



Pós-Graduação *Lato Sensu* em Língua Inglesa

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**AN EXPLORATORY EYE TOWARDS A GROUP OF TEACHERS' AGENCIES IN A
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

Rio de Janeiro
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To my beloved mother, Edilene, for always encouraging me to go for my dreams, no matter the circumstances.

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Special thanks to my friends, members of the group this research is about. Our interactions are always a source of learning and sharing.

It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question

Eugène Ionesco

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a research carried out with a group of teachers, members of a community of practice, as an attempt to understand some challenges in the implementation of an English course. Exploratory Practice was used as the pedagogical framework and through an Exploratory Discussion we could reflect upon our difficulties in implementing the project, considering aspects such as our beliefs about teaching and learning, our different motivations and the impact of the Covi-19 pandemic on our personal and professional lives. The conversation was inspired by the puzzle: "Why is our English project making no progress?", which unearthed other puzzles and led to reflections upon issues such as power relations in education and the danger of adopting an individualistic perspective within a community of practice. In this research, I also try to understand my own journey in my attempt to develop Exploratory Practice with the members of this community of practice, critically analyzing my difficulties in the light of Exploratory Practice seven principles for inclusive practitioner research (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS, 2009, p. 260).

Keywords: Communities of Practice, Exploratory Practice, teaching, learning

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RESUMO

Esta pesquisa apresenta um trabalho desenvolvido com um grupo de professores, membros de uma comunidade de prática, na tentativa de entender alguns desafios na implementação de um curso de inglês. Usei Prática Exploratória como estrutura pedagógica e através de uma conversa exploratória, pudemos refletir sobre as nossas dificuldades na implementação do projeto, considerando aspectos como nossas crenças sobre ensino e aprendizagem, nossas diferentes motivações e o impacto da pandemia de Covid-19 nas nossas vidas pessoal e profissional. Nossa conversa foi inspirada pelo puzzle “Por que nosso curso de inglês não está avançando?”. Essa pergunta deu origem a outras questões e envolveu reflexões sobre assuntos como relações de poder na educação e o perigo de adotar uma perspectiva individualista em uma comunidade de prática. Nesta pesquisa, eu também busco entender minha jornada pessoal ao tentar desenvolver Prática Exploratória com os membros dessa comunidade de prática, analisando criticamente minhas dificuldades à luz dos sete princípios da pesquisa inclusiva de praticante propostos pela Prática Exploratória. (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS, 2009, p. 260).

Palavras-chave: Comunidade de Prática, Prática Exploratória, ensino, aprendizagem

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1. INTRODUCTION

*We all belong to communities of practice.
At home, at work, at school, in our hobbies -
we belong to several communities of practice at any given time.
And the communities of practice to which we belong
change over the course of our lives.
In fact, communities of practice are everywhere.
Wenger, 1998*

The unforgettable experience of starting my career as a teacher to a group of employees at a big company, has certainly impacted my preference for adult learners, something that, despite my interactions with other age groups, hasn't changed over eighteen years of teaching experience.

I have always been interested in how adults learn to the point of choosing Andragogy (Adult Education) as my monograph topic in my undergraduate studies. Due to this preference, I always tried to keep at least one or two adult groups among the other age groups I had to work with, as a way of balancing things for me and make me feel stronger to deal with the challenges of teaching children and teenagers, which I believed were bigger than the ones I faced with adults. I believed the older the learner, the easier the control of the group and the lesser the incidence of indiscipline, among other issues. These conclusions were based on my experience in private institutions, mainly language schools, and for a short time in regular schools.

In 2019, I started my journey in public education and for the first time in my life, children became my main target audience. The unpreparedness I felt, having to deal with the lack of resources and other particularities of the public school system, made me start questioning my teaching ability. I used to be sure about many things. However, a period of doubts had just begun.

Exploratory Practice: a new perspective

These changes in my professional life occurred during a specialization course at PUC, started in 2018. There, I was first introduced to Exploratory Practice (EP), which encouraged me to think of my practice from a different perspective. In EP classes, we were encouraged to reflect upon a range of topics involving our life in the classroom. These topics emerged in the form of puzzles, that is, why questions we generated and that invited us to reflections in order to reach some understanding. As my challenges as a teacher in the public sector had become a source of concern for me, when encouraged to create mine, I came up with and decided to investigate and present as my final task the following: *“Why do I think my approach to teaching young learners is not critical enough?”*. In my attempt to understand that, I engaged in reflections upon my classroom activities and what I meant by critical and critical pedagogy.

That enriching experience led me to choose Exploratory Practice as the pedagogic framework of my monograph, a long time before deciding my research topic. Initially, I intended to investigate Indiscipline and Classroom Management, something that affected me a lot in my first semester as a teacher in the public school. I even had a particular group of children in mind but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, my access to the kids was limited and the communication with them was restricted to asynchronous activities. I had no choice but to change my research topic.

Outros Quilombos: A community of practice

During the discussions about the possible topics of investigation with Bebel, my advisor, I mentioned an English project I had with a group of friends, started face-to-face in 2019 and merged to online sessions in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This group aimed at studying and discussing race and ethnic issues and the implementation of the anti-racist 10639/2003 and 11645/2008 laws in the school, through interdisciplinary projects, in which we could link our different areas of expertise.

This group did not exist before my arrival in the school. Two teachers' engagement in ethnic and racial issues soon influenced me and made me want to be around them and seek knowledge on those topics. I started thinking about ways of incorporating those topics into my regular classes in the school in order to bring an anti-racist perspective to my teaching. We were then three. Some time later, two other teachers joined us.

We always tried to come up with an interdisciplinary project, linking our fields of knowledge. Projects such as *Female Authors*, in which I could introduce author bell hooks to a group of 5th graders, and the storytelling event *African Readings*, organized as part of the Children's week activities, were some of the ideas that emerged during our talks and meetings. Idealized by one of our group members, these projects helped me visualize the possibilities I had with the kids. The way I was embraced was really significant.

We built a bond of friendship that transcended the school and started engaging in various activities together. Having worked in private institutions my whole life, the idea I had of the public sector was quite different from the one I was confronted with as soon as I arrived there. So, they became a source of support to me.

Our group was named Outros Quilombos in reference to author, historian, poet, theorist and organiser Beatriz Nascimento, a key figure in Brazil's Black Movement. Talking about her views on the concept of quilombo, Gomes et al (2021) argues:

Her arguments hinge on her unique conceptualisation of quilombo as a dynamic, spatial, political field, rather than a static political institution located in the past. Thus, her theorisation of quilombo moves away from an understanding of territoriality as fixity, towards a framing of territoriality as becoming.

Our beliefs of our existence as a political group, whose goal was to implement projects regarding racial and ethnic issues in the school, led us to produce and share a lot together. Our English project was one of the many things we came up with. The project consisted of an English language course offered by me to the other group members. The idea of having an English teacher in the group seemed a great opportunity for them to finally learn English, since most of them had started and quit

courses several times. Joining the course was voluntary and free of charge. It was thought of as one more project that would strengthen and potentialize our actions.

On hearing the characteristics of our group, Bebel, my advisor, was the first to refer to it as a community of practice. The informal aspect of our group made me doubt if I could apply that term to it, since we acted in a very informal way and were not recognized by the whole school as a group, just for some teachers a little more familiarized with our activities. Bebel then introduced me to Etienne Wenger, one of the authors to coin the term.

