



**The Didactics in teacher training courses:  
about times, spaces and some subjects involved in the discipline at the  
University of São Paulo and the University of Brasil (1934-1969)<sup>1</sup>**

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La didáctica en los cursos de formación docente:  
sobre tiempos, espacios y algunos temas involucrados con la disciplina en la  
Universidad de São Paulo y la Universidad de Brasil (1934-1969)

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## Abstract

This article is the result of research that analyzed the Didactics discipline at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (FFCL) of the University of São Paulo and at the National Faculty of Philosophy (FNF) of the University of Brasil, aiming to understand dimensions related to the performance of some of their professors and their teaching programs, the historical aspects of the constitution and teaching of the discipline, its divergences and convergences. The time frames included the period of operation of the two institutions, the FFCL/USP (1934-1969) and the FNF/UB (1939-1968). With the objective of indicating some aspects related to the histories of the Didactics discipline in higher education, also contributing to the recovery of elements that are part of the culture and memory of these institutions that are among the oldest in Brazil, the study took as privileged sources the documentation of these universities, memorial works, discipline programs and teaching plans.

**Keywords:** History of Education, Didactics, Higher Education.

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## Resumo

O artigo é fruto da pesquisa que analisou a disciplina Didática na Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras (FFCL) da Universidade de São Paulo e na Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia (FNFi) da Universidade do Brasil, visando conhecer dimensões referentes à atuação de alguns de seus professores e os seus programas de ensino, os aspectos históricos de constituição e do ensino da disciplina, seus distanciamentos e suas convergências. Os marcos temporais compreenderam o período de funcionamento das duas instituições, a FFCL/USP (1934-1969) e a FNFi/UB (1939-1968). Com o objetivo de indicar alguns aspectos referentes às histórias da disciplina Didática no ensino superior, contribuindo também para a recuperação de elementos que fazem parte da cultura e da memória destas instituições que estão entre as mais antigas do Brasil, o estudo tomou como fontes privilegiadas a documentação destas universidades, obras memorialísticas, programas de disciplinas e planos de ensino.

**Palavras-chave:** História da Educação, Didática, Ensino Superior.

## Resumen

El artículo es resultado de una investigación que analizó la disciplina Didáctica en la Facultad de Filosofía, Ciencias y Letras (FFCL) de la Universidad de São Paulo y en la Facultad Nacional de Filosofía (FNFi) de la Universidad de Brasil, con el objetivo de comprender dimensiones relacionadas a la actuación de algunos de sus profesores y sus programas de enseñanza, los aspectos históricos de la constitución y enseñanza de la disciplina, sus distancias y sus convergencias. Los marcos temporales abarcaron el período de funcionamiento de las dos instituciones, FFCL/USP (1934-1969) y FNFi/UB (1939-1968). Con el objetivo de indicar algunos aspectos relacionados a la historia de la disciplina Didáctica en la educación superior, contribuyendo también a la recuperación de elementos que forman parte de la cultura y de la memoria de estas instituciones que están entre las más antiguas de Brasil, el estudio tomó como fuentes privilegiadas la documentación de estas universidades, obras memoriales, programas de la disciplina y planes de enseñanza.

**Palabras clave:** Historia de la Educación, Didáctica, Educación Superior.

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## Introduction

This article is the result of research that analyzed the discipline of Didactics, known as General Didactics during the period studied, at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters (FFCL) of the University of São Paulo and the National Faculty of Philosophy (FNFi) of the University of Brasil. The aim was to understand the dimensions of the work of some of their professors and their teaching programs, the historical aspects of the discipline's establishment and teaching, and its differences and convergences in these higher education teacher training institutions, which are among the oldest in the country. The timeframe covered the period of operation of both institutions: The Faculty of Philosophy of the University of São Paulo (1934-1969) and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Brasil (1939-1968).

