STUDENT TRAINING FOR PROMOTING COLLABORATIVE AGENCY: 
THE MONITORING ACTIVITIES 

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at understanding how student training contributes to the success and sustainability of a school intervention project and how collaborative agency emerges from that process among students and teachers. All activities developed in the intervention were based on Cultural Historical Activity Theory and on the Critical-Collaborative Research. The data from meetings, classes and questionnaires with the students were analyzed considering discursive aspects of the turns in order to understand how the students collaborate for the research design and to the sustainability of the intervention. Our results suggest that by participating in all phases of the intervention (designing, implementing and evaluating), the students tend to collaborate more with each other and with the teachers, and also have the possibility to go beyond what was established by the initial intervention objectives.

Keywords: collaborative agency, secondary education, critical-collaboration, monitoring activities

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, much work has been dedicated to continuous teacher training, and also on how to implement intervention projects on the different levels of basic education in Brazil (Liberali, 2009; Magalhães, 2011; Ninin, 2013). Regarding the continuous teacher training, there is a growing demand for post-graduation courses, and also training for the teachers inside the schools. The training can be as master classes, workshops, and also training for implementing intervention projects to be used with the students. Besides the contextual needs, that is, specific
problems schools have to deal with, there is also pressure from the government to implement new educational programs, which can be in the municipal, state or federal levels.

However, most of the educational programs or intervention projects imposed by the Ministry of Education (MEC) or Secretariats of Education, do not consider an important matter: how to train students for implementing new programs or interventions at schools. According to Freire (2011), real changes at schools are only possible if the management team and the teachers also consider the students as subjects, and not as patients. Thus, the changes at schools are more likely to happen if students are also considered during the development and implementation of an intervention, as well as in its evaluation.

Considering the students as subjects, we discuss in this article two questions: a) how student training contributes to the sustainability of a school intervention project, and b) how the student training enables the emergence of collaborative agency among students and teachers.

For doing so, we present in this article how the students were trained for an intervention project which used monitoring activities in the classroom. The monitoring activities intervention project, which will be described latter in this article, was developed as an attempt to minimize the unevenness of knowledge among the students, so the teacher could work the curricular content in a more effective way. It is also important to highlight that all phases of the intervention were developed under a critical-collaborative perspective, that is, all stakeholders can contribute to the development, implementation and sustainability of the activities.

Considering monitoring activities in school contexts we come up with two distinct models: the first, widely used in college and university contexts in Brazil, works with students from the subsequent school year to help students with difficulties on a specific topic, and the meetings take place usually on a different time of the regular classes; the second, which is the focus of this study, works with students with a higher knowledge of a given topic collaborating with their colleagues during the activities proposed by the teacher, inside classroom (Cunha Jr., 2009; Faria, 2010). This second model presents advantages on its organization over the first, since there are students from rural areas who need transportation to go from school to home, and also the lack of available rooms for developing those activities. In the second model, all the students are able to participate.
During the monitoring activities, as proposed by this article, collaboration among the participants plays a central role. As suggested by Magalhães (1998), the participants create collaborative spaces by using language, enabling a critical reflection on a given activity. However, collaboration itself is not enough for the success of an intervention: it is necessary that the participants become agents in the process. According to Freire (2014a), by becoming subjects the students are able to reconstruct the activities and to understand their role inside the community, so they can pursue a common shared object.

Combining the collaborative perspective with agency, we propose in this article the concept of collaborative agency, which will be explored in the following section. Thus, in order to have a real transformation of a context it is necessary that the participants become subjects, that is, agents, and by becoming agents they are able to transpose the initial aims of an activity to other contexts.

All the activities developed on the monitoring project were based on the Cultural Historical Activity Theory – CHAT (Engeström, 1987; Leontiev, 1978; Vygotsky, 1997), and based on the Critical-Collaborative Research – CCR (Liberali, 2009; Magalhães, 2011). The use of CHAT and CCR enable the participants to act and reflect critically upon their activities and decisions during all phases of the intervention, so they also become co-authors of the project.

In the following sections we will present the theoretical framework, expanding the concept of collaborative agency. We will also present the research context and the methodology used for analyzing the data. Finally, we present our findings and discussions about the student training process for the development, implementation and sustainability of the monitoring project.

**SHARING MEANINGS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLABORATIVE AGENCY**

As mentioned on the introduction of this article, schools would benefit a lot from considering the students as part of the training preceding an intervention at schools. However, it is not enough to be considered as part of the process: it is also important to give them autonomy and responsibility for the activities of a given project, so they can have the possibility to become collaborative agents in the process of construction of the activities.
The collaborative process of student training happens by sharing meanings, as proposed by Vygotsky (1997). During the training meetings, the students present their senses, that is, the concepts they have about the monitoring activities, and by discussing with the colleagues and the mediators, new shared meanings emerge. Thus, new meanings are shared and the initial senses of the students are transformed. According to Vygotsky, the meaning of a word is the sum of the psychological events that a word rises on consciousness, being a dynamic process, acquiring meaning in the context it emerges (Vygotsky, 1997). Through the shared meaning construction, the students are able to establish new concepts and rules for the activity (Engeström, 1987). In that process of meaning transformation, the students have the possibility of becoming agents in the activity.

However, agency itself is not enough for the success of an intervention. We need to go beyond the definition of agency as the power the subject has to choose what happens next (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). Many authors have addressed how the students become agents on the teaching-learning process (Gutstein, 2007; Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012; Pillay, 2015), but the main focus of such discussions is on agency as a way of improving academic performance or the engagement of the students during the school activities (Bahou, 2012; Goodman & Eren, 2013; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). In those discussions, the concept of agency is limited to the actions of an individual subject, and do not consider the influence of others on an activity.

When considering the monitoring project, it is important that all students become agents. Thus, we propose the concept of collaborative agency, which derives from the concept of transformative agency (Engeström, Sannino, & Virkkunen, 2014; Virkkunen, 2006) and from the concept of togetherness (Van Oers & Hännikäinen, 2001). The transformative agency is the capacity the subject has to act in order to transform a given context; togetherness is the ability the subjects have to organize themselves, even for a short period, in small groups while having a common shared object.

In that extent, the emergence of collaborative agency is first dependent on the individual agency. After becoming an agent, the subject works together with a group of people, who are also agents, in order to pursue an object and to transpose the results obtained to other contexts. Therefore, collaborative agency does not only imply acting consciously in relation to an activity, but acting consciously together with the colleagues, so they construct a collaborative process,
being also responsible for the success or failures of the intervention. In the monitoring project, by becoming collaborative agents, the monitor students share with the teachers the teaching-learning activities, being also responsible for the success or failure of the colleagues.

In order to have the possibility of becoming collaborative agents in the monitoring activities, the student training should take place under a collaborative perspective. By collaborating with each other, the students emphasize the construction of a process, which by its turn aims a product; differently from a cooperative process, in which every subject performs a task and after joining the different parts they have a final product.

In order to have the collaborative process (and not cooperative), the monitoring project is also based on the Critical-Collaborative Research (Liberali, 2009; Magalhães, 2011). Under this perspective, the transformations are possible when all the stakeholders of an activity are involved. For the monitoring project, first the management team was involved and trained, then the teachers and finally the students. All the people involved had a previous training and also collaborated for the research design before the activities with the monitoring groups started. This is also an important feature of CCR: there is no imposition of rules or norms for an activity, they are constructed together by all the participants.

RESEARCH SETTING

The monitoring project

The monitoring project was developed at Escola Estadual Cônego José Eugênio de Faria, from now on School Cônego. School Cônego is located in Cachoeira de Minas, a small city in the south of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and is the only secondary education school in town. The school is responsible for providing education for students from the urban and rural areas of the city, presenting a great heterogeneity of contexts among the students.

One of the biggest problems faced by that school is the unevenness of knowledge of students. Although it is a problem faced in other educational levels, it gets worse in the secondary education (Cunha Jr., 2009). In an attempt to minimize that problem, we proposed to the school principal the development and implementation of the monitoring project, who immediately allowed us to present the initial ideas with the teachers, so they could also collaborate for the development phase. During the first six months, the teachers participated on the development of
the project. Following that process of teacher training, we started the training with the students. The training process of the students took place during the breaks between classes, so they would not miss a class or go to school in another time to attend to the meetings.

The monitoring activities consist of having a monitor student working with a group of students during the activities proposed by the teachers inside classroom. For that, the students with a higher knowledge on a given topic were selected, either by the teacher or by the students, so they could work with the other students. The monitor students varied from a curricular component to another, so that a student could be monitor in Portuguese Language and be a monitored student in Mathematics. The group setting could also be altered during the activities, by the teachers and students as well when necessary.

The monitoring activities were not used every day. So, in order to have a task using the monitor students, the teacher would tell the class beforehand, so they could organize the class for the work in groups in the following day. Since the classrooms are traditionally organized in rows, the students needed some time to organize the desks in groups in the beginning of the class, and in rows again by the end of the class.

It is important to highlight that the monitor students are not responsible for introducing a new content to the colleagues. That task is still the responsibility of the teacher, and only during the tasks in class the monitors would collaborate with the colleagues, so their doubts and questions could be responded immediately. Having the monitors as collaborators, the teacher has more free time available to work with students with more difficulties.

Participants

The monitoring project started with six teachers (Portuguese Language, Geography, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and English as Second Language), and two first-year classes. The classes were composed by, in average, 25 students, aging from 15 to 18 years old. From the 50 students, 31 acted as monitors and 19 were not monitor in any of the previous curricular components. Besides the teachers and students, two researchers participated on the teacher/student training. The students could be monitors in only one curricular component or in all of them, depending on their expertise. Table 1 summarizes how was the distribution of monitors according to the number of curricular component they worked, and the number of
students who acted as monitors in every component. It is important to highlight that during the project some students left the position of monitor, while others became monitors.

Table 1. Distribution of how students worked during the monitoring activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitor in</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Monitor in</th>
<th>Number of Monitor students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 6 curricular components</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 components</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 components</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 components</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 components</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 component</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-monitor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation in the monitoring project was voluntary to all the participants. They were free to leave the intervention at any moment, and the written consent of the parents was given for research purposes. In addition, the intervention project was also approved by the Ethical Committee from Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Although there were free to leave, no participant left the project.

Data

Three different data sources were used for this article: audio-recorded meetings, audio-video recordings from classes and a questionnaire.
**Audio-recorded meetings:** The meetings with the students, both monitors and non-monitors, were audio recorded. The students were informed about the recorder, which was placed in the center of the room, so all the students could be recorded. In total we recorded six meetings with the students: one with all the students together, three with the monitor students and two with the non-monitor students. The aim of the meetings was to discuss the senses and meanings of the students about the monitoring activities. In addition, the meetings were also used to establish the rules for the monitoring activities. Those meetings were then transcribed for further analysis.

**Audio/video-recording from classes:** during the monitoring project we recorded classes in which the students worked in the monitoring groups. For doing so we placed an audio recorder in every group of students, so we could analyze the discursive interactions inside every group. In addition, a video camera was placed in the corner of the class, so we could have an overview of the monitoring activity. The main objective of the class recording was to understand how the participants interacted during the activities with monitors. The recordings were all transcribed for analysis. However, for this article we will focus in one Mathematic and one Geography class.

**Questionnaire:** the questionnaire was developed by the researchers and responded by the students by the end of the implementation process, after one year and a half after the intervention started. The questionnaire comprised five open questions and was intended to verify the results obtained by the students after using monitoring activities.

**Data analysis**

In this study we analyzed the data qualitatively. The transcripts from the data were analyzed according to the social-discursive interactionism (Bronckart, 1999) and conversational analysis (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2006). First, we performed an analysis of the textual planning and the thematic content of every discursive turn. This analysis consists on identifying the main topic of discussion in one turn or inside a group of turns. Second, we classified other discursive aspects, as described in Table 2.
Table 2. Discursive aspects of the turns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive aspects of the turns</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual planning</td>
<td>Main topic of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic content</td>
<td>Main topic of the turn or group of turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn initiated by</td>
<td>Teacher, student or researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enunciate responsibility</td>
<td>Who takes responsibility for what is said: teachers, students or researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of answer</td>
<td>Simple (does not add new information) or Complex expands what is being discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion end</td>
<td>Concluded discussion: the discussions is answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open discussion: a given discussion is left without a solution or answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of questions</td>
<td>Open question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarification question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothetical question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking for more evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linking or extension question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For doing so, we organized all the transcripts in an Excel file. That analysis enabled us to understand the collaborative patterns inside the groups and during the meetings, and how the participants created opportunities for the emergence of collaborative agency.

