The subject who learns in higher education: the theoretical construction of undergraduate psychology students

O sujeito que aprende no ensino superior: a construção teórica dos graduandos em Psicologia

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ABSTRACT
This work seeks to understand the theoretical construction of undergraduate psychology students belonging to the eighth semester of a private higher education institution in Brasília. We worked with a problem situation whose purpose was to understand, from the students' answers, if there is a singular production of the subject who learns in his answer or if he randomly reproduces theories. For this, we used the Qualitative Epistemological Research (1997, 2002, 2005) and the Theory of Subjectivity (2003, 2004a, 2007), whose author is the Cuban psychologist Gonzalez Rey, in the methodological-theoretical preparation. Few students were able to generate a creative response to the problem situation. What we saw was theoretical mimicry, the dichotomization of psychological phenomena, a-historical analysis of man, and knowledge based on the principles of positivism in the responses.

Keywords: Higher Education. Subjectivity Theory. Psychologist training.

RESUMO
Este trabalho busca compreender a construção teórica dos graduandos em Psicologia pertencentes ao oitavo semestre de uma instituição privada de ensino superior de Brasília. Trabalhou-se com uma situação-problema cujo intuito era compreendermos, a partir das respostas dos discentes, se existe a produção singular do sujeito que aprende em sua resposta ou se ele reproduz teorias aleatoriamente. Foram 37 participantes e nesse trabalho constam 10 respostas. Esta pesquisa, por ser de caráter interpretativo e construtivo, a ênfase está na produção teórica do pesquisador. Para isso, utilizamos a Pesquisa Epistemológica Qualitativa (1997, 2002, 2005) e a Teoria da Subjetividade (2003, 2004a, 2007), que tem como autor o psicólogo cubano Gonzalez Rey, na confecção metodológica-teórica. Poucos alunos conseguiram gerar uma resposta criativa perante a situação-problema. O que se viu foi o mimetismo teórico, a dicotomização dos fenômenos psicológicos, a análise a-histórica do homem e o conhecimento embasado nos princípios do positivismo nas respostas.

Palavras-chave: Ensino Superior. Teoria da Subjetividade. Formação do psicólogo.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Theoretical production by students has played a secondary role in psychology degree programs, where traditional teaching methods based on theoretical mimicry and methodological addiction are still in demand (Gonzalez Rey, 2009b). In teaching this science, most undergraduate programs still use a standardized, rote learning model based on positivist principles for constructing knowledge, which leads to a somewhat depersonalized teaching style. This has raised concerns about the role of undergraduate education in the personal development of psychologists and how the school environment contributes to a reproductive-descriptive teaching model.

This study aimed to examine students as constructive and creative subjects of their learning and to explore how they produce knowledge in these educational settings, establishing themselves as learners. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how students express their theoretical production based on their reflections and whether scientific ideals that have become hegemonic in the theoretical construction of psychology persist. This allows us to develop strategies to improve its teaching during the undergraduate period.

This article is the result of monographic work developed as a criterion for course completion. It presents a research proposal to study indicators related to the theoretical knowledge that psychology undergraduates enrolled in the eighth semester at a private institution in Brasília developed in response to problem situations.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Due to the variety of theoretical references in psychology, teaching in this field is associated with students choosing a theoretical field in which to begin their academic and professional careers. In this context, teaching and learning procedures are associated with acquiring and reproducing techniques

derived from a belief in doing science. This turns students into receptacles of knowledge that will be filled with theoretical categories, providing something predetermined. Students are only required to copy and reproduce this knowledge (Baptista, 2001; Bernardes, 2004; Coimbra, 1992; Ferreira Neto, 2004). Consequently, this implies learning without subjective production and does not encompass the individual's complexity in relation to the learning process (Mori, 2012).

Emotions, the student's history, the communicative relationship between professor and student, and the student's unique expression are nonexistent in theoretical construction and reflection in the history of psychology teaching. For example, if the idea arises that there was no dialogue between behaviorists and psychoanalysts during the undergraduate experience, few psychologists would find such a statement offensive since it is common in the history of psychology not to seek intersections between theoretical models, resulting in a dogmatic view. However, emerging issues in science (Morin, 2005; Prigogine, 1996; Santos, 1987; Stengers, 2002) and psychology (Gonzalez Rey, 1997, 1999, 2002; Neubern, 2004, 2005, 2009) call into question the epistemological foundations of traditional ideas.

