

Initial teacher education in the light of cultural- historical psychology: constituting knowledge for critical practice

A formação inicial de professores à luz da psicologia histórico-cultural:
constituindo saberes para uma prática crítica

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ABSTRACT

This article presents reflections about the initial formation of teachers based on Historic-Cultural Psychology and with a view to an active criticism in reality by the future teacher of Basic Education. Proposes the presentation and appropriation of essential concepts for Pedagogy's graduation for the development of the teaching activity with a view to the processes of learning and human development in a critical view and committed to social transformation. Thus, we have a formation proposal that dialogues with the knowledge of this Psychology, considering the appropriation of culture as fundamental elements of the humanization process. At the end, we consider which dialogues we aim to establish between teachers and psychologists in the schooling process.

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1 Introduction

Initial teacher training is a vast field of study and research for various areas of knowledge, including psychology. It is also where a perspective of human development is established, which, in theory, should contribute to guiding the actions of future professionals. With this premise, we present a discussion on how psychology can be present in initial teacher training courses, more specifically in the Pedagogy course, to contribute to their acting critically with a view to emancipatory education.

The undergraduate course in Pedagogy trains teachers to teach in Early Childhood Education, the early years of Elementary School, Youth and Adult Education (YAE), and also includes work in various other contexts and areas that require pedagogical knowledge. According to the National Curriculum Guidelines for Pedagogy Training Courses (NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, 2006):

Art. 2 § 1 Teaching is understood as an educational activity and a methodical and intentional pedagogical process, built on social, ethnic-racial, and productive relationships, which influence the concepts, principles, and objectives of Pedagogy, developing in the articulation between scientific and cultural knowledge ethical and aesthetic values inherent to the processes of learning, socialization, and knowledge construction, within the scope of dialogue between different worldviews. § 2 The Pedagogy course, through theoretical and practical studies, research, and critical reflection, will provide: I - the planning, execution, and evaluation of educational activities; II - the application to the field of education of contributions from, among others, philosophical, historical, anthropological, environmental-ecological, psychological, linguistic, sociological, political, economic, and cultural knowledge. (...)

Art. 5 Graduates of the Pedagogy course should be able to: I - act ethically and with commitment to building a just, equitable, and egalitarian society; II - understand, care for, and educate children from zero to five years of age, to contribute to their physical, psychological, intellectual, and social development, among others; III - strengthen the development and learning of elementary school children, as well as those who did not have the opportunity to attend school at the appropriate age; IV - work, in school and non-school settings, to promote learning for individuals at different stages of human development, at various levels and in various modalities of the educational process; V - recognize and respect the physical,

cognitive, emotional, and affective manifestations and needs of students in their individual and collective relationships. (NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, 2006, s.p.).

These DCNs lead us to a critical view when they place teaching as an intentional educational action, based on social and cultural foundations with an ethical and aesthetic stance and with a view to building a fair, equitable, and egalitarian society. The proposal to train teachers from a critical perspective requires us, initially, to understand the concept of criticism. According to Nasciutti and Silva (2014), teaching from a critical perspective “implies, among other requirements, understanding the school context from an ethical and political perspective that understands how capitalist logic affects public policies, interpersonal relationships, and everyday educational life as a whole” (p. 26).

According to Meira (2000, p. 39), for thinking to be critical, it must be based on the following foundations: “dialectical reflection, critique of knowledge, denunciation of human degradation, and the possibility of being used as an instrument of social transformation.” Thus, we emphasize that the concept of criticism proposed here derives from the Marxist conception of reality, as well as from Historical-Cultural Psychology, our epistemological foundation. It is not, then, a matter of denying certain theories in favor of others, but of understanding the historical and social genesis of scientific knowledge and what and whom it represents.

We thus assume that psychological knowledge is neither neutral nor universal, and we therefore rely on a psychology based on the concrete conditions of life that cannot be disregarded when thinking about the development of individuals. From this perspective, we have teaching practice, which, in its essence, by focusing on learning processes through teaching, must turn its actions toward emancipation and, to this end, must be critical.