In 1982, the seminar "*Didactica em Questão*," promoted by the Department of Education of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RJ) with the support of the CNPq, aimed to promote a critical review of teaching and research in Didactics. In the publication resulting from the event, Vera Maria Candau (1982) pointed to the challenge of that moment, which would be to overcome an exclusively instrumental Didactics and to construct a fundamental Didactics. At the time, the professor already drew attention to the importance of investigating the history of Didactics and its teaching in Brazil (CANDAU, 1982). A similar diagnosis was made by Ilma Passos Veiga, when she considered that the "technical-instrumental conception and teaching focused on theory to the detriment of practice, [continue to contribute to] the decontextualization of the contents of Didactics" (VEIGA, 2010, p. 47).

In Brazil, the discipline of Didactics has had and continues to have a strong presence in teacher training, both at the secondary level (Normal Course) and at the higher education level (required for the Pedagogy program and other undergraduate programs). A historical perspective reveals that, as the discipline undergoes a paradigm shift, it loses its instrumental and prescriptive characteristics and becomes imbued with a significant political dimension, in which teachers' intellectual autonomy, diversity, and experience are increasingly valued, fostering training for a more democratic schooling system. Aiming to trace the history of General Didactics in higher education, learn about some of the professors responsible for the discipline, and understand their teaching programs during the initial period in which the USP and UB teacher training programs operated at the FFCL (1934-1969) and FNFi (1939-1968), respectively, and also contribute to the recovery of elements that are part of the history, culture, and memory of these institutions, the study used as its primary sources USP and UB documentation, memorial works, course syllabi, and teaching plans. Among the results achieved, we identify the articulation of the discipline with several pedagogical theories, such as constructivism and the New School movement.

## About the establishment of the FFCL/USP and the FNFi/UB: dimensions related to teacher training

Upon its creation, USP sought to foster the intellectual development of the country. European influence and a French emphasis marked the institution's emergence: on the one hand, there was the "disinterested knowledge" that would enrich and develop the spirit, and on the other, there was the "utilitarian knowledge" that would be useful in practical life (FÉTIZON, 1986). Initially, during the creation of USP, the State attempted to implement the original—European—model in its purest form. According to Beatriz Fétizon (1986), the first adaptation

of the FFCL model began in 1938, "turned into a professional training school through the creation of its fourth section (Pedagogy)" (op. cit., p. 399). Marked by meritocracy, the FFCL focused on the universality of high-level knowledge.

The hiring of foreign professors marked the first generation of intellectuals, teachers, and researchers trained in the procedures of a rigorous research model. To this extent, the inclusion of education studies in the FFCL as a fourth section—Pedagogy—in 1938 marked the abandonment of the original, pure model. The Pedagogy section marked the FFCL in a very particular way, as it was part of an institution based on rigorous research procedures and disinterested learning, but at the same time needed to provide training focused on work and practice. The first professors at the Institute of Education were former professors of the Normal Course, who were elevated to higher education with the Improvement Course, resulting in USP having full professors who did not have a higher education degree (FÉTIZON, 1986).

The Education Institute, which created the Pedagogy program, was founded in 1933 and incorporated into USP in 1934. 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 established in the country, and to collaborate with the FFCL in the training of secondary school teachers. The Education Institute offered several university programs, with approximately 45 students per class. It was created not only to provide general education to teachers, but also for their technical preparation, through studies of the scientific foundations of the profession and the acquisition of work techniques, through professional internships in the attached schools, for demonstration, observation, and teaching practice (Decree No. 7,067, of April 6, 1935).

The FFCL, which housed, among other things, the Pedagogy Program, was assigned the role of being the "spirit" of USP, in the words of Arbousse Bastide, who was the head of the French mission and whose prerogative was to direct and guide teaching with the "best didactic criteria" with the goal of training the country's university elite. Regarding the hiring of French professors, it is worth recalling the excerpt from the book *Tristes Tropiques* (1996), in which Claude Lévi-Strauss published his memoirs about the time he was invited to participate in the French mission that came to Brazil to establish this university. In 1934, Lévi-Strauss recounts receiving a phone call from the then-director of the *Escola Normal Superior*, Célestin Bouglé, who asked him the following question: 'Do you still want to pursue ethnography?' 'Absolutely!' 'Then submit your application for professor of sociology at the University of São Paulo. The surrounding area is teeming with Indigenous people, to whom you will dedicate your weekends' (op. cit., p. 45).

