

V. V. Repkin's contributions to thinking about the education of students with intellectual disabilities: introductory notes

Contribuições de V. V. Repkin para pensar a educação dos estudantes com deficiência intelectual: apontamentos introdutórios

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at identifying and reflecting on V. V. Repkin's contributions to thinking about the education of students with intellectual disabilities. This purpose is an initial theoretical approach to the theme, since the above-mentioned author did not focus his research and didactic propositions on students with disabilities. Repkin made a significant contribution to the theoretical-experimental production within the scope of the Developmental Learning Theory, advancing the understanding of the role of education in the psychic development of students based on Vigotski's work; therefore, highlighting the importance of development by the subject as the source of study activity. The author moves us towards seeking in his production the possibility of building new areas of intelligibility to expand and deepen relevant studies on the conceptual learning of students with intellectual disabilities – yet insufficiently addressed in the fields of scientific production in areas such as Psychology, education, and Teaching. In order to do that, the following reflections were supported by Vygotsky and Repkin and the effort of theoretical articulations

RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva identificar e refletir sobre as contribuições do V. V. Repkin para pensar a educação dos estudantes com deficiência intelectual. Esse propósito se configura como uma aproximação teórica inicial com a temática porque o autor em tela não direcionou suas pesquisas e proposições didáticas aos estudantes com deficiência. Repkin contribuiu significativamente para a produção teórico-experimental no âmbito da Teoria da Aprendizagem Desenvolvidamental, que avançou na compreensão do papel da educação no desenvolvimento psíquico dos estudantes a partir da obra de Vigotski; com efeito, ressaltou-se a importância do desenvolvimento do sujeito como fonte da atividade de estudo. Assim, o autor nos mobiliza a buscar em sua obra a possibilidade de construir novas zonas de inteligibilidade para ampliar e adensar os estudos pertinentes à aprendizagem conceitual dos estudantes com deficiência intelectual – ainda insuficientemente tratada nos campos de produção científica das áreas da Psicologia, Pedagogia e Didática. Para tanto, as reflexões elaboradas orientaram-se pelos fundamentos de Vigotski e Repkin, buscando

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between them to elaborate introductory notes regarding the complexity of the following dilemma: research and production on Cultural-Historical Theory argue that students with atypical development are capable of attending school if provided the adequate conditions and offered through collaborative and inclusive environments. Nevertheless, School, under the aegis of capitalism, is based on fatalistic and/or biologizing explanations about the possibilities of conceptual learning for these students, simplifying the educational process, with impacts on student learning.

Keywords: Developmental Learning Theory. Students with Intellectual Disability. Subject development.

tessituras teóricas entre os autores a fim de subsidiar a produção de apontamentos introdutórios face à complexidade do tema. Movimentadas pelo seguinte dilema: os estudos e pesquisas fundamentados na Teoria Histórico-Cultural defendem que os estudantes com desenvolvimento atípico têm condições de escolarizar-se, desde que as condições sejam adequadas e ofertadas por meio de processos colaborativos e inclusivos, no entanto, a Escola, sob a égide do capitalismo, fundamenta-se em explicações fatalistas e/ou biologizantes sobre as possibilidades de aprendizagem conceitual desses estudantes, simplificando o processo educativo, com impactos na aprendizagem dos estudantes.

Palavras-chave: Teoria da Aprendizagem Desenvolvidor. Estudantes com Deficiência Intelectual. Desenvolvimento do sujeito.

1 Introduction

In the domain of psychology and didactics, which draws from the cultural-historical approach espoused by prominent scholars such as L. S. Vigotski³, S. L. Rubinstein, and A. N. Leontiev, the Developmental Learning Theory (DLT) emerged because of rigorous and multifaceted research conducted by groups of researchers. Initially centered in Moscow and Kharkov, these efforts later expanded to other Eastern countries and the Western world. The experimental research was conducted during the early years of fundamental education and was subsequently expanded into subsequent school years, reaching what, in Brazil, corresponds to the final years of elementary school and high school (PUENTES, 2022).

It is imperative to acknowledge that the overarching objective of the empirical endeavors was to substantiate "[...] L. S. Vygotsky's theoretical thesis concerning the pivotal function of children's education and learning in their

³ L. S. Vygotsky's name is spelled differently in various works, so in this paper the author's name will be written according to the work cited. When the authors of this text refer to the author, it will be with the following spelling: L. S. Vigotski.

psychological evolution, with a view to accentuating the psychological principles of developmental learning" (PUENTES, 2022, p. 31). In this sense, the central objective was to develop a Theory of Study Activity, the main activity of school-age children. This endeavor was undertaken assuming the formation of theoretical thinking (scientific concepts and generalized modes of action) is at the basis of the student's psychological development, aimed at the self-transformation of the subject of learning (PUENTES; LONGAREZI, 2020).

According to Repkin (2020a, p. 317), the activity of studying fulfills a social function that encompasses the objective of "[...] ensuring the assimilation of scientific knowledge by individuals as one of the central components of the world of human culture" and is "[...] one of the main ways [...] of including new generations in the system of social relations, in openly collective activity, in the course of which the moral values and social norms that underlie any collective activity of people are assimilated" (Repkin, 2020a, p. 317).

