

Historical-Critical (Marxist) Didactics in Brazil: reflections from the perspective of the authors Tomaschewsky (1966) and Zayas (1999)¹

A Didática Histórico-Crítica (marxista) no Brasil: reflexões sob a ótica dos autores Tomaschewsky (1966) e Zayas (1999)

Gracieda dos Santos Araújo²
Juan Carlos Rodriguez Cruz³

RESUMO

This article analyzes the foundations of Historical-Critical Didactics, developed by the Marxist theorists of Historical-Critical Pedagogy (HCP) in Brazil, in comparison with the theoretical conceptions of two international authors, Tomaschewsky (1966) and Zayas (1999). The entire investigation is guided by the following problem: to what extent does Historical-Critical Didactics, as part of the pedagogical proposal for critical and emancipatory education in Brazil, represent a concrete alternative to the teaching-learning process, based on the universal theoretical-methodological criteria of historical-dialectical materialist didactics? The method adopted as a reference for this investigation is based on historical-dialectical materialism. The methodology used is a bibliographical review. To this end, an analysis was carried out of the central foundations of Historical-Critical Didactics, from the conception of Duarte (2001),

ABSTRACT

Este artigo analisa os fundamentos da Didática Histórico-Crítica, desenvolvidos pelos teóricos marxistas da Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica (PHC) no Brasil, em comparação com as concepções teóricas de dois autores internacionais, Tomaschewsky (1966) e Zayas (1999). Toda a investigação é orientada pelo seguinte problema: em que medida a Didática Histórico-Crítica, como parte da proposta pedagógica de educação crítica e emancipadora, no Brasil, representa uma alternativa concreta ao processo de ensino-aprendizagem, desde os critérios teórico-metodológicos universais da didática materialista histórico-dialético? O método adotado como referencial para esta investigação se baseia no materialismo histórico-dialético. A metodologia utilizada trata-se de revisão bibliográfica. Para tanto, realizou-se a análise dos fundamentos centrais da Didática Histórico-Crítica, desde a concepção de Duarte (2001), Gasparin (2002), Gasparin e Petenucci (2014), Galvão et. al (2019) e Saviani (1995; 2002; 2008; 2011; 2013), localizando as divergências fundamentais

¹ Translation: Elizabeth Hierrezuelo García. E-mail: ehierrezuelo@uho.edu.cu, elohgcuba@gmail.com.

² PhD in Education from the Federal University of São Carlos/UFSCar, Brazil (2022). Graduated in Pedagogy from the State University of Bahia/UNEB (2001). Full Professor at the Federal University of Northern Tocantins - UFNT, Social Sciences Course. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1006-3024>. E-mail: gracieda.araujo@uft.edu.br.

³ Post-doctorate in Education from the Federal University of São Carlos/UFSCar, Brazil (2019). PhD in Pedagogical Sciences from the University of Holguín, Cuba (2008). Degree in Education (2002). Full Professor at the University of Holguín, Cuba. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8785-7255>. Email: juancarlosrodriguezacruz2002@gmail.com.

Gasparin (2002), Gasparin and Petenucci (2014), Galvão et. al (2019) and Saviani (1995; 2002; 2008; 2011; 2013), locating the fundamental divergences of these authors in relation to the thinking of the international authors studied in this research. The result achieved shows that, although it takes Marx's thought and Historical-Cultural Psychology as a reference, Historical-Critical Didactics presents important divergences in relation to the thought of international Marxist didactics. This affirms the importance of Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Historical-Critical Didactics for Brazilian education, as a critical theoretical-methodological vision, as long as it is aligned with the universal educational perspective, from the point of view of the proletariat.

Keywords: Didactics. Historical-dialectical materialist didactics. Historical-Critical Didactics.

destes autores, em relação ao pensamento dos autores internacionais, estudados nesta pesquisa. O resultado alcançado demonstra que, embora tome o pensamento de Marx e da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural como referência, a Didática Histórico-Crítica apresenta divergências importantes, com relação ao pensamento dos didáticos marxistas internacionais. Diante disso, se afirma a importância da Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica e da Didática Histórico-Crítica para a educação brasileira, enquanto uma visão teórico-metodológica crítica, desde que alinhada à perspectiva educacional universal, na ótica do proletariado.

Palavras-chave: Didática. Didática materialista histórico-dialética. Didática Histórico-Crítica.

1 Introduction

Didactics is the science that studies the teaching-educational process (teaching-learning), in a systematic, efficient way, whose process is carried out under theoretical foundations and by specialized professionals: teachers. As a social science, its aim is to form the ideal type of individual required by a given society. Therefore, the school, as an instructive institution, part of society, is the privileged place where didactic action takes place.

From the perspective of the international historical-dialectical materialist theorists Tomaschewsky (1966) and Zayas (1999), didactics as a science has its own characteristics or components and its own laws and principles. As Araújo (2022) notes, based on the aforementioned authors, it is considered a science because it has its own object (the teaching-learning process) and a methodology that is a consequence of the laws inherent in this object.