In the context of the 1930 Coup and the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945), the federal government, among other initiatives: a) developed a university project, highlighting the promulgation of the Statute of Brazilian Universities, the reorganization of the University of Rio de Janeiro, and the creation of the National Council of Education in 1931; b) restructured the Ministry of Education and Public Health in 1935; c) institutionalized the University of Brazil in 1937; d) created the National Faculty of Philosophy in 1939. Maria de Lourdes Fávero (2003) suggests that "those in power are concerned with giving education a 'uniform' shape." Regarding higher education, this assertion can be seen in the highlights made by Minister Francisco Campos when submitting his reform project:

in the reorganization of the University of Rio de Janeiro, which will serve as a model for universities and equivalent institutes, the norms established for the university system in the Statute of Brazilian Universities were adopted. It incorporates the higher education institutes of the capital of the Republic, dependent on the Ministry of Education and Public Health, along with the Ouro Preto School of

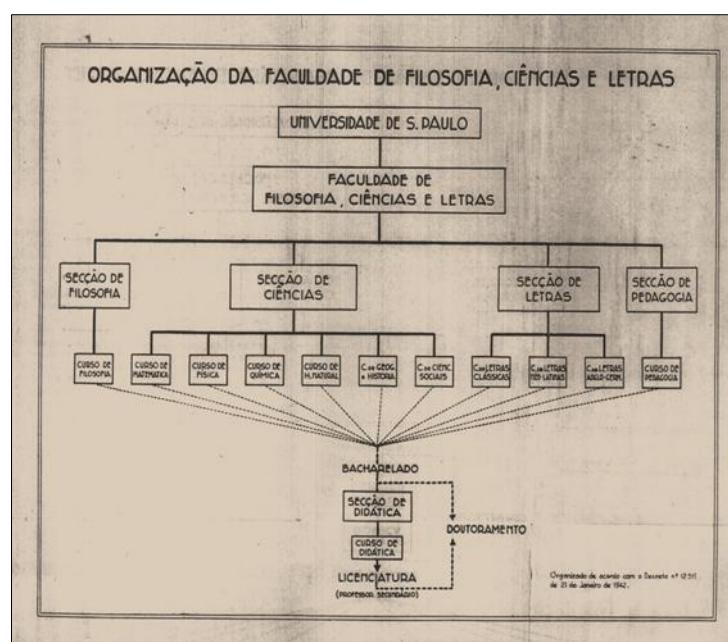
Minas and the Faculty of Education, Sciences, and Letters, created in the project" (CAMPOS, 1931, p. 108-109).

Created in 1939, the National Faculty of the Faculty of Philosophy (FNFi) aimed to prepare intellectual workers for disinterested or technical cultural activities, as well as to train candidates for secondary and regular teaching. The faculty was organized into four fundamental sections: Philosophy, Sciences, Literature, and Pedagogy. There was also a special section on Didactics. The FNFi trained generations of teachers in diverse fields and was a milestone in the country's cultural, scientific, and technological development. Since its founding in 1939, Brazilian and foreign professors have passed through the institution, contributing to the institutionalization of their respective fields of knowledge.

In its early days, FNFi's faculty recruitment (Ferreira, 2008) was based on candidates' networks of relationships rather than selection through public examinations. The closure of the University of the Federal District (UDF) led to the transfer of some professors, while others voluntarily left or were dismissed. The criteria adopted for filling vacant positions varied (CUNHA, 1983). In some cases, former assistants were elevated to the status of interim professors.