For Saviani (2013), schools must be at the service of elaborate, systematized, and scholarly knowledge that allows for reflective access to the cultural, material, and immaterial goods produced by humanity and that enables social transformation. From this perspective, schools produce the humanization

necessary for humans to live in society. This conception of schools is based on a perspective coined by this author in the 1970s as Historical-Critical Pedagogy, which is grounded in historical-dialectical materialism (SANTOS, 2018). From this perspective, among other things, the knowledge of L. S. Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology is used to explain human development and higher psychological functions. Based on these considerations, we present a reflection on how Psychology, an essential curricular component in teacher training, can contribute to critical and emancipatory practices.

We understand that, to make such reflections, we need to start from the beginning, that is, which psychology we are talking about. To this end, we consider it important to differentiate between the terms "educational psychology" and "school psychology," which are often considered synonyms but have important differences that need to be understood. After these definitions, we focus on training—the content to be taught and how to do so, considering the need to immerse students in the reality to be studied, which will later be their working context. Here we have a challenge: the future teacher is a student. So, the question here, besides what to teach, is how to teach. How can we establish a critical pedagogical practice that targets future professionals and, at the same time, current students? We use Historical-Cultural Psychology as a guide, with authors L. S. Vigotski and A. Leontiev, two of the main Soviet founders of this perspective. After these discussions, in the final considerations, we will discuss the dialogue between psychology and education aimed at the same goal: the formation of critical thinking and a schooling process that recognizes human development in its uniqueness, sharing reflections and foundations that can support the work of trainers in the field of teaching.

2 From Educational Psychology to School Psychology: differences and dialogues with teacher training in elementary education

How does psychology fit into education? How does training in pedagogy come into contact with the knowledge produced in the field of psychology, understanding it as a science constituted from different biases and problems of study in such a short

time (usually one or two subjects in undergraduate courses)? How can we focus on both epistemology and the theoretical concepts that underpin a theory without losing sight of the reality in which they are embedded and in which teachers will work?

That said, it is necessary to start from an important differentiation, which implies defining and understanding terms that are confused as synonyms but are not – including those related to the areas of training, practice, study, and epistemological bases in psychological science. This understanding also reverberates in the future teacher's approach to their work, based on their understanding of psychology, its knowledge, and their professional practice within or outside of education.

We begin with *Educational Psychology*, a field in which, since the early days of psychology as a science, it has been possible to glimpse similarities and differences between the two areas, with the object and practice of education being the raw material of psychological studies, which in turn feed back into it. Gatti (1997), in the last century, already alerted us to this relationship, in which we have psychology focusing on education to constitute psychological knowledge, and the reverse is also true: education turning to psychology to justify pedagogical purposes. In general, psychology looking at or justifying educational phenomena is commonplace when we access what is worked on in this field, especially when theories are presented in undergraduate courses and how they explain development, learning, and human constitution.

However, within what we call Educational Psychology, we have different defenses and explanations—depending on the epistemological approach used—about the phenomena present in the act of educating, which are quite divergent in relation to their object of study and their social and political purpose. What is necessary, then, is to understand the bases and foundations of the constitution of knowledge in this field, implying an accurate look at the movement that produces this knowledge and its multiple determinations.

However, what we end up seeing is the opposite. According to research conducted by Pessoa and Leonardo (2020), in teacher training courses, especially in pedagogy, various psychological theories are presented in the discipline of

educational psychology, which ends up creating a shallow view of the historical processes in which they were constituted and an understanding of them as if they were complementary strands. And, after graduating, depending on what is being experienced within the school, one, or another author is resorted to indiscriminately, without the necessary depth and theoretical-methodological positioning, which could even guarantee a well-founded reflection on pedagogical practices. When thinking about the training of future teachers, psychology must be presented in a way that provides a historical process, but also constitutes a critical view of the educational phenomenon in a manner committed to social transformation, understanding its historicity and breaking with homogenizing and normative conceptions when thinking about human development and learning.

