

**METHODOLOGIES FOR A PLURAL HISTORY: THE CASE OF THE CURSINHO
GERAÇÃO NEAR**

***METODOLOGIAS PARA UMA HISTÓRIA PLURAL: O CASO DO CURSINHO
POPULAR GERAÇÃO NEAR***

***METODOLOGÍAS PARA UNA HISTÓRIA PLURAL: EL CASO DEL CURSINHO
GERAÇÃO NEAR***



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ABSTRACT: This experience report narrates a didactic sequence developed in the Brazilian History course at the Cursinho Popular Geração NEAR. It addressed the Brazilian independence process and one of its main symbols, the painting Grito do Ipiranga (1888). The methodology used in constructing the didactic sequence follows the assumptions of qualitative research in education and the theoretical framework of (Jorn) Rüsen. This work is organized into three stages: presentation of the theme, introduction to the historical problematization of images and narratives about Independence, and source analysis. As final considerations, it highlights that the didactic sequence allowed students to engage with different historical interpretations and practice critical analysis of narratives and visual representations, fostering historical awareness.

KEYWORDS: History teaching. Plural narratives. Brazilian history. Popular education.

RESUMO: Este relato de experiência narra uma sequência didática desenvolvida na disciplina de História do Brasil no Cursinho Popular Geração NEAR. Nele, foi abordado o processo de independência brasileira e um de seus principais símbolos, o quadro “Grito do Ipiranga” (1888). A metodologia empregada na construção da sequência didática segue os pressupostos da pesquisa qualitativa em educação e o referencial teórico de (Jorn) Rusen. O presente trabalho se organiza em três etapas: apresentação do tema, introdução à problematização histórica das imagens e narrativas sobre a Independência e análise de fontes. Como considerações finais, pontua que a sequência didática permitiu aos alunos o contato com diferentes interpretações históricas e o exercício da análise crítica de narrativas e representações visuais, fomentando a consciência histórica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de história. Narrativas plurais. História do Brasil. Educação popular.

RESUMEN: Este relato de experiencia narra una secuencia didáctica desarrollada en la asignatura de Historia de Brasil en el Cursinho Popular Geração NEAR. En ella, se abordó el proceso de independencia brasileña y uno de sus principales símbolos, el cuadro Grito do Ipiranga (1888). La metodología empleada en la construcción de la secuencia didáctica sigue los principios de la investigación cualitativa en educación y el marco teórico de (Jorn) Rüsen. El presente trabajo se organiza en tres etapas: presentación del tema, introducción a la problematización histórica de las imágenes y narrativas sobre la Independencia y análisis de fuentes. Como consideraciones finales, se señala que la secuencia didáctica permitió a los alumnos entrar en contacto con diferentes interpretaciones históricas y ejercer el análisis crítico de narrativas y representaciones visuales, fomentando la conciencia histórica.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Enseñanza de la historia. Narrativas plurales. Historia de Brasil. Educación popular.

Introduction

History is present in multiple aspects of human life, whether through social interaction or lived experiences that shape traditions, values, and beliefs extending beyond classroom learning. In this sense, the present study aims to contribute to the debate on the didactics of History through an experience report, focusing on a didactic sequence of History classes developed at the Cursinho Popular Geração Near.

Furthermore, the Cursinho Popular Geração Near is a project created in 2010 in partnership with the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of UNESP in Araraquara, within the framework of university extension activities, and operates with a dual purpose. First, it seeks to promote teacher education by complementing pedagogical training and providing a deeper and more comprehensive experience in the classroom. Second, it aims to supplement the educational background of students who have completed Basic Education and to democratize access to higher education. In addition, the project prioritizes students from the public school system and, in some cases, those already engaged in work routines, with the objective of broadening their horizons of possibilities through access to universities. Thus, while the Cursinho Popular Geração Near advocates for equitable access to higher education, it also assumes responsibility for fostering critical and civic education, seeking to provide the foundations for the construction of an autonomous subject capable of understanding and critically engaging with the social context in which they are embedded, as well as valuing public spaces and public policies (Cursinho Popular Geração Near, 2022).

