

Presentation
Dossier
Historical-cultural psychology in basic Education:
practices and research

Psicologia histórico-cultural na educação básica:
práticas e pesquisa

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The intersection of psychology and education is a field of research and professional practice focused on interventions that address development, learning, and knowledge acquisition in school settings.

Historically, one of the first areas psychology explored in its development as a science at the end of the 19th century was education. Research sought to justify learning difficulties by attributing them to the child, their family, or the students' environment. These factors were considered explanations for the causes of these problems, as Patto (1984, 1999) has strongly denounced.

Since the late 1980s, and more specifically since the 1990s, we have seen efforts in Brazil to develop a psychology with a critical perspective on school

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education, as in Souza (2021), Souza, Silva, and Yamamoto (2014), Facci (2004, 2007), Tanamachi and Meira (2003), Machado and Souza (2000), among many other examples.

Along these lines, there are a considerable number of national and international authors who research and work based on the precepts of Historical-Cultural Theory in the field of psychology in schools, seeking interconnections between the different objects of psychological science and pedagogical sciences. We highlight the rigor of the theorist Rubinstein (1976), a representative of this theory, when he elucidates the specificities of the objects of the two sciences:

We believe that the most important thing for the practice of psychological research tasks is *to discover the internal psychological content of human activity*, which manifests itself and shapes man and his psychic qualities. For pedagogical practice, the task will be to discover the internal psychological content of the child's ongoing activity in which their development takes place and their psychic qualities are formed (p. 201, emphasis added by the author, translation by us).

In summary, the core of psychology is the laws of psychic development, while the pedagogical process is a condition of it. Conversely, the core of pedagogy is the specific laws of education and teaching; psychic properties are the conditions that must be considered.

The **objective** of this dossier is to identify paths and compile references through the production of a school psychology based on historical-cultural theory. This aims to ensure that practices and research are critically constituted within and alongside schools.

Furthermore, the dossier aims to ensure that psychology and its role are understood by other participants in everyday school life, thereby adding partnerships to the work and perspectives developed there. Thus, we intend to compile some main contributions of this field of study based on Historical-Cultural Theory to broaden its understanding and contribute to efforts in this area, which requires careful thought and construction to avoid individualizing and pathologizing perspectives.

In short, it is crucial for educators and professionals involved in school education to understand the role of psychology in schools and its area of intervention, as we must strengthen our efforts to ensure that there is concrete psychology that understands psychological phenomena in relation to pedagogical processes. As we have said, professionals in this field have not always been present in educational spaces to gain a broader understanding of reality and the various human manifestations in the school environment. The issue of not establishing individual care as well as perceiving the psychologist as someone who is detached from the educational process and is in the school to solve problems independently is a growing concern. As we consider how we want to integrate psychology with education, this concern only grows.

In Brazil, we have the framework provided by Law No. 13,935, dated December 11, 2019, which regulates the provision of psychology and social work services in public basic education networks, placing psychology professionals as part of the multidisciplinary team. The description of this law does not establish the guiding principles for the work of these professionals, nor does it provide guidelines for their practice. Given this, we understand that there is a gap for all sorts of actions to be developed in schools, including those that must be overcome, which individualize and pathologize issues that are, in fact, socially established.

To avoid conforming to a positivist and reductionist logic of psychological and pedagogical phenomena in education, we must disseminate the specificities of school psychology to those involved in education: psychologists, teachers, administrators, education researchers, and the school community. The more we understand the role of psychology in education, the better equipped we will be to ensure that school professionals and the broader school community understand and combat actions that reduce social, cultural, and collective achievements to mere individual or biological expressions.

Given this context, we intend to share possible paths through texts that focus on discussing some themes of Psychology in Education to support research

and interventions committed to social transformation based on Education, and Historical-Cultural Theory offers us this theoretical-methodological support. Thus, we hope to contribute with scientific productions so that research and actions that add to this commitment can be developed and carried out.