It is precisely in this way that we present the field of *School Psychology* as the work of psychology professionals who are committed to the defense and study of education and intervention in education. We know, according to Meira (2012), that psychological knowledge has not always contributed to human emancipation with a broader view of the phenomenon that occurs in the field of education and that often corroborates fragmented and partial views from which a kind of psychologization of school phenomena emerges, referring to the “recurrent use of psychological explanations to describe and analyze phenomena, disregarding their process of social production” (p. 91). Thus, in a partial and decontextualized view, often supported by isolated concepts from psychology, the processes of learning and development end up having their origin in internal and subjective factors considered to be produced by the students themselves or their families. In this bias, professionals turn their attention to explanations that blame the student or their family for not succeeding or not keeping up with the school's expectations.

What we aim for, then, is for theories studied in Educational Psychology to present and substantiate, in a coherent manner, the work of teachers in education and, together with School Psychology in a dialogue that should be established in schools between different professionals. We say this because, in a distant relationship and without understanding what the psychologist does in or with the

school, a conception of clinical psychology within the school can be created, individualizing issues that are constituted in the midst of school relationships. If their social, cultural, political, and contextual relationships are disregarded, we can easily fall into the commonplace of seeking a solution only in those who emerge from this relationship: often the student or their family (MOREIRA; COTRIN, 2016). The role of school psychology in school complaints, for example, is precisely to investigate, understand, and act jointly with all actors in the school environment, encouraging students, teachers, families, and the institutional community to think about and overcome what crystallizes as a complaint—formerly referred to as school failure, learning difficulties, or behavioral problems³ (LEONARDO, LEAL, ROSSATO, 2015).

From a critical perspective, based on Historical-Cultural Psychology, the dialogue between teachers and psychologists should contribute to the implementation of critical practices committed to social transformation and human emancipation. It is worth noting that in 2019, in Brazil, after years of deliberation and changes to the proposal, Law No. 13,935 of December 11, 2019, was approved, providing for the provision of psychology and social work services in public basic education networks. This law contains a very broad and vague text, which can open the way for all sorts of actions and understandings of what is done and what is the purpose of psychologists working in school contexts.

Among these practices, we advocate critical practices that contextualize school complaints that may arise, a collective effort of psychology with parents, teachers, students, and the school community. To collaborate with these principles, we advocate that teachers know what the psychologist's field of work is within schools for partnerships that aim to address the issues and incidents that arise there and strengthen the fight for perspectives that do not pathologize or medicalize school phenomena.

³ The term “school failure” has fallen into disuse in the field of School and Educational Psychology when referring to complications in the schooling process, due to the connotation of the term “failure” being attributed in isolation to one of the participants in this network: whether it be the student and/or their family or the teacher. The change to the term “school complaints” broadens the perspective and invites investigation into the multiple determinants that culminate in the complaint itself.

Having made these distinctions and assuming a position as training psychologists in the field of Psychology and Education, we will present a proposal on what to teach students in the Pedagogy course based on essential concepts in Historical-Cultural Psychology.

3 What to teach? On the choice of Historical-Cultural Psychology and its concepts

The constructs of scientific psychology have always been part of teacher training courses. Since the first courses, which became standardized in the 1920s (TANURI, 2000), psychology has played a fundamental role in teacher training, as it aims to explain human behavior and development, especially regarding the learning process.

From 1920 to the present day, individualistic, empiricist, innatist, interactionist, and critical theories have competed to provide trainees with paths to a practice centered on how children learn. This often constitutes a fragmented view, contrary to the DCNs themselves, since, when coming into contact with such perspectives, the intention should be to learn about the historical foundations of psychology to build a critical, engaged, attentive, and committed foundation for social transformation through education.

Hence our proposal. If our perspective is to train professionals who act critically and have the tools to think about the teaching process based on relevant aspects of human development, we cannot use theories that are based on and have a theoretical corpus focused only on understanding individual development that occurs universally. However, we need to study them historically and understand their implications. With this, it is necessary to highlight that even psychology itself is committed to building knowledge and concepts focused on the educational area, but it is necessary to know to whom and what their interests are.