In this regard, the value of school education for new generations is acknowledged, as it is regarded as a learning environment conducive to human development, facilitating the acquisition of scientific knowledge and the social-relational experiences that constitute it. Within the confines of neoliberal democracy, education is conceptualized as a space for the articulation of diverse historical and social projects. Historically, access to school education has posed significant challenges for individuals diagnosed with disabilities or developmental disorders, often attributed to perceived physical and cognitive limitations. Consequently, these individuals have been viewed as being less productive in terms of social integration and the demands of daily life.

In the Brazilian context, despite the advancements observed in the regulatory frameworks resulting from the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LGB No. 9394/96), inspired by the inclusive perspective, a movement adopted worldwide in the early 1990s under the auspices of the UN system, particularly following the Salamanca Declaration, numerous challenges persist in

the education of students with special needs⁴. Individuals with intellectual disabilities and other impairments that hinder their capacity to learn are often marginalized in the educational curriculum. This situation is further compounded at each grade level, leading to factors such as dropping out of school, automatic promotion, or repeated failure.

Research has demonstrated that, for the majority of students with intellectual disabilities, the activities designed for them in schools are simplified and/or infantilized, and do not extend beyond the concrete level of thought (PLETSCH, 2014). Pletsch and Oliveira (2017) assert that one of the most significant barriers encountered by students with intellectual disabilities in schools is the lack of access to the curriculum, with teachers' conceptions impeding their academic progress. The integration of these students into conventional educational settings underscores the systemic shortcomings of the educational system and the variability in pedagogical practices (OLIVEIRA, 2017).

Considering the aforementioned points, the present article aims to identify and reflect on V. V. Repkin's contributions to the field of education for students with intellectual disabilities. While Repkin's research and didactic proposals were not explicitly focused on students with disabilities (atypical development), they are nevertheless relevant within the context of the Elkonin-Davidov-Repkin didactic system. The pursuit of understanding how learning can influence psychic development is a compelling endeavor, and it is one that merits further exploration. In this regard, Puentes (2019, p. 20) makes the following argument:

Developmental theory is not merely a concept that emphasizes instruction and the transmission of pre-established content. Rather, it is a conception of learning that acknowledges the inherent complexity of psychic activity, which is theorized as the content of elementary school. This theoretical thought is not something that can be merely taught; it is something that can

⁴ Students with disabilities, global development disorders (autistic spectrum disorders) and high abilities (BRASIL, 2008).

only be learned by the student who emerges as a subject in the activity of study.

Developmental learning is predicated on the development of higher psychological functions through organization and planning aimed at overcoming spontaneity. Consequently, schools must create teaching conditions that fulfill this purpose, especially for students with intellectual disabilities. In these students, the generalization process is impaired, requiring collateral support so that the student can progress from collaborative learning to autonomy in this process (DAVIDOV, MÁRKOVA, 2020). In this regard, the role of the educator is to orchestrate the pedagogical process in a collaborative and dialogical manner with students within the context of their academic endeavors. Special education, as defined by the Brazilian government (BRASIL, 1996, 2008), is a distinct type of education with the overarching objective of ensuring access to regular education, fostering participation, facilitating learning, and ensuring continuity at higher levels of education. It adopts an inclusive stance, advocating for the right to education for all students. It also exposes the intricacies of the educational process and the contradictions inherent in prevailing pedagogical models in educational institutions. This is done to ensure compliance with the guarantees established in the relevant regulatory frameworks.

The organization of the pedagogical process gives rise to questions related to the management of didactic work. For instance, it calls into question the provision of learning conditions for all students in environments that do not have adequate support in line with the principles of inclusive education. It also raises questions regarding the necessity of reducing the number of students per class, the use of diversified didactic strategies and resources, and the use of assistive technologies. The support mentioned also includes the presence of caregivers who work with students with disabilities. In our studies and professional work with teachers in initial and continuing training, questions about the possibilities of learning are always suspected of.

This challenge prompted a re-examination of the work of L. S. Vygotsky on his understanding of the learning of students with atypical development,

with an emphasis on what is currently known as intellectual disability. To establish interlocutions with V. V. Repkin's contributions found in recent texts translated from Russian into Portuguese by Brazilian researchers and from their readings of works in Russian, we consulted published works on the subject. Consequently, this study, of a bibliographical and conceptual nature, aims to conceptualize the education of students with these characteristics. Initially, we will present elaborations based on works that address the learning processes of students with atypical development, among which the following stand out: L. S. Vygotski, A. R. Luria. Subsequently, we will examine the TLD studies produced by representatives of the Elkonin-Davydov-Repkin didactic system, emphasizing the contributions of V. V. Repkin. The content of the theoretical productions will be analyzed about cultural-historical theory, observing the meanings and value of the content in line with the historical context of its production, identifying the concepts and theoretical and methodological approaches to the subject studied.

2 Vygotsky's ideas for studying atypical development and understanding mental retardation

In this section, we present Vygotsky's main ideas on atypical development, comparing them with the studies of other authors carried out between 2018 and 2023, identified in the journal portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Capes) to obtain works containing the descriptors "intellectual disability" and "cultural-historical theory". In addition to these databases, we searched for chapters and books on the subject, which will be referenced in due course. We found 10 peer-reviewed articles that met our objectives.

