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Articles

The implications of curricular organization on teachers' pedagogical practice

As implicações da organização curricular na práxis pedagógica de docentes

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Abstract

This essay aims to understand the implications of curricular organization in the pedagogical praxis that fosters the processes of teacher training and performance. It is justified by the need to discuss praxis as a way of breaking with the pernicious elements that neoliberalism has imposed on education. Therefore, this qualitative essay is based on theoretical contributions that discuss the subject in question. Based on epistemological studies and reflections constructed from the problematization of the theme, it was inferred that the curriculum projects hegemonic political, economic and social conceptions, causing the processes of training and teaching performance to encounter difficulties in being conceived according to the perspective of pedagogical praxis, which in turn, advocates the articulation between reflection and action. Thus, the need to reflect on the current education system and the curricular proposals that govern it is perceived and, in this way, corroborate the relevant studies.

Keywords: curriculum; teacher training; pedagogical praxis.

Resumo

Este ensaio objetiva compreender as implicações da organização curricular na práxis pedagógica que fomenta os processos de formação e atuação docente. Justifica-se pela necessidade de discutir a práxis como forma de ruptura com os elementos perniciosos que o neoliberalismo tem imposto à educação. Destarte, esse ensaio de cunho qualitativo encontra-se esteado em aportes teóricos que discutem sobre o assunto em tela. Com base em estudos epistemológicos e nas reflexões construídas a partir da problematização da temática, foi inferido que o currículo projeta as concepções políticas, econômicas e sociais hegemônicas, impelindo que os processos de formação e atuação docente encontrem dificuldades em serem concebidos segundo a perspectiva da práxis pedagógica, que por sua vez, advoga a articulação entre reflexão e ação. Assim, se percebe a necessidade de refletir acerca do atual sistema de ensino e das propostas curriculares que o rege e, dessa forma, corroborar com os estudos concernentes.

Palavras-chave: currículo; formação docente; práxis pedagógica.

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INTRODUCTION

The educational system is a projective cut of the prominent political and socioeconomic situation in a given society, and, for the most part, these situations are generated from a neoliberal ideology that, in turn, reached a state of hegemony throughout the 1980s. and 1990 and has continued to this day. This regime of inequality and oppression, which comes from capitalism, has been installed in the most diverse segments of society, including with a strong prevalence in education as can be seen in studies by important authors such as Almerindo Janela Afonso (2016), Luiz Carlos de Freitas (2014), István Mészáros (2008), Pablo Gentili (1996), among others.

Therefore, it is necessary that the educational curricular organization is reflected and structured in such a way that its proposed guidelines, especially with regard to content and teaching and learning methodologies, raise discussions that problematize the current political and social reality. However, massively, it is inferred that curricular documents do not instigate critical formation and the construction of a real and non-alienated consciousness, this is because a large part of them are prepared with the participation of multilateral organizations, which, at times, encourage the logic of capital financial.

Studies and research such as those by Michael Young (2014), José Gimeno Sacristán (2013) and Tomas Tadeu da Silva (2005), which can be seen as references in the discussion about curriculum, show that it cannot be conceived as a mere document. According to the reflections of the aforementioned authors, this document can be seen as a tool of power (Young, 2014), given its ability to influence and guide behaviors and institutional initiatives. It contains ideologies, beliefs and interests and, therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the guidelines established by it, after all, the development of teaching-learning should not assume a passive stance, on the contrary, it is necessary to have an active and creative stance.

It is in this context that the importance of pedagogical praxis stands out, as it is configured as a dialectical movement of an educational, social and political nature that aims to problematize prominent social issues and their implications for education. In turn, teacher training is also linked to this discussion, after all, teachers are the main protagonists of this storyline with regard to the implementation of curricular policies in the classroom (Gadêlha, 2022)[1].

In this sense, this work aims to understand the implications of curricular organization in the pedagogical praxis that promotes the processes of teacher training and performance. To this end, this qualitative discussion is based on the theoretical contributions of Young (2007, 2014), which addresses the curriculum dimension; Arroyo (2001), which problematizes the issue of curricular compositions; Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (2005), who discusses Curriculum theories; Imbert (2003), which conceptualizes pedagogical praxis; Vázquez (2011) who explains the philosophy of praxis; Konder (1992), which makes a historical and temporal analysis of the manifestation of praxis; among other authors.

