



## **The history of evaluation and teaching practices at USP: marks of the French mission in the higher education in São Paulo<sup>1</sup>**

História das práticas de avaliação e ensino na USP: marcas da missão francesa na educação universitária paulista

Historia de las prácticas de evaluación y enseñanza en la USP: marcas de la misión francesa en la educación universitaria en Sao Paulo

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### **Abstract**

This article seeks to contribute to the production of knowledge about Brazilian university culture based on the study of learning assessment practices, taking as sources for research documents from the University of São Paulo, among them the confidential reports of the French mission that helped to found the university. What is presented here is originated from a research that aimed to recover, know and analyze the proposal of evaluation and teaching practices that were in force at the University of São Paulo since its creation, 1934 to 1968, the year of the University Reform.

**Keywords:** University culture. USP. Assessment and teaching practices.

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## **Resumo**

O presente artigo busca contribuir para a produção de conhecimento sobre a cultura universitária brasileira a partir do estudo de práticas de avaliação das aprendizagens, tomando como fontes para a pesquisa documentos da Universidade de São Paulo, entre eles os relatórios confidenciais da missão francesa que ajudou a fundar a universidade. O que aqui se apresenta origina-se numa pesquisa que teve por objetivo recuperar, conhecer e analisar a proposição de práticas de avaliação e de ensino que estiveram vigentes na Universidade de São Paulo desde a sua criação, 1934 até 1968, ano da Reforma Universitária.

**Palavras-chave:** Cultura universitária. USP. Práticas de avaliação e ensino.

## **Resumen**

Este artículo busca contribuir a la producción de conocimiento sobre la cultura universitaria brasileña a partir del estudio de las prácticas de evaluación del aprendizaje, teniendo como fuentes de investigación documentos de la Universidad de São Paulo, entre ellos los informes confidenciales de la misión francesa que ayudó a fundar la universidad. Lo que se presenta aquí se origina en una investigación que tuvo como objetivo recuperar, conocer y analizar la propuesta de evaluación y prácticas docentes vigentes en la Universidad de São Paulo desde su creación, 1934 hasta 1968, año de la Reforma Universitaria.

**Palabras clave:** Cultura universitaria. USP. Evaluación y prácticas docentes.

## Introduction

The work presented here originates from a research that aimed to recover, to know and to analyze the proposal of evaluation and teaching practices that were in force at the University of São Paulo from its creation, 1934<sup>2</sup> to 1968, the year of the University Reform. The investigation of assessment and teaching practices allows us to understand the elements that mobilize the classifications that teachers produce in their daily lives and the judgments they build about their students or, in the words of Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint-Martin (1999), “The categories of teacher judgment”. In this regard, we can think, for example, of the expectations that French teachers had regarding the performance of their Brazilian students at the University of São Paulo, as we will present below. Regarding the conception of “practices”, it is worth recovering the words of these authors: “(...) it can be admitted that practice always implies a knowledge operation, that is, a more or less complex classification operation, that has nothing in common with a passive record, without however making this a purely intellectual construction; practical knowledge is a practical construction operation that triggers, by reference to practical functions, classification systems (taxonomies) that organize perception and appreciation, and structure the practice ”(op. cit., p. 187). In this perspective, the schemes of perception, appreciation and action are acquired by practice and “function as practical operators through which the objective structures of which they are products tend to reproduce in the practices” (op. Cit., p. 187). The works of Pierre Bourdieu and collaborators support the analysis. Beatriz Fétizon and Irene Cardoso provide important elements about the history of USP. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roger Bastide, among others, make it possible to understand the perspective of the members of the mission by providing testimonies about the teaching work at the university, their perception and the assessment of students.

When studying the creation project of the University of São Paulo, Irene Cardoso (1982) addresses an issue which is pertinent to the policy undertaken by a group of journalists, intellectuals and politicians in the 1930s: the formation of “elites” who would be able to develop intellectually the projects of the oligarchy that was in crisis. Bringing with them the “superior mission of the formation of nationality” and heirs of the “best civic and intellectual traditions”, the “group of Estado” - spokesman for the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo - led by Julio de Mesquita Filho, thought of himself as capable of leading the “reunion of Brazil with its destiny of greatness”. With the objective of guaranteeing its position of independence before party actions, the actions of the “group of Estado” would be geared towards the creation of an institution in which the principles of “illustrated flagging” should prevail, with the University being its radiating center. At the request of Julio de Mesquita Filho, Fernando de Azevedo conducted the “Inquiry about Public Instruction” (CARDOSO, 1982). The aforementioned newspaper defended as a principle a kind of “oriented liberalism”, that is, that the school system produced a “guiding elite” and “free” education, above party interests. In this context, the idea of the University as a trainer of intellectual and political elites would gain strength. According to the author, “against a possible identification of these positions with an aristocratic conception of society, which the Inquiry denied, [Fernando de Azevedo] recalls that there is no conflict between the ideal of the formation of elites and the democratic ideals, as popular education and preparation of the elites would be two sides of a single problem, the one of the formation of national culture ”(op. cit., p. 30). The Inquiry proposes, in the words of the author, a “mechanism for the circulation of elites” that would resolve the opposition between the elite and the mass. It is said in the document that “as education extends its influence, awakening vocations, it penetrates even the most obscure layers, so that, among the workers themselves,

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discover the great man, the useful citizen, that the state has the duty to attract, subjecting ideas and men to constant testing, to elevate and select them according to their value or their disability” (op. cit., p. 31). Thus, the University would have the task of “disseminating” the sciences, placing them within the “reach of the people” through a system that would include teaching, research and university extension and would reach the popular strata. Based on these assumptions, the Inquiry prepared by Fernando de Azevedo postulated that the University would be the “most effective instrument” in the “work of national cohesion”. In Azevedo's discourse, the demonstrated change from classical liberalism to a “programmer state” would have occurred under the influence of the Revolution of 1930. (CARDOSO, 1982). In this sense, the “programmer” State could also operate in selecting and “elevating” the most capable. Higher education would be responsible for training the elites, guaranteeing the masses access to primary education. Between the masses and elites was the middle class, for which secondary education was intended, and which would be the “disseminator of university culture”. Important works on the Brazilian university have already been carried out, among them, for example, Cunha (1980, 1983, 1988), Fávero (2000, 2010), Bontempi Júnior (2008).

