

Licentia Hypomnema: Reflections and Perceptions in Teacher Education

Juliana Crespo Lopes¹

¹ Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brasil

Joelle Souza Nunes²

² Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brasil

Suzy Michelle Feitosa Rocha²

² Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brasil

Abstract: Student protagonism is paramount in the knowledge construction process. In this paper, we discuss a didactic-pedagogical resource called *licentia hypomnema* (LH), inspired in portfolios and learning diaries in which student-teachers record their understandings and reflections regarding pedagogical topics learned at University in a meta-learning process on learning about teaching. The initial context of the research was a Psychological Development and Teaching course, offered in the Teacher Education program at Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Two of the authors, then Literacy and Languages Teaching students, produced their LH and peer assessed each other during the course. In their annotations, the student-authors recorded two pedagogical situations related to the use of LH in their own teaching practices, causing an impact on their formative path. These materials consist of the data for analysis and discussion. Moreover, we discuss possible uses of reflexive writing in teacher education and other learning contexts. Producing a LH supports knowledge production and allows students to connect theory and practice, which consequently influences the student's teaching practice. Since LH is a didactic-pedagogical resource and not a close-ended tool, both the context and individuals who use it should be considered.

Keywords: *Licentia Hypomnema*, Teacher education, Reflective writing.

Licentia Hypomnema: Reflexões e Percepções na Formação de Educadoras(es)

Resumo: O protagonismo de estudantes tem grande importância no processo de construção do conhecimento. Neste artigo, discutimos um recurso didático-pedagógico chamado *licentia hypomnema* (LH), inspirado em portfólios e diários de aprendizagem, isto é, estudantes de licenciatura escrevem suas compreensões e reflexões acerca de assuntos pedagógicos vistos na universidade em um processo de meta-aprendizagem sobre aprender a ensinar. O contexto inicial da pesquisa foi um curso de Desenvolvimento Psicológico e Ensino, ministrado em cursos de Licenciatura da Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Duas das autoras eram estudantes do curso de Letras, elas produziram seus LH, realizando avaliação por pares entre si durante o curso. As estudantes-autoras trouxeram em seus registros duas situações pedagógicas relacionadas ao uso desse recurso em suas próprias práticas de ensino que causaram um impacto em suas trajetórias formativas. São esses relatos que compõem os dados para análise e discussão. Além disso, procuramos discutir possíveis desdobramentos para o uso do recurso da escrita reflexiva na formação docente e em outros contextos de aprendizagem. A produção do LH fornece suporte para a produção de conhecimento e permite ao aluno conectar teoria e prática, o que, conseqüentemente, reverbera na prática de ensino do aluno. O LH é um recurso didático-pedagógico e não uma ferramenta fechada, portanto, tanto o contexto quanto as pessoas que o utilizam devem ser considerados.

Palavras-chave: *Licentia Hypomnema*, Formação docente, Escrita reflexiva.

***Licentia Hypomnema*: Reflexiones y Percepciones en la Formación del Profesorado**

Resumen: El protagonismo de los estudiantes tiene gran importancia en el proceso de construcción del conocimiento. En este trabajo, discutimos un recurso didáctico-pedagógico llamado *licentia hypomnema* (*LH*), que se inspira en diarios de aprendizaje, es decir, estudiantes de profesorado escriben sus comprensiones y reflexiones sobre temas pedagógicos aprendidos en la universidad, produciendo un proceso de meta-aprendizaje sobre aprender a enseñar. El contexto inicial de la investigación fue un curso de Desarrollo Psicológico y Enseñanza, impartido en el programa de Formación de Profesores de la Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Dos de las autoras eran alumnas de la carrera de Letras que produjeron sus *LH* y realizaron una evaluación por pares mutua durante el curso. Las estudiantes autoras plantearon en su *LH* dos situaciones pedagógicas relacionadas con el uso de este recurso en sus propias prácticas de enseñanza, causando un impacto en su trayectoria formativa. Estos materiales constituyen los datos para el análisis y la discusión en esta investigación. Buscamos discutir posibles desdoblamientos para el uso del recurso de la escritura reflexiva en la formación docente y en otros contextos de aprendizaje. La producción de este recurso da soporte a la producción de conocimiento y permite al estudiante conectar teoría y práctica, lo que consecuentemente repercute en su práctica docente. El *LH* es un recurso didáctico-pedagógico y no una herramienta cerrada, por lo tanto, se debe considerar tanto el contexto como las personas que lo utilizan.

Palabras clave: *Licentia Hypomnema*, Formación de profesores, Escritura reflexiva.

***Licentia Hypomnema* and the Freedom of Creation**

Licentia Hypomnema (*LH*) emerged as a didactical resource from an experience in Psychological Development and Teaching (PDT) course offered at the University of Brasilia (UnB). Likened to a learning diary, *LH* is specifically reserved for the Teacher Education context. Students were encouraged to weekly write their reflections about the topics discussed in class on their *LH*. A major aspect that supported the *LH* was the idea of knowledge authorship: students had previous valid knowledge and, moreover, were able to produce knowledge while reflecting upon the studied topics. Some guiding questions were suggested to provide support and avoid mere content descriptions.

The first author (JCL), a PhD student in teaching practice at the time, was the course professor, the other two authors were pre-service student-teachers attending the course, JSN was just beginning her teaching career, whereas SMFR already had experience as an English teacher. Both students produced their *LH* during the course and JCL invited them to co-author this paper by discussing excerpts from their *LH* to illustrate its use possibilities in Teacher Education.

This paper presents the *LH* as another possible pedagogical tool to be used in Teacher Education courses, highlighting its positive aspects in practice. First, we will present an overview of the theoretical framework underlying the course and the concept of *licentia hypomnema*. Building on this idea, we will discuss two situations addressed by the co-authors on their *LH*, showing how tool can be used to reflect, develop pedagogical possibilities and produce knowledge.

Theoretical framework

In this research and at the classes, we sought to approach education from a student-centred perspective, fostering different venues for student participation. Student-centred approaches are based on the idea that educational practices should focus on students' active participation by stimulating their autonomy and, consequently, their motivation for learning. According to Rogers (1985), it is important that students have the desire to learn and to develop from their own contexts and interests. Hence, affording students the freedom to choose what motivates and is significant to them is fundamental for meaningful learning, produced in a unique and autonomous way

(Rogers, 1985). Instead of a teaching practice designed and imposed by a third party, knowledge must be constructed by each individual, going beyond a system that demands, guides, and shapes different pieces of standardized knowledge.

Student-centred education (SCE) assumes that student involvement is necessary at all stages of teaching and learning processes, from planning to assessment. Since students have different learning profiles and ways of perceiving and being affected by educational environments, there is no one way to establish SCE (Hounsell & McCune, 2002). Students need to develop skills related to self-management, such as initiative and responsibility (López, 2017), and to establish learning partnerships. Peer-based work creates the interactive learning environment, which is important because knowledge production is not strictly individual, even when centred in the figure of the learner (Marioara, 2015).

Student-focused educational practices tend to promote significant learning while understanding that students' active participation, self-management, and interest are essential (Räisänen, Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2016). Among these practices, one important approach is to work with genuine issues, promoting their own understanding about the studied topic. In such situations, students contribute by actively participating in the process of knowledge construction (McCune & Entwistle, 2011).

Paulo Freire's work is fundamental when addressing the issue of students being active in the construction of their knowledge. As human beings, we have the possibility and ability to go beyond our mere existence in this world. Education can provide a context for students to critically reflect and be active about their own lives and the ways in which we are involved in the world and can transform it (Freire, 2007). Besides being a powerful political tool for societal change in a macro context, student reflection can also be an important pedagogical practice, especially in Teacher Education courses. Reflection skills about pedagogical experiences can have a very positive impact on the professional development of future teachers. For this to happen, professors should provide constructive feedback and promote individual and collective reflexive skills (Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä & Turunen, 2016).

Potential benefits can be further extended if we understand that, by having these experiences as students, the future teachers may be encouraged to

replicate them with their own pupils. Since reflexive practices are essential for Education as a whole and for Teacher Education specifically, students must be encouraged to perform them. Teacher Education employs several resources to promote students' reflection on pedagogical experiences and theories, such as Learning Diaries (Komur & Cepik, 2015; Ferreira & Marques-Schäfer, 2016), Academic Memorials (Carpi, 2014; Cintra, 2020), and Portfolios (Clarke & Boud, 2018; Chy, Zhou, Koh & Liu, 2019).

In the experience we address in this paper, a new instrument was used to promote student reflection: the *licentia hypomnema* (LH), a tool designed considering important aspects of the learning diaries, academic memorials, and portfolios, such as reflection on studied content, awareness and follow up of the educational process. Moreover, LH proposes a deeper reflection about students' knowledge production processes: the relations established between academic and teaching knowledge and their own experiences, pathways, and postures. The focus was not only on the content, but also on the teaching and learning practices.

The term *licentia hypomnema* is used as the singular form, while *licentiae hypomnemata* is the plural form. The LH is understood as a self-writing pedagogical resource for pre-service teachers to develop meta-pedagogical processes. Its name derives from combining two concepts, as briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

Foucault, when addressing the writing of the self in interviews (Rabinow & Dreyfus, 1995), cites the *hypomnemata*, a Greek mode of registration, to refer to a writing exercise that acts as an opening and a narrative of the self. The *hypomnemata* would be a writing exercise that promotes self-care, a Greek concept (*epimeleia heautou*) that refers to the process of one's own development as an individual by getting in contact with themselves (Foucault, 2004). Pre-service teachers writing *hypomnemata* for a Pedagogy class could be understood as a care-of-the-self practice in the process of becoming teachers.

Licentia is the Latin word from which the Portuguese term "*licenciatura*" [teacher education] is derived and it stands for freedom, permission, excessive freedom, and indiscipline (Resende & Bianchet, 2014). Interestingly, contrary to its lexical origins, Teacher Education courses are the opposite of freedom. The structure mainly found at universities and other educational contexts is of power relationships

based on an understanding that only the professors have the knowledge while the students should replicate it (Quijano, 1992; hooks, 2010).

By combining the two terms, writing a *licentia hypomnema* could be an act of reclaiming the freedom of thinking as pre-service teachers and future educators. Although possible translations for the Latin term can be viewed as negative, we understand that often an excess or a shift is needed for a rupture of paradigms and practices. Another possible interpretation for *licentia* is “poetic license,” in the sense of permission for the new, the “not yet thought.” In that sense, being undisciplined in a Teacher Education course would be to exercise a freedom of creation. Consequently, extrapolating rigid structures of power relations and knowledge domination would be to question and subvert such structures and reflect on how they relate to the contents and processes experienced, producing new knowledge. Such reflections and knowledge refer precisely to learning and teaching.

In writing an *LH* for a theoretical-practical class on teaching and learning, as the PDT course, pre-service teachers can reflect on previous and current experiences, as well as on future performance perspectives; reflecting on the experience of what will become their own profession is an even more important process. The *LH* aims to help promote meaningful learning in a student-centred Teacher Education context. The two main conditions necessary for achieving meaningful learning are the students’ intentionality toward learning and potential meaningfulness of the used materials (Moreira, 2012). The first is met by the *LH* because the weekly writing was voluntary and thus required active and conscious action of the students to learn, and the second because, while producing their *LH*, students attributed their own meanings to it.

Methodology

This is an Experience Report (Mussi, Flores & Almeida, 2020) discussing part of an Action Research (Norton, 2008) developed in a Teacher Education course (Lopes, 2020) structured by a Student-Centred approach. The *LH* was adopted in two different contexts (a summer course and a regular course) and time-frames (daily classes in 2018, and weekly classes in 2019). The experiences reported here were lived by two students (JSN and SMFR) enrolled on the regular PDT course in 2019, and mediated by JCL, the professor.

Since the instrument composed part of the PDT course self-assessment, all students were encouraged to write their *LH* weekly. Although not compulsory, the practice was strongly recommended. With an open format, not abiding to academic writing rules or structures, its reflexive approach was ensured by some guiding questions: (1) “What was the class content that made me think the most? Why?” (2) “What were the pedagogical practices in the classroom that helped me learn? Why? Which ones made it difficult? Why?” (3) “As a student, what did I do to learn this subject? What do I make of my attitude?” Beyond this, writing was free as reflections arose.

This text is structured in three parts. JSN’s section opens with a line from her *LH*: “One knows how to play and the other knows music theory,” in which she discusses the relationship between theory and practice. This theoretical reflection makes way for SMFR’s reflections on the use of *LH* to teach English as a Foreign Language: “Use of *Licentiae Hypomnemata* in a new context.” Finally, its final part examines the general experience and possibilities for *LH* adoption based on the students’ and professor’s perspectives: “The student-authors’ experience with the *licentiae hypomnemata*.” All reflections and analysis presented use a student-centred, decolonial and critical framework.

“One knows how to play and the other knows music theory”

Used to define the difference between a bachelor’s degree and a teaching licence in music JSN was enrolled, this quote reminds us of the saying “those who can, do; those who can’t, teach” which places teaching in an undervalued position where theoretical knowledge is enough. The many reflections derived from classes on pedagogical studies about music education recorded on the *LH* can be used to rethink the education of teachers in other fields: “wouldn’t it be possible—and desirable—for future educators to achieve mastery of practice and theory, especially if classes combine both?” It is of utmost importance to provide learning environments that promote comprehensive pedagogical development. Undergraduate students from both bachelor’s degrees and teaching licence may feel discomfort in defining their studies with such undermining definitions, and yet this feeling remains unacknowledged.

The *licentia hypomnema* could assist in promoting more meaningful learning, based on immediate experiences and focused on the future intermediation

of pupil's knowledge production. Thinking plays an important role in knowledge production (Abrantes & Martins, 2007). Learning environments that promote reflection set students into a movement of changing perceptions in both individual and group practices. Stimulating thinking in educational settings represents an opportunity for individuals to self-express and understand themselves as epistemological beings who exist and produce knowledge. Students' perceptions are fundamental in this process as they should be able to see themselves as pursuing knowledge and abilities that integrate practice and theory.

An ever-present issue in students' *LH* was the importance and need of experiencing pedagogical practices. Beyond learning didactic theory, our classes sought to create different opportunities for teaching, learning and producing knowledge, always grounded in theory. Pedagogical *práxis*, understood as a path to societal change through critically reflexive theory and practice (Freire, 2007), emerged as a goal and as a basis for enabling teacher education.

Paulo Freire conceived of and advocated for an education in which students play an active role, collaborating in knowledge production (Freire, 1996). According to Freire, as human beings, we have the possibility and ability to go beyond our mere material existence. We can reflect and act upon our own lives and the world to transform it. Freire adds to the verb "to exist" the preposition "with": One exists with the world, transforming it based on the knowledge one has of oneself and of one's contexts (Freire, 1982).

Education creates conditions for people to pursue change and liberation (Freire, 2007); thus, Teacher Education is an essential setting for pre-service teachers to develop not only skills and knowledge, but also critical reflection. Professors/teachers can influence and stimulate students to think and reflect about several pedagogical aspects. Consequently, it is necessary to learn how to promote autonomy and meta-reflection, going beyond content and didactics. Students, in turn, are not merely passive receivers, they play an active role in the learning process as transformers of realities.

When encountering greater knowledge possibilities (of the self and about the world), people start to problematize and critically reflect, leading to continuous learning and political and social transformation (Freire, 1982). Knowledge produced by students and future teachers can potentially transform their own

educational practices and attitudes, and this personal transformation can, consequently, affect other people and spaces they come in contact with.

Continuous learning is experienced by adopting an active and dialogical attitude that seeks liberation from the experienced oppressions (Pitano, 2017). Promoting a learning process that rethinks the standardized roles attributed to students and teachers, the Teacher Education courses, and everything else related to educational possibilities is of paramount importance. In this regard, the *LH* acts as tool for connecting theory and practice, fostering reflection and linking ideas and possibilities. By engaging in this writing exercise, pre-service student teachers reflect on, dissect and question their own teaching and learning processes, experiencing it as didactic-pedagogical praxis.

Use of *licentiae hypmnemata* in a new context

In most classrooms, teaching and learning processes are often teacher-centred. Such approach proves to be particularly problematic in language learning classes, because this process is predicated on the conscious and self-regulated understanding of students' cognitive abilities (Carvalho, Mancopes & Mota, 2015). SMFR, after attending PDT classes and using the *LH*, decided to adopt this pedagogical tool in her English as a Second Language private classes. The proposal was for students to use *LH* throughout the course to increase their autonomy and enable a more holistic view of their individual learning process. This could include their difficulties in developing a certain ability, their strength in a certain skill, or some progress that went by unnoticed by the student.

Dropping out of English as Foreign Language (EFL) courses is common, especially in adulthood. Even at university, English Language studies have a high student evasion history. Students mainly complain about methodologies and learning difficulties (Pessoa & Pinto, 2013), i.e., students drop out due to (1) teaching techniques considered to be inefficient, and (2) not believing they are achieving their desirable learning pace (Evans & Tragant, 2020). Consequently, teachers must think carefully about the method used during English classes.

People over 10 years old find greater difficulty in assimilating a second language (Montezor & Silva, 2009), so the *LH* emerged not only as a pedagogical approach, but also as a resource to reflect on the

learning processes of adults. As in the PDT classes, SMFR suggested for two students to produce a *LH* as part of a syllabus including other pedagogical tools. They were asked to write a self-evaluation, trying to identify their difficulties and abilities in English learning. Besides recording their learning process, the idea was also to document how they prepared before classes.

Their *LH* were discussed weekly at the beginning of each class. During this conversation, important aspects of their learning processes, such as difficulties and improvements, were identified and highlighted. During this conversation, the points of improvement on their part were also emphasised. As a consequence, it was possible to work on the aspects that were identified as difficulties and that, in some way, were hindering their learning process. Thus, the lesson planning was designed to address this aspect through some activity or assignment. The following topic presents some of the most relevant considerations made about the *LH* of the two English students.

***Licentia hypomnema* as an assessment tool**

The first student, a 26-year-old woman, was enrolled at conventional advanced-level group English classes, but still presented difficulties. She sought private classes due to problems with grammar, sentence structure and long texts. Pronunciation, oral production, and text interpretation also showed some gaps. When reading long texts, she had great difficulty in retaining information read in previous paragraphs and in interpreting the text as a whole, which led to resistance toward working on long texts and reading them aloud.

In reading her *licentia hypomnema*, a pragmatic structure was found: lessons were separated by day and theme and did not go beyond what was presented in class. She did not act as the author of her knowledge production, and self-reflection was restricted only to the first records. Seeking to foster a more independent knowledge construction, these perceptions were shared with her, but she did not adapt well to the proposition. Instead of authoring knowledge, the *licentia hypomnema* remained a tool for registering information.

Consequently, the instrument was used to provide feedback and support to her learning process. Even without conventional evaluation, it was possible to identify problematic aspects and direct her more effectively. One point that became easier to monitor and correct

were grammatical mistakes. Given the pragmatic nature of her writings, corrections were made by commenting and highlighting errors. During classes, these points were brought up once again to clarify the correction made. From that point on, the student started monitoring her errors in her oral and written productions.

Reflection and action

The second student, a 29-year-old woman, had attended only beginner English group classes. Her difficulties related to pronunciation were amplified by the classes' imposition of only communicating in English, which delayed her learning process. She felt anxious about the idea of having to speak in front of other students and dropped out of the regular English course several times because of it.

When asked to identify her strengths and weaknesses in relation to the language, she could not identify her own abilities. Such inexperience with self-evaluation may result from the lack of incentive to critical thinking in our educational system. The need to comply with a preestablished academic curriculum leaves little room for analytical development.

In her *LH*, self-reflection seemed to be working positively. Despite also having a pragmatic character, the student wrote self-evaluations for each class, pointing out factors that contributed to her difficulties with oral communication. She began preparing for routine class practices by exploring content beyond that of lessons.

Throughout the learning process, the student perceived herself in charge of her own development and could identify stress points concerning language learning, proposing ways to use them in her favour. To overcome her anxiety of speaking in public, for example, the student began writing down what she thought would be interesting or important to share with the teacher. She thus became more secure in her ability to verbally communicate in another language. These results demonstrate how the *LH*, together with a suitable methodology and a teacher committed to working as a mediator, can promote a student-centred learning process.

The experience with the *licentiae hypomnemata*

Producing *licentiae hypomnemata* at PDT classes provided us with different learning, teaching, development, and interactive experiences. Sharing our

analyses with our peers promoted mutual learning between students. Whether to discuss positive points about a certain observation or to promote casual conversations, this collective construction favoured dialogue about what had been written. Furthermore, reading our writings after listening to the other's point of view provided us with more reflections and revealed important aspects that were previously unknown. Given their ability to favour reflection, these interactive processes are essential in teacher education (Dutra, Ferreira & Therrien, 2019).

Although pedagogically interesting, some students had reservations about writing an *LH*. At first, they perceived the activity as uncomfortable: expressing their thoughts in words and, above all, ensuring that such thoughts would be considered valid knowledge was challenging. This “self-inferiorization” could be seen as a reflection of the current epistemological paradigm where student knowledge is undervalued.

For other students, the purpose of this type of writing seemed pointless, as observed by Clarke and Boud (2018). Some perceived the *LH* as a “repackaged evaluation tool” without any significant change. Gradually, by experiencing the practices during the course, some students started to experiment with writing, problematizing and reflecting about our pedagogical action. Writing became more fluid and flexible, detailing events and reflections, and producing the *LH* in this context became rewarding. As Domingues and Medeiros (2017) state, writing reflectively allows us to produce our own knowledge and dissect our own learning and teaching practices. A key aspect of the *LH* was the freedom to share our thoughts outside the academic structure while establishing connections between class contents and our own experiences.

When writing our *LH*, we followed some steps: (1) to summarise what happened on that day of class; (2) to reflect on good pedagogical approaches used in the class and about how we, as students, prepare ourselves to participate in class; (3) to establish connections between the course bibliography and pedagogical experiences; (4) to reflect on how this content was previously experienced in different circumstances and on our feeling and thoughts regarding it.

The need to follow a specific academic structure, exemplified by a concern with the right use of words and the need to meet exact requirements, is often an obstacle for many undergraduates, blocking and even invalidating our thoughts. Hence the emphasis put

on the non-academic nature of *LH* and the greater importance afforded to the content. Such an approach validates our thoughts and perceptions, generating a writing that is relevant to our academic trajectory.

Producing an *LH* in a teacher education program allowed us to address previous educational experiences. When looking back at experiences, students reflect on the consequences, advantages, and possible improvements for what was done before (Domingues & Medeiros, 2017). As distance between the person and their acts facilitates reflection (Dutra et al., 2019), the instrument allowed us to examine our attitudes, behaviours, and ideas. Moreover, we can ponder a pedagogical practice before its application, evaluating possible outcomes.

Although reflective writing takes place more often in teaching practices (Dutra et al., 2019; Domingues & Medeiros, 2017; Rissi, Rodrigues, Lealdini, Andrade & Zanon, 2015), we have questioned its little inclusion in pedagogical situations prior to in-service experiences. Having the opportunity to look at oneself as a person, student, and future teacher, all at the same time, promotes a reflective attitude throughout the educational period. This self-reflexive experience allows us to better understand the teaching-learning process and how it works differently for each person.

Some benefits from reflective writing include: the possibility of measuring our own learning; greater and better creative skills; recollection of academic contents; the opportunity to think and question ourselves, to expand or change perspectives and opinions; and planning the future as students and future teachers. Different courses offered in Teacher Education programs could benefit from reflexive practices, not only those related to Psychology or Pedagogy. Despite the common understanding that subjectivity-based pedagogical approaches have no place in areas such as STEM or hard sciences, our experience with students from different courses shows that it can be beneficial and interesting for any field.

As for peer assessment, we made comments on each other's *LH* with complementary notes, opinions, perspectives, and tips for improvement. These were written in a tone of spontaneous conversation, unconcerned with formalities, grammatical rules, or a good apparent structure. The importance lied, again, on content and thinking skills. Peer assessment allowed our thoughts to be acknowledged from another viewpoint. Besides, we approached different perspectives while identifying ourselves with situations and feelings.

The *LH* also included writing a self-assessment text at the end of the course based on our whole experience as students and on what we thought educational processes and a student attitude should be. Looking back at the whole experience now, we realise that self-assessment permeated the entire writing of the *LH*. Reflective writing provided an expanded and continuous look inwards, emphasising the processual aspect of knowledge production and student-teacher development. To future teachers, this experience may support establishing a learning environment based on mutual listening and collective work, instead of hierarchical teaching practices. We want to create opportunities for our students to think, reflect and expose their ideas and opinions.

In the short and long term, we observed an evolution in our writing, thinking and attitudes. Rereading the *LH*, either during the course or long after it, provides us with the maturity to realise what was done and what has changed, and the pleasure of rediscovering ourselves and continuing to reflect through writing.

Possibilities and paths

Our experience in the PDT classes and other teaching settings highlight the centrality of students in knowledge production. Practices that promote and demand more autonomy and student engagement are not fit for everybody, as such practices demand self-investigation. However, this awareness can only occur when teachers provide an appropriate context where students can view themselves as in development, and where the student-teacher dialogue enables the search for meaning in the established practices (Souza, Carneiro, Perez, Oliveira, Reali & Oliveira, 2012).

Developing a *licentia hypomnema* during the course provided us with a practical and epistemological understanding of our role as pre-service teachers. Until then, we had failed to analyse how new knowledge was produced. As we planned and experienced teaching practices, reflected on learning and pedagogical approaches, and connected these to theory and previous experiences during classes, we were able to further explore the studied content and its meanings. We produced, were affected and transformed by knowledge.

Regarding meaningful learning, knowledge related to life and emotion is as important as cognitive knowledge (Rogers & Rosenberg, 1997). For the authors, one can recognize the importance of student experience and “feel” the contents. Disregard for

previous knowledge, experiences and interests promotes a hegemonic and singular transmission of content. In such situations, some students pursue only good grades, regardless of their learning as subjects.

The use of diverse didactic-pedagogical activities at PDT classes exemplified how teaching practices and significant learning can happen in the classroom. The students’ *LH* included reflections about these experiences, with some remarking about the contrast with academic seminars. Commonly used in higher education, seminars are viewed as a misguided attempt to “replace the professor’s monologue [...] by that of the student” (Borges, 1999, p. 1). Students saw that they could go beyond the simple transmission of knowledge and have direct contact with their peers, creating collective thoughts and experimental activities.

The PDT course provided students with a pedagogical environment in which they could go beyond merely existing in the academic world. As Freire (1982) puts it, they existed with the world in an active-reflexive manner, transforming their trajectories in teacher education. Therein lies the importance of a student-centred education and, specifically, of spaces for reflection such as the *licentiae hypomnemata*: they act as tools for active knowledge production (Freire, 1996) about teaching and learning and the attribution of meanings.

As part of diverse cultures and social contexts, individuals develop in particular ways and have a particular history. All knowledge acquired throughout life informs and is closely linked to how students learn and produce knowledge. Thus, proposing practices to ensure the participation of all—teachers and students—is essential to make collective knowledge production possible.

Openness to rethink the established educational structures triggers reflection on one’s present and future practices. The “free writing” of the *LH* was viewed as valuable because it constituted an instrument to expose reflections, wishes, questions and suggestions, which are not easily shared with teachers and professors due to the asymmetric classroom relationships. According to La Taille (1999), this asymmetry encompasses two perspectives: authority and authoritarianism. The former refers to legitimate statements and orders and the latter to the abusive use of power. The fear regarding authoritarianism presents a great obstacle, which has brought greater complexity and tension to the student-teacher relationship in recent decades (Santos & Soares, 2011).

Opposite to the conventional diary, and more than a mere description of routine events, the *LH* presents itself as a tool for developing critical thinking skills. It establishes a conversation between the one who teaches and the one who learns. It evokes previous knowledge-related experiences. It promotes collective and shared learning. And it enables students to identify their strengths and insecurities. *LH* writing is an opportunity for one to reflect, to know and transcend oneself, to address contents that are in the process of being learned and transformed. It involves relating experiences, knowledge, analyses and world perceptions as a pre-service teacher and future educator. Note that many other pedagogical resources and approaches can lead to the same aims. In this paper we are focusing on this particular instrument to present it as one more possibility to be either adapted to specific contexts or used as showed here.

Regarding language learners, the use of the *licentia hypomnema* promotes conscious reflection about linguistic structures and their evolution process. However, knowing the learner profile is relevant, since some students might require a more active teacher mediation. A similar initiative based on learning diaries found barriers concerning the lack of time for diary writing, fatigue, and the belief that this tool was not significant for their education (Souza et al., 2012). These findings point to the need for adaptations and closer work with students using *LH* as a learning tool.

When students start reflecting on how they learn, a movement toward new pedagogical practices is established. The emphasis is put not on cognitively mastering theoretical precepts, but on understanding

the processes—including their own—of knowledge construction and its multiple configuration and authorship possibilities.

Final remarks

The Psychological Development and Teaching course was structured based on a student-centred approach and the adoption of *licentiae hypomnemata* as an instrument for reflecting on and producing knowledge and possibilities. During the writing of this paper, we noted the ramifications of this three-year-old experience. At that time, both students wrote powerful reflections on their *LH*, and now we can more clearly see their important reverberations on the continuity of their studies and teaching activities.

Importantly, the *LH* is a didactic-pedagogical resource and not a closed tool. Its core lies on its subjective aspect and the different possibilities it creates. Thus, its use should be adapted to each context and person. In another opportunity, we intend to further explore the interconnection between the *LH* and language learning. We also emphasise the importance of new studies both in undergraduate courses and in other spaces of knowledge production.

We hope that, through this writing exercise, students from different educational settings find freedom of expression and permission to innovate. The *licentia hypomnema* is, among other pedagogical resources, a path for individual and collective creation, and for promoting fissures in established practices and structures. It aims to promote more significant and authorial knowledge productions, as well as new protagonists in different contexts.

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Juliana Crespo Lopes

Professora Adjunta do Setor de Educação da Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, PR, Brasil


E-mail: juliana.crespo@ufpr.br

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4344-208X>

Joelle Souza Nunes

Graduanda pela Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brasil


E-mail: juliana.jcl@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0861-183X>

Suzy Michelle Feitosa Rocha

Graduanda pela Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, DF, Brasil

E-mail: suzy.michelle@aluno.unb.br

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4142-6676>

Endereço para envio de correspondência:

Rua General Carneiro, 460, Centro. CEP: 80.060-150. Curitiba – PR. Brasil.

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