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**Brazilian Literature and the Classroom:
How do we Teach the Literary Reading?**

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Brazilian Literature and the Classroom: How do we Teach the Literary Reading?

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Abstract

This research is about reader education in Brazil. The aim is to discuss the Portuguese language and literature university undergraduate students' reading strategies developed with state high school students, during their participation at the Teaching Initiation Scholarship Institutional Programme (called PIBID). PIBID is a Brazilian government programme that aims to develop undergraduate students for basic education, contributing to raise the quality of public schools. The instruments for data collection were the Portuguese Language and Literature students' portfolios posted in the virtual environment of the institution. We analyzed the conceptions that support these strategies and how they collaborate to develop readers. Dealing with literature, taking into consideration its aesthetic perception in a school, requires innovation in teaching methodologies, with reading strategies that lead the reader to understand the text as poetic. This way we do not push the reader away of the literary text. As a result, we indicate: a) reading strategies developed during PIBID are aligned with the conception of fruitive literature, preserving its aesthetic function. A speech in favour of aesthetics rather than its utility permeates all proposed activities; b) the strategies prioritize silent reading and group reading; c) body performance is used as a way of reframing the text; d) the computer is used as a tool for reading and production of literary texts, aiding the process of developing readers; e) undergraduate students' preparation for fruitive reading methodology; f) use of different physical spaces in the school to promote reading; g) introduction of reading activities in the school curriculum.

Keywords: PIBID, Teaching Strategies, Reader Education in Brazil, Brazilian Literature.

Introduction

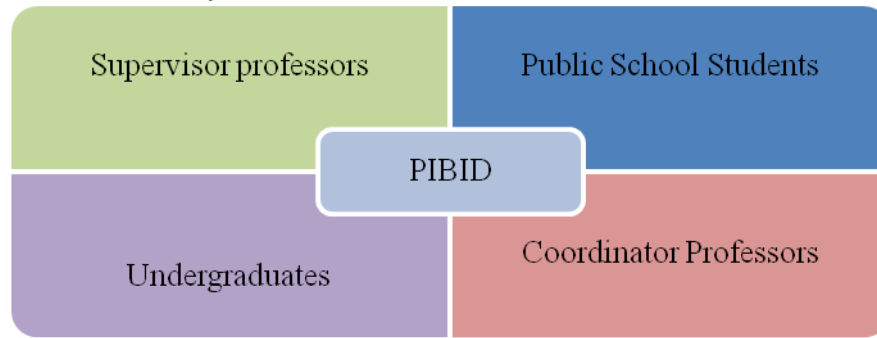
This article is about reader education in Brazil. The objective is to discuss how literature is worked in the classroom, focusing on the reading strategies developed by the Portuguese language and literature undergraduate students with state high school students, during their participation at the Teaching Initiation Scholarship Institutional Programme (called PIBID - Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência). The research problem is: What literary reading strategies did PIBID undergraduate students promote during the programme, what conceptions underline them and how these strategies contribute to reader education in high school?

The research Portraits of Reading in Brazil, applied in 2011, identifies as readers those who have read at least one book in the last three months. This research is a good indicator of Brazilians' reading behavior - 7th on their preferences. Watching television is the first, followed by listening to music, resting, getting together with friends and family, watching DVDs and going out with friends (Instituto Pró-Livro). Besides, national and international reading evaluations in Brazil reveal a great discrepancy regarding reading competences, mainly in the final years of basic education. According to Bridon, the great majority of young people in Brazilian basic schools have low levels of reading strategy knowledge. Her research points out that students rarely read novels and they are also surface and highly restricted readers. One of the causes may be the lack of literature reading experiences in school life or even the literary text exploitation through pedagogical practices, which aim its use as a teaching strategy, without considering its aesthetic function.

Research Background

Since 2007, PIBID has been a Brazilian programme developed by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) (Higher Education Personnel Improvement Coordination) that aims to animate teachers' education for basic schools. One of this programme's aims is to develop projects in schools involving Portuguese language and literature undergraduate students and state school teachers, tutored by a university coordinator professor. The programme allows the state school teacher to be the undergraduate students' co-instructor who participates in several activities and develops innovative projects at school that lead to re-think his/her practice in the classroom, changing this teacher's routine.

