

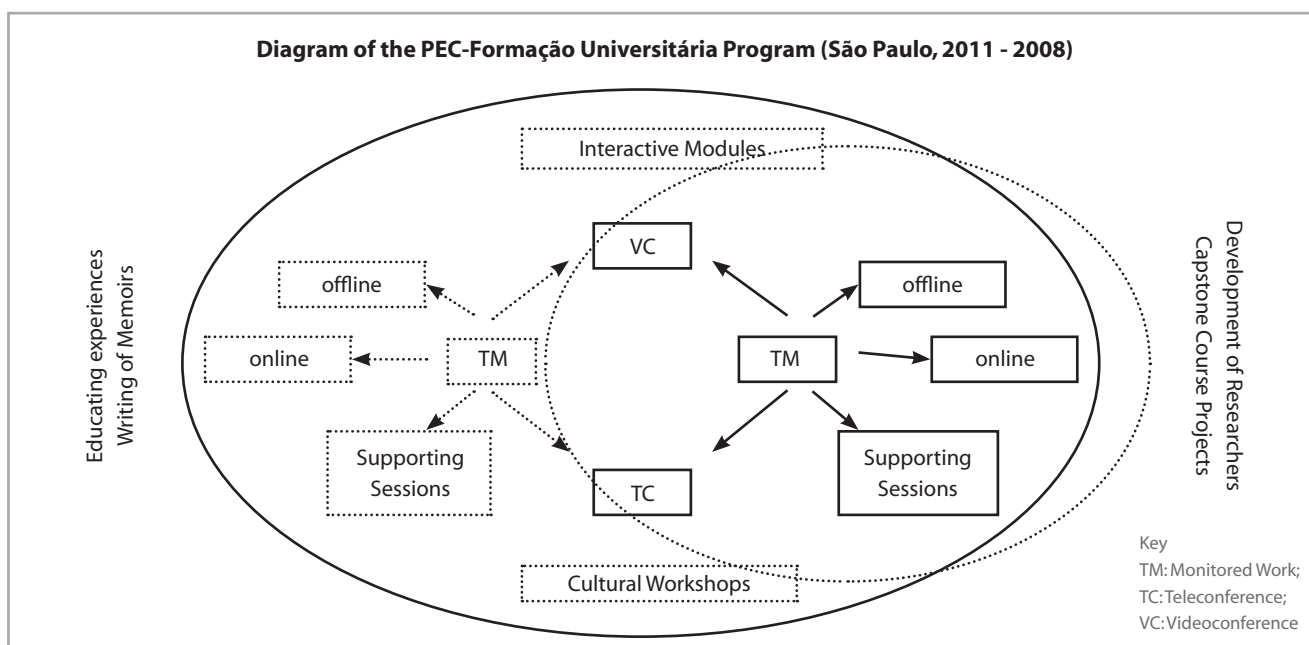
TEACHER EDUCATION SPECIAL PROGRAMS, DISTANCE LEARNING AND SCHOOLING: STUDIES ON THE NEW MODELS OF IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

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By virtue of the new education Guidelines and Bases Act (LDB 9394/96) and the institution of the “education decade” (1997-2007), initiatives related to teacher education have proliferated in Brazil. In this context, a new model of in-service training has gained strength through “special programs.” The chief aim of these programs was to graduating within a short period of time teachers from all over the country who did not have higher degrees or, in the case of the more deprived regions of the country, high school certificates.

The main goal of this project is to analyze these programs and this new pedagogical model. The analyses have various scopes that aim to characterize these programs and to establish their place within the wider context of current educational reforms. The project has two lines of study. The first considers the structure, functioning, conceptions and modus operandi of the special programs. This line of research examines the curricula, devices, written and virtual didactic materials, the profiles of the students and

teachers, the emergence of new educational agents, the knowledge promoted in these new educational contexts and the concept of school established by this model. The second line of research examines the implications of these programs for the educational processes and pedagogical practices of the teachers who graduate from these courses. Because these courses emphasize the teacher’s practice and are grounded in the discourse of competences, the project follows the work of specific groups of teachers and focuses on their teaching practices and knowledge, their reading practices, and their appropriation of concepts and ideas from the program, including those related to technology. This study also examines the market of educational services addressed to teachers and teachers’ practices of consumption related to this market. The overall purpose of this study is to develop a wider understanding of the contemporary policies and initiatives within teacher education in Brazil, with special attention to in-service teacher education, based on theories from the field of education and the social sciences.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS TO DATE AND PERSPECTIVES

By analyzing the structure, operation and conceptions of the model disseminated by the special programs, the study finds that teacher in-service training is currently a worldwide concern that is the object of initiatives and policies in Europe and in Latin America. A shared discourse is being adopted within the field of teacher education that is translated into different actions and meanings according to local contexts. In the Brazilian case, relative success is being achieved because thousands of teachers have already graduated at higher education levels (or at the high school level in the poorer regions of the country) during the last decade through a variety of programs, many of them conducted in partnership with secretariats of education and prestigious universities and others conducted by private institutions of higher education. The investigations have shown that obtaining a higher degree contributes to increasing teachers' self-esteem, feelings of professional worth and legitimacy due primarily to a better command of the academic discourse and of the written



Teachers watching a video conference in the Program (PEC)

language. A process of professional socialization also occurs during these courses as a result of their daily meetings, stimulating teachers' sense of belonging in a markedly feminine profession. From the perspective of pedagogical formation, this study finds that the experience of assuming parallel roles as teachers and students leads the participants of these programs to a better understanding of their pupils' learning processes. In the case of programs of higher education, the model contributes to integrating the university and the school, creating opportunities for an enhanced understanding of the specificities of teachers' work in public schools today. These studies also demonstrate the questionable aspects of the model, such as the exaggerated monitoring of the teachers, which limits their autonomy and freedom to participate; the normalizing and standardized nature of the education offered; and the "academization" of the teacher education afforded in this framework. As it continues, this project will study groups of teachers who have been trained in these programs in an attempt to identify in their teaching practices the applications of their in-service education. The analyses of the model will be strengthened by the investigation of similar experiences in other contexts in Brazil and Latin America.

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