Created during the *Estado Novo* era and marked by the authoritarian ideas then in force, the FNFi underwent some changes with the fall of the Vargas regime and the redemocratization process beginning in 1945. During 1944 and 1945, intense discussions were held regarding the procedures to be adopted for the regularization of the faculty. However, it was from 1945 onward that the UB's contours were better defined, both in terms of its teaching and research concepts and its administrative and financial structure. Thus, in 1946, the university began to be organized into faculties and departments. At the FNFi, the sections of the previous academic-administrative structure disappeared, and the departments of Philosophy, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, History and Geography, Social Sciences, Literature, and Pedagogy emerged. At USP, the Institute of Education was incorporated in 1934, giving rise to the Pedagogy Program, which began operating effectively in 1938. As part of the Pedagogy Section, it was initially housed within the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters (FFCL).

**Figure 1** - Organizational chart of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters in 1942.



Source: Centro de Apoio à Pesquisa em História "Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda" (CAP-FFLCH/USP)

The documents related to the General Didactics course, which was offered to the Pedagogy program and other teacher training programs (Philosophy, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, Geography and History, Social Sciences, Classics, Neo-Latin Literature, and Anglo-Germanic Literature), are safeguarded in the General Archives of the University of São Paulo.

The teaching at the FFCL was provided by professors who taught at the Education Institute and by faculty members who were part of the French mission. For example, in the *Anuário da Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras da Universidade de São Paulo – 1952*, which describes the activities developed by the courses and departments, there is the following information about the General Didactics course, taught by Professor Onofre de Arruda Penteado Junior, in the Pedagogy Program:

the assignments for grading were exclusively oral, and the course eliminated all written work, since its purpose was teacher training. For this reason, several topics were proposed by the professor and developed orally by the students (Yearbook, 1952, p. 219).

The same document contains another reference to the influence the French mission had on university teaching methods:

considering that the monographic courses established in the Philosophy section by French professors and preserved to this day as a kind of tradition, since they are undeniably the most suitable for university-level development, nevertheless have the disadvantage of not offering students a comprehensive overview of the History of Philosophy, it was decided to organize, as an experiment, a program for the coming years that would cover the main aspects of Western Philosophy up to the 18th century, to be completed over two years, or even more if necessary. This would be without prejudice to the monographic courses, of which each class must take at least one throughout its studies. It was also decided, in agreement with the respective professors, to offer students in Social Sciences and Pedagogy different courses according to their specific needs (*Anuário*, 1952, pp. 247-248).

Professor Onofre de Arruda Penteado Junior was the first Professor of General Didactics at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters of the University of São Paulo, followed by Professor Amélia Americano Franco Domingues de Castro, who had served as an assistant professor.

### **When General Didactics Dialogues with the New School**

Professor Amélia Americano Franco Domingues de Castro taught the General Didactics course from 1956 until her retirement from USP. Working in the General Teaching Methodology Chair at a time when it was staffed primarily by graduates, specialists from all sections of the FFCL, she contributed to the group's didactic training by organizing "Didactics Seminars," which emphasized the study of the psychogenetic foundations of Didactics. An avid reader of European (especially Édouard Claparède and Jean-Ovide Decroly) and American (particularly John Dewey and William Heard Kilpatrick) New School authors, Amélia was also

one of the pioneering researchers to disseminate Jean Piaget's ideas in Brazil. It is important to highlight, in this regard, her work in articulating Piaget's theory with pedagogical practice. Influenced by the New School Movement and the prevailing psychological theories of the time, together with Onofre de Arruda Penteado Junior, also a Didactics professor at FFCL, she was part of the group of teachers who analyzed the work of Hans Aebli, who proposed the application of Piagetian theory to didactics. In an interview with Mário Sérgio Vasconcelos (1995), she explained how the group worked:

We formed a group of teachers, understanding that Hans Aebli's work offered a significant contribution to didactics. We were encouraged to study it and to seek out the sources that underpinned the work of Piaget and his collaborators. At that time, we were influenced by New School authors. For teachers in the field, these studies were a source of great enthusiasm, because we found an extremely valuable rationale for a series of ideas and educational practices that the New School had introduced, but which, for us, were unfounded. We were very familiar with the New School Movement and the psychological theories in vogue at the time. The American New School came with Dewey, Kilpatrick, and others, and the European New School had Claparède, Decroly, Ferrière, and Montessori. The New School authors were our working tools, but there was dissatisfaction with their psychological foundations. We were familiar with North American associationist psychology, which came from a stronghold of Watson and, later, Skinner. Dewey's functionalism, the basis of New School, was highly intuitive and, curiously, accepted the concept of interaction between man and environment, but conducted studies on the reflex-nerve arc that had associationist origins. We were familiar with Thorndike's Law of Effect and Law of Exercise. All of these schools of thought led to a psychology insufficient to support pedagogical practices. From France came Claparède's functionalism, which was more satisfying because it defended the law of necessity and the law of interest. But Claparède still wasn't fully convincing. So we began studying Piaget, seeking answers to this gap. We went straight to what was available here: *The Psychology of Intelligence*, a summary book written by Piaget in 1947, but a very difficult book for beginners, so much so that we struggled a lot. So we had the idea of starting at the beginning. We began with *The Judgment and Reasoning of the Child*, from 1924, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, from 1936, and all of Piaget's early books. We followed his research. We read everything in French. There was no Piaget bibliography in Portuguese. From these studies, we discovered how the exchange between humankind and its environment could be interpreted, in Piaget's way. Then we began to become excited about finding an explanation. We no longer needed to accept that humankind receives everything from the outside (the empiricist) or that humankind has already everything ready-made from within (the innatist). We began to understand the form of the individual-environment exchange and

how mental structures are constructed. We began to perceive new didactic possibilities. That was what interested us. We found, in Hans Aebli's little book and in Piagetian studies, the foundations for New School practices. It eliminated inaccuracies. We better situated the concept of activity. We began a bridge between Piaget and didactics (Vasconcelos, 1995, p. 139-140).

This analysis represented a major difference for the study of genetic psychology and its dissemination through university courses and the resulting publications. Among the many books published by Professor Amélia, some titles are worth highlighting: "*Fundamentos psicológicos da didática: enfoque piagetiano*", "*Didática da escola média: teoria e prática*", "*Bases para uma didática do estudo (na perspectiva do desenvolvimento intelectual)*", "*Piaget e a pré-escola brasileira*", "*Didática para a escola de 1º e 2º graus*", "*Ensinar a ensinar: didática para a escola fundamental e média*", the latter organized in collaboration with Anna Maria Pessoa de Carvalho, another USP professor, who was her doctoral advisor. In 1966, she participated in the establishment of the first "*Curso de Pós-Graduação em Metodologia do Ensino Médio*" at the University of São Paulo.

Regarding her collaboration with other institutions, it is worth highlighting her participation in courses taught at the Professor Queiroz Filho Regional Research Center in São Paulo, covering topics such as "*Métodos Ativos*", "*Planos, programas e métodos*", "*Problemas educativos da América Latina*", among others. She also participated in the founding of the "*Centro de Treinamento para professores de Ciências de São Paulo*" serving on its Administrative Council. In addition to her work as a university professor, Amélia was also director of the *Colégio de Aplicação* in 1961, and also directed the *Pedagogical Guidance Service* within it. In 1963, she obtained her associate professorship from the FFCL of USP, with her thesis "*Bases para uma Didática do Estudo*". From 1967 to 1974, she served as a counselor on the State Council of Education. Upon retiring from USP, she became a professor at the School of Education of the State University of Campinas. In 1984, the teacher took office at the Paulista Academy of Education.

### **The development of university professors under the responsibilities of the Chair of General and Special Didactics: The New School Today**

The timeframe investigated between the two institutions coincides: at the National Faculty of Philosophy (FNFI) of the University of Brasil, from 1939 – the year the "special section of didactics" was created, responsible for preparing teachers for secondary and normal education – until 1968, when the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) was organized, following the university model then developed for Brazilian higher education, as part of the university reform.

The discipline of General Didactics, now Didactics, has already included in the curriculum of teacher training courses – Pedagogy and other undergraduate programs – since the creation of USP (1934) and FNFI (1939). The document entitled "*Digesto da Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia – Rio de Janeiro, 1955*", retrieves the legislation that has regulated the faculty's operations since its founding. The first names nominated for the chair of General and Special Didactics<sup>2</sup>, by the then rector of the University of Brazil, Dr. Raul Leitão da Cunha, in 1939, were Antonio de Almeida Junior and Dora Caldeira de Barros, both from São Paulo. In 1945, among the interim full professors, the name of Luiz Narciso Alves de Matos appears,

<sup>2</sup> The term "Special Didactics" is currently equivalent to "Teaching Methodology", therefore, it is the didactics associated with specific disciplinary content.

responsible for the chair of General and Special Didactics. The teaching assistants listed were Albert Ebert, Adolfina Rodrigues Portela, Clarice Lourdes das Neves, Irene da Silva Melo Carvalho, James Braga Vieira da Fonseca, José Senem Bandeira, and Selma Abramant Pinkusfeld, as recorded in *Organização e Regime Escolar, Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia, Universidade do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, 1945*.

Throughout the period analyzed, Luiz Narciso Alves de Matos was the chair of General Didactics, also responsible for developing proposals for teaching improvements and extension courses for university professors. He was also director of the *Colégio de Aplicação*<sup>3</sup> of the National Faculty of Philosophy during its first twenty years of operation. The professor, who also authored teaching manuals and teacher training books used in Normal Schools and Higher Education Institutions, used references that combined aspects of the New School ideology with others linked to Catholic ideals, based on the pursuit of technical efficiency and also reflecting his own training, which originated in religious institutions.

In 1946, after the publication of Decree-Law No. 9.092<sup>4</sup>, which expanded the teaching regime of philosophy faculties, establishing the format known as "3+1," in which teaching training offered to undergraduates would be concentrated in the fourth year of the program, Luiz Narciso Alves de Matos gave an interview to the newspaper *O Globo* emphasizing certain

<sup>3</sup> On March 12, 1946, Federal Decree-Law No. 9053 established the obligation for all Philosophy Schools to maintain practical training centers for students in Didactics programs. Ernesto de Souza Campos, in an article published in 1957, defined the objectives of the Practical Training Centers as follows: *"To provide practical training in teaching in an appropriate educational institution, equipped with all the resources for this purpose; To establish a model educational institution to encourage and emulate others of the same level; To open, under the aegis of the Faculty of Philosophy, a vibrant and evolving internship field."* In this sense, the Application Colleges were conceived based on two central premises: that of constituting a mandatory internship field for undergraduate students of the Faculty of Philosophy and that of providing opportunities for experimentation with new pedagogical practices. On May 20, 1948, the formal inauguration of the Application College of the National Faculty of Philosophy of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro was held. The school's Director was appointed Professor Luiz Narciso Alves de Mattos, Chair of General and Special Didactics. Professor Mattos nominated Professor Ary Sartorato of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation to serve as Executive Coordinator. (<https://www.cap.ufrj.br/index.php/sobre/cap/historico>).

