

COOPERATIVE WORK IN FREINET PEDAGOGY AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF FUNDAMENTAL
EDUCATION

*AS CONTRIBUIÇÕES DA PEDAGOGIA FREINET PARA AS PRÁTICAS
PEDAGÓGICAS NOS ANOS INICIAIS DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL*

*LAS CONTRIBUCIONES DE LA PEDAGOGÍA DE FREINET A LAS PRÁCTICAS
PEDAGÓGICAS EN LOS PRIMEROS AÑOS DE LA EDUCACIÓN FUNDAMENTAL*



Taís Regina Stein OLIVEIRA ¹
e-mail: tais100h10@gmail.com



Patrícia Cristina Albieri de ALMEIDA ²
e-mail: patricia.albieri@unasp.edu.br



Cristina ZUKOWSKY- TAVARES ³
e-mail: cristina.tavares@unasp.edu.br

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¹ São Paulo Adventist University Center – (UNASP), Engenheiro Coelho – SP – Brazil. Master in Education and Teacher at the Municipal Network of Limeira.

² São Paulo Adventist University Center – (UNASP), Engenheiro Coelho – SP – Brazil. Professor of the Professional Master's Degree in Education and Researcher at the Carlos Chagas Foundation (FCC), São Paulo – SP – Brazil.

³ São Paulo Adventist University Center – (UNASP), Engenheiro Coelho – SP – Brazil. Professor of the Professional Master's in Education.

ABSTRACT: This article aims to analyze the contributions of Freinet Pedagogy to pedagogical practices in the early years of elementary school, especially with regard to cooperative work. This is qualitative research, in the form of a case study, with a school as its setting whose proposal is based on the Freinetian conception. Observation and discussion groups with managers and teachers were used as a data collection instrument. The results indicate that Freinet Pedagogy has elements that can contribute to a qualitative change in the pedagogical practice of teachers, since it brings work as a basic element, understood as a constructive activity, and supports affectivity, cooperation, autonomy and self-management. Overcoming a traditional teaching practice, appropriating the theoretical and methodological knowledge of Freinet's proposal and the lack of material resources are some of the challenges in implementing Freinet Pedagogy in public schools.

KEYWORDS: Freinet Pedagogy. Pedagogical Practices. Basic Education.

RESUMO: Este artigo objetiva analisar as contribuições da Pedagogia Freinet para as práticas pedagógicas nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental, especialmente no que diz respeito ao trabalho cooperativo. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, na modalidade de estudo de caso, tendo como cenário uma escola que tem sua proposta fundamentada na concepção freinetiana. Utilizou-se como instrumento de coleta de dados a observação e o grupo de discussão com gestoras e professoras. Os resultados apontam que a Pedagogia Freinet possui elementos que podem contribuir para uma mudança qualitativa na prática pedagógica dos professores, uma vez que ela traz como elemento basilar o trabalho, entendido como atividade construtiva, e tem como subsídio a afetividade, a cooperação, a autonomia e a autogestão. Superar uma prática de ensino tradicional, se apropriar dos conhecimentos teóricos e metodológicos da proposta freinetiana e a ausência de recursos materiais são alguns dos desafios na implementação da Pedagogia Freinet nas escolas públicas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pedagogia Freinet. Práticas Pedagógicas. Educação Básica.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las contribuciones de la Pedagogía Freinet a las prácticas pedagógicas en los primeros años de la educación fundamental, especialmente cuando se trata de trabajo cooperativo. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa, en forma de estudio de caso, teniendo como escenario una escuela que tiene su propuesta basada en la concepción freinethiana. Se utilizó como instrumentos de recolección de datos la observación y un grupo de discusión con directivos y docentes. Los resultados indican que la Pedagogía de Freinet tiene elementos que pueden contribuir a un cambio cualitativo en la práctica pedagógica de los docentes, ya que trae como elemento básico el trabajo, entendido como una actividad constructiva, y tiene como subsidio la afectividad, la cooperación, la autonomía y la autogestión. La superación de una práctica docente tradicional, la apropiación de los conocimientos teóricos y metodológicos de la propuesta Freinet y la ausencia de recursos materiales son algunos de los desafíos en la implementación de la Pedagogía Freinet en las escuelas públicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pedagogía Freinet. Práticas Pedagógicas. Educación Básica.