This article seeks to contribute to the production of knowledge about Brazilian university culture from the study of learning assessment practices, taking as sources for research documents from the University of São Paulo and documents produced by professors who were part of the French mission that helped to found the university, among them the confidential reports of the French mission. It is a set of correspondences, handwritten or typed, that circulated between Brazil and France giving news about the work of French professors and the functioning of the newly founded university.

### **The French mission and its intellectual heirs**

It was to put São Paulo's youth at the level of European culture that those bourgeois aristocrats decided to create the university. But, due to a kind of paradox, the students came from modest classes, because there was a great gap between the elite and the mass of society, which remained poor and with a provincial spirit. The students, often men and women already engaged in professional life, were suspicious of the great bourgeois who had founded the university. And even we were between two camps. While they considered us valuable people, students sometimes saw us as servants of the ruling class.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, in an interview with Didier Eribon

The University of São Paulo, in its creation, intended to carry out the intellectual formation of the country, according to the idea that the State of São Paulo would take on this task. The European influence and the French emphasis marked the institution's origin: on the one hand was the “disinterested knowledge”, the knowledge that would enrich and develop the spirit and, on the other hand, the “utilitarian knowledge”, the knowledge that would be useful to practical life (FÉTIZON, 1986). At first, during the creation of USP, the State attempted to implement the original model - European - in its purest form. According to

Beatriz Fétizon (1986), from 1938 onwards the first accommodation of the initial model of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literatures (FFCL) began, “made a professional training school by the creation of its fourth section (Pedagogy)” ( op. cit., p. 399). Marked by meritocracy, the FFCL was focused on the universality of high-level knowledge. The hiring of foreign teachers marked the first generation of intellectuals, teachers and researchers trained in the procedures of a rigorous research model. The entry of education studies for the FFCL, as a fourth section - Pedagogy - in 1938, enshrined the abandonment of the pure original model. In this sense, the Pedagogy section marked the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literatures in a very particular way, as it was in an institution based on the rigor of research procedures and knowledge of a disinterested character, but it needed to conduct at the same time a training focused on work and practice. The first professors of the Institute of Education were the former professors of the Normal School, who were elevated with the Improvement Course to a higher level, causing USP to have full professors who had no higher education (FÉTIZON, 1986).

The Education Institute, formerly “Instituto Caetano de Campos”, created to train teachers at a higher level with the Escola Normal da Capital, was founded in 1933 and soon afterwards was incorporated into the University of São Paulo in 1934. In 1938 it was transformed into the Pedagogy Section of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature and, later, in the Department of Education. Decree No. 6,283 of January 25, 1934, which “Creates the University of São Paulo and takes other measures”, determined the following in its Chapter I, entitled “From the Institute of Education: Art. 5 - The Institute of Education, former “Caetano de Campos” Institute will participate in the University exclusively through its School of Teachers, but will be administratively and technically subordinate to it, as attached institutes, the Complementary Course, the Secondary School, the Primary School and the Kindergarten, intended for experimentation, demonstration and practice of teaching and the professional internship of students at the School of Teachers”. In addition to training teachers according to the needs imposed by the State's educational system, the Institute also organized itself to be a “high school of school administration”, the first that was installed in the country, and to collaborate with the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature (FFCL) in the formation of secondary teachers. The Institute of Education had several university courses, with about 45 students per class. It was created not only to teach general culture to the teacher, but also for its technical preparation, through studies of the scientific bases of the profession and acquisition of work techniques, by the professional internship in the attached schools, for the demonstration, observation and teaching practice (Decree No. 7,067, of April 6, 1935). To the FFCL, which housed, among others, the Pedagogy Course, was assigned the role of being the “spirit” of the University, in the words of Arbousse Bastide, who was the head of the French mission and had the prerogative to direct and guide teaching with “best didactic criteria” to fulfill the goal of training the university elite. Regarding the hiring of French teachers, it is worth remembering the excerpt from the book *Tristes Trópicos* (1996), in which Claude Lévi-Strauss published his memoirs about the time when he was invited to participate in the French mission. In 1934, Lévi-Strauss says that he received a call from the then director of the Escola Normal Superior, Célestin Bouglé, who asked him the following question: “Do you still want to do ethnography?”. ‘Without a doubt!’ ‘Then, submit your application for professor of sociology at the University of São Paulo. The surroundings are full of Indians, to whom you will dedicate your weekends.’” (op. cit., P. 45)

Once hired, teachers were expected to follow the rules that regulated the newly founded institution. For what interests us here, namely the history of evaluation practices at the university, it is worth noting the legal provisions that regulated school life at different times at the institution. In decree nº 39 of September 3, 1934, the first document that approves the

statutes of the University of São Paulo, in its Chapter III, entitled “Of examinations and promotions”, contains the following:

Art. 124 - The verification of qualification in university courses, either for the issuance of certificates and diplomas, or for the promotion to the following academic periods, will be made by the tests and averages below and numbered, in times and with processes discriminated in the regulations of the university institutes, respecting the current laws:

- a) partial tests;
- b) final exams;
- c) averages of practical work or other school exercises.