<sup>4</sup> DECREE-LAW No. 9,092, OF MARCH 26, 1946. Expands the didactic regime of the faculties of philosophy, and contains other provisions. The President of the Republic, using the power conferred upon him by Article 180 of the Constitution, decrees: Art. 1. The faculties of philosophy may be governed by the form of current legislation or in accordance with the didactic regime established in this Decree-Law. Art. 2. The degree of licentiate or bachelor's degree under the new regime will be conferred after four years of study, in accordance with the conditions of Articles 3 and 4. Art. 3. In the first three years, students will follow a fixed curriculum of subjects, the breakdown of which will be current or the subject of instructions issued by the Minister of Education and Health. Art. 4. In the fourth year of the course, students will choose two or three subjects or courses from among those offered by the faculty. § 1. To obtain the bachelor's degree, fourth-year students will receive theoretical and practical didactic training at the applied college and will be required to take a course in psychology applied to education. § 2. Those who do not meet the requirements of the previous paragraph will receive a bachelor's degree. Art. 5. The Faculty will also grant a specialization diploma to bachelor's and graduates who meet the requirements that will be the subject of special instructions to be issued by the Minister of Education and Health. *Sole paragraph.* The diplomas referred to in this article will be conferred after the fourth year or a fifth year, also with optional courses, depending on the nature of the courses taken. Art. 6. The doctorate will be awarded to bachelor's or graduates who pass their thesis defense. § 1. The minimum period between registration for the doctorate and the thesis defense will be two years. § 2. The thesis will be an original work, written under the direction of a faculty professor. Art. 7. The Minister of Education and Health shall issue such instructions as may be necessary for the execution of this Decree-Law. Art. 8. This Decree-Law shall come into force on the date of its publication. Art. 9. Any provisions to the contrary are hereby revoked. Rio de Janeiro, March 26, 1946, the 125th year of Independence and the 58th year of the Republic. EURICO G. DUTRA. Ernesto de Souza Campos.

problems that needed to be addressed to improve the quality of education in Brazil. Regarding teacher training, Matos said:

a high percentage of our teaching staff lacks technical preparation: despite the regular schools, educational institutes, and philosophy faculties spread throughout the country, teaching remains a profession open to self-study. Teaching is a complex and subtle work of human engineering; (...) its responsibility to the educated individual and to society is tremendous. There is a whole body of principles, criteria, standards of action, resources, and techniques specific to teaching, which the individual who assumes this responsibility should be well-versed in order to proceed with confidence and accuracy. The human material entrusted to them by society is too delicate and sacred to be carelessly exposed to the vagaries of improvisation or mere routine. In addition to regular primary and secondary teacher training courses, intensive and "summer" courses should be created and spread throughout the country, aimed at the professional rehabilitation of the self-taught teachers currently serving in the teaching ranks, thus enhancing their capabilities and improving the quality of their teaching (p. 1-2).

As the same as Amélia Americano Franco Domingues de Castro, who was responsible for the didactic and pedagogical training of the group of professors in her department by leading the "Didactics Seminars" at the FFCL/USP, Luiz Alves de Mattos also contributed to the training of university professors by coordinating the "*Curso de extensão universitária sobre técnica de ensino para docentes de escolas superiores*" offered by the FNFi/UB in 1959. In this case, the course would be offered to professors and teaching assistants not only at the FNFi, but also to those from higher education institutions in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, São Paulo, the Federal District, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Bahia, Pernambuco, Paraíba, and Paraná. Among the course objectives were: "Analyze and critically discuss among the main problems of higher education related to student achievement. Familiarize registered teachers with the principles and standards of modern teaching techniques. Focus on the principles of professional ethics implicit in higher education teaching. (p.1 – typed document *Curso de extensão universitária sobre técnica de ensino para docentes de escolas superiores – FNFi – 1959*). The course covered topics such as teaching technique, teaching planning, learning motivation, classroom management, testing, and learning verification processes, highlighting characteristics of "instrumental didactics," a prevailing perspective at the time, which aimed to equip teachers with prescriptions and ways of acting in the classroom (CANDAU, 1982).

### **By the way of Final Considerations**

Among the similarities observed during the emergence of the General Didactics discipline at FFCL and FNFi, there was the intertwining of three statements that sparked (and continues to spark) interest in studies focused about the topic. The allusion, at this point, is to the "centrality of learning, the scientific nature of education, and university teacher training" (FONSECA, 2015, p. 242), which increasingly needed furthermore, it is inseparable from the process of preparing future teachers.

In this regard, within the scope and limits of this article, we chose to highlight the importance assumed by the so-called New School movement in the two institutions studied, as

indicated by the investments made in this study. After all, in the case of FFCL/USP, New School ideals were significantly present in the daily professional lives of Amélia Americano Franco Domingues de Castro and Onofre de Arruda Penteado Junior, responsible for General Didactics. Regarding FNFi/UB, we also examined traces of such ideals in the teaching practice of Luiz Narciso Alves de Matos, chair of General Didactics and director of the *Colégio de Aplicação* during its first twenty years of operation.

