

# Relationship with knowledge: a study with university students entering a private institution\*

Karina Sales Vieira<sup>1</sup>

ORCID: 0000-0002-7763-8569

## Abstract

This article presents results of an investigation that sought to understand the relationship with academic knowledge of university students from a private institution of higher education. The research field was AGES University Center (UniAGES) located in the state of Bahia. The research subjects were 170 first and second period students who entered higher education through the aid of government programs, such as the Student Financing Fund (Fies) and the University for All Program (ProUni) and even the one implemented by the Institution, the Reception Program (ProVIDA). Data collection was carried out from the balance of knowledge, an instrument proposed by Bernard Charlot that consists of the process of producing a text about the subject's learning. First, the article presents the theoretical axes, followed by the analysis of the learning evoked by the students, after it is discussed with whom the students say they have learned, the preponderance of intellectual and academic learning and, finally, the projects they elaborate for the future. It is concluded that the relationship with the knowledge of the research subjects is linked to the valuation of intellectual and academic learning as a promise of a better life. It is the element of mobilization to enter the university and, aiming at the insertion in the job market in a specialized society, it is not uncommon the preponderance presented for the type of learning strongly indicated.

## Keywords

Relationship with knowledge – Private Higher Education – Scholarship students.

---

**1** - Universidade Federal de Sergipe, São Cristóvão, SE, Brasil. Contato: vieirask@hotmail.com.

\* Text translated into English by Lucas Gonçalves dos Santos. The translator assumes full responsibility for the translation of the text. Contact: lucas.ages@hotmail.com



<https://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634202046214213>

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons attribution-type BY-NC.

## Introduction

This article presents the results of a research that sought to understand the relationship with academic knowledge of university scholarship students from a private institution of higher education in the interior of Bahia. In order to achieve this purpose, Bernard Charlot's theory of the relationship with knowledge (2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2009) was used as a theoretical framework. The choice of this theme was motivated by considering the heterogeneous character of the university public in private institutions resulting from the expansion of the offer at this level of education from the Fies and ProUni programs and even ProVIDA, from the complex nature of discourse in higher education, as well as different processes in the relationship with academic knowledge established by students. For this reason, Bernard Charlot's discussions about the relationship with knowledge were the appropriate framework for the analysis and understanding of the different aspects involved in the educational experiences established in higher education.

The research field was the AGES University Center (UniAGES) located in a small municipality in the state of Bahia. The research covered 7 undergraduate degree courses, with a representative course from each Knowledge Center offered by the institution being researched: Biology, 2012 (Biological Sciences); Physical Education, 2008 (Health Sciences); Mathematics, 2012; Physics, 2014, and Chemistry, 2014 (Exact and Earth Sciences); Pedagogy, 2007 (Human Sciences); Letras, 2001 (Linguistics, Letters and Arts). The definition of the courses took as a premise to consider those with the largest number of students enrolled, as this would have a more extensive database, as well as because they were the largest concentration of scholarship students. However, as the courses at the Exact Center registered a low number of enrollments, three were chosen as shown above.

The research subjects were students from the first and second periods of each course. The 170 students who comprised the investigated population were young, predominantly female, from low-income families and who, being the first of their families to enter the University, exceeded their parents' education. In order to collect the data, the balance of knowledge was used, a technique developed by Bernard Charlot that consists in the production of a text by the subjects / students, based on the following questions: "Since I was born, I learned many things, at home, in the street, at school and elsewhere... What? With whom? What is important to me about all this? And now, what do I expect? " (CHARLOT, 2009, p. 7).

In this perspective, this study lets university students entering a reality speak that even the implementation of financing programs for higher education (Fies, ProUni and ProVIDA) did not have them as protagonists. For this reason, considering that every relationship with knowledge also includes an identity, social and epistemic dimension (CHARLOT, 2000), in this investigation the statement of the balance of knowledge was modified, in order to let the scholarship university students talk about the meaning they attribute to academic knowledge, which for them is most important in all their experience in higher education, which projects they develop for the future. Thus, in an attempt to adapt the instrument to these perspectives, changes were made, which are indicated below:

Since I was born, I have learned many things ... and now I am at the University. What have I learned at the University? And have learned from books, from teachers, from colleagues ...? What do you think is most important in this learning? What is important to me about all this? And now, what do I expect, what are my projects and expectations for the future after I graduate?

In the first section of this article we present the theoretical aspects of the theory of the relationship with knowledge. The subsequent sections are dedicated to the analysis of the data produced from the balance of knowledge. It is addressed not what the student learned objectively, but what is important, valuable, meaningful to him. Thus, they are dealt with the learnings that are most prominent in the atmosphere of academic knowledge. Following, the importance given by students to learning is presented, which are the most relevant and endowed with meaning, next with whom they learned and, finally, which projects they elaborate for the future.

## **The theory of the relationship with knowledge**

The relationship with knowledge is, according to Charlot (2000), a set of relations that the subject establishes with learning, multiple, circumstantial and, sometimes, contradictory relations. Thus, it proposes the understanding of the subject as being whole and simultaneously a human, a social and singular being. Therefore, in this theory there is no equality between the subjects regarding access to knowledge. Each being is unique, singular and therefore each has a relationship with the knowledge that is particular. Therefore, research by Charlot and the ESCOL team on this relationship with knowledge:

[...] they seek to understand how the subject categorizes, organizes his world, how he gives meaning to his experience and especially to his school experience [...], how the subject apprehends the world and, with that, how he is constructed and he transforms himself. (CHARLOT, 2005, p. 41).