We say this because psychological knowledge has not always been focused on the emancipation of individuals or linked to an education that focuses on the uniqueness of each student. Historically, psychological knowledge and insights

have been directed toward the measurement and segregation of children, young people, and families within school spaces, with different justifications and pretexts (PATTO, 1984; SOARES, MARINHO-ARAÚJO, 2010). Therefore, when discussing this field of science, we still need to identify the perspective on which it is based to understand its connection and commitment to the type of education we want to achieve.

In this way, we highlight Historical-Cultural Psychology as a perspective that sought, in its time, to construct a new Psychology and that, in fact, placed the object of study of psychological knowledge focused on understanding human development necessarily constituted in a specific social, political, economic, and cultural context (VIGOTSKI, 1999). This understanding offers a new direction for psychological knowledge, as it avoids and refutes any explanations of psychic processes that are abstract and constituted outside the cultural, social, and political relationships that establish them.

Developed by Soviet thinkers L. S. Vigotski, A. Leontiev, and A. Luria, this perspective is based on an understanding of the psyche through the appropriation of culture and human objectifications for the process of humanization to occur. In this sense, it offers a contribution based on Marxian assumptions of understanding reality to study how each being constitutes characteristics that are initially placed on a social plane and, in a mediated process, become part of intrapsychic functioning. (LEONTIEV, 1978, 1983; VIGOTSKI, 1999, 2001). By appropriating and constituting oneself psychically based on human characteristics, the path to the formation of consciousness and higher psychic functions can only be conceived through the learning of knowledge objectified throughout the human historical process. We point out that, considering that the biological apparatus is not enough for us to become human and needs to be overcome by the historical and social constitution of the psyche, this perspective highlights culture as the driving force for us to become who we are. This understanding can only be achieved if we locate the historical, political, economic, and cultural context to which we belong.

With the paradigm shift in understanding the formation of the psyche, moving to the necessarily social plane to think about the uniqueness of each individual's formation, education becomes central because it is necessary to access and grasp characteristics that humanize, and for that, it is necessary to intentionally organize and present historically accumulated knowledge in order to continue the process of forming new generations, as they are not given in advance (VIGOTSKI, 2001).

With this in mind, when we think about the work of teachers and what knowledge is necessary for their performance, it is worth asking, what is essential for all teachers to know to act intentionally in the development of their students? What concepts help to guide teacher training committed to the struggle for human emancipation through the appropriation of already produced objectifications? Furthermore, based on which branch of psychology do we want to establish the theoretical and methodological foundations for teachers to carry out their teaching activities?

We argue that historical-cultural psychology can provide support to education professionals based on concepts coined in the development of a new psychology, with its concrete foundations contextualizing psychological knowledge focused on a commitment to social transformation. We list

some of these concepts that we consider fundamental for teaching, and we will discuss them in order to think about what could be presented in the initial training of future teachers in Basic Education.

The first concept we would like to highlight is the understanding of the necessarily social constitution of the human psyche, as argued by Vigotski (2001) and Leontiev (1978). Based on this assumption, we have material to think that every internal and unique characteristic was, for the first time, a social relationship. This statement leads us to propose human development and learning processes that move away from naturalizing determinism and subordination to biological maturation, disconnecting it or placing it in the background in relation to social determinants.

On the contrary, we understand the path of human development based on the activity that takes place in the context to which one belongs, promoting infinite possibilities for how each person will develop. According to Leontiev's Activity Theory (1983) and later Elkonin's *periodization* of development (2017), there is an understanding that the process of humanization must occur with each new human being that is born, as there are no pre-established phases that everyone must necessarily go through. The conception of the process of periodization based on main activities that can be established in each period of life subordinates biological processes to cultural experiences, promoting human development. In this process, basic psychological functions that are common to humans and animals are distinct from *higher psychological functions* such as language, abstract thinking, and voluntary attention, which are exclusively human and have their genesis in cultural and social experiences (VIGOTSKI, 2001). From this perspective, we must understand the paths of development from a specific social and cultural context, in which ways of being, thinking, acting, and organizing oneself as a society are shared, which will leave its mark on this formation.