Introduction

Brazilian education, despite presenting advances related to the democratization of access, still faces several challenges such as, for example, the quality of teaching, retention, and academic success (Brasil, 2014). The authors Silva Filho and Araújo (2017) state that Brazil has a high school dropout rate and argue that the practices used by educators have contributed to this situation, as they develop content in a decontextualized and meaningless way for students.

The traditional practices maintained by the school, as Moran (2012) highlights, contribute to students' lack of interest in school. This is because the traditionally established school works, for the most part, using a methodology that aims only at the transmission of knowledge, centered on the teacher and the passivity of the students.

Therefore, even knowing that there has been an expansion in terms of access to basic education in Brazil, other challenges remain, such as the quality of teaching, retention and school success. Therefore, and knowing that education is an enterprise that involves human interactions, it is clear that the quality and success of education permeate pedagogical practices, with the need to move forward on these issues.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contributions of Freinet Pedagogy to pedagogical practices in the early years of elementary school, especially with regard to cooperative work. The study is structured as follows: firstly, the section “Rethinking pedagogical practices” is presented, discussing pedagogical practices and studying some aspects of the pedagogy developed by Célestin Freinet. Subsequently, the methodological procedures are described, elucidating the data collection and analysis procedures. Next, the main results are presented. And, finally, the final remarks, which summarize the main points of this study.

Rethinking pedagogical practices

Throughout the 20th century, through the New School Movement, several critics of traditional education emerged, proposing a pedagogy “focused on the child, their activity, needs and interests” (Gauthier; Bissonnette; Richard, 2014, our translation).

In this context, the French pedagogue Célestin appears Freinet who, according to the authors Gumiero and Araújo (2019, p. 9, our translation), brought significant contributions “to rethink traditional pedagogical practices, the role of the teacher, the role of the student himself and the social reality experienced in this process”.

Currently, this new conception is widely accepted and disseminated, however, as already highlighted, traditional education is still very much alive and “in a very good state of health” (Zabala, 1998). Therefore, it is necessary to resume the discussion about the pedagogical practices carried out by teachers in schools.

Célestin Freinet, as he himself used to say, was “a simple primary school teacher”. The interesting thing to highlight, according to Freinet himself (1975), and more recently reiterated by Imbernón (2017), was that for the first time in history an educational renewal movement truly came from teachers and not professionals from other areas such as doctors, thinkers, philosophers or psychologists. Therefore, his techniques were developed based on his vision as a teacher and were based on the reality experienced in the classroom.

Freinet 's contributions, innovative in his time, are still valid and current. Therefore, the relevance of studying Célestin 's works more carefully Freinet, a French pedagogue, creator of the Modern School in France, born in 1896, who developed his pedagogy more than a hundred years ago, but which remains so current.

Freinetean pedagogy had a profound impact on many educators of their time and even after so long it remains up to date, and is still a reference for teachers seeking a liberating education. In line with this, Elias (2017) highlights that Freinet Pedagogy has important elements that have not yet been explored and have not even been effectively implemented by schools.

The authors Gumiero and Araújo (2019) narrate that their pedagogy is based on dialogue, cooperation, awareness and activity, placing the student as the subject of their learning and the teacher as a mediator in this process, through techniques that favor interactions. The authors explain that Freinet believed in the child's potential and ability to participate in their teaching and learning process, in cooperation between peers, in creativity and autonomy as a process of knowledge and discoveries (Gumiero; Araújo, 2019, p. 6).