In this perspective, there is no relationship with knowledge without a reference to the subject who is born obliged to the need of learning. Faced with the duty to learn to be, to build, to become a man and to appropriate a part of the world, underlying the human condition, the subject experiences these processes involved in the condition of humanizing, singularizing and socializing thus, becoming a member of the human species, having a history that is unique and becoming a member of a society (CHARLOT, 2000).

Learning, therefore, is part of the construction of man and there is no learning except in conditions of desire. This is because man is a being born unfinished, imperfect, unprepared. That is why he must become, with the help of humanity, education and himself, he must finish his own work. But it is also a being engaged in a world where he acts, interprets, survives, produces and is produced.

To learn is to appropriate what has been learned, it is to make something your own, it is to "internalize it". However, learning is also about appropriating a knowledge, a practice, a form of relationship with others and with oneself ... that exists before I learn it, outside me. (CHARLOT, 2001, p. 20).

Knowing implies acquiring an intellectual content, while many elements can be learned that do not imply this condition. One can learn to master the computer, to ride a bicycle, to ride a motorcycle, to swim, to read, in short, one learns a wide range of practices and not just to appropriate a content, a knowledge. On the other hand, as knowledge is acquired, other relationships with the world are maintained.

Learning is not just acquiring knowledge, in the school and intellectual sense of the term, of the statements. It is also about appropriating relational practices and forms and confronting the question of the meaning of life, of the world, of yourself. The relationship with learning is broader than the relationship with knowledge (in the school sense of the term), and the whole relationship with learning is also a relationship with the world, with others and with oneself. In this field of learning, there may be situations of competition (for example, between learning at school and learning in life) caused mainly by the social and cultural position in which one is born (CHARLOT, 2005, p. 56 emphasis added).

Thus, one can learn in various spaces, times and with different people. Whereas knowledge, in the schooled sense of the term, is something that is acquired in a school environment, so it is knowledge that is privileged by educational institutions. Thus, there is no knowledge outside of their relationship.

Acquiring knowledge allows you to ensure a certain domain of the world in which you live, to communicate with other beings and to share the world with them, to live certain experiences and, thus, to become bigger, more confident of yourself, more independent (CHARLOT, 2000, p. 60).

The notion of knowledge, therefore, is restricted to activities that involve the use of reason, intellectual, mental movement. As a result, the subject of knowledge develops activities of argumentation, verification, experimentation, willingness to demonstrate, to prove, to validate. It is also the subject's action on himself, because making use of reason and knowledge increase demands in relation to himself, it is an activity that implies a form of relationship with the intellectual community.

According to Charlot (2009), there are several types of learning thus categorized: relational and affective (interpersonal relationships and affective-emotional behaviors); linked to personal development (personal achievements, ways of being, religious experiences); everyday (everyday learning - walking, talking, etc.); institutional and school learning (school learning or involving mental operations); professionals (learning linked to expectations about learning to be a professional); generic (when the subject says he has learned many things, but does not specify them). From these categories, we formulate others to deal with and typify the learning mentioned by the students, which make up the framework for analyzing the issue addressed in the next section.

Unspecified learnings: learnings that were not named suggesting generic ideas, for example: "At the University I am learning several things that will certainly help me to be a successful professional in the field of education" (STUDENT AT THE EXACT CENTER, emphasis added).

Intellectual and academic learning: learning that involves mental and intellectual operations whose content has been specified, such as: “During my time at the University I have been learning numerous things. How to create and make analysis of functions, records, concept maps, learning to like studies more, among others” (STUDENT AT THE EXACT CENTER, emphasis added).

Relational and affective learning: learning that encompasses interpersonal or affective relationships, for example: “And now I am at the University, I have learned that knowledge is not limited only in the classroom, it made me mature my ideas more, I learned to understand and respect the differences accepting them in a natural way and without repudiation” (STUDENT AT THE EXACT CENTER, emphasis added).

Personal development learnings: learnings that involve personal achievements, time management, values, ways of being, for example: “I learned to take a little out of my shyness” (Student of the Biological Sciences Center) and, “Now that I entered college I have learned to organize myself in my personal life and to reconcile the time between college and the day-to-day chores ” (HEALTH CENTER STUDENT).

## The relationship with knowledge and different learnings

Learning, according to Charlot (2009), means acquiring knowledge, controlling activities, objects of everyday life, relational forms. At the university, the sense of learning is amplified and for each subject it can mean different, singular relationships. In this sense, we will deal here with how this universe of learning is organized and which ones are most relevant for the students researched at UniAGES.