> The subject is denied in positivist epistemology, both because of its neutrality and because of the distorted and secondary place assigned to theory in science, which was dominant until twenty years ago and remains dominant in many sectors of psychology.

By "subject," we mean that they participate in a recursive process within society. In other words, they participate in constituting society, as well as their uniqueness in the spaces they inhabit. They do this by infinitely configuring subjective aspects according to their experiences, allowing their uniqueness to emerge in their daily lives. Thus, conceptualizing the subject in learning means recognizing the student as the author and actor of their learning, encouraging them to produce reflective, constructive, and personal thoughts based on their learning intentions. Gonzalez Rey (2008b, p. 40) adds

> Students become subjects of their learning when they can develop a differentiated roadmap for what they learn and to position themselves critically and reflectively in relation to learning. This positioning will only be possible to the extent that they can generate subjective meanings in relation to what they learn. It is in this process that true constructive models of what has been learned will emerge, facilitating their own original operations and constructions based on what they have learned.

Thus, subjective meaning is a complex psychological phenomenon involving a person's emotions in relation to a symbolic space. It is characterized by human expression as a psychological unit that arises from a current need but brings history and cultural relevance to human development. In other words, meaning takes shape in human expression and correlates with other meanings from different social spaces, forming an infinite network of emotions and symbols based on our history.

Subjective meaning in learning is the historical and cultural relationship between emotional aspects and symbolic processes that constitute what is learned dialogically. In other words, learning is not limited to acquiring ready-made techniques and procedures; rather, it is motivating knowledge that shapes all areas of a student's life. Therefore, even within a standardized education system, students have the potential to generate unique alternatives, which may create tension in the school environment. No two people learn in the same way, nor do they produce theoretical knowledge based on standard generalizations. Students become subjects who learn when what they learn generates meaning in their unique constitution.

School learning is not limited to acquiring cognitive and neural aspects or behavioral patterns according to a certain contingency. Learning requires an understanding that it is a unique process for each student. This process involves personal production and reflection on learning—the production of subjective meaning for what is learned.

3. METHODOLOGY

It was decided to use clinical cases experienced by the author during his mandatory supervised internship, referred to here as problem situations, to facilitate the theoretical development of psychology students. The participants were in their eighth semester and, therefore, according to the course structure, were eligible to begin their mandatory internship, which begins in the ninth semester. They also already had knowledge of numerous psychological schools. The clinical case was as follows:

> You are part of a psycho-pedagogical team in the Federal District's public school system. At the school where you work, there is a student in early childhood education who, every time she is at school, starting at 2:30 p.m., begins to cry uncontrollably. The professor does not know what to do. She has already spoken with the family, but the conversation focused on the student's performance in school. In a final attempt, the teacher refers the student to the principal, who yells at the teacher, calling her incompetent and requesting that the psycho-pedagogical team solve the problem immediately. The teacher tells the team about the child's problems, saying that she cries every day and that she has tried to talk to her parents, but they have not discussed the problem with her. She says that through another teacher, she learned that the child has no father and lives with her maternal grandparents because her mother works all day. She learned that in the family history, there is an uncle and a cousin involved in various crimes, such as kidnapping and rape. The child is not learning the content that the teacher teaches every day because she cries throughout the class.
> **As a psychologist, what would you do in this case? Report in detail how you would proceed in dealing with all the problems raised by the professor. Explain your work strategy for this case.**

Another area of research focused on classroom experiences in higher education institutions, particularly in curriculum components discussing psychotherapy theories and techniques. The professor responsible for this component of the curriculum was asked to allow the researcher to attend a

class, talk with students, and explain the interests and objectives of the research. The professor made it clear that using the theoretical models studied up to that point would be important for a coherent response, but that students were not required to follow a particular theoretical line. The professor's discipline was chosen because the course syllabus addressed numerous psychological schools and their contributions to clinical psychology. There were 37 participants, but due to space limitations, we selected 10 responses for this article.

