Chapter 12
The Role of Pibid in Graduation Courses: Discussing Teachers’ Education

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ABSTRACT
One of the greatest challenges of teachers’ education is its requirement to ally theory and practice. In Brazil, this scenario fostered the implementation of the Institutional Scholarship Program for Pre-Service Teacher Education – Pibid by a Governmental agency. The core of the program is to offer undergraduate students the opportunity to experience teaching process as they participate in school routine. Although Pibid dates from 2007, it was implemented at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology – IFTO in 2009. This chapter presents the history of Pibid at IFTO and an analysis of its results with regards to fostering reflective teaching. We employed a qualitative research methodology to conduct this case study. Besides the literature review, we analyzed the reports of Pibid and we surveyed graduates who participated in it while attending their graduate courses. Data confirms that Pibid is beneficial to teachers’ pre-service and in-service education; it promotes interaction between theory and practice and, most importantly, it helps developing reflective teaching.

INTRODUCTION
Thinking over teachers’ education implies comprehending different speeches, conceptions and features adopted by public policies regarding pre-service education, in order to understand the guiding points of them and elucidate the consequences of these models to basic education in public schools. Recent
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Changes in the job market and the economic globalization have demanded further approximation of professional training and production sectors in several areas. Based on that, under the coordination of the World Bank – WB together with other multilateral organizations (International Monetary Fund – IMF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO, World Trade Organization – WTO, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD), profound reforms in educational policies have started, particularly in peripheral countries (Fonseca, 2001; Torres, 2000).

In Brazilian context, educational reforms in the nineties provided an uncontrolled expansion of teachers’ education courses, mostly in private colleges and universities with no commitment to the educational system itself or the quality of training. The distinguishing features of this process were: Syllabus over teacher flexibility, training period relief, and lack of engagement with a firm theoretical basis in teachers’ education supported by scientific foundations from educational field and pedagogical studies. As a result, what has prevailed since then is a profound pragmatic character and a market perspective for the educational field (Freitas, 2007).

Beyond this scenario, teachers also need to face on everyday basis the reality of public schools with regard to inadequate funding, heavy workload, lack of effective practices aiming at democratic management, little participation of parents in their children’s school life, students’ indifference towards schools, besides many other challenges to be confronted. This scenario has led us to raise the following questions: To what extent are teachers working in public schools able to assure a high quality teaching-learning process? What is meant by high quality teaching and how could a teacher promote it? What are the characteristics and particularities of teaching practices which can support improving the quality of education?

Although the term quality is a very complex and polysemous one, because its scope has been historically defined as a result of a reality interconnected with political and ideological contexts. For this study, we have to adopt the principle that “quality” in education refers to a set of technical, pedagogical, political and ethical domains which must feed teaching practices and educational activities in general (Gadotti, 2010; Rios, 2003). In this respect, Gadotti (2010) states that “to speak about social quality of education is to speak about a new type of quality, where social, cultural and environmental aspects are highlighted; in which not only symbolic knowledge is valued, but also emotional and technical knowledge are considered” (p.01). This line of thinking implies an educational model that respects differences, embraces the social function of schools related to disseminating culture, selecting critically the contents, using novel and contextualized methodologies and adopting reflective teaching practices that can contribute to empower the individual as a social subject.

An education of quality, on its macro picture, demands that teaching must be seen as a priority from the elaboration of educational policies to their execution. It involves the guidance of effective actions regarding pre-service teachers’ education, which provide teachers with appropriate conditions for their practice, including amongst them salary scale valuation, in-service education (preferably in post-graduation level), and professional performance assessment. On the other hand, observing education as a social practice, on its micro picture, an education of quality demands teachers to mastery subject content and pedagogical expertise. This set of knowledge, as a result of pre-service and in-service training, is what characterizes teaching. Still, teachers need to be in a position to absorb them organically, not as two parts of different issues that are put together, but integrating them simultaneously in order to reconsider their pedagogical practices in the classrooms in a theoretical basis. In the following section an overview of teacher education in Brazil is presented as to better understand the context where this study was investigated.
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