Art. 125 - The final tests referred to in the previous article will be judged by examining commissions, of which the teachers and professors who have taken the respective courses will necessarily be part.

Art. 126 - Examination fees will be set in tables attached to the regulations of university institutes, where the bonus that must be granted to members of the examining commissions will be detailed.

The Statute of the University of São Paulo (Ante-project approved by the University Council in a session of January 16, 1939), in the chapter regarding exams and promotions, reproduces the provisions of the previous Statute. However, there are some indications of a disciplinary nature. Observe, for example:

- Art. 160 - Students from university institutes will be expelled:
- b) when they lose the year due to absences or failure in 2 successive years; (...)
  - a) when they repeat fraud in carrying out the tests and schoolwork referred to in article 148. (p. 48)

In the 1960s, the university's statutes underwent some changes. In 1965, with Ordinance GR nº 174, of July 21, 1965, which alters provisions of the Statutes of the University of São Paulo and provides other measures, there is the following change in relation to the promotion of students: “Article 125 - New enrollment will be refused to the student who has failed more than once in any series or set of subjects. Sole paragraph - For the purposes of this article, the regulation of each institution will provide for the understanding of a given set of disciplines” (p. 7).

In the 1930s and 1940s, social policies created opportunities that allowed a portion of the middle class to reach the University, bringing to this institution an increasingly diverse clientele with regard to both their socio-economic origins and the cultural capital presented. In the words of Alfredo Bosi, written in the preface to Irene Cardoso's book (1982), it was a clientele “for which the study was not only bread already baked and broken by academic knowledge, but also a leaven that could leaven the new masses. Throughout the process, the best teachers have gone from ‘*enfants gâtés*’ to ‘*enfants terribles*’” (op. cit., p. 16). Teaching expectations were confronted with student behavior and the way to relate to knowledge at this level of education. In relation to the learning representations that marked the evaluation practices in the Pedagogy course, which was later housed by the USP Faculty of Education from the year of its creation, in 1969, and which started to work effectively from 1970, the French model brought many influences. One can observe the fact, for example, by paying attention to the role that rhetoric and dissertation initially played in the courses. If the personal experience of teachers and their subjectivity lead to the formulation of quantitative parameters, the judgment about the quality of work produced by students can be subjective and based on

the experience and knowledge of teachers. The experiences that teachers had when they were students produce representations that influence educational practice, the way of teaching and the way of evaluating (PERRENOUD, 1993). According to Florestan Fernandes (1984), the first students at the University of São Paulo were “naive and pure”, and their “rusticity” must have frightened the first French teachers who, in turn, “faced” their students as “equals”. Regarding the evaluation process, it is worth transcribing the excerpt in which Fernandes reports the first work he did for Professor Roger Bastide's discipline: “(...) he reproached me because I had not developed a dissertation, but a 'report'. Nevertheless, the same Roger Bastide, later, in 1943, gave a ten and praised a work on 'the primitive, the madman and the child' in which I fell on sticks and stones on the proposition of such a theme ... invited me to come to his house in 1942 to discuss a research on folklore, which I had done in 1941.

In short, the student was taken seriously as a person, he was treated as a mature person (is an apprentice not the other of the master?), tutored and distinguished if he deserved it and, mainly, there were no limits on his freedom, although he was responsible for his use of it and ended up paying the high price of that freedom”(op. cit. apud FÉTIZON, 1986, p. 474). The report of Fernandes shows the influence that the French model brought to the learning ideas that circulated at USP, especially when it was created. In addition to the clash between the representations of learning and study brought by these teachers and the school clientele found, as Fernandes observed, we think about the representations of excellence in student performance. According to Lévi-Strauss (2005), regarding the university students from São Paulo, “the students had a colossal appetite for knowledge. In fact, in a certain sense, they knew more than we did, because, as self-taught, they had read everything, devoured everything, but in second or third hand works. Our task was less to teach them the things they ignored than to give them an intellectual discipline” (op. Cit., P. 34). The French mission and the generation of the 1940s prepared USP of the 1960s, by forming a large part of the teaching staff that began to teach at this university, leaving visible marks on the academic training of those people.

### **Teaching practices, evaluation at USP and the marks of the French tradition**

In the first period of operation of the University, it is important to draw attention to the clash of representations that occurred between French professors and Brazilian students. From Beatriz Fétizon's doctoral dissertation (1986), we know the report of Florestan Fernandes about the impression Arbousse Bastide had to know that his students read on the tram: “When my turn came, I reported what I was doing, embarrassed. When mentioning Durkheim (...) I clarified: 'I read on the tram'. It was a scandal. (...) If he had asked, he would explain that he read on a trip that started in *Praça da Sé* and ended in *Penha*, at times that allowed great tranquility on the tram... There were other types of rusticity and torture of the refinements of the high culture. There was even a level of ignorance that struggled with the sophisticated and complex pattern of learning.” (op. cit., 472-473) By consulting the confidential reports of the French mission, it was possible to learn about the assessment of students of these teachers, considered “intelligent, but more superficial than educated”, giving the impression that they were perhaps more illustrated than scholars. In the document entitled *Notes sur une mission à la Faculté nouvelle de São Paulo (juin – décembre 1934)*, we find the following: «Due to the diversity of their ages and their situations, they constituted a sample of São Paulo society: the teaching given by the college did not have much repercussion. Intelligent, more superficial than educated; almost zero formation; serious work; constant» (page 1 - our translation). The handwritten report in the French document is aligned with what Florestan Fernandes says about the students and about the first Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of USP, which were, in his words “most from middle classes, many with cultural tradition, thanks at the social level of their families,

but mostly crude, apprentices or officiating from the first mass. However, knowledge burned in their being like red-hot iron.” (FERNANDES, F. apud FÉTIZON, B., 1986, p. 472). A certain weakness observed in the training of young Brazilians and modes of study considered somewhat exotic by the French, as the situation reported, worried their teachers because, in addition to teaching the contents taught in the courses, it was part of the mission to make the French tradition regarding the way in which people produce, disseminate and deal with knowledge take root and proliferate in the University that had just been created.