The appropriate methodology for studying subjective processes in this research proposal is Qualitative Epistemology, developed by González Rey (1997, 1999, 2002, and 2005). This methodology is based on three attributes: 1) knowledge as constructive-interpretive production; 2) production of knowledge through legitimation of singularity; and 3) significance of singularity in knowledge production. These attributes are not static, but rather recursive and dialogical processes undertaken during the research. Research and the survey of hypotheses generates other hypotheses with the researcher's participation and the understanding that the researched subject is active in this recursiveness.

> The assertion of the theoretical nature of this proposal (referring to qualitative epistemological research) does not exclude the empirical, nor does it consider it secondary, but rather understands it as an inseparable part of the theoretical production process.

In both cases, there is a clear concern that the process of theoretical construction is recursively interconnected with the needs of the subjects in their social action.

When dealing with a subject who, in their concrete experience, brings to light meanings from other social spaces that are contradictory and recursive, the method as a ready-made formula that provides an answer does not cover the complexity related to the production of the subjective configuration of the historical and symbolic processes of society that the subject constructs in their experience (GONZALEZ REY, 2003). Thus, it does not provide support for

studying the complex processes of thought production in psychology students. Therefore, a method was needed that values the historical character of human phenomena and does not compartmentalize students' expressions into pre-established categories.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Construction of Hypotheses

The psychological discourse that still prevails in relation to childhood promotes the idea that human beings develop in relation to static and deterministic moments. For instance, physiological and biological maturation, as well as the relationship between specific psychological stages — such as Freud's oral, anal, and phallic stages of psychosexual development — are considered essential for a child's healthy development and maturation of the psyche and cognition (Gonzalez Rey, 2004c).

In this temporal conception of development, children are not considered to be thinking or have emotions, nor are they considered to have subjective experiences related to their lives. Another person is necessarily needed for development to occur linearly, disregarding his or her self-regulatory capacity. It is at this point that we introduce the response of a student therapist.

> The emotional support that the psychologist provides to the child is essential at this time, as the child appears fragile. Through games, play, and other recreational activities, the **therapist will try to understand the reasons for the child's crying and discouragement by entering their world in subsequent sessions.** Then, it will be easier to understand the family and social context that may be influencing the child's poor school performance. Talking to the child's guardians would also be helpful in gathering information that could shed light on the child's condition.

The student therapist's assumptions encompass a deterministic and non-theoretical stance. For example, they simplify the child's emotions to

external factors. They attribute fragility based on the concrete observation of continuous crying and conclude the child's ideas based on what they observe.

The techniques used to "enter the child's world" may not make sense to the child, thus hindering communication. Furthermore, when using these tools, the student therapist only seeks causes that corroborate the child's poor performance, not procedures that enable dialogue. At no point is there any effort to create a space for communication with the child, which makes the school, the classroom, and the room of the psycho-pedagogical team places where she is merely a subject who learns. Note how this response is similar to the previous one.

> First, I would call a meeting with the school staff who are in contact with the child, especially the teacher in question and the principal, to clarify and guide the team on the child's problem, **warning them that there are probably strong reasons for the child's behavior** and that; therefore, the team professionals should treat the case with more sensitivity and tolerance. Then, as a psychologist in the school system, I would approach the child, providing comfort and trust. **I would talk to the child, seeking information to understand the reasons for the crying, even if indirectly so as not to shock the child. I would seek to use playful strategies involving mainly school and family themes to try to identify the root of the problem.** It is necessary to contact the family to observe their participation and interest in the girl (SIC).

In the last response, the student therapist used play in a non-reflective manner to achieve his goals for a task that aims to elucidate the child's situation. In the previous response, the other student therapist proposes an interesting idea using play to encourage the child to reflect on the social spaces in which he moves, such as school and family. Proposing a space for dialogue with all school personnel is interesting if the psychologist's goal is to avoid generalizing the child's problem, which could lead to school failure. His approach with the child is also interesting because it allows for dialogue about the reasons behind her constant crying. Communication emerges as an interesting working tool that allows for the expression of subjective aspects of

each person. However, the student therapist objectifies and systematizes their work by aiming to use communication as a tool that favors the discovery of elements that lead to the problem.