Therefore, for Freinet (1974), and in line with authors such as Freire (1987) and Zabala (1998), it is necessary to overcome the idea of the function of education linked only to the transmission of knowledge, making it necessary to break with pedagogical practices that privilege only memorization and reproduction. The importance of viewing the human being in all its multidimensionality stands out, overcoming the fragmented view of the subject and knowledge (Verdum, 2013). It is expected that education contributes to the formation of critical and active citizens in the search for a more just and egalitarian society. For Freinet, this change can be implemented through work pedagogy, which deals with constructive activity.

In this context, the search for overcoming traditional educational practices led Freinet to formulate techniques known as “Freinet Techniques” (Freinet, 1975). He preferred this nomenclature, as he did not appreciate the term “method” which, according to the author, carries with it a meaning of rigidity, disregarding the specificities of each context. Therefore, its techniques are not closed and do not intend to become “manual”. “Freinet Techniques” should not always remain the same, it is necessary to enrich and adapt them to the reality of each context, as well as using all available technology.

The techniques developed by Freinet are highlighted by Marques and Almeida (2017), who state that they allow for several enriching situations, such as: free production (Book of Life), communication (correspondence between schools, newspaper and wall newspaper), systematization of information and knowledge (School Files and Work Library) and the organization of group life (Work Plans, Daily Agenda, Wall Newspapers, among others).

For Freinet (1975), the originality of his conceptions is not in the fact that he gives students an active role in the construction of their knowledge, as others had already done so, but in the fact that he manages to organize a living school, as a natural extension of the life of the family, community and environment in which it operates. In this way, Freinet classes are similar in their fundamentals and techniques, but also different, considering the specificities of the environment in which children live.

Methodological procedures

This is qualitative research, in the form of a case study, taking as its setting a private school institution, located in the interior of the state of São Paulo, which has its proposal based on Freinet’s conception. In order to achieve the objective of this study, which is to analyze the contributions of Freinet Pedagogy to pedagogical practices in the initial years of elementary school, especially with regard to cooperative work, observation and discussion group.

After acceptance of the project by the Ethics Committee, field research was carried out, and, in order to delimit the situation under study, structured observation was carried out, using an observation grid that was carried out at the institution that was the subject of this study, in person, during the month of October, totaling 40 hours. It is important to highlight that during this period the world was experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic and the school was operating in a hybrid manner, with remote and in-person classes, following the official protocol that provided for social distancing. Even in this scenario, it was possible to observe the daily

activities carried out by at least one class from each year of schooling in the initial years of elementary school, as well as the internal and external spaces of the school.

Two pedagogical managers/coordinators and three teachers participated in the discussion group. They have between thirteen and forty years of teaching experience and between six and thirty-two years of experience with the Freinet's proposal. The managers/coordinators have the longest experience in a Freinet school, thirty-two years each. The discussion lasted approximately sixty-five minutes and a semi-structured script was used with two warm-up questions, two central questions and two closing questions. The meeting was recorded and transcribed.

Data from observation and the Discussion Group were analyzed from the perspective of content analysis (Laville; Dionne, 1999), with the help of WebQDA Software (Costa; Amado, 2017). After organizing the material, that is, the records from the observations and the Discussion Group transcription, the content was cut into elements in WebQDA, in order to order them into categories. After carrying out several critical and reflective readings, we sought to organize and reorganize the categories considering the similarities or divergences of the themes raised. From this analysis, three axes of analysis were created: (i) Freinet pedagogy assumptions and their potential; (ii) Freinet's techniques; and (iii) Challenges in implementing Freinet pedagogy. For the purposes of this article, only the first and third axes of analysis will be presented.

Assumptions of Freinet Pedagogy and its potential

Freinet Pedagogy assumes that the child is the focus of school work, considering their interests and needs, playing an active role in the construction of their knowledge. Fortunato and Porto (2020) state that their proposal places the student at the center of the entire process and is governed by principles such as: cooperation, sense of responsibility, reflective thinking, communication, creativity and especially autonomy.