Figure 1. *Structure of PIBID*



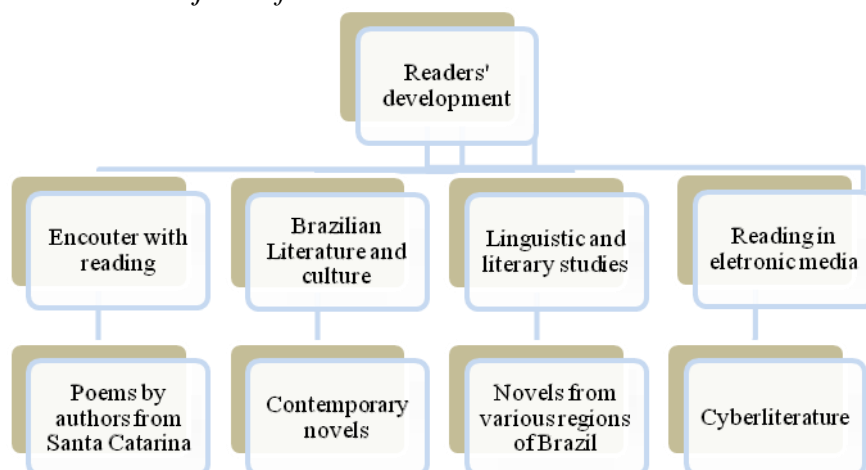
PIBID-Language and Literature (as we shall call here) objective is to develop projects for high school reader education by introducing literature through its poetic-aesthetic via. Dealing with literature considering the aesthetic perception in a school institution demands reading strategies that lead the reader to notice the text as an artistic object. It is necessary to appreciate the text before withdrawing information. That is why PIBID literature conception is the fruitive, which respects the literary text aesthetic specificities. Providing the students with a compelling reading that arouses curiosity about the reading act itself is a process that depends on some variables: literature collection available, the way this collection is presented to the students, and the activities that will result from the encounter between reader and text. According to Lajolo: ‘So that reading fulfills its role in students’ lives, the school may not have a mechanical and discouraging reading standard. On the contrary, school can and needs to make students capable of comprehensive, critical, and inventive reading. Only then, the books will make sense in their lives’ (Lajolo 13).

Reading education process depends on the establishment of a crisis in the subject’s intimacy that is revealed by the text desire. Our hypothesis is that the aesthetic relation that is built with the literary text will mobilize the subject’s perceptions so as he/she is able to apprehend the multiple meanings of the text, not only the explicit signs, but also those that are oblique, marked in the language, between the lines. Feeling uneasy with this, PIBID tried to develop reading practices that respected the literally text artistic expression and prioritized the aesthetic perception, aimed at the text itself not as a material to be drilled in an unceasing search for literary movements, character typology - thus theory overriding the text - but that stimulated students’ poetic sensibility, leading them to love the text first and then help them with its comprehension.

Putting the text aesthetic function in the foreground, its value does not lie only in the message the text conveys but also on how it is conveyed. A project founded in fruitive literature demands a poetic posture of complicity with the literary text, dialogues with a transforming trend that in Brazil started to emerge in 1986 with Edmir Perrotti’s publication: *O texto Sedutor na literatura infantil* (The Seductive text in children’s literature). This work presents an effort to introduce literature in schools, not only through pedagogical utilitarianism, but also in order to exceed it by valuing its poetic aesthetic

speech, that besides offering world concept, creates spaces for reader imagination and reader fruition, escaping from the authoritarian speech of literature as homework. The proposal is more than creating a reading habit: it is about bringing to school the reading desire, expanding the reader world conception. Given these assumptions, PIBID - Language and Literature planned the development of the following projects:

Figure 1. *PIBID Projects of Letters*



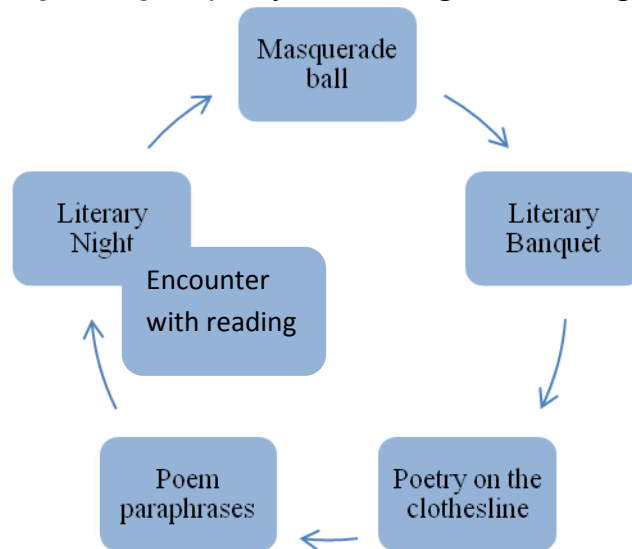
Source: Serenita Hockman - PIBID - Language and Literature projects.