From this point of view, the object of the teaching-learning process as such arises to satisfy a social need. Thus, the problem - the social need to educate new

generations and the population as a whole - is the basis of the object of Didactics and the curricular issue. The nature of the object is, essentially, social and it materializes in the student-teacher relationship, mediated by content and method, the aim of which is to prepare human beings for life (ZAYAS, 1999).

In this process, the solution to the problem - training new generations - takes place through the appropriation of the culture that humanity has systematized in its development (content), actively and consciously by the students (method), but also with the action planned over time, observing certain student structures (form) and with the help of certain objects, including resources such as blackboards, chalk, books etc. (ZAYAS, 1999). In this conception, educational work is not carried out by the free will of teachers, but is regulated by the laws and principles of Didactics, which are social in nature.

For Cuban theorist Carlos Álvarez de Zayas (1999), the laws that govern the teaching-learning process (Laws of Didactics) are:

First Law of Didactics - The relationship between the teaching-learning process and the social context: "School in life". In this process, the problem-objective relationship takes shape. The teaching-learning process is thus understood as a subsystem of society that determines its objectives and interests.

Second Law of Didactics - This deals with the internal relations of the teaching-learning process: "education through instruction". The act of teaching and learning has an internal structure and dynamic, in which the relationship: objective-content-method is realized.

Based on these assumptions, the problem-objective relationship, in practice, is explained as follows: the student is trained to serve society, to know how to solve particular and social problems. They do this through practical activities. Hence the defense of active teaching methods.

This Marxist conception of didactics, of valuing work as an essential element in students' education, is based on the principle that work is the main human activity, the process by which men transform nature and, at the same time, transform themselves. In fact, for Zayas (1999), teaching to work at school

means instructing students to solve social problems with the help of the method, the logic of science and the logic of the profession.

In a study of Marxist didactics, focusing on the theorists Tomaschewsky and Zayas, Araújo (2022) observes that, in historical-dialectical materialism, pedagogical theory about the process of teaching and learning is born out of criticism of the teaching methods of the Traditional School and the New School. However, as a synthesis, it incorporates fundamental traits from both perspectives. This is the case with the emphasis on academic content, privileged by the Traditional School, and active learning as a method incorporated into the New School.

Nevertheless, the theoretical basis adopted by Marxist educational theorists in Brazil to develop the foundations of Critical Didactics (Marxist didactics), although it takes Marx's thought and the Historical-Cultural Psychology developed by the Vygotsky School as a reference, presents important divergences in relation to the considerations of international Marxist didactics.

This is a theme that we seek to introduce in the continuation of this text, in view of the challenge of building a didactic approach based on the presuppositions of historical-dialectical materialism in Brazil.

2 The foundations of materialist-dialectical didactics, according to theorists Tomaschewsky (1966) and Zayas (1999)

The following discussion is anchored in two fundamental works: *Didáctica General*, by the Marxist didactician Tomaschewsky (1966), and *Didáctica: la escuela en la vida*, written by the Cuban author Carlos M. Álvarez de Zayas (1999). Both deal with the teaching-learning process, starting with the pedagogical and psychological foundations of education from the theoretical conception of Marxism-Leninism and cultural-historical psychology.

The theoretical foundations of Didactics, based on Marxist philosophy and cultural-historical psychology, start from the assumption that Didactics is a science, and as such has the characteristics of a theoretical system, with concepts, categories, laws, as well as a particular structure of its components.

These factors determine an internal logic in which social conditioning factors intervene as external elements to the object of Didactics (the teaching-learning process).

For Zayas (1997), the task of Didactics is fundamentally to structure the different components that characterize the teaching-learning process - the content, the method, the form, the medium, the evaluation - in such a way as to satisfy the social objectives of achieving the goal, relying for this on the laws specific to this process. From this point of view, the teacher's educational work must take into account the first law of didactics - "school in life", which essentially consists of educating students based on the real situations of their own lives, in other words, educating them by participating in their own lives. Therefore, their experiences must be an integral part of the classes, helping to give meaning to the curricular content being studied. This Marxist conception of didactics, of valuing work as an important element in preparing students for school, takes into account that the main human activity is work, the process by which men transform nature to satisfy their needs, which enables them to know this nature.

Preparing human beings for life through school means, first and foremost, preparing them for work. This is the first need to be considered. In this sense, work, as a way of solving social problems, has research as its fundamental method. This is the second need to be taken into account. Based on this understanding, the idea of work as an educational principle at school is defended; with this principle students learn to solve real life problems, using the methods and "the logic of science" (ZAYAS, 1999).

As a consequence of the first law of Didactics, the second law expresses that, based on the problem, the training of new generations, the relationships between the components of Didactics are established in order to ensure that students achieve the school objective: their learning and development in order to act in the society in which they live. This task is achieved in the teaching-learning process with the help of the method. In this sense, the objective and the content demonstrate their validity throughout the method. The **method**, form

and means, establishes the dialectical relationship between the two components: objective and method. It is the instrument that leads the teaching-learning process to achieve the educational goal aspired to by society. The objective is the category of Didactics that expresses the aspirations, "the purposes that society wants to form in the new generations" (ZAYAS, 1999, p. 101). This training is directly linked to mastery of the content. Therefore, the objective "is the independent variable, and the content, the dependent one" (ZAYAS, 1999, p. 103).