The construction of this essay is organized as follows: initially, a general introduction of the theme and the presentation of the elucidating elements of the discussion are made; in the second moment, we discuss the role of the State, Society and Education in the current situation; in the third part, we carry out a conversation between the present proposal within the scope of pedagogical praxis and the Curriculum; in the last part, final remakers are made and then the references used are presented.

STATE, SOCIETY AND EDUCATION IN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

In the work "Education and class struggle", written by Aníbal Ponce (2001), it can be identified that since the most remote times, the history of humanity has been characterized by the

[1] In a recent study, Gadêlha (2022, p. 7) infers that, based on the analysis of the teaching conception of pedagogical praxis and how it materializes in the initial training of students in a Pedagogy Course at a Brazilian state public university, "[...] the constitution of a pedagogical praxis represents an importante advance formative, as in addition to contemplating the theoretical-practical unity as a path of (self)transformation, it seeks to dialectically grasp the dimensions of knowledge, in a contextualized and congruent way, with the social, historical and political aspects of the educational act".

division of classes and power relations. What changes are the circumstances of each era, but in all of them, there is a progressive and accentuated polarization of social classes and the exploitation of work. This evidence extends to the most different sectors, including education, as neoliberal ideology was incorporated into educational processes, materialized substantially through management policies and results-based evaluation.

Regarding the implementation and development of neoliberalism, the Washington Consensus, for example, which took place at the end of the 1980s, drawn up by the North-American economist John Williamson, included among its recommendations the policy of privatizing state-owned companies, the State tax reduction, the reduction of labor laws and the outsourcing of services as ways of reducing the government's participation in the Economy and public spending. These neoliberal proposals

> [...] achieved many of its objectives, creating markedly more unequal societies, although not as privatized as it wanted. Politically and ideologically, however, neoliberalism has achieved success to a degree that its founders probably never dreamed of, disseminating the simple idea that there are no alternatives to its principles, that everyone, whether confessing or denying, has to adapt to its norms. (Anderson, 1995, p. 12, our translation).

Thus, neoliberalism imposes itself as the dominant ideology that infiltrates society, considerably increasing existing inequalities. In the field of public policies, the prescriptions of international organizations that project a neoliberal education model in our country threaten the future of our society, as the flags that are being raised inside educational institutions, for the most part, reveal a system of meritocratic teaching and with pedagogical practices that are based on mechanical and technical standards.

A sample of this are the frantic movements and somewhat heated that occur in public Basic Education schools during the preparation process for external and/or large-scale assessments, taking as examples: the Ceará Permanent Basic Education Assessment System (SPAECE); the National Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB); the National High School Exam (ENEM) and/or specific entrance exams at some universities that require this type of assessment for new entrants. Regarding this, the author Almerindo Afonso states that: "[...] the forms of evaluation are increasingly subordinated to the production of measurable results and the elitist meritocratization of public schools; external exams are carried out at an increasingly earlier age (now in the 4th year of schooling); formative assessment was definitely devalued [....]." (Afonso, 2013, p. 290, our translation).

The pressure that takes over educational environments, with the arrival of these evaluations, reveals the fragility that this capitalist system has revealed in education professionals and students. Not to mention the

> [...] continuous policy of dismantling, by the federal government, the universities and federal institutes in our country with reduction in funding, appointment of military interveners to the position of rector and the frequent attack on university autonomy. (Bonfim, 2021, p. 158).

At the end of this, real knowledge is denied to us. What is most worrying, and also revolting, is that even the State, a figure that should be responsible for preserving social rights and seeking justice and equality, is also an ally of this oppressive system, as "[...] it emerges as an apparatus of the ruling class precisely with the purpose of reproducing its dominance" (Oliveira, 1985, p. 55, our translation). It is not new that the State serves the interests of the dominant classes much more than those of the population. According to Zavaleta (2009, p. 331, our translation): "In its most remote sense, it is clear that the State is an apparatus of one class or a bloc to dominate another, even if in a deferred way. In fact, the instrumental form is reminiscent of the primal moments of power"[2]. In our context of neoliberal imposition, the State is, in this way, a mechanism at the service of the upper classes.