Considering the group of university students surveyed, out of a total of 377 learning evoked, 18% were classified as unspecified; 49% as intellectuals and academics; 8% as relational and affective and, finally, 25% as personal development, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1** - Result of the set of learnings mentioned by the students

CATEGORIES	OCCURRENCES
A) Unspecified learning	18% (68)
B) Intellectual and academic learning	49% (185)
C) Relational, Affective Learning	8% (30)
D) Personal Development Learning	25% (94)
TOTAL OCCURRENCES	100% (377)

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

It is observed that, in relation to the group of students, there is a preponderance of intellectual and academic learning that makes up almost half of the total learning recorded in the balances of knowledge. Learning related to personal development also showed a significant index, totaling 25% of the total. Then there are the unspecified learnings, a category also with a high percentage, 18%. Relational and affective learning,

on the other hand, were mentioned in a proportion 6 times smaller than intellectual and academic ones.

The unspecified learning category incorporates all the responses of students who do not mention specific learning, do not name what they say they have learned. Thus, they say with generic expressions that they have learned many things or various knowledge, but do not specify it.

The category of intellectual and academic learning, of greater preponderance, aggregates learning related to the production of academic texts, works, methodology, theoretical and scientific subjects discussed in the disciplines; concepts, rules of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (ABNT), the importance of reading. When students evoke the methodology, they refer to the one used in the researched institution - the active methodology. The following records exemplify:

New learning was provided to me, such as: the creation of concept maps, which since high school was considered difficult by me [...]. (FEMALE STUDENT AT HUMAN CENTER).

I learned a lot from day to day that I stepped here, how to build a legal text, concept map, to argue and give my ideas, I also learned to contextualize questions, make goals, hypotheses [...]. (FEMALE STUDENT AT THE HEALTH CENTER).

During my time at the University I have been learning countless things like creating and analyzing functions, records, concept maps [...]. (STUDENT AT THE EXACT CENTER, MALE).

I'm learning a lot of content that I didn't see or want to talk about in elementary and high school, such as Anatomy, Biological Bases, PT (Textual Production), MTC (Scientific Work Methodology), and the History of Physical Education that actually I didn't know that there was such a discipline. (FEMALE STUDENT AT THE HEALTH CENTER).

The category related to relational and affective aspects, mentioned in a smaller proportion in the total of responses, gathers learning related to interpersonal relationships, the ability to live with others, respecting differences, as well as affective relationships, when learning to love.

And having joined the University is a wonderful discovery, I have learned several things such: to better respect the opinion of others, to live better, to accept differences, learning to make new friends [...]. (STUDENT AT THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES CENTER, FEMALE).

Finally, the category personal development brings together learning related to human values, personal achievements, as ways of being; linked to the ability to develop responsibility and manage time based on personal achievements:

I have learned the importance of being humble and supportive of everyone. (STUDENT AT THE HEALTH CENTER, MALE).

I learned in college to lose the shame of public speaking. (STUDENT AT THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES CENTER, FEMALE).

I learned that I am not always sure, that it is better to listen and reflect than letting go of what is feeling to the four winds, I learned to see my failures as a means of improving my own knowledge, and above all to value myself and realize that I'm capable. (STUDENT AT THE EXACT CENTER, FEMALE).

Taking, therefore, the group of students surveyed, there is a greater preponderance for intellectual and academic learning, appearing with 49%, however, other learning was listed with a certain prevalence, such as those related to personal development and unspecified learning.

Students mention that they learned, in these first months of experience at the university, contents of specific subjects such as Anatomy and Biological Bases, the teaching methodology adopted by the institution (concept map, questions, objectives, hypotheses), they say they have learned to do academic work example of recordings and unique production.

The category personal development appears with 25% of the answers from which statements like: I learned to be ethical, human, humble, I learned human values, to manage and manage time, reconciling study with domestic chores, to lose my shyness.

The unspecified learning category, on the other hand, recorded 18% of occurrences. Many do not identify what they have learned in a specific way and mention in generic responses that they have learned many things, a lot of knowledge, but do not name or typify them. The least mentioned category, in this total of students, refers to relational and affective learning with a total of 8%.

The transition from high school to higher education is a delicate stage (COULON, 2008), there are no longer the same relationships, the familiar faces of the school disappear, but all of this can generate growth.

Growing up is always losing your roots, your old relationships, your old friends, it means being isolated for a while. It is a necessary condition to walk towards a crossroads that reveals the hope of new paths. Learning, the time of the other that I want to look like, announces the time of affiliation that will finally be what will allow to learn and understand. (COULON, 2008, p. 175).

For all these reasons, this lonely world is, according to Coulon (2008), a necessary condition for growth, development and, above all, for learning. To enter the university is to lose sight of your best friends from school, "to feel isolated and anonymous among others, is to remain silent even in a group" (COULON, 2008, p. 173).

Anyway, it is important to realize that the school makes some sense to students, the sense is what changes. For the group of UniAGES students who responded to the balance of knowledge, it seems that the university gains meaning through intellectual and academic learning, as evidenced in table 1.

The primacy given to university knowledge is evident. Therefore, studying the relationship of young university scholarship holders with academic knowledge means thinking about their human and professional training, considering that, for the most part, they had a basic education that largely did them little good. In addition, studying them is important to realize the return that they, from the preponderance of university knowledge, evidenced in the data collected, as well as through the projects they elaborate for the future, can give to the society that invests in its preparation.

When knowing the data of the group of students, we are now interested in whether they remain or vary according to the Knowledge Centers. For this reason, we count the data per surveyed course and group them by Center. The table with the data for the five Centers follows.