In the document entitled *Note pour monsieur Marx*, the professor Braudel, when explaining the conditions of teaching in São Paulo, suggests the creation of “three or four scholarships” for students to work under the guidance of teachers and to continue French traditions. Jean Marx was the director of the *Service des Oeuvres Françaises à l’Étranger*, organization of the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*. The requests of mission teachers were often addressed to him, such as the following: “Mr. Braudel suggests the creation of 3 or 4 scholarships for students at the University of São Paulo. The first should be given to the excellent students who worked under the direction of our teachers. When a movement of nationalists distances foreign teachers, these former scholarship holders will continue French traditions” (pages 2-3 - our translation, emphasis added). Regarding such traditions, it is worth remembering the report of Claude Lévi-Strauss, in the book *Tristes Trópicos* (1996), when he recalls his academic life at Sorbonne. When he was preparing for his degree in philosophy, the author gives us clues about the importance that dialectics had in his own training and the influence it would have in the formation of the first philosophy classes at USP. Regarding his apprenticeship at the French college, he says:

there I started to learn that any problem, serious or futile, can be solved by applying a method, always identical, which consists of opposing two traditional views of the issue; in introducing the first for justifications of common sense, then in destroying them by means of the second; finally, to oppose them mutually thanks to a third that reveals the partial character of the other two, reduced by the artifices of the vocabulary to the complementary aspects of the same reality: form and background, continent and content, being and appearing, continuous and discontinuous, essence and existence etc. Such exercises soon become verbal, based on an art of the pun that takes the place of reflection; the assonances between the terms, the homophonies and the ambiguities gradually provide the material for these speculative pirouettes by whose ingenuity good philosophical works are recognized. Five years in Sorbonne were reduced to learning that gymnastics whose dangers, however, are obvious. First, because the spring of such acrobatics is so simple that there is no problem that cannot be treated in this way. In order to prepare the contest and this supreme test, the class (which consists, after a few hours of preparation, in talking about a chosen topic), my companions and I proposed the most extravagant subjects. I was bragging about preparing an hour-long conference in ten minutes, with a solid dialectical framework, on the respective superiority of buses and trams. The method not only provides a *passé-partout*, but also encourages one to see in the richness of the themes of reflection a unique way, always similar, with the condition of making certain elementary corrections to it: a bit like a song that was reduced to an only melody, as long as we understand that it is read sometimes in treble clef and sometimes in bass clef. From this point of view, philosophical



teaching exercised intelligence while drying out the spirit”. (op. cit., p. 49-50, emphasis added).

The length of the transcribed excerpt is justified by approaching some of the ideas exposed in the debate on teaching at the university that then started here in São Paulo. The importance of the dissertation and the oral argument could be observed throughout this study as marks of tradition that were printed in the University of São Paulo practices. In the footnote of the 1937 Bulletin, from the Chair of Sociology, when presenting the grades of his students, Arbousse Bastide adds the following: “The other students, having not handed in their papers, will have their grades given after an oral interrogation. All students who are not there, did not hand in their works and did not present themselves for oral questioning, thus finding themselves very affected by a zero. If there is still time, they need to come and find me for an oral questioning” (our translation). The oral exam, in addition to verifying whether the student knew the content taught in the course, also verified other elements of his education, such as skill with words, richness in terms of the use of vocabulary, clarity in expressing himself. If we think that the mission was in charge of giving French soul to the Brazilian university, printing a way of dealing with the knowledge that should be perpetuated throughout the development of this institution, then it was necessary that the French professors formed according to their molds those who would succeed Chairs. The oral questioning left everyone exposed, so that not only the content of the subject taught could be presented, but also what those students could become, since the cultural capital presented by students from São Paulo was below what was expected by the teachers of the mission.

In the document entitled “*Remarques sur les conditions et l’organisation de l’enseignement de la sociologie à la Faculté de Philosophie, Sciences et Lettres de São Paulo (Brésil)*” – no date - written by Arbousse Bastide, some of the obstacles faced for teaching are highlighted. Access to books was considered to be one of the most serious and urgent problems, which meant that teachers mimeographed texts to distribute to students. The French claimed that it would not be possible to instill work habits in students if they had no books available. In the Yearbook of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature - 1937/1938, when dealing with the cooperation of France, the document records that “in addition to providing distinguished professors for USP professorships, France donated 120,000 francs in books, which would arrive through the port of Santos”. Regarding the “teaching method”, the professor claims that in order to carry out the mission of creating a university tradition at FFCL, students would need to be “closely guided”. The seminars given by the teachers are presented as something intermediate between classes and conversations, there is the following in the document referring to such practice: “this seminar work, as they say in Germany, intermediates between the class and the conversation, seems very fruitful and appreciated by students. It is evident that it would still be necessary to experiment to create a teaching method that is more adapted to the circumstances, the environment and the needs” (our translation).