This idea of a living, active and dynamic school, in which all activity must be contextualized from a cultural and social point of view (Filho, 2016), is an important contribution of Freinet Pedagogy. It is desirable and necessary that education in the early years of elementary school is based on cooperative work, free expression and, above all, respect for the child. Freinet's desire to "create a freer and more democratic system of education" (Fortunato; Porto, 2020, p. 5, our translation) is current and probably shared by multipurpose teachers in the early years.

Freinet created the Pedagogy of work, because for him, it is the activity that guides school practice. According to Filho (2016, p. 6, our translation), for the French educator the “ultimate objective of education is to train citizens for free and creative work, capable of dominating and transforming the environment and emancipating those who exercise it”. The work provides experimentation, creation and documentation, replacing lectures and the accumulation of information. In this sense, in the Discussion Group, when asked by the mediator: “What does Freinet pedagogy mean to you?”, Professor Vilma responded:

I think life and work in the classroom! For me, Freinet’s classroom is truly a construction site, where children are working and building (Vilma, teacher, our translation).

Professor Vilma used the expression “construction site” to refer to the classroom in Freinet’s view, as Freinet believed that education happens through work and that the classroom should effectively become a “construction site”. And what would it take for early years classrooms to be a “construction site” where everyone would be working and building cooperatively? What does it take to overcome the idea of the class being just a space in which only the teacher produces and bring to light its bias as a place where everyone works collectively?

Work, in the Freinetean view, must mutually develop intellectual and manual skills in a collaborative way, so that all actors are in a movement of constant exchange and learning. Freire corroborates this idea when he states: “Whoever teaches learns by teaching and whoever learns teaches by learning” (Freire, 1996, p. 12, our translation). Manager Cecília stated this in this regard:

Freinetean techniques, he will be developing his work with the students more naturally and calmly, because they will be working together. So the teacher will work with the student and alongside the student, not for the student. So, this is very pleasurable and will bring them new knowledge, there will be the possibility of exchange, I teach, you learn, if you learn, I teach, so this learning network (Cecília, manager, our translation).

From this perspective, the teacher does not work for the student, but alongside the student, teaching and learning, creating a learning network. To this end, it is necessary to develop students’ autonomy. According to Barros (2017), Freinet created techniques that have as their principle, among other things, autonomy. And it must be said that these techniques are easy to use and create an environment without domination and self-management by students, as recommended by him (Oliveira, 1995).

Furthermore, the authors Arena and Resende (2021, p. 24, our translation) state that Freinet creates “a school equipped with participatory structures, where students develop, from the ground up, their own educational project, where educational self-management begins to gain visibility”. Accordingly, during the Discussion Group, professor Valéria declares that Freinet Pedagogy differs from others because it allows a different perspective on the student, which does not underestimate them: “[...] the pedagogy of work leaves that traditional, that vision underestimating the student. She looks at the student as if they were capable of having their autonomy, of building their learning, of discovering” (Valéria, teacher, our translation).

In this sense, it is noted that, in the perception of the participants, the pedagogy of work changes the perspective on the student, does not underestimate him, on the contrary, it creates possibilities for him to build, through discovery, autonomy and develop self-management of their behaviors and manners. To this end, it is clear that students are working cooperatively at all times, as shown in an excerpt from the field diary:

Students are actively participating in activities at all times. It is clear that they have good oral skills, good argumentation power and good elaboration in formulating answers and hypotheses. They know how to work collaboratively while maintaining self-discipline and self-management. They appear motivated and engaged in group activities and workshops (Field diary, researcher, our translation).

From this excerpt, it was possible to see that the students work engaged and much of the time as a team, which allows the development of oral skills, power of argumentation and formulation of answers and hypotheses. This entire movement helps the student's autonomous work and self-management, which is of fundamental importance for their personal growth. It is common for teachers, not only teachers of the initial years, but of all segments, to require autonomy and self-management from their students, so that they become more independent in the learning process. However, the practices mobilized in the classroom do not always enable students to experience this.

