

**VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE ON THE INTERFACE BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY
AND EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

**ORIENTAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL NA INTERFACE ENTRE PSICOLOGIA E
EDUCAÇÃO: UMA REVISÃO DE LITERATURA**

**ORIENTACIÓN PROFESIONAL SOBRE LA INTERFAZ ENTRE LA PSICOLOGÍA Y
LA EDUCACIÓN: UNA REVISIÓN DE LA LITERATURA**

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ABSTRACT: *This paper presents results of research on the practice of Vocational Guidance (VG) at the interface between Psychology and Education. A bibliographic review was made from the access to the platforms Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Virtual Health Library - Psychology (VHL - Psi). From the use of the Vocational Guidance descriptor, a total of 83 articles were found, of which nine were selected after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Reports of VGs practiced at the interface between psychology and education were chosen. The VG proved to be powerful to support students in the process of professional choice. In addition, it has emerged as a strategic device for bringing psychology and education closer in an ethical and political way.*

KEYWORDS: *Vocation guidance. Education. School and educational psychology.*

RESUMO: *Este artigo expõe resultados de uma pesquisa sobre a prática de Orientação Profissional (OP) na interface entre Psicologia e Educação. Realizou-se uma revisão bibliográfica a partir do acesso às plataformas Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) e Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde – Psicologia (BVS – Psi). A partir do emprego do descritor Orientação Vocacional, constatou-se um total de 83 artigos, dos quais nove foram selecionados após a aplicação de critérios de inclusão e de exclusão. Priorizaram-se relatos de OPs praticadas na interface entre psicologia e educação. A OP mostrou-se potente para apoiar estudantes em processo de escolha profissional. Além disso, despontou como dispositivo estratégico para aproximar psicologia e educação de modo ético e político.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Orientação profissional. Educação. Psicologia escolar e educacional.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo presenta los resultados de la investigación sobre la práctica de la Orientación Profesional (OP) en la interfaz entre psicología y educación. Se realizó una revisión bibliográfica desde el acceso a las plataformas Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) y Biblioteca Virtual en Salud - Psicología (BVS - Psi). Del uso del descriptor de orientación vocacional, se encontraron un total de 83 artículos, de los cuales nueve fueron seleccionados después de aplicar los criterios de inclusión y exclusión. Se escogieron informes*

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de OP practicados en la interfaz entre psicología y educación. La OP demostró ser poderosa para apoyar a los estudiantes en el proceso de elección profesional. Además, se ha convertido en un dispositivo estratégico para acercar la psicología y la educación de una manera ética y política.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Orientación profesional. Educación. Psicología Escolar.*

Introduction

VG has been held in Brazil in different spaces and fields of action in psychology. According to Abade (2005), there are at least three recurrent emphases in the works, namely: psychometric, clinical and psychosocial, the first two being significantly predominant in the scenario of practices and studies in VG.

This predominance is justified because, historically, VG has been associated with work carried out in private offices or colleges, aimed at the wealthiest sections of society. In general, services practiced in these environments are supported through psychometric tests, individual interviews and other instruments aimed at measuring aspects such as interests, motivations, skills and personality traits (RIBEIRO, 2003).

From a psychometric perspective, we seek to identify individual aspects that are compatible with certain areas of professional practice. It is an approach that implies that we must find the right person for the right place. In general, the strategies emphasize the individual dimension of the subjects and do not consider the social, historical, political, economic and cultural elements involved in the process of professional choice.

From the 1970s onwards, VG gained space in psychological clinics, especially under the influence of the clinical approach proposed by Argentine psychoanalyst Rodolfo Bohoslavsky. Conducted more frequently in private offices, through individual consultations, guidelines for clinical approach emerged with the purpose of supporting adolescents in times of crisis, anxiety and conflicts associated with professional choice (BOHOSLAVSKY, 1998).

After the 1990s, expressive works marked the consolidation of practices with a socio-historical approach (BOCK; AGUIAR, 1995; BOCK, 2002). In that moment of important changes for the consolidation of the Brazilian democracy, this approach expanded the possibilities of access to the VG.

