ABSTRACT
          This paper explains how undergraduate student teaching
programs in Brazil, and relationships between universities and local public
schools, depend on the dominant theoretical view of teacher education. This
dominant theoretical view is determined by the sociopolitical context and
involves power relations. When this theoretical view changes, student
teaching supervision also changes. Section 1 describes student teacher
supervision in the Brazilian context. Generally, a supervisor is responsible
for coordinating a group of student teachers. Supervision involves choosing
the school where student teaching will occur, obtaining permission from the
school for the student teaching, analyzing student teachers' reports, helping
student teachers prepare lessons, and evaluating student teachers at the end
of the year. Section 2 describes different tendencies in teacher education
research and resulting consequences on the supervision process from the 1970s
to the present. The main questions addressed relate to theoretical aspects of
methodological approaches used by supervisors in teaching practice courses
and the school itself as the place where the practicum occurs. Section 3
examines current issues in supervision, including the theory-practice
relationship and how to overcome repetitive practices in the school context
and transform the student teaching experience in a fulfilling, rewarding way.
(Contains 14 references.) (SM)

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CURRENT ISSUES IN STUDENT TEACHING SUPERVISION IN BRAZIL

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The main idea of this paper is that the way the process of student teaching is conducted in undergraduate teacher education programs and the relationship established between university and community schools are dependent on the dominant theoretical view of teacher education at a given moment. Also, this dominant theoretical view is determined by the social-political context, and it involves power relations. When this theoretical view changes, student teaching supervision changes too. Starting from this idea my presentation is structured in 3 sections:

In the first section I will explain, in a general way, how student teaching supervision is done in our context. In the second part, I will briefly describe the different tendencies in teacher education research and its consequences to the supervision process from the 70's to the present. In the third one, I will take current issues related to supervision into account and present final considerations.

It is important to note that to become a school teacher in Brazil, it is not necessary to take a university degree since there is a special course named "Magistério", although, nowadays, specially in urban areas in the south and southeast regions of the country, many elementary school teachers have a university degree. In this paper I will be referring to the process of supervision that is conducted by a teacher educator that belongs to the academic staff of a department of education at a university.

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1) How is supervision done?

This course, in which the process of supervision takes place, is a two-term course taken in the last year before graduation: by then, the student teachers have already taken the basic courses of a more theoretical nature such as psychology, philosophy and sociology of education. Besides these courses, the student teachers have already studied specific methodologies to teach Portuguese Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, etc.

"Teaching practice" is a course conceived as the appropriate occasion to "analyze", and "reflect" upon the work of teachers, that takes place in public or private schools of the community. Besides that, the course has as its main objective to "apply" teaching theoretical knowledge in practical situations, as the student teacher gives lessons in elementary or secondary school classes. So, it focuses not only on the development of technical skills as planning, transmitting and evaluating school knowledge but also on the development of a "reflective thought" of the teaching and learning process as a whole. So, according to this view, supervision plays an important role because the supervisor together with the student teacher, not only reflects on daily practices in schools, but also faces difficulties and tries to think of pedagogical alternatives to develop successful practices and overcome these difficulties in concrete terms. For instance, they try to overcome school failure and repetition, that are two of the most important problems in Brazilian schools.

In general, the supervisor (a teacher educator) is responsible for the coordination of a group of student teachers who go to these so called "escolas de aplicação" (in Brazil, "escolas de aplicação" are schools that belong to universities and have, among their duties to accept student teachers for teaching practice) or schools of the community (public or private) to observe classes, prepare reports, collaborate with teachers preparing their lessons, and, at the end of the course, give classes.

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The supervision consists of the supervisor choosing the school where the practice will be taken, obtaining permission from the headmaster and the schoolteacher for the student teachers to do their practices at the school, analyzing the student teachers reports, helping student teachers prepare their lessons and evaluating them at the end of the year.

In a general and brief way this is how the process is conceived.

2) What has educational research told us about student teaching during the teacher education?

A brief survey of recent research in this area shows that the main questions addressed are related to the theoretical aspects of methodological approaches used by supervisors in teaching practice courses and to the school itself as the place where the "practicum" takes place.

Methodological approaches are attached to the dominant theoretical view that is determined from the social-political context, and it can be seen as a result of different forces involving power relations. Teacher education is then valued in different ways at different moments according to diverse purposes, although sometimes it is not valued at all. I intend now briefly describe the dominant tendencies since the 70's.