With regard to **content**, this is the didactic category that expresses the part of the culture or branch of knowledge that the student must master to achieve the objective. The method, on the other hand, is the didactic category which, as a dynamic concept, expresses the way in which the process is developed with the same aim: the transmission of culture. In practical terms, the broader objective must be associated with the specific, instructive objectives in each subject. Therefore, the instructional objective includes knowledge associated with the development of skills, which are developed mainly through theoretical and practical activities.

In this approach, the relationship between objective and content is associated with the skills that the school must develop in the student. The development of skills is closely associated with curricular content, knowledge or objects of study. This content must be directly linked to life, to the surrounding reality which the students' experiences are a part of. Thus, the skill that appears in the objective is what determines the learning method to be used by the teacher, which can be reproductive or productive, passive or active. As shown above, teaching and learning are social tasks. However, social needs are not the only ones that determine teaching. Teaching and learning tasks must also take into account the principles of students' physical and psychological development, as Tomaschewsky (1996) assures us.

In the book *Didáctica General* by Tomaschewsky (1966), the aim of teaching is to instruct students by training and educating them in a progressive vision, with firm convictions, a sense of social responsibility and a willingness to

participate in the construction of a society based on socialist principles. This book is the result of the work carried out by a group of pedagogues during years of experience in school education in the socialist state of the German Democratic Republic (1949-1990). Based on dialectical materialism as a scientific foundation, the author systematizes didactic norms and rules in order to make the work of teachers effective.

From Tomaschewsky's point of view (1966), the purpose of teaching and didactics is to develop the student's personality in all its physical and intellectual aspects into a solid unity. However, in order to achieve this goal, they must have been educated intellectually, morally and technically, as well as physically and aesthetically. In this process, an important task for the teacher is to awaken and stimulate in the students a great interest and intellectual inclination, the will to learn and the desire to know more.

From this perspective, teaching and learning are actions that are directly linked to the cognitive capacity of human beings. In this sense, the construction of knowledge is related to concrete reality, to the environment. According to Tomaschewsky (1966, p. 35), man, as a higher animal species, has developed the possibility of knowing his reality through the activity of his nervous system. The act of knowing takes place when the brain establishes a cognitive relationship with reality. In this action, the nerves transmit the stimulus to the brain and the objective reality is reflected in the cerebral cortex. Thus, for human beings, to know is to reflect concrete reality, which reaches the brain through the senses. The process of knowledge in the brain begins with practice, so through practice we arrive at theoretical knowledge, concrete thought, which then returns to practice.

In Tomaschewsky's view, practice is the goal of cognition and the criterion of truth. This is because, for this author, theory can only be extracted from practice, from the generalization of experience. Therefore, it is through theory that practical knowledge is transformed into a new and more elaborate knowledge of reality, since practice is its ultimate goal. Due to practice being considered the criterion of truth, the content of knowledge that has not yet been

submitted to it is unreliable. Thus, knowledge becomes an integral part of humanity's cultural heritage when it is confirmed and proven in practice.

In fact, once it has been subjected to observation and the criteria of scientific thought, abstract thought, by concept, knowledge does not return to practice in its old form, but in a new, richer, more valuable configuration, on a higher plane. However, before human consciousness can penetrate the essence of reality and truly understand it, it needs to work on the material captured from reality by sensory cognition, by the senses, with the help of the brain's logical operations. This happens through analysis and synthesis, through abstraction, generalization and specialization, but also through induction and deduction. "With the help of these logical operations, concepts are built and general judgments are reached," explains Tomaschewsky (1966, p. 39).

Tomaschewsky's argument finds support in Karl Marx's *Capital* (2013, p. 129) when he states:

My dialectical method, in its foundations, is not only different from the Hegelian method, but its exact opposite. For Hegel, the thought process, which he, under the name of Idea, even transforms into an autonomous subject, is the demiurge of the actual process, which is only the external manifestation of the former. For me, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing more than the material, transposed and translated in man's head.

On the other hand, it is also based on Lenin's ideas (1978, p. 190) when he explains: "Life gives birth to the brain. Nature is reflected in the human brain. Through the verification and application of the exactitude of these reflections in his practice and technique, man arrives at objective truth".

However, in this process, the knowledge captured by the senses in a concrete-immediate way - through observation, listening, etc. - needs to pass through the criteria of science in order to be validated. In this case, the general cognitive process follows the same path as the formation of concepts, from concrete to abstract, from particular judgment to general judgment.

The role of the teacher, in this proposal, is to direct the cognitive process of their students and push them forward in their pedagogical task of learning. One

way of doing this is to take into account the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, a Marxist-Leninist theory based on the relationship between man and nature, when he acts and transforms it according to his needs in order to obtain the material goods necessary for his survival. This is a process of man's continuous conflict with the outside world and it is only in the concrete relationship with reality that he acquires skills, dexterities and habits that allow him to get to know and modify the environment, considering that these developed qualities are capable of responding to the demands of practice.