As they highlight Arena and Resende (2021, p. 24, our translation), Freinet's genius and boldness was to be able to implement the motto “from life”, seeing the child as a social being, inserted in a context. Therefore, his techniques are strongly marked by this bias. At the same time, teacher Vilma stated in this regard: “The classroom is alive and it has a meaning for the student, it is an extension of life, there is no difference between life and school” (Vilma, teacher, our translation).

The authors Arena and Resende (2021, p. 27, our translation) state that “school must itself be the learning of life”. This idea is evident in Vilma's speech, as her perception of the classroom is that it is a living environment and that it cannot be dissociated from the child's life. This intention of bringing the social context within the school walls helps in the humanization of subjects, in search of an emancipatory education:

[...] reconnecting the school to the authentic life of children, to their concrete experience, helping them to deepen their first perceptions, to make reality more complex, and, at the same time, to build a reflection that is their own, to draw their personal conclusions in a democratic confrontation of opinions. (Arena; Resende, 2021, p. 27, our translation).

The statement by authors Arena and Resende (2021) demonstrate that Freinet was concerned with the education of children based on his experience, but moving towards a more complex, reflective and critical view of reality.

Therefore, within a school whose proposal is Freinet's one, we can observe a dynamic environment, in which everyone works actively and in cooperation. This could be verified during the field research, mainly through the practice of the workshops, according to an excerpt from the field diary:

Various workshops are developed with the classes. These workshops require collaborative work, self-management of time, space, materials to be used and discipline, power of argument and conflict management. They also favor “experimental groping”, because in this work environment, students explore the object of study and can build their knowledge (Field diary, researcher, our translation).

These workshops promote tactile teaching, that is, exploration and discovery, allowing children to be active in the face of knowledge, leading to more meaningful learning (Freinet, 1985). This process is fundamental, because according to Bacich and Moran (2018), learning through transmission is important “but learning through questioning and experimentation is more relevant for a broader and deeper understanding”.

In this sense, it is evident that cooperative work presents itself as an important potential within the teaching-learning process from a Freinetean perspective, as it allows the teacher to group students together in order to enhance learning, but recognizes the importance of individual work.

Gauthier, Bissonnette and Richard (2014) reinforce this practice by stating that working with heterogeneous classes is positive, but should not completely replace individual practice and point out that students must truly work as a team, aspiring to common goals and to feel

individual responsible for achieving these objectives. In relation to cooperative work, the authors believe that the teacher should prioritize the following elements: positive interdependence (solidarity, winning and losing together), mutual help, holding team members individually and collectively accountable, developing interpersonal skills (conflict resolution, decision making, etc.) and reflection on the group work process. Promoting different forms of grouping is a viable and necessary practice in the classroom; however, schools rarely carry out a well-founded reflection on the options available for organizing class space and interactions, as Zabala (1998) argues.

It is noteworthy that the studio is a technique that can be implemented in different contexts in the classroom, as long as it is well planned, with clear objectives and considering the possible challenges and necessary adjustments, such as, for example, the large number of students per room. In this case, the teacher can seek strategies to make this work possible, such as carrying out these activities in a larger place than the classroom (for example, an open space) and/or previously requesting the assistance of an employee such as a monitor, students more experienced people or even community volunteers.

Furthermore, it is important to reinforce that the teacher's action must not be based on improvisation, but must have intentionality. Therefore, for the development of pedagogical work, planning is necessary, understood as essential for the learning process. According to Almeida *et al.* (2021), it is through it that reflection on the work proposal, strategies and practices takes place. They also state that it is essential that planning is flexible and not rigid, so that it is possible to include the contributions made by students and adapt it according to the specificities of each class.

It is important to emphasize that the role of the teacher is not just to plan the workshops and make them viable, but to be attentive to their development in order to make interventions to teach their students to truly work as a team, making significant exchanges, which requires, among other things, power of argumentation, negotiation, tolerance, understanding, as ideas are not always accepted by the group. Participating in the workshops does not guarantee that the work will be carried out as a team, but it is a viable strategy that can be used repeatedly in the initial years. And the techniques of Freinetean pedagogy, despite their potential, are still little explored by teachers. In Freinet 's work it is possible to find many possibilities to promote tentative teaching and active learning, helping to overcome passive teaching in which students are just receptacles of knowledge.