Collective and creative strategies have become necessary to carry out interventions practiced in impoverished contexts. Themes such as work, career, educational formation and professional choice circulated in school institutions due to actions developed, mainly, from the

group perspective, with students from public schools (SOUZA *et al.*, 2009; NASCIMENTO; MACHADO, 2019).

Elements associated with the historical and social domains have gained relevance and space in carrying out activities and producing analyzes. According to Bock (2002), the socio-historical approach recognized as the main objectives of the VG: to make participants aware of the historical and social determinants related to their narratives and life trajectories; problematize prejudices and naturalizations on topics such as professional choice, success, career and formation, among others; transforming social reality through empowerment and emancipation in the face of power and domination relations operated in class society.

The dissemination of VG practices in the school context, it is worth noting, complies with Law no. 9394/96 - Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (BRASIL, 1996), which assigns to school institutions the task of preparing individuals for work, in addition to fulfilling an important role in human development and training for citizenship.

In view of these responsibilities attributed to school institutions, projects promoted at the interface between psychology and education propose the transversalization of VG to the school curriculum (LAMAS; PEREIRA; BARBOSA, 2008; BARBOSA; LAMAS, 2012). More recently, projects and programs aimed at basic education offered by the public education system have recommended the inclusion of subjects to address topics such as work, employment and life projects (BRASIL, 2009; BRASIL, 2019).

However, as we will discuss below, however significant changes have been implemented in view of the demands for expanding access to VG (LAMAS *et al.*, 2008), the hegemony of work based on the application of psychometric tests, followed by clinical approach techniques (ABADE, 2005), suggests a long way to go.

When we talk about offering this service to groups historically neglected by psychology, we must take ethical and epistemological care to avoid the reproduction of discriminatory and exclusive practices under the aegis of a scientific discourse influenced by the ideals of meritocracy in force today.

In privileged contexts from an economic, social and cultural point of view, VG services are supported by traditionally consolidated approaches in the field of psychology. Substantially different are the approaches demanded by the work promoted in public schools, attended by socially disadvantaged population segments.

In some contexts, choosing is not a verb that can be embodied in actions, especially in the case of young people living in peripheral neighborhoods, marked by oppression that violates

rights, stigmatizes, silences, makes them invisible and socially excludes (CASTRO; BICALHO, 2013).

Therefore, aware of the importance of the propagation of VG practices, especially to the public lacking opportunities to assertively project their professional future, we access scientific articles with reports of practices carried out in school contexts in order to identify, analyze and reflect on their scope, limits and possibilities.

Method

We performed a bibliographic review (LUNA, 1998; MARCONI; LAKATOS, 2004) on VG practices reported through scientific articles. We prioritize actions implemented at the interface between psychology and education.

Procedures for data collection

The revision was achieved by accessing the SciELO and BVS - Psi databases, being restricted to texts published between the years 2008 and 2018. The bibliographic survey resulted from the use of the descriptor vocational guidance.

We adopted as inclusion criteria: (1) reports of intervention; (2) works promoted at the interface between psychology and education; (3) practices associated with the field of School and Educational Psychology. We exclude: (1) essays and theoretical articles; (2) practices unrelated to training and educational processes; (3) actions taken in the health area.

Analysis procedures

At first, we read the title and summary of each article located in the databases consulted. Then, we started the inclusion and exclusion processes based on the previously stipulated criteria. Finally, we read the selected works in full and elaborate the summaries of the reports.

The reading of the texts was guided by the following questions: What are the main characteristics of the VG practices carried out in school contexts? What is the target audience present in such actions? What are the objectives of the interventions? What is the predominant theoretical framework? What are the recurring methods?

The summaries were organized in tables containing the following elements: (1) title of the article; (2) objectives; (3) theoretical approach; (4) methodology; (5) target audience; (6)

results and discussion. Then, we group the references and their respective syntheses according to similarities and differences between the above elements.