[2] "En su acepción más remota, es claro que el Estado es un aparato de una clase o de un bloque para dominar a otro, aunque sea de un modo diferido. En realidad, la forma instrumental es una reminiscencia de los momentos primarios del poder" (Zavaleta, 2009, p. 331, our translation).

In view of this, one could even ask: the working class, sometimes weakened by the violation of rights and the deprivation of an emancipatory and humanized education, has effective conditions to participate in a struggle like this in which the other side finds the strength and the economic and political power of the dominant classes supported even by the State itself? It cannot be said that it is not possible, however, "the struggle must therefore be conscious, organized and directed [...]." (Vázquez, 2011, p. 233, our translation).

Indeed, there is already a significant number of academic and scientific productions on neoliberal hegemony and its reverberations on society, therefore, this present construct is not new when it addresses the losses and limitations to human emancipation and the political and historical formation of subjects resulting from this system, but despite this abundance of studies related to the topic, the importance of insisting and reinforcing the problem is perceived, after all, it is necessary to build an awareness movement, which, in turn, is structured from repetitive and permanent efforts.

CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS OF TEACHERS

The school curriculum plays a fundamental role in pedagogical practice, as it guides the daily teaching-learning work, defining the contents that should be worked on throughout the school period, the methodologies that can be used and the objectives to be achieved. It is a document that organizes knowledge into disciplines and that has yet another function beyond the normative: to articulate scientifically and historically constructed knowledge with that which is necessary for life in society, therefore, "[...] it is like an activity that the curriculum must be understood – an activity that is not limited to our school, educational life, but to our entire life." (Silva, 2005, p. 43, our translation).

In this sense, it can be stated that the form and organization of the curriculum greatly influence the teacher's didactic-pedagogical practice, and, therefore, depending on how they are put in place, they can contribute to education being a source of "powerful knowledge", that is, that it has the potential to "[...] provide reliable explanations or new ways of thinking about the world" (Young, 2007, p. 1294, our translation) or as a source of "knowledge of the powerful" that is configured as instrument for maintaining social inequalities (Young, 2014).

It is from this perspective that discussion and reflection on the meaning of praxis and its contribution to human formation through teaching work are proposed. As Vázquez (2011, p. 221, our translation) explains, "all praxis is activity, but not all activity is praxis". The basic studies on the category of praxis (Vázquez, 2011; Konder, 1992; Freire, 2019), recommend that it is necessary for man to resort to reflection and action, that is, theory and practice, in order to achieve an holistic understanding view of the reality that surrounds you and in this way achieve the ideal of transformation.

In this way, theory is the activity of thought capable of conceiving and organizing ideas and providing them with consciousness; and practice is the material and objective realization of this activity. Thus, as a theoretical-practical activity, praxis "[...] has an ideal, theoretical side, and a material, properly practical side, with the particularity that only artificially, through a process of abstraction, can we separate, isolate a of the other" (Vázquez, 2011, p. 264, our translation). That said,

> Praxis is the concrete activity through which human subjects assert themselves in the world, modifying objective reality and, in order to be able to change it, transforming themselves. It is the action that, to be deepened in a more consistent way, needs reflection, self-questioning, theory; and it is the theory that leads to action, which faces the challenge of verifying its successes and failures, comparing them with practice. (Konder, 1992, p. 115, our translation).

In the case of pedagogical praxis more specifically, it is a contrast to closed practices, standardized and mold-bound teaching: "[...] praxis mobilizes the institution's founding moment. It opens new exits, opens a new becoming. It breaks with archaic ties, finished

identifications, definitive definitions" (Imbert, 2003, p. 74, our translation). In other words, what differs from praxis is that it

> [...] never ceases to make the new appear. Contrary to a cloistering pedagogical practice, it is based on the explicit recognition of the openness of its object and only exists as long as it is capable of maintaining the tension of such openness. (Imbert, 2003, p. 118, our translation).

However, it is known that, sometimes, teaching autonomy is limited and infringed, consequently transforming practice into praxis becomes an arduous exercise. There is a hierarchy of powers; there are relations of force and conflicts that generally end up involving and influencing the teacher's work, in this way, "[...] from so much living, planning and acting within the curriculum, we think about the world, the society and history, students and above all we think of knowledge and culture as gridded, hierarchical." (Arroyo, 2001, p. 211, our translation).