However, finding the "root of the problem" nullifies the relevance of play as a work strategy that could provide an outlet for the student's subjectivity. Searching for the "root of the problem" perpetuates the prevalent psychological mindset of reducing human processes to small compartments to better understand them.

The student therapist's role would simply be to stop the child from crying and help them perform better at school. This overlooks the complex nature of learning and the student's life experiences. According to this approach, the family is merely a mechanism to look for clues that led to the crying and poor performance. Speculation is merely an instrumental position taken by the student therapist. Let us examine this response:

> First, I would try to **talk to the child, gathering as much information as possible about their family li**fe and their relationship with their grandparents and mother. It would probably be necessary to call the mother to discuss some issues raised, making it clear that the child is having difficulty learning and socializing. If I **discovered something serious about the parents,** I would check with a guardianship council to see if it would be possible to take some kind of action against the mother or relatives. If the case were simple, I would try to work with the child and mother to find an appropriate course of action that would provide greater emotional stability for the child.

In this response, the student therapist suggests the possibility of an interesting dialogue with the child. According to the therapist, the child would likely share his entire perspective on life. This position is interesting because it encourages communication between the school, the family, and most importantly, the child. However, care must be taken not to instrumentalize this communication space, understanding it as something external or merely

a place of interest for the psychologist to discover problems in the family and child's discourse, thus generating an abstract relationship.

The investigation becomes a game of questions and answers, where the psychologist calls the family to clarify the child's narrative. This treats the family as if they are following and reproducing a pattern of the social spaces in which they live. Investigating the family and child's history and school records can contribute to understanding the subjective meaning of their current experience and how it relates to the classroom. However, reducing the entire situation to finding causalities by using the family and child's history nullifies the child's recursive relationship with society and the person's irreducible and contradictory character, thus promoting an unrealistic relationship.

Citing the presence of the Child Protection Agency as a punitive measure nullifies all subjective aspects of those involved if the family is contributing to the child's crying. It creates the impression that the student therapist is focused on a probable lack of maternal care or abuse. Thus, the student therapist's hypothesis is based on decontextualized deduction, and the reflections still have a causal and speculative character.

The student therapist's hypothesis is shallow in relation to the child's complex dynamics, his professional performance, and all the school agents involved in the case. We need to rethink the role of "guesswork" in the professional's performance. The hypothesis should not aim to silence the child and family because that is not the ultimate goal of professional psychological practice. Rather, it should converge with other thoughts in a dialectical manner to elaborate other hypotheses in an endless context. These hypotheses are configured and reconfigured in the course of the professional's work. In this sense, one response caught our attention:

> It would be like a school psychologist, right? I think the important thing would be to talk to the child first and then to the family members. I'm not sure how these conversations would go, but I think it's important to note that, in principle, the psychologist handling this case would have to be careful not to let themselves be influenced, when coming up with hypotheses, by the already

> naturalized process of attributing problems in poor children to poverty itself, lack of a father, or a family of criminals. **I believe that the individual is indeed influenced by society and vice versa, but this predefined cause of black-poor-thief would not be a good basis for raising hypotheses, thus losing sight of the person's dimension.**

The student therapist acknowledges the intricate dialectical relationship between the social and the individual. They understand that the hypothesis should not transcend psychological speculation, but rather establish a framework in which the individual's perspective remains active. Unlike the other responses cited so far, the student therapist acknowledges the unpredictable nature of a psychologist's work. This is because the professional's work involves dialectical relationships of certainty-uncertainty, order-disorder, and right wrong.

The last response's construction of hypotheses sought to encompass the subject's dimension. Therefore, it was interpreted that not knowing during a dialogue is not necessarily abolished by psychological practice. The use of "cake recipes" in psychological practice begins in undergraduate courses, aiming to detail professional performance objectively and dispel the fear of failure and making mistakes (Alencar & Mitjans Martínez, 1998). The student therapist provides a reflective, unique response to the case.