Of all the academic productions, the highlights were the basic principles of his work: "The defect and compensation", "On the psychology and pedagogy of child defectology", "Principles of education of physically handicapped children" (VYGOTSKI, 1997) and chapter 15 of the work *Pedagogical Psychology*

(VIGOTSKI, 2003) entitled "Abnormal behavior", and go up to the period close to his death with the manuscript "The problem of mental retardation" (VYGOTSKI, 1997) published in 1935. (PADILHA, 2018), (DAINEZ; SMOLKA; SOUZA, 2022), (ABREU; PEDERIVA, 2021), (CHAVES; ROSATO, 2019), (FREITAS; PINTO; MONTEIRO, 2023), (NORONHA; SILVA; SHIMAZAKI, 2023).

In the course of the experience, the child learns to compensate for their natural deficiencies, based on the defective natural behaviors, cultural techniques and skills come into existence, concealing and compensating for the defect. They make it possible to tackle an unfeasible task by using new and different ways. Compensatory cultural behavior overrides defective natural behavior.

The knowledge acquired from this experience is employed in the relationship between the primary defect and the secondary defect, which is facilitated by culture. Certain behaviors that are identified as problems may, in fact, signify alternative methods an individual has developed to cope with daily challenges.

However, the seminal work of L. S. Vigotski and A. R. Luria (1996) did not delve into the intricacies of compensatory processes, merely operating within the confines of an innate psychological ability. Instead, they sought to establish conditions that would facilitate the overcoming of damage caused by atypical development, as it was then conceptualized. However, a departure from the localizations thesis of mental functions, as espoused by these authors, engendered novel insights. Specifically, it was recognized that the brain functions as a system and that culture exerts a predominant influence on the psychic development of human beings. Consequently, brain plasticity enables the mobilization of new neuronal circuits through appropriate cultural stimuli, thereby activating regions of the brain that have not yet been recruited and fostering the emergence of novel higher psychological functions. Consequently, by leveraging the positive attributes and addressing the challenges exhibited by these children, we can foster their learning, as articulated by L. S. Vigotski (1997, p. 07):

The positive peculiarity of the disabled child also arises, first, not because one or other functions observed in a typical child disappear, but rather because the disappearance of these functions gives rise to new formations that collectively represent a reaction of the personality to the disability and a compensatory mechanism in the developmental process.

Nonetheless, the compensatory process does not invariably yield positive outcomes for individuals with atypical development. The coexistence of both victory and defeat can serve as catalysts for resilience in the face of adversity, thereby providing a foundation for exploring alternative pathways that lead to diverse life opportunities. As L. S. Vigotski (1997, p. 07) astutely observed:

It would be erroneous to presume that the process of compensation invariably culminates in success, leading to the development of capacities from deficiencies. As with any process of overcoming and struggle, compensation can yield two outcomes: victory and defeat, with all the intermediate possibilities between these two extremes. The outcome is contingent on numerous factors, but is fundamentally determined by the availability of compensation funds. Irrespective of the anticipated outcome of the compensation process, the development complicated by disability constitutes a creative process (organic and psychological) of construction and reconstruction of the child's personality, based on the reorganization of all adaptive functions, the formation of new overlapping, substitutive, leveling processes, which are generated by the defect, and the opening up of new paths of deviation for development. A world of new forms and paths of development, characterized by unlimited diversity, becomes accessible within the framework of defectology.

The efficacy of the compensation process hinges upon the quality of the actions and relationships cultivated during the lifetimes of individuals with disabilities. In the specific case of children with intellectual disabilities, compensatory development can be achieved through the substitution of functions by learning to utilize cultural artifacts. For instance, students who have difficulty maintaining their focus on an activity proposed by the teacher may be susceptible to distractions caused by movement. However, through in-depth interviews and a

careful analysis of their motivations, it was observed that by addressing their concerns and offering alternative strategies to address their educational needs, their attention span increased, facilitating the memorization of the material. This process highlights a novel aspect of attention, where the entire encephalon (brain) is engaged, and mobilizing functions from the three functional blocks described by A. R. Luria in 1981.

This student has been exposed to novel cultural artifacts that were previously unknown to them or were not presented under optimal conditions, resulting in the exacerbation of feelings of inferiority, which often go unnoticed by their teachers. In essence, their perceived "backwardness" leads to the accumulation of adverse qualities and complications, manifesting as incomplete social development and neglect. (VIGOTSKI, 2018, p. 15). In this regard, we find ourselves in agreement with L. S. Vygotski's (1997) thesis on the dialectical relationship between the primary defect and the secondary defect, with the latter having a significant impact on an individual's development. The secondary defect is present in the culture of the family, the school, and society in general. We concur with Noronha, Oliveira, and Shimazaki (2023) that the environment to which children with intellectual disabilities is exposed should be the focal point of education, with the objective of identifying secondary situations that can facilitate compensatory mechanisms, where The cultural values, ideas, conceptual frameworks, and ideological frameworks that shape institutional relations have the capacity to influence the members of these institutions, thereby mobilizing the production of meanings. This phenomenon, as elucidated by L. S. Vygotsky (1934, p. 465), underscores the dynamic interplay between institutional dynamics and the construction of meaning.

The definition of a word is the aggregate of all psychological facts that it evokes in our consciousness. Consequently, meaning is a dynamic, fluid, and complex formation with multiple zones of varying stability. Among these zones, meaning is merely one that a word acquires in the context of a given discourse. Moreover, it is a more stable, uniform, and precise zone.