The project is funded by PROEC (Office of the Vice-Rector for Extension and University Culture) through scholarships awarded to undergraduate students of São Paulo State University Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Araraquara Campus) who join the project team, with the aim of ensuring their academic permanence. As a member of this project, I work as a Brazilian History teacher, being responsible for planning and conducting classes, as well as for the pedagogical monitoring of students. The curricular structure of the course is organized by areas of knowledge, namely: “Languages, Codes, and Their Technologies”—Literature, Writing, Grammar, and English; “Human Sciences and Their Technologies”—Sociology, Philosophy, Geography, Brazilian History, and General History; “Natural Sciences and Their Technologies”—Chemistry, Physics, and Biology; and “Mathematics and Its Technologies”—Basic Mathematics, Geometry, Algebra, and Text Interpretation. Accordingly, each teacher is responsible for preparing classes in their respective subjects, attending meetings established by the project, complying with academic schedules throughout the school year, recording student

attendance, developing mock exams, participating in extracurricular events, and taking part in the institution's Scientific Initiation Congress. Therefore, in order to achieve its proposed objectives, the project offers students daily classes, pedagogical support, and extracurricular activities that contribute to political, scientific, and human development, while simultaneously preparing teachers to carry out these activities (Cursinho Popular Geração Near, 2022).

In studies on the teaching of History, certain fundamental dimensions are considered, including its understanding as a social science interconnected with other disciplines, the importance of historical cognition, and the role of historical consciousness in education, based on the premise that “to teach History to João, one must understand teaching, History, and João” (Caimi, 2009, p. 68). Thus, History cannot be seen merely as a narrative of the past, but as a practice that must be understood hermeneutically, in which educators and students interpret historical testimonies as texts that reflect human intentionalities. This approach goes beyond the mere reproduction of content and provides an educational experience that fosters dialogue between historical experience and subjectivity. In this way, it avoids adopting “the notion of historical consciousness as a reductive national, local, or other identity, or as the construction of a single citizen profile, around which we know there is no consensus” (Rüsen, 2010, p. 15, our translation). From this perspective, it becomes necessary to develop historical consciousness, which occurs when inert information, progressively internalized, becomes a mechanism of the subject and is consciously applied in everyday life, extending its use beyond formal education.

Within this context, it is essential to problematize how History and historical narratives are presented in the contemporary world, often in fragmented ways and devoid of structuring frameworks. As noted by Rüsen (2010, p. 17, our translation), “productions tend to emphasize violent characteristics of the world, although some also refer to or discuss scientific and technological progress.” This emphasis on isolated aspects, without articulation with social, cultural, and historical construction, contributes to the discontinuity of historical consciousness. As a result, many young people complete basic education without a deeper understanding of their role as historical subjects and without temporal references that allow them to critically interpret the present. In this sense, it becomes fundamental to ask: which narratives are being silenced or neglected in this process?

Therefore, this experience report is based on a didactic sequence involving dynamics and methodologies employed in two Brazilian History classes conducted at the Cursinho Popular Geração Near throughout 2024, focusing on the theme of national Independence.

Images and sound elements were used, putting into practice discussions from the social sciences and historiography regarding narrative power and the ways in which Brazilian History is taught in textbooks and schools. Accordingly, the objectives of this didactic sequence were to understand and perceive the relationship between image, power, and narrative; to develop historical consciousness; to foster multiple languages in the teaching of History; and, finally, to demonstrate the importance of historical narrative in the construction of identity and collective memory.

The methodology employed in the construction of the didactic sequence follows the assumptions of qualitative research in education. In this way, the *Cursinho Popular Geração Near*, as a space for the education of young people from the public school system, faces the challenge of de-fragmenting content, thus seeking to foster a critical and reflective historical consciousness (Rüsen, 2010). Accordingly, the methodology adopted in the didactic sequences applied in the project is structured around the active construction of historical knowledge, encouraging students to critically analyze the narratives present in teaching materials and in dominant historiographical culture.

Finally, in order to outline the development topics of this study, the first section, *What are images for?*, was conducted with students arranged in a large circle, encouraging reflection on what an image is, what representations are, and how they act and interfere in life, narratives, and their presence in History. In *The faces of independence*, a theoretical reflection on the Brazilian independence process is proposed to provide students with the conceptual grounding necessary to interpret the artistic proposal presented subsequently. The section *The Cry of Ipiranga* addresses the stage in which students were divided into three large groups to debate works of art from different periods that portrayed the same historical event. In *Collective power*, the final part of the didactic sequence is described, in which groups presented their perceptions through a cumulative points-based activity and, through the articulation between the artwork, its elements, and its symbolic field, collectively constructed a shared material.