**Table 2 - Learning cited by students by Knowledge Center**

CATEGORIES	HEALTH	EXACT	HUMAN	LINGUISTICS, LETTERS AND ARTS	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
A) Unspecified learning	19% (20)	26% (21)	13% (13)	11% (3)	18% (11)
B) Intellectual and academic learning	57% (62)	41% (34)	48% (47)	41% (11)	47% (29)
C) Relational, Affective Learning	6% (6)	9% (7)	11% (11)	11% (3)	5% (3)
D) Personal Development Learning	19% (20)	24% (20)	28% (27)	37% (10)	31% (19)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(108)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(82)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(98)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(27)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(62)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

As shown in table 2, there is no significant variation. In all Knowledge Centers the balances of knowledge have marked the preponderance of intellectual and academic learning. It seems that knowledge, reading and writing activities, the contents of the subjects, the methodology, the improvement of vocabulary, expanding the world view make a lot of sense to the students surveyed at UniAGES.

Regarding this aspect, a student of the mathematics course, in an informal and relaxed language, refers in his balance of knowledge to the importance of academic knowledge for his insertion in the job market:

The student's life is very complicated, poor guy doesn't even have time to work, does he live in the world of choices, make a snack or photocopy a job? However, at the end of the course you still have to take care of your stomach with gastritis because of academic concerns. However, you get good knowledge for the job market [sic]. (MATHEMATICS COURSE STUDENT).

It is important to highlight the financial difficulties faced by students, a condition that makes them live with choices. As they are scholarship holders, one of the requirements to have access to this financing is, precisely, to belong to a family group of low income



per capita. It is seen, therefore, that we are not facing subjects who are Bourdieu's heirs. The heirs, the students and the culture is a work of Bourdieu with the collaboration of Passeron. The work deals with inequality in the face of the culture that predominates in schooling processes. Therefore, the school defines who the heirs and non-heirs are. The heirs are, therefore, those who have a broad cultural capital, for them the experience of the future school is marked by more than one chance in two to go to college, this destination is natural, commonplace, while for the children of workers is an almost unreachable reality, as they have less than two chances in a hundred to get there (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2018). Those who manage to enter a university often have to reconcile study and work and, due to their social status, need to make choices to stay in their studies. Unlike the heirs, who have a favored economic and social origin. For them, the job is the study, without having to make choices or reconcile this task with work.

## **Who the students say they learned from**

As Charlot (2009) explains, the learning expressed in the balances of knowledge can refer, on the one hand, to places and, on the other, to learning agents, who taught them. In this research, the occurrence records refer to agents of learning. We will use the term to refer to a person (a teacher, a family member etc.), or to a group of people (colleagues, friends, etc.) who have performed a function, perform an action and / or participate in moments and processes of learning with students. In addition, students in our research also point to books and on rare occasions they refer to the internet, to indicate where and from whom they learned. It is important to note that books are for Bourdieu cultural goods, in the objectified state, cultural capital can exist under other forms of cultural goods such as paintings, pictures, dictionaries etc. (BOURDIEU, 1998).

In total, therefore, among the students surveyed, a total of 273 responses were distributed as follows: 35% mentions that he learned from the teachers, following this margin, 33% indicates that he learned by reading the books indicated by the teachers; with a slightly lower percentage, 29% say they learned from their colleagues; family and internet were rarely mentioned, both 1%. We realize that among teachers, colleagues and books there is no relevant preponderance, the data appear with a certain balance.

When students mention teachers as learning agents, they say that they taught the content related to the course, the dynamics of the university and its methodology:

With the professors of the University I have learned what is an academic text, a concept map, a record. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

All learning is linked mainly to the teacher who through him is the one who knows all the knowledge of the disciplines and who is in the books, providing a wide diversity of knowledge linked to the books. Colleagues are also part of this knowledge, because it is through them that we have discussions of issues. (FEMALE HEALTH CENTER).

Books are often associated with teachers. Students say that books help to build knowledge from the ideas conveyed in them, what they call theories.

When it comes to identifying colleagues as learning agents, they are cited when referring to the construction of companionship relationships, respect for the opinion of the other, while colleagues also appear as those who help to clarify content and activities not understood with the teacher:

With my colleagues I learned that we have to respect the opinion of the other, because being different, having a different opinion is normal. (CENTER OF LINGUISTICS LETTERS AND ARTS, FEMALE).

I have learned from colleagues, with them there is a great connection, helping each other in times of need, taking the doubt that sometimes we do not understand with the teacher. (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

[...] it often becomes easier to learn from studying with a colleague than in the classroom. [sic]. (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, MALE).