Results and discussion

The survey resulted in a total of 83 articles on VG. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, nine texts were selected (see table 1).

Table 1 - References selected in the literature review

Title	Journal	Year
Orientability during a group process with adolescents: an experience report. ²	Revista Brasileira de Orientação Profissional.	2008
Vocational Guidance at school: research with intervention. ³	Revista Psicologia em Pesquisa.	2008
Vocational guidance workshop in a public school: a psychosocial approach ⁴ .	Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão.	2009
Professional re-choice: report of professional orientation experience with students of Normal Education. ⁵	Contextos Clínicos.	2010
My place in the world: report of experience with young people in vocational guidance. ⁶	Revista Brasileira de Orientação Profissional.	2012
Vocational guidance as a transversal activity to the school curriculum. ⁷	Estudos de Psicologia.	2012
Vocational guidance (VG) as a link between the university and the school. ⁸	Psicologia Argumento.	2012
Youth, territory, Psychology and politics: possible interventions and practices. ⁹	Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão.	2013
Workshops to raise awareness of professional issues with high school students from public schools. ¹⁰	Psicologia Revista.	2016

Source: Devised by the author

The papers were submitted to analysis procedures and are grouped in the subsections set out below.

² Orientabilidade ao longo de um processo grupal com adolescentes: relato de uma experiência.

³ Orientação Profissional na escola: uma pesquisa com intervenção

⁴ Oficina de orientação profissional em uma escola pública: uma abordagem psicossocial

⁵ Re-escolha profissional: relato de experiência de orientação profissional com estudantes do Ensino Normal.

⁶ Meu lugar no mundo: relato de experiência com jovens em orientação profissional.

⁷ A orientação profissional como atividade transversal ao currículo escolar.

⁸ A orientação profissional (OP) como elo entre a universidade e a escola.

⁹ Juventude, território, Psicologia e política: intervenções e práticas possíveis.

¹⁰ Oficinas de sensibilização às questões profissionais realizadas com estudantes do ensino médio de escola pública.

Psychosocial approach as a strategy to expand access to VG

In this subsection, we list interventions with a psychosocial approach aimed at young students enrolled in high school. In Lamas *et al.*, (2008), we highlight the investment in activities with the potential to disseminate information about different professions and areas of knowledge to a group of students in a public school. Based on the use of group dynamics, music, phrases and films on formation and work, the aim was to make participants aware of the complexity involved in the choice processes. The activities included the production of reflections and critical analysis on the privileges of the wealthier classes versus the lack of opportunities for the impoverished population to access the world of work.

In the same perspective, Becker, Bobato and Schulz (2012) held VG sessions with students from the 9th grade of elementary school and the 2nd year of high school. The work was developed on the premises of a company located in the State of Santa Catarina. The target audience for the actions was composed of teenagers from the middle and lower classes, children of employees of the same company.

Through activities such as dramatizations, group dynamics, autobiographical writings and lectures on career, given by employees of the company where the work was developed, the sessions sought to promote: self-knowledge; learning about different areas of knowledge and professional performance; and, finally, reflections on important influences for professional choice processes. At the time of the intervention, the participants indicated parents, friends, teachers and the media as the main influences on the professional choice process (BECKER *et al.*, 2012).

Regarding the work exposed in Becker *et al.*, (2012), the fact that the intervention was not carried out in a school environment, as usual, stands out. In addition, the participants' contact with reports from professionals from different areas of activity is highlighted.

However, although this work alluded to the socio-historical approach as a theoretical basis, adolescence was defined as a natural stage of development. We did not observe any considerations about the historical, social and cultural determinants associated with it. It is worth mentioning that, according to the socio-historical framework,

[...] adolescence is seen as a social construction with repercussions on the subjectivity and development of modern man and not as a natural period of development. [...] Marks of body development are associated with it. These marks also constitute adolescence as a social phenomenon, but the fact that

they exist as body marks should not make adolescence a natural fact (BOCK, 2007, p. 68).¹¹

This criticism in relation to the traditional conception of adolescence, identified in the report by Becker *et al.*, (2012), also appears in the analyzes of Ozella and Aguiar (2008). According to these authors, although there are common aspects among adolescents from different parts of the world, we must consider differences in class, gender and ethnicity to affirm the multidetermination of the construction processes associated with the phenomenon that has been hegemonically called adolescence.