What Are Images For?

In contemporary society, there is an accelerated process of stimulus intensification and image circulation, making images an integral part of everyday life and active agents in social transformations, directly influencing ways of thinking, acting, and being. In this context, the first class of the didactic sequence reported here began with students organizing themselves in

a large circle to initiate discussion, guided by the following questions: What is an image? And what is it for?

The most simplistic definition of an image is that it represents a person or an object. However, the debate surrounding this concept is as old as Western philosophy itself. Plato (1993) established some of the earliest definitions of what an image is in his writings on the allegory of the cave, in which the image refers to something that conceals the real plane while simultaneously defining it. Thus, “the image does not illustrate or reproduce reality, but rather reconstructs it through its own language, produced within a given historical context” (Martins, 2007, p. 3, our translation). Consequently, the meanings of images depend on their social and material contexts, their circumstances, and even the physical space in which they are displayed, and cannot be characterized merely as reflections of specific times and places. Likewise, those who analyze an image—in this case, the teacher and the students—are “endowed with perceptual capacity, knowledge, beliefs, and affects shaped by historical-social and psychological configurations that constitute the diversity of viewers” (Martins, 2007, p. 5, our translation).

From this perspective, understanding images is essential in historical studies. For Kossoy (2014), photography is a form of cultural expression documented through images; aspects of dwelling, customs, and social events can thus be recorded. Photography may therefore serve as a source to support the research process. However, it is crucial to recognize that the photographer—the author of the image—participated in the process of representation, acting as a cultural filter. There is intentionality on the part of the producer, as well as their direct interference. Burke argues that images “can be both evidence of history and history itself, since their production often involves behavior that operates within a broad social spectrum” (Burke, 2004).

In summary:

Thus, it becomes clear that the primary function of an image is to resemble something else—a function of representation. The construction of an image therefore implies that its creator perceives this purpose and exercises control over it, whether total or partial. For this intercommunication to be effective, a symbolic relationship must be established in which both agents involved are able to apprehend the meaning produced by the other. The effectiveness of the visual message is therefore grounded in this capacity (Braga Junior, 2015, p. 27).

It can be concluded that students come to understand that, in History, images do not provide direct access to the social world, but rather to contemporary views of that world. The

testimony of images must be situated within plural contexts, and “in the case of images, as with texts, it is necessary to read between the lines, observing even the smallest details in search of meaningful elements” (Burke, 2004, p. 182, our translation). Subsequently, after grasping the complexity of images and their nuances in modernity, students were introduced to the historical context of Brazilian Independence, its political conjuncture, and the succession of narratives surrounding September 7, 1822.

The Faces of Independence

Addressing Brazilian Independence in the classroom involves a series of complexities and choices, as both History and the Social Sciences question the scope and positioning of this process (Novais; Mota, 1996, p. 12). Accordingly, students were presented with the political and historical context of the period. Briefly, Independence resulted from a long process of crisis in mercantilist colonialism and the Ancien Régime, which had shown signs of exhaustion since the eighteenth century, largely due to the Age of Revolutions—the Industrial and French Revolutions—the independence of the United States of America and the Spanish colonies, and the spread of Enlightenment ideas.

In this sense, the crisis of absolutism is particularly relevant, as it was intrinsically linked to the colonial model. Colonization developed under the patronage of absolutist states; however, with the emergence of a new capitalist market model, complex exchanges, and industrialism, this system became incompatible with “exclusive trade, slavery, and political domination—in short, with the Old Colonial System” (Novais; Mota, 1996, p. 23, our translation). Furthermore, the arrival of the royal family in Brazil and the opening of ports to friendly nations aligned the interests of the Brazilian landowning elite with those of the metropolitan state. This alignment persisted until the 1820s, when the Porto Revolution and the return of King João VI to Portugal generated a new confrontation between those who sought recolonization and those who fought to maintain the autonomy that had been achieved.