Talking about some characteristics of Communities of Practice, Wenger (1998, p.7) mentions that *they are so informal and so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit focus (...) and most communities of practice do not have a name and do not issue membership cards*. Well, ours even had a name. This made me interested in deepening my studies on Communities of Practice and its role as a kind of *social theory of learning* (1998, p.4).

My expectations regarding the project were really high, considering my preference for adult learners and my level of intimacy with them. They showed willingness and enthusiasm when we could finally start the classes, something they had asked for several times. It seemed everything would go well, until some problems such as: absence, demotivation and complaints about the classes started to happen.

That unexpected scenario showed us the need to understand what was going on. As a group, we needed to find our way. Throughout my reflection moments, I asked myself: If other projects we engaged in seemed to work out well, why is it so hard now? Why do I feel so confused about how to act with them, I mean, am I their teacher or a friend? What do they expect from our project? And from me?

I believed Exploratory Practice, whose ideas include the concept of community of practice, could help me understand the challenges we were facing in implementing our English Project. In order to research that, we engaged in an exploratory discussion that led us to reflect upon learning as a community, in opposition to the traditional teacher-student model we were used to.

This research paper is divided into five sections, including this Introduction. Section 2 brings the Theoretical Background: Exploratory Practice, and theory on Communities of Practice. In section 3, Methodology, I present the data generated in a

session with members of our community of practice. Section 4 is a reflection about the data in the light of Exploratory Practice. Section 5 brings the Final Considerations.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As we see it, allowing time for Exploratory Practice experiences has helped us transform classrooms and other practitioner groups into communities of practice and communities of learning.
Wenger, 2010

2.1 EXPLORATORY PRACTICE (EP)

Before being introduced to Exploratory Practice, research was not a topic of interest to me. Having spent most of my professional life at language institutions, I was usually trained on methods thought of to be followed, not questioned. Even after merging from audio-lingual methods to schools that focused on communicative approach, my idea of research was restricted to academia and as I did not see myself as a potential researcher, my interest in that was very little. And considering the load of work that comes with teaching: the covering of content, the school's bureaucracy, etc, I believed there was no time for that in regular classrooms, unless there was an outsider, a professional researcher doing it. My first contact with Exploratory Practice was significant because it showed me the possibility of teachers acting as researchers of their own classrooms.

Exploratory Practice (EP) is a form of practitioner research in which students as well as teachers are encouraged to investigate their own learning/teaching practices, while concurrently practicing the target language. (HANKS, 2017, p. 2)

In the early 90's, Dick Allwright began to express concern with academic research studies which were in a way, 'parasitic', since they extracted knowledge from the classroom to build theories about it without involving teachers or learners in such theorizations (ALLWRIGHT, 2003a). He emphasized that, instead of a professional researcher disconnected with their reality, teachers and students should be the ones investigating their classrooms. He justifies (2003, p. 11):

This is because the participants (learners as well as teachers) are necessarily involved in the moment-by-moment micro-management of classroom events. This process involves countless acts of local decision-making. And these decisions need to be taken on the best possible basis of local understandings - understandings that take fully into account the human and other particularities of the immediate situation.

Exploratory Practice has been developed as a set of principles which promotes understanding towards teaching/learning issues within the practice instead of prescribing a set of classroom practices (ALLWRIGHT, 2005, p. 353). This is especially possible when it comes to language teaching, since language, in this case, is both the target content and the medium of instruction. (ALLWRIGHT, 2003, p. 11).

2.1.1 - PEPA (Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activity) and PERA (Potentially Exploitable Reflective Activity)

Exploratory Practice highlights the importance of creating opportunities to reflect upon puzzles that emerge from the experiences lived in classroom/workplace through pedagogical activities (MILLER, 2010, p. 3). A pedagogical activity for Exploratory Practice is a familiar activity or strategy that can be adapted and generate reflections, information and puzzles about teachers and students, about their classroom life. Miller and Cunha (2019, p. 590) point out that teachers can be introduced to the notion of PEPAs (Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities) and PERAs (Potentially Exploitable Reflective Activities), thinking about how they can adapt their regular activities so as to explore what goes on in their workplaces. Allwright (2003a) refers to PEPAs and PERAs as 'discursive actions for understanding' since they are slight adaptations made to everyday activities with the intention of promoting reflection and digging for further understanding of puzzles and questions.

Miller and Cunha (2019, p. 589) encourage participants to word the puzzles emerged in the PEPAs through 'why' questions. They explain that this formulation fosters deeper reflection that tries to stay away from the more common 'how-to questions', which normally arise from a problem-solving attitude. Teachers and learners try to comprehend their puzzles based on their own social and institutional knowledge in order to look for understandings rather than try to solve problems. They do so, guided by the 'seven principles for inclusive practitioner research' (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS (2009, p. 260):

1. Focus on *quality of life* as the fundamental issue.
2. Work to *understand* it, before thinking about solving problems.

3. Involve *everybody* as practitioners developing their own understandings.
4. Work to bring people *together* in a common enterprise.
5. Work cooperatively for *mutual* development.
6. Make it a *continuous* enterprise.
7. *Minimise the burden* by integrating work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice.

These principles emphasize the importance of a sense of community among participants. It is not the teacher researching the classroom, it is a collective work for understanding, assuming all participants are practitioners of learning. Allwright and Hanks (2009, p. 2) highlight the importance of the term practitioner to refer to students and teachers, since they want to make the students' role 'as importantly parallel to the role of the people we already happily see as "practitioners" - the teachers.' They present Five Propositions about Learners (2009, p. 7):

1. Learners are unique individuals who learn and develop best in their own idiosyncratic ways.
2. Learners are social beings who learn and develop best in a mutually supportive environment.
3. Learners are capable of taking learning seriously.
4. Learners are capable of independent decision-making.
5. Learners are capable of developing as practitioners of learning.

It is essential that both teachers and students identify with these propositions. This may be challenging, especially in the Brazilian context. Miller and Cunha (2019, p. 589) point out that students and teachers find it difficult to believe in themselves as practitioners of learning. They accept society's mistrust in students' capabilities and in teachers' capacity to act as autonomous professionals.

In this research, a special focus is given to Exploratory Practice as a powerful tool to transform classrooms and other practitioner groups into communities of practice and communities of learning (WENGER, 2010).

2.2 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (CoP)

By definition, according to Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p.4),

Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis(...)These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs.

The coinage of the concept dates back to 1991, with the publication of the book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* by authors Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. The phenomenon it refers to, however, is age-old. It was common as far back as ancient times. Wenger & Snyder (2000) state that:

In classical Greece, for instance, "corporations" of metalworkers, potters, masons, and other craftsmen had both a social purpose (members worshiped the same deities and celebrated holidays together) and a business function (members trained apprentices and spread innovations). In the Middle Ages, guilds played similar roles for artisans throughout Europe.

It is, after all, a familiar phenomenon. Wenger (1998, p. 7), states that if we care to consider our own life from a Community of Practice perspective for a moment, we can all construct a fairly good picture of the CoPs we belong to now, the ones we belonged to in the past and the ones we would like to belong to in the future, either as core members or occasional participants. We tend to easily recognize the communities of practice in which we are core members or the ones which have a large number of members, but some CoPs are small, informal and do not even have a name.