Teachers need to take this into account if they are to be successful in developing their students' skills, abilities and habits. Examples of activities that should be carried out to develop skills are: speaking, reading, writing, systematizing, drawing, singing, jumping, playing, counting, dramatizing, etc. In fact, if these activities are carried out successively, the skills we highlighted above will emerge. In the same way, practical activities can develop the skills of attention, observation, imagination and thinking. In other words, developing what are known as intellectual skills, as Tomaszewsky points out. Intellectual skills are also developed through practical activities: observing, imagining, reproducing, thinking, analyzing, comparing, among others; but always in accordance with the specific aims and objectives of each discipline or area of knowledge.

It should be noted that skills, abilities and habits are not born with human beings. They are developed through activity, as they are not innate but biological preconditions. In this way, there is the possibility that education and instruction can consciously guide the development of certain particular skills, abilities and habits in each student. The aforementioned author bases this defense on the vision of Marxism-Leninism.

On the physiological foundations of ability, skill and habits, the arguments developed by the Marxist-Leninist conception are that psychic functions arise and develop as a reflection of the events of practical activity. According to Tomaszewsky (1966, p. 44), this occurs

[...] because the brain's nervous connections, which form the physiological foundations of abilities, skills and habits, are developed through the direct influence of the external development of specifically formed facts (TOMASCHEWSKY, 1966, p. 44).

From this perspective, the development of the ability to think logically and dialectically, together with the procedure to help the student achieve it, is an important problem in school education, a factor that will imply, in the future, success or failure in the intellectual and professional fields of the graduating student. In this specific case, the following are examples: learning to synthesize and analyze; learning to abstract; generalizing and specializing; learning to form concepts and use them meaningfully; judging and drawing conclusions. In addition, knowing how to prove when a statement or assumption is true. In this sense, the concept of skills is defined as the psychic particularities that are an essential condition for the successful execution of one or more activities.

Continuing with the previous discussion, skills are automated components of a consciousness, which are formed during the execution of that consciousness. Based on these precepts, the teacher needs to know and take into account the relationship between the transmission and acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills in the classroom, bearing in mind that both - knowledge and skills - develop in the same process as the practical activities of learning and teaching. For Tomaszewsky (1966, p. 46) "*One thing is a condition of the other*". It is not possible to acquire knowledge without having a certain amount of skills, abilities and habits and, at the same time, there is no development of abilities without mastering a certain amount of knowledge. In this process, the student acts actively under the guidance of the teacher, and this is an issue that concerns the choice of teaching methods.

Thus, under the skills development approach, students are educated to become men with the ability to think independently. Therefore, in order to achieve these objectives, the choice of active methods and the development of the ability to learn for oneself, to learn how to learn, is justified. However, this is not the same concept adopted by the New School. On the contrary, in the view of Marxist Didactics, the student does not have to seek out the "scientifically

unknown" during lessons; their task is to get to know and use the knowledge already developed by science, to understand and be impressed by the discoveries already made by science. For this reason, allowing students to fall into the adventure of searching for knowledge freely can result in them grasping inconsistent information. On the other hand, neither should the teacher transmit to the student "all" the knowledge to be learned. In this way, they would be educating men incapable of thinking independently.

It should be emphasized that, in this conception, the teacher must give the student the most fundamental and important facts so that, once instigated, they can move on to study the subject with a view to reaching general conclusions (Tomaschewsky, 1966). This is therefore a guideline that forms part of the universal principles of historical-dialectical materialist didactics.

It is worth noting, based on Lopez et al. (2010, p. 39), that

[...] the principles express the will or aspiration of society regarding the development and results of the teaching-learning process, these desires are not outside the action of the laws. In other words, there is a direct relationship between laws and principles.

From the work of Tomaschewsky (1966), we can extract some fundamental principles of Didactics that contribute to a coherent educational process, under the theoretical approach of historical-dialectical materialism: a) the interrelation of the scientific character of teaching and learning and the democratic and progressive education of students; b) the relationship between theory and practice; c) the unity of the concrete and the abstract; d) the principle of conscious and creative work by the student, under the direction of the teacher; e) systematization and f) comprehensibility, clear, objective and accessible transmission of knowledge by the teacher. These principles are contrary to the Didactic perspective of the Traditional School and the New School.

Although there are some similarities with the constructivist didactics of the New School, such as the case of the student being seen as the active subject of the teaching-learning process, in the historical-dialectical materialist approach

the student's autonomy in the process is relative and is under the intentionally planned and guided action of the teacher. Here, students learn to learn and do through the careful and responsible direction of the teacher, in order to achieve the goal of fully forming the personality of the new social being. Thus, being clear about these differences and divergences is no simple exercise, but it is necessary if students' learning is not to be neglected, as it is an integral process of education.

With regards to the Didactics of the New School, it should be noted that this didactic was created in the USA by the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), whose theoretical-philosophical and methodological perspective places the interests of students and the development of their abilities at the center of the teaching-learning process, recognizing them as active subjects of the process. In this model, the order of the teacher-student relationship is inverted, giving way to a practice that prioritizes the student as the main protagonist, with the teacher as a mediator, a guide who assists the student's free development and must respect their freedom and autonomy.