Regarding the work done by the students, it is worth transcribing the following excerpt from the document: «The work of sociology students can be of different types: 1) concrete social documentation studies (survey, gathering of social information material), 2) a dissertation on more abstract and properly sociological themes (questions of methodology, conclusion to be drawn from an observation of social facts), 3) critical analysis of a work of sociology or an explanation of a set of studies about an author, about a sociological school, 4) (...), 5) written or oral explanation of texts of social philosophy, social methodology or general philosophy, 6) oral presentation of a relevant theme of sociology or of some auxiliary science and its relations with sociology. It is necessary to admit that we have not yet reached very satisfactory results, (...) but it is necessary to recognize that if students show some taste for the oral analysis of the different social facts that surround them, they are still unfit for all work that requires an effort

of composition, discussion and synthesis” (p. 13 - our translation). In this description, the dissertation and the oral exposition are valued as activities performed by the students and that also served the evaluation made by the teachers.

In the initial period of operation of the FFCL, the classes were small and students from different courses could attend classes and seminars together, taking common subjects, just as the teachers did not work with a single course, but taught in several of them. In an interview with Didier Eribon, Claude Lévi-Strauss said that the newly created university, which was made up of “a few dozen” students, was “in the center of the city, in old buildings, in which there was still a colonial atmosphere. While today, the university, affected as others by the gigantism, is installed in constructions style Jussieu or Nanterre, in an immense open space” (LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.; ERIBON, D., 2005, p. 34).

### **From exams to promotion: the assignment of criteria for the evaluation of university students**

The yearbooks are volumes produced by the university to publish documents and research produced within the institution. In a study about the Polytechnic School of USP, we found the work of Bruno Bontempi Junior (2013) who used the Yearbooks, among other sources. In the Yearbook of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature - 1937/1938, Roger Bastide defended that there was a connection between the different courses so that students did not have an “impression of separate teaching”, the “collaboration of all in a same work of intellectual education” (p. 14). Arbousse Bastide, as head of the mission, also reported to the *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, in the aforementioned document, what he considered to be the most urgent problem encountered in relation to the São Paulo school clientele: pre-university education and post-university orientation of students. He said:

If it is relatively easy to see what needs to be done in the more or less distant future, it is perhaps more urgent to indicate the closest difficulties and the points on which to make the first efforts. It seems that they must be applied to two very precise points: 1) to train future students so that the teaching received at the FFCL can be fruitful without it being necessary to lower their level; 2) to foresee truly interesting situations for those students who successfully reach the end of their higher education, in more precise terms: the FFCL cannot develop normally: 1) unless secondary education is radically reformed, 2) unless the situation of secondary school teachers is morally and materially revalued. We must undoubtedly work to form elites, but candidates for intellectual nobility will make a persistent and persevering effort only if the society in which they live reserves a social function truly worthy of the name. The students who come to us, despite their goodwill, their intelligence and their work, do not have and do not quickly possess the instruments of culture that should be offered to them by secondary education. In the absence of an immediate reformulation of secondary education, one could envisage the organization of a propaedeutic year of higher education for all students who have not truly satisfied the good conditions of the entrance exam, whose programs were recently published. Thus, one could be truly demanding for candidates without, however, simply eliminating those who prove to be insufficient, but deserving. It would be difficult to say how the effectiveness of sociological culture, not to mention the training of students called to receive it and, consequently, without saying a word

of the efforts needed to prepare the environment in which it should, little by little, establish its roots and bear fruit”(page 14 - our translation, emphasis added).

Pierre Bourdieu<sup>3</sup> and Monique de Saint-Martin (1999), when writing about “the categories of teacher judgment”, deal with the classifications that teachers produce daily about their students. When studying a set of individual files filled out by a Philosophy professor who taught in a first year of higher education in Paris, the authors analyzed the adjectives attributed to students in relation to their social origin. Students from the middle classes are subject to negative judgments, such as silly, slavish, mediocre, vulgar, while those “(...) from the fractions of the ruling class rich in cultural capital escape almost entirely from negative judgments, even euphemized, as well as petty-bourgeois virtues, and they are insistently attributed to the most sought after qualities” (op. cit., p. 191). The school virtues appreciated in the training undertaken at the FFCL, such as the knowledge of the authors and the mastery of the vocabulary used in the area, the way to construct an argument and demonstrate it through written works correspond to a part of the object presented to the judgment undertaken by the teachers, the other, and quite important, concerns oral exposure and a kind of skill that candidates for “intellectual nobility” should be carrying. In this regard, it is worth remembering the words of Bourdieu and Saint-Martin:

the 'external' criteria, more often implicit and even rejected by the institution, have an even more important weight in the assessment of oral manifestations, once that to the criteria already mentioned, there is the addition of everything that relates to the word and, more precisely, the accent, the utterance and the diction, which are the safest marks, because they are the most indelible, of the social and geographical origin, the style of language spoken, which can differ profoundly from the written style, and finally and mainly the corporal hexis, the manners and the conduct, which are often designated very directly in the appraisals”(op. cit., p. 192-193).

The oral presentation was highly valued at the FFCL, in the training of its students and also in the Pedagogy Course, as can already be seen in the Regulation of the Institute of Education (Decree No. 7,067, of April 6, 1935), in which it is explained in the article 76, that “in each chair, the student will have, during the semester, two grades, one for application and the other for exam, in addition to a final exam” (p. 11). The student who had missed ¼ of practical work or theoretical classes in any of the chairs could not be promoted. The application note consisted of attendance, oral call, practical exercises, mandatory and spontaneous work, and also “spirit of initiative”. The exam consisted of a test on the subject explained in the semester. Each discipline had a different type of practical work, regarding the bibliography of the courses, most of which were in English, French and Spanish. The practical work could consist of varied activities, surveys and research, individually and in groups, or even investigations about the primary school. Monographs and seminars were also recurrent practices in classes that served to assess learning, as stated in the Programs for regular and extraordinary courses for the year 1937 - FFCL / USP.