Meaning is an individual production that occurs within social practices and is articulated to singular experiences, where a set of signs are present, amalgamated by emotions and symbolizations constituted in the fabric of human relationships (Vigotski, 2018). Therefore, compensatory processes are mobilized by the driving forces that gain power in the quality of social relationships and, above all, in educational processes combined with carefully planned collateral support (Vigotski, 2018). It is imperative to pay attention to the subjective dimensions that run through the lives of students with intellectual disabilities. In this regard, we will be guided by three theses proposed by L. S. Vigotski (2018, p. 04): Firstly, the development of the intellectually disabled child, previously referred to as "mentally retarded," is conducive to overcoming their challenges. Secondly, understanding the dynamics of retardation and identifying its general structure is paramount. Thirdly, as stated by Vigotski (2018, p. 04), "[...] consists of the maximum pedagogical conclusions arising from the explication of the first and second."

When analyzing the first thesis, it becomes evident that the most crucial element is to comprehend the dynamics of its development, which is mobilized by the reactions produced by human beings in the face of the organic conditions of their disability. By considering the context, it becomes possible to comprehend the dynamics involved in the formation of the secondary defect and the impact that the limitations brought on by the disability have on the individual. This, in turn, facilitates an understanding of the complexity of the experiences, as well as the tracking of changes and continuities in the course of the current life of the person with disability.

This approach aligns with V. V. Repkin's theories, which offer a rich source of ideas for studies on conceptual learning. These studies extend beyond the confines of the cognitive domain, incorporating the context of subject development. This development, conceptualized as a process mobilized by the needs and motivations to learn, is associated with the formation of conceptual thinking, a voluntary activity energized by the possibilities of analysis and

synthesis, which involve the generalization of knowledge and generate qualitative changes in children, expanding their participation in society (FREITAS; DAIANEZ; MONTEIRO, 2022). Consequently, the convergence of perspectives between Vygotsky and Repkin has the potential to facilitate the effective implementation of educational programs for this demographic.

3 Ideas of V. V. Repkin: Possible Points for Thinking about the Education of Students with Intellectual Disabilities

In this section, we present ideas and concepts formulated in the Elkonin-Davidov-Repkin didactic system, with an emphasis on Repkin, relating them to the thinking of L. S. Vygotsky concerning the bases for the study of atypical development. In doing so, we aim to highlight theoretical possibilities that generate new areas of understanding for the discussion at hand. We initiated the discussion, guided by Puentes and Mitjáns Martínez's (2023) call that it is essential to understand how ADT conceptualizes development to approach it from a didactic perspective. Puentes's (2022) seminal work on development in DBT underscores the necessity of incorporating a critical lens into our deliberations. Puentes's research identifies inaccuracies, divergences, and silences in the relationship between psychic and personality development within the Elkonin-Davidov-Repkin system. In this article, we will focus on understanding development based on the contributions of V. V. Repkin and more recent productions formulated in partnership with N. V. Repkina, his daughter and collaborator.

3.1 Understanding the Development of the Subject of the Study Activity. According to Repkin (2020b, p. 376), the development of man is defined as the process of maturation of the subject of different types and forms of human activity, with the understanding that "[...] the possibility of the subject's self-transformation presupposes its existence." This perspective underscores the significance of intellectual development in the constitution of the subject, as it is inextricably linked to activity and enables its execution.

Furthermore, the evolution of the personality is shaped by shared social activity and the cultural mediators that are either present or crafted within it. Human beings are not born subjects or personalities, but it is true that where "man creates, there he is a subject" (REPKIN, 2020b, p. 377).

Development is the objective of TLD, in the context of the activity of study that creates the conditions for psychic and personality development in the initial period of school age (between 6/7 and 10/11 years of age). This developmental process extends to the adolescent stage, which corresponds to the elementary school level (initial years: 1st to 5th, final years: 6th to 9th), aligning with the school organization within the Brazilian education system. During this period, the study activity assumes a pivotal role in guiding the assimilation of content that introduces novel formations consistent with the challenges faced by students during this developmental stage. These novel formations encompass theoretical thinking, encompassing the development of scientific concepts, and students' cognitive actions (Puentes, 2022).

The conceptual foundation for this approach is drawn from Karl Marx's notion of work as a vital human activity that serves as a form of self-realization, representing a type of free and creative human activity. This perspective stands in contrast to the prevailing social division of labor, which is characterized by a narrow focus on mere subsistence, leading to a dissociation between the individual and their goals, and consequently, the meaning of their activity (REPKIN, 2020b).

Creative and transformative activity is constitutive of man as a social being in his original and humanizing form (REPKIN; REPKINA, 2019), developing the necessary conditions for participation in the production of social life and for his development. The development of the student as a subject is presupposed by creative activity, that is, as an individual capable of relying on their understanding of the situation, determining the objectives of actions, and how to achieve them. As Repkin and Repkina (2019) note, this process of development entails the transformation of knowledge rather than its mere assimilation, within the context of the activity.