According to the work of Silva (1991) in the 70's, the main theoretical approach in Teacher Education Research was Human Capital Theory. The economic development of the country was an important reason for the improvement of teacher education programs. This improvement was necessary because teachers were not adequately prepared to change this situation designed to reach economic development. There was a great emphasis on planning, formulating objectives and preparing evaluation plans.

In the 70's, there was also a great quantity of studies aiming to characterize who the elementary teacher was. However, the fundamental approach of the majority of the studies analyzed was basically descriptive. So, these studies did not give explanation neither about

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what determined the basic social-cultural profile among in-service teachers, nor about how and why some individual characteristics of the teachers were associated to the students' progress in the teaching and learning processes.

Some of these studies tried to identify important competences and abilities that could be considered essential to the teaching and learning processes. Many studies were basically developed on experienced teachers, supervisors, school principals and technical staff. The practical consequences of these studies were that many courses and training activities were developed based on "models" or "competence based systems", that were conducted with the main purpose of dominating technical and pedagogical skills and instrumental abilities. On the other hand, studies and projects that privileged the establishment of a "curriculum design" for the teacher education programs in their approaches were also developed. Most of the time these projects and proposals disconsidered the effective human and material availabilities of the educational systems. So, for this reason only a few of these studies could overcome, either the phase of training developed with small experimental groups, or even the phase of theoretical formulation. (Silva et al., 1991, p.140)

In relation to the schools where the "practicum" took place we can say that at this time the teaching practice of university students happened basically in "escolas de aplicação", which were created at the end of the 50's and beginning of 60's. In some authors' opinion like Mattos (1975), if the teaching practice took place in public schools the routine would be perpetuated, "with all its procession of vices and adulterations". This way, it would be essential to provide the "escolas de aplicação" with proper installations and necessary equipment, and also resources to carry out its "noble mission of laboratories, demonstration fields and the practice of the new methodological orientation efficiently to the authentic renovation of our country". (Mattos, 1975, p.37)

The "escolas de aplicação" have, in general, great responsibility as an "experimental field" since teachers could try new methodologies, and by doing that they could prepare a "new generation" of teachers with a "new modern approach" to education. The main idea was to modernize education and this idea expressed great confidence in the "educational power"

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reorganized at that time, in a new scientific and technical basis. This vision was characterized in Brazil as "pedagogic optimism" because we could see school as if it were able to transform society as a whole, and this was the social- political dimension of this proposal.

In these "experimental schools" the emphasis was basically in the methodological aspect. To learn the content (ideas, principles, facts) was not the main aspect, but to learn how to observe, do research, or simply "learn how to learn". The use of new learning methods and techniques as group work in developing projects and doing research was extremely valued in this approach. The final objective to be achieved was to "learn how to learn" and it was reached by using an active teaching and learning process. These active methodologies were based on the psychological approach.

But these "experimental schools" were basically attended by students that belonged to an intellectual and social-economic elite because they had to take an exam to enter these schools. This elitist characteristic was questioned at the end of the decade and a more democratic approach was demanded.

From the 80's on, studies were strongly influenced by sociological theories and anthropological approaches. In this period teacher education was viewed in a contextualized way, in which elements that determined this context were the main focuses of these studies. During this period, researchers privileged the debate about the social function of schooling and how to develop a critical citizen in a school system that belonged to a concrete society and was part of it. During the 80's teacher education was no longer adopted in a psychological approach in which teaching and learning methods were strongly focused. Now, social relations and contradictions were the main aspects viewed. This sociological view led to different kinds of studies in teacher education research.

Some of these studies were strongly influenced by reproductivistic theories (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970) that viewed educational institutions as having no other function besides the reproduction of social inequalities. So, it was impossible to have a critical teacher education

in the educational system since all the components of a teacher education program were put into question: methods, contents, texts used, books and educational material, everything was criticized. Reproductive theories often led to a pessimistic attitude, since changing anything seemed impossible. The power of educational action, including teacher education, was extremely limited, almost useless. In consequence, student teaching supervision was not considered an important matter, because the work of teachers inside their classrooms could not cause any changes in society.