From this perspective, it can be argued that Independence, as it is traditionally narrated in 1822, was carried out from the top down, serving the conservative interests of the Brazilian agrarian elite and preserving the economic, social, and political order under the monarchy. Decision-making processes were centralized, thereby marginalizing popular sectors from participation. Despite the event of the Cry of Independence in 1822, “its political and economic consolidation would still take time” (Novais; Mota, 1996, p. 46, our translation). Moreover,

Portuguese resistance persisted in several provinces, such as Bahia, Piauí, Maranhão, and Grão-Pará. The consolidation of the Independence process required popular wars, often marked by female leadership, as exemplified by Joana Angélica, Maria Quitéria, and Maria Felipa, who led revolutionary movements in their respective provinces and are frequently erased from textbooks and educational processes. In this sense, the relevance of Rüsen's theoretical framework on the typology of historical consciousness is reaffirmed, emphasizing the need to critique and deconstruct interpretations, disrupt the repetition of cultural patterns, and promote a dynamic understanding of History as a process of continuous transformation.

Accordingly, this study problematizes the ways in which texts and images in textbooks are often presented as given, consistently portraying Brazilian achievements as products of elite action and framing historical subjects as ahistorical, acting within pre-established attitudes and conditions. In other words, “the textbooks used in schools convey persistent appropriations of images that depict a world that is still largely male, white, adult, Christian, and heterosexual; composed of groups who live in cities, who are thin, healthy, among other hegemonic standards” (Silva, 2007, p. 229, our translation). Thus, classroom investigation sought to address these issues and to rethink historical hierarchies and traditional gender roles in History within the schooling process of individuals.

The Cry of Ipiranga

The event of the Cry of Ipiranga itself was addressed in the classroom of the Cursinho Popular Geração Near based on the text “*O Grito do Ipiranga*” – *A Problem That Challenges Historians: Certainties and Doubts Concerning a Historical Event* (Oberacker Jr., 1972). In this way, the dispute over narratives surrounding the event was presented. In the classic version, Dom Pedro I was traveling to the province of São Paulo to contain local revolts that were undermining José Bonifácio. On his return journey, he allegedly encountered envoys from Rio de Janeiro on the banks of the Ipiranga River and, after reading letters sent by his wife conveying the decisions of the Portuguese court, became enraged and proclaimed “Independence or Death,” witnessed by the entourage accompanying him.

However, analyses of documents written by members of Dom Pedro's entourage reveal four distinct accounts: those of Colonel Manuel Marcondes de Oliveira e Melo, Colonel Antônio Leite Pereira da Gama Lobo, Lieutenant Francisco de Castro Canto e Mello, and Father Belchior Pinheiro de Oliveira, all of which illustrate a different version of the event.

Certain elements of the narrative are confirmed and reiterated across these accounts. On the return from the journey to Santos, Dom Pedro was dressed in a “police uniform jacket,” as described by Marcondes, and was riding “a strong dapple-gray mare” (Novais, 1996, p. 426, our translation) or a “fine bay mount,” as described by Gama Lôbo and Father Belchior (Novais, 1996, p. 428, our translation). These descriptions suggest the absence of grand horses or elaborate attire. Furthermore, it is recorded that Dom Pedro was unwell during the return from Santos, suffering from dysentery. Gama Lôbo recounts: “We had already climbed the mountain range when Dom Pedro complained of mild intestinal cramps, requiring him to dismount in order to resort to natural means to relieve his suffering” (Novais, 1996, p. 426, our translation). In this context, despite his indisposition, he did in fact receive letters from Leopoldina and from the court:

It is necessary that you return with the greatest haste; be persuaded that it is not only love and friendship that make me desire more than ever your prompt presence, but rather the circumstances in which beloved Brazil finds itself. Only your presence, great energy, and firmness can save it from ruin. The news from Lisbon is dreadful: fourteen battalions are to embark on three ships. Your letters have been ordered printed, and the people of Lisbon have allowed themselves all kinds of unworthy expressions against your person. In Bahia, six hundred men have landed, with two or three warships, and our treacherous fleet stood open-mouthed watching them. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, this news has caused the greatest turmoil (Novais, 1996, p. 431, our translation).

Thus, Leopoldina’s letter already points to conflicts within the country. However, what Oberacker demonstrates is that there was nothing in its content so alarming as to provoke such irritability in Dom Pedro that he would have publicly proclaimed a separatist stance in open fields, as was traditionally disseminated for so long. Taken together with other evidence, this analysis shows that the manner in which a historical fact is represented carries an intention to glamorize everyday life, construct national identity, or create a hero for a nation. Images possess this power of construction.