However, he does not emphasize the participation of the school, teacher, principal, and classmates with the child. In this respect, his response resembles the following:

> I would look into the child's family history for reasons for the constant crying and refer them to a social worker who could investigate further, what is happening in the child's home**. I would try to interview the parents to gauge their level of interest and involvement in resolving the case, as well as look for possible signs of abuse.**

A child's social life is limited to their family and family history. The student therapist does not consider teacher-student or student-student relationships

when developing hypotheses. Another interesting aspect is that the school psychologist is confined to a space where they cannot visit students' homes, i.e., leave the school grounds. In our view, the division of labor between the psychologist and social worker indicates the hyper-specialization of professional practices embedded in school spaces. This hinders interdisciplinary thinking across many existing areas. This should be questioned in psychologist training because the belief that psychologists can only do what the school describes and remain silenced by its walls can contribute to the dilution and muteness of the profession, making it bureaucratic.

The student therapist's response seeks to disconnect their practice from the child's school experience, decharacterizing the social commitment in their work. Consequently, different areas of psychology emerge, distant from all others, without creating spaces for dialogue among themselves and with other professionals. Thus, the social worker visits the family's home, the psychologist looks for "signs of abuse," the teacher only teaches the school curriculum, and the girl must behave according to the school's standards.

We observe that, with a few exceptions, the hypotheses developed so far by the student therapists continue to characterize an aspect in which the social is considered something external. The child internalizes experiences as if they were a receptacle of this social space, or as if the space were nothing more than a contingency in which the child acquires certain behaviors. Another student therapist wrote that:

> I would adopt a welcoming attitude towards the child in the school context because through affectionate and understanding treatment, we would work on **the gradual integration of the student. Generally, this type of behavior in children indicates a feeling of vulnerability and insecurity**. Therefore, I would allow and even request the presence of the grandparents at school to accompany her during the first days or weeks, and gradually replace their presence with other people (adults, classmates) and other activities that promote the child's well-being and enjoyment of **developing (sic) in that context.**

According to the student therapist, through an "affectionate" and "understanding" relationship, the child will return to "normality" with his peers and at school. He concludes by saying that the crying behavior is a consequence of the child's feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. However, he did not listen to the child; his preconceived notions guided his hypotheses. In our view, this is a significant risk because nullifying the subject can generate tension. The psychologist's practice remains merely reproductive and non-reflective if it does not address the child's motivational and emotional aspects.

The school, by valuing the homogenization of children, corroborates the student therapist's reflection by attributing a problem to the student. Therefore, this can generate a school record that leads to failure. Thus, the school psychologist's hegemonic role is to perpetuate the symbolic processes that characterize a perverse system by proclaiming inadequacies in the school environment, specifically among students (Patto, 2002).

Not only does keeping children in segregated spaces, such as schools, make them susceptible to academic failure, it can also turn them into people who regurgitate programmatic content while separating their emotions from what they learn (Gonzalez Rey, 2008b). Consequently, they may also become individuals who do not question or reflect on their way of life.

The role of psychologists in schools must go beyond simply reproducing perverse mechanisms aimed at diagnosing and stigmatizing children who do not fit into school procedures. These professionals must be committed to the school context, enabling a space for dialogue between all school agents, understanding that the school is a complex system, just like the people who use its services and constitute it, and that it plays an important role in generating subjective meanings focused on professional choices, on reflections on ways of life, for example.

4.2. Psychological Strategies

Let us delve deeper into the issues raised so far regarding children and their teaching and learning processes, as well as how student therapists' strategies

disregard children as subjects of their lives. First, children must be considered subjects of their learning. From this perspective, their intellectual development is associated with all social spaces in their lives.

Therefore, subjectivity as an organic phenomenon must be respected by professors and schools, contributing to the unique character of each child's learning.

Contrary to the student-therapists' responses, emotions are not limited to concrete responses to biological, physiological, or cognitive factors. When children are recognized as the subjects of their own learning, they develop subjective meanings for what they learn. This occurs through emotional and symbolic processes in response to situations experienced in the classroom and in the social spaces, they frequent. In other words, culture and way of life also shape children's emotional lives, forming a complex network that appears as the subjective configuration of their learning.