Other studies conducted by a group of critical teacher educators and researchers tried to overcome this reproductivistic theory approach. This <u>critical paradigm</u> in teacher education happened because of the establishment of a more liberal political framework in the country. This corresponded to a moment of reaction to the pessimism caused by the adoption of reproductivistic theories. In the Brazilian context the end of the military regime and the transition to democracy in the mid 80's, brought up new hopes for educators, and at this time new approaches to teacher education and student teaching supervision were developed.

Among those who tried to overcome the reproductivistic approach, authors as Mello (1982) and Libaneo (1985) emphasized in their studies that if schools worked competently, this would certainly have some transformative effect on the way working class children would later reach their social destination. To work competently meant having "political commitment" as well as a "professional competence". This group was known as social-critical pedagogy based on contents/ "pedagogia crítico-social dos conteúdos". The basic idea was the need for a more directive competent teacher who had to master the content to be taught and the methods to be used, to transmit this content in an efficient way to working class children. In short, they saw pedagogy centered on the transmission of relevant content as essentially democratic and tried to articulate the political and the technical aspects in the same proposal.

At this moment, to develop "teaching practice" in public schools, that were attended by working-class students (most of them coming from poor families) was extremely valued.

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Student teachers and university supervisors facing difficulties as school failure and repetition started to look for alternative ways of dealing with these problems.

Another group of critical educators as Brandão (1982) based on the work of Freire (1970) stressed the importance of the teacher as a problem-poser asking provoking questions and encouraging students to ask their own questions. This way, students would learn to question answers rather than simply answering questions and they would consequently develop the "critical consciousness" which "would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (Freire, 1970). This group was known as "popular education"/ educação popular which basic idea was the emphasizing the dialogue between the teacher and the student as the central aspect of education.

In this conception the student teaching experience could be developed out of regular education. The students were encouraged to participate in extra-curricular experiences such as teaching groups of illiterate students, educational experiences in slums, groups connected to residents' associations, community schools. This time there is an increased value of the practices that are also executed in public schools that were attended by children from the working-class children.

In the beginning of the 90's the most important struggle of critical educators was still how to guarantee access and permanence in the public education system for all students despite their economic status.

In this decade, Brazilian education faces the challenges of globalization. The dominant view is that globalization reflects a world economic pressure, seen as inexorably determining educational policy in countries like Brazil. To cope with globalization the country has to modernize education and teacher education. Educational reforms have been proposed to facilitate adaptation to the needs of the international work market. The official rhetoric has as its priority the improvement of quality in education to cope with globalization. Quality will be obtained by means of the implementation of a national system of evaluation and the establishment of a national curriculum.

I have already discussed some of these issues in Marcondes (1999). So, in this paper I will be briefly referring to the implications of these two new aspects in search of "quality in education"- a national evaluation and a national curriculum with some of the consequences to the process of supervision of student teachers in schools.

One of the objectives of the national evaluation system is to evaluate the quality of teachers. But what does quality means? What are the best indicators to measure it? How can it be measured in practical terms?

According with the work of Gama (1999), referring to the analysis of data from the National System of Evaluation (SAEB) we can come to the conclusion that the teacher's quality has been only defined in technical terms. Another important aspect refers to the fact that the teachers resisted to giving information about the work developed in classrooms at public schools to the researchers of SAEB.

According to the same author (Gama, 1999, p.18) "The concealing of verified information reveals itself as a defense and resistence mechanism, which tries to make any educational politics that come from the government, as well as its attempts to legitimate controls that are able to restrict the autonomy of teachers, impossible."

Concerning the implications to the process of supervision in teaching practice at schools, it could be said that the technical aspect was emphasized to the detriment of an analysis of the structural conditions of the context where this practice happens.

In relation to the implementation of a national curriculum, we can say that in a recent analysis by Marcondes et al (1998) the definition of national curriculum parameters emerged according to the experts of the Ministry of Education as a necessity of putting the system of evaluation into practice.

