

# Contributions of Cultural-Historical Theory to teacher education and pedagogical activity: connecting ideas, dialoguing research<sup>1</sup>

Contribuições da Teoria Histórico-Cultural à formação docente e à atividade pedagógica: conectando ideias, dialogando pesquisas

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Since the Educational Goals 2021's ambitious objectives, signed in El Salvador, in 2008, by several ministers from Latin America, aiming to improve the education quality and overcome educational delays in Latin America, several actions have been developed, whether arising from macro policies or of local punctual movements. Even before the global COVID-19 pandemic, the difficulties observed in students and the illness demonstrated by teachers find different explanations and proposals for solutions that are related to the purpose attributed to schools and Education in general, as well as to the explanations assumed for human development and with regard to school learning.

In the field of school and educational psychology, we find the reflections of Patto (1999), Proença (2004), Souza (2018) and Meira (2013) signaling reductionism and limitations of some theories in understanding

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school failure and the learning difficulties presented by schoolchildren, resulting, in many cases, in the recent phenomenon that we have called medicalization.

In the Latin American context, we find, in the 1960s/1970s, the Cuban group experience which, based on a critical analysis of development theories systematized by Psychology, assumed the Cultural-Historical Approach as a theoretical foundation for organizing the educational system and for a set of circumstances relates to this assumption. Among them, we understand as relevant the figure of José Julián Martí Pérez, considered a Cuban National Hero, in the struggles for the island's independence as a Spanish colony. We find in the “*Diccionario del Pensamiento Martiano*”, organized by Galarraga (2012), under the subtitle *Educación*, some observations by Martí that help us think about the Cultural-Historical Approach election by the Cuban group, as a theoretical basis for organizing educational processes. Martí considered, in 1779, that “instruction is not the same as education: that refers to thought, and is, mainly, to feeling. However, there is no good education without instruction. Education is the only way to save yourself from slavery” (Galagarra, 2012, p. 144).

Globally, Cultural-Historical Approach has been consolidating itself, for practically a century, into an important reference to support educational processes, pedagogical practices and teacher education in different educational levels and at varied contexts, as can be seen in international collections, as in Selau and Castro (2015). In Brazil, it is no different. But it was only over the last three decades that access to the original assumptions of the pioneers of this important revolutionary reference has increased and improved its quality.

In the Brazilian context, in addition to the relevant Cuban contributions, we find different research that demonstrates the Cultural-Historical Approach as a necessary foundation for organizing an education capable of promoting the human and society itself development. The researchers participation from the Vygotsky Chair, at the University of

Havana, in different research groups, in that national context, provided an opportunity for greater approximation and understanding of the theoretical foundations and critical analyzes made by Vygotsky to the Psychology of his time, in the first decades of the 20th century (Calejón, 2018). We also consider it necessary to highlight, in this context of expansion of these ideas, the Marta Shuare (1990) contributions, an Argentine psychologist based in the Soviet Union who completed her formation in Alexander R. Luria's team. Occupying a place in Editorial Progreso, she translated a set of materials into Spanish, expanding our accessibility to the thoughts of the first and subsequent Historical-Cultural Approach organizers. To our comrades from Cuba, and to comrade Marta Shuare, our thanks for the possibility of greater and better access to this theory; and for the possibility of thinking about ways out of the challenges that Brazilian and Latin American education faces.

At the historical moment in which this special thematic issue is published in *Obutchénie* Journal, there are Brazilian research groups developing the important work of translating original works by authors considered founders of this theoretical current, and also more recent works, originating from more contemporary developments of foreign researchers who deepen assumptions based on initial elements of this theory. Hence, in dialogues with what is produced by Brazilian researchers, an emerging profusion of studies based on Cultural-Historical Theory is constituted, as well as theoretical-practical propositions for educational processes based on this matrix of thought.

