

TEACHER EDUCATION: BETWEEN REGULATION AND EMANCIPATION

A FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE: ENTRE A REGULAÇÃO E A EMANCIPAÇÃO

FORMACIÓN DOCENTE: ENTRE REGULACIÓN Y EMANCIPACIÓN

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ABSTRACT: Much has been said about teacher formation. This is not a new speech; however, it is gaining new contours every day, as there is a latent concern about teacher formation. This concern is not only related to the legitimacy of this formation, but to the way it is taking place, its real conditions and its scenarios. The debate on teacher formation has always been present in the Brazilian educational scenario, revolving around teaching, the curriculum, the teacher-student relationship, the teaching and learning process and the articulation between theory and practice. Thus, we bring to the focus of our discussion the political, economic, cultural and social context in which these relationships take place. The transformations that have been taking place worldwide, especially those related to the phenomenon of globalization, scientific and technological advances, in addition to the adherence to a neoliberal project for education, bring with it an immediate and urgent demand for the professionalization of teaching. All of this motivates the questioning regarding the formation and performance of teachers in the face of the challenges imposed by capitalist society.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education. Education. Neoliberalism. Regulation. Emancipation.

RESUMO: *Muito se tem falado acerca da formação docente. Não se trata de um discurso novo; entretanto, ganha a cada dia novos contornos, pois há uma preocupação latente quanto à formação de professores. Essa preocupação não diz respeito apenas à legitimidade dessa formação, mas ao modo como ela está ocorrendo, suas reais condições e seus cenários. O debate sobre formação de professores sempre esteve presente no cenário educacional brasileiro, girando em torno da docência, do currículo, da relação professor e aluno, do processo de ensino e aprendizagem e da articulação entre teoria e prática. Assim, trazemos para o foco de nossa discussão, o contexto político, econômico, cultural e social em que essas relações acontecem. As transformações que vêm ocorrendo em nível mundial, em especial os relacionados ao fenômeno da globalização, os avanços científicos e tecnológicos, além da adesão de um projeto neoliberal para educação, trazem consigo uma exigência imediata e urgente no sentido da profissionalização do magistério. Tudo isso motiva o questionamento com relação à formação e à atuação dos professores frente aos desafios impostos pela sociedade capitalista.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação docente. Educação. Neoliberalismo. Regulação. Emancipação.*

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RESUMEN: *Se ha hablado mucho sobre la formación del profesorado. Este no es un discurso nuevo; sin embargo, está ganando nuevos contornos cada día, ya que existe una preocupación latente por la formación del profesorado. Esta preocupación no solo está relacionada con la legitimidad de esta formación, sino con la forma en que se desarrolla, sus condiciones reales y sus escenarios. El debate sobre la formación docente siempre ha estado presente en el escenario educativo brasileño, girando en torno a la enseñanza, el currículo, la relación profesor-alumno, el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje y la articulación entre teoría y práctica. Por lo tanto, traemos al centro de nuestra discusión el contexto político, económico, cultural y social en el que se desarrollan estas relaciones. Las transformaciones que se han venido produciendo a nivel mundial, especialmente las relacionadas con el fenómeno de la globalización, los avances científicos y tecnológicos, además de la adhesión a un proyecto neoliberal de educación, traen consigo una demanda inmediata y urgente de profesionalización de la docencia. Todo ello motiva el cuestionamiento sobre la formación y desempeño de los docentes frente a los desafíos impuestos por la sociedad capitalista.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Formación docente. Educación. Neoliberalismo. Regulación. Emancipación.*

Introduction

Brazilian pedagogical thinking cannot be understood out of context with world pedagogical thinking. The study of the history of education involves the changes that underpinned the modern world. The transition from the 18th century to the 19th century brought several changes in the physiognomy of the world of work and education. Machines have not only changed production relationships but have also built a new social system.

According to Aranha (2006), during this period, more precisely in the 19th century, the State was endeavoring to offer a free school to the poorest classes. In return, the bourgeoisie sought out religious schools. In the reorganization of the secondary education network, education was aimed at the bourgeois class, geared towards classical and propaedeutic formation, and education for the working class, geared towards technical instruction.

It is important to remember that the children of the bourgeoisie were educated in their homes so that they did not mix with the children of the working class in public schools. The public school had as its objective not only to teach basic literacy skills and numbers to future workers, but also to incorporate ideas, values and behaviors that would safeguard the demands of the ruling class.

