM.
- Prezotto, M. (2015). *O trabalho docente com.par.t(r)ilhado: focalizando a parceria*. (PhD Thesis). Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brasil.
- Souza, M. P. R. (2010). *A atuação do psicólogo na rede pública de educação: concepções práticas e desafios*. (Tese de Livre Docência). Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil.
- Tanamachi, E. R.; Proença, M.; Rocha, M. L. R. (Eds.). (2000). *Psicologia e Educação: Desafios teórico-práticos*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Tanamachi, E. R.; Meira, M. E. M. (2003). A atuação do psicólogo como expressão do pensamento crítico em Psicologia e Educação. In: Meira, M. E. M.; Antunes, M. A. M. *Psicologia escolar: práticas críticas*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- Veresov, N. (2010). Introducing cultural-historical theory: main concepts and principles of genetic research methodology. *Cultural-historical psychology*, 4, 83-90.
- Veresov, N. (2014). Refocusing the lens on development: Towards genetic research methodology. In: Fleer, M. & Ridway, A. (Eds.) *Visual methodologies and digital tools for researching with Young Children*. Springer, 129-149.

- Veresov, N. (2016). Duality of Categories or Dialectical Concepts? Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science, 50, 244-256 DOI 10.1007/s12124-015-9327-1.
- Veresov, N., Fler, M. (2016). Perezhivanie as a theoretical concept for researching young children's development, Mind, culture and activity (in press)
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1929/1989). Concrete human psychology. Soviet Psychology, 27(2), 53–77.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/1994) Vygotsky L. S. The problem of the environment / In: R. Van der Veer, R. & Valsiner, J. (Eds.). The Vygotsky reader. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Vygotski, L. S. (1931/1997). The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky: The History of the development of Higher Mental Functions (Vol. 4, pp. 97-120). New York: Spriger Science+Business Media New York.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1934/1998). The Problem of Age. In: Rieber, R. W. The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky: Child Psychology (Vol. 5, pp. 187-205). New York: Spriger Science+Business Media New York.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior-Brazil) for the financial support to develop part of the PhD at Monash University, Australia.

About the authors

Fabiana Marques Barbosa Nasciutti is a PhD student, currently based at Faculty of Education of State University of Campinas – São Paulo, Brazil

Contact: fabimarquesb@hotmail.com

Nikolai Veresov is an Associate Professor in Early Childhood at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia.

Contact: nveresov@hotmail.com

Ana Maria Falcão de Aragão is psychologist, Associated Professor in Educational Psychology at the Faculty of Education, State University of Campinas – São Paulo, Brazil

Contact: anaragao@terra.com.br