Unlike the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, from this translation work, Brazilian researchers began to have access to the ideas from what we have more commonly called Cultural in Brazil, in a more consistent way. We began reading Vygotsky, in Brazil, in the 1970s, based on translation's translations: from the American English translation, translated from Russian, into Brazilian Portuguese. Today, some of them are controversial publications and considered problematic in terms of completeness of the original contents, conceptually and also in terms of translation itself (from Russian to English and, later, from English to Brazilian Portuguese).

After the publication of Vigotski's *Obras Escogidas*, in Spanish, and the most recent translations from Russian directly into Brazilian Portuguese, not only has the number of researchers and research groups focused on investigations of psychological and educational aspects based on assumptions of Cultural-Historical Theory, how the studies of this reference are deepened, as well as its developments based on different realities and educational contexts in a country with continental dimensions and great cultural and ethnic diversity. Recent research, as can be seen in Asbahr and Oliveira (2021) and in Asbahr (2023, p. 7) and, confirm the trend that the approach in focus is growing, which “brings the need to evaluate its relevance as a reference used in education, psychology and other areas, and learn about the directions that scientific investigations from this theoretical perspective have been taking”.

And this special thematic issue, called “**Cultural-Historical Theory to teacher educational and to pedagogical activity**”, is another concrete reverberation of Cultural-Historical Theory development in Brazil, through the publication of a set of ten articles, through the participation of 23 authors and 21 *ad hoc* evaluators, covering ten Brazilian states, all five Brazilian regions and 21 Higher Education Institutions. It also includes dialogue with Cuban researchers.

After this Presentation, the special thematic issue opens with the article “**Periodization of psychological development and pedagogical teaching activities: theoretical-practical elements to think about teacher education and school education**”, by Epifânia Barbosa da Silva and Rafael Fonseca de Castro, from the Federal University of Rondônia (UNIR). In this paper, the authors present and propose theoretical-practical contributions considered pertinent to School Education from a historical-cultural perspective. To this end, they start from assumptions by Lev Vygotski, Alexei Leontiev, Vasili Davidov and Danill Elkonin, with an emphasis on pedagogical teaching activities and on the development process of school-age students, based on the perspective of periodization of

psychological development, in their mutual relationships and their potential for application in teacher education processes and in pedagogical practices of/by Basic Education teachers.

The second text, by Valéria Carla Vieira Gomes and Adriane Cenci, from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), entitled “**The role of collaboration in the continued tutelage of teachers for inclusive and collaborative contexts**”, aims to present teacher education developed in a state school in the city of Natal/RN. It was a collaborative formative process, based on the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, which intended to create spaces for sharing and building learning for the collaborative and inclusive work organization at school.

Next, the article “**Circus activities in school by means of relational psychomotricity**”, by Luís Fernando Lacerda Lence and Bento Selau, from the Federal University of Pampa (Unipampa), presents the developments of a research that aimed to evaluate the use of relational psychomotricity in teaching of circus activities for children in the 1st year of Elementary School in Physical Education School classes. The theoretical basis that supports this practice was anchored in the Cultural-Historical Theory, fundamentally in the precepts of L. S. Vygotski, in an approach that allows the study of psyche in its system, in contrast to different psychological approaches, still dominant, since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focused on the stimulus-response notion.

The fourth paper in the special issue, by Carla Salati Almeida Ghirello-Pires, from the State University of Southwest Bahia (UESB), and Sônia Mari Shima Barroco, from the State University of Maringá (UEM), “**Appropriation of language as a structuring and organizing process of human activity: contributions to Early Childhood Education**”, presents theoretical aspects about the language internalization, its role in structuring the psyche, as well as elements that may favor its development in the first years of a child's life. The hypothesis from which the authors start is that, from its appropriation, other higher psychological functions and

the formation of consciousness itself may be established, thus organizing a functional system that operates dynamically.