In the context of the study activity, the subject assumes the role of the

objective of developmental learning, a process that must foster a conducive environment for the growth of each student as "a self-transforming subject of study" (REPKINA, 1993 apud PUENTES, 2023, p. 16). The study's objective is to promote qualitative changes in the child as the subject of the activity, a transformation of the self, in contrast to play, which is oriented towards external outcomes. The activity of study should be understood as "an activity of self-transformation of the subject" (REPkin, 2020b, p. 376).

To conceptualize the education of students with intellectual disabilities from the perspective of ADT, it is necessary to recall L. S. Vygotsky's (1997) assertion that all individuals possess the capacity to learn and develop, even in the face of challenges posed by a disability, and we posit that this is facilitated by the universal capacity to establish an emotional connection to the learning process, to mobilize it, even in the absence of complete mastery over the cultural forms of study (PUENTES, 2023). This fundamental premise undergirds the education of students with intellectual disabilities, with the objective of providing conducive conditions and resources for their development and the cultivation of theoretical thinking as a potent cultural instrument in the pursuit of inclusion in social life.

To further refine our understanding of the subject's development, it is crucial to delineate the components/properties of the subject's content of activity. Among the numerous special properties, we emphasize those deemed most salient by Repkin, as the absence of these elements precludes the emergence of the subject and consequently hinders learning from the perspective of developmental learning. To elucidate further:

Reason enables individuals to transcend the confines of tangible existence, establishing progressively ambitious objectives. Free will, grounded in sentiments of love and human dignity, endows individuals with the fortitude to surmount the influence of fleeting circumstances. Conscience serves to substantiate the objectives selected and the methodologies for their realization (REPkin, 1997, apud PUENTES, 2023, p. 24).

It is acknowledged that these distinctive characteristics represent significant psychic resources that play a crucial role in the subjective formation of the individual, contributing to the emergence of the subject in academic pursuits and other domains of activity. Furthermore, Repkin and Repkina (2012, as cited in Puentes, 2023) delineated the psychological structure of the subject of study activity as comprising two phases contingent upon the student's integration into the educational system, encompassing the entry and completion of elementary school. The initial phase is characterized by two elements that define the student as an agent: "(1) the universal need for independent and active action," which necessitates emotional communication with peers, and "(2) reflection, through which the child disengages from their actions." As Repkin and Repkina (2012 apud PUENTES, 2023) emphasize, the form of self-awareness that reflection initially engenders is the most potent catalyst for the child's subsequent development. The subsequent phase integrates "(1) comprehension, which acquires an indirect character, and based on knowledge of the substantive basis of the generalized mode of action [...] provides an understanding of its meaning"; and "(2) defining reflection allows the student to [...] detect contradictions between the necessary level of understanding of a new situation and existing knowledge," allowing the student to define a new study objective, autonomously, and how to achieve it (Puentes, 2023, p. 25).

Consequently, the student initially assumes the role of the subject of the collective study activity, subsequently transitions to the quasi-research activity, and ultimately reaches the study activity, which aims to facilitate the student's self-transformation into a subject (REPKIN; REPKINA, 2012, apud PUENTES, 2023).

Puentes' (2023) theoretical framework posits that this progression manifests as an upward movement comprising distinct levels of subject development. It originates as a communicative subject and culminates in the final phase of the creative subject, traversing the subject of practical actions and the understanding subject. Beyond the communicative level, the

subsequent levels integrated into the educational period expose students to increasingly complex social scenarios and demand the progressive mastery of cultural products and norms, thereby significantly expanding individual experience until they can engage in creative activities.

The aspects presented—content, structure, and levels—pertinent to the composition and dynamics of the development process of the subject of the study activity form part of a psychological and didactic-pedagogical system guiding developmental learning. Planning, implementation, and evaluation should be based on this system with a view to shaping the study activity.

From an early age, the individual requires the development of the subject, and this takes place in a process that is designed according to the characteristics and materiality of the activities in which he participates in his life history. When we reflect on this process and the possibilities it offers, we realize the abyss in which students with intellectual disabilities find themselves in the school experience.

The connotation of individuals with disabilities as not only different, but also inferior, places them in a position of object rather than subject⁵, resulting in paternalistic and welfare attitudes that are dominant in special education and also expressed in the current inclusive perspective (MITJÁNS MARTÍNEZ; GONZÁLEZ REY, 2017). These attitudes act as significant barriers to the development of students with disabilities in the educational experience, especially when considering the limitations in accessing and mastering the knowledge and modes of action socialized at school, as they are important psychological resources in the process of cultural compensation.

3.2 Theoretical Reflections on Educational Opportunities for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

⁵ Although the aforementioned authors conceive of the subject, within the Theory of Subjectivity elaborated by González Rey, in a different way to Repkin, they are related to some extent in their generative nature, in their creative attitudes and in their attempt to overcome prescriptions.

Education has the main function of transmitting historically accumulated human experience and ensuring the continuity of cultural development, involving new generations in transformative activities. According to Repkin and Repkina (2019), transformative activities can be characterized from two different perspectives in terms of objectives, content, functions, methods of implementation, and preparation of children and young people, resulting in two systems of education from modern times (traditional and developmental).

In both perspectives, two aspects are associated with learning, which generate different relationships with it: "[...] the psychological, which implies that the individual has the desire to participate in this type of activity, and the objective-technological, which assumes the presence of knowledge and skills necessary to participate in this activity" (REPkin; REPkina, 2019, p. 33, emphasis added).