It is important to note that for a community to be considered a community of practice, it needs to meet some criteria. According to Wenger-Traynor (2015), three elements are crucial: the domain, the community and the practice.

1. *The domain* - A community of practice needs to have an identity defined by a shared domain of interest and membership implies a commitment to this domain.

For instance, the fact the members of my group are all teachers at the same school is not enough for it to be considered a community of practice. What makes us a CoP is the domain, in our case, our mutual interest in ethnic and racial issues and our commitment to it.

2. *The community* - Members must be engaged in joint activities and discussions, help each other and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other.

Our *African Readings* project illustrates this sense of commitment well. Our competence in storytelling techniques as well as the content of the stories we would explore was the result of a lot of sharing and generosity. I had never told a story to a group before. The fact one of the members was an expert in storytelling was fundamental for my confidence. Besides, my knowledge about Ghana Culture was a complement to stories other members had to tell. We actually learned a lot from each other throughout the process of preparation for the event.

3. *The practice* - Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. The development of a shared practice may be more or less self-conscious.

This could be noticed in our group considering the periodicity of our meetings and the fact most of the ideas emerged during our talks were put into practice and ended up in projects. A lot was also built during our short interactions in the teachers' room or at lunchtime. These informal talks about work somehow shaped the way we dealt with our students in the school. Many times, these moments helped us tackle some situation, be it in the classroom or involving the school's bureaucracy.

Wenger-Trayner et al (2016) point out that the notion of community of practice cannot be applied to any group. He emphasizes the importance of the domain to set a difference between a simple team and a community of practice. He points out that:

A team is defined by a joint task, something they have to accomplish together. It is a task-driven partnership, whereas a community of practice is a learning partnership related to a domain of practice. Members of a community of practice may engage in the same practice while working on different tasks in different teams.

An analysis of these three key elements, shows that the characteristics of a CoP could be found in our group. We had a domain (ethnic and racial issues), the practice (projects and meetings) and the community element (knowledge sharing).

2.2.1 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE – A SOCIAL THEORY OF LEARNING

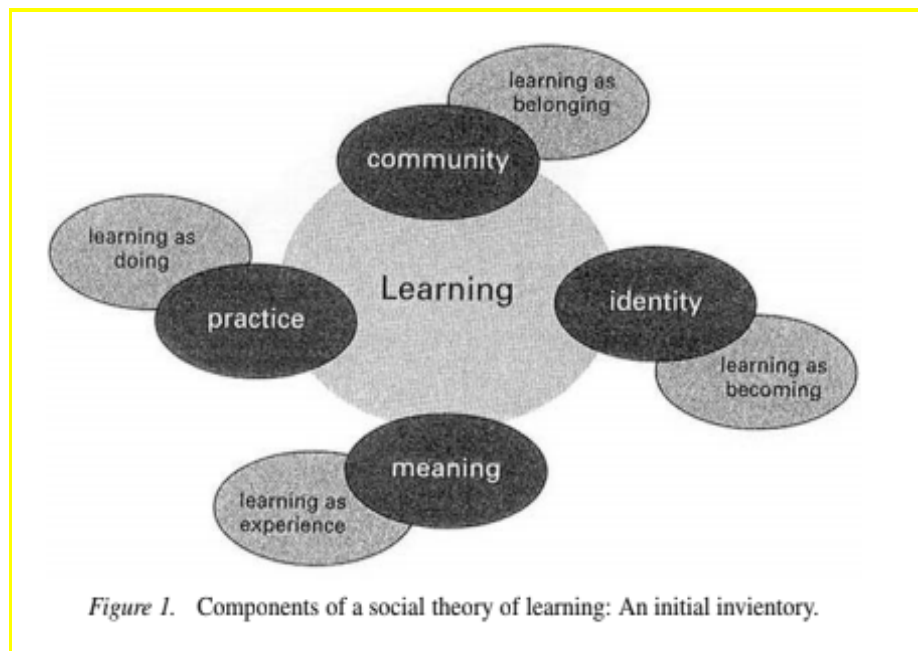
What if we assumed that learning is, in its essence, a fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing?
Wenger, 1998

Wenger (1998, p. 4) presents four assumptions about learning and the nature of knowledge:

- 1) We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning.
- 2) Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises -such as singing in tune, discovering scientific facts, fixing machines, writing poetry, being convivial, growing up as a boy or a girl, and so forth.
- 3) Knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, that is, of active engagement in the world.
- 4) Meaning - our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful - is ultimately what learning is to produce.

The primary focus of Wenger's theory is that learning occurs through social participation, that is, it occurs through active participation in the practices of social communities.

For Wenger, a social theory of learning must integrate some components necessary to characterize social participation as a process of learning and of knowing. These components include meaning, practice, community and identity as can be seen in Figure 0.1 below (1998, p. 5).



These components are interconnected and mutually defining. Wenger emphasizes that if we switch any of the four peripheral components with learning, and place it in the center as the primary focus, the figure would still make sense.

Therefore, the concept of community of practice is a constitutive element of a broader conceptual framework. Learning will occur then as the result of the integration of these components.

One of the five propositions about learners presented by Allwright and Hanks (2009, p. 7) corroborates this. By stating that learners are social beings who learn and develop best in a mutually supportive environment, they shed light on the sense of community necessary for the development of Exploratory Practice.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

This research involved a group of five teachers, aged from 40 to 54 years old, from the same public school in Rio de Janeiro and members of a community of practice for ethnic and racial issues. Although the group members are all teachers from the same school, for this analysis, the focus will be on their agency as my students of English. All of them had a beginner level of English, and most of them had begun and quit English courses in the past. The group members, acting as students, are represented in this research as Gonzalez, Nascimento, Carneiro and Evaristo, in reference to prominent names in the Brazilian Black Movement. No focus on gender was given in this research. They are described as follows:

1. **Gonzalez** - 51 year-old 3rd grade teacher. Seems to like languages. Recently graduated in Spanish from a language school. Enrolled in some English courses years ago but never finished.
2. **Nascimento** - 49 year-old 4th grade teacher. Low confidence in learning English. Somehow convinced it is not possible to learn at an older age. Focused on family and pets, always putting them in first place.
3. **Carneiro** - 54 year-old 5th grade teacher. Tried to learn English years ago, but found the methods unattractive. Shows difficulty with English. Has always postponed studying it.
4. **Evaristo** - 47 year-old Physical Education Teacher. Doctorate student. Focus on reading. Needs it mainly to understand texts. Has started and quit English classes twice.

The project had started with thirty-minute meetings that occurred in person, twice a week, at our lunchtime at school. Little could be done in that context, since we had just a one-hour break. In order to eat lunch, have our meeting and be ready to start the afternoon classes, we needed to hurry, which ended up making us all really tired.

Our quick sessions were based on conversations, curiosities about the English language and simple topics they could practice through short dialogues.

They started feeling the need to have some support materials in order to do some self-study at home. That is when we decided to adopt a coursebook, so they had some exercises to do. They asked for materials in which they could practice reading, listening and writing.

I explained the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) to them in order to set some goals regarding their language skills and show how most language schools apply placement tests. My idea was to show them the skills required in each level. One of them had had more contact with English, which made the others assume that they were at a disadvantage in comparison with this particular student. So, showing the CEFR to them was important to illustrate where they could be placed. In the end, they realized they were all beginners, with different levels of difficulty.