The work of Aliciene Fusca Machado Cordeiro, from the University of the Joinville Region (UNIVILLE), Luciana de Oliveira Rocha Magalhães, from the University of Taubaté (UNITAU), and Wanda Maria Junqueira de Aguiar, from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), is the fifth in this special issue. Entitled “**Captured inventiveness: creative movements of teaching practice**”, it discusses photography as a tool used in teacher education during research that followed a formative journey during the COVID-19 pandemic. Betting on capturing the daily teaching work during the pandemic, through authorial photographic records, what was obtained through dialogue with researchers were signs of teaching inventiveness.

The sixth article, “**Historical-Cultural Psychology and policies for continuing teacher training: considerations on the non-dichotomy of theory and practice**”, by Soraya Cunha Couto Vital and Sônia da Cunha Urt, both from the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), brings elements of a Doctoral research on a critical analysis of the theoretical-methodological bases of continuing teacher education policies. In light of Cultural-Historical Theory foundations, the methodological path of the aforementioned investigation encompassed historical, bibliographic and documentary studies of the analyzed political-educational-education framework.

Next, “The development of theoretical thought in the teaching of physics: a proposal from the cultural-historical approach”, by Rafael García Cañedo (*Universidad Tecnológica de La Habana José Antonio Echeverría – CUJAE/Cuba*), Eliéte Zanelatto (UNIR) and Carolina Douglas de la Peña (*Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de La Habana – Cuba*), aims to explain a guiding scheme for the teaching and learning processes of general physics that enables the development of theoretical thinking in engineering course students. The theoretical foundation is based on Cultural-Historical Theory and uses, in particular, authors such as Vygotski, Davidov and Galperin to

understand the development of theoretical thinking and the principles for teaching to be developmental.

The next work, materialized in the paper titled “**The contribution of Zaporozhets to the analysis of child development in preschool age**”, by Juliana Campregher Pasqualini, from Paulista State University (UNESP), reports research of a theoretical-conceptual nature that explores Zaporozhets' contributions to the understanding of psychic development in preschool age, seeking to extract implications from the cultural-historical analysis of child development for pedagogical action. In this work, the author's propositions regarding the development of perception, emotional processes and motor development in the preschool period are systematized.

The ninth article in this special issue, by Nelson Luiz Reyes Marques, from the Sul-Rio-Grandense Federal Institute (IF-Sul), and Cleci Teresinha Werner da Rosa, from the University of Passo Fundo (UPF), called “**Some pedagogical implications of the Vygotsky School for Science Teaching**”, discusses Vygotsky's concepts considered central to science teaching, referenced in publications translated from this author's originals directly from Russian, considering the wide use in this area of edited translations and with numerous cuts that mischaracterize his work. According to the authors, there are valuable contributions in Vygotski's work for teaching science at school.

The last article, “**Conflicts in teacher-management relationship and the drama of school psychiatrization: a study based on Goiânia's data**”, by Ana Laura de Moura Septimio, Gisele Toassa and Jullyana Silva Rosa, from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG), proposes the investigation of teachers psychiatry dramas in the city of Goiânia's schools network, paying attention to their relationships with conflicts in the teacher-management relationship. Cultural-Historical psychology and historical-dialectical materialism were essential for the investigative perspective construction on teaching work, pointing to the inextricable content of conflicts with management and teacher illness in the analyzed sample.

This set does not intend any type of ideas standardization, developed and deepened within the scope of studies of Cultural-Historical Theory assumptions, on the contrary: it values the perspectives plurality within this theoretical construct. It values, at the same time, consonances and recognizes antitheses so that syntheses can germinate, in communicating science on an essentially dialectical perspective.

In the end, we hope that the elements presented and discussed throughout the works that constitute the Special Issue Contributions of “**Cultural-Historical Theory to teacher educational and to pedagogical activity**” can effectively collaborate with formative processes and educational practices, in different contexts, based on assumptions theorists that we consider to be truly powerful in helping us think about and materialize a more equitable and developmental Education for everyone.

Aportes de la Teoría Histórico-Cultural a la formación docente y la actividad pedagógica: conectando ideas, dialogando investigaciones

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