An alternative proposal to intensify the expansion of access to VG

In Santos *et al.*, (2016), we found the report of a practice that is distinct from all the others accessed in this study. The project mentioned by the authors proposed awareness workshops for students aged between 16 and 20 years old, enrolled in a public school located in a municipality in Rio Grande do Sul. The workshops aimed to identify the participants' interests and motivations. In the same perspective, they encouraged the practice of self-knowledge practices and the recognition of important influences for the choice processes. In addition, they performed simulations and exercises in preparation for participation in selection processes for job vacancies.

These authors were supported by the developmental perspective of Super (1963; 1990). As reported, they applied a questionnaire based on Holland's typology (1997), called RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Entrepreneur and Conventional). The instrument was used to promote in the participants the recognition of their own skills and interests for career development. In addition, they suggested an exercise aimed at breaking stereotypes about professions (LASSANCE, 1999), they discussed collectively from listening to the objectives and life projects of some participants. At another time, they requested the production of research about professions and areas of formation and addressed knowledge of themselves as a strategy for decision making in the face of the challenges of choice. Finally, they played videos with tips on how to seek information about professions of interest and make decisions in the selection processes.

¹¹ [...] a adolescência é vista como uma construção social com repercussões na subjetividade e no desenvolvimento do homem moderno e não como um período natural do desenvolvimento. [...] Estão associadas a ela marcas do desenvolvimento do corpo. Essas marcas constituem também a adolescência enquanto fenômeno social, mas o fato de existirem enquanto marcas do corpo não deve fazer da adolescência um fato natural (BOCK, 2007, p. 68).

This work proved to be relevant especially to students in need of speech and listening spaces, which are so important for the development of cognitive and subjective resources necessary to overcome challenges, so frequent in times of professional choice. However, as analyzed, the theoretical perspective adopted does not support the necessary criticism of the work involving people from the impoverished strata. On the contrary, according to the developmental framework used to base the action, the professional choice was thought of as the result of a supposed natural phase of development. In that perspective, it is believed that young people can make decisions based on the accumulation of experiences and the influences received during their life from contact with reference figures. This approach does not attach sufficient importance to the cultural, social, political and economic aspects involved in the relationship between individuals and the world of work.

Innovative VG experiences

In this subsection, we point out two practices that are distinguished from the others due to the format and objectives listed. The first reports an action focused on the so-called “professional re-choice” (HOHENDORFF; PRATI, 2010). The second indicates a proposal for the cross-cutting of topics covered in VG in the curriculum of an application college linked to a federal university located in southeastern Brazil (BARBOSA; LAMAS, 2012).

The first reported intervention elected a group of students of technical and professional level enrolled in a normal higher education course (teaching) as public. Considering the fact that the majority had entered that course relatively early, when they were between the ages of 14 and 15, the work welcomed doubts about professional choice. In addition, the participants were made aware of the weight that decisions taken in youth can bring to their professional trajectory.

This work was developed in six meetings and was guided by the use of resources such as: group dynamics, application of a scale to measure the degree of maturity for professional choice (NEIVA, 1999), discussion about the term “choice”, dramatization on relationships between participants and family members in situations requiring decision and comments on the importance of family members and guardians at that stage in which the participants were.

During the intervention, participants took advantage of spaces for dialogue, reflection and exchange of experiences to complain about the pressures suffered in the relationship with family members, who required continuity in the area of education, since that course prepared

teachers. There were those who were enrolled exclusively according to the wishes of parents or other family members (HOHENDORFF; PRATI, 2010).