The first text of the dossier, entitled “*Apontamentos sobre os fundamentos teórico-metodológicos de Vigotski para a atuação e a investigação da Psicologia na Educação* (Notes on Vigotski's theoretical and methodological foundations for the practice and research of psychology in education),” is a summary of the readings of the study group on Vigotski and Marx at LIEPPE (“*Laboratório Interinstitucional de Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*” or Interinstitutional Laboratory for Studies and Research in School and Educational Psychology). The authors Ana Karina A. Checchia, Célia Regina da Silva, Elenita de Rício Tanamachi, Isabel A. Hamada, José Alves Trindade, and Rosemeire Foltran are members of the aforementioned team, and, as a summary of the group's journey, they present and develop four theses on the relationship between Marxist fundamentals and Vygotskian theory, which are essential to intervention and research in critical school psychology based on historical-cultural theory. The theses are: 1) reading Marx is fundamental to understanding Vigotski's works; 2) the historical-dialectical materialist method is the essence of the theory of the social being and of Historical-Cultural Psychology; 3) Historical-Cultural Psychology transforms the content and form of analysis and explanation in Educational Psychology, creating the underlying basis for the transformation of the psychologist's activity; 4) School Psychology, by overcoming its merely technical condition, assumes its place in the practical theoretical context that is proper to it as an educational dimension of Psychology and the training of psychologists and as a psychological dimension of the training of teachers and educators in general. The article opens the dossier, as its purpose is to “*explain why, for what purpose, and how* school psychologists need to study Vygotsky's psychology,” which is the central theme of this publication.

In “*Psicologia Escolar, políticas educacionais e os impactos da Pandemia de Covid-19: reflexões a partir do enfoque histórico-cultural* (School Psychology, Educational Policies, and the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Reflections from a Historical-Cultural Perspective)”, by Marilene Proença Rebello de Souza, we are given an impressive overview of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil, caused by the Brazilian government’s denial of the disease and its negligence in organizing public health policies to mitigate its effects. In the second part of the text, the author reflects on the main impacts of the pandemic on Brazilian education and on the possibilities for school psychologists to act within the scope of public education policies, highlighting the contributions of the historical-cultural approach as a fundamental reference for the praxis of psychology. From this perspective, some challenges to be faced by school psychology consist of understanding the cross-sectoral nature of public policies and jointly conducting a general diagnosis of the school situation. The author also proposes that we recover two inseparable dimensions of schooling: acceptance and knowledge, affirming the unity of affect and cognition in the educational process. Throughout its analytical journey, the article reaffirms education as a right for all, which the state is responsible for guaranteeing.

The article “*Contribuições Histórico-Culturais à Psicologia Escolar na Educação Especial Inclusiva* (Historical and Cultural Contributions to School Psychology in Inclusive Special Education)”, authored by Sonia Mari Shima Barroco and Iracema Neno Cecilio Tada, discusses the contributions of school psychology to special education from the perspective of inclusive education in light of historical and cultural psychology. The article denounces the decline of the theory in postmodern times and affirms the social function of schools as privileged spaces for developing theoretical thinking and accessing classical knowledge. The article argues that a school is inclusive when it ensures that everyone can access the material and nonmaterial riches humanity has created. With the social formation of the psyche as its central thesis, the article asserts that the limits and potential for learning of students with disabilities or special educational needs are

fundamentally shaped by their social environment rather than solely by their biological condition. Thus, the article contributes to our reflection on the role of school psychology in special and inclusive education based on the premise that a good school should promote the development of its students and teachers.

The fourth article, entitled "*As queixas escolares: análises a partir da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural* (School Complaints: Analyses Based on Historical-Cultural Psychology)", authored by Nilza Sanches Tessaro Leonardo, Zaira Fátima de Rezende Gonzalez Leal, and Solange Pereira Marques Rossato, aims to discuss and reflect on school complaints. The article presents Historical-Cultural Psychology and its assumptions as an alternative to the medicalized view of schooling and the elements that constitute school complaints. The authors argue that it is necessary to overcome the logic of transforming incidents in the teaching and learning process into pathology or disorder and to take a critical look at school education. Recovering the way Psychology has approached the phenomenon of complaints, the authors trace the field's history of corroborating the segregation and labeling of students in the schooling process. They also discuss how much School and Educational Psychology have contributed, and continue to contribute, to overcoming this view of the phenomenon from a critical perspective. Based on historical-cultural psychology, the article invites us to rethink the logic of academic "success" and "failure." Understanding that the human constitution is shaped by culture and social relations broadens our understanding of the nuances in the teaching and learning process. This approach favors the humanization process as we recognize the uniqueness of each student.