This article deals with the developed strategies in two of these projects: Encounter with reading that focused on poetry and Brazilian Literature and culture that focused on Brazilian contemporary novels. Ten undergraduate students developed both projects in two state high schools in the city of Itajaí, SC, Brazil, Henrique da Silva Fontes and Victor Meirelles High Schools. In the first school, the class had 23 students in the last year of high school, and in the second one two classes of 21 students each, first and second grade. Data collection instruments were the university students' portfolios, posted on the university virtual environment - Sophia. We analyzed the concepts that supported the strategies and how they collaborated to reader education. We based this analysis on Petit, Paz, Lajolo, Pennac and Bridon.

Reading Strategies: Presenting Results

Encounter with Reading: How to embrace a poem, notice it, build senses, enlarge its meanings? How to learn how to read it? How to teach students to see it? The idea was to work with poems by authors from Santa Catarina: Leandro de Mamam, Alcides Buss, Magru Floriano and Bento Nascimento. Nascimento was born in Itajaí, so the reader feels next to his work. It is important to point out that a literary project about authors from Santa Catarina mobilizes the students to notice that reading is something that can be considered alive, that is renewed and enlarged. The strategies developed with this group were:

Figure 2. Reading Strategies of Project “Meeting with Reading”



Masquerade Ball

In his study of body senses in literary reception, Zumthor places the body as an element that makes it possible for the text perception to unfold.

The expression of the other is a sensorial presence in which the world is present. It is important not to forget that ‘it is through the body that sense is noticed’ (Zumthor 90), that is we learn through the body. Thus, this strategy aimed to confound the senses through the body. Each student received a mask, and one circle was made so that all could walk freely inside it, as if they were dancing in a ball while a Brazilian song named Noite dos mascarados (Masquerade ball night) by Chico Buarque was playing. One of the students asked: ‘Look at yourselves. Are we all equal? How are we similar and different?’ Each student decorated their masks according to their most representative identity character, and they could observe their differences. The students received poems by authors from Santa Catarina to be read in silence and aloud, when the music stopped. The students were grouped according to their characteristics, previously exposed through their masks when reading aloud.

Image 1. *The Masquerade Ball*



Source: PIBID-Language and Literature undergraduate students' portfolio.

To Petit, the reading 'works' the reader, it is the text that reads him/her and due to this, it is the text that reveals him/her. 'Thanks to their stories, we write ours, between the lines.' (2008, 39). Thus, when one surrenders to the text, without other intentions, it is the first step to promote the passion for the text and to notice the differences between the lyric and the narrative text. From this activity, it is possible to establish a nuisance among young students: reading is not such a dull activity.

Literary Banquet

This strategy aimed the reading and perception of the rhythm of poem, promoting more contact with the text, this way, the reader could build an aesthetic relationship with the text. 'Let the thought go freely, wander, it means returning to the rhythm' (Paz 82). To this strategy development, the classroom became a banquet space. The idea was to associate the spiritual food – the reading – with the necessary food to the physical body. For this, the undergraduate students organized a banquet with real food and literature, surrounded by the song *Comida* by Titãs, a Brazilian rock group. The students remained sitting at the banquet table and one of the undergraduate students recited a poem, presenting the book and the author.

Image 2. *Literary Banquet*



PIBID-Language and Literature undergraduate students' portfolio.

