

TEACHER FORMATION: SELF-WRITING IN THE LEARNING OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

In the process of teaching and becoming a teacher, self-writing in the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology of Education constitutes a fruitful field of intervention, research and initial training for future teachers. Students in the Pedagogy course brought to light episodes that potentiated an exercise in signifying and reframing their life trajectory, their insertion in groups, their subjectivity and uniqueness, which was a valuable reflective device in the meaningful learning of concepts from Psychology and Sociology of Education. Students from the Pedagogy Course at a public university participated. The proposed methodology consisted of autobiographical narrative productions based on the theories studied throughout the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology of Education. It was concluded that there is in the autobiography, the little-considered presence of elements that influence the formation supported by theoretical views, acceptances, refusals, and needs to be considered in the initial formation.

Keywords: teacher training; narratives; autobiography.

Formación Docente: la escritura de si en el aprendizaje de Psicología y Sociología

RESUMEN

En proceso del hacer docente y hacerse docente, la escritura de si en las asignaturas de Psicología y Sociología de la educación constituyen un campo fecundo de intervención, investigación y formación inicial de futuros profesores. Alumnos del curso de Pedagogía trajeron a la luz episodios que potencializaron un ejercicio de significar y resignificar su trayectoria de vida, su inserción en los grupos, su subjetividad y singularidad, que fue dispositivo reflexivo valioso en el aprendizaje significativa de conceptos de la Psicología y de la Sociología de la Educación. Participaron alumnos del Curso de Pedagogía de una Universidad pública. La metodología propuesta consistió en producciones narrativas autobiográficas fundamentadas en las teorías estudiadas en el transcurrir de las asignaturas de Psicología y Sociología de la Educación. Se concluye que hay en la autobiografía, la presencia poco considerada de elementos que influyen en la formación basando visiones, aceptes y rechazos teóricos y necesita ser considerada en la formación inicial.

Palabras claves: formación de profesores; narrativas; autobiografía.

Formação docente: a escrita de si na aprendizagem de Psicologia e Sociologia

RESUMO

No processo do fazer docente e fazer-se docente, a escrita de si nas disciplinas de Psicologia e Sociologia da Educação constitui um campo fecundo de intervenção, investigação e formação inicial de futuros professores. Alunos do curso de Pedagogia trouxeram à luz episódios que potencializaram um exercício de significar e resignificar sua trajetória de vida, sua inserção nos grupos, sua subjetividade e singularidade, que foi dispositivo reflexivo valioso na aprendizagem significativa de conceitos da Psicologia e da Sociologia da Educação. Participaram alunos do Curso de Pedagogia de uma Universidade pública. A metodologia proposta consistiu em produções narrativas autobiográficas fundamentadas nas teorias estudadas no transcorrer das disciplinas de Psicologia e Sociologia da Educação. Concluiu-se que há na autobiografia, a presença pouco considerada de elementos que influem na formação alicerçando visões, aceites e recusas teóricas e necessita ser considerada na formação inicial.

Palavras-chave: formação de professores; narrativas; autobiografia.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of teacher formation has been widely problematized ever since the late 20th century. It is based on a perspective that subscribes to the notion that the teacher is a person, according to Nóvoa (1992). In general, it is a reflex of the way education research reverberates into a broader movement towards better appreciation of persons and individuality, which considers the biographic method, created in Germany at the end of the 19th century, as a sociological alternative to positivism, fundamental representant and whose systematics is started with the American sociologists of the Chicago school in the 1920s (Coulon, 1995).

In the research on the theme of future formation, there is an emerging interest by the researchers on the life, career, professional path, biography, and personal autobiography of the teachers who find in autobiographic research a vehicle where they can channel the voice of the individual who participates in the investigations. That consolidates the opposition to the method as a dichotomy vision regarding the conventional methods of research between investigators and the investigated. It makes sense to think that the teachers are previously equipped, especially due to experience with the students, with knowledge on the teaching established by the images, rituals, customs, routines, and rhythms based on their experience.

In the initial and continuous formation of teachers, the use of autobiographies gets stronger by their connection with the research works in the education area (Souza, Sousa, & Catani, 2007) and finds support in authors that appreciate the double process of forming and getting formed (Josso, 2010), the issue of experience as anchor for memory and formation movement (Larrosa, 2011; Ricoeur, 2007), and in those who take a stand in defense of the use of autobiography not only as a methodology, but also a specific and autonomous perspective for research in education (Bolívar, 2002; Ferrarotti, 2010).

The present report presents an experience that showed how autobiographic narratives might be turned into productive, significant strategies and the initial formation of future educators, who revisited memories from their life trajectories, their insertion into the groups, their subjectivity and singularity, which were conducive to meaningful learning of concepts in the area of education psychology and sociology.