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<sup>3</sup> Resorting to the notion of “categories of teacher judgment”, formulated by Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint-Martin, obeys the investment in understanding the history of education from a socio-historical perspective, as Roger Chartier generally defends when arguing about the possibility of building the history of the fields (social spaces) and the use of sociological concepts. See Chartier (2002) and also Catani (2008). This elaboration, of course, was already present in the interpretations of Émile Durkheim (2008).

In the Final Examination Bulletin - 1947 - FFCL / USP, it is possible to know the way in which teachers reached the final average of students. The bulletins were not from the students, but from the Chairs, from the subjects taught. In these documents there is the student's name, followed by the exam score written in one column, the oral exam score in a second column and the final grade in the third. The oral grade and the written grade had the same weight and were divided by two, generating the final average, for example:  $7 + 5 = 6$ . At the end of these reports there were the names of the teachers who made up the examining board for these exams, consisting of three teachers. Such forms were typewritten and carried the USP FFCL stamp. The date of these bulletins is December, usually from the 15th. It is common to find in the Bulletins published over the years 30 and 40, the following entry in the footnote, as the one in the 1938-39 Bulletin - FFCL / USP: "Article 133 - The teacher must give the students an 'achievement grade' every six months in the practical work and other school exercises of the Chair. This grade will be applied under preparations, arguments, reports of practical work and excursions carried out during the respective school periods and presented until the last day of class.

Paragraph 1 - The professor must send to the Secretariat the list of the grades obtained by the enrolled students, up to the last day of school of the respective academic period.

Paragraph 2 - For the student who withholds the elements established by the teacher for the application of grades, the general average of approval will be calculated with the same divisor 3 provided for in article 131."

In the *Bulletins of Grades - Final exam - written / oral - 1944 - FFCL / USP*, there is the following inscription related to the final oral exam: "On the ... day of ... of 19..., before the examining commission of... the students mentioned below attended, in order to take the final oral exam, under the terms of the Regulation. After being accused, they received the grades that are recorded in the column 'final oral grade'. Below there is a table with the names and grades typed and filled in by hand: there are four grade fields, average of partial exams, average of achievement, final oral exam score, general average. At the bottom of the page there are the names and signatures of the teachers who made up the panel that judged the final oral exam. The *Bulletins of Grades General Evening Shift - 1954 - FFCL / USP*, have a different format, they are printed sheets front and back on which some data are filled in by hand and typed. For example:

University of Sao Paulo  
 Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature  
 Grades Bulletin  
 Course of ...  
 Chair of ...  
 Academic year 19 ...  
 Evening shift  
 Teacher ...  
 Columns: No., students, 1st achievement, 1st partial, 2nd call exam, 2nd achievement, 2nd partial, average of achievement, average of partials, general average.

All columns were filled with grades in numerical format, except for the last column (general average) that could be filled with: "oral", "disapproved" (in red), "E. O." (written and oral exam), or high grades, such as 9.0 or 9.37. When the student was a repeater, it was marked next to his name "(repeater)", or "(transferred)" or "adaptation". Article 133 is printed at the bottom of the page. And on the back of the page there are fields for the name of the teacher and signature and date. There are three fields: "1st achievement and 1st partial test", "2nd call",

"2nd achievement and 2nd partial test" and below "Observations: ...". In order to carry out the Retake exams, it was necessary to enroll, as can be verified according to the 1943 notice:

Notice of registration for Retake exams

By order of Mr. Director, I make public that enrollments for the Retake exams in all courses of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature will be open from the 11th to the 15<sup>th</sup> of February.

Secretariat of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo,  
February 3, 1942.

Notice section – to be published from the 4th to the 15th of the current month.

To take the Retake exams, students should pay a fee. Retake exams used to be held in February of the year following the year in which the course took place, especially in the second half of the month. To judge the performance of the students, there was a panel of judges made up of three teachers. In the study of the bulletins published in this period, it was possible to notice that the type of exam applied in these situations varied according to the discipline. For example: in 1942, the Sociology exam consisted of an oral exam while the Biological Foundations of Education exam consisted of an oral exam on one day and a written exam on another. In the *Bulletin of Grades of Retake exams and Substitute Exam 1950 - FFCL / USP*, there is a uniformity in relation to Retake exams in all subjects, being composed by an oral test grade plus a written test grade, which added and divided by two gave rise to the average.

### **The Substitute Exam**

The substitute exams were applied according to Law No. 1,029, of December 30th, 1949, which determined that “students enrolled in higher education courses, who, due to lack of legal attendance in theoretical classes in one or more subjects, could not be promoted by average, nor sign up for the final exams, they will be admitted to Retake exams, in the second half of February of the following year, as long as they have been frequent to the classes and practical exercises, which were mandatory, contained in the school rules or regulations. Single paragraph. The Retake exams for each discipline, which will cover the entire subject of the program, will consist of written and oral tests, and, when the regulations or regulations require, also of practical tests.” In these exams, students were subjected to the questioning of the whole subject and not just the drawn point. In the *Bulletin of Grades of the Retake exam – Substitute Exam D. e N. - 1952 - FFCL / USP*, it is possible to find the following records typed on all sheets in red letters: “Note: The student who is not part of this list, cannot take an exam, except with the written authorization of this secretariat. According to the law of substitute exams, (complete exams), they cover all subjects, whether taught or not”. In addition to the provisions of Law No. 1,029, in which it determined that students should be subjected to examination of the entire subject of the program, the registration in the 1952 bulletin of the FFCL determined that the examination would cover the entire subject, even if it had not been taught.