After that, students chose a poem served on the literary banquet and everyone recited different poems at the same time. Next, they experienced the individual reading. Each student read the first verse of his/her poem, forming a fragmented reading, composed only by the first verse, then the second verse and so on. The students emphasized the sound elements of the verses and explored the pauses, the alliterations, in order to exercise the images that arose from the rhythm of the verses. The focus was to sensitize the students with the rhythm of the poem, without worrying about the meanings that they could attribute to it. In pairs, they chose a poem to read to the group. The activity of reading was so intense that the literary banquet was preferred over the food, which was not touched. This dynamic aimed to insert the subject in the literary universe, through a none utilitarian view of literature that enabled the students to read, to savour, and to notice the poem. The students listened to poetry, recited it, were introduced to the book and its author, then they realized that the poems they read and heard could be revisited.

Literary Clothesline

The access to the text is the basic principle of any reader education programme. Working in a way that reading has its place in the discipline of Portuguese Language is essential for students to understand the importance of reading just for appreciation of the text. Books by authors from Santa Catarina were available in the center of the room so the students could choose one. As students read, they selected some poems to recite. A chat circle allowed them to externalize what they read and lived, expressing the sensations generated by the poems. It was a moment of interaction, verbalization within the group that generated many reflections about the themes. The undergraduate students invited the group to reveal these perceptions through clippings and magazines, because during the organization of space and materials students, besides being part of the groups, they experienced social situations and through them developed their criticism.

Image 3. Students' Productions



Source: PIBID-Language and Literature undergraduate students' portfolio.

The students exposed their productions on a literary clothesline and each one socialized the material produced, reading the selected poem, talking about the creative process and the meanings of each element. The reader, here, may ask him/herself: what is the importance of all this process in the reader education? We can answer saying that the worlds that literature creates and therefore provides to the reader are not diluted at the end of the book, they 'remain in the reader, incorporated as experience, each one's reading landmark' (Lajolo, 2006, 44-45).

Poems Paraphrases

When we realize how a text dialogues with another, how a text comes from another, and the universe of relations in which it is born, we expand our understanding about the writing process. Aiming to offer the students not only opportunities to read, but also comprehension of a text writing process, the undergraduate students started working with poetic text paraphrases. This production exercise, at first simple and without major problems, put again the students in touch with the poetry by authors from Santa Catarina.

Paraphrasing is a writing exercise that requires reading the text very carefully, and, in this process, the reader interprets, builds several meanings, appropriating the text. Regarding poetry, it is not just exchanging words by synonyms, but a more planned construction, engineered, re-signified, so that the text does not lose its sonority, lightness, harmony, among other poetic predicates.

Rereading allows the students to enlarge their conception of poetry, 'this verbal exorcism that provokes on the reader or listener, a provider of mental images' (Paz 143). The poem 'is amphibious creatures: they are ideas and forms, sounds and silences' (Paz 143) that will contribute to expand their creative process. At the end of the activities, each student recited his/her chosen poetry and then the paraphrase they elaborated. Lajolo points out:

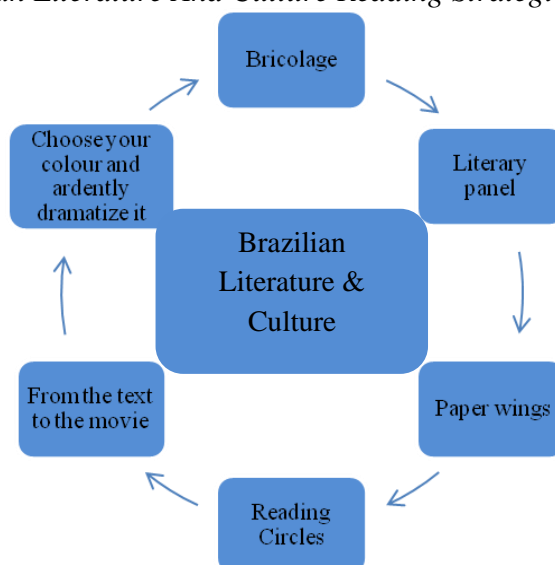
‘Literature is the door to several worlds that are born from various readings that are done from it’ (2006, 44-45).

Literary Night

We know that everything we experience interferes in our way of being and acting. Our own daily lives build our knowledge. Petit (2008) presents testimonies of young people who through contact with literature in some way were affected by it. Given that the projects dealt with authors from Santa Catarina, the undergraduate students organized two cultural events, called Literary Night, whose central focus was the presence of the author at school. The event enabled the author to talk about his career as a writer, and the students to interact with him and produce literary presentations. The author distributed books to students and autographed them. The experience with the author motivated the reading process, generating close links between reader and book. ‘Every reader in the individuality of his/her life will intertwine the personal meaning of their readings with several accumulated meanings throughout the history of a text’ (Lajolo, 2007, 106).

