EDUR • Educação em Revista. 2024;40:e45698
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0102-45698t
Preprint DOI: https://doi.org/10.1590/SciELOPreprints.5773

ARTICLE

INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES: CRITERIA ASSIGNED BY TEACHER EDUCATORS WORKING IN PEDAGOGY UNDERGRADUATE COURSES[1]

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the criteria that teacher educators, working in Pedagogy undergraduate courses, attribute to innovative pedagogical practices. This article is empirically based on data from a descriptive, exploratory, and qualitative research in six community. Higher Education Institutions in the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil, linked to the Acafe, which offers in-person Pedagogy courses. The sample comprised teacher educators at these institutions working as professors in Pedagogy courses who agreed to participate in the research. We used an online questionnaire as a data collection procedure. The results were interpreted using the content analysis technique was applied. It was evident that the criteria that give meaning to innovative pedagogical practice are subjective, assume a polysemic character, and vary according to the knowledge, interpretation, and experience of those surveyed. Some central elements were articulated with this type of practice: student protagonism; rupture with the traditional; new; technology; research; and active methodologies. In light of the research's theoretical framework, the analysis of these criteria allowed us to understand that not everything that was perceived as pedagogical innovation constitutes, in fact, an innovative pedagogical practice. Thus, the need and importance of promoting reflection on what an innovative pedagogical practice is and how it is constituted, aiming at a more assertive conception of the concept, which can support the practice in teacher training courses and the consolidation of the profile of an innovative teacher.

Keywords: innovative pedagogical practices, pedagogical innovation, in-person Pedagogy Courses, teacher educators.

[1] Article published with funding from the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* - CNPq/Brazil for editing, layout and XML conversion services.

PRÁTICAS PEDAGÓGICAS INOVADORAS: CRITÉRIOS ATRIBUÍDOS POR PROFESSORES(AS) FORMADORES(AS) QUE ATUAM EM CURSOS DE PEDAGOGIA

RESUMO: Este artigo analisa os critérios que os(as) professores(as) formadores(as), atuantes em Cursos de Pedagogia, atribuem às práticas pedagógicas inovadoras. Como base empírica deste texto foram utilizados dados de uma pesquisa descritiva, de cunho exploratório e de natureza qualitativa, que teve como lócus seis Instituições de Ensino Superior Comunitárias do Estado de Santa Catarina, vinculadas à Associação Catarinense das Fundações Educacionais – Acafe, que oferecem o curso de Pedagogia na modalidade presencial. A amostra foi composta por professores(as) formadores(as) que atuam como titulares nos cursos de Pedagogia dessas instituições, e que aceitaram participar da pesquisa. Para a coleta de dados foi utilizado um questionário on-line, e na análise foi aplicada a técnica de análise de conteúdo. Evidenciou-se que os critérios que atribuem sentido à prática pedagógica inovadora são subjetivos, assumem caráter polissêmico e variam de acordo com o conhecimento, a interpretação e a vivência dos pesquisados. Alguns elementos centrais foram articulados à prática dessa natureza: protagonismo dos estudantes; ruptura com o tradicional; novo; tecnologia; pesquisa; e metodologias ativas. A análise desses critérios, à luz do referencial teórico utilizado, possibilitou compreender que nem tudo que foi explicitado como inovação pedagógica constitui, de fato, uma prática pedagógica inovadora. Constatou-se a necessidade e a importância de se promover a reflexão sobre o que é e como se constitui uma prática pedagógica inovadora, visando uma concepção mais assertiva sobre o conceito, que possa fundamentar a prática nos cursos de formação docente e a consolidação do perfil do(a) professor(a) inovador(a).

Palavras-chave: práticas pedagógicas inovadoras, inovação pedagógica, cursos de Pedagogia presenciais, professores(as) formadores(as).