The fifth article in this dossier is entitled "*Processos grupais e atividade docente: uma proposta interventiva para saúde psicológica* (Group Processes and Teaching Activity: An Intervention Proposal for Psychological Health)" and is written by Luciete Valota Fernandes. It aims to investigate how group processes can serve as instruments of resistance against suffering, illness, and alienation in teaching activities. Using historical-cultural psychology and a historical-dialectical perspective, the article presents research conducted with teachers through group

process intervention. The author contextualizes the scenario of layoffs and precarious working conditions experienced by teachers and presents school and educational psychology from a critical perspective, acting as a partner to help teachers think and intervene to find elements that promote mental health in the workplace. The author defends group work as a means of resisting suffering and teacher illness. She presents the themes and discussions that permeated her work with the group of teachers and reiterates that the sharing that occurred during the work with the group creates elements for resistance to work alienation. It also highlights what can be achieved in teaching, even amidst such controversial conditions. The article invites readers to consider teacher illness through an intervention proposal based on school psychology, enabling discussions and contributions to the fields of psychology and education.

In the article “*Relación familia y escuela: Las familias potenciadoras* (Family and school relationship: Empowering families)”, authors Guillermo Arias Beatón, Laura Marisa Carnielo Calejon, and Ariel Zulueta Bravo discuss the role of the family-school relationship in promoting child development, using the concept of empowering families as a reference. They draw on historical-cultural theory and defend the importance of a comprehensive study of human development. The article provides an important historical context of how Cuba organized its public school education policies after the 1959 Revolution and briefly presents the role of the National Literacy Campaign, which in 1961 decreed that the country was free of illiteracy, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Children's Circles, and the Educa tu hijo (Educate Your Child) Program. It provides a summary of the results obtained in research conducted in the Cuban context, at different times and longitudinally, on the educational role of families. It finds that mothers and fathers need to be prepared to carry out their educational work in a way that promotes their children's development and that this training should be a function of the state. Some of the conclusions of the research carried out refer to the characterization of empowering families: they consciously share their educational role with the school, which creates an organic and close relationship between

family and school regarding education, learning, and development; they constantly and systematically seek and acquire information and knowledge about how to educate their children. Finally, it is important to emphasize the need to ensure a close interrelationship between the educational work of the school and the family to consolidate educational quality as a product of the materialization of cultural development essential for the formation of the human being.

In the article "*Das lições diárias de outras tantas pessoas: vivências em Psicologia Escolar na Educação Básica*" (Daily Lessons from Many People: Experiences in School Psychology in Basic Education), Silvia Maria Cintra da Silva, Anabela Almeida Costa, and Santos Peretta aim to contribute to the discussion and establishment of a critical framework for school and educational psychology. They share their professional experiences to contribute to the work with students and teachers in basic education. Assuming that educational practices are grounded in a solid framework, the authors use data from a survey of psychologists in the public education system in seven Brazilian states to support the discussion of the importance of a consolidated theoretical foundation for developing professional practices that focus on education in an emancipatory and critical manner, based on Historical-Cultural Psychology.

The article "*Enfrentando a medicalização no chão da escola: pesquisa, teoria e prática* (Confronting Medicalization in Schools: Research, Theory, and Practice)", authored by Adriana de Fátima Franco, Silvana Calvo Tuleski, and Fernando Wolff Mendonça, reports on a psychological intervention proposal addressing medicalization. This proposal was developed in response to requests from education departments in municipalities in the state of Paraná. These departments expressed concern about the large number of early childhood and elementary school students being prescribed psychotropic drugs to address behavioral and/or learning issues. The authors describe the intervention and training process in schools and emphasize the importance of coordinating with childcare policies to allow each individual to grow, develop, and learn according to their unique needs.

The second-to-last article in the dossier, "*Atividade de Estudo Como Conceito Central Para a Psicologia Escolar* (Study Activity as a Central Concept for School Psychology)", is authored by Flávia da Silva Ferreira Asbahr and Ana Bárbara Joaquim Mendonça. The article aims to present study activity as a fundamental concept for school psychologists guided by historical-cultural psychology. First, the authors provide a brief contextualization of the historical constitution of critical school psychology, focusing on historical-cultural psychology as a theory that can provide answers to understanding and addressing school issues. The authors argue that understanding children's study activity is essential to understanding the teaching process, i.e., how students learn and develop. The authors also present how studying develops and is structured, as well as its results in child development. They highlight the content and theoretical concepts of studying. The authors maintain that analyzing children's learning based on the structure and development of studying provides essential elements for understanding child development and taking critical action in school psychology.

Lastly, the tenth article, titled "*A formação inicial de professoras à luz da psicologia histórico-cultural: constituindo saberes para uma prática crítica* (Initial Teacher Training in Light of Historical-Cultural Psychology: Building Knowledge for Critical Practice)", was written by Camila Turati Pessoa and Jane Teresinha Domingues Cotrin. The article presents reflections based on historical-cultural psychological assumptions about initial teacher training. The aim is to enable future basic education teachers to act critically in reality. The authors highlight important concepts in teacher training to develop future teaching activities in line with social transformation through education and knowledge appropriation. The article also argues that to develop a critical view of teaching, learning, and human development and these phenomena must be addressed in depth during higher education and related to the reality of schools. This will support the construction of teaching actions aimed at human formation.

The articles in this dossier share important points that we consider essential to a critical approach to psychology in basic education. Since they all share the same theoretical framework, historical-cultural psychology, the texts begin with the premise that the psyche is culturally and socially constituted. This premise supports an anti-biologizing and non-medicalizing understanding of learning and developing school subjects.

The texts share the assertion that schools are privileged places for accessing theoretical knowledge. In this discussion about the role of school education, the texts revisit Vygotsky's thesis that a good teaching and learning process (*obutchénie*) should promote the development of students and teachers.

The relationship between psychology and education, as explained by Rubinstein (1976) and mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, is revisited in different texts. These texts highlight the specificities and interrelationships between the two fields of knowledge and practice.

Conversely, historical-cultural psychology and school psychology do not appear consistently in the articles. Some texts argue that differentiating between "Psychology of Education," "Educational Psychology," and "School Psychology" is not central to the field because there can be no radical split between theoretical knowledge and its applications. Conversely, some articles explain the specificities of each term, reiterating Gatti's (1997) classic contributions.

Although Vygotsky's contributions to school psychology are given priority, other authors of historical-cultural theory appear in the texts: Leontiev, Luria, Elkonin, Davidov, Bozhovich, Petrovski, etc. In addition, other authors who are not from the Soviet school are mentioned but who make important critical contributions to our thinking about the processes of schooling, such as Ignacio Martin-Baró, Paulo Freire, Demerval Saviani, Maria Helena de Souza Patto, among others.

The theoretical concepts also do not appear in a unified manner, showing the breadth of interpretations and insights that historical-cultural theory has in our country. Just as a small example, about Vygotsky's discussions on development

and learning, we sometimes see the use of the term "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" and sometimes "Zone of Imminent Development (ZID)," demonstrating how even in the translations of terms there is no complete unanimity.

In any case, despite differences in interpretation and theoretical understanding, the texts that make up the dossier highlight the Marxist epistemological foundations of Vygotskian theory and show how understanding the historical-dialectical materialist method is one of the fundamental differences of the theory in question.

Finally, in the framework of implementing Federal Law No. 13,935/2019, mentioned above, we hope that the dossier can make important contributions so that teachers and other actors in the educational field can learn about the possibilities of psychology in schools, enabling us to build partnerships toward the construction of quality education that truly promotes human development.

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