The relationship between the above two aspects generates the process of assimilation of socio-historical experience by the individual. Davidov and Márkova (2020) conceptualize assimilation as a process of reproduction by the subject of historically elaborated procedures of relating to the objects of human culture and the transformation of these procedures into forms of subjectivity. The authors also point out that assimilation is not simply the passive adaptation of the student to social life, but rather the result of study activity, which is why it differs from functional learning typical of traditional pedagogy.

In the traditional educational system, the goal is oriented to reproductive and adaptive activity, regulated by purely external demands and instructions, which is why it values readiness as the most appropriate psychological aspect in the learning process, acting in the zone of the student's real development (REPkin; REPkina, 2019). In this case, learning is oriented more to the functional preparation of the student than to his development, which eventually is spontaneous and unpredictable. Its goal presupposes the acquisition of a certain level of knowledge, habits, and skills (REPkin, 2020b).

Davidov (1987, p. 144) asserts that traditional pedagogy is "[...] utterly inadequate in capturing the genuine essence of contemporary science and the

tenets of a creative, active, and profoundly fulfilling relationship with reality." Consequently, he contends that it merely influences the development of empirical thinking. The author, in his analysis of these principles, has identified the imperative for a substantial re-examination and substitution to facilitate education on alternative social foundations. These principles, as outlined by Davidov (1987, p. 146), encompass the successive nature of learning, accessibility, the conscious nature, and the visual, direct, or intuitive nature. The integration of these principles is in alignment with the psychological and pedagogical foundations upon which the teaching process for students with intellectual disabilities in school is based. In the context of this study, the principle of accessibility is particularly salient. This principle entails the disregard of the historical, social, and concrete conditions characteristic of childhood, focusing instead on the potentialities already inherent in the child. Consequently, it results in a delineation of the capabilities of the student at their present educational stage. However, Davidov (1987, p. 146) poses a pertinent question: "[...] who and when could define the measure of this capacity with precision?" The system of education based on developmental learning, on the other hand, signifies a significant shift in the elements of cultural and historical experience, since they are no longer merely transmitted but rather recreated by the students in collaboration with the teacher, to the benefit of creative transformative activity. The objective is to understand how to develop learning, considering that students as subjects also participate in the planning and implementation process. In this system, knowledge, skills, and habits function as the means to achieve learning objectives (REPKIN; REPKINA, 2019).

Repkin (2020b, p. 370) posits that accessibility constitutes an indispensable criterion in the process of organizing learning, asserting that in its absence, the criteria of scientificity, logical sequence, and historicity become moot. It is imperative to acknowledge the particularities of development to identify its nuances and possibilities for learning, which are manifested in specific content and methods selected in favor of the student.

This criterion of accessibility in learning applies to the education of students with disabilities. In the case of students with intellectual disabilities, the accessibility criterion is understood to be related to understanding the role of compensation in the process of coping with the challenges caused by organic problems, such as disabilities and other limitations. These challenges must be addressed in the social environment through cultural mediation. At the core of this understanding lies the field of possibilities represented by L. S. Vygotsky's (2021) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for conceptualizing a didactic process governed by the foundations of developmental learning. This perspective underscores the dictates of pasteurized prescription perspectives of what should be taught to students with disabilities. The extant research indicates that the infantilization and focus on what is purportedly known about the genuine development zone of students with intellectual disabilities is a practical expression of Davidov's critique of conventional pedagogy. This paralyzes the individual in their organic state, as manifested in behavior and/or socially reproduced patterns independent of the knowledge that has been produced about the individual and, even more so, far from living with them.

For the criterion of accessibility to be actualized in the didactic organization, work oriented towards the student's ZDI must prioritize knowledge of the particularities of development. Consequently, this approach will facilitate the identification of the type and level of external assistance required at that particular moment. The theoretical construct developed by L. S. Vygotsky (2021, p. 191) holds significant value in both research and practice, as it facilitates comprehension of the internal progression and development process. This construct enables us to not only discern what has been accomplished and the results of that development, but also to predict future outcomes in development.

In this regard, the collaborative engagement between educators and their students emerges as a pivotal pedagogical condition that fosters the development of the subject of learning. Collaboration between the parties involved in the educational process fosters the development of both, as

evidenced by the student's advancement in knowledge acquisition, which in turn demonstrates the teacher's need for further progress. This information is crucial for the planning of new didactic actions that can rely on the collateral support that serves as a foundation for achieving academic autonomy. This concept is exemplified by the acquisition of writing mastery.

It is evident that the focal point of the study activity and its comprehensive execution materialize when the student attains the autonomy to propose and determine their learning process within the academic environment. To attain this autonomy, students undergo the collaborative stage, wherein the activity is assisted and guided by the instructor. In this stage, students adopt an active stance, and the school content is presented as a study task by the teacher, who becomes responsible for the psychological organization of this content within the task (Puentes, 2019). This reaffirms Repkina's thesis (apud VLADMIROVNA, 2019) asserts that joint and distributed action between teacher and student constitutes one of the psychological and pedagogical conditions that facilitate the formation and development of an educational subject.