This orientation is anchored in the cognitive psychology of psychologist Jean Piaget, who understands child development as a factor of an essentially biological nature.

In the New Didactics teaching method, the active method, students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge, having contact with direct experiences, while at the same time making observations and doing research to test their ideas. In this way, the content is found by the student's action - through self-discovery - imitating the action of the researcher. In turn, the teacher loses the role of explaining science, its logic and data, which the student must discover by studying the curricular content of the different subjects (ZAYAS, 1997).

As Zayas (1997) points out, the mission of the New School teacher, above all, consists of creating the working conditions that allow students' aptitudes to develop. Therefore, the teacher's role in class is to provide the tools through which learners can find knowledge. Here, the teaching method is characterized

by the active search for knowledge by the students. In this didactic perspective, by not facilitating the conceptualization and logical structure of knowledge for the student, since "the student would only seek and may not find" (ZAYAS, 1997, p. 39), the teaching method is limited to the most external, pragmatic, non-rational activities, thus revealing it as limited, poor, in terms of an integral, theoretically founded education.

3 The foundations of the Didactics of Historical-Critical Pedagogy in Brazil

In Brazil, in response to the limitations presented by the Traditional School and the New School, from the 1960s onwards, new models emerged in the field of Psychology and Pedagogy that aimed to overcome some of the aspects inherited from these two school models and which currently make up the humanist, constructivist and historical-social currents (SAVIANI, 2013).

With regard to Historical- Critical Pedagogy, it should be noted that its basis is the dialectical theory of Karl Marx, "having affinities, in terms of its psychological foundations, with the Cultural-Historical Psychology developed by the Vygotsky School" (SAVIANI, 2012, p. 160). Thus, in its elaboration, the author defines it as a pedagogical conception that is coherent with the conception of the world and of man, typical of historical-dialectical materialism. The origins of this pedagogy were discussed in the book *Historical-Critical Pedagogy: first approaches* (SAVIANI, 1985), chapters 3, 4 and 6, in which the author discusses, respectively: "The Historical-Critical Pedagogy within the framework of critical trends in Brazilian education"; "The Historical-Critical Pedagogy and school education" and "Historical and theoretical contextualization of the Historical-Critical Pedagogy". The 1970s is the context in which PHC (by its Portuguese acronym) was born in the effervescence of [...]

culture, politics and pedagogy, which arose in the context of criticism of the educational policy and official pedagogy of the military regime [...], evolving into the search for alternatives to official guidance, which posed the need to develop a pedagogical

theory that was critical, but not reproductive. (SAVIANI, 2011, p. 218).

In order to develop his historical-critical pedagogical theory, Saviani takes as his starting point the criticism of non-critical pedagogies (Traditional Pedagogy, New Pedagogy and Technicist Pedagogy) and constructivist methods, based on the principle of "learning to learn" (SAVIANI, 2002), assuming it to be a critical pedagogy, and therefore revolutionary. The revolution that the author deals with is understood as a process of transforming reality that occurs simultaneously and interdependently, involving the transformation of the individuals themselves, internally, of the external reality in which they act as subjects transformed by education. "This pedagogy defends the thesis that the specific way for school education to participate in the struggle for socialist revolution is through the socialization of scientific, artistic and philosophical knowledge in its most developed forms" (DUARTE, 2016, p. 38).

From Saviani's point of view (2002, p. 55), "the dominated cannot liberate themselves if they do not come to dominate what the dominants dominate. Therefore, mastering what the dominant dominates is a condition for liberation". Therefore, it is by instrumentalizing the elements of the popular classes in the sense of assimilating classical knowledge that they "gain the conditions to assert their interests, and it is in this sense, then, that they are strengthened politically" (SAVIANI, 2002, p. 55)⁴

In this sense, the PHC teaching-learning method aims to articulate curricular content with popular interests, since "this conception positions itself as a counter-hegemonic theory, aligned with the demands of the working class, of socialist inspiration" (GALVÃO; LAVOURA; MARTINS, 2019, p. 18). To this end, in pedagogical work, teachers and students are "taken as social agents" (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 56). In this case, although they are in different positions, both have equal importance: the teacher is not the center, as in the Traditional School, nor is the student, as in the New School. Therefore, the relationship

⁴ The method proposed for this work is organized into five steps: 1 - Social practice as a starting point; 2 - Problematization; 3- Instrumentalization; 4- Catharsis; 5- Return to social practice (SAVIANI, 2002, 2016).

between teacher and student must take place in a democratic way, favoring dialogue between the students and the teacher, considering the dialogue with the historically accumulated culture and the interests of the students.

According to Saviani (2008, p. 56), the starting point for teaching "is not the preparation of the students, whose initiative lies with the teacher (traditional pedagogy), nor the activity, which is the initiative of the students (new pedagogy)". In this sense, the starting point should be social practice (the first step), which is common to both the teacher and the student. It is understood that the teacher, at the first moment, has the practical synthetic mastery of knowledge (local and global social practice), while the students, at the starting point of the teaching-learning process, only have a syncretic (confused, disorganized) knowledge of this same social practice. As such, the work under the teacher's direction should lead the student to achieve a more elaborate understanding of the content (social practice), so that they can return to social practice with a new, scientific view of reality, in a position to act to transform that same reality.