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The document's theoretical basis is the "curriculum development"(Pinar et al., 1995), according to which curriculum is seen under a technical point of view, with particular relevance to curriculum design. Throughout the document, there is a belief that education can be changed through changes in the curriculum. Cunha (1996, p.22), who analyzed a preliminary version of the document of national curriculum parameters, pointed that school is viewed in the document as "omnipotent" to face school failure. School failure is considered as caused by internal problems, thus, a good school would be capable of fighting against and eliminating school failure. Arguing against this "omnipotent" view, Cunha (1996, p.22) mentioned, among external causes of bad results in Brazilian schools, the misdistribution of income and the poverty of a great part of the population. However, it is doubtful that it is possible to change this situation by selecting curricular contents. So, for the student supervision, the most important aspect is to develop a competent teacher as curricula designer. Planning and evaluating became once more the main key of the teacher activity. And psychology became the most important domain, because the theoretical approach of the national curriculum is a combination of the work of Ralph Tyler (1949)and the constructivism of Cesar Coll (1997).

Most of the students want to observe teachers in private schools (especially those that have educational material, resources, a small number of students in classroom) applying the principles of the constructivism approach in practical situations.

3) The most important problems

Having in mind what was presented above there are many issues in student teacher supervision in Brazil that could deserve greater discussion. Among them we can list two:

3.1-Theory and practice relation

The relation between university and school involves many tensions and contradictions. Student teachers do not usually find the basic courses they have taken before very helpful

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when they start their teaching practice. There is a gap between the more theoretical part of the preparation of a student teacher and the teaching practice in which these theoretical studies should be applied.

Teacher education is not an easy task, since as seen above; teacher education programs frequently fail to establish relations between theory and practice. Consequently, it is very difficult to establish connections between the theories that have been learned in courses student teachers take in the university with the real practice in schools. It seems they are completely different worlds and teachers feel unable to make connections just by themselves.

How can we join academic and practical interests in a curricular proposal for a teacher educational program? What kind of theory or theoretical approaches are important for daily practice in schools? One of the main difficulties faced in this case is then how to overcome this gap between theory and practice.

The practical disciplines do not have the same status as the theoretical ones, such as philosophy, sociology or psychology of education. The "how to do" is not so important, considered as a knowledge of less academic status. Nowadays, teacher education is given a more political emphasis. However, the knowledge "in theory" of a political posture is not guarantee of a critical practice in the classroom. Many disciplines discuss critical themes such as "multiculturalism", "human rights" and "education for citizenship", although there are few practical experiences that can be lived by student teachers about how these aspects can be worked in the classrooms.

3.2-How to overcome repetitive practices in the school context and transform the student teacher experience in a fulfilling and rewarding experience.

How can we overcome the repetitive practice in "training schools" and transform teaching practice in a moment of "experimentation"?

Student teachers observation is often limited to repetitive exercises emphasizing memorization and traditional methods of learning. School teachers frequently give classes basically reading from books and following exercises found in the textbooks.

The pressure that the student teacher suffers from the school environment and from what he/she sees in the classroom in which he/she is practicing makes the student teacher feel the need of adapting himself/herself if he/she wants to succeed during his/her period of practice. So, it would be necessary to integrate university with public schools, with schools that have well-succeeded and/or innovative experiences.

Final Considerations

Throughout this paper I tried to show that the supervision experience in teaching practice, including the relation between university and schools of community, is connected to the way society sees and values teacher education in a specific moment. Nowadays, one of the main questions of Brazilian education which will, consequently, influence supervision practices is to develop a "quality" teacher, that is, a teacher that could be able to offer education with quality to his/her students independent of color, race and gender. And it is understood as someone who is able to develop a national curriculum.

Quality is an up to date concept in Brazilian educational context, and in order to improve quality in Brazilian education we cannot ignore wages and conditions of work of teachers especially of those who work in elementary schools, all central factors in this process. Besides that it is necessary to improve the social conditions of the population in general because the implementation of any "quality" educational program without a social program will be almost worthless in our point of view.

These are the main challenges we face now:

1) To revise the bond established between the university and training schools finding a way of valuing the work of school teachers, their classroom experience, their knowledge produced from their own practice, and also a way of articulating the work of researchers with schools in search of alternatives to the main problems found by public school teachers

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nowadays. How to transform the student teacher in a researcher of his own practice, and make him notice the social-political consequences of his action in the classroom.

2) To establish links (formal or informal) between university professors and teachers in school, valuing their experience, and the knowledge produced from their daily work in schools. How to articulate research work with teachers in a more collaborative way and trying to overcome school problems?

3) To take into consideration what a teacher does in the classroom and its social political consequences through an analysis of and reflection on the larger context of the educational process and its practices.

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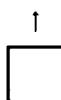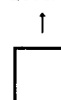| The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
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