Thus, emotions are a fundamental aspect of children's learning. They generate a space in the classroom for constant dialogic interaction between students' emotions and their symbolic processes in relation to the pedagogical content. This interaction expands into feedback in the form of children's reflections and questions about their social condition, crossing the entire network that constitutes them as people.

This article demonstrates the significant progress being made in discussions about the teaching-learning process and the social role of children. These discussions also affect the practice of other school professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and educational counselors.

These school professionals still share ideas that seek immediate answers to problematic situations and are shaping their conception of their role in undergraduate education. For example:

> **As a clinical psychologist, I would refer the child to psychotherapy to diagnose why this child suffers "because she cries" so much, what distresses her in this learning process**. I would pay attention to this child's learning style: how does she learn? How does she reframe this learning process? The

> work should also be done with the school to reassure the teacher, informing her about this child's learning style because cognition and affectivity go hand in hand and **the teacher** feels helpless in situations like this, and also because she is a **teacher and not a therapist in** the classroom. The family should be heard to assess this dynamic in detail for possible intervention and guidance. After gathering data on the entire family history, the psychotherapist can help this child and remove them from this place of not learning, of not knowing, from the place of **oligotimia**, becoming a learner, **unlocking their own intelligence** and encouraging them to put their knowledge into play.

The student therapist emphasizes his role as a clinical psychotherapist, stating that he will diagnose the motivational factors causing the child to cry at school. As we discussed earlier, student therapists lack a social aspect, and assignments that seek to identify problems and solutions are indicators of professional practices that treat others as individualized entities separate from the world.

Furthermore, disregarding the institution in which the case occurs and attributing only a psychotherapeutic perspective to the practice itself excludes the social space of the school psychologist.

Another interesting issue is attributing emotions to a direct reaction to life experiences, which provides a stimulus-response relationship. The child continues to cry because she is experiencing something "bad" that has caused her to feel like crying. At no point was there any attempt to communicate with the student using the strategies established by the student therapist. The focus is on diagnosing the child's crying, suffering, and inability to learn. In other words, the child does not exist as a subject in her social space. She is merely a product of external processes, responding with constant crying and "suffering."

The way the student-therapist perceives the professor is very curious. The student-therapist treats the professor only as a teacher and not as a therapist in the classroom. This can be said to result from a rigid representation of professional roles arising from a narrow view of the profession, in which professionals are defined by a limited set of operations. In

the complex dynamics of the classroom, relationships with others are intrinsic to the teaching and learning processes. However, for the student-therapist, this is irrelevant since the professor-student relationship should focus solely on content and teaching. This eliminates any space for dialogue between them. However, contrary to this belief, even if a professor tries to focus her practice on teaching her students, she will inevitably encounter situations that surpass her plans for the class. The classroom is a complex space with ever-changing dynamics. Pedagogical strategies that focus solely on academic content encourage mechanistic, no reflective teaching and allow professors to simply transmit information.

The classroom is a space where the emotions of students and professors, for what is taught and learned, must pass through a space of dialogue, thus allowing the professor, in a certain way, to deal with their students as a therapist, for example. Tacca (2008, p.50) tells us that

> Dialogue lies at the heart of the learning relationship, in which the participants exchange and negotiate the various meanings of the subject. This approach highlights the active, reflective, emotional, and creative roles of both students and professors. Knowledge moves away from a mechanistic or cognitivism perspective that emphasizes the product of learning almost exclusively. It is understood as a dynamic that is constructed in the dialectical confluence between the individual and the social. This dynamic is intended to promote the integral development of those involved in education. Students who are interested, participatory, reflective, and cooperative can only flourish in an interactive environment where communication is encouraged and structured within relationships of trust.

Therefore, rather than removing the child from a space where she is not learning, as the student therapist proposed, it would be better to rethink the dialogic space of the classroom. Rather, we should rethink the dialogic space of the classroom to recognize the child's unique learning needs. It appears that the context in which the girl lives contributes directly to the causes and

motivations of her alleged problems, and the strategies developed by the student therapists follow this line of reasoning.

The student therapists' responses suggest strategies such as observing the child's school context, the stimuli that attract her, and the family environment that contributes to her crying. Ultimately, these strategies nullify the child as a social actor or subject. Let us examine this response and consider how it relates to our discussion.