The experience reported in Barbosa and Lamas (2012), in turn, proved to be innovative in that it inserted VG themes as a transversal element in the curriculum of an application college. The action lasted two months and was supported by coordinators and teachers from different disciplines. The planned activities were inspired by proposals based on the socio-historical (BOCK, 2002), developmental (SUPER, 1963; 1990) and clinical (BOHOSLAVSKY, 1998) approaches.

The authors reported carrying out the following actions: week of professions, covering lectures and exhibitions on different professional areas; insertion of topics on formation and work in disciplines from different areas of knowledge; screening of films to relate professional choice with gender, socioeconomic conditions and influences exercised by family members and important people in the social daily life of each one; conversation circles, reflections and debates about the world of work.

According to Barbosa and Lamas (2012) the project cooperated to improve relations between teachers and students, as it brought theory and practice, knowledge and reality closer together. Institutions were recommended to seek partnerships with companies and community leaders, among other important references to the social support of young people in decision-making by the areas of formation and professional performance. However, the researchers deplored the fact that teachers are firmly attached to teaching programs and plans, surrounded by the time limits imposed by the curricula, invariably full of content associated with traditional disciplines (BARBOSA; LAMAS, 2012).

Clinical approach interventions in school settings

Despite the fact that VG practices carried out in school contexts are mostly located in the field of psychosocial approach interventions, we found two experiences classified as being of clinical orientation (SELIG; VALORE, 2008; SILVA; FARIA; FOCESATO, 2012).

In Selig and Valore (2008), group consultations were carried out on the premises of a public university. A group of seven students, one from a private school and six from a public school, participated in weekly meetings for two months, each lasting two hours. The activities developed included: group dynamics and games; production of drawings, collages and autobiographical writings; self-administered questionnaires; tab searches; interviews with

professionals from different areas, to learn about the most diverse possibilities of professional performance.

According to Selig and Valore (2008), the referred work was anchored in the clinical approach, known, above all, from the work of Bohoslavsky (1998), as exposed in the Introduction. According to Bohoslavsky (1998), the vocational guidance of a clinical approach is intended to create possibilities for individuals to face anxieties, anxieties and fears, among other difficulties associated with the processes of professional choice. It turns to the investigation of the personality of the one who chooses, including conflicts and anxieties regarding the situation of choice. The results seek to promote the learning of choice, the knowledge of oneself and the occupational world.

In this perspective, the readiness of individuals for guidance processes is considered. In other words, it is understood that involvement in the process is only possible when you have the psychological conditions to do so. In this way, the so-called degree of “orientability” (BOHOSLAVSKY, 1998) indicates whether a person needs vocational guidance or, if the case suggests, referral to another type of psychological intervention.

Therefore, a clinical reading of adolescents' speeches was carried out, before and after the VG process (SELIG; VALORE, 2008), to identify the participants' orientation for involvement in that action. In a second step, the analysis aimed to verify the effects of the practice. The analysis material included the expectations of each participant regarding the work, as well as the quality of the bond with the tasks performed and the ways of each one to deal with the vocational problem.

It is worth noting that, although this approach has historically been practiced in private practices, through individual consultations, with a privileged audience of people from the upper and middle classes, in this case students from one disadvantaged social group.

In Silva *et al.*, (2012), we found analyzes on the potential of professional guidance practices with a clinical approach as a resource to form and preserve the link between university and school. These authors presented a balance of several practices carried out within the scope of an extension project promoted by a private higher education institution.

The extension project served a total of 121 students from different grades of high school, aged between 15 and 20 years, in public and private educational institutions (SILVA *et al.*, 2012). Each orientation proposal was implemented based on an average number of ten meetings (SILVA *et al.*, 2012).

The actions included recreational activities, application of a scale to measure the degree of maturity for professional choice, test to assess personality types, role plays, projective

techniques, semi-directed interviews, production of family trees, acquisition of knowledge about different occupations and professional realities, in addition to the production of letters addressed to members of the project's execution teams, used as a resource for evaluating and closing processes.