The work proposed by Freinet materializes through productive and reflective activity, in which cooperation is highlighted in the sense that everyone works towards a common objective. Likewise, it is important to highlight that there are also moments of individual work, depending on the objectives set by the teacher.

Freinet Pedagogy

During the Discussion Group, several speeches emerged aimed at the possibilities and difficulties of implementing Freinetan practices in public schools. All participants, except one, have a history of working in both Freinetan and public schools. Currently, two of the three teachers work in public schools. Therefore, during the Discussion Group, they made important contributions regarding the work they carry out both in the Freinetan school and in the public school.

They declared that they are essentially Freinetan teachers and reported the challenges faced in public schools to develop their practices in accordance with their principles and how other teachers see the practice they develop in these schools. They highlighted three challenges: the first is related to the appropriation of theoretical and methodological knowledge of the Freinetan proposal by teachers; the second is related to the difficulties of breaking with traditional practices; and the third concerns the lack of resources.

The participants complain that in initial and continuing training, the majority of teachers do not have contact with Freinet's Pedagogy and that they need to *acquire the theoretical and methodological knowledge of Freinet's proposal*. They themselves were not aware of the proposal before working at the school, the object of this study. Valéria and Vilma describe how they met Freinet Pedagogy:

[...] **I didn't know Freinet**. From what I heard at college, at the time, was that Freinet was the one who taught under the tree and that was it. (Vilma, teacher).

I didn't know the proposal until I arrived at the College [...] and really, for me it was very impactful, because it's very different from everything we've ever seen, everything we've ever worked on, in those traditional techniques. Even if suddenly, we don't really want to reproduce traditional practices, it would be difficult without having the resources, without having **the knowledge** to be able to really work in another way (Valéria, teacher, our translation).

Professors Valéria and Vilma did not have the opportunity to learn in depth about Freinet's proposal during their academic training. It can be seen that Professor Valéria was not completely comfortable using traditional practices, but, among other reasons, the lack of

knowledge was a limiting factor in overcoming this reality. After learning about Freinet Pedagogy, the teacher reports that she underwent an “impressive” transformation. Manager Cecília talks about this transformation in her role as manager:

We talk a lot about this, **the biggest difficulty is for us to find**, in many moments, **people who are** really in your heart, your thoughts, **the desire for this transformation**. It is necessary to understand philosophy, not just technique for the sake of technique, not just go there and apply the book of life, a conversation circle, but have the philosophical basis of why I am doing all this, and the feeling, therefore, **the biggest challenge is finding teachers who are willing to change** (Cecília, manager, our translation).

Freinet's pedagogical proposal by teachers, but, above all, finding professionals who accept to go through what she called “metamorphosis”, since working with Freinet Pedagogy requires a change of assumptions. She explains that changing pedagogical practice is not enough to successfully implement Freinet Pedagogy, as a profound, philosophical change needs to occur, so as not to be just the application of “technique for technique’s sake”, devoid of intentionality. To this end, according to Verdum (2013), there needs to be more than a change in discourse, but a radical transformation of pedagogical practices and teachers' responsibilities, which implies a change that views the human being in all its multidimensionality, not dissociating the individual of the world in which he lives, overcoming the fragmented view of the subject and knowledge.

Freinetean techniques in schools that do not have this brand in their proposal. And when this choice is made by the teacher, Maria reports that it is natural to feel afraid:

I offer paths, possibilities for the student to work, develop, seek, and then, what am I going to do with all of this afterwards? Will I be able to start and finish? Because, sometimes it is anxiety and fear of the teacher that begins in Freinet pedagogy. And then comes Freinet 's text, [...] when he talks about shoes, that **we cannot abandon our old shoes, so as not to form blisters on our feet** (Maria, manager, our translation).

Freinetean techniques, they are insecure thinking that it won't work or they won't be able to handle it. It is pertinent to say that, for there to be a safe change in pedagogical practice, one should not suddenly abandon all practices carried out and introduce others. It is necessary for the teacher to introduce Freinetean techniques little by little, molding them in their own way and in the context of the class, because according to Freinet 's (1985) guidance, teachers should seek flexible techniques and “mark them with their way of walking and with your temperament” (Freinet, 1985, p. 97, our translation).

When seeking constant training, the teacher does not evolve alone, his students evolve with him. According to Maria, the study brings many benefits, including the formation of identity, as you recognize yourself and your actions are supported by solid theories:

So, **in studying you will be enchanted**, also because you will recognize yourself, and if you recognize yourself, standing on the road, **continue searching**, continue looking at the landscape around you, and you will then see the blessings that are waiting for you [...]. So, these are discoveries that we make every day in this way (Maria, manager, our translation).

According to Maria, studying brings enchantment and awakens the constant search for knowledge. As Tardif and Moscoso (2018) highlight, the teacher cannot be considered merely as a technician, but needs to maintain a reflective link with his work, reflect on his practice and in practice, allowing himself to enter into a continuous learning process, being this is a determining factor in professional teaching practice.

Freinet Pedagogy, in the understanding of the participants, is related to the *difficulties of breaking with traditional practices*. For Gauthier, Bissonnette and Richard (2014, p. 23, our translation), although the discourse of New Pedagogy “focused on children, their activity, needs and interests” is predominant today, traditionalism still remains very much alive in the pedagogical practices of teachers. Even though the teacher saw in his training that the school must overcome this vision of teaching, it is common to see teachers applying the practices with which they were taught in their classes. And even considering technological advances, there are teachers who have barely changed the class ritual, which is still strongly based on the transmission of information. Valéria and Lúcia talk about the possibilities of adopting work pedagogy:

The pedagogy of work, all these proposals, **comes out of that traditional**, that vision of underestimating the student (Valéria, teacher).
[...] teachers who don't know say: Wow, that's a lot of work! It's just that in their minds, **they can't look at the student as a protagonist**, they don't know the “Pedagogy of work”. So, it's only the teacher who goes to work, then we fall into that banking education way back when, when the student only receives, receives, the teacher only deposits and it's not like that, the student works, and they then don't have that vision (Lúcia, teacher, our translation).

It is noted that the teachers' statements indicate that, in their perception, the school cannot overcome traditional teaching when it underestimates students and fails to see in them the potential for protagonism that they carry. Therefore, their practices continue to perpetuate banking education, in which the student only receives and the teacher only deposits (Freire, 1996). Valéria's speech exemplifies this issue:

[...] we don't have that old banking education, of course, but **we carry a lot of the traditional**. So, if we don't learn, if we don't have this contact with the new, with this school, in which the student is the protagonist, the student builds, he has this autonomy, **we are left with a foothold in the traditional** and sometimes we don't even realize it. So, really for me it was a metamorphosis, it was a total change that made complete sense (Valéria, teacher, our translation).

We can observe in Valéria's speech that, even though the teacher knows, for example, Freire's concept of banking education, and is aware that he needs to work in a different way, he tends to work “with a little emphasis on the traditional”, even without be aware of this. So, according to the teacher, it is necessary for the teacher to learn more, seek more knowledge, trying to exercise *praxis*, to have contact with the new, which according to her, is the school that sees the student as the protagonist and subject of the construction of their learning.

The *lack of resources to work* with Freinet Pedagogy is the third challenge identified by the discussion group participants. Freinet (1985), in his book “Pedagogy of good sense”, already denounced the scarce resources in schools. Teachers who also work in the public education network reported difficulties in working with Freinet pedagogy, when resources are limited. However, although this can be a challenge, the participants point out that there are possibilities for working with Freinetean principles within a public school. In this regard, Professor Lúcia reports:

[...] my room at public school is a **Freinetean classroom**. Vilma asked me a few things at school, I sent her a photo, she said: “Wow, I see a Freinet blackboard”. Why? Because, that's how I know how to work, I don't know how to work with those concepts, that bunch of activities where the child can't think, and is there a way to do that in public schools? Yes. Unlike our school, which has a different structure, but making the child think does not depend on money, does not depend on school, it depends on who is thinking and setting these goals for this learning to happen. So, I think we can work, I don't know how to work any other way, so my vision is the vision of Freinet Pedagogy (Lúcia, teacher, our translation).

Lúcia's speech highlights that even though she does not have all the resources necessary to develop the Freinet proposal in the public school where she works, she bases her practice on the assumptions of Freinet Pedagogy, seeking more meaningful learning for the student. It argues that even in adverse situations, the teacher can set goals and work to make this learning happen, signaling the importance of the teacher's intentionality in relation to the practices developed in the classroom. Almeida *et al.* (2021) endorses this idea, as they state that it is essential for the learning process that the teacher's intentionality is present at all times. In this

regard, Valéria stated: “[...] it is our contribution to education, regardless of the school, **even if we do not have the resources**. That we really don’t have, but it’s what we believe” (Valéria, teacher).

In the participants' perception, regardless of resources, there are still possibilities, starting from simple but meaningful practices. This conception is most evident in Maria’s speech:

So, I think that every place we are, the teacher builds himself, when he allows himself, I think the first challenge is to open up, allow himself and be enchanted, because if you like it, there's no mistake? So, work more, **do wherever you can, with material, without material**, this happens (Maria, manager, our translation).

It is clear from the educators' statements that the lack of resources is a limiting factor, but it does not make it impossible to search for learning and classroom management strategies, favoring and enhancing learning in a meaningful and effective way.

Final remarks

It may seem trivial, but reflecting on the concepts of teaching and learning is still necessary, since traditional teaching, which aims only to transmit knowledge, favoring decontextualized teaching and the passivity of students, has been perpetuated in schools.

Movements to renew teaching, whose proposal is centered on children, changing the focus of teaching to their needs and interests, are not recent. The pedagogy proposed by the Frenchman Célestin Freinet, based on principles of cooperation, autonomy, self-management and free expression, emerged in the context of the “new school” movement at the beginning of the 20th century, and had similarities with the Escolanovistas, he went further, as he proposed a democratic school for all, which is why many authors call it the popular new school.

However, even with democratic principles and widely spread practices, his pedagogy has little presence in classrooms and schools, not to mention that there is still a lot to be explored in Freinet Pedagogy.

Freinetean pedagogy has elements capable of contributing to the pedagogical practice of teachers in the initial years of elementary school, through cooperative work that promotes significant interactions, giving students protagonism and by its principles governed by cooperation, autonomy and free expression.

The cooperative work manifested in Freinet Pedagogy privileges cooperation, but equally respects individual moments of production, promotes dialogical education in a movement of constant exchange and learning, in addition to mutually developing intellectual and manual skills in a collaborative way.

Freinet 's proposal, his philosophy and his objectives, teachers may be tempted to practice it, but a question arises: “how to start?”. Teachers do not need to change their entire practice suddenly, but they can gradually replace traditional techniques with more modern and meaningful ones. Also, they can plan their classes in order to reduce the time of expository and demonstrative classes, creating learning situations in which students explore, problematize, question, discuss, create hypotheses, test them, that is, actively participate in the construction of your learning. Furthermore, they must propose activities in groups, without neglecting individual work.

To assist in this process, Freinet created techniques to support teaching practice that aim to renew teaching. These techniques have a democratic and emancipatory character. Some of them are: the Book of Life, the assemblies, the conversation circle, the exchange of correspondence between schools, the school newspaper, class trips, exchange of knowledge, etc.

With these principles, Freinet demonstrates to teachers that they must maintain a relationship of mutual respect and companionship, that they plan their classes in a way that allows cooperative work between teacher and student and between students and their peers, as well as that they attribute to students the role of co-responsible for their learning process. It is important to highlight that these changes are possible to be carried out in schools, whether public or private, Freinetean or not.

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