PRÁCTICAS PEDAGÓGICAS INNOVADORAS: CRITERIOS ASIGNADOS POR LOS FORMADORES DE DOCENTES QUE ACTÚAN EN LOS CURSOS DE PEDAGOGÍA

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza los criterios que formadores de docentes en los Cursos de Pedagogía atribuyen a las prácticas pedagógicas innovadoras. La base empírica de apoyo a las discusiones de este texto son datos de uma investigación descriptiva, exploratoria y cualitativa, que tuvo como locus seis Instituciones de Educación Superior Comunitarias del Estado de Santa Catarina, vinculadas a la Acafe, que ofrecen el curso de Pedagogía em modalidad presencial. La muestra estuvo compuesta por formadores de docentes, que actúan como titulares de cursos de Pedagogía en estas instituciones, y que aceptaron participar em la investigación. Como procedimiento de recolección de datos se utilizó un cuestionario en línea. Y, en el análisis, la técnica de análisis de contenido. Se evidenció que los criterios que dan sentido a la práctica pedagógica innovadora son subjetivos, asumen um carácter polisémico y varían según el conocimiento, interpretación y experiencia de los encuestados. Para la práctica de esta naturaleza se articularon algunos elementos centrales: el protagonismo estudiantil; ruptura com lo tradicional; nuevo; tecnología; buscar; y metodologías activas. El análisis de estos criterios, a la luz del marco teórico de la investigación, permitió comprender que no todo lo explicado como innovación pedagógica constituye, de hecho, una práctica pedagógica innovadora. Se constató la necesidad y la importancia de promover la reflexión sobre qué es uma práctica pedagógica innovadora y cómo se constituye, visando una concepción más asertiva del concepto, que pueda sustentar la práctica em los cursos de formación docente y la consolidación del perfil del maestro innovador.

Palabras clave: prácticas pedagógicas inovadoras, docentes que laboran en Cursos de Pedagogía presenciales, profesores formadores.

INTRODUCTION

The constant transformations in society, particularly those related to the teaching and learning processes – what and how to teach, what pedagogical tools, resources, and techniques favor teaching and motivating students to learn, how to learn – make new demands emerge, which inevitably reverberate in the educational systems. From the establishment of pedagogical practices to the formative processes, this change involves a series of epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical alterations. Regarding higher education teaching, new challenges appear that permeate the educational processes and materialize in the pedagogical practices through professors' actions.

In this sense, such changes boosted teaching renovation and resignification by incorporating new ways of thinking and implementing pedagogical practice in an innovation process, leading teachers to broaden their conceptions, think, and reinvent their educational activities. Innovation has been constantly discussed at all educational levels, mainly higher education, seeking to overcome traditional pedagogy based on knowledge reproduction and start from an innovative practice that promotes knowledge production. However, given the plurality of meanings attributed to the concept of innovation, we understand that not all pedagogical experiences that present themselves as innovative can indeed be considered so. Thus, this article discusses what is understood by innovation, seeking to perceive how and in which conditions an innovative pedagogical practice can be established, considering the understanding of teacher educators working in in-person Pedagogy courses in Higher Education institutions belonging to the *Associação Catarinense das Fundações Educacionais* – Acafe [Santa Catarina Association of Education Foundations]. The discussions proposed in this text are empirically grounded on research developed in a master's course in education.

The descriptive, exploratory, and qualitative research took place in six community Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, connected to Acafe, offering in-person Pedagogy undergraduate degrees. The sample comprised teacher educators working in these institutions' Pedagogy degrees. The data presented in this text was collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using the content analysis technique. The research project was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the institution to which the study is connected and was reviewed by report number 4.551.789. The project was submitted to the REC of the other institutions participating in the investigation.

CONCEPT OF INNOVATION

Etymologically, the word *innovation* comes from the Latin *innovatio*, which means *renovation.* At the beginning of the word, the prefix 'in' means *ingress*, i.e., something new or novelty. Hence, innovation can represent a new perspective or a different gaze (Battestin; Nogaro, 2016).

In the educational context, Tavares (2019) observes the pulverization of the term *innovation* in different denominations, often used inadvertently, with no explicit meaning, or taking on several meanings, connected to different epistemological conceptions, which can lead to several interpretations. This might happen because the term *innovation* can have a polysemic, plural, and complex character (Carbonell, 2002), varying according to the historical, social, and even linguistic context in which it is used.

Hence, there are different conceptions of what innovation is, as Hernandez points out (2000, p. 19):

> [...] This might imply that what innovation is for someone might not be for another person within the same system. Therefore, the issue when approaching the innovation theme is not its definition but its interpretation, that is, the recognition from the perspective from which they start. Thus, innovation is not the same for those promoting it, those facilitating it, those implementing it, or those receiving its effects. Therefore, the definition of innovation results from the confluence of a plurality of gazes and opinions from those somehow related to it.

Therefore, the concept of innovation is not unique and finished. House *apud* Hernandez (2000) presents three historical perspectives that marked the development of the concept and the practice of innovation : the technological guidance of the 1970s, in a systematic and rational focus, related to the ideal of technology as synonymous with progress, emphasizing the improvements in the methods and materials at the expense of knowledges and relationships between different educational agents; the political perspective, considering innovation as the object of conflicts and commitments; and the cultural perspective, which considers the different sectors and cultures involved, with their conflict of values and distinguished meanings regarding the reality, conceiving innovation from the interaction of divergent cultures and how people interpret facts.

Hence, the polysemic character of the innovation concept. Therefore, it is necessary to choose a definition closer to what is understood as pedagogical innovation to keep a coherent line of analysis and discussion of the possible relationships and contraposition in the dimension of the concept and meanings. Carbonell (2002) understands pedagogical innovation as:

> [...] the set of interventions, decisions, and processes, with a certain degree of intentionality and systematization, which refers to modifying attitudes, ideas, cultures, contents, models, and pedagogical practices. And, in its turn, introduce, in a renovating line, new projects and programs, curriculum materials, teaching-learning strategies, didactic materials, and other forms of organizing and managing curriculum, school, and class dynamics (Carbonell, 2002, p.19).

The author (2002) notes the ampleness and multidimensionality of this definition, which can be open to several interpretations and translations depending on ideological conditions, power relations in knowledge control, sociocultural context, and economic and political contexts where educational processes are involved. To Carbonell, educational innovation, in certain contexts, is associated with renovation, change, and pedagogical improvement.

According to Farias (2006), the concept of innovation is often used as a synonym for change and renovation. However, the author states that change is materialized in the educational praxis as a resignification process based on changes in pedagogical thinking and action in a movement. This movement implies critical construction and the collective participation of those involved. Innovation is not synonymous with change; it finds in change its intention as a possibility in the praxis field. Finally, the author understands renovation in the relationship between change and innovation as a materialization strategy. Nonetheless, the strategic place of schools in change is commonly restricted to the managerial and operational levels due to the immediate and centralized way through which innovations are prescribed to schools and motivated by political and economic interests. In other words, every innovation implies change, but not all change represents innovation.

The *Enciclopédia de Pedagogia Universitária:* Glossário (Cunha, 2006, p. 445) presents another definition for innovation:

> [...] of a historical-social character marked by an epistemological attitude of knowledge beyond the regularities proposed by modernity and characterized by experiences delineated by: rupture with the traditional way of teaching and learning and/or with academic procedures inspired in the positive principles of modern science; participative management, in which the subjects of the innovative process are protagonists of the experience; reconfigurations of knowledges nullifying or decreasing the dualities between scientific knowledge/popular knowledge, science/culture, education/work, etc.

This definition brings one other meaningful element regarding pedagogical innovation: the epistemological change marked by the *rupture* with the traditional education paradigm based on a reconfiguration of knowledge, overcoming the logic of knowledge transmission and reproduction, and students and teachers as protagonists in the teaching processes, through participative interaction. Hence, we understand that an innovative practice surpasses the *commonplace* and breaks away from the traditional logic of teaching and learning by proposing new paradigms, overcoming the dominant models, and proposing new teaching forms. From this perspective, Nikolai and Pensin (2013) understand that pedagogical practice innovation assumes the importance of overcoming, rupturing, and pioneering. It should be understood from its time and spatial characteristics, as it is an intentional educational action with a contextualized and theoretical-practical nature.

> [...] assuming "innovation" as a guiding proposition of educational practice does not mean surrendering to the new because it is different, but assuming its historical dimension, seeking to break away from technical teaching-learning practices that do not allow for a critical reflection about the historical, political, social, and cultural facts implied in the educational work (Nikolai; Pensin, 2013, p. 33).

Given the intentionality of pedagogical practice, when referring to pedagogical innovation, it is important to know the epistemological bases that support this concept to understand in which sense we understand what is expected by *innovation.*

As Hernandez (2000) highlights, innovations in education are often connected to ideological, social, and economic questions, depending on their emerging context, promoters, incidence, and the extension they take. So, due to its different conceptualizations and forms adopted in practice, innovation is not a homogenous field and "[...] its different meanings are parallel to the dominant ideologies in school education, the ways of teaching, and teachers' actions" (Hernandez, 2000, p. 19).

Veiga (2008) presents innovation under two aspects: as a regulatory action or technique and as an emancipatory or uplifting action. The first grounds its epistemological basis on conservative science, with a regulatory and normative character. In this perspective, innovation revolves around novelty, renovation, standardized, controlled, planned, and in a centralized form. Thus, innovation is established from the outside to the inside and does not produce something new but the same in a changed way. This means that

> [...] innovation results are transformed into norms and prescriptions; consequently, their application is also technical. [...] Innovating is, therefore, introducing something different within

> a system to produce a decontextualized organizational change. This process leaves behind the subjects as protagonists, dismissing the relationships and differences between them and not recognizing the power relations between the institutional and the broader social context (Veiga, 2008, p. 22).

Thus, in the first aspect, innovation represents something new or reformed from what already exists, as new clothes on a technical level, foreseeing new procedures with modernizing aspects that do not necessarily represent the surpassing of traditional pedagogical practices (Nikolai; Pensin, 2013). Hence, *new* is not always synonymous with innovation because it can characterize the modernization of something that already exists and was simply remodeled (Carbonell, 2002). Hernandez (2000) understands that if there is no connection with the conceptual constructions and teachers' ways of action, and if there is no acceptance and necessary and adequate practical decisions, innovation becomes diluted and loses meaning.

Emancipatory or uplifting innovation has its epistemological bases grounded in the emergent science, with its emancipating and argumentative character, underpinning itself in communication, dialogue, and the social-historical contextualization, opposed to the dichotomies of conservative traditional paradigm and science fragmentation. In this perspective, intentionality permeates every innovative process, which presupposes rupture towards questioning and emancipation, in a process from "inside out, [...] when breaking away with the conservative way of teaching, learning, researching, and evaluating" (Veiga, 2008, p. 24).

Pedagogical practice is, consequently, "[...] a social practice guided by objectives, ends, and knowledges, inserted in the context of social practice" (Veiga, 2008, p. 16). Teachers' representations regarding the nature of their practices are used to define, structure, and guide them, as they are incorporated in the practice, which grants intelligibility and meaning to the educational activity, and offers meanings and reference points to the teaching action (Tardif, 2014). Thus, "pedagogical practices should be reorganized and recreated daily to fulfill the initial project that changes as life, routine, and existence invade it" (Franco, 2016, p. 534). Therefore, it is important to understand what an innovative pedagogical practice is and how it is established to promote and consolidate practices that contribute to the transformation of realities and subjects in the teaching and learning processes.

CRITERIA TEACHERS ATTRIBUTE TO THE INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

The study that empirically grounds this article was conducted in six community Higher Education Institutions from the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, connected to the *Associação Catarinense das Fundações Educacionais* – Acafe, which offer in-person Pedagogy undergraduate degrees. The sample comprised teacher-training professors who work in the in-person Pedagogy degