The Social Networking Environments/Tools as Auxiliaries of Teacher Formation Activity

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This study aims to show the possibility of using virtual environments/tools that are just considered social networking settings/tools as auxiliaries to develop the teacher formation process, and to verify how the knowledge is produced during the formation process developed in a distance setting through Microsoft Service Network Messenger (MSN). In this way, this study had as basis a continuing professional development project based on the relations between the researcher and an English teacher that worked at Basic Level I in a municipal school in Conceição dos Ouros, Minas Gerais, Brazil. As foundation to the discussions, this study is based on Lévy's (1996/2003; 1999/2003) works to understand the settings/tools supplied by computer-mediated communication (CMC); on works developed by Brookfield (1987), Freire (1979/2001), and others to understand the critical reflective principles and the language role mediating the social inter-relations that has the argumentation as an important tool to the development of the critical reflective thought. Parts of the reflective sessions were selected and analyzed. The intention of analyzing the cutting data was to understand how sense about teaching-learning was questioning and new meanings were shared during the teacher formation activity on the environment used. The results show that: 1. The virtual setting allowed that the teacher formation activity was updated becoming real in a virtual setting, acquiring an interaction similar as a face-to-face interaction; 2. The knowledge production happens when there are opportunities to the participants to manifest themselves, to expound their opinions, to agree or disagree, to listen and to be listened, to argue and to convince others, and to learn to interact with others respectfully; and 3. In this social production process, the role of the other become fundamental to trigger off new zones of proximal development (ZPDs), to reorganize and transform the senses, to build new meanings, and to develop.

Keywords: knowledge production, virtual settings/tools, teacher formation

Introduction

It is undeniable the fact that human beings are living in an era of big and fast changes, and that the signs of these are related to the technological and scientific transformation, and to the communicational advances that interfere in their lives causing changes in the economical, social, political, and cultural spheres. According to Bettega (2004), one change that can be cited is the multiply power and the applicability of the information and communications technology (ICT) in all human's work (e.g., the computer is present in homes, industries, and trades, and is indispensable in research and teaching), taking people to a new way of socio-spatial organization,

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since that the technological advance made possible the interaction between people located in different parts of the planet. This paper intends to show the possibility of using virtual environments that are just considered as social networking settings as an important tool to develop the teacher formation process, and to verify how the knowledge was produced during the formation process developed in a distance setting through Microsoft Service Network Messenger (MSN).

This paper is organized to, firstly, present the context in which the data to be discussed were collected. Next, it discusses the theoretical perspectives to understand the context studied. Finally, it examines and discusses examples of two reflective sessions to understand how sense about teaching-learning was questioning and new meanings were shared during the teacher formation activity on the environment used.

Context

The teacher formation process happened in 2005, when the teacher, a student of the last academic year of the Modern Languages Course, was invited to work at Basic Level I in a municipal school in Conceição dos Ouros, Minas Gerais, Southeast Brazil, to teach English to children from 5 to 10 years old. In that moment, she felt very worried because she had never worked with it and the college in Brazil does not prepare to work with this level, it just prepares to teach English from Basic Level II.

During the first semester of that year, the communication between the researcher and the teacher happened through face-to-face reflective sessions and reflective diaries that were sent by e-mail and discussed in these sessions. The reflective sessions happened during the months of April, May, and June, with one meeting by month. As the distance between the researcher that lived in Toledo, Parana, South Brazil and the teacher was too far (1,200km approximately), they decided to carry out these sessions virtually by chat in order to assure the continuity of the work. So, they decided to meet virtually using as environment/tool the MSN, because it could give them a synchronous communication like in a face-to-face meeting. The virtual reflective sessions (VRSs) happened during the months of August, September, October, November, and December, with two or three meetings by month according to their necessities.

The data analyzed were collected in October and November. The first VRS happened on October 29, 2005 and aimed to discuss about the intervention project that the teacher was developing in a school while she was a college student. The second reflective session, focused on discussion about indiscipline, took place on November 12, 2005.

It is important to say that the name of the teacher will not be omitted according to an agreement made during the process.

The Technological Development and the New Socio-spatial Organization

To understand the contemporary transformation and the new socio-spatial organization, it is necessary to study the historical organization of the society. This brief study based on the history of the Ancient Greece will give a basis to understand this new way of the society that occurs in a virtual environment.

In the Ancient Greece, people of the same community met in a public place to deliberate about important matters to their lives. This public place, called “agora”, worked as an area for different activities, such as festivals, elections, and so on. However, from the introduction of the currency as a way of exchange, this place became the polis of the society, getting a mercantile function. With the development and the complexity of the society, this place was replaced by buildings to develop several activities (e.g., schools,

theatres, and stadiums). Nowadays, people are seeing the development of a new agora, called by Mitchell (1996) as “electronic agora”, a place where people all over the world meet each other without being at the same place.

According to Stockinger (2001), the cyberspace “not only amplifies the social communication as tool, but it is able to bring new social and cultural structures that become in subject, having its own life, a virtual life equipped with an artificial intelligence”.

According to Merchán, Marcos, and Perales (1998), the computer-mediated communication (CMC) causes changes in the society, modifying the way of life and work, cultural values, and the socio-cultural profile. As pointed by Kensky (1998), the technology, whether older as the writing or newer as the electronic book, modifies the way people represent and understand the time and the space around them, and the diversity of tools used daily resizes up their temporal possibilities and spatial moving.

Lévy (1996/2003) also discussed this new organization and explained that the virtualization of the body is the new stage of human beings, since that the virtual reality allows them to experience a dynamic integration of different perception modalities. To the author, the perception, which role is to “bring the world here”, is clearly shown by the technological systems that not only carry human beings’ sound body, but allow them to be “here” and “there” at the same time.

According to the author, the textual deterritorialization provided by CMC gets nearer the time and space, since that, by travelling through the Web, this dynamic text rebuilds the co-presence of the message and its oral characterization bringing together of the discourse “the pertinence as a result of the moment, readers, and virtual places”.

In this way, it can be said that the virtual reality carries much more than a single image, it transmits a “almost presence”, and when people connect to others that use the same technical Web, their body multiplies becoming part of a hybrid hyper-body, and that the main contribution of the world communicational Web was to allow the actualization or creation of new tools for communication, giving people an opportunity to share information or produce knowledge with people apart physically.

Language and Critical Reflection

According to Richards (1990) (as cited in Farrel, 1998), the critical reflection is the key for the development of a teacher, since the self-questioning and the reflective thought can take him/her from the level he/she is guided by impulse, purpose, or routine, to a level where the actions are guided by reflection. That is, the critical reflection is a practice that expresses the power of reconstruction of the social life, since when people become critical, they “develop consciousness of the diversity of values, behavior and social structures in the world, principally between theory and practice” (Brookfield, 1987).

Discussing about critical reflection, Liberali (2004) said that thinking critically is a “conscious act of looking the actions” aiming to reformulate them, since this questioning takes to distance of the actions in order to know, understand, and reformulate them. However, working with educational problems and developing critical thoughts do not just imply to understand and change the procedures that the teachers develop for dealing with daily contradictions of actions, on the other hand, to develop a way of thinking critically implies in creating situations to act in a real context, as Liberali (2005) pointed, it implies in creating a zone of proximal development (ZPD), which may develop possible forms of engagement in the teaching-learning activity for all the participants.

Freire (1979/2001) pointed out that this transformation process is just possible from the moment that the reality in which the one act is known, and warned that this knowledge cannot be reduced to the level of the *doxa*, it is necessary to reach the *logos* in direction of the perception of the *ontos*. As the author says, this movement is just possible through an indivisible reflective process and through the human praxis, in order words, through a critical reflective process.

However, Brookfield (1987) attracted the attention for the fact that the process of thinking critically cannot be reduced to a simple way of expression, since, by being social, this process occurs when a person finds friends or people that help him/her to see his/her action in a new way. According to the author, the “other” is fundamental to help obtain a clear perspective about his/her practice, since the discussion in pairs permits: (a) the possibility to break with the isolation; (b) to suggest new possibilities and new ways of analyzing and answering to the problems; and (c) possibility for questioning.

As pointed by Bakthin (1981/1998), diverse others’ voices struggle to influence the consciousness of individual (in the same way as they struggle in the social environment), that is, the individual consciousness is surrounded by voices of others and can only be distinguished from them later, when independent selective thoughts arise. As can be seen, in this process, the language becomes an important tool, since, as pointed in the studies developed by Leont’ev (1959) and Vygotsky (1934/2001), it not only performs the role of mean of communication between individuals, but it is a way of consciousness and the human thought. That is, the human consciousness originates as a product of the activity of the individual with the world, from the reflection of its practical reality, from the relations and mediation that arise in the establishment and development of society. To Leont’ev (1959), the changes that occur through the language acquire a characteristic of consciousness activity from the moment that the individual becomes conscious of the actions of others and of his/her own actions.

Believing that the language not only enable people to interpret experience, but that their subjectivity is built through the discursive plays and positions that they assume in several situations, it can be understood that the discussions developed during the teacher formation process had in the argumentation a strong tool to develop the critical reflective thinking, since argumentation can be used to “make ideas interact, bringing them together in conflicts” (Navega, 2005). In this way, the objective of argumentation is the construction of a dialectical new idea as a result of the construction of the knowledge by all involved in a discourse. In this case, argumentation is related not to the debate of what is true or more logical, but to the prospect of creating new possibilities of understanding realities.

The Role of Argumentation in the Critical Reflective Process

Departing from the understanding that argumentation is seen as a type of language organization that works as a tool in the production of shared meanings and that is through the argumentative discursive organization that all the participants have the possibility to describe and evaluate their practices, understand their roles in the process and in the collaborative construction of meaning, and put down their supposition in a constant questioning, argumentative, and counter-argument circle, they must bear in mind that in a critical reflective process, no one is “the owner of truth” (Navega, 2005) and the emphasis must fall on the competition among ideas not on people.

Dolz (1996) affirmed that any argumentation departs from a controversy in which a conflict of interests is expressed. That is, in argumentative situations, interlocutors aim to convince and change the disposition of the

auditory, once they have as their object of controversy a conflict concerning values where several answers are possible. In other words, the interlocutors assume their hierarchical social roles, present an argumentative orientation which determines the value of the arguments and counterarguments they present in the social setting they play.

In this term, Gutierrez (2005) affirmed that, in argumentative situations, the socio-historical scene must be taken as essential in the definition of discourse as a social practice, in which the conditions of production (institutional, ideological, historical, and cultural) bind social and discursive universes. That is, the focus should be on the articulation of a number of reasons to support or refute a thesis and the methods to appreciate and evaluate the arguments.

Toulmin (1958) presented a scheme that gives rise to a great number of possibilities of analysis the organization of argumentation:

- (a) Claim—Point of view of the enunciator;
- (b) Grounds—Data and statements to support the argument;
- (c) Warrant—Form of generalization to show that the data give genuine support for the thesis;
- (d) Backing—Additional support;
- (e) Modality—Levels of certainty expressed by the thesis;
- (f) Rebuttal—Aspects that may lower the force of the thesis.

In this line, Dolz (1996) proposed that argumentation be organized through the articulation of: (a) presentation of points of views/thesis; (b) argumentative supports; (c) counter-arguments; and (d) conclusion.

Dolz (1996) presented some marks which linguistically express this articulation, they are:

- (a) Use of the 1st and 2nd personal/adjective pronouns to express personal opinion;
- (b) Logical, argumentative organizers to ensure the articulation between the reasons and the conclusions;
- (c) Modal locutions;
- (d) Expressions used to formulate objections and to oppose;
- (e) Conceding formulation.

In this way, it can be understood that these are an interesting support to discuss the data, since it implies the possibility of dealing in the dialectical form of present different points of views, making possible to see how the knowledge was produced during the teacher formation process.

The Production of Knowledge Developed in VRs

This session aims to describe and present the analyses of two reflective sessions to understand how ZPDs were created in order to understand the acts/praxis and new senses and meanings were shared during the teacher formation activity on the environment used.

Session One

The first session aimed to get more information about the project that Neiva had to develop in a school, as a partial work in the subject she was taking in the college—Supervised Traineeship. It is interesting to notice how the researcher used modal locutions (“I would like”, “I know that”, and “could be”) to ask about the project, and justified it, giving support the question, trying to convince her to talk about it. The use of these locutions reveals the goal of making the researcher closer to the participating teacher and in constructing an image of a person that is interested in her problems.

Accepting the researcher's asking (see Table 1), Neiva explained that the project is a partial work that graduating students have to develop in a public school as a work for the subject—Supervised Traineeship, and during this project, they have to choose the level they are going to work; observe the classroom in order to find some problem; propose a project aiming to solve the problem found; and apply/develop the project, as shown in Turn 36 (see Table 2). However, during her explanatory sentence, she exposed her sense about the applicability of the project, pointing the difficulty of realizing an important work in only one class, that is, just in 50 minutes, and about her difficulty to find a problem, since that they could not focus on the methodology used by the teacher, neither on the educational material, nor on the indiscipline. This assertion can be seen by the locutions used in turns 37 and 43.

Table 1

VRS 29/10/2005 (Part I)

17:07:52	Researcher: Neiva, would you like to talk about this intervention project (Modality ¹). I know that you have done this before, but we did not record it. So, I would like to have something recorded. Could be (Modality/Warrant)?
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Table 2

VRS 29/10/2005 (Part II)

Turn	Time	
34	17:08:27	Neiva: Of course (Agreement). The intervention project is part of the Supervised Traineeship of my course in the college.
35	17:09:21	Neiva: This project is developed in several parts (Thesis). Firstly, we choose a level, we make the observation trying to find a "problem that is happening in that classroom".
36	17:11:09	Neiva: After we propose a project trying to solve that problem (Grounds/Explanation), the only one problem is that this project has to be just developed in a class of 50 minutes (Backing).
37	17:12:09	Neiva: It is very difficult to find this problem, because it must be inclusive (Grounds/Explanation).
43	17:15:07	Neiva: For example, it cannot be the way the teacher works, neither about the educational material, or about the indiscipline (Backing).

During the chat, which aimed to provide a space for reflection, the researcher retook the problem about the applicability of the project asking her if a project developed in that way could intervene in a problem that was happening for a long time. At this moment, the researcher worked as "the other", as pointed by Brookfield (1987), Bakhtin (1981/1988), and others, creating a ZPD, giving her the opportunity to expose her senses about it. This opening can be seen by the use of capital letters in Turn 85 (see Table 3).

Table 3

VRS 29/10/2005 (Part III)

Turn	Time	
85	17:38:02	Researcher: That is it ... my question is related to this. YOU think that in ONLY ONE class, it is possible to intervene in a problem that suddenly is happening for long time ago or years (Open to reflection)?
86	17:38:47	Neiva: Of course not (Agreement). It would be necessary, who knows, even a year (Claim/Modality).
87	17:39:56	Neiva: It is a shame, because these students have already studied English since the first year of the Basic Level I (Rebuttal).

However, in spite of showing agreement with the researcher's questioning, Neiva's reflection about the subject was superficial, staying, as pointed by Freire (1979/2001), in a *doxa* level. That is, trying to support her answer, she did not present a firm/deep reflection, limiting herself to explain that those students have studied English since the Basic Level I (see turns 86 and 87 in Table 3).

¹ The words in bold show the level of argumentation during the reflective process.

Trying to take her to a deep reflection that could take her to a *logos* level in direction of the perception of the *ontos* (Freire, 1979/2001), the researcher reformulated and insisted on the question (see Turn 97 in Table 4).

Answering it, Neiva exposed her senses, showing the biggest problem of the educational systems: (a) lack of political objective (“Finally, the system that does not give the real importance to the subject”); (b) lack of educational project (“also goes through the head-teacher that does not lift a finger to improve it”); and (c) lack of a consistent formation that contributes for a citizen formation of the individuals (“starts by the teacher that does not know that she is teaching, neither considers what have already been learned”). Unfortunately, her assertion presents a problem that is still happening in Brazilian schools, that is, when the teacher, during the distribution of the subjects, cannot work with the subject he/she was graduated to, he/she has to work with the English subject (see Table 4).

Table 4

VRS 29/10/2005(Part IV)

Turn	Time	
97	17:46:14	Researcher: After all you have said here, you really think that the problem is in the subject studied (Open to reflection)?
98	17:48:57	Neiva: It is everywhere in that school (Claims) starts by the teacher that does not know what she is teaching, neither considers what have already been learned, also goes through the head-teacher that does not lift a finger to improve it, and finally, by the system that does not give the real importance to the subject (Grounds/Modality).
101	17:51:00	Researcher: Do you think this is a really intervention project (Open to reflection)?
102	17:53:58	Neiva: I believe that it is not really a project (Claim/Point of view), it can intervene a little, because when we do this in class, most students ask to the teacher a dynamic and interesting class (Warrant/Backing). We cannot finish the problem (Claim), but we “shake” the classroom and we create a problem to the teacher (Warrant).
103	17:54:41	Researcher: Do you create or “cause” more problems (Open to reflection)?
104	17:55:58	Neiva: I think we cause more problems (Claim), but I will tell you the real situation of the teacher. She taught Portuguese during 20 years, but this create or “cause” more problems (Open to reflection)?