Still others say that everything they learned at the university was with everyone's contribution: books, teachers and friends. Given this data set, it is important to know if there is a change by Knowledge Center. Thus, we also catalog the data and systematize them by Center, as shown in the table below:

**Table 3 - Learning agents mentioned in the Knowledge Balances by Knowledge Center**

CATEGORIES	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	HEALTH	EXACT	HUMAN	LINGUISTICS, LETTERS AND ARTS
A) Teachers	31% (16)	38% (32)	33% (18)	37% (21)	40% (9)
B) Colleagues	35% (19)	31% (26)	24% (13)	26% (15)	30% (7)
C) Books / readings	30% (16)	32% (27)	37% (20)	37% (21)	30% (7)
D) Family	7% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
E) Internet	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(54)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(85)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(54)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(57)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(23)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

From the data shown in table 3, it can be realized that there is no significant variation, as both by Center and in the data set, students recognize the importance of teachers, colleagues and readings / books in their learning processes. The family only appears as a learning agent among students at the Center for Biological Sciences and the mention of the Internet appears among students at the Center for Exact Sciences. If we think that the occurrence of intellectual and academic learning among all students

surveyed was 49%, according to table 1, we can infer that the family and the internet seem to have little participation in their learning processes in the academic scenario; teachers, colleagues and books gain greater meaning in this space.

According to Coulon (2008), the knowledge that is conveyed in this university space no longer has reference to parental speeches and the student begins to experience moments of conflict, arising both from the University's requirements, due to its link, as well as by the much broader aspects and personal that are part of the common transformations in this stage of transition and development.

In this atmosphere, it is important to highlight that if basic education does not favor students in their entry into higher education, it is at the University that they begin, in fact, to learn. For this reason, of the total of 377 responses, 49% mentioned having learned intellectual and academic subjects, as themes related to personal development, and even to relational and affective themes, they may have learned in the family and in basic education, but knowledge academic nature, conceptual map, file, elaboration of questions, objectives, hypotheses as mentioned by them, were not explored in the public basic school.

Thus, many attribute value to knowledge and reading as agents of learning, emphasizing the value of also being readers:

It is important to be readers, because when we do not exercise the mind, darkness remains within us and reading is exclusively about filling this void within us, in addition to opening our eyes to society. (FEMALE HEALTH CENTER).

For all these reasons, the university is, therefore, for the researched students of UniAGES, a privileged and important space for intellectual and academic learning, which can be facilitated by the guidance of teachers, colleagues and readings, but it is also a space for learning linked to personal development.

## **Meaning and relationship with knowledge**

To learn it is necessary to be mobilized, there must be an internal action, something that projects the subject and makes him want. Thus, in order to seek university, to carry out a course, it is necessary that something put the subject in motion by mobiles that send him to a value. So, what makes sense for the student involved in all this atmosphere of learning? What is important to them? When invited through the balance of knowing how to record what is important in all the experience lived at the University and the learning they acquired, there were many responses, which were categorized as follows: unspecified responses; intellectual and academic knowledge; relational, affective and values aspects; aspects related to the profession and a better life; and finally, aspects related to personal development.

The first category concerns generic responses, which do not mention or specify what in academic experience has been most important, as exemplified below:

There is nothing more important than another in learning, so it can be said that everything is important, as long as the reality found in society is consistent and applicable. (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

The second category, intellectual and academic knowledge, groups the records of those students who mention the relevance of learning disciplinary content, methodologies, scientific procedures, etc., named by them, such as: the discipline of anatomy, the development of critical vision, knowing the Physical Education concepts and even the Institution's method. Thus, they quote:

The most important thing about learning is knowledge, because only I can seek it, and it is something that no one will take from me. (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

So it is as one of the most important learning for me to acquire all of the knowledge exposed above (concept map, text production, make theoretical foundation). (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

The third category linked to relational, affective and values aspects refers to aspects of coexistence, interpersonal relationships, friendships, companionship, affective relationships, as in the example of the record:

In this, all that is most important is the friends I made here, which seem like childhood friendships. I was forgetting, it was also important that I met Felipe, who today we are boyfriends. (CENTER OF LINGUISTICS, LETTERS AND ARTS, FEMALE).

The fourth category related to the profession and a better life involves aspects related to the profession and the desire for a better life, desires to get a job, to have a good salary. This is evidenced in records such as the ones below:

Exactly everything that has been learned has its due importance, but the worldview I have after each explanation is fundamental. It is therefore important for my professional training. (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).

I've been working hard here, however, I don't have that much time available, however I know that the greatest importance is in guaranteeing a better future and life. (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

Finally, the last category, linked to personal development, highlights aspects related to overcoming difficulties, self-confidence, losing shyness, learning human values, ethics, morals, changing the way of being, as exemplified below:

The importance of my learning is to become a better and better person, human, humble, loyal and friendly. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

For me, all this learning has its level of importance, but nevertheless [sic] human values in turn have a special importance, as it is necessary that you know and have each one of them for your own good as well as for the good of humanity. (EXACT CENTER, FEMALE).

Regarding these categories, among the students, of the 165 responses, 38% referred to intellectual and academic knowledge as being more important in university experience; then, with 19%, it indicated aspects related to the profession and to a better life; alongside this category, with 18%, they mention aspects related to personal development; with a very expressive number, 14%, there are unspecified answers, for whom everything is important; and, finally, the relational and affective aspects, as shown in table 4, appear with the lowest percentage of 12%, in line with the data in table 1 in which these aspects were the least mentioned when asked about what they had learned at the university.