> **First, I would like to observe the child during class and recess to see what her typical day is like. Then, I think it is essential to talk to the people responsible for her**, her caregivers. As mentioned previously, the professor has already done this, but the family seems to shy away from the conversation about the girl's school performance. **I would like to know more about the child's relationships with other family members and whether they are close,** such as with the uncle and cousin mentioned. This is important because the child may be experiencing abuse of any kind. Perhaps **the crying stems from her inability to adapt to the classroom environment**. If **she is being abused, she may feel different or inferior to her peer**s. The school and the family must work together on this. **Another issue to consider is how this child relates to his classmates and teachers at school.** It's possible that he is being bullied, teased, or excluded by other children. The best approach is to address this issue with not only the victim, but also the school and other students to raise awareness.

The student therapist proposed a strategy of observing the child's daily life from a distance without interacting. The purpose of this strategy was unclear, though the intention was to identify behavioral categories to develop other strategies. These ideas are vague and fragmented, negating the complexity of the situation. Not to mention, attributing the cause to the "environment" is a simplistic response that ignores the nature of the situation, such as the presence of abuse or victimization. This line of thinking was also proposed by the student therapist.

> First, I would talk to the girl's mother and grandparents **to learn more about her routine.** I would also ask the professor when the crying fits started. Then**, I would talk to the girl** to find out why she is acting this way in class. Did she cry before? What has changed to make her act this way now? **One hypothesis I would consider is whether the child is experiencing sexual or emotional abuse. During the sessions, I would seek evidence to support or refute this hypothesis.**

The investigation consists of determining the child's routine with relatives and then speaking with the professor to determine when the child began crying. Again, the situation nullifies all the child's subjective processes, not to mention a school psychologist's task of finding the reasons for a supposed problem.

The proposed conversation between the student therapist and the professor does not involve a conversational dynamic. In other words, it is not a communicative process in which both parties authenticate what is said; rather, it is an investigation to confirm or deny pre-established hypotheses. Therefore, the contradictory dynamics of human relationships and communication processes, as well as the child's role in their own life, are disregarded.

Until now, children have been reflections of the spaces in which they live, responding to their environments. Adults establish what is true in their speech. Thus, we must ask what extent this concept is present in their teaching and learning processes at school. We are struck by how predominant the connotation of emotions as a response to a contingency or what is expressed in concrete action, or the somatic cause-and-effect relationship, was in the reflections of the student therapists.

> First, I would try to **observe** when the child cries in class. What kind of subject is being discussed in class that causes the child to start crying when they hear it? By **observing each facial expression** (sic) or **gesture** that the child makes in your presence, you may be able to identify something that has caused them some kind of trauma or fear... **Something that depresses them every time certain situations are**

brought to mind. Some charts that they have experienced. Another course of action would be to talk to the grandparents. Investigating through questions that would help solve the child's **emotional problem**. As a psychologist, you must always be careful with the issues raised... so as not to create another problem, which would be for the grandparents. The questions should always focus on whom the child actually spends the most time with, how the child behaves, when she withdraws from social situations, and how she behaves when she is with the people she mentions. **What would the child's behavior be like when she was with these people for a while? The people with whom she expressed less distress or sadness would be ruled out as suspects. As a psychologist, I focused more on the people with whom (sic) the child was most distressed.** Of course, for this to happen, I would have to gather all the child's stories. Starting from the day it all began and how this child was before being with these family members because given the number of cases of pedophilia that have been happening within families with uncles, cousins, and even grandparents, we must always be alert to this type of result. "**I apologize for not being able to contribute more to this research, as I am suffering from chronic anemia, where my hemoglobin is already at 9.8, when it should be 13 according to the tests." This case makes me break out in a cold sweat, feel nauseous, slow down my thinking, and experience many other symptoms.**

We thought that students would question the circumstances when we prepared the clinical cases and highlighted aspects of common media perceptions regarding cases of child abuse by family members. However, to our surprise, they accepted the ideas suggested in the short case and generalized the child's problems to it. Therefore, let us consider how social subjectivity[2] in Brazil has been shaped by linear procedures and how complexity is eliminated from these reflections when addressing Brazilian social problems in response to certain circumstances. For