This presence of the New School in both institutions can be interpreted based on several main dimensions. Strictly speaking, the late 1920s/early 1930s marked a turning point in Brazil, in general, and in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in particular, not for the emergence, but for the strengthening of the defense of so-called "New School"<sup>5</sup> knowledge and practices. To this extent, as Ariadne L. Ecar and Fernanda Franchini (2020, p. 210) argue:

"New School" gained ground in discussions about the so-called traditional, bookish, and distant teaching of students. [...] The movement brought together education and politics by seeking to "renew the public system" by encouraging reforms at the municipal and state levels. Throughout the 1930s, such discourses by educators merged with Getúlio Vargas's promises of political renewal, which sustained the political coup, as they announced the new precepts as the only alternative to "educational ills."

For those who called themselves "New School," strategically, students had to occupy an "active" position in the learning process. Thus, not only were they to be tolerated, in a sense, questions, curiosities, games, glances, sensations, first impressions, experiences, and questions were primarily stimulated. The teacher's role was, on the one hand, to channel, discipline, and articulate students' interests, so as to "prevent them from [...] transforming into 'passion,' an 'untimely' principle of 'capricious choices'" (CARVALHO, 1997, p. 285). And, on the other, to use them as references for developing activities.

Experience combined with intuition increasingly began to be championed as the main theme for triggering the educational process. If, theoretically, with the intuitive teaching method, students ceased to be listeners and also became observers, the aim now was to bring about a new deepening: for the "listener-observers" to become, through action, experimenters (VIDAL, 2000, p. 498).

From this framework, it is no coincidence that it was proclaimed that students' "interest time" should dictate the pace of activities. Teachers were responsible for awakening this "interest time," both in terms of internal and external circumstances within schools. Arousing students' "interest" in the classroom also meant encouraging them to take an "interest" in other circumstances related to social life, so that educational, hygienic, disciplinary, and behavioral precepts would continue to be reflected, practiced, and disseminated.

For this deepening, it was essential to pay special attention to the study and preparation periods of future teachers. After all, as Maria Verônica R. Fonseca emphasizes, FONSECA (2015, p. 242): "the teacher ceased to be the center of instruction and required specialized and scientifically oriented training to enable learning."

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<sup>5</sup> As early as the late 19th century, in the European context, debates were already underway regarding the necessary "renewal of the school." Especially after the end of World War I, there was an intensification of the defense of the contributions that a "new school" could make to the emergence of a different society (ECAR; FRANCHINI, 2020).

Based on this framework of considerations, although shrouded in specificities, at both the FFCL and the FNF, we point to interference from these concerns regarding *learning* and *teaching* during the emergence, strengthening, and consolidation of "a Didactics Course and a specific academic discipline called General Didactics" (FONSECA, 2015, p. 242). Today, the Didactics discipline remains a structural element in teacher training programs. Mandatory for the Pedagogy program and other undergraduate programs, it addresses the triadic teacher-student-knowledge relation.

The connection with the New School and constructivist theory, and the way in which university professors who taught the course at the University of São Paulo and the University of Brazil appropriated the content of General Didactics and conducted research in the area, gradually brought the discipline, from a methodological perspective, closer to the foundations of education. This reconfiguration would be strengthened in the decade following the period studied here, the 1970s, when Didactics was questioned and transformed from "instrumental didactics" to "fundamental didactics" (CANDAU, 1991), which would later lead to the articulation of the discipline with the history of education, the sociology of education, and the psychology of education.

In other words, given the social needs and demands of that time—the so-called *interwar* period—education for peace, the preparation of children as the foundation for a more caring and humane world, and, ultimately, the defense of the political aspects of educational investments also served as justifications for the (re)signification of what was thought possible to achieve through the didactic training of those professionals who would be responsible for disseminating and expanding educational precepts.

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