As can be seen, the questions realized during the session probably created spaces to reflect about the problem, and try to explain it. Neiva had, indirectly, the opportunity to think about her future praxis.

Session Two

The second session aimed to discuss the indiscipline based on the reading of Celso Antunes’ book—*Professor Bonzinho = Aluno Difícil* (Kindly Teacher = Difficult Pupil). This topic was suggested because Neiva felt worried about the behavior of some students. In that moment, the reading had a correspondence of double object, that is, to reflect and discuss about teaching-learning with the activity necessity—provide the participants with theory to understand and broach the problem. Departing from this assertion, and understanding that the interactions are established and kept if there is something to talk about, that is, if the meeting was arranged before, the conversation starts with the topic that caused it. This assertion can be seen in the turns 7, 8, and 9 (see Table 5), when Neiva showed her point of view about the reading through an evaluation sequence. This evaluation can be noticed by the use of the marks “Really good”.

Starting the reflection about the reading, the researcher asked Neiva if she had realized the aim of the reading. Answering this question, Neiva, firstly, presented her point of view asserting that the indiscipline could be understood in a different way from that teachers usually understand. After that, she relates it to the behavior of a student (see Table 6).

Table 5

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part I)

Turn	Time	
7	15:58:34	Neiva: I have already read the book (Express personal action).
8	15:58:40	Researcher: How did you like it???
9	15:59:55	Neiva: I thought it is really good (Express personal opinion/Evaluate). The teachers asked me what I was reading and asked me if I could lend it to them.

Table 6

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part II)

Turn	Time	
18	16:07:45	Researcher: Well ... according to the reading, could you “realize” or “deduce” what was the aim of this reading???
19	16:10:46	Neiva: To me realize that the problem about indiscipline can be tackled in a different way from that we usually understand that a well-behaved student is a quiet student (Claims). Maybe, is there any relation with Peter Daniel? (Relation between reason and conclusion).

Facing with her questioning, the researcher confirmed that the idea started from her description in the diaries. To justify the assertion, the researcher argued that, although she had never referred to the behavior of the student as indiscipline, it was noticed that his behavior bothered her. To reinforce the justification, the researcher asserted that the indiscipline is a problem that teachers are going to work during their all professional life (see Table 7).

Table 7

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part III)

Turn	Time	
21	16:12:09	Researcher: Well ... the idea is related to Peter Daniel behavior and intensified after our last meeting at the moment you talked about the indiscipline of the students in a school (Claim).
22	16:13:59	Neiva: What got my attention in relation to Peter Daniel is that in lots of diaries, you tell about his behavior during the class, ... you have never told that it was indiscipline, but since the beginning, I have noticed that this bother you a little (Modalization/Backing) ... so, I decided to discuss this point with you ... since this is a problem that we will work during our all professional life (Warrant).

At the same time, Neiva agreed with the researcher, it is possible to see the position one assumes in several situations. At this moment, she changed her role in the interaction play, that is, she assumed the paper of asking the questions, counter-arguing that teachers are inserted in a biggest social logic, presenting additional support that could help them to understand the student's behavior—He presented neurological and psychological problems (see Table 8).

Table 8

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part IV)

Turn	Time	
24	16:17:51	Neiva: That is right (Claim/Agree)!! But I have a question (Counter-argument/Change the position), I do not know if it is time for this, talking about Peter Daniel, specifically, how to “work” the indiscipline with him, knowing that he is a boy that has lots of psychological, even neurological problems that become difficult the possibility of a deeply analyses (Marks—Express articulation/new thesis).

It is interesting to notice that, although Neiva's question opens space for reflection, this does not occur at this moment. Instead of answering immediately, the researcher retook it, as shown in Turn 26 (see Table 9), maybe, as strategy to have time to think about it or as possibility of reflection for both. However, this strategy provides an opportunity to her, as pointed by Liberali (2004), to distance of the action in order to know it, since

that she answered her own question, presenting a concrete way to understand the student's behavior.