According to the report by Silva *et al.*, (2012), the actions achieved results such as: maturity in relation to professional choice and resolution of doubts in view of the different options of higher education courses.

It should be noted, however, that, despite Silva *et al.* (2012) have dealt with a clinical approach intervention, there is an evident integration of techniques and strategies from other approaches. We point here to the fact that Bohoslavsky's (1998) clinical perspective brings the idea that professional choice depends on understanding and elaborating emerging dilemmas in the choice process. In this perspective, we seek to understand the characteristics of each individual in the choice process. This approach, therefore, would not be the most appropriate for practices involving groups.

Resistance and re-existence in impoverished contexts

Among the selected articles, two exposed objectives pertinent to the perspectives in which VG is explicitly defined as a strategy aimed at transforming social reality (SOUZA *et al.*, 2009; CASTRO; BICALHO, 2013).

Souza *et al.*, (2009) elected as target audience third year high school students enrolled in a public school in the metropolitan region of Vitória - ES. Eleven students were involved in activities that emphasized discussions about school life. The following guiding question was asked: "What are the main factors that make students like school, like studying?" (SOUZA *et al.*, 2009, p. 419). Since then, moderators have raised questions about naturalized conceptions associated with the roles of teacher and student. In addition, dependency relations produced and reproduced in the teacher-student relationship were at the center of discussions that intersected daily life, training and the world of work.

The authors highlighted the fact that the participants showed too much desire to talk about school life, especially in the first three meetings. Souza *et al.* (2009) recognize the relevance of this data, as they understand silencing as one of the different expressions of the control and dressage strategies that are frequent in school spaces. During the meetings, students exposed complaints about the quality of teaching, while reflecting on the meanings of professional choices amid determined social, economic, family and personal impasses.

In the work of Castro and Bicalho (2013), the target audience was a group of young people living in a community located in the suburb of Rio de Janeiro. Enrolled in a popular pre-university entrance exam linked to a social and community project, they participated in individual interviews and group intervention practices. According to the report, the participants were encouraged to problematize the processes of choice and modes of existence engendered in the territory where the so-called “vocational analysis” was carried out (CASTRO; BICALHO, 2013, p. 117).

During weekly meetings held during a semester, moderators proposed conversation circles and mediated dialogues about each young person's life trajectory. Along this path, participants were involved in discussions through which professional choice was treated as a process, as opposed to the hegemonic conception that classifies it as a single decision, strictly based on personal motivations. During the intervention, the verb choose was analyzed, taking into account the deprivations and limitations resulting from the social, economic and educational marginalization of that population (CASTRO; BICALHO, 2013).

The participants were able to deconstruct prejudices about the community itself, generally classified as a space permeated by indolence and the supposed lack of initiative of its members to overcome poverty. The questioning of meritocratic ideals, which hide contradictions present in the social reality, accompanied by problematizations about other aspects of that reality, caused ruptures in the ways of thinking, acting and feeling of those young people (CASTRO; BICALHO, 2013).

Despite the existence of epistemological and theoretical-methodological differences between the practices mentioned in this subsection, both suggest the application of VG as an intervention strategy with the potential to transcend the limits of practice, by valuing social, historical, political, economic and institutional elements in the scope of their respective projects. These elements are understood as crucial factors in the processes of choice and decision-making in relation to the professional career.

Final considerations

This study corroborates the relevance of VG as a strategy for expanding access to the knowledge and practices of psychology. In addition, it is vital for the establishment of the essential connections between psychology and education.

The practices reported in the articles analyzed in this research proved to be relevant from a social and scientific point of view, insofar as they sought to welcome people historically excluded from VG services.

Finally, we believe in the possibility of strengthening the encounter between psychology and education by carrying out more comprehensive, inclusive VG actions, capable of valuing multiplicity and plurality in educational contexts, especially in the areas affected by structural and/or material precariousness, characteristics of an educational model lacking public policies and emancipatory practices.

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