The strategies developed during the Brazilian Literature and Culture project were focused on the reading of three books: *Cidade Ihada* (Islanded City), by Milton Hatoum; *Terra Papagalli* (Papagalli Land), by José Roberto Torero and Marcus Aurelius Pimenta; and *Amrik*, by Ana Miranda. The choice of these books took place due to the need to expand the literary repertoire of the students, regarding the contemporary production, so that they could build the view that literature is a living body, which consists of a dynamic form through narratives and reader point of view. The undergraduate students planned and applied the following reading strategies at Victor Meirelles Public School:

Figure 3. *Brazilian Literature And Culture Reading Strategies*



Literary Panel

The literary panel aimed to present three books to the students, using several resources such as videos, posters, excerpts from the books, songs and poems to help the students to choose the book to start their reading journey. Petit (2008) discusses the importance of the mediator in the reading process when a young boy/girl comes from an environment that does not worship the image of the book. According to the author, 'a mediator may authorize, legitimize an insecure desire to read or learn, or even reveal this desire. And other mediators may then accompany the reader in different moments of their journey' (Petit, 2008, 28).

Paper Wings

Outside the classroom, in an environment prepared with cushions and carpets, the students observed the object 'book', exploring their paratexts. Auden's epigraph (in Amrik) affected the group: 'being free is often being alone'. Freedom was discussed and students individually wrote a small paragraph about the meaning of the word 'freedom', followed by the reading of their production aloud. To take advantage of the dialogue that students began to establish with the book due to the epigraph, one of the undergraduate students presented a folded book and the invitation to the students to create one through the technique of folding a symbolic object of freedom. They chose to do a tsuru (a Japanese technique for folding) shaped like a bird. Each student selected the artistic material available to personalize his/her tsuru. After the folding process, the students juxtaposed it with the text about freedom that each one produced and exhibited on the wall of the school. Thus, reading activities, discussion and construction of a symbolic object were born from a shared reading. According to Petit: 'By sharing reading [...] every person may experience a sense of belonging to something, to this humanity of our time or past times, from here or elsewhere, to which one can feel close' (2008, 43).

Reading Circles

Reader education also occurs in the silence, moment in which the interaction between reader and piece of work proposes a surrender to the text. Besides, a crisis in the reader intimacy takes place and reveals a desire for the text. Reading circles is a strategy that consists of promoting a group reading as a curricular activity, silent reading and reading aloud, interspersed with moments of dialogue about the text. Circles of reading in several school spaces allowed the students to have contact with the book as an aesthetic object, which goes far beyond its communicative function. The book becomes a refuge whose virtue is to 'abstract us from the world to lend it meaning' (Pennac 18). When listening to the text, the reading becomes collective; the listener perceives its poeticity. By taking possession of the story through other person's voice, the oral and written text start to coexist. Pennac discusses how moments of encounter with the book can forge a reader, especially when these encounters with an adult reader happen in a vivid way.

From The Text to the Movie

Reading literary texts enables the students to develop their reading competences. That collaborates on the reader profile, helping them go from surface and highly restricted readers to deep and wide readers (Bridon). But, for that, besides cultivating the taste in reading, it is necessary to systematize strategies that lead them to read and interpret texts; analyze and criticize information; draw conclusions by induction and/or deduction; establish relations, comparisons and contrasts in different situations; detect contradictions; make choices by evaluating consequences; question the reality.

From the Text to the film sought to explore the literary language through group discussion that focused on certain stories, chosen by the groups with the aim of stimulating students' reflection on the trajectory that each performed while reading the book. The undergraduate students invited the group to remember what they read and resignify what was lived, manifesting the perceptions generated in the act of reading to enlarge their understanding. The students highlighted phrases selected from the story, arranging them in the same temporal order in which they appear in the text. This action takes the student to develop basic reading competences, such as developing interpretation of written material and reflect on the content and quality of the text. To socialize the process of the story discussion, the undergraduate students proposed to the students to elaborate a filmstrip with images only, in a horizontally placed sequence, one slide next to the other, giving the idea of a roll produced film or even representing the construction of photographic negatives. The choices made by the students showed their reading trajectory.