In accordance with Repkin's (2020) assertion, it is acknowledged that, within the two aforementioned stages, the teacher's assistance to the student persists, and both parties engage in a genuine activity comprising actions that are distributed, periodically shared, and occasionally assumed individually, in interdependent stages. This sequence of actions culminates in the execution of the study activity (Puentes, 2019). The objective of these actions is to facilitate the transition of students into self-directed learners, thereby redefining the role of teaching and the teacher as the facilitator of didactic action. This process is a highly intricate task of equal pedagogical and social value, which involves "helping students to teach themselves" (REPKIN, 2020b, p. 377).

This conception of teacher and student aligns with Vygotsky's (2004) notion that the act of educating another person is inherently impossible, as it is not possible to exert a direct influence on and produce changes in their mental activity. He further elaborates, stating: "If, from a scientific

perspective, we deny that the teacher has the mystical ability to 'model the soul of others,' it is precisely because we recognize that his importance is immeasurably greater" (VYGOTSKY, 2004, p. 76). The teacher plays an active role in the process of creating the objective and subjective conditions that foster the student's development in the school context.

In addition, accompanying support should not only be understood as the presence of a specialist in the classroom, but for the work to be adequate, it also requires collaboration between professionals that must be shared and constantly reflected upon. In the reality of special education, from an inclusive perspective, collaboration between regular education teachers and special education teachers strengthens the possibility of minimally breaking with the fragmentation and pragmatism typical of the educational system under the aegis of the neoliberal precepts that dominate today's school. Collaboration requires the exercise of a sense of collectivity, reflection, criticism, and creativity to come closer to the experience of a transformative activity as well for professionals. We would also add that collaborative action among students is critical and should be valued in the teaching proposal, especially in the learning process of students with disabilities.

To generate the study activity, it is necessary to have a set of components that, according to Repkin, interdependently integrate the structure and dynamics of the activity, namely: study task, study action, control action and evaluation action, as cited by Puentes (2019). It is worth highlighting the study task as the unit of analysis of this structure of the study activity and the starting point for its formation, in which the emergence of needs and the desire to learn is strategic to ensure the formulation of the study activity. A series of actions are part of this search: difficulty situation, problem situation, and study situation (PUENTES, 2019).

In this sense, Repkin (2020b, p. 392) wondered: "[...] how and in what way can we ensure that children are involved in this activity and gradually shape their study activity?" How can this challenge be met in the Brazilian educational context, with a focus on the development of students with intellectual disabilities?

The answer to these questions is not simple if we consider the peculiarities of the school trajectory of a significant proportion of students with intellectual disabilities. Generally, these students don't fit into the standard flow of the schooling process for some of these isolated or associated reasons: late entry into school; brief or unstable stay in school; large age/grade distortion; even when they enter and follow the normal flow of seriation, they can't access the curriculum; recurring automatic promotion, without changing the conditions and didactic organization to advance in meeting the specific needs of students, among others. In addition, there is a direct or indirect disbelief in the students' ability to learn and develop, leading to simplified, repetitive, improvised, or overprotective pedagogical responses.

The aspects pointed out above, rather than the intellectual peculiarities and limitations resulting from the disability, become significant barriers not only to the students' participation in an educational process governed by developmental learning, but also to the realization of the right to education, partly carried out by the school. Given this complexity, it requires, from the outset, structural changes in the objective and subjective conditions that make up the educational experiences provided to these students, breaking with the naturalization of low expectations and meager investments expressed in the impoverishment of the curriculum, didactic improvisation and unpreparedness constantly denounced by professionals, sometimes resulting in parallel school paths that distance them from access to scientific knowledge and their modes of mental action.

Undoubtedly, the organization of this experience in school needs to be rethought and resized because the study activity is only triggered when the student's motivational sphere is mobilized, which must be qualitatively increased to stimulate the assumption of the study task and the effort to complete it successfully. To this end, the content, structure and developmental levels of the subject, as explained above, must be considered in a contextualized and personalized way, with the challenging goal of helping to shape the subject of learning within the condition of students with disabilities (PUENTES, 2023).

In light of the foregoing, several propositions have been enumerated, which are the result of the dialogues established in the present work. Said propositions serve as an introductory summary of possibilities for tackling the pedagogical barriers that hinder the development of students with intellectual disabilities in contemporary schools. These propositions are as follows:

a) Given the upward movement of the levels of development of the subject of the study activity, it becomes crucial that investments in care, stimuli, and interactions begin long before the child enters school. It is evident that most families will require guidance and support to adequately address these needs, a requirement that should persist throughout the educational journey. This endeavor, indisputably, is a structural and systemic undertaking, necessitating intersectoral public policies that align with the National Special Education Policy's (BRASIL, 2008) inclusive education objective.

b) Organizing the learning process with the child's participation as a means of facilitating the assimilation of knowledge into an active process, driven by the child's emotional engagement with the task;

c) Preparing for the child's entry into school and exposure to scientific knowledge, as it demands novel cognitive challenges and a substantial shift in the child's social milieu;

d) Identifying the most appropriate levels and forms of pedagogical aids and their progression to meet specific needs, about the peculiarities of the student's learning, without hindering their development;

e) Encouraging the creation of emotionally stimulating, welcoming, and challenging socio-relational contexts, allowing assisted entry into different living, communication, and learning spaces and situations;

f) Breaking with traditional perspectives on the organization of pedagogical work and moving towards the construction of accessible curricula that can promote learning conditions for these students;

g) Prioritize assessment processes that inform about learning and do not focus on students' deficiencies, explaining the dynamics of the cultural development of the personality and the specificities of the students;

h) Recognize the driving forces in the limits, to build possibilities together with the student to advance in the formation of the study activity;

i) Collaboratively developing didactic planning with all stakeholders to promote meaningful study activities that can be shared collectively;

j) Implementing strategies to personalize the learning process, leveraging tools such as the Individualized Educational Plan with the curriculum and the common school experience;

k) Recognizing the value of Assistive Technology and diverse communication modalities as effective mediating tools.