In 1947, two years before the law that instituted the substitute examination was enacted, Jorge Americano, who was dean of USP between 1941 and 1946, published a text entitled *The University of São Paulo: Data, problems and plans*, in which he dealt with the partial grades and final exams. He pondered: “An absolutely strange and inconceivable fact in a civilized country usually occurs in Brazil periodically: the arbitrary alteration, by the government, of the judgment grades of partial or final exams. Every teacher adopts a criterion for judging tests, according to which each test is considered terrible, bad, poor, regular, good, excellent. Given any doubt in the

judgment, the teacher will look for an intermediate solution in this case: between bad and poor, between regular and good, etc. Translating this criterion, which can be said to be universal, on a numerical scale from 0 to 10, we will have: 0 = terrible, 2 = bad, 4 = poor, 6 = regular, 8 = good, 10 = excellent. The odd numbers will serve, in this case, to translate the intermediate modalities. It is evident that any numerical scale, 0-100, 0-25, etc., can serve the arithmetic translation, since the judge equates the bad grade to zero and the optimal grade to the maximum value of the scale. We emphasize these details to make it feel that a given judgment is always expressed numerically in terms of a preset table, where each concept - terrible, regular, excellent - is equivalent to a number. Now, if, after the judgment rendered on the basis of a certain numerical expression, a law or decree appears that alters the correspondence between the numerical expression and the judgment, that is, if a law takes the number 4, expression of the judgment - poor - and declares that this number, which expressed disapproval when it was released, starts to express approval, such law is criminal, for countering the effective judgment. However, this is what happens periodically in Brazil: Students who failed represent the public authorities asking them to change the judgments handed down; the public power in search of popularity then declares by law or decree that the failing grades given are worth approval; and teachers whose trial has been criminally tampered with remain silent, hoping that things will go differently in the future. A reaction is necessary” (p. 167-168). Two years later, the written and oral exam was instituted, covering the entire program, the substitute exam.

In the Guide of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo, from 1951, it is possible to know the promotion regime in force at the institution at that time, in which the oral exam is still present:

#### A- First assessment

##### 1-Considering the chair alone

The current promotion regime, in force at the Faculty, is as follows:

- a) The student who obtains an average achievement of 4 or more, and 7 or more in the partial tests, will be considered approved, regardless of final exam.
- b) The student who obtains an average achievement equal to or higher than 4 and, in the partial tests, an average between 5 and 6.99, must take only the final oral exam. The general average 5, required for approval, will be extracted from the following elements: - grade of the final oral exam, average of achievement and average of partial tests.
- c) The student who obtains an average achievement of 4 or above and between 3 and 4.99, in the partial tests, must take final exams (written and oral). The general average 5, required for approval, will be extracted from the following elements: - average of the final exams (written and oral), average of achievement and average of the partial tests” (p. 91-92).

#### B- Retake examination

The student who obtains an average achievement of less than 4, must take the Retake exam, whatever the average in the partial tests.

The general average 5, required in the approval, will be extracted from the grade of the written test and the oral test and, when the regulations require, grade of the practical test.

In the Yearbook of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1952, which contains a description of the activities developed by the chairs and departments, there is the following information about the General Didactics

course, taught by professor Onofre de Arruda Penteadó Junior, in the Pedagogy Course<sup>4</sup>: “the papers for grade of achievement were exclusively oral, with the chair suppressing any and all written work, since it has the purpose of training teachers. For this reason, several themes were proposed by the teacher and developed orally by the students” (p. 219). In the same document there is another reference about the influence that the French mission left on the ways of teaching at the university: “considering that the monographic courses instituted in the Philosophy section by French professors and preserved until the present as a kind of tradition, because undeniably they are the ones that lend themselves most to university-level development, however, have the disadvantage of not offering students an overview of the History of Philosophy, it was decided to organize for the next years, as an experiment, a program to understand the main aspects of Western Philosophy, up to the 18th century, and which should be carried out in two years, or even more, if necessary. This, without prejudice to monographic courses, of which each class must follow at least one, in the set of their studies. It was also decided, according to the respective teachers, to give students of Social Sciences and Pedagogy, different courses and according to their own needs” (p. 247-248).

### **The qualification contest**

The oral exam was also present in the selection that was made for candidates to enter the courses, which today is known as entrance exam, in 1943 it received the name of “Qualification contest” (Guide of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1943), according to the document “there are two tests for the qualification contest for each discipline that appears in the program for that contest. The first test is a vague written exam and the second an oral exam” (p. 43). According to the Guide of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1965, “the programs for the qualification contest will deal exclusively with subjects of the programs of the high school cycle, consisting of written and oral tests of the following subjects, according to the course for which the candidate is intended: (...) 14- Pedagogy Course - written and oral tests in the following subjects: General History, Portuguese, French or English ”(p. 97-98). In order to complete the enrollment, it was necessary for the student to present a “recent certificate of moral integrity” (p. 93). Until the early 1960s, few people took the university entrance exam, so it is understandable that it was possible to take the oral exam to select candidates. In 1962, for example, the Pedagogy Course had 155 candidates, of which 33 were approved, not filling the 60 vacancies available for the first year (Statistics from the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1934-1967).

In the Philosophy and Education Guide - Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1966, it is already possible to find the term vestibular in the university entrance exam: “the vestibular exams for the Pedagogy course comprise written and oral tests of Portuguese and General History and oral exam of a living language (French or English). Department professors consider the system in place so far to be quite unsatisfactory. The problem of vestibular exams for all courses at the Faculty remains under study, as it is intended to correct, in the future, the main flaws of the current system” (p. 59).