The capitalist system developed in the middle of the systematic grouping of the means of production, of scientific rationality, of pragmatic individualism, of the separation between

public and private and of the emergence of an increasingly aggressive and expansionist economy, based on private property, in industrialism, bureaucratization and the means of regulation.

The field of education has been a faithful depository of the demands of capitalist society. It is a field in which political interests act incessantly, either to qualify education, when there is interest from the ruling class, or to disallow it at times when access to the most popular strata threatens its power.

For Silva (1998), Western education, linked to mass schooling, has assumed several outlines, they are: religious education; traditionalist; liberal; child-centered; behaviorist; socialist; fascist; nationalist; progressive; based on problem solving; with foundation on problem solving; education for liberation; constructivist; critical pedagogy.

Although these outlines represent each historical moment, they are all based on practices and assumptions of modernity, influenced by the Enlightenment faith in the capacity to transform and improve human nature. To meet these perspectives, the pedagogical discourses assume the universality of the subjects. For this, teachers should be responsible for catalyzing the assets of knowledge production and reproduction.

Over time, societies have gained different ways of presenting themselves, just as education takes different forms of action. In the development of capitalist society, education has become a lever for control and social change. For Mézaros (2008), it has become a part of the process of capital accumulation and consensus building that makes the production of the class system possible.

In this market logic, education becomes a commodity, so it is available to be purchased. This thinking favors the weakening of education, especially public education. Thus, education comes into existence to serve this sphere of consumption.

According to Gentili (1998, p. 104, our translation),

education serves to perform in the market, and its expansion enhances economic growth. In this sense, it is defined as the activity of transmitting the stock of knowledge and skills that qualify for competitive individual action in the economic sphere, basically, in the labor market.

This transmission of knowledge begins in early childhood education and continues through higher education. In this context, educational policies seek to meet a purely market view of the world. In this rationality, teacher formation suffers the consequences of an expansionist policy, whose neoliberal regimes advocate the use of strategies and ready-made

recipes for education, which generates in the formation of teachers, the manufacture of senses and meanings about education.

It should be emphasized that education is understood as an enterprise and that the mission of teachers is to ensure the formation of subjects to respond to this perspective. The set of speeches, proposals and educational practices coalition for this purpose. In the neoliberal dictatorship, the educational institution has a specific purpose - the formation of competent, versatile and skilled individuals to perform tasks.

For Santos and Mesquida (2007, p. 87, our translation),

[...] it is up to education to form a future worker adapted to the demands of the market, endowed with flexibility and a 'gelatinous' will, which can be shaped in the company. This education maintained by the State or by the State in partnership with the company, would be education for the 21st Century.

In short, the school is a strategic place to prepare the masses. A demonstration of this is the school curricula, which emphasize technical formation, emptied of critical content and devoid of humanity. This view reaches higher education, mainly in teacher formation courses, in which technical and economic reasoning has gained space, which requires a discussion so that we can understand how the neoliberal ideology uses education to meet its interests.

At this point, we can inquire about teacher formation policies that establish development standards based on multifaceted formation, aiming to serve a highly competitive and exclusive market. In this sense, there is a concern with purely technical formation, unrelated to theoretical formation, which contributes significantly to the political and investigative autonomy of teachers and, consequently, their pedagogical practice.

When suggesting that teacher education needs theoretical and research foundations, we refer to Adorno (1995, p. 202, our translation), who, when problematizing this issue, asserts:

[...] while this promises to guide men out of the closure itself, it has itself, now and always, been closed; that is why the practical are unapproachable and the objective reference of the praxis, a priori undermined. One might even ask whether, until today, all praxis, as a domain of nature, has not been, in its indifference to the object, illusory praxis.

About this aspect, we can understand that the pedagogical praxis is based on rigid and closed pedagogical models in itself, because, although it promises to guide individuals and make them leave their cocoon, it works to put them in that place. Thus, we would be creating an illusory praxis.

Focusing our gaze on teaching praxis, we can visualize the influence of the capitalist model, in particular, the North American pragmatism in teacher education, centered on achieving its objectives immediately, unrelated to any type of questioning or reflection. When faced with the immediate need to do, we forget the theory or put it in the background, which prevents us from expressing critical thinking.