Four Final Considerations

This text underscores the significance of developmental learning in establishing educational opportunities conducive to the development and learning of students with intellectual disabilities. This is because it deviates from conventional psychological and didactic-pedagogical principles that constrain the Individuals with disabilities are often confined within these traditional frameworks, hindering their potential for growth and development. This perspective acknowledges that each child or student represents an emerging subject within the context of their academic activity, necessitating an educational environment that is receptive to their unique needs, knowledge, relationships, and practices.

The subject's process of self-transformation necessitates shared action, in a real and current world, and demands the mobilization of integrated psychic and subjective resources, expressed in creativity, understanding, and reflection, overcoming the limits of the present and of individual experience, empathy, autonomy, among others. Consequently, these phenomena also manifest as the conceptualization of theoretical thinking, which serves as a materialization of the subject's developmental process. This theoretical thinking can function as a tool

for comprehending reality, mastering cultural norms and roles, and actively engaging with and transforming social life through creative endeavors, whether on an individual or collective level.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned valuable contributions, there are some gaps that merit attention, including the necessity for more in-depth study of the impact of secondary defects on the formal learning process, which is accentuated by the dynamics of school culture, which is still marked by attitudes that obscure the possibilities for student development.

It is imperative to emphasize the necessity of conducting empirical research to comprehend developmental learning, considering the historical evolution of schooling, the prevailing study conditions, and the contextual framework within which it unfolds. This is particularly salient in light of the recognition that students with atypical development often encounter challenges in aligning their educational trajectory with conventional standards. The question thus arises: How can developmental learning to be effectively directed for students who experience delays in school entry and persistent instabilities in their engagement? It is imperative to address the fact that this delay in entry coincides with the age periods that are crucial for the formation of new psychic structures, which are pivotal for academic activity. How can we cultivate the subject of education in these circumstances while still nurturing creativity in students? Would these strategies be more effective in contexts that are more favorable?

A substantial portion of the endeavor to comprehend the impetus for self-transformation and its fulfillment until it attains the pinnacle of autonomous and creative study activity resides in the subject's motivational domain. However, this aspect has received inadequate attention from researchers within the TLD paradigm (PUENTES, 2022). From this perspective, there is a necessity for a more complex theoretical understanding of learning, the development of the subject, and the role of the motivational sphere in the process of psychological and subjective development of students with intellectual disabilities. To further advance this inquiry, we acknowledge

the significance of aligning the ADT with the categorical framework of the Cultural-Historical Theory of Subjectivity, as developed by González Rey. We contend that the heuristic value of this alignment stems from its ability to elucidate the subjective influences of disability on the process of learning. This, in turn, facilitates a deeper examination and the establishment of new domains of comprehensibility concerning the subject under study.

Aportes de V.V. Repkin para pensar la educación de estudiantes con discapacidad intelectual: notas introductorias

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo identificar y reflexionar sobre las contribuciones de V. V. Repkin para pensar la educación de estudiantes con discapacidad intelectual. Este propósito es una primera aproximación teórica al tema, ya que el mencionado autor no centró sus investigaciones y propuestas didácticas en los estudiantes con discapacidad. Repkin hizo un aporte significativo a la producción teórico-experimental en el ámbito de la Teoría del Aprendizaje del Desarrollo, avanzando en la comprensión del papel de la educación en el desarrollo psíquico de los estudiantes a partir de la obra de Vigotski; por lo tanto, se destaca la importancia del desarrollo del sujeto como la fuente de actividad de estudio. El autor nos mueve a buscar en su producción la posibilidad de construir nuevos espacios de inteligibilidad para ampliar y profundizar estudios relevantes sobre el aprendizaje conceptual de estudiantes con discapacidad intelectual – aún insuficientemente abordados en los campos de la producción científica en áreas como la Psicología, la Educación y la Enseñanza. Para ello, las siguientes reflexiones se apoyaron en los fundamentos de Vygotsky y Repkin en busca de una articulación teórica entre ellos para elaborar notas introductorias sobre la complejidad del siguiente dilema: las investigaciones y producciones sobre Teoría Histórico-Cultural argumentan que los estudiantes con desarrollo atípico son capaces de asistir a la escuela si se le brindan las condiciones adecuadas y se le ofrece a través de entornos colaborativos e inclusivos. Sin embargo, la Escuela, bajo la vertiente capitalista, permanece bajo el ámbito de explicaciones fatalistas y/o biológicas sobre las posibilidades de aprendizaje conceptual de estos estudiantes, lo que vuelve superficial el proceso educativo.

Palabras clave: Teoría del Aprendizaje Desarrollador. Estudiantes con Discapacidad Intelectual. Desarrollo del sujeto.

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