Image 4. *The Students' Reading Trajectory Reproduction*



Source: PIBID-Language and Literature undergraduate students' portfolio.

Choose Your Colour and Ardently Dramatize It

How do we demonstrate what we see, hear, feel, learn? Everything around us reaches us through the senses, our bodies show our reactions towards what we experience. Zumthor invites us to reflect on the body as an instrument of dialogue and interaction with the world. Zumthor calls that materialized feeling in movement, this physiological manifestation, 'performance'. In this sense, there is no way to disregard the body when it comes to reading, because it is

materialized by the body, the senses, and it is built on the body. Reading is born in the body interaction with the book, understanding it occurs in the body and redefinition uses up the body - responsible receptacle for our productive relationship with the book, with the world. The strategy of the game of colours was thought in this context.

The classroom space was reorganized so that students could move themselves during oral and silent reading. The undergraduate students offered a set of cards with different colours that the students could choose. Each colour had a guideline to be followed when reading, which implied the involvement of the body through dramatic reading. For instance: Red - the student should read expressing the feeling 'fear'; Blue - The student should walk and read in a soft and sad tone.

The undergraduate students coordinated the action so that all students participated and expressed their actions through their performance, thus increasing their interest in reading. This exercise triggered significant elements: auditory, visual, tactile - enlarging the possibilities of entering the text, understanding and re-signifying their senses.

Image 4. *Students' Involvement on Dramatic Reading*



Source: PIBID-Language and Literature undergraduate students' portfolio.

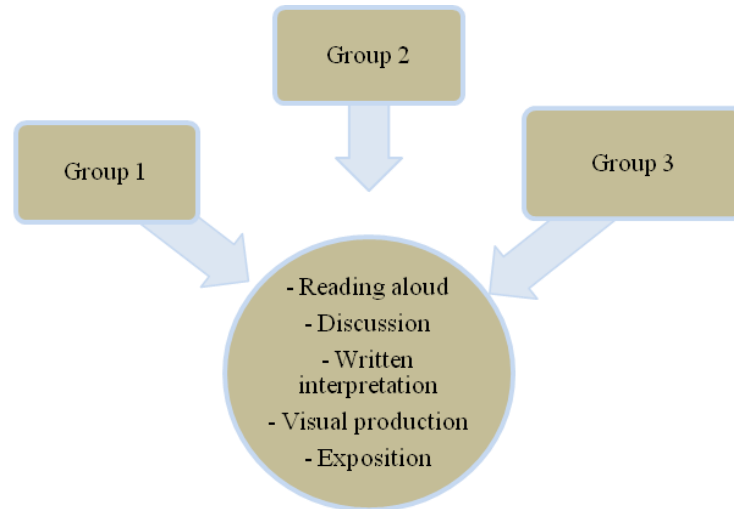
According to the portfolios, the students involved reported to have enjoyed participating and even requested this game to be done more often. The first steps towards the literary text were given. The distance that the group had from the book was broken. This group started to see reading as a social practice that can be enjoyable.

Bricolage: From Impression to Expression

Aiming to encourage fruition by creating symbolic products with the aid of newspapers and magazines, students were divided into three groups in order to read the chapters of the book aloud. At the end of each chapter of the novel or short story, there was a discussion about the text, mediated by the

undergraduate students. Mediation sought to bring students to relate the text to their daily life or their memories.

Figure 5. *Bricolage Dynamic*



Students wrote their perceptions about the chapter establishing relationships between fiction and reality, continuing the process of text interpretation. This activity was developed in four classes of approximately fifty minutes, from reading and discussions to bricolage that emerged as a sequence of the reading process, discussions, re-reading and reflection on the text, resulting in a visual production related to text meaning for the group. All this material composed a mural exposed outside the classroom. This activity allowed students to produce summaries of what they read, in written and imagery form, but its main objective was to expand the relationship between reader and book. To Bridon, ‘the literary text should be used as a pretext, but as a pretext to conquer readers, to bring them into the world of reading, as to be a reader a student needs to read and read’ (25).