According to studies by Costa (2012a; 2012b), teacher formation is heteronomous, focused on utilitarian praxis, with a focus on pedagogical and/or didactic resources for the development of teaching activities, and depends on other social actors to be carried out. Thus, the teaching experience is overvalued at the expense of theoretical knowledge.

This dependence generates an alienating pedagogical praxis, in which the scarcity of autonomy and freedom of thought predominate, and the control of their lives and their pedagogical practice are delegated to others, which favors the domination and the reproduction of traditionalist pedagogical models, that focus more on social adaptation and prevent the emergence of a critical and emancipatory pedagogical model.

The great challenge in the formation of teachers is to make them realize that the practice does not speak for itself, it requires a theoretical relationship with itself, in order to be understood. For Saviani (2003, p. 145, our translation), “[...] practice, needs to develop and produce its consequences, it needs theory and it needs to be illuminated by it. This brings us to the question of the method”. Saviani (2009, p. 6-7, our translation) adds that “praxis must be understood as a theoretically grounded human activity, which implies a dialectical unity between theory and practice”.

Therefore, we understand that theory and practice are inseparable, that the first enables knowledge about reality and acts to be transformed. However, it is not enough to know reality, it is necessary to act on it. Thus, the union between theory and practice leads to a transformative praxis.

In this way, man becomes aware of the context in which he is inserted and transforms reality, it suggests action and reflection. For Konder (1992, p. 115, our translation):

Praxis is the concrete activity by which the subjects assert themselves in the world, changing the objective reality and, in order to be able to change it, transforming themselves. It is the action that, in order to go deeper in a more consistent way, needs reflection, self-questioning, theory; and it is the theory that refers to the action, which faces the challenge of verifying its successes and failures, comparing them with practice.

Between School Machinery and Emancipatory Education

By focusing our gaze on the 20th century, having as its axis the relationship between professional formation and productive activity. We can see that, in the extension of this century, a series of proposals for reforms in school education spread, all ordered by capitalist society.

Taking as a reference the liberal ideals that prescribed teacher formation in the early twentieth century, we have as a principle, the universalization of education, which elects the State as responsible for overcoming the ignorance of individuals, and the school is charged with correcting this crime, aimed at turning them into citizens.

According to Saviani (2007), in the first three decades of the last century, pedagogical models of a religious and lay nature coexisted in traditional Pedagogy; between the 1930s and the 1940s, traditional Pedagogy and new Pedagogy were present acting together; in the 1950s and 1960s, new Pedagogy prevailed, and even during the 1960s, *escalonovismo* declined, due to the social changes of the time, among them, the industrialization and modernization of the country, in addition to the claim for a school that is public and democratic. At the end of the 1960s and 1970s, new demands arose from the industrial model, which opened new parameters for the social order. On education befell the task of forming a technical workforce, suitable to supply new jobs.

In the following decades, we experienced the rise of Productivist Pedagogy and the proliferation of technicist conceptions. In the same period, ideas against hegemonic ideas were announced, with pedagogical principles guided by content-critical Pedagogy and historical-critical Pedagogy.

At the end of the 20th century, the pedagogical ideals were aligned with the commercial logic of education, expressed by new pedagogical models, namely: neoproductivism, ordered by the demands of capital; *neoescalonovismo*, manifested in the Pedagogy of learning to learn; neoconstructivism, declared in the individualization of learning and in the pedagogy of competences and expressed in the principles of administration, which introduced the fulfillment of goals and the principles of total quality in the educational environment (SAVIANI, 2007).

As a result of what has been exposed, we can see the influence of international mechanisms that have influenced and influence changes in the field of education. They are: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO, the United Nations International Emergency Fund for Children - UNICEF and the WORLD BANK,

whose watchwords are quality, productivity, equity, rationalization and resource optimization. In this same guideline, Leher (1999, p. 19-20, our translation), when analyzing the policy imposed by international organizations, believes that the World Bank came to be seen as “World Ministry of Education”, which enshrined “the strictly instrumental dimension of education in the face of the new dynamics of capital”.

International funding agencies have led to Brazilian educational reforms since the 1990s, the main effects of which are felt in several official documents, in their conception, in the form of evaluation and in financing. It is important to note that, from the 1990s onwards, educational legislation was at the service of the State reform project, with the aim of adapting Brazilian education to new transformations in the world of work. These policies not only introduced a new way of understanding teacher education, but also defined the necessary knowledge to be acquired for this work, emphasizing the competency model.

It is important to note that Brazilian educational policies were strongly influenced by liberal ideals, arising from the principles given at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990 (UNESCO, 1990). This event was financed by international agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) and the World Bank. The result of this influence can be seen in the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education - LDBN n. 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996) - with a strong consequence in the construction of policies to train teachers and for teaching work in general, which requires training that meets the new prerogatives of the world of work and the demands of the market (MEDEIROS; PIRES, 2014).

To meet the new requirements arising from international agencies that prioritize the universalization of education, Brazil, as a signatory, must comply with what was agreed, with an emphasis on the universalization of education. For this, qualified professionals are needed for teaching. This issue is portrayed in articles 61 to 67 of LDBN n. 9,394/1996 (BRASIL, 1996), in Title VI, which deals with “Education professionals”.

In its article 62, the Law says:

The formation of teachers to work in basic education will take place at a higher level, in a full undergraduate degree course, at university and higher education institutes. As a minimum formation for the exercise of teaching in early childhood education and in the first four grades of elementary education, it is admitted that offered at the secondary level, in the normal mode (BRASIL, 1996, p. 20, our translation).

The aforementioned paragraph generated controversies about the formation of teachers and influenced the direction of this formation in the country. The new legislation caused dissatisfaction, by delegating to the Higher Institutes of Education the formation of teachers, which resulted in the expansion of the private sector, with the offer of normal higher education, and a good deal for the sector.

Many of these courses were offered in a light way, with cheap costs and of short duration. Gatti (2010, p. 1358, our translation) asserts that:

the formation of teachers for basic education is carried out, in all types of undergraduate teaching degree courses, in a fragmented way between the disciplinary areas and levels of education, not counting Brazil, in higher education institutions, with its own college or institute, which forms these professionals, with a common formative basis, as observed in other countries, where there is a teacher formation center encompassing all specialties, with studies, research and extension related to didactic activity and the reflections and theories associated with it.

It is important to highlight the fragility that surrounds teacher formation in Brazil, because, not infrequently, what is found are palliative alternatives to the problems that involve this formation, as mentioned in the quote. In this context, we agree with Nóvoa (2009, p. 12, author' highlights, our translation), when he expresses:

We have seen, in recent years, the return of teachers to the educational spotlight, after almost forty years of relative invisibility. Their importance has never been in question, but the eyes have turned to other problems: in the 70s, it was the time of rationalization of teaching, of pedagogy by objectives, of the effort to foresee planning, to control; then in the 1980s, major educational reforms came, centered on the structure of school systems and, particularly, on curriculum engineering; in the 1990s, special attention was paid to school organizations, their functioning, administration and management. [...] Teachers reappear, at the beginning of the 21st Century, as irreplaceable elements not only in the promotion of learning, but also in the construction of an inclusion process that responds to the challenges of diversity and in the development of appropriate methods of using new technologies.

We are dealing with a pedagogical discourse that changes according to the social context and the dominant interests. Bourdieu and Passeron (2013) express this position when saying that the pedagogical discourse is one of the mechanisms by which the State filters class conflicts, to establish social consensus. Thus, it uses the pedagogical discourse to soften its forces on the population, through symbolic violence, with the ability to create false educational consensuses, which are embodied in teaching activities and in the rules imposed by/at school.

Within this perspective, we can understand the variation of discourses that involve educational policies. Based on the thinking of Bourdieu (2003, p. 7-8, our translation), symbolic violence is a “[...] soft, insensitive violence, invisible to its own victims, which is exercised essentially by the purely symbolic means of communication and knowledge, or, more precisely, ignorance, recognition or, ultimately, feeling”. Symbolic violence translates the thinking that regulates power.

Regarding the 21st century, the teaching function seeks to meet the demands of an increasingly specific formation. A demonstration of this is the emphasis placed on the notion of competence installed by the capitalist system. This understanding of the concept of competence extends to teacher formation, as education is considered to be responsible for providing basic skills so that students can face future demands. Thus, the school and the teachers are responsible for developing strategies that can adapt the new workers to the capitalist model of production.