My idea was to link the CEFR to the book choice. After showing some possibilities of coursebooks, they liked The American English File Oxford series, since they would be able to find all listening tracks and exercises online. The coursebook was just a support material, since in class, I usually focused on other tools, such as slide presentations, websites and the like.

After vacation, we were back to school in February - 2020, willing to resume our English project. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, interrupted our plans. It took us some months to figure out how we could adapt to that new context. Although we kept in touch through Whatsapp, mainly to deal with the school's demands, the English classes were not a priority at that moment.

After some months, we were more familiarized with online platforms for virtual meetings and even used some for our weekly chats, mainly about the school, the new format of activities, possibilities of online projects and the like. It seemed the right moment to return to our English class project. We even thought that would help us deal with the challenging time we were all facing. Engaging in something for personal growth, among friends, seemed interesting for all of us back then.

After a meeting to decide the weekday, time, platforms, etc., we all agreed our classes would be on Fridays from 8 to 9:30 pm. The class slides, readings and class recordings would be posted on our virtual classroom platform. It was all set.

We started as planned. At first, things seemed to be going well. Everyone attended the first class and during the week, used the whatsapp group to discuss class topics. Our general feedback was good.

However, in the meetings that followed, we usually had some issues, such as absence, unpunctuality or some student's unwillingness to have class. They showed up to start conversations, to open up about problems, ignoring what we had planned for that day. I started feeling uncomfortable with that situation.

As we were reaching the end of 2020, and therefore facing high demands from our school, a recess was necessary. I imagined that after a break, we would go back renewed and motivated.

Our return was scheduled and confirmed. I intended to develop an Exploratory Practice activity with them, in order to involve everybody in the reflection of our classes. My intention was to restart the project from a different perspective.

To my surprise and disappointment, only one student showed up. Refusing to have class without the others, the student in class suggested a meeting to discuss the project problems. I sent a message to the group opening up about my disappointment, mentioning how that posture was affecting me and other group members. The absent students sent us messages apologizing and justifying their absences. We all agreed on the importance of a meeting to discuss what was going on. It happened a week later.

3.2 A PERA - POTENTIALLY EXPLOITABLE REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

The following activity was a reflective conversation about our project issues, guided by the puzzle *Why is our English Project making no progress?* It occurred in Portuguese, through a virtual meeting platform and involved three participants: me, Carneiro and Evaristo. The meeting started fifteen minutes late due to participants' unpunctuality. It was translated to English and its original version in Portuguese can be found in the appendix.

There was little incidence of turn-taking in our conversation. Our focus was on our views of the project and therefore, most of our talking involved listening to the group members' views. I was the first one to speak and started talking about my expectations and feelings and reminding them of our motivations at the beginning of the project, as shown below:

Me (The teacher)

There was only Gonzalez in class last week and once again, we couldn't have class. We thought this meeting would be a good idea for us to understand what is going on. And then, we talked about the beginning of our project, our very first idea, back then, in the school, when we had those short meetings at lunchtime and how this may have changed when we merged to online sessions. Back then, we had a perspective, a motivation. I don't know if that's the same now, I mean, maybe that format, when we met in person, was more interesting to us. And as time goes by, we tend to get demotivated and worn out, since we just can't move on with our project.

I've never worked in a democratic perspective like this. We always refer to Paulo Freire, but in general, we find it difficult to apply his views in our classes in the school, with our students, since we understand we need to be in a position of authority in order to keep the order in our classes. There's usually an imposed system we have to follow.

I imagined that, as teachers, we would be able to decide everything collectively, and build knowledge together, without the hierarchy we usually adopt in the school.

Today, for instance, is one of those days on which there's absence, unpunctuality, and we have not defined what to do in such situations. Is it a class? Or just a social meeting? What's been happening is that the students who come to attend class, usually refuse to have it without the others, which I see as unfair with them since they committed to be here. But then, I don't feel okay in defining this by myself, in taking the position of a boss here. That's why it's so important for me to listen to you.

Carneiro starts talking

We can't dissociate our meetings from everything that's going on. This somehow has an influence on that. I don't know what each one of us is going through. Some of us barely participated (*Referring to Nascimento*). I don't mean to be disrespectful with your time, your dedication. I respect what you're trying to do.

I feel bad for having started our classes in a very difficult moment of my life. And when I think of it, I realize that at that moment, I shouldn't have committed to something like this. Classes during the week at that moment, no way!

One of the things we need to have in mind is that the activities must be done. We need to be very honest with each other if we really want to go on. The ones who really want it must commit to it.

And there's something else: I think the class format must be changed. You mentioned Paulo Freire and we see how far the dialogue and content are from what we could be focusing on, especially regarding English and our anti-racist perspective about Education. We could be taking different steps, even taking risks, mainly you as a teacher, as a professional. This is something to think about.

I also spent a period without my computer and I can't do anything on my cell phone (studies, course). This whole context... I wake up feeling miserable on some days. The courses and lives can't minimize it anymore. And I realized I need to focus on something. There was also my move to a new place, all the changes, adaptations. And we've been facing times in which we wake up really bad, and nothing seems interesting. We just don't wanna do anything! Now, I'm at a better, quieter moment and I think we should restart changing the approach (class format). As for the ones who confirm but never show up (*Referring to Nascimento*), I don't count on them, because their indecisiveness confuses it all.

I interrupted: That's true. Nascimento always confirms but never shows up.

Carneiro: You, as the teacher, although we'll talk a lot, must be more strict about this. *"Are you in or not? If not, you need to make it clear."*

Another thing is the fact we are at different levels. I don't know to what extent this influences the classes. I feel we're not on the same level, and I feel I'm bothering my colleagues. I know I wasn't studying (dedicating), but I feel I'm different from my colleagues. And our classes represent a moment at which we talk about a lot of unrelated issues. Maybe, it would be good to have a moment, before the English class, to talk about other issues. And then, what I proposed, (discussions involving literary texts or books on ethnic and racial issues), why don't we do something like this in English? Then, we need to think of each one's intentions with these classes. I want to understand. I want to be able to minimally understand the content of a text. I want to read and listen. I want to communicate.

Evaristo starts talking

I didn't want to unschedule our meeting today because I understand Adriana's effort to offer us her time, in these times (pandemic) so we can continue our English classes, but the point is, that I had this other meeting scheduled at the same time and when we're finished here, I'll return to this other meeting.

Carneiro interrupted: Did you listen to all I said?

I listened to all you said. I had the camera off for some time but I could hear all that was said.

Well, about the fact we are at different levels, as mentioned before, I'd say there are also different needs. I see all we do as a way of strengthening our political group in the school, but our needs are actually really different.

The fact I knew the content of the classes, even minimally, made me feel unmotivated to do the tasks in some moments. I thought that doing it with the group or not, would not make any difference. At the same time, not being there, made me

lose track of the class rhythm. On the other hand, some participants were really engaged, participated in all that was proposed, and were never absent. (Referring to Gonzalez)

I interrupted: Yeah, I'm even worried about today's absence. At the end of this meeting, I'll make contact to check what happened.

Evaristo: Another point is that our relations are based on affection. We want to see each other, talk to each other, have drinks together and that ended up affecting it a lot. A class that could last 50 min, which is enough, ended up lasting much more and losing focus.