Based on this elaboration, we see that the biological apparatus with which we are born is not enough to define who we are or what modes of existence we will have: we need to grasp the *culture* to which we belong (VIGOTSKI, 2001). It is precisely in this way that education, by intentionally organizing, systematizing, and presenting already developed knowledge, must contribute to advancing the human species and, at the same time, the unique formation of each individual. When preparing content to be worked on in the classroom, teachers are not only showing a concept or a definition but also sharing the human history that produced certain knowledge that once satisfied and still continues to satisfy human needs and constitute different ways of existing, dialectically.

Learning, in this way, takes on essential contours for us to think about building paths for development because, according to Vigotski (2001), it is necessary to learn concepts, through the intentional organization of content by the teacher, which, in reality, we would not be able to achieve directly – *scientific*

concepts – because knowledge derived solely from concrete experience provides us with spontaneous knowledge, which will be the basis for forming the aforementioned concepts, which are more complex and need to be developed in contact with more experienced partners.

The process of learning scientific concepts was defined by Vigotski (2001) as the *Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*⁴ and refers to “the discrepancy between actual mental age or level of development,” which can be understood as “the assistance provided in solving problems independently, and the level it reaches when solving problems without autonomy, in collaboration with another person, determines the child's immediate development zone.” (p. 327). The future teacher's understanding of this concept implies organizing knowledge so that it can be accessed, appropriated, and expanded through the learning process. Looking only at what the student already does alone, without help, without interference—as is usually required in school—is to consider only their *level of actual development*, or that is, what they have already worked out for themselves. This misses the broader view of the living movement that is the process of learning new content, in its various possibilities of constitution. Similarly, diagnoses based solely on what the student apparently does not know reduce the organization of teaching strategies. In this case, the concept of ZPD broadens the perspective of teacher action and intervention, since it considers that students have diverse experiences with the same object of knowledge, including the type of pedagogical mediation carried out up to that point. The path of intentional learning considers the student in a Zone of Proximal Development, and the definition of what ‘will be learned’ is given the same degree of importance as the definition of ‘with which cultural mediators’ this process will be carried out. Such mediators make it possible to interpret reality by considering its material and immaterial instruments and its historicity. Pessoa (2018) adds: “thus, we have the constant formation of subjects through learning,

⁴ The last letter of the acronym, also conceived with the translation of possible, close, immediate, imminent, among other terms, implies theoretical discussions that lead to different understandings of this concept, but here we will adopt it as a synonym to contemplate the concept in a more initial way.

overcoming what has already been elaborated and constituting new formations and possibilities for the direction of human development” (p. 24).

Ao entrarmos em contato com elaborações historicamente realizadas, manifestas na cultura material e imaterial presentes numa determinada sociedade, e que guardam consigo uma certa cristalização da realidade de forma a permitir representá-la e comunicá-la, acessamos os *significados socialmente* constituídos: signos elaborados pela humanidade e que guardam a história social do gênero humano (LEONTIEV, 1978). É a partir dos significados que nos comunicamos e acessamos a realidade para além daquela que conhecemos. Podemos dizer que é o que nos permite acessar o passado e projetar o futuro por meio da comunicação e elaboração dos saberes constituídos. Compreender a necessidade de acesso e apropriação dos conhecimentos por meio da partilha dos significados sociais oferece ao futuro docente um olhar ampliado à finalidade de seu trabalho, ultrapassando apenas a apresentação de conteúdo e conferência de como esse saber foi externalizado por seu aluno. É preciso entender que, a partir dos conhecimentos objetivados e vivenciados por cada aluno, tal compreensão se produzirá de maneiras singulares.

Nessa direção, compartilhar os significados sociais não implica que todos os alunos constituirão a mesma perspectiva, o mesmo olhar, e acessarão da mesma forma os conhecimentos. Ao ser elaborado por cada um, produzirá *sentidos pessoais* diferentes a partir da vivência e das experiências anteriores de cada indivíduo em sua trajetória de vida (LEONTIEV, 1978). É por meio dos sentidos pessoais que se vive na realidade, do que fica para cada um daquilo que se acessou, conheceu e se apropriou da realidade. Por isso, compreender que cada aluno poderá constituir sentidos diversos em decorrência da forma como a atividade de ensino é planejada e desenvolvida aumenta as chances do conhecimento acessado modificar o modo de pensar e agir na realidade, de maneira ímpar.

Para Vigotski (2001): “o sentido real de cada palavra é determinado, no fim das contas, por toda a riqueza dos momentos existentes na consciência e relacionados àquilo que está expresso por uma determinada palavra” (p. 466).

Ao pensarmos na formação do futuro docente, ponderamos que entender que a história da humanidade e sua participação na constituição do psiquismo de seus alunos é realizada também por meio dos significados sociais e sentidos pessoais e permite novas lentes para a expectativa sobre como os conteúdos serão trabalhados em sala de aula.

A vivência inter- e intrapsíquica na apropriação dos significados sociais abre caminhos para a formação da *consciência*. Para Leontiev (1983), “a realidade psíquica que se abre diretamente diante de nós é o mundo subjetivo da consciência” (p. 101). Ainda considera que o estudo de como a consciência é formada só é possível quando analisada como produto da participação do indivíduo em um contexto social e cultural específico. Ou seja, como cada um se constituirá passa, necessariamente, por uma relação social e historicamente estabelecida. Essa instância não pode ser concebida como dada de antemão, mas sim por meio da internalização, sendo “produto do desenvolvimento de um sistema de relações objetivas” (LEONTIEV, 1983, p. 16).

When we come into contact with historically constructed elaborations, manifested in the material and immaterial culture present in a given society, which hold within them a certain crystallization of reality to represent and communicate it, we access *socially constructed meanings*: signs elaborated by humanity that hold the social history of humankind (LEONTIEV, 1978). It is through meanings that we communicate and access reality beyond what we know. We can say that this is what allows us to access the past and project the future through communication and the elaboration of constituted knowledge. Understanding the need to access and appropriate knowledge through the sharing of social meanings offers future teachers a broader view of the purpose of their work, going beyond the mere presentation of content and checking how this knowledge has been externalized by their students. It is necessary to understand that, based on the knowledge objectified and experienced by each student, such understanding will be produced in unique ways.

In this sense, sharing social meanings does not imply that all students will have the same perspective, the same view, and will access knowledge in the same way. When elaborated by each individual, it will produce different *personal meanings* based on the previous experiences of each individual in their life trajectory (LEONTIEV, 1978). It is through personal meanings that we live in reality, from what remains for each individual of what they have accessed, learned, and appropriated from reality. Therefore, understanding that each student may construct different meanings as a result of how the teaching activity is planned and developed increases the chances that the knowledge accessed will modify the way of thinking and acting in reality uniquely.

According to Vigotski (2001): “the real meaning of each word is ultimately determined by the richness of the moments existing in *consciousness* and related to what is expressed by a given word” (p. 466). When we think about the training of future teachers, we consider that understanding the history of humanity and its participation in the constitution of the psyche of their students is also achieved through social meanings and personal meanings and allows new lenses for expectations about how content will be worked on in the classroom.

The inter- and intrapsychic experience in the appropriation of social meanings opens paths for the formation of consciousness. For Leontiev (1983), “the psychic reality that opens up directly before us is the subjective world of consciousness” (p. 101). He also considers that the study of how consciousness is formed is only possible when analyzed as a product of the individual’s participation in a specific social and cultural context. In other words, how each person is constituted necessarily involves a socially and historically established relationship. This instance cannot be conceived as a given, but rather through internalization, being “a product of the development of a system of objective relationships” (LEONTIEV, 1983, p. 16).