You really can't fantasize about reality. There is a real class struggle happening and in an unequal way. There is a dispute for control over education and teachers are right in the middle of this crossfire and the curriculum is also used as an instrument of power. However, no matter how challenging and unequal this clash may be, it is necessary to resist not agreeing and not agreeing with a unilateral, autocratic, alienated model of curriculum, which is why "[...] we need to understand curricula as forms of specialized knowledge so we can develop better curricula and expand learning opportunities" (Young, 2014, p. 197, our translation). In view of this,

> [...] thinking about the curriculum has to reveal its regulatory nature, the codes through which it is created, what mechanisms it uses, how this nature is carried out and what consequences may arise from its operation. However, it is not enough to stop at this. It is also necessary to make explicit, explain and justify the options that are taken and what is imposed on us; in other words, we must evaluate the meaning of what we do and for what we do it. (Sacristán, 2013, p. 23, our translation).

Certainly, following this path is not an easy task. It is complex to talk about the curriculum and its relationship with the performance of teachers linked to the perspective of pedagogical praxis. On the other hand, the complexity of the subject also reveals its pertinence and relevance for the socio-educational field, after all, talking about curriculum is dealing with the dynamics of didactic-pedagogical relationships that engender the educational, political and economic system and the processes of training and performance. for teaching.

Without a doubt, change does not happen overnight and results flourish. Popular movements[3] in defense of social causes are faithful portraits of the difficulty and slowness of the struggle. Furthermore, the search for freedom often costs a high price and, in the meantime, fatalities[4] also happen. But it is necessary to insist, resist and that is why it is argued that the teacher's work and the pedagogical practice substantiated in praxis are very important and necessary, both for the process of training and human emancipation, and for the construction of a curriculum that concerns with the political and social function of education.

FINAL REMARKS

Based on the reflections arising from the problematization posed by this work, it was inferred that the curriculum projects in a preponderant way hegemonic political, economic and social conceptions, leading to the processes of training and teaching activities encountering difficulties in being conceived according to the perspective of pedagogical praxis, which in turn, advocates a free and democratic education system, committed to the healthy transformation of reality.

[3] Black, Indigenous, Feminist Movements, Landless Rural Workers (MST) etc.
[4] Many of the people who actively participate in these movements are victims of murder, as was the case with councilor Marielle Franco murdered in 2018 and farmer Zé Maria do Tomé in 2010, among many others.

In view of this, it is essential that educational institutions and society participate in the process of preparing and developing the curriculum with the purpose of ensuring that their needs and demands will be covered by the document and that the curricular organization will try to ensure a preponderant quality teaching-learning and teacher training.

As mentioned above, education is situated in a minefield and tortuous terrain. There is within educational policies an arbitrary force that seeks to manipulate knowledge and subjugate the masses in order to avoid contradictions and thus ensure a state of hegemony. Therefore, in this text, the importance of raising awareness was mentioned, which in turn consists of identifying the real intentions of certain movements.

Indeed, it is not easy to implement some of the speeches and actions that are idealized, after all, it is known that difficulties and obstacles exist, however, if paralysis and silence prevail, equity and justice will perish. Therefore, we cannot run the risk of letting hegemonic groups take the voice of the population and decide everything for them indiscriminately.

The reflections and problematizations listed here become even more pressing when thinking about the curriculum, since it is an expressive tool for mediation and intervention in the educational policy of educational institutions. In this sense, reflection on the curricular organization is essential, as it is pertinent to analyze whether there are spaces in the curriculum for the construction of pedagogical praxis, especially with regard to the possibilities of teaching.

To develop this analysis, it is certainly necessary to carry out empirical research that allows real contact with teachers and the curricular documents present in educational institutions. As it was not possible to carry out it at the moment, this work was intended as a theoretical essay on the topic, but later, it is intended, through field research, to expand it and record its empirical results in future productions.

In short, since the curriculum is a path (to be) followed, the constant and necessary route is taken in order to propose and achieve a critical and contextualized professional training and performance based on the perspective of critical and post-critical curricular theories. in order to broaden the perception of the power relations that permeate these curricular elaborations with a view to making teachers and students increasingly protagonists of training processes that encourage other subjects to also assume unique roles.

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