English, for me, is important. I'm about to take part in a selection process that will require English and I have difficulty with reading.

As for me, whatever is decided by the group, whatever decision Adriana makes, will be okay, but I understand we need to be truly committed in order to make it work.

Me: You mentioned our relationship is based on affection, and when I think about affect and learning, well, I just can't dissociate these two things. This got really clear to me when I started studying Spanish...

Carneiro interrupted: You mentioned Spanish, it's interesting, I've always been better at Spanish. Whenever I had a test to do and I could choose between English and Spanish, I chose Spanish and was usually successful. I don't know why I didn't focus on this, which is much easier for me. I've always run away from English.

Another point is that Monday is a terrible day for me. If we are really going to restart, I suggest another weekday and an earlier time so it's less tiring. Besides, the classes must start and finish on time.

The meeting lasted 45 minutes. Considering the absence of Gonzalez and Nascimento, in order to organize the topics that emerged in the conversation, I decided to take notes and list the topics to make it easier for the absent group

members to get updated on our discussions. The list, posted on our WhatsApp group, is shown below:

1. The Covid-19 Pandemic (General Emotional State);
2. Change of day and time (Monday, 8 pm was mentioned as not productive);
3. Class Format (Approach/Methodology) - Use texts on ethnic and racial issues;
4. Different levels of English;
5. Different level of difficulty with English;
6. Lack of self-commitment;
7. Different motivations;
8. Technology restrictions (computer vs cell phone);
9. Lack of strictness on the teacher's part.
10. Lack of class focus due to our level of intimacy.

Around a month after our conversation, I prepared a form, which was responded to by the 4 students. This form was based on the conversation, and therefore influenced my analysis, which only occurred months later. I translated the form questions and answers and the original version in Portuguese can be found in the appendix as well. The information collected from the form, as well as our conversations, would influence our actions from that moment on.

3.3 FORM WITH GROUP MEMBERS' ANSWERS

1. Which weekday is better for the classes: Tuesday or Thursday?			
Nascimento - Thursday	Gonzalez - Tuesday	Carneiro -Tuesday	Evaristo - Thursday
2. Which time is better: 6 or 7 pm?			
Nascimento - 7 pm	Gonzalez - 7 pm	Carneiro - 7 pm	Evaristo - 7 pm
3. What's your main goal (motivation) to learn English?			
<p>Nascimento- Communication. I intend to travel abroad in the future. I dream about it.</p> <p>Gonzalez - Communication</p> <p>Carneiro - Read and understand texts and everyday conversation.</p> <p>Evaristo - Reading</p>			
4. What is indispensable in English classes? Comments and suggestions			
<p>Nascimento- Vocabulary, simple and objective use of the language (Practical English)</p> <p>Gonzalez - Conversation</p> <p>Carneiro - Dynamism and Contextualization</p> <p>Evaristo - Reading (Text comprehension)</p>			
<p>5. What do you think about the relationship between teacher and students adopted for the classes?</p> <p><i>a. Adequate. It is important to decide course elements collectively in a democratic way.</i></p> <p><i>b. Too democratic. The teacher should be more strict.</i></p>			
Nascimento - b	Gonzalez - a	Carneiro - a	Evaristo - a
6. Justify your previous answer:			
<p>Nascimento - If we are too free, we don't take it too seriously (I refer to myself) lol, and then the course never makes progress.</p> <p>Gonzalez - Deciding collectively leads to confidence and commitment.</p> <p>Carneiro - Yes, because the commitment is collective.</p> <p>Evaristo - Choices must be made collectively.</p>			
7. From 0 to 5, how committed do you believe you'll be in this new phase of our course?			
Nascimento - 4	Gonzalez - 5	Carneiro - 5	Evaristo - 4

4. REFLECTIONS

4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

An attentive look at our conversation, and also the students' answers to the form, might provide some understandings to the puzzle "Why is our English project making no progress?". I decided to analyze four topics which I considered the most relevant. They were: level of self-commitment to the project; participants' beliefs about their roles - teacher versus student attitudes; different needs and levels of English and beliefs about what an ideal English class should be like.

Level of self-commitment to the project

"One of the things we need to have in mind is that the activities must be done. We need to be very honest with each other if we really want to go on. The ones who really want it must commit to it." **Carneiro**

"(...)but I understand we need to be truly committed in order to make it work." **Evaristo**

The prevalence of intensifiers (very, really and truly), as well as modality (must and need to) makes it clear that both Carneiro and Evaristo recognize the importance of commitment so the project can make progress. Carneiro's lines, in particular, indicate that although some members recognize the importance of self-commitment, they may not be acting accordingly.

The students' answers to the form, corroborate their beliefs in the importance of self-commitment for the success of the project. When asked about it, they all showed willingness to get more committed to it.

Participants' roles - The teacher X The students' issue

"I imagined that, as teachers, we would be able to decide everything collectively, and build knowledge together, without the hierarchy we usually adopt in

the school. (...) But then, I don't feel okay in defining this by myself, in taking the position of a boss here. That's why it's so important for me to listen to you." **Me**

"You, as the teacher, although we'll talk a lot, must be more strict about this."

Carneiro

"As for me, whatever is decided by the group, whatever decision Adriana makes, will be okay." **Evaristo**

On analyzing these lines, it seems to me that group members have particular beliefs about the role of teachers and students in the classes. On saying we usually adopt a hierarchy at school, I see I tend to attribute the idea of authority to teachers, even using the word "boss" to refer to it. When Carneiro says that "as the teacher, I must be more strict" and Evaristo says "whatever decision Adriana makes will be okay", it seems that, although decisions are supposed to be made collectively, they expect me to act as the authority of the class.

On the other hand, they both showed a preference for deciding class issues collectively, when responding to the form.

Different needs and levels of English

"I feel we're not on the same level, and I feel I'm bothering my colleagues. I know I wasn't studying (dedicating), but I feel I'm different from my colleagues."

Carneiro

"The fact I knew the content of the classes, even minimally, made me feel unmotivated to do the tasks in some moments. I thought that doing it with the group or not, would not make any difference." **Evaristo**

"Well, about the fact we are at different levels, as mentioned before, I'd say there are also different needs". **Evaristo**

The fact that the students had different needs, as mentioned by Evaristo, seemed to have a certain impact on their level of commitment. Evaristo expected a focus on ESP in order to be prepared for Doctorate, whereas the others expected a focus on general English. The form represented an interesting moment for them to revisit their goals and was important to reflect upon our classes, activities and approach. Our reaction to those issues was also an interesting source of reflection.

The ones facing more difficulty felt intimidated and the ones who were okay with the classes got isolated. I expected them to get involved in group study and autonomously find their way of helping each other. It seemed they expected learning to happen only in our meetings, since they even needed me to guide them on what to do.

Beliefs about what an ideal English class should be like

“Is it a class? Or just a social meeting?” **Me**

“I think the class format must be changed. You mentioned Paulo Freire and we see how far the dialogue and content are from what we could be focusing on, especially regarding English and our anti-racist perspective about Education. We could be taking different steps, even taking risks, mainly you as a teacher, as a professional. This is something to think about.” **Carneiro** *“A class that could last 50 min, which is enough, ended up lasting much more and losing focus.”* **Evaristo**

It seems that the group members have particular beliefs about what an ideal English class should look like. My question: “Is it a class or just a social meeting?”, indicates my belief that my being there involved teaching. In my mind, that seems to be what is expected from me as a teacher.