**Table 4** - What is most important in the university experience for all students

CATEGORIES	OCORRENCES
A) Unspecified answers	14% (23)
B) Intellectual and academic knowledge	38% (62)
C) Relational and Affective Aspects	12% (20)
D) Aspects related to the profession and a better life	19% (31)
F) Aspects related to Personal Development	18% (29)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100% (165)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

Although the category of intellectual and academic knowledge appears with 38% of the total answers, it is still a small number when we add the results of the other categories. In addition, in table 1 it is evident that intellectual and academic knowledge prevails among the others with 49% of the total answers, here, in table 4, this number drops to 38%. In view of these data, it seems that although 49% of the responses show with preponderance that they learned aspects related to intellectual and academic knowledge (table 1), only 38% is the most important category (table 4).

**Table 5** - What is most important in the university experience for students by Center

CATEGORIES	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	HEALTH	EXACT	HUMAN	LINGUISTICS, LETTERS AND ARTS
A) Unspecified answers	23% (5)	11% (7)	19% (7)	11% (3)	6% (1)
B) Intellectual and academic knowledge	36% (8)	41% (26)	31% (11)	56% (15)	12% (2)
C) Relational and Affective Aspects	9% (2)	16% (10)	3% (1)	7% (2)	24% (4)
D) Aspects related to the profession and a better life	5% (1)	22% (14)	19% (7)	11% (3)	35% (6)
E) Aspects related to Personal Development	27% (6)	10% (6)	28% (10)	15% (4)	24% (4)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100% (22)</b>	<b>100% (63)</b>	<b>100% (36)</b>	<b>100% (27)</b>	<b>100% (17)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

When systematized by course, we realize that there are important variations starting with the students of the Biological Sciences Center (Biological Sciences course), for whom the rate of unidentified responses is high, representing 23%, they think that “everything” is important, “That all this serves me”. As the following record expresses:

Everything is important here, because the world outside is not easy and here we are preparing to know how to act abroad, so everything is important. (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).

It is important to highlight that in relation to table 2, the unspecified answers to what they claimed to have learned was 18%, an expressive number. On the other hand, 47% (table 2) said they had learned the aspects related to intellectual and academic knowledge, which for 36% of the occurrences are the most important.

The frequency of the importance attributed to intellectual and academic knowledge was more prevalent among students at the Humanities Center (Pedagogy course), representing 56%, in their balance of knowledge students said with greater vehemence that knowledge was the most important.

It is important for me to know that with each passing day I learn more, I have more knowledge and I will seek more information. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

Everything I have been learning, all past knowledge is of great value to my life, as everything will be very profitable in the future. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

The great importance in all this is because each day we learn more and always seeking more knowledge, it is important because what would be of each one of us if we did not study. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

Knowledge for the public of investigated students is an important element in the relationship with the university and in guaranteeing a better future:

What I consider to be the most important is the gain of knowledge, as, as Paulo Freire says, only education frees and can give us a new life, a new experience and even a better future. (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

Students at the Exact Center (Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics course) also highlight knowledge as an important element both because of the knowledge that is acquired and because of the possibility of being able to share it with other people, in addition, they expose that knowledge allows to withdraw it. them from intellectual ignorance in such a way that it is possible to form an opinion on various everyday matters. Thus, a student expresses: “the great importance in all this is that in addition to learning, I will share my knowledge with others and have a very full worldview and have the morality of being able to give an opinion in the face of our daily matters” (COURSE IN CHEMISTRY).

Another knowledge center that presents knowledge as the most important element is the Health Sciences (Physical Education course) with 41% of the answers. In this Center, students represent knowledge as knowledge, reading, specific contents, such as anatomy, the Institution's active method, knowing the concepts of Physical Education. In addition, some say that everything is important, especially when you are the first in your family to be at university, says a student:

All of this is important to me, because in my family I am the first daughter to study higher education, it is important for me, because I want to have a critical view on everything and never be manipulated by anyone for lack of knowledge. (PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENT).

Having a critical view is, above all, analyzing, examining the fundamentals and reasons of an object, for that it is necessary to have knowledge. It is necessary to know the phenomenon. You cannot have a critical view and thus make an analysis and position yourself on what nothing is known or known. Knowledge is the basis and foundation.

The data in table 5 show that only the Center for Letters, Linguistics and Arts (Language course) does not mention knowledge as the most important element. The data from this Center cite relational and affective aspects as predominant, with 25%, as well as those related to a profession and a better life, as 35%. According to the following records:

The most important thing for me in all of this is that there is harmony, respect between people regardless of who they are, it is of great importance to me that these values are always present so that there is unity between people. (LETTERS, LINGUISTICS AND ARTS CENTER, FEMALE).

The most important thing is that everything I have learned and will still learn will help me to be a good professional and have a better future. (CENTER OF LETTERS, LANGUAGE AND ARTS, MALE).

In the face of everything, the general framework presented by the students surveyed at UniAGES regarding what is most important to them in the university experience points to intellectual and academic knowledge as the most important element, as what makes the most sense to them. In addition, as they seek insertion in the labor market in a specialized society, it is perhaps common that the greatest importance attributed by students is linked to intellectual and academic learning.