It is worth noting that the first elaboration of a Didactic for PHC is the result of the work *A Didactic for Historical-Critical Pedagogy* (2002), by the teacher João Luiz Gasparin, from the State University of Maringá-PR. This book is presented as an alternative form of teacher-disciple action in which the teacher does not work for the student, but with the student, using the dialectical practice-theory-practice method.

Gasparin's didactic proposal for PHP consists fundamentally of presenting a methodology for the teacher's work, based on Saviani's work *Escola e Democracia* (2008), chapter III, item *Para além dos métodos novos e tradicionais*. This methodology is systematized into 5 steps: 1) Social practice; 2) Problematization; 3) Instrumentalization; 4) Catharsis and 5) Final social practice.

The **first step** - *Social Practice* - is a survey of the teacher's and students' prior knowledge. "The teacher announces to the students the contents that will be studied and their respective objectives" (Gasparin; Petenucci, 2014, p.9) and,

through dialogue, encourages them to express their initial knowledge and what they would like, or need, to know more about the contents. According to Saviani (2008, p. 57), "it is a question of detecting what issues need to be resolved in the context of social practice and, consequently, what knowledge needs to be mastered".

The **second step** is to *problematize* the problem posed by social practice, based on curricular content. Example: Water content. Topics: 1. What is water; 2. Physical states of water: solid, liquid and gas; 3. Importance of water and its cycle for people and agriculture; 4. Water pollution and 5. Domestic use of water (GASPARIN, 2002, p.25). This is how Gasparin (2002) explains it:

contradictory/controversial aspects, such as: Is there a need to pay water bills when water is constantly lacking? What is the social importance of water? What does it mean to waste water? Is pollution the result of progress? Is free water possible for all? [...]. The important thing at this point is for students to become aware that problematizing means questioning reality, questioning certainties, raising questions about evidence, questioning everyday life, empirics and school content (GASPARIN, 2002, p. 44).

At this point, the teacher briefly discusses the problem and relates it to the scientific content. The questions raised serve to instigate curiosity and motivate the students, creating in them an awareness of the reasons why the content should be learned.

The **third step** - *Instrumentalization* - refers to the transmission and apprehension of the theoretical-scientific knowledge needed to understand the phenomena of social practice, reality. For this work, Gasparin and Petenucci (2014) suggest that the teacher adopts appropriate teaching actions that enable students to exercise mental comparison, based on the study of scientific/abstract knowledge, with the daily experience they have of this same knowledge. In this process of instrumentalization, the teacher can either transmit the knowledge directly or indicate the means by which the transmission will take place (SAVIANI, 2008).

The **fourth step** - *Catharsis*⁵ - consists of the elaborate expression of the new way of understanding social reality, social practice, achieved through the appropriation of new scientific theoretical knowledge. Catharsis takes place through the new mental synthesis reached by the learner; it is the student's mastery of the new knowledge. It is the effective incorporation of culture, knowledge scientifically and historically elaborated by humanity, now transformed into tools for social transformation. In practice, this synthesis should be "expressed through an oral or written assessment, formal or informal", in which the student expresses everything that has been learned (GASPARIN; PETENUCCI, 2014, p 10).

The **fifth step** - *Final Social Practice* - refers to the unfolding of the knowledge learned during the lessons by the students in the concrete social practice they experience. The student's new level of development should be manifested in their new forms of positioning, attitudes and actions as an active social agent.

Depending on the specific situations in which the pedagogical practice is developed (Early Childhood Education, High School...), instead of steps that are ordered in a chronological sequence, it is suggested that the practice be structured by articulated moments "in the same movement, unique and organic" (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 60).

It is worth noting that, although Gasparin's work (2002) sets out to present a didactic proposal that is coherent with the thinking of Historical-Critical Pedagogy, this proposal has been questioned among the main theorists of this Pedagogy. This is a discussion that is presented in the work *Fundamentos da Didática Histórico-Crítica* by Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019), whose work seeks to develop a proposal for Marxist didactics. For these theorists, Gasparin (2002) made a mistake in relation to the dialectical method in terms of the movement of overcoming syncretism to synthesis through the mediation of analysis, reducing the pedagogical method of historical-critical didactics to a set

⁵ This is a concept taken from Gramsci which means "the higher elaboration of structure into superstructure in the consciousness of men" (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 57).

of schematic simplifications and watertight and mechanized steps of teaching procedures.

We feel it is important to emphasize that in Gasparin's (2002) elaboration of *Didactics of Historical-Critical Pedagogy (Historical-Critical Didactics)*, as well as in the book by Galvão et. al. (2019), the works of Zayas and Tomaschewsky are not used as a reference. It is clear that these authors are still unknown in Brazil. As already mentioned in this study, the theoretical foundation used by Brazilian Marxist researchers in the field of Pedagogy and Didactics is essentially based on Marx's theoretical thinking and, nowadays, is also anchored in Historical-Cultural Psychology. Thus, it is possible to find some important divergences between what international Marxist didactics propose and Brazilian Marxists in the field of education. In fact, some of these divergences are expressed essentially with regard to the conception of the student as the center of the process, and the adoption of active methods, taking into account the development of skills, abilities and habits.