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<sup>4</sup>On the position of Pedagogy in the scientific world and the basic disciplines in the training of its professionals, see Borges; Gatti Jr, 2013.

## The evaluation practices in the programs of the disciplines

The FFCL programs from 1934 to 1968 were examined in order to find references on the assessment in each of the courses, however, in addition to each course presenting its program discipline in a very different way from the other, few addressed the evaluation practices carried out. In the Programs for the regular and extraordinary courses for the year 1953 - FFCL / USP, for example, there is not much reference to the assessment of learning, only in the Chair of Sociology II there are the themes for research and the work that should be developed. In the discipline of Learning Psychology, it is said that there would be planning and development of research on the phenomenon of learning. An exception can be identified in the Programs for 1968 approved by the congregation - FFCL / USP, where it is possible to find a description of the work done by students in the discipline “Hygiene”, taught in the Pedagogy course: “3. The subjects of discussion for each class are provided at the beginning of the course, with bibliography to be studied before each class, for a written test on the topic studied, to then be debated. (...) 5. The course is semiannual with a load of 4 hours per week. The achievement grade (N. A.) results from the average between the grades of practical activities (N. Pr.) And theoretical (N. Te.). The N. Pr. grade will be attributed to individual and collective projects, which must be presented in a seminar. The N Te grade will be given according to the results of the weekly tests and the final test. (p. 145) In the 1959 Programs approved by the Congregation - FFCL / USP it is possible to know some elements regarding the evaluations practiced in some subjects of the Pedagogy Course. In Philosophy of Education and in Special Didactics of Mathematics, Languages and History, students should present seminars. In Special Didactics of Chemistry and Natural History, in the context of learning verification, students should prepare theoretical and practical works and carry out examinations, sabbaticans and tests. In General Theory of Education, seminars and assignments would be held. Among the terms used to refer to the evaluation we find: verification of learning, verification and evaluation of learning and work of achievement. The following year, in the Programs approved by the Congregation for the 1960 school year - FFCL / USP, it was possible to learn about the following evaluation practices undertaken by teachers: in Educational Psychology, students did experiments, research and wrote reports; in School Administration and Comparative Education, seminars were held and in General Theory of Education, works and seminars were carried out. In the year 1966, in the Programs for 1966 approved by the congregation - FFCL / USP, in the discipline "Didactics: High School Methodology", we find the following: "6 - Verification and evaluation of learning: a) the 'traditional' exams; b) the tests; c) other verification modalities”(p. 203). In other types of verification, seminars, oral examinations and sabbaticans could be carried out. The word “tests” comes to be used in some programs at this time.

In the normative structure of the University of São Paulo (Decree nº 52.326, of December 16, 1969 - DO of 17-12-69), a document that contains the Statute and the Ordinances that implemented the University Reform, chapter IV refers to the “Council for Teaching, Research and Extension of Community Services”, among its attributions are the following: “V - indicate to the congregations norms for the evaluation of teaching and the promotion of students; (...) IX - deliberate on the form of admission of candidates to undergraduate curricula; (...) X - conceptualize and standardize the criteria related to ‘credit units’”(p. 18). The document referring to the implementation of the University Reform also says that it would be up to the department to organize the teaching and student work. The information is repeated in the General Regiment of the University of São Paulo - 1972, in which it is said that the Council for Teaching, Research and Extension of Community Services is responsible for indicating to the Congregations rules for evaluating teaching and promoting students.

In 1970, Ordinance No. 1,024, of January 15, 1970 (D. O. of 20-1-70), which lays down transitional rules to implement university reform, determined that the assessment of merit and



exams will obey the regulations of each unity. Regarding the performance of students and their participation in university management, Ordinance No. 1,449, of April 14, 1971. (D. O. of 15-4-71), which Consolidates provisions on the election of the representatives of the student body to the University Council, defined that no representative can score less than 6 (six).

### **Learning assessment practices: between artisanal<sup>5</sup> and institutional**

Throughout this study, it was possible to notice that the learning assessment practices in the first decades of creation of the Pedagogy Course were carried out in a very artisanal process. At the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature, the classes were small, and people knew each other. When conducting the qualification contest among candidates, for example, the contact that was provided by the oral exam could allow teachers to capture much more of the potential of these students, what they could “become”, than what they brought in fact, because the cultural capital presented was low according to the standards demanded by those who came to found the university and by their intellectual heirs. As previously stated, in 1962, for example, the Pedagogy Course had 155 candidates, of which 33 were approved, not filling the 60 vacancies available for the first year (Statistics from the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages and Literature of the University of São Paulo - 1934-1967).

With the University Reform (Law No. 5,540, of 1968) and the drafting of the new Statutes of the University of São Paulo, on December 16, 1969, the Faculty of Education was created and started to function effectively as such from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1970. The realization of major entrance exams, as we know, made the hypothesis of oral exams almost impossible. The preservation of writing tests, in these cases, seeks to guarantee the appreciation of the use made of language, vocabulary, argumentation and clarity in the presentation of ideas. Marked by the influence exerted by the teachers who arrived with the French mission, the evaluation and teaching practices used since the first decades of operation of the Pedagogy Course showed the conception of a humanist formation valued by the exercise of orality and dissertation.

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<sup>5</sup> In a conversation with Professor Celso de Rui Beisiegel about the learning assessment practices carried out at the university by the generation of the “heirs” of the French mission, the expression “artisanal” emerged in association with the modes of work of the teachers.

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