Table 9

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part V)

Turn	Time	
26	16:24:26	Researcher: But ... backing to your question.
27	16:25:37	Neiva: That is right!! But I have a question, I do not know if it is time for this: talking about Peter Daniel, specifically, how to "work" the indiscipline with him, knowing that he is a boy that has lots of psychological, even neurological problems that become difficult the possibility of a deeply analysis. (Retaking) . Try to see what the problems he brings from home and influence his behavior in the classroom (Conceding formulation) .

Although Neiva signalized a beginning of reflection, the researcher tried to present her point of view. To support it, the researcher returned to the book to assert the necessity of making the students understand that there are rules that are pre-established and must be followed (see Table 10).

Table 10

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part VI)

Turn	Time	
29	16:27:48	Researcher: Well ... I do not know if you have the book with you, but, for instance ... the author points exactly this on page 33 when he discusses the aspects of telling off ... in the middle of the paragraph. Antunes advises us to invite the students to analyze their procedures/behavior and notice that to live in a society, it is necessary to follow some rules that are pre-established (Grounds/Ensure articulation) .

During the chat, Neiva retook the book to give base to her question, asserting that the limits must be established since the beginning ("How do this now at the end of year, is there any solution?") (see Table 11).

Although her question opens space for reflection, this does not happen at this time again. Instead of answering, the researcher formulated, as a counter-argument, a new question giving them the possibility to show their points of view, and to go deeper into the discussion of the establishment of the rules.

Table 11

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part VII)

Turn	Time	
46	16:50:03	Neiva: I have a question again. Antunes says that the limits must be established at the beginning, right (grounds/conceding formulation)? How do this now at the end of year, is there any solution (Thesis/Open to reflection) ?
47	16:52:06	Researcher: Well ... the question we must do is how to solve a problem that has already been happening since the beginning, where the limits were not established (Articulation between reason and conclusion) ... It is not an easy job (Conclusion) .
48	16:52:59	Neiva: Really (Agreement) ... next year, I will already know everything and I will start well (Opinion/Conclusion) !!

Neiva's answer shows up her agreement with the question and with the researcher's warranty, and exposes, implicitly, a transformation of senses and future action. This transformation of sense, results of the reading, can be noticed by her assertion in Turn 68 (see Table 12), when she gave additional information about her new praxis in the classroom.

It is interesting to notice how the reading of the book and the discussion developed during the session were useful giving to the participants, as pointed by Lévy (1996/2003), support and/or pretext to bring their mental space up to date, developing this way, new meaning.

Table 12

VRS 12/11/2005 (Part VIII)

Turn	Time	
68	17:12:16	Neiva: This week “contaminated” by the book (Grounds), I believe that I have worked calmly (Modality), more calm, even when the class looks to turn upside down. This action gives good results. Beyond that, the chat with the students that wanted to “be in evidence” was effective in 90% (Backing/Warrant)

Conclusion

This paper aimed to show the possibility of using virtual social networking environments/tools as auxiliaries to develop a teacher formation process, and to verify how the knowledge was produced during this process. For that, the study tried to understand, more specifically, the questioning of the sense and the sharing of new meanings during the activity.

The analyses developed show that the internal thought is derived of the external and inter-individual practical action that happens through a collaborative dialog. It provided to observe that this is a dynamic and dialectic process where the conflicts/struggle contributes to the discursive engagement, to the appropriate of the language organization that happens through the argumentation, and to the consciousness how the participants can learn together. It also provided to understand that the knowledge production happens when there are opportunities to the participants to manifest themselves, to expound their opinions, to agree or disagree, to listen and to be listened, to argue and to convince the others, and to learn to interact with others respectfully, and how the role of the “other” become fundamental to trigger off new ZPDs to reorganize and transform senses to build new meanings.

From the analyses, it can be understood that the language shapes the action, making possible its understanding and recognition, since that, talking about the praxis, the participants had an opportunity to assume an auto-consciousness in relation to their actions.

In relation to the development of the activity in a virtual environment, using as tool the MSN—an instrument used to socialize in a Web, the analyses showed that, although using the writing, this environment makes possible to update the activity, becoming real in a virtual setting, acquiring an interaction similar as that happened in a face-to-face meeting. It can be concluded that it does not matter to what the instrument was created, but how people use it an appropriate way to serve to their intention and produce knowledge.

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