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[2] Category developed by Fernando Luis Gonzalez Rey (2004a). According to the author, social spaces, in their complexity, configure forms of social and individual subjectivation, articulated at various levels of people's daily lives, characterizing the contradictory and dialogical aspect of concrete society. Thus, social spaces do not have their own dynamics, but are related in a complex web, configuring subjective processes of how society participates directly in the constitution of the subject and vice versa. We will develop this category further later in this paper.

instance, a student therapist may cite numerous cases of pedophilia within the family and relate them to his psychological strategies. He must investigate the child's entire history and speak with the family to find evidence of abuse, thereby oversimplifying the problem.

There is no relationship with others in their uniqueness. The encounter has instrumental characteristics, focusing on validating hypotheses and creating a supposed improvement for the child. Thus, the relationship between the psychologist and the child boils down to an instrumental order — as if the child were merely an object to be dissected.

We highlight the final excerpt of the response to elaborate an appendix regarding qualitative epistemological research. Note that the student therapist, in his writing, expresses situations that involve his daily life, in this case, his health. The subject's expression during the research goes beyond a simple response to the statement.

Each response is not something directive to the command of the question, but rather a reflective process of the student who involves the entire network of subjective meaning to elaborate a response to the question. Thus, if some aspects of the students' responses coincided, we believe that there are symbolic processes inherited and configured in higher education spaces, specifically in undergraduate psychology programs, which still seek to emphasize instrumental responses to complex problems.

4.3. Final Considerations of This Case

a) Graduates view social order objectively. At the time of the research, external factors create internal factors. The intelligibility and recursive processes of social spaces remain utopian for the psychology students who participated in this study, who are developing ideas and strategies. Consequently, there are no reflections on the role of the school psychologist, which is the subject of the next topic.

b) The disregard for the scope of the case study indicates that the undergraduate program has not presented or generated alternatives for students to learn about the spaces in which their profession can operate during their academic life. How can they reflect on a practice they do not know? Furthermore, how can they develop intelligent strategies when they are unaware of the symbolic processes of the social institutions in which they will work? Thus, we could ask these students what they know about the teaching-learning relationship. What do they understand about the role of the professor? Alternatively, of the school psychologist? Student therapists had difficulty analyzing the proposed case because they disregarded the complex processes involved in any social circumstance. This way of thinking characterizes the nullification of the school as a space with subjective meaning for everyone who participates in its activities. Thus, an instrumental and objective procedure predominated in the students' reflections, leading to the third topic.

c) The dismissal of the proactive subject in the psychologist's professional field. In this case, the child is not a subject, has no emotions (or these are contingent conceptions), much less subjective configurations for school experiences. She is a reflection of her family, an immature person in the process of overall development. What she says only makes sense to the psychologist when it is corroborated by what the family says, thus nullifying the child-subject, considering her incapable of taking actions and making decisions regarding her life. This view of the child is strongly influenced by the dominant thinking of developmental psychology addressed in undergraduate studies.

5. Final Thoughts:

Schools need to find ways to help students express themselves. This study found that students mostly still learn by copying and repeating.

Having a good professional does not imply having a good curriculum. Rather, it implies the psychologist's ability to think of and create alternatives that promote improvement in people by considering each individual's uniqueness, which is subversive to reproductive teaching.

We emphasize that the classroom should be a place where psychology students can express their feelings about what they are learning. As a facilitator and provocateur of this expression, the professor becomes a key player in rescuing the learning subject.

Therefore, we must break with the standardized teaching still present in psychology, as demonstrated in this work. We must seek dialogicity as a relational space between professors, students, and society, making it the center of educational practice in psychology undergraduate programs. This is the emergence of the subject in the educational process.

Expressing the creative function rescues the subject from passivity and the role of listener. It invites them to explore areas that were not popular in traditional science: the subjective production of students in the learning process challenges the characterization of science as the mere application of pre-existing methods. Considering the learner in psychology means accepting the risk of a scientific field without the need for order, neutrality, or causality in psychological thought.

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