RESULTS

Student training process: defining the groups

After six months the work with teacher training started, the monitoring project was presented to the students of the 1st year of secondary education by the researchers. That meeting had as objective to show all the students what the monitoring activity was and how it could be used during the classes in any curricular component.

During that meeting, after a short explanation of the project, the students asked questions about how the monitors would be chosen, if participation was mandatory, if it would be graded, among other questions. Those questions were answered by the researchers according to what had
been previously established with the teachers. For instance, the teachers had agreed that monitor students would be chosen by their grades, that is, the students with higher grades on a giver curricular component would be monitors.

While the students and the researchers were discussing the questions, we could observe the first example of collaborative construction of the monitoring activity: the students highlighted that the students with higher grades would not be patient with weaker students. Thus, they suggested changing the rule, so they could have different levels of monitors to work with different levels of students. As a consequence, the groups were formed, for example, students with average 6 with a monitor average 7, and students with average 7/8 with a monitor average 9/10. In those discussions, the researchers play an essential role of expanding the discussions in order to have a critical-collaborative space, as suggested by Magalhães (1998). Although the criteria for choosing the monitor students was previously defined by the teachers, the students were able to identify topics, like the lack of patience the monitors would have with the non-monitor students, which was not noticed by the teachers.

After that first meeting with the students, the teachers and students selected the monitor students and how the groups of students would be formed. After the first monitor students were chosen, the process of student training was divided in two: training for monitor students and training for non-monitor students. In the following sections we describe how this process was developed.

**Monitor students’ training**

As mentioned in the previous sections, the students collaborated with the teachers for the selection of the first monitor students. After the students were selected, we performed four meetings with the monitor students: two in the beginning, one in the middle and another in the end of the school year.

The first meeting took place during a class break and last 15 minutes. The reason for choosing a class break for having a meeting was because some of the monitor students lived in the rural area of the city and were dependent of the school bus to return home. Thus, they were all able to participate in the meeting. When preparing an intervention project, schools might benefit more if we consider the historical-cultural aspects of the participants, as described by Vygotsky...
(1997). In the context of the given school, the heterogeneity of students, the place of residence, and other factors needed to be considered for developing the intervention.

During the first meeting, the monitor students presented their initial senses about the monitoring activity. The researchers, who conducted the meeting, tried to involve the students in an informal manner, so they could feel free to express themselves. In that meeting, the students pointed out that the monitor students would help or assist their colleagues. The sense of help/assistance demonstrates the socio-cultural-historical context of the students, who present the view of a traditional school, in which one teaches and the other learns. This goes according to what Freire (1970) calls the banking education.

However, since the school wanted to create a collaborative space for the students, the role of the researchers is of extreme importance in those meetings with the students: by questioning the students about their opinions, new senses emerged for the monitoring activity: the organization and collaboration. The students concluded that the monitoring activities would fit as a new way of organizing the classroom activities, so it would lead to a collaborative space for all the students. Thus, the students would have the opportunity to become agents in the activity. According to Freire (2014a), students’ agency can be used as an stimulus for the classroom tasks, so the students understand the activity as a way of solving a real life problem.

Having the critical-collaborative perspective for the intervention, the meetings with the students made possible that all of them could be heard and active in the whole process of development of the intervention. However, acting critically does not mean that all discussions would be accepted or integrated to the given activity: the mediator of the meeting, a researcher or a teacher, needs to act as an inquisitor. By questioning and deepening the discussions with the students, the mediator can make them aware of other perspectives that might be connected to the activity. Thus, the mediator of the meeting brings what had been previously discussed with the teachers (during the teacher training) and works together with the students in order to perform possible changes to the activity. According to Mack (2012), by giving students voice and action, and also identifying their agency, enables the teachers more tools to promote learning in the classroom. In that sense, by developing agency, the students become part of the process, and not only objects of the activity (Freire, 2014b).
During the second meeting, the researchers discussed with the students the characteristics of what a *good monitor* would present. From the characteristics highlighted by the students, a good monitor should be: patient, responsible, intelligent, and use an easier and comprehensible language with the colleagues. This kind of discussions with the students also made them feel co-authors of the monitoring project. One monitor student stated on that meeting that “it was the first time they were invited to participate on the development of a project for the school, and they felt important for that”. According to Penuel and his colleagues (2011), the authorship of a project also lead the participants to be more involved during the implementation of the activities, and also after its implementation the participants are more likely to continue working with those activities.