By saying that 50 minutes represent enough time for a class if we separate class time from side talks, Evaristo highlights the assumption of learning that Wenger (1998, p. 3) attributes to our institutions, in which learning is seen as an individual process, that has a beginning to an end, that is best separated from the rest of our activities, and that is the result of teaching. Wenger contrasts that with the assumption that learning is the result of participation in social communities.

My reference to Paulo Freire at the beginning of the conversation was about the democratic class Freire defended in which both students and teachers would have a voice. I was talking about deciding things collectively, with freedom, something I do not see at the school, even among those teachers who claim to act according to Freire’s pedagogy.

Therefore, an analysis of my lines and Carneiro's lines shows we meant different things when we mentioned Paulo Freire. I meant democratic education and Carneiro referred to more critical classes involving discussions on ethnic and racial issues through texts in English.

As a teacher to different age groups and levels, I find it particularly difficult to engage in discussions at a beginner level of the language. Carneiro seems to believe this is possible, though. This can be noticed in the following lines. *"We see how far the dialogue and content are from what we could be focusing on, especially regarding English and our anti-racist perspective about Education. We could be taking different steps, even taking risks, mainly you as a teacher, as a professional."*

Carneiro's beliefs about an ideal English class seem to differ from Evaristo's. On responding to the form, Evaristo mentioned reading as indispensable in the English classes, in contrast with Carneiro who mentioned dynamism and contextualization. This may be explained by analyzing their answers about class goals. Whereas Carneiro's focus is on communication, Evaristo seems to be more interested in reading and text comprehension.

4.2 REFLECTIONS UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPLORATORY PRACTICE

My intention with the meeting was to work on the puzzle “Why is our English Project making no progress?” and reflect on our issues collectively. Analyzing it now, in the light of Exploratory Practice principles, I realize that maybe, the need for a solution was stronger in me than the need for reflection.

An analysis of Exploratory Practice seven principles for inclusive practitioner work, mainly, principles 3 - involve everybody; 4 - work to bring people together and 5 - work for mutual development (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS 2009, p.260), made me, in a first moment, think of our group English classes as the perfect context to develop E.P.

When we started facing absence and unpunctuality issues, I understood I needed to wait for the right moment to try to develop an E.P activity. This perfect moment never occurred. And I don't know why it was so important for me to have everything perfectly set, which led me to other puzzles and made me reflect on the meaning of a “perfect classroom” for me.

One of the E.P principles I tried to keep in mind is exactly the one about integrating work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS 2009, p. 260). A lesson I have learned in this process is: keep it simple. It's not about developing wonderful and impressive activities in perfect classrooms. It's about reality, the real classroom, the quality of life lived in a real classroom.

The first principle of E.P, “quality of life”, was for a long time a term misunderstood by me. Miller and Cunha (2019) argue about the importance of dissociating the term ‘quality of life’ from the marketing concept of it which is traditionally associated with good quality. According to them, it has been necessary to deconstruct ‘the quality of classroom life’ as ‘the nature of the life that we lead in classrooms’, which can, of course, be ‘good’, ‘less good’ or ‘bad’.

Although I was quite familiar with this E.P principle, when it was time to put it into practice in my classroom, the fact that the quality of our classroom life was definitely not good, worked as a sort of unconscious obstacle to me.

When we started our group, our discussions and projects involving ethnic and racial issues occurred naturally since all members had reasonable knowledge on those topics. It was easier for us to see one another as partners. The English Project

ended up exposing some of our beliefs, especially regarding our roles as students and teachers. The belief that it was my responsibility, as the teacher of the group, to impose rules and follow a certain style of teaching was evident throughout the conversation.

On listing some of the challenges faced by teachers trying to develop Exploratory Practice, Miller and Cunha (2019, p.589) mention the issue of power as one of them:

Due to personal traits or contextual professional circumstances, some teachers appear to resist the developmental aspect of their learners' and of their own learning. Also, the issue of power emerges so strongly here that Freire's (1970) claim to learn *from* or *with* the learner still seems to be an enormous challenge for many teachers.

The fact we are all teachers, something I believed would be positive, turned out to affect our perceptions of our role as members of the community. When confronted with our weaknesses, the group lost track of the way. The belief that teachers cannot make mistakes, that teachers are the owners of absolute knowledge in addition to some group members' difficulty with the language, intensified the problems.

Analyzing it now, I see I could have led the activity in a different way, for instance, applying the seventh principle of EP - *Minimise the burden by integrating work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice*. (ALLWRIGHT AND HANKS (2009, p. 260). That conversation could have happened as part of a class and not as an extra activity. For instance, why not involve all of us in a reflection through puzzles? I even came up with some during the conversation but the level of anxiety was so high that I could not think of an activity and involve them. There was no integration, no application of principle 7.

Working this way would certainly have had another impact on us, since we would have been engaged in reflections instead of just listening to what each other had to say. We could have practiced the interrogative form and that summary of topics could have been the result of a collaborative work - there were many possibilities. I just could not see it as a PEPA, probably due to my high level of anxiety and tiredness.

4.3 ARE WE A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE?

One of the gifts I can attribute to Exploratory Practice is what I have internalized as a kind of ode to reflection. Learners are thinkers in essence, one might say. But how many times have we asked ourselves why we think the way we do? The point is I was usually led to think of solutions to problems, generally not produced by me. Sometimes I was the problem but simply didn't know. I automatically worked on solutions to problems when I sometimes didn't even understand them. Most times, I just danced the dance, the way it was introduced to me.

Since I started working on this research, I have asked myself "why" many times. My first personal "why" was about this group I belong to. "Why am I a member of it? Why do I care about our interactions?" These reflective moments were especially important when I needed to frame it as a community of practice. Throughout the research, I convinced myself more than once that we had never been a community. More than once, as well, the idea of us as a community seemed reasonable. I just couldn't figure out our current configuration.

Wenger et al (2014 p. 111) emphasize the living aspect of CoPs and how they undergo several changes over the course of their life. Their practice, relationships and focus tend to change, after all, they're made of people. Maybe, at first, what we came to have together was actually a CoP, that might not have survived the Covid-19 pandemic. Talking about the sustainability of Communities of Practice, Wenger et al (2014 p. 109) mention that the death of a community of practice is just as natural as its birth. Members can suddenly develop different interests, the practices of the community can become commonplace, many things can happen. They provide examples of how some communities came to an end. The one that follows fits perfectly what may have happened to my group.

Communities also die by turning into a social club. A once-powerful community of IT managers became isolated from emerging ideas and influence in the organization. The core group had developed strong personal connections and continued to meet, but their focus slowly shifted from IT issues to organizational ones, and then to their personal lives. Although they felt well connected to each other, they lost their sense of stewarding a practice. (2014, p. 109)

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly affected us professionally and personally.

One of the main negative effects of it was the transformation of the educational model we were used to. Once, in constant contact with students, which somehow helped us survive and think of ideas and strategies, we were then in our homes, trying to learn new ways together. Just as it happened to the IT managers, mentioned previously, we no longer talked about projects related to our domain. We were just trying to survive in a new context of uncertainty. Our focus shifted from ethnic and racial issues to discussions about the several spreadsheets we had to create and fill out, virtual meeting platforms we had no idea of, and preparation of classes that did not cater to our students' needs.