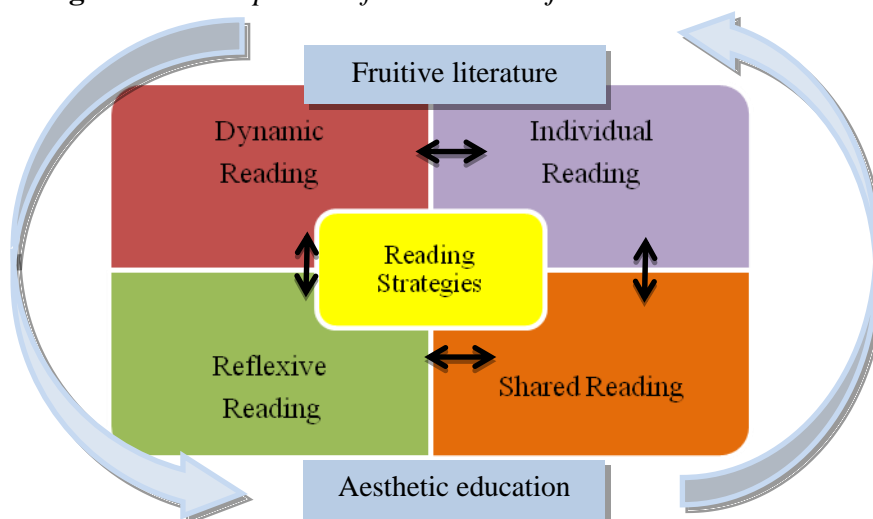
Final Considerations

Considering that PIBID-Language and Literature adopted literature as art, which needs to be appreciated as an aesthetic object, through research and analysis of the undergraduate students’ portfolios, we identified the project is concerned with students’ reading enchantment. We observed that the ultimate goal was to promote the understanding and appreciation of the literary work as an aesthetic and artistic object, justified by the students’ reality who reached the last years of high school without access to this immaterial object that is literature.

The strategies we analyzed are aligned to the fruitive literature conception designed in the project and enabled the students to see the school space as a place that needs to be opened up to sensations. Dealing with art favours a

sensible education when we emphasize its aesthetic function. This way, a speech in favour of aesthetics rather than utility permeated all the proposed activities. We saw that all the strategies applied enabled the reader to enter the text through oral, silent, reflective and dynamic reading, providing experiences that, besides seducing the reader, may lead them to develop several reading competences.

Figure 6. *Assumptions Of The Two Projects*



The whole process proved to be productive because everyone involved gained: undergraduates - broaden their view about teaching literature, integrating theory and practice; supervising teachers - rethought their practices and revitalized themselves by creating new teaching strategies with the undergraduate students; the high school students - during months lived with contemporary literature in a fruitive way; teaching course professors - when working with basic education, professors could reflect on the content of the teaching graduating courses.

To summarize, we indicate the following results: a) the developed literature reading strategies are aligned with the conception of fruitive literature, preserving its aesthetic function. A speech in favour of aesthetics rather than the utility permeates all proposed activities, although the idea of producing a symbolic material after reading still persists; b) the strategies prioritized the silent reading and group reading; c) body performance was used as a way of text re-signification; d) undergraduate students' preparation to fruitive reading methodology; e) use of various physical spaces in the school to promote reading; f) introduction of reading activities in the school curriculum; g) students' bibliographical collection expansion due to the donations made by the authors at the literary night.

The appropriation of literature through fruition is desirable for several reasons, among them: the reader 'becomes more skilled in the use of language and more critical; and also becomes more capable of exploring the human experience, giving to it meaning and poetic value' (Petit, 2010, p. 28).

However, if this argument is not enough, we can make use of another that embarks in the construction of personal narratives that connect with other narratives and enable the understanding of the other. To Bridon, the book, when presented to the reader as an art object, touches ‘him/her in other ways, as it provokes not only his/her intellect, but also his/her human being sensible side, paving the way for sensitivity, creativity, and sense refinement’ (24).

Overall, through the portfolios, we realized that the strategies applied, despite being mostly known to us, allowed students to be interested in the activities and to participate in a positive learning environment. This makes us reflect on teacher’s attitude in the art of teaching. The teaching job needs to consider other dimensions of the human in order to overcome the extremely productivist and instrumental feature of modern educational framework, aspects that go beyond the specific knowledge of teaching, as educating is not just about science and technology domain, it also involves an aesthetic dimension of educational practice.

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