Understanding psychological development in general can provide future teachers with elements for a practice based on reality and the elements that make it dynamic. Beyond fixed curriculum content, what is proposed is a look at the

cultural mediators and instruments that shape consciousness and should be used for this purpose. We also argue that, when accessing content in the field of psychology, teachers in training can elucidate a historical study of the epistemological understanding of various currents, but that they should develop a conception of the individual that transforms reality and is transformed by it, so that, when preparing their teaching activities, they can intentionally organize actions that serve this purpose.

This discussion is aided by an understanding of the activity of study, which can be formulated as an activity that promotes human development when performed, contributing to the constitution of higher psychic functions—such as attention, memory, thought, language, and emotions—here, especially in school-age children (LEONTIEV, 1983). In this way, the activity of studying does not form naturally, but needs to be constructed, and the reasons for studying must be focused on the acquisition of knowledge that engenders the possibility of participation in culture.

As the work of Asbahr and Mendonça (2018) shows us, students do not always attend or are at school for a meaningful reason, with the purpose of acquiring knowledge, but for other motivating factors that go beyond being at school – such as being with friends or making their parents happy. Therefore, it is also up to teachers to reorganize their teaching activities to discern in their actions the reasons students have for pursuing education and so that they can produce meaning from what they study. Furthermore, as Pessoa and Leonardo (2020) have already analyzed in a study conducted with practicing teachers, teaching activities must also produce meaning for the teacher and be geared toward the human development of their students. Thus, we argue that the knowledge that is accessed should produce meaning for those who learn and, in this way, change their way of seeing reality in order to transform it.

Furthermore, by having as a guide an understanding based on a psychology committed to human formation through educational processes, undergraduates—future teachers—will be able to envision how to deal with challenges, different

modes of expression by their students, and an understanding of reality with a critical eye committed to social transformation. However, we emphasize the need for these teachers, when in practice, to have the concrete and material conditions to carry out their work and to know that they are not alone in the task of collaborating in the formation of new generations.

When discussing what to teach, we are immediately confronted with how to teach. Beyond regular study activities such as reading and discussing texts and scientific writing, understanding educational reality through knowledge of theoretical, practical, political, and regulatory aspects and confronting one's own ideas can lead undergraduates from spontaneous thinking built on their trajectories about reality to scientific doing and thinking. The main challenge in this training, when we think about the appropriation of concepts in the field of psychology to support the development of future teachers, lies in the fact that, when they begin the course in educational psychology, their experience with childhood and adolescence comes, in most cases, from contact with their own family and friends, in addition to their personal experiences. They also carry their experiences from their time as students. This view of childhood and adolescence is generally permeated by conceptions that come from common sense, often rooted in generalizing, deterministic, and/or reductionist views of the development process. Thus, the challenge is to have other experiences that can lead students to change their perspective, to see from another place, in order to understand the fundamental role of school in human development.

These and other questions arising from how to present and construct scientific thinking in the field of education led us to proposals in which our students could listen to children and adolescents from another perspective, investigating different concepts that permeate everyday and academic life. Here we share a proposal through a semi-structured script that consists of dialoguing with children and adolescents of different ages about various concepts with different levels of difficulty. Exercising the gaze of researchers and those who, during their undergraduate studies, come into contact with a reality they already know and

begin to expand their knowledge in this regard, Education students are now invited to look at children and adolescents from other places, other concepts. In this way, questions are developed from the most basic to the most complex: ‘what is an animal’ and even ‘what is politics’; ‘why does it rain’ and ‘what is the purpose of being in college’; among others. This questioning exercise allows undergraduate students to experience a new type of experience: what meanings are attributed to different concepts, how contradictions in thinking are demonstrated, how they are overcome, and how school experiences help them along this path. Furthermore, it provides higher education teachers with material to work on concepts relevant to the field of education that can draw on examples experienced in practice to form the theoretical and practical basis when we think about the role of teachers in the process of humanization with their students.