In this sense, I'd say a lot was shared and learned in our group. There was no formal teaching taking place, and a lot of incidental learning occurred through our participation as members of this group. We shared the little knowledge we had about things and developed our own way of doing things.

That mindset influenced me a lot when I suggested merging our English class project to an online format. We could learn more about those platforms, technological devices and the like. Together, we would test them, see what could be applied to our students and all that while we learned English. This just seemed a positive idea when it first came out. They all agreed and looked excited about it.

Due to the circumstances, the idea of developing Exploratory Practice with them seemed simple at first. We were teachers working together, generating mutual learning. What could go wrong?

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this research paper, I share my experience with a group of teachers, members of a community of practice and the challenges we faced in our attempt to engage in an English course, in which I acted as their English teacher. I analyzed one of our conversations and their answers to a form based on it, in the light of Exploratory Practice principles. I could reflect upon the problems that emerged in the English course as well as my difficulties in developing Exploratory Practice with them.

The research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, whose effects had a great influence on our interactions, especially professionally. Isolation, fear, and high demands from our jobs as teachers were some of the issues we experienced during these difficult times.

This experience has made me deepen my knowledge on communities of practice and its role as a kind of social theory of learning. Wenger (1998) points out that our participation in communities of practice shapes us, our practice and our interpretation of our actions. I can see the truth in these words, when I reflect upon my agency in the various communities of practice I have been a member of in the past, and then compare it to my agency in the community this research is about. I also noticed that even in the same community, we can assume different attitudes. In this particular community, my agency as a participant in ethnic and racial issues was different from the one I assumed as their English teacher. I could notice the same change in attitude in the other group participants.

The inclusive perspective of practitioner research proposed by Exploratory Practice will also follow me in my teaching/learning practice from now on. My experience trying to develop it was crucial to understand how learning in community occurs. It is not something that can happen on the individual level - it is pure collective work. I am still in the process of elaborating a researcher identity and this experience is part of my learning process and just one out of the many to come.

This research has also made me reflect upon my own teacher identity. The issue of power that emerged in the conversation with the group, has shed light to some of my beliefs about education and the roles of teachers and students. I could see that, although my heart makes me seek a progressive view of education, I may still be attached to some traditions. This seemed to be true about the other members

of my group as well. We were all confronted with our beliefs and a lot of reflection could emerge from that. Reflecting to understand why we have such beliefs about what we do and about who we are was an important experience. I could analyze learning from a different perspective, not necessarily as the result of teaching, rather, as the result of interaction and participation in social communities.

Allwright (2003a, p. 137) points out that Exploratory Practice is 'work in progress' and 'must always remain in the process of development, as we learn from the different circumstances in which the framework is invoked'. This experience has sparked in me the desire to continue my 'work for understanding'.

Classrooms are living spaces, made up of human beings and we are always in transformation. I hope other learners (teachers and students) can benefit from Exploratory Practice and live better lives in their classrooms, understanding the importance and the joy of working together collectively.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE CONVERSATION

Adriana:

Gonzalez e eu começamos a conversar no encontro passado, em que mais uma vez, não conseguimos fazer a aula, e surgiu a ideia de nos reunirmos para tentar entender o que tá acontecendo.

E daí, a gente falou sobre o começo de tudo, quando tínhamos nossos encontros breves na escola e sobre a mudança pro formato online, enfim, a expectativa era que com um maior tempo de aula, nós pudéssemos seguir de fato um cronograma de aula e tornar a coisa mais regular. E daí, lá atrás, a gente tava com uma cabeça. Eu não sei como tá isso hoje. Tipo assim, de repente, lá atrás, a gente tava a fim, num formato que interessava mais e hoje já não sei. E daí, à medida que o tempo vai avançando, vai desgastando, porque a gente não consegue avançar.

Como eu conversei com Gonzalez, eu nunca trabalhei nessa perspectiva democrática. A gente fala do Paulo Freire, mas tem dificuldade em trabalhar nessa perspectiva na escola. A gente trabalha numa perspectiva, em que a gente tem que colocar ordem, se não a coisa não anda. E daí, com as crianças, a gente se coloca em posição de autoridade em relação aos alunos. Geralmente, há um sistema imposto, que a gente segue. E daí, no nosso caso, o fato de sermos professores, me fez pensar que seria legal decidir tudo coletivamente, construir o conhecimento juntos, sem a hierarquia que geralmente colocamos em sala.

Mas daí, por exemplo, hoje, estamos num cenário em que não temos todos os colegas aqui e de fato, não definimos o que faríamos numa situação assim. É uma aula? Ou um encontro para assuntos variados? O que tem acontecido é que geralmente os alunos que se programam para aparecer, como é o caso de Gonzalez, geralmente, se recusam a fazer a aula sem que os demais estejam presentes, o que a meu ver, não é justo. Mas eu também não me sinto à vontade para assumir o controle e definir isso. Por isso, preciso tanto ouvir vocês.

Carneiro inicia sua fala

A gente não pode dissociar os nossos encontros de tudo que tá acontecendo. Isso tem um quê de influência. Eu não sei como tá a vida de cada um. O que os demais estão vivenciando. Nascimento praticamente não participou...Eu não quero ser desrespeitosa com seu tempo, com a sua dedicação. Eu respeito o que você tá tentando fazer.

Eu particularmente me sinto mal por ter começado as aulas num momento muito difícil da minha vida. Pensando bem, naquele momento, eu nem poderia ter me comprometido com algo assim. Sem chances de fazer aulas durante a semana.

Uma das coisas que a gente precisa pensar é que as atividades precisam ser feitas. Precisamos ser muito sinceros um com o outro se quisermos realmente continuar. Quem estiver realmente disposto a continuar, precisa se comprometer.

Eu penso que o formato precisa ser modificado. Você tocou em Paulo Freire e vemos como o diálogo e o conteúdo estão distantes do que a gente poderia se debruçar, se tratando de inglês então e com a nossa perspectiva de educação antirracista e tal. Quando a gente podia estar aí dando uns passos diferentes, até se arriscando, inclusive pra você como professora e profissional. Isso aí é algo pra se pensar.

Eu também fiquei sem computador. Não consigo fazer nada no celular. Esse contexto todo. Tem dia que eu acordo mal. Os cursos não dão mais conta disso, nem as lives. Eu percebi também que eu preciso centrar. Houve a mudança de casa, tudo. E a gente tá vivendo um momento também (pandemia), em que tem dia que a gente acorda mal e não quer fazer nada.

Agora, eu estou num bom momento (mais calmo) e acho que a gente deveria recomeçar mudando a proposta.

Eu particularmente, já falei isso com Nascimento. Eu não conto com Nascimento. Diz que tá, mas não tá, e daí, confunde.

Adriana: É, Nascimento sempre confirma presença, mas não vem.

Você que é a professora, embora a gente vá dialogar bastante, precisa ter uma fala um pouco mais dura nesse sentido. Vai ficar ou não vai? Se ficar, precisa se posicionar.

Outra coisa também é o fato de nós estarmos em níveis diferentes de inglês. Eu não sei o quanto isso interfere. Eu sinto que a gente não tá igual, então eu sinto que às vezes eu estou atrapalhando os colegas. Eu sei que eu também não tava estudando, mas sinto que sou diferente dos colegas.

E também é um espaço, na aula de inglês em que a gente fica falando sobre várias outras coisas. Talvez fosse bom, antes da aula de inglês, a gente ter um momento para conversar sobre outros assuntos.

Daí a proposta de discussão do texto literário (Livros na temática étnico-racial), por que não fazer algo assim em inglês? Daí a gente precisa pensar o que cada um quer do inglês. Eu quero entender. Eu quero pegar um texto e conseguir entender o que tá sendo falado ali minimamente. Ler e ouvir, me comunicar.

Evaristo inicia a sua fala

Eu não quis desmarcar nossa reunião hoje porque eu entendo todo esse movimento que a Adriana fez de dispor de um tempo dela pra estar com a gente,

nesse período, pra gente continuar fazendo o nosso inglês, mas quando eu sair dessa outra reunião, já preciso voltar pra essa outra.

Sobre isso que Carneiro falou, além da questão dos tempos (níveis) diferentes, tem também a questão das necessidades diferentes. Eu vejo tudo que a gente faz como fortalecimento de um grupo político dentro da escola, mas nós realmente temos necessidades muito diferentes. O fato de eu já ter um conhecimento mesmo que mínimo sobre o que estava sendo tratado, me desmotivava em alguns momentos para fazer as tarefas. Eu pensava que não faria diferença não fazer com a turma. Ao mesmo tempo, não estar ali, me fez perder o ritmo da turma. Em contrapartida, Gonzalez é bem mais caxias, faz tudo, participa de tudo, não sei nem porque não tá aqui hoje.

Adriana: É, eu tô até preocupada, vou ligar pra ver o que houve.

Outro ponto é que as nossas relações são cercadas por afeto. E a gente quer se ver, se falar, beber junto, o que acabou afetando muito. Uma aula que podia ser feita em 50 min, o que já é suficiente, acabava levando muito mais e se perdendo. Esse inglês pra mim é importante. Eu vou passar por um processo agora que eu vou precisar do inglês e eu tenho dificuldade com leitura.

Pra mim, tá okay o que o grupo decidir, o que Adriana decidir, mas eu entendo que precisamos muito do compromisso pra conseguir ir em frente.

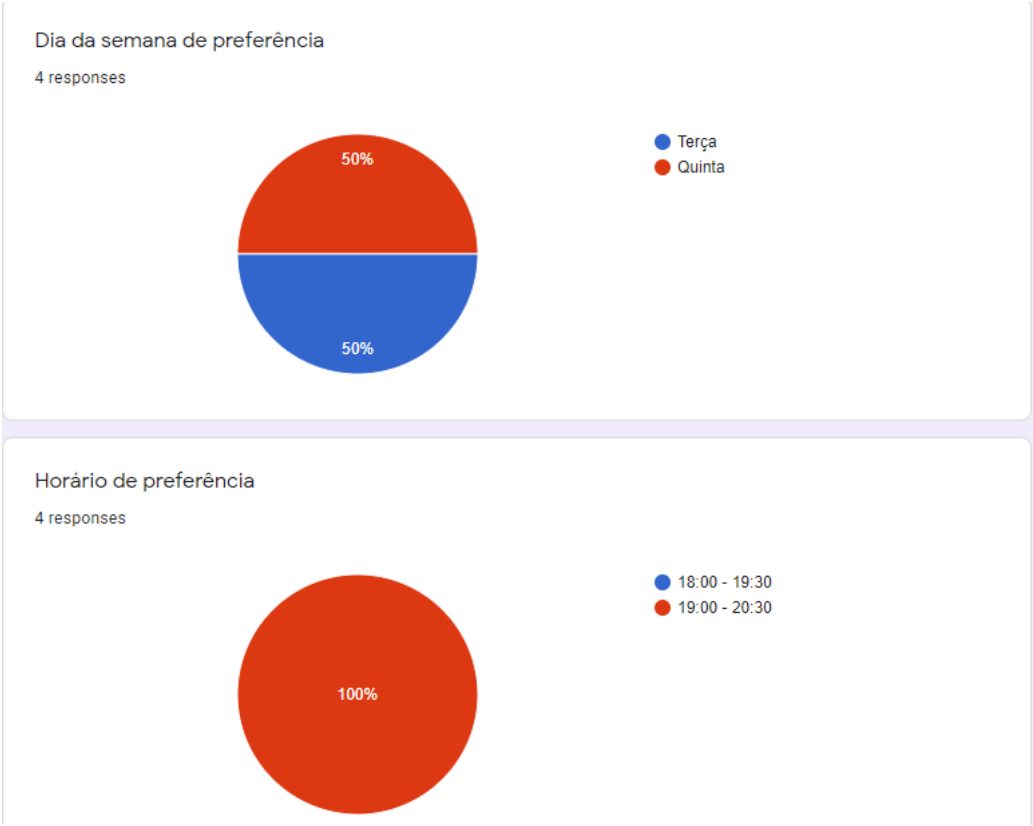
Adriana: Quando a gente pensa em afeto e aprendizagem, pegando o gancho nisso que Evaristo falou, eu não consigo separar as coisas. E daí, eu fico pensando no quanto isso pesou quando eu comecei a estudar espanhol, por exemplo.

Carneiro: Engraçado, eu sempre fui melhor em espanhol. Toda vez que vou fazer uma prova em que posso escolher entre inglês e espanhol, escolho espanhol e geralmente me dou bem. Não sei porque não foquei nisso, que é bem mais fácil pra mim.

7.2 ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE LIST OF TOPICS

1. Contexto de pandemia (Covid- 19) (Estado emocional dos participantes);
2. Problemas com o dia da semana e horário previamente definidos;
3. Formato das aulas (Metodologia) - Usar textos na temática étnico-racial;
4. Diferentes níveis de inglês;
5. Diferentes níveis de dificuldade com a língua inglesa;
6. Falta de comprometimento dos participantes;
7. Diferentes motivações;
8. Restrições tecnológicas (Estudar pelo computador ou celular);
9. Ausência de uma postura mais incisiva por parte da professora;
10. Falta de foco devido ao nível de intimidade entre os participantes.

7.3 ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE FORM WITH GROUP MEMBERS' ANSWERS



Qual o seu principal objetivo (motivação) para aprender inglês?

4 responses

Me comunicar, durante uma viagem ao exterior, que pretendo fazer um dia 😊 sonho...

Comunicação

Ler e compreender textos e falas cotidianas

leitura

O que não pode faltar nas aulas de inglês? Sugestões e comentários:

4 responses

vocábulos, voltados para um inglês mais simples e objetivo.

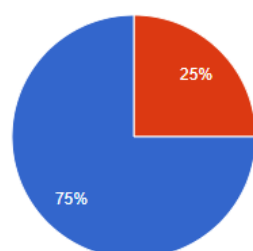
Conversação

Que seja dinâmica e contextualizada

leitura de texto

O que você acha do modelo relacional adotado no curso?

4 responses



- Adequado. Acho válido decidir os elementos do curso de forma coletiva e democrática.
- Democrático demais. Poderia haver mais rigidez por parte da professora.

Justifique sua resposta anterior

4 responses

Se der muita liberdade, ficamos na libertinagem (falo por mim) kkk, e o curso não sai do projeto.

Decidir coletivamente gera confiança e comprometimento.

Sim, porque o comprometimento é coletivo.

as escolhas devem ser coletivas