The choice of autobiographic narratives was initially based on three premises:

a) first, the consideration that something should be done about the pedagogical challenge produced by the Crescent movement of entrance of students with diverse

profiles into the pedagogy course. most importantly, search diversity was observed in the wide range of ages and in the life trajectories characterized by many curves that have an impact on learning difficulties, manifested in the fragility of relationship and adaptation skills, b) second, the necessity to consider other teaching possibilities that, based on the premise of affinity among the areas of human sciences (Educational Psychology and Sociology), focus on the centrality of individuals and their experiences as catalysts for meaningful, thoughtful learning and c) an understanding that teacher formation is a permanent and continuous process.

Therefore, the choice of narratives as a methodological option seems to be the most convenient and appropriate one for the articulation between theory and practice, as well as for research and teacher formation while promoting self-awareness, and reflections on our place in the world, our past and our present, as well as an analysis of the subjectivity that characterizes the situations reported, which resulted in greater clarity for future projection. The intention was to use autobiographic narratives as an instrument for reflection and reconfiguration of meanings of individual experiences for each student in the disciplines of Educational Psychology and Sociology in a pedagogy course.

The study was based on the hypothesis that, the analyzed autobiographic writing, inspired by the theories studied in the discipline of Education Psychology and Sociology, would bring a more meaningful and thoughtful comprehension of the concepts studied in the disciplines by the students in their pedagogy course.

Participants

The participants of the research were 30 (30) and 45 students of the first period, enrolled in the pedagogy course at a public university, ages between 18 and 48 years, of low and medium socio-economic level, respectively in the years of 2014 and 2015. At the moment of presentation of the proposal, a term of confidentiality was signed by the participants. This document guaranteed the confidential nature of the reports. The proposal was explained during the classes and the writing was done at home, the feedback by the teachers was realized in the students' report books, in which observations and remarks were made on the life history of each one of the participants and their relations with the theories studied in the two disciplines. It is important to emphasize that the two groups were predominantly made up of female students.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the disciplines of Education Psychology and Sociology was developed

based on the production of biographic writing realized in a notebook of the diary type for Psychology and in the form of assorted compositions for Sociology throughout the semester in the two teams made up mostly by the same group. Speech, expansions and criticisms were respected. In the discipline of Education Psychology and Sociology, the methodology was based on the production of three or four compositions respectively. This process was organized into three stages inspired by Passeggi (2008):

1- Pre text. characterized as initial writing, the meaning of which is to place students in the condition of authors in the writing process.

2- Writing action. In this stage, there are reports and self-discourse. There is the emergency of facts that make up an individual's history and memory. First, the students told their life histories, their past and their present for the Psychology as well as for the Sociology discipline. In this stage, the teacher would request that reports be adapted to the content of each discipline. This guideline strongly activated some sort of filter, or adjustment in the lenses in order to make experiences more meaningful.

3- Taking a distance from the object. In this stage, there was a search for recognition by the students of their role as active players in the writing process. It is a moment for placing oneself under analysis. It is a moment to read heuristically.

In the discipline of Education Psychology, the students were supposed to report the experiences by answering questions structured by the teacher of the discipline and the questions were related to two theoretical approaches studied throughout the semester, contemplated by the addition to the discipline named Educational Psychology I: the behaviorist theory and the humanism of Carl Rogers. First, in the Diaries, the students were requested to write their life histories, starting at the moment of their birth until the present moment, including childhood, teenage years, life as a young adult, and the most memorable things that took place during these phases of development. In the second stage, in the part related to behaviorist theory, students were requested to report on situations experienced in the school environment or in life in general that would remind the students of concepts such as positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction, punishment, and generalization according to Skinner. In the third stage, the issues of freedom, autonomy, and responsibility of humanistic schools were discussed within the context of Roger theory with initial questions such as "what is the school of your dreams", while also requesting a rescue of experiences related to teaching practices with humanistic teachers and their

transformation emancipation vision for society and education. In the Psychology discipline, three individual compositions were requested in the diary.

In the classes of Education Sociology I, the addition recommends the study of classics by Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber. In order to prevent influence on these writing productions, before the classes on the thinking and concepts of Durkheim, Marx and Weber, students were requested to write their first composition in which they would report on their origin, the places where they came from, the people they knew, their customs. In fact, their genealogy, and their childhood. Then, as the classes took place, students were requested to write about their entrance at school and their experience in the initial years. Also, students were requested to produce a third composition, in which the theme was their choice of university course, and plans for the future. At the end of this sequence, there was a recommendation for students to read their own productions and produce their own interpretations or sociological meanings on all the important episodes or key moments emphasized in those compositions (Josso, 2010).