After the two meetings, the students started the implementation of the monitoring activities. During the beginning of the implementation phase, the students were asked to observe how their senses and meanings about the monitoring activities would be worked with their colleagues, as well as to observe if the characteristics highlighted by them were presented in practice. Four months after the implementation begun, the students were again invited to participate in another meeting with the researchers.

The objective of that meeting was to discuss with the students if the shared meanings the group raised in the previous meeting were kept or if there were any changes. Due to the socio-historical-cultural of the students, the sense of help was still present in the students’ discourse. On the other hand, new senses were introduced by the monitors: monitoring as a way to making the other think and as a way of motivating the interests of others. According to Vygotsky (1988), the sense of a word is complex and dynamic, so the senses are modified according to the context they emerge. Thus, the senses about the monitoring activities are constructed collectively by the participants.

In the first example, a way to making the other think, we can observe the creation of a critical-collaborative relation, as described by Magalhães (2011). Acting in a critical-collaborative way, the monitor does not give the solution of a given problem to the colleagues, but makes them to reflect about the issue, through questioning, so they can elaborate a satisfactory answer to the question. However, the monitors reported that they still had difficulties on how to make such a questioning to the students, without giving them the answers directly.
In the second case, having the monitoring activities as a way of motivating the interests of others, the students shown that monitoring could be an alternative to motivate the colleagues on learning a new content. Contrary to that, another student raised the question: “monitoring can make the non-monitors more interested in the topic, but you can explain ten times, if he is not interested, he will not learn anything!” Although this student raised this issue, by discussing and reflecting, the students concluded that monitoring could be a way of really motivating the colleagues. In that moment we could observe a first movement toward collaborative agency: the students realize that for using the monitoring activities effectively they need to act and to have the other colleagues acting together, both monitor and non-monitor students.

After the discussions about those two topics, the researchers worked with the monitors how to make questions to the other students during the monitoring activities. There was a tendency on the students to ask Yes/No questions. To have a better connection with the critical-collaborative process of the monitoring project, the researchers suggested the monitors to ask questions that enabled an open answer, usually started by specific markers, such as how, where, which, why, what. Using the right type of question enables the subjects to have a more democratic process inside the activity, so that by questioning they have the possibility of constructing knowledge collaboratively (Brookfield, 2005).

In relation to the characteristics of how to be a good monitor, the monitor students did not observe any changes, and kept the senses described during the first meeting. Since the monitors were not the same in all the curricular components, there were cases, for example, that one student was monitor in Physics and not in Portuguese.

That exchange of roles in the monitoring activity enabled the students to observe both sides of the activity, so they could reflect on their posture as monitor, and while observing the other colleague being his monitor, they assumed the posture of collaborative agents. Following that discussion, the researchers requested, again, the students to observe critically how they would act with the colleagues in the classroom, and that the students observed more the monitors while being in the position of non-monitor during the classes with monitoring activities.

After that meeting, the students continued with the monitoring activities with their colleagues, according to the specific needs of every curricular component. By the end of
November, the researchers met the monitors again so they could point their final remarks about the project. It is important to highlight that the monitoring project was a long-term project for the school, and the activities would continue in the following years, including new first-year classes every beginning of the school year.

Being a critical-collaborative project, the constructions of the intervention enabled all the participants to act on the activities. During the year new monitor students were included to the list of monitor students, while some monitor students left the position of monitors. This exchange in the role of the students was made in a consensus with the teachers and students. However, those monitors who became a monitor during the activities did not participate in the meetings, so the training of those students occurred in practice, by observing the other monitor students. In that moment we could observe again the collaborative agency among the students, since they could become monitors by exchanging their experiences with the colleagues. The continuous learning is a pre-requisite for a critical-collaborative intervention, as described by Liberali (2009). Thus, the participants are required to develop abilities in collaboration with their partners.

In the last meeting, the researchers discussed again the senses and meanings about monitoring with the students. The focus of that discussion was to establish collaboratively how the monitors should work in the following years. Although the work help was still present in the students’ discourse, there was a significant change of the students towards critical collaboration. The monitors were aware that the help was a way of doing together with the colleagues, and not simply giving an answer. Besides the collaborative posture, the monitors felt themselves as a teacher, as the one who can teach something to the colleagues. That way, the students takes more responsibility while being monitors.

As a result of the training meetings, the students established together the following conditions to become a monitor:

- Be patient and responsible
- Know the curricular component
- Be flexible for expressing himself with the colleagues
- To understand the difference between collaborating and helping
- Do not give direct answers to the question
- To question the non-monitors in a collaborative way
Again, for being a critical-collaborative intervention project, the researchers were not allowed to make any impositions to the monitors. Otherwise, the monitors themselves established the rules for the activity and the criteria to be a monitor. According to van Oers (2012), the degrees of freedom given to the participants is of extreme importance for the progress of the activities. Thus, by having voice during the training process, the participants become more engaged in the activities, and the probability for a successful implementation is higher. After the training process, the students worked with the monitoring project for more two years, that is, for the secondary education period. However, in the following years, the students worked autonomously, that is, without the interference of the researchers.

Non-monitor students’ training

The meetings with the non-monitor students were organized in a similar way to the monitor students. However, the researchers had only two meetings with the non-monitor students, one in March and the other in November. The objective of the meetings was to understand the non-monitor students’ perspectives on the monitoring activities and how they perceived the monitors’ role during the activities.

For the non-monitor students, the monitor should work as a facilitator, and that they could better understand the topics when a monitor student was explaining than when the teacher was. In this moment, we can observe the importance of discourse for understanding the relations among people (1999). By using an easier language for the non-monitors, they perceived the monitor as the one who could “translate” what the teacher explained to an easier language. It is important to highlight that for the non-monitor students there were not too many expectations about the monitoring activities, since most of them considered themselves as weak students.

In the meetings with the non-monitor students, instead of trying to establish rules for the monitoring activities, the meetings were used as feedback on the work of the monitor students, so that the researchers could discuss what was presented by the non-monitor with the monitors during their meetings. In that sense, the meetings with the two groups – monitors and non-monitors – enabled us to contrast the information provided by each of the two groups. Although the non-monitor students did not have a direct influence in the process of monitor students training, the non-monitor students felt themselves proud for being invited to express their
opinions about the monitoring project, and thus being also part of the construction of the intervention. In that sense, it was possible to identify failures in the monitors’ work, as well as communicating them to the teachers, so both of them could find solutions for the problems.

CONCLUSIONS

Developing and implementing an intervention project in a school context is a delicate task and involve all people from the school. To be successful, the training for all people involved seems to be a fundamental factor to the progression of the work. In our case, with the monitoring project, there was the involvement of all people from the school. First, the school principal allowed us to talk to the teachers. Second, the teacher training enabled homogeneity of practices among the teachers. Third, the involvement of the students during the project construction enabled a work within the needs and expectations the students had, and not only the needs and expectations from the school principal or from the teachers.

It is important to highlight that we should not understand student or teacher training as knowledge transmission, but as a process in which the subjects construct their concepts about the activity. Thus, the students training, even though it was carried on for only six meetings, was seen by the students as a way of stimulating their participation during the implementation of the project. Therefore, the process of collective training of all the participants proved to be a key characteristic to the implementation process of the monitoring activities in that school.

By raising their senses and sharing new meanings for the monitoring activities, students could experience the process of implementations of an innovation in the school context, so that the result of this process is the emergence of collaborative agency among the students, that is, not only one student acting in the context, but all the students act together in order to create a new context and to transform their school.

After the implementation phase (the first year of the intervention), the researchers did not make interventions with the participants. However, they followed up the activities by meeting with the teachers. That follow up process last for the following two years after the implementation phase.

During the follow up process, we could observe the best example that goes in the direction of our concept of collaborative agency: the students started organizing monitoring
groups with teachers who did not participate on the monitoring project. Thus, besides organizing the monitoring groups, they convinced the other teachers that the use of monitoring activities was an efficient way of promoting learning and for engaging the students. As a consequence, the classroom was not organized in rows, but in groups. Only when requested by the teachers (e.g. for exams or tests), the room was again organized in rows.

In that way, the students transposed the concepts constructed collaboratively beyond the initial aims of the monitoring project. That movement also reflects the importance of students participating in the development and implementation of an intervention at school. By participating and becoming co-authors of the intervention, together with the management team and teachers, they are able to sustain the activities for a longer period.

REFERENCES:


