

HISTORICAL EDUCATION, PANDEMICS AND HISTORY TEACHING: VALIDATION OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE IN INTERNET/REVISIONISM TIMES

EDUCAÇÃO HISTÓRICA, PANDEMIA E ENSINO DE HISTÓRIA: VALIDAÇÃO DO CONHECIMENTO HISTÓRICO EM TEMPOS DE INTERNET/REVISIONISMO

EDUCACIÓN HISTÓRICA, PANDEMICAS Y ENSEÑANZA DE HISTORIA: VALIDACIÓN DEL CONOCIMIENTO HISTÓRICO EN INTERNET/TIEMPOS DE REVISIONISMO

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ABSTRACT: In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges for the teaching of history found, in technology, new support, but also contradictions. With a new perspective on the teaching of the discipline, anchored in the theoretical field of Historical Education, the work based on the epistemology of History started to demand from historian teachers a practice in which the relationship with historical sources is fundamental. In this way, the idea of a historical source was further expanded, as the web contains an infinite number of materials that can be conceived as historical documents. In addition, the use of the internet as a means of interaction between different subjects in the schooling process presupposed a relationship in which technology needed to be redefined due to the possibility of support, but also ask for its influence as a disseminator of superficial and skeptical ideas regarding the scientific knowledge.

KEYWORDS: Historical education. Teaching. History. Pandemic. Sensitivity.

RESUMO: No contexto da pandemia de Covid-19, os desafios para o ensino de História encontraram, na tecnologia, novo respaldo, mas também contradições. Com nova perspectiva do ensino da disciplina, ancorada no campo teórico da Educação Histórica, o trabalho a partir da epistemologia da História passou a exigir dos professores historiadores uma prática em que a relação com as fontes históricas é fundamental. Desse modo, a ideia de fonte histórica foi ainda mais ampliada, já que a web contém uma infinidade de materiais que podem ser concebidos como documentos históricos. Além disso, a utilização da internet como meio de interação entre os diferentes sujeitos no processo de escolarização pressupôs uma relação em que a tecnologia precisou ser ressignificada devido à possibilidade de apoio, mas também pela sua influência como disseminadora de informações superficiais e céticas com relação ao conhecimento científico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação histórica. Ensino. História. Pandemia. Sensibilidade.

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RESUMEN: *En el contexto de la pandemia Covid-19, los desafíos para la enseñanza de la historia encontraron, en la tecnología, nuevos apoyos, pero también contradicciones. Con una nueva perspectiva de la enseñanza de la disciplina, anclada en el campo teórico de la Educación Histórica, el trabajo basado en la epistemología de la Historia pasó a demandar de los profesores historiadores una práctica en la que la relación con las fuentes históricas es fundamental. De esta forma, se amplió aún más la idea de fuente histórica, ya que la web contiene una infinidad de materiales que pueden concebirse como documentos históricos. Además, el uso de internet como medio de interacción entre diferentes sujetos en el proceso de escolarización presuponía una relación en la que la tecnología necesitaba ser redefinida por la posibilidad de apoyo, pero también aporta su influencia como difusora de superficialidad y escepticismo relativa al conocimiento científico.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación histórica. Enseñanza. Historia. Pandemia. Sensibilidad.*

Introduction

The discussions about History teaching have gained great relevance in the last decades, especially in the period after the civil-military dictatorship with the Brazilian political opening. In that context, when history returned to the scene as an autonomous discipline, it was necessary to rethink its role, as well as that of the history teachers. For this reason, several events started to be organized by historians and teachers of the area, such as the National Meeting of History Teaching Researchers (ENPEH, in the Portuguese acronym), which has been held since 1993. The discussions on the teaching of history and the role of the teachers have promoted debates and publications, renewing the view on the teaching and learning of this discipline. Among the new curriculum proposals, it is worth mentioning that:

The great mark of these reformulations was concentrated in the perspective of repositioning teachers and students as subjects of history and of the production of knowledge, facing the traditional form of teaching worked in most Brazilian schools, which was centered in the figure of the teacher as a transmitter and in the figure of the student as a passive receiver of historical knowledge. A clash was waged against the factual teaching of historical knowledge, anachronistic, positivist, and temporally static (SCHMIDT; CAINELLI, 2004, p. 12).

It can be stated that relevant perspectives for the debate emerged in the discipline of history, insofar as they proposed overcoming dichotomous views about the training and action of teachers in basic education.

Germinari and Gonçalves (2017, p. 63) point out that

[...] in recent decades, a line of research called History Education, also known as research into situated historical cognition, developed with a certain

intensity in countries such as England, the United States, Canada, Portugal and Brazil. History Education, as a line of research, is based on the assumption of the need to understand the students' historical ideas, with the aim of guiding didactic interventions in the teaching process, the reference for the analysis of the students' historical ideas being the epistemology of history itself.

The influence of this new theoretical field called History Education or situated historical cognition was based on local curricular and learning needs. History Education was adopted in Portugal and, from that country, contacts with Brazilian historian teachers have promoted debates and propositions of work with students and teachers in Brazil which are very promising and which diminish the distance between the academy and the school ground. Teaching and Research Laboratories have been created in universities, such as the Laboratory of Research in History Education (LAPEDUH), linked to the Post-Graduation Program of the Federal University of Paraná (PPGE/UFPR), which has been developing, since 2003, research with future History teachers and with those who work in Basic Education. In addition, many teachers of Basic Education have entered the Postgraduate Programs of the Federal University of Paraná and developed important research in the field of History Education, both in the Master's and Doctoral programs, investigating the relations with historical knowledge and learning of teachers and students.

These studies have as their starting point the assumptions of the epistemology of History for the development of learning. "In order to learn History, it is necessary to use the research methods of that science to achieve the development of historical thinking"(SANTOS, 2013, p. 35).

History education: research and knowledge production

With a conception based on the existence of a didactics proper to history, the idea of historical learning is based on the epistemology of the discipline, which makes History Education emphasize the use of historical sources and methodology specific to historical science during the lessons. This, therefore, means thinking of teachers as historians, researchers and producers of knowledge.

In the field of History Education it is believed that teachers should be aware of History as a science. For this theoretical field it is fundamental to emphasize that there is not only one explanation or narrative about the past. To understand it, it is necessary to recognize that there is multiperspectivity, which requires that history be investigated and

interpreted using its own methods that help in the analysis and interpretation of the evidence of the past (SOBANSKI, 2021, p. 117-118).

With a conception of the teaching of history aimed at the learning and protagonism of teachers and students as producers of knowledge, the theoretical field of History Education has promoted important experiences. By valuing the science of reference and the specific epistemology of History, above all with the use of historic - graphical methodology, History Education has promoted the valorization of History teachers and turned to a teaching that prioritizes the formation of historical thought in detriment of the memorization of contents.

Since the process of re-democratization, the training of History teachers has been a process of discussion and debate on the indispensable and active role of this subject in the process of teaching in Basic Education. Thus, the concept of the History teacher also as a historian and, therefore, as a researcher and producer of knowledge, has been defended. History Education is based on the defense of this conception of the history teacher. The researcher teacher, according to Schmidt (2015, p. 518):

The training of the historian-teacher required a solid scientific content, a consistent preparation as a researcher, theoretical and practical, involving a political commitment to transform him significantly in relation to the praxis, not with the practice itself, but with the real, concrete and historical world of himself and his students.

The relationship with the curricular contents, from the perspective of History Education, requires from teacher researchers the observation of students' previous knowledge and a constant use of historical sources, whether they are present in the textbooks themselves or researched and selected in the most different archives, such as the web.

The scientificity of history

According to the German historian Bodo Von Borries (1943), these curricular contents adopted as of the 2000s may be related to what he conceptualizes as Burdening History, and Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt (2015, p. 19) calls Difficult History. According to Von Borries (2016), there are certain contents of History that involve feelings that are very delicate to a group of people and, therefore, come to emphasize experiences that are considered very heavy when resuming the study of a certain past; for this reason, these contents are more difficult to be addressed than topics that present positive considerations.

Besides the contents of History considered difficult to be worked on due to their degree of complexity, which may accentuate a trauma or some more sensitive issue, it is worth mentioning that, in Brazil, some episodes from the past may also be considered difficult due to their political character.

Difficult history is a very important concept to understand the teaching processes in pandemic, because nowadays the virtual world has "invaded" the lives of teachers and students through different formats: online classes, hybrid classes, distance learning, lectures and meetings via Youtube, classes broadcasted on TV, bringing many questions to the development process of this subject. Sobanski and Gonçalves state that "meaningful historical learning involves understanding the ways in which the past is being reconstructed and told by students and teachers, and how this reconstruction is being structured"(SOBANSKI; GONÇALVES, 2021, p. 88).

Since before the pandemic, the role of science in school has been attacked and devalued by ideas and groups that understand school not from the bias of science, but from morality and religiosity. Created in 2004 by São Paulo state prosecutor Miguel Nagib, the "School without Party" movement claims that it seeks to guarantee a "non-partisan education, without indoctrination and free of ideologies". Both the movement and its proposal have put under discussion in recent years the autonomy of schools and, especially, of teachers when it comes to selecting and discussing certain school contents.

Thus, the demonstration of the scientificity of history has become even more necessary, since the historical knowledge present in schools has become increasingly questioned. And since challenges never end, it was precisely in this context that Brazilian schools received the news, in March 2020, that they would have to suspend classroom lessons due to a pandemic.

New challenges: the uses and misuses of technology

On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was considered a pandemic by the World Health Organization, WHO. In Brazil, on March 20, 2020, the Legislative Decree n. 06 was published, which recognized the occurrence of the state of public calamity in the country (BRAZIL, 2020).

Given these characteristics and in line with the challenges imposed by the Covid -19 pandemic that ravaged the planet, the difficulties felt by teachers in general may have served as a new field of possibility, in particular, for history teachers.

As mentioned, history teaching has faced new challenges for its development, both methodological and in questioning its scientific character. After almost one year and nine months of pandemic and 615,744 deaths as a result of SARS-Cov, it is necessary to reflect and discuss how History Teaching was carried out in the pandemic context.

In this period, new challenges, such as keeping teachers and students in contact with each other and with knowledge, demanded from all subjects involved in the educational process a closer relationship with technology. And it is precisely in this context that history teachers started to deal even more with the information and digital sources available on the web. Despite the need on the part of many teachers to learn to deal with this technology and develop new teaching methodologies, this perspective in history teaching also promoted another confrontation in a historical moment full of doubts, revisionism, and even denialism.

The pedagogical reality has become challenging due to the fact that the denial of science has been listed as a "matter of opinion", and the speed of information propagation in the virtual world makes it difficult to verify much information available online, many of which contradict science and cause interference with the denialist and revisionist discourses present in online life.

Young people in this technological world who have stayed more than a year away from schools and classrooms have expanded their relationship with social networks and YouTube channels. In a quick investigation with high school students from a public school in the city of Curitiba it was possible to see that many of them follow Youtube channels dedicated to History. However, few of them are, in fact, organized and presented by historians. To what extent, therefore, has scientifically proven historical knowledge been within the reach of these young people? It is pertinent, therefore, to think about how many common sense ideas propagate and influence thinking about historical knowledge, generating distrust and conflict in relation to school knowledge and teachers' narratives.

It is possible to state that,

The Brazilian population is bombarded by discourses and political positions based on information that denies the scientific evidence and is anchored in revisionist and negationist narratives (DOMICIANO *et al.*, 2021, p. 45).

The revisionism and negationism discourse that is present in many speeches of public figures and even pseudo-academics shows that the ideas and concepts spread are not supported by science but by distortions. According to Le Goff (1990, p. 220), this posture is based "[...] not on the criticism of the document, but on the appropriation and distortion of

previous facts. The dissemination of fallacious speeches and information has gone far beyond reasonableness in defending these "data",

Besides the questioning of basic scientific postulates, as in the case of flat Earth theories, we witness the denial of broad consensus, such as global warming, the harmful consequences of deforestation, and the effectiveness of vaccines. Among the effects of this movement, which does not occur by chance, but is carefully orchestrated, it is possible to identify political polarization and the masking of social inequalities fed by a nostalgia that insists on evoking a past in which order, morality, and corruption-free governance supposedly reigned. A past that seemed to have been overcome, but was not, since its defenders once again clamored for military intervention, for the revision of history, and for the denial of the atrocities committed against democracy and life between 1964 and 1985 (DOMICIANO *et al.*, 2021, p. 46-47).

As Gandra and Jesus (2020, p. 5) observe, "[...] the denialists use several strategies, among them, appropriation of documents and private memories, which are interpreted in a distorted way to give credibility to their theses". This, together with the dissemination of often unproven information, but spread to exhaustion, via phone apps, brought to history teachers clashes in their daily lives, due to criticism of the history curriculum content he worked during the pandemic.

Moreover, the reality showed that many students have great difficulty in both accessing and keeping up with their school life online. In this sense,

[...] school is a territory in which social inequalities are revealed. The pandemic has accelerated the use of technologies in education, but also many students have been left at the margins of the process for not having access to technological resources, quality Internet or even enough information to use the devices in school activities (DOMICIANO *et al.*, 2021, p. 48).

If the proposal of History Education as a theoretical field is based on the use of historical sources, the internet, a communication tool which became fundamental during the pandemic, presented itself as an important place of concentration, search and research of abundant material for the work with the teaching of History.

In this sense, it is worth remembering that there has been an expansion of the concept of historical source, made possible, in large part, by technological development. In the book "Age of Extremes: the brief twentieth century", Hobsbawm (1995) mentions how a technological production never seen in other times occurred and how, in the last decades, the arrival of home computers and access to the internet have enabled a new conception of historical sources, now understood as digital sources. Allocated in the web, these historical

sources comprise the so-called cyberspace and are part of cyberculture, being directly related to the idea of History of the Present.

According to Caraméz (2014, p. 19),

[...] the web can be considered as a space in which historical sources can be found, from all parts of the world and from different historical times [and] has allowed people from all parts of the world to move from spectators to narrators, experimenting through the new languages of hypertexts and hypermedia, to historically narrate primary and secondary sources.

During the pandemic, history teachers used many online historical sources, such as virtual museum visits, interviews, news reports, and lectures to teach, and it was via the Internet most of the time that the school encounter took place for more than a year.

Caraméz also states that (2014, p. 51):

Thus, it is understood that the internet is a cyberspace capable of hosting infinite official and unofficial archives, full of historical documents, allowing History to be worked in a more investigative way in the classroom. This is because one can visit the past more easily and quickly in order to seek answers to the students' lack of temporal orientation and practical life, relating the past and the present in a meaningful way.

This search for answers to the students' lack of temporal orientation is a very important process during the pandemic, and the teacher's role as researcher is of utmost importance for teaching and for the construction of the students' historical consciousness. And in this way, historical consciousness can be considered as "the reality from which one can understand what history is, as a science, and why it is necessary" (RÜSEN, 2001, p. 56-57).

Final remarks

The academic discussion about the effects of the pandemic is already taking place, and many studies are being developed observing how the pandemic altered the teaching and learning process. And with history teaching it was no different. History teachers, like all education professionals, had to update and enter deeply into virtual life, to learn how to deal with technology, with programs, postures, and also acquired many supplies and materials to develop the work in home-office. Teaching in the year 2020 was conducted entirely online, which caused schools to build different modes of contact and classrooms.

In the state of Paraná, for example, in 2020 various attempts were made to organize and maintain the teaching processes: from the delivery of printed teaching materials to

schools for students without Internet access, online classes, classes via recorded and broadcast programs on the Internet and television. It is important to note that, despite these attempts, the idea of transporting the school and all the relationships that are part of the school culture into the virtual world has been maintained. When it came to the transmission of recorded classes, many students said they missed the teachers and the more individualized explanations. About the online classes, the impersonality and the lack of "control" over the students present left the teachers discouraged and with a lot of difficulty to get to know the students, their learning process and difficulties. It is concluded, therefore, that the schooling knowledge and the way the school is instituted requires the physical presence of all subjects involved in the learning process and, although technology is recognized as a tool of extreme importance, it cannot meet the demands and needs of the world in schooling.

In this case, therefore, it can be seen that innovation was followed by a lot of difficulty. In general, teachers are unanimous in stating that nothing replaces the school space and the relationships that take place there.

In line with the difficulties presented in recent years regarding the legitimacy of the teachers' knowledge, this period of virtual interaction also brought about another important change in the relationship between teachers and students: the indirect participation of family members in the classes. As students watched the classes online from their homes, many family members were nearby, listening and commenting. In some cases, teachers have even reported parents "dropping in" during classes, commenting on or even questioning the content. In this case, teachers needed even more to legitimize their lesson plans and the scientific knowledge they were dealing with.

In 2021, with the arrival and expansion of the vaccination process, the reality that was imposed on teachers was the gradual return to the classroom, even with the fear of the development of the disease and the delayed vaccination of children from 12 years old, which began only in September 2021. Children under the age of 11 have no date yet for the start of vaccination.

During the pandemic period, teachers were also confronted with information that was incorrect, inaccurate, and presented personal opinions without being based on science. Many of the students were presented with this data, and even with the participation and hard work of the history teacher, they constructed a view of the past that was not anchored in science. It remains to be seen what the results of this exposure and often lack of analysis are for the construction of students' historical thinking.

History refers to the conditions of a possible future, which cannot be deduced solely from the sum of isolated events. But in the events it investigates, structures are delineated that establish both the conditions and the limits of future action. In this way, history demarcates the limits of a possible and distinct future, without thereby being able to renounce the structural conditions associated with a possible repetition of events (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 145).

One realizes, therefore, the need for further research to understand how the physical absence and daily personal contact at school has altered the learning process at school. It is also important to reflect on the consequences that the removal imposed by the pandemic has caused for students and teachers, and what the results of the hyper-exposure of students to content that is not checked and that during all these months has even brought clashes between parents and teachers during online classes.

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