## **What are the students' expectations for the future**

Projects, dreams, desires... what drives the researched students at UniAGES are dreams, they are good reasons to enter the University. When asked to register their expectations and projects for the future, there were a multitude of responses, which were analyzed, divided into themes and gathered in these categories: unspecified responses, such as "going further", "making my dreams come true", "seeing the direction that studies can take me"; academic life, such as "getting good grades", "completing the course",

“being a good academic”, “getting a degree”, “taking another course, specialization, master’s, doctorate; aspects related to the professional life in which are the themes related to the search for a job. A good job that guarantees a better life financially, being a successful professional, students with an entrepreneurial spirit - who want to start their own companies; aspects related to personal and family satisfaction, in which themes refer to the possibility of helping the family financially, giving a dignified life, as well as the relationships of happiness, “being happy”, “a better person”, “a person of light”; finally, aspects related to the desire to transform reality, themes related to the desire to build a just society, change people’s worldview, make the city more active, help society. The data are shown in table 6:

**Table 6** - Future projects indicated by the researched students at UniAGES

CATEGORIES	OCORRENCES
A) Unspecified answers	7% (20)
B) Academic life	22% (64)
C) Professional life	54% (155)
D) Personal and family satisfaction	10% (30)
E) Transformation of reality	6% (17)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100% (286)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author’s construction (August-October 2016).

Taking into account the group of students surveyed, the first category obtained a not very expressive percentage, only 7% cite unspecified responses. Their records do not outline defined projects, they say that in the future they want to achieve their dreams, their goals and even their goals, but they do not name or specify them, as exemplified in the following record: “My expectation is to achieve all my goals” (HUMAN CENTER, FEMALE).

The Academic life category represents 22% of the total of 286 occurrences. This category comprises students who claim to aspire to good grades, have graduation as expectations, others aspire to continue their studies with a master’s degree or even another undergraduate course, as evidenced by the records:

Now I hope to get good grades in tests, works, projects and graduate ... (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).

With all this, I hope to achieve my goals and get my diploma, graduate, and maybe even another degree. (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

[...] However, I already think about the future, about taking a bachelor’s degree in the course I study and master’s. (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).



The third category, linked to work, professional success and life improvement is the most prevalent, representing 54% of the total occurrences. This success is related to getting a job, having a better life and financial conditions to acquire goods and achieve a more dignified life. As exemplified below:

I hope to be a good professional, develop my work significantly and specialize in order to receive a good salary and improve my life. (CENTER OF LETTERS, LANGUAGE AND ARTS, MALE).

Having a career and be recognized and valued in my profession, where the real importance of education can be highlighted (CENTRO DE HUMANAS, FEMALE).

I want to be a renowned marine biologist and put into practice everything I've been taught. (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).

My future projects are to get a good job and thereby build my own business, which would be a school where I would develop several resources for special people... (CENTRO DE HUMANAS, FEMALE).

If for 38% of the students surveyed at UniAGES intellectual and academic knowledge is important, it is because knowledge is what will give them the necessary skills to be able to enter the job market with a good job in order to have a better life, since 54% out of a total of 286 occurrences, it traces projects for the future to have a job, open a business, have professional success, in short, have a better life. "My expectations are to get a good job, help my parents and build and be able to support my family with my profession, with my sweat" (CENTER OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, FEMALE).

The last two categories, personal and family satisfaction and transformation of reality, likewise the first, do not present significant percentages, respectively, 10% and 6%. However, for these 10%, of the total number of students, the family is their greatest source of mobilization, in addition to their personal satisfaction of being happy. Finally, the last category, transformation of reality, with 6% of the total of 286 occurrences, corresponds to students who outline projects related to the transformation of reality. They wish to modify it to the point of making it more just:

I hope from this acquired knowledge to transform reality into the path of tolerance, human values and consequently peace. (FEMALE HEALTH CENTER).

I intend to continue learning to contribute to society, making it fairer and offering equal opportunities for all. (FEMALE HEALTH CENTER).

Therefore, it is clear that, with greater preponderance, students want a more dignified life for the future, based on a good job and professional success. From this, in order to check if there would be a change, variation in the results by Knowledge Center, we catalog and systematize them by Center, as shown in table 7:

**Table 7 - Future projects indicated by students surveyed at UniAGES by Knowledge Center**

CATEGORIES	HEALTH	EXACT	HUMAN	LINGUISTICS, LETTERS AND ARTS	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
A) Unspecified answers	9% (9)	4% (2)	7% (5)	14% (3)	2% (1)
B) Aspects related to the University, graduation and continuity of studies	26% (27)	20% (9)	15% (11)	24% (5)	29% (12)
C) Aspects related to employment, professional success, life improvement	50% (53)	58% (27)	64% (46)	57% (12)	41% (17)
D) Aspects related to the Family and personal satisfaction	9% (9)	6% (3)	10% (7)	5% (1)	25% (10)
E) Transformation of reality	8% (8)	11% (5)	4% (3)	0% (0)	2% (1)
<b>TOTAL OCCURRENCES</b>	<b>100% (106)</b>	<b>100% (46)</b>	<b>100% (72)</b>	<b>100% (21)</b>	<b>100% (41)</b>

Source: Balance of Knowledge, author's construction (August-October 2016).

It is noted by the data that there is no relevant variation. Professional success, recognition is a well-marked occurrence among all students of the Courses researched in the different Centers, especially the Center for Human Sciences, representing 64% of the total of 72 occurrences. Thus, the University and knowledge gain meaning for the students surveyed at UniAGES in reference to a job, to a better life, to professional success. The university is then the passport to employment, the salary, as the balance of knowledge of a student in the Language course at UniAGES says: "I hope to be a good professional, develop my work significantly and specialize in order to receive a good salary." What drives them is employment, work.