RESULTS

In the analysis of reports requested on the diary of the Education Psychology discipline, related to situations involving learning and development concepts according to behaviorist and humanistic theories, it was possible to observe a mode of narrative, in most of the cases, that was more descriptive of the situations experienced and less critical of the phenomena such as difficulties, frustrations, joy, and violence described in order to assess or identify the value of such experiences. Reports involving experiences at school and out of school brought out memories of punishments (negative reinforcement), exclusions and scarcity of positive reinforcement. In the humanistic approach, most of the students identified themselves with the break of paradigms proposed by Rogers and felt seduced by the humanistic principles of respect, autonomy, freedom, and responsibility which were lacking in most of the school experiences of the participants. Artistic activities were also emphasized by the students as an aspect to be contemplated in the school of their dreams. Something that really drew the attention of researchers was the number of reports of sexual abuse suffered by female students. In the discipline of psychology, the autobiographic narrative helped the students learn in a more efficient way the concepts proposed by the two theoretical approaches. More specifically for the present study, data pointed out that the concepts of learning and development and the factors that influenced the students suffered modifications due to a study of the psychological

theories, as well as the use of autobiographic narratives.

On the other hand, the analysis of the requested compositions in the discipline of Education Sociology was guided by a search for the proximity between the life history productions and the contributions of the major triad of sociology: on Durkheim, social fact, coercion, social group, punishment, types of solidarity, and other concepts; Marx, the concepts of added value, exploitation, labor, and alienation, and Weber, bureaucracy, leadership, and social action for the comprehension of society. A first observation to be made on the writing productions is that they showed that sociology, understood as the study of society, already exists independent from academia, since all of the students think of society somehow. What happens is that their written histories, when read out loud, triggered the production of meanings and interpretations that redirected or consolidated decision making, refusals and agreements. It is important to emphasize that there was an evolution in which it was possible to observe the taking of a distance concerning the descriptions of the emotions triggered by memory and by approximation with an analysis movement, signification of episodes, cognitive, and social emotional restructuring. It was noticed when we picked an initial writing production with an excess of adjectives in expressions such as "it was good", "it was painful" and for a Manichaeic approach to episodes. Such excess was fixed and then we were able to observe an increase in self questioning or in attempts to elaborate other explanations and meanings. The characteristics most often perceived in this phase were: a functionalist reading of the world and society associated with the thinking of Durkheim, which included the place and the no-place for women, countryside people, workers, b) aspects of the alienation and of exploitation by capital understood as a lack of clarification and as a product of social exploitation associated with the thinking of Marx, c) the types of social action and leadership associated to Weber. Therefore, just like in Psychology, in the Sociology discipline the process orientation was descriptive analytical. A written synthesis in particular, which was obtained in Sociology, show the potential of the process for a student here named Ester who wrote a final production on her own interpretations: "Now I know that it was not always my fault. The fact that I was born black, poor, and female in a country such as this explains a lot".

After in general analysis of the written productions of the students on themselves, it is possible to observe advancements and setbacks in the concepts approached in the two disciplines, as well as reinterpretations of the experiences shared due to the use of autobiographic

narratives and to the study of sociological and psychological theories. Something that happened quite often in the two disciplines was a difficulty by the students in writing on themselves based on a reflexive perspective; becoming aware of one's life history can be painful sometimes. another difficulty was related to the necessity to reflect on the narrated facts, based on the theories studied, which was necessary in this process.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the students' notion that the writing of their life histories articulated to a certain theoretical framework by educational psychology and sociology would produce a more reflexive comprehension, while promoting a more meaningful learning, it was possible to observe that, according to literature (Galvão, 2005; Josso, 2010; Passegi, 2011) this experience provided support for learning by these students as future professionals in the education area.

According to Nóvoa (2002, p. 9) "there is no learning without experience or without personal, autobiographic reflection on experience. What really matters is not the reality experienced, but the way reality is felt, thought, and interpreted". Unfortunately, some investigations show that initial formation has produced little contribution to the exercise of teaching (Josso, 2010). Overcoming the dichotomy felt by the students between theory and practice in the initial formation of future educators is believed to be one of the greatest challenges faced by teachers and higher learning. Graphic narrative can be one of the possible ways to overcome the fragmentation between theory and practice while promoting a learning that is significant for future teachers. Literature shows that a request to remember one's life history, reflect, select episodes, and narrate these episodes based on a theoretical approach demands a cognitive and metacognitive effort which leads to a personal process of formation, and reflection on the contents of initial formation that will make a difference in the practice of future teachers (Passegi, 2011).

As a conclusion, as educators working in the formation of teachers for child education, we observed the existence of quite a few challenges for the realization of work on subjectivity and interdisciplinarity: the difficulty to assess critically and analytically one's life history; the difficulty to approximate individual and formative processes. The observations concerning the possibility for use of autobiographic narratives in the area of education sociology and psychology in its interplay with education are relevant not only for the pedagogical practice, but also because they constitute a fertile field for intervention and research. It will be

useful for teachers as a tool for discussions on the initial formation of future professionals.

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