In order for us to capture neoliberal thinking in education, we need a document that underlies this approach - we speak of the report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century, whose main rapporteur was Jacques Delors. This document reflects on the problems caused by capitalism, such as unemployment and social exclusion. Regarding education, the report highlights it as a fundamental instrument for the development of individuals, which makes it essential to respond to social demands.

The report brings one of the main emphases to neoliberalism - the access of all to education and the obligation to insert themselves in the educational environment, which is a solution to be successful in the professional field. The first pillar of the report emphasizes “learning to learn” as an ongoing process that is not restricted to schooling. It is something that occurs throughout life and that the educator-worker must constantly seek to update, with a view to developing new skills.

In making a brief reflection, we saw that, in the document in question, there is a fine line between the interests in improving education and the yearnings to attend to the development of capital. We can summarize it in the constant tension that involves the production of an individual capable of absorbing the transformations of a world in constant change, which requires the student to constantly adapt to the reality of contemporary society. The report also expresses a vision of peaceful education. This thinking would be supported by a positive attitude towards life and society. On this, Delors (2006, p. 52, our translation), asserts:

Faced with the crisis of social relations, education must therefore take on the difficult task of making diversity a positive factor of mutual understanding between individuals and human groups. Its greatest ambition is to provide all the necessary means for a conscious and active citizenship, which can only be fully realized in a context of democratic societies.

It is in this sense that we seek to problematize the motto “learn to learn”, in an ideology that seeks to maintain the neoliberal ideal in the field of Education. This maxim is vested with interests that seek to maintain the *status quo* and, for that, it presents, in its discourse, an appreciation that, in practice, does not exist.

To illustrate this thought, we bring the considerations of Duarte (2006, p. 08, our translation):

Our assessment is that the core that defines the motto “learn to learn” lies in the devaluation of the transmission of objective knowledge, in the dilution of the school's role in transmitting this knowledge, in the mischaracterization of the teacher's role as someone who has knowledge to be transmitted to his students, in the very negation of the act of teaching. [...] Rather than being a path for the full formation of individuals, it is an ideological instrument of the ruling class to empty school education for the majority of the population, while on the other hand, ways of improving the education of elites are sought. [...] Thus, the motto “learn to learn” plays an important role in adapting contemporary pedagogical discourse to the needs of the capitalism's globalization process, due to its internal linkage to the category of adaptation that occupies a prominent place both in the neoliberal political-economic discourse as in the constructivist epistemological, psychological and pedagogical theories.

In summary, it is up to education to make this thought proliferate, extolling an uninterrupted teaching-learning model that relativizes and secondaryizes scientific knowledge itself and leads them to a purely pragmatic action. For this reason, in the search for alternatives that can become flags of resistance, this tenacity depends on the quality of pedagogical practice, which suggests an education for autonomy and emancipation. According to Crochik *et al.* (2013, p. 19, our translation),

education for autonomy is about not “getting into the game of others”; it implies knowing the intentions of others who make us the object of their desires and their reifying intentions. Education for emancipation refers to the awareness that the structure of society is anachronistic and that the identification with oppression, which makes us submissive and at the same time willing to take its place, is overcome.

It should be emphasized that admitting teacher education that has emancipation as a perspective is not an easy thing, as it requires a new stance from teachers, the deconstruction of reductionist pedagogical practices and critical self-reflection. Therefore, we need to think

about teacher formation that aims at the autonomy of teaching practice and its creative capacity.

It is in this direction that those looking for an emancipatory teacher education are heading, in which the teacher must be able to think for himself, and for that to happen, the education must consider the social and economic relations that are around it. According to Adorno (1995, p. 144, our translation), education for emancipation "[...] has [...] much more the task of strengthening resistance than of strengthening adaptation".

Final considerations

Given the above, it is worth saying that teacher formation cannot be limited to enabling individuals to orient themselves in the world, because, if it does, it will be contributing exclusively to adjust or adapt people to social demands, as advocated by neoliberal policies.

In summary, we can conclude that, when we talk about teacher formation, we have a great deal of discussion. Therefore, the theme does not end with this essay, especially nowadays, where this teacher formation faces new challenges, given the new demands that society needs, derived from the pandemic of COVID 19.

In this sense, it is necessary to rethink the formation of teachers, therefore, we believe in a policy that goes beyond the reproductive and regulatory conception and that teacher formation courses can instigate free thinking and autonomous and emancipatory teaching practices.

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