On the other hand, there are students who think of helping people, society, to improve the world. The meaning of the university for these is to be able to have knowledge to help others: "[...] go beyond the degree, I think a lot about helping others and trying to be the best without taking anyone's space and leaving my legacy to be remembered when I go to another life " (EXACT CENTER, MALE).

### Final considerations

When resuming the data and the discussions presented in this article, it can be said that the relationship with the academic knowledge of university students subject to the present research is based on the valorization of intellectual and academic learning. Specifically considering the learning that is most important for students, it is found those who recognize the university as a privileged and important space, where they can acquire new knowledge, develop critical thinking, which make up almost half of the total learning recorded in the balance sheets. to know. This result does not present considerable variations when analyzed by Knowledge Center, in all of them the preponderance of intellectual and academic learning was recorded.

These students also see the university as a promise of an economically better life. Others indicate the university as a space where it is possible to establish new affective, interpersonal relationships. The first group when referring to the learning they acquired at the university, more than 50% mentions intellectual knowledge, however, they are not able to specify a content, a theme, a topic, the knowledge. Perhaps, this is related to the condition of being students of initial periods and still being in the phase of strangeness. They are not yet students, they are demanding for higher education (COULON, 2008).

Entering the university implies entering a profoundly linguistic world, where language is very codified and standardized, because only through it can knowledge gain a scientific character, so that being “scientific” is first of all not “saying anything” (CHARLOT, 2006). So as well, it is not enough to say that you have learned subjects from discipline X, or that knowledge is the most important. It is necessary to substantiate, specify, which subject he learned carefully.

The condition of scholarship holders interferes in the relationship with academic knowledge. This condition depends on the economic origin declared by the academics. They come from low-income families, which is a criterion for granting scholarships. Thus, this condition makes them see the University as the key to a promising future.

In addition, it is evident among the students in this research that the dream of a better life is the element of mobilization to enter university and as they seek insertion in the labor market in a specialized society, it is perhaps common that the greater importance attributed by students is linked to intellectual and academic learning.

For all this, it can be said that for the students surveyed at UniAGES, the university makes sense as a space for building knowledge, but also as a space for coexistence, sociability and personal development. It is in this space that the subject builds and develops another relationship with knowledge other than that of high school, as expressed in the student’s record: “I am not yet very adapted, because high school does not prepare us to enter the University, I will gradually mingling, searching for information and finding me” (CENTRO DE EXATAS, MALE).

In this process and university space, little by little, with difficulty, students are adapting, fitting in and finding themselves in this new relationship, they are learning to experience and deal with their new student condition, they are gradually learning to be university students.

In this perspective, it is important to emphasize that contemporary society is marked by social and economic inequality, a situation that triggers anxiety in the population in search of a higher standard of living through schooling. Given this, the university students surveyed seem to know that in this society to achieve social ascension and a better economic life than that of their families, it is necessary to have increasingly higher levels of schooling. Thus, the meaning of the University goes far beyond a space to acquire knowledge. It represents hope, personal fulfillment and improvement in the consumption pattern, as it identifies among students, projects of social ascension through academic success and a more qualified insertion in the job market, that is why they are well focused on facing and winning the challenges of appropriating this knowledge.

## References

BOURDIEU, Pierre. **Escritos de educação**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1998.

BOURDIEU, Pierre; PARRESON, Jean-Claude. **Os herdeiros, os estudantes e a cultura**. Tradução de Ione Ribeiro Valle e Nilton Valle. 2. ed. Florianópolis: UFSC, 2018.

CHARLOT, Bernard. A noção da relação com o saber: bases de apoio teórico e fundamentos antropológicos. In: CHARLOT, Bernard (Org.). **Os jovens e o saber: perspectivas mundiais**. Tradução de Fátima Murad. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2001. p. 15-31.

CHARLOT, Bernard. **A relação com o saber nos meios populares uma investigação nos liceus profissionais**. Tradução de Catarina Matos. Porto: Legis, 2009.

CHARLOT, Bernard. As novas relações com o saber na universidade contemporânea. In: NASCIMENTO, Jorge Carvalho do (Dir.). **Ensino superior, educação escolar e práticas educativas extra-escolares**. São Cristóvão: Universidade Federal de Sergipe, 2006. p. 11-31.

CHARLOT, Bernard. **Da relação com o saber: elementos para uma teoria**. Tradução de Bruno Magne. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2000.

CHARLOT, Bernard. **Relação com o saber, formação dos professores e globalização: questões para a educação hoje**. Tradução de Sandra Loguercio. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2005.

COULON, Alain. **A condição de estudante: a entrada na vida universitária**. Tradução de: Georgina Gonçalves dos Santos, Sônia Maria Rocha Sampaio. Salvador: Edufba, 2008.

*Received on September 17th 2018*

*Approved on May 27 th 2019*

**Karina Sales Vieira** is a doctoral student in education at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), master in education at the Federal University of Sergipe, researcher at the Education and Contemporary Studies Group - EDUCON / UFS. She is currently a professor at the AGES University Center, Paripiranga, BA.