The defense of self-learning, learning how to learn, and of practical knowledge, learning how to do is not incorporated into the foundations of Historical-Critical Didactics, since in the conception of its authors it is a bourgeois pedagogical conception. This issue is addressed in Galvão et. al. (2019) and, in particular, in the book *Vygotsky e o "aprender a aprender": crítica às apropriações neoliberais e pós-modernas da teoria vigotskiana*, by Professor Newton Duarte (2001).

The criticism of "learning to learn" by Brazilian Marxists is based on the adoption of this category by hegemonic liberal pedagogical trends. Thus, it is argued that the idea of "learning to learn" cannot be incorporated into a Marxist pedagogy⁶. In this understanding, the appropriation of Vygotsky's ideas by hegemonic pedagogies has an ideological backdrop, which is "the maintenance of

⁶ [Argument used by the author to respond to a discussion developed by Brazilian didactician José Carlos Libâneo, in his article *A didática e a atividade do pensar e do aprender: a teoria histórico-cultural da atividade e a contribuição de Vasili Davydov*, published in *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 27, p. 5-24, dec, 2004. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbedu/a/ZMN47bVm3XNDsJKyJvVqtx/abstract/?lang=pt>. Accessed: 28 Mar 2022] (DUARTE, 2008, cited by GALVÃO et. al, 2019, p. 24).

bourgeois hegemony in the educational field, through the incorporation of Vygotsky's theory into the neoliberal and postmodern ideological universe" (DUARTE, 2001, p. 20).

In his studies, Duarte (2001, p. 13) seeks to demonstrate how hegemonic pedagogies, adopted by the official education policies of the Brazilian state, from the 1990s onwards, "incorporate Vygotskian psychology into the neoliberal and postmodern ideological universe", dissociating Vygotsky's thinking from the Marxist and socialist ideological universe", of which he is a part.

The author illustrates the case of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs by its Portuguese acronym), a document from the Ministry of Education, drawn up from the influence of "constructivism and neo-scholasticism, under whose influence the new pedagogical bases that have been guiding educational reforms and practices in Brazilian education were outlined.

As discussed by Julia Malanchen (2014) in her thesis entitled *A Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica e o Currículo: para além do multiculturalismo das políticas curriculares nacionais*,

[...] in the 1990s, as in the subsequent decade, reforms in Brazilian school education had the school curriculum as one of their targets, and a milestone in this regard was the development of the National Curriculum Parameters for Primary Education, the PCNs (BRASIL, 1997), which officially adopted constructivism as a pedagogical reference for Brazilian education. (DUARTE, 2004a; MARSIGLIA, 2011; MALANCHEN, 2014, p. 18).

The author makes it clear that the current context for historical-dialectical materialist education in Brazil is one of confronting conceptions of post-modern education that are based on the discourse of multiculturalism and that have served the political and economic interests of the neoliberal state. According to Malanchen (2014), education and the school curriculum under the discourse of multiculturalism have been characterized by

[...] a new ideological construct that apparently advocates social inclusion, democratization, respect for diversity and the culture of

minority groups, but in reality has been used as a strategy to corroborate international investment and the continued development of contemporary capitalism. (MALANCHEN, 2014, p. 8).

Still on the incompatibility of the foundations of critical historical didactics with the critical (Marxist) didactics of Zayas and Tomaschewsky, another point of divergence lies in the thesis of the teaching-learning process as an action aimed at developing capacities, abilities, skills and habits. In Marxist Didactics, according to Tomaschewsky (1966, p. 98):

The practical use of knowledge and skills in class is the most important means of achieving the unity of oral representation and theory with action, in practical activity. This depends on overcoming intellectualism and verbalism in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. By learning from practice, students take an active stance towards reality and understand that they must learn in order to change it and master it. If students recognize the usefulness of the knowledge and practical skills acquired in class, their interest grows, their attention becomes more lasting and sustainable, and at the same time, they have valuable reasons to dedicate themselves to the work of learning [...] (Tomaschewsky, 1966, p. 98, translated from Spanish by the author).

Undoubtedly, this statement is not based on John Dewey's Pragmatic Constructivist Pedagogy conception of practice, but on the Marxist-Leninist conception of knowledge. In this conception, the author argues:

Truth is always concrete. This is a fundamental law of the Marxist-Leninist theory of understanding. To return to practice, that is, to return to reality, means, moreover, to form the consciousness of man through the use and verification of knowledge and of the unity between the abstract, general, and the concrete, particular. (TOMASCHEWSKY, 1966, p. 98).

In the case of the Brazilian Marxists' criticism of practical activities (practical knowledge), the starting point is their criticism of the pragmatism of constructivist pedagogies, which currently have a major influence on the country's educational policies. The rejection by PHC theorists of the thesis that

learning should be meaningful and contextualized (pragmatic) comes precisely from the clash and fight against bourgeois and neoliberal educational perspectives, which predominate within schools with the aim of forming the ideal type of worker that the capitalist globalized society model requires: adapted to the social, economic and political order.