Accordingly, the third segment of the class consisted of dividing students into three large groups, each assigned an image depicting the Cry of Ipiranga. The images were as follows: *O Grito do Ipiranga* by Pedro Américo (1888); *A Proclamação da Independência* by François-René Moreaux (1844); and *Independência ou Mortos!* by Harald Stricker (Hq Nerdbooks, 2012), corresponding to Figures 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Figure 1 – The Cry of Ipiranga



Source: AMÉRICO, Pedro. *Independência ou Morte! (The Cry of Ipiranga)*. 1888. Digital reproduction².

Figure 2 – The Proclamation of Independence



Source: MOREAUX, François-René. *Proclamação da Independência do Brasil (The Proclamation of the Independence of Brazil)*. 1844. Digital reproduction³.

² Available at: Google Arts & Culture (Museu Paulista/USP). Accessed on: Jan. 7, 2026

³ Available at: Wikimedia Commons. Accessed on: Jan. 7, 2026.

Figure 3 – Independence or Deaths!



Source: *Independência ou Mortos!* Curitiba: Nerdbooks, 2012.

The activity consisted of each group selecting one artwork to represent, observing it, and then comparing it with the others in order to understand their differences. All students had access to their mobile phones to research the artists, the year of production of the artwork, and the painting techniques used. The objective was to enable students to perceive the relationship between image, power, and narrative. In this way, prominence was given not only to historical facts but also to illustrations, in a contextualized manner, so that the symbol of Independence would not be reduced to a mere illustration, as is often the case in textbooks.

Collective Power

The final and fourth segment of the class consisted of a group-based activity structured as a game, in which each group was required to present elements of the artwork and its context to the class, with the aim of stimulating debate and enhancing the ability to articulate connections between the artwork, its message, its elements, and the symbolic field. From this perspective, the group that identified the greatest number of expected elements received points.

Accordingly, the main elements expected in Pedro Américo's work (1888) included: the population positioned in the background, Dom Pedro portrayed as a brave leader, the construction of the artwork to represent a heroic History and to forge national identity, and Brazilian troops depicted in smaller numbers. In contrast, Moreaux's image (1844) featured elements such as romanticism, the replacement of the sword with a hat, an attempt to convey a popular image of Dom Pedro, the inclusion of the people as part of the process, and the absence of military troops. Finally, in Harald Stricker's comic (2012), it was possible to identify a more

humorous tone, the reconfiguration of visual traits, Dom Pedro's simple clothing, the presence of speech, the attendance of only his own guard, and the ironic use of mules as mounts.

Following these discussions, a collective summary document was produced, synthesizing the reflections developed collaboratively by the students throughout the class.

Final Considerations

The experience reported throughout this article highlights the importance of a critical and plural methodological approach to the teaching of History, particularly within the context of popular preparatory courses, distinguishing it from textbook-based instruction, since, "as a cultural object and product [...] the textbook contains a system of values" (Silva, 2007, p. 223, our translation). Therefore, it does not convey a comprehensive view of History. Moreover, it was observed that students were able to identify all the expected elements in the images and collectively articulate what each image represents, its political purpose, as well as their similarities and differences.

Thus, the didactic sequence developed allowed students not only to engage with different interpretations of Brazilian Independence, but also to practice the critical analysis of narratives and visual representations, fostering historical consciousness. By encouraging the problematization of images and discourses present in traditional teaching materials, the approach sought to move beyond the reproduction of a single, centralized view of History, broadening students' perceptions of the multiple historical subjects involved in the Independence process. The analysis of artistic works and the participatory methodology enabled students to understand the role of images in the construction of identities and in the consolidation of national symbols. Furthermore, the proposal reaffirms the role of the Cursinho Popular Geração Near as a space for critical and civic education, committed not only to democratizing access to higher education but also to promoting the teaching of History in dialogue with the demands of contemporary society.

In this way, the experience described reinforces the need for teaching practices that go beyond the mere transmission of content, adopting pedagogical strategies that foster the construction of critical thinking and the appreciation of historical diversity. The continuity of this type of approach can significantly contribute to the formation of students who are more aware of their role as historical and social subjects, capable of interpreting and transforming the reality in which they are embedded. Therefore, it is concluded that the use of images as a

didactic resource is essential in the teaching process, enhancing critical reasoning skills, verbal and non-verbal textual interpretation, and contributing to more dynamic and engaging classes, thereby providing foundations for a more equitable and enriching educational process for all those involved.

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