Activities that bring students of pedagogy closer to the professional future they will encounter as teachers allow the concepts of psychology to be considered a basis for developing teaching activities, learning and development processes, and even for taking a critical, attentive, and investigative stance toward the school-related issues experienced by students. The concern with how to present the historical foundations of psychology without forming a fragmented view of theories and without seeming that, depending on the school subject, we must resort to one or another strand in an epistemological miscellany is even more present when we want future teachers to be able to dedicate themselves to the task of participating in the humanization process of their students through the appropriation of historically developed knowledge.

Thus, in this paper, we list some points to consider in the training of future teachers in Basic Education so that they can build a theoretical and methodological foundation that will allow them, in the face of various events inside and outside the classroom, to be consistent with the goal of human formation through culture and also to develop a critical view of education and all those involved in it. Below are some considerations on initial training, teaching, and working with and alongside psychology.

4 Final considerations: challenges for training and what kind of teaching we aspire to

The experience of writing this text allowed us to revisit our experiences as psychologists, teachers, and participants in training spaces in which we are focused on collaborating with education, whether inside or outside of school. Building elements to collaborate with initial teacher training processes allows us to encounter the ongoing training of those who will be contributing daily to the new generations of humanity. This is especially true when considering basic education, which, in our Brazilian context, is the gateway to schooling and access to systematized scientific knowledge. Thinking about the critical training of these professionals is an important and challenging task.

Listing the content we consider essential in the teaching activities of future teachers leads us to position ourselves on what kind of education we want and what kind of society we want to build. Based on historical-cultural psychology, we are committed to fighting for education that develops the humanization process of each individual, accessing and elaborating the knowledge objectified throughout human history. Furthermore, we aspire for everyone in our society, without discrimination, to have this access and achieve their infinite possibilities for human development through learning.

This task becomes quite arduous when we consider how psychology can be presented as a foundation to undergraduate students, especially in pedagogy. We advocate that the historicity of psychological knowledge be accessed and understood, but that in the end, it constitutes a theoretical-methodological foundation that allows teachers to take a critical look at human development, learning processes, and the school reality in a curious and investigative manner focused on the formation of individuals in their uniqueness and acting in the transformation of society. However, it is still urgent to discuss what kind of psychology we want in education. We present School and Educational Psychology engaged with this commitment and believe it is essential to understand its role, its

function, and its possibilities for insertion within, outside, and with schools—in fact, within the educational process as a whole.

We want a psychology, both in the concepts presented and in the professionals in the field, that works with teachers and the school community, not agreeing that the student has a problem or a health disorder just because they do not meet the expectations placed on them in educational contexts. The search for “an answer” to what happens during the schooling process should not be focused on “making a diagnosis,” but rather, armed with scientific clarification and reasoning about how human development occurs through learning, it should question the medicalizing logic in educational processes. We advocate that teachers should be familiar with psychology and align themselves with views that do not make diagnoses so easily and that question any simplistic explanations for the path that students may present or should—mistakenly—follow in their learning or behavior.

If, on the one hand, we want teachers to be able to use knowledge from the field of psychology in their work, on the other hand, we also consider it equally necessary to understand what school and educational psychologists do so that, working together, we can join forces against the sickening and individualizing logic that hangs over the linear and rigid path traced in the schooling process. With the expectation that all students will respond in the same way to the knowledge they access, we have a full plate when it comes to transforming social, cultural, and contextual issues into diagnoses and pathologizing psychological processes and functions that are still in the process of being formed.

From the initial training, we aim for teachers to be constituted in such a way as to understand the diversity of ways of existing of the individual, in their uniqueness, which is being constituted at every moment. Furthermore, conceiving the appropriation of knowledge as central to the constitution of the psyche goes beyond attending school just to comply with a protocol but rather promotes human development through learning.

We argue that Historical-Cultural Psychology provides sufficient support for the theoretical and methodological foundation for teachers throughout their careers, from the moment they design and develop their teaching activities to how they deal with possible complications in the process of knowledge acquisition, its timing, and how it occurs. Finally, we hope to see more research and interventions in this field, with an epistemological bias committed to social transformation through education, whether by teachers, psychologists, or any professionals working in educational processes.

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