In this sense, we must agree with Duarte when, coming from the current context of constructivism in vogue in Brazil, he states:

The slogan "learning to learn", instead of being a way of overcoming the problem, i.e. a way of fully educating individuals, is an ideological instrument of the ruling class for emptying school education for the majority of the population while, on the other hand, looking for ways of improving education for the elites (DUARTE, 2001, p. 28).

Nevertheless, this is a discussion that needs to be broadened and reframed based on the contributions of the references that deal with historical-dialectical materialist education, from practical, historically proven experiences. In fact, when we introduce this discussion, we do so with the aim of prompting reflections that will help us move forward in building a possible pedagogical and didactic proposal that is consistent with the principles and ideals of the working class. It's worth pointing out that this is a challenge facing historical-critical and humanist educational experiences alike.

4 Final considerations

In the proposal of Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Critical Didactics, the "autonomy" given to students in their process of constructing knowledge, and active methods, are seen negatively as being part of and influenced by the New School. However, as the international Marxist didacticians studied in this paper demonstrate, the techniques of the New School can be used, provided they are used under other educational objectives.

Marxist Didactics, under the focus of Tomaschewsky (1966, p. 98), highlights the practical use of knowledge in education as being of great relevance

to students' schooling, as it is a way of overcoming intellectualism and verbalism in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. For this reason, it is argued that teaching and learning should be related to the problems of life, to national and social problems. It should be noted that this vision is based not on John Dewey's scholastic constructivism, but on the vision of Marxism-Leninism.

Based on Tomaschewsky and Zayas, we reaffirm the importance of the construction of PHC and Historical-Critical Didactics for the education of the Brazilian working class, as a theoretical-methodological vision of education, as long as they are aligned with the universal educational perspective, from the point of view of the proletariat.

It should be emphasized that, in Brazil, the construction of Historical-Critical Pedagogy is a relatively new movement, which runs counter to the hegemonic education of the MEC and the neoliberal policies of the Brazilian state. At the current stage, important discussions have been taking place around the theoretical-philosophical and didactic foundations of this pedagogy, with one of the main points of discussion being *How to concretize, in the pedagogical practice of public schools, in the city and in the countryside, the historical-dialectical materialist conception and that of Historical-Cultural Psychology for the education of working class students?*

Unlike socialist countries, where there is a consolidated proposal for Marxist education, in capitalist countries like Brazil the current context is one of struggle on the part of teachers and theoreticians, with regard to the construction of a theoretical-methodological and didactic-critical (counter-hegemonic) framework for the education of the working class. The instrumentalization of students, i.e. their mastery of scientific, artistic and philosophical knowledge, is a priority, so that they are able to think and act intellectually and consciously, with a view to social transition.

In view of this reality and the challenges posed to the theoretical-methodological elaborations of historical-critical (historical-dialectical materialist) education in Brazil, it is appropriate to highlight the thoughts of the Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, regarding the task of

elaborating the educational proposal of the working class: knowing how to distinguish "what is bad and what is useful" from bourgeois education (LENIN, 2015).

Didáctica histórico-crítica (marxista) en Brasil: reflexiones desde la perspectiva de los autores Tomaschewsky (1966) y Zayas (1999)

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza los fundamentos de la Didáctica Histórico-Crítica, desarrollada por los teóricos marxistas de la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica (PCH) en Brasil, en comparación con las concepciones teóricas de dos autores internacionales, Tomaschewsky (1966) y Zayas (1999). Toda la investigación está orientada por el siguiente problema: ¿en qué medida la Didáctica Histórico-Crítica, como parte de la propuesta pedagógica para una educación crítica y emancipadora en Brasil, representa una alternativa concreta al proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, basada en los criterios teórico-metodológicos universales de la didáctica materialista histórico-dialéctica? El método adoptado como referencia para esta investigación se basa en el materialismo histórico-dialéctico. La metodología utilizada es la revisión bibliográfica. Para ello, se analizaron los fundamentos centrales de la Didáctica Histórico-Crítica, desde el punto de vista de Duarte (2001), Gasparin (2002), Gasparin y Petenucci (2014), Galvão et. al (2019) y Saviani (1985; 2002; 2008; 2011; 2013), localizando las divergencias fundamentales de estos autores en relación con el pensamiento de los autores internacionales estudiados en esta investigación. Los resultados muestran que, aunque tome como referencia el pensamiento de Marx y de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural, la Didáctica Histórico-Crítica tiene importantes divergencias con el pensamiento de la didáctica marxista internacional. Frente a esto, se afirma la importancia de la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica y de la Didáctica Histórico-Crítica para la educación brasileña, como visión teórico-metodológica crítica, siempre que esté alineada con la perspectiva educativa universal, desde la perspectiva del proletariado.

Palabras clave: Didáctica. Didáctica materialista histórico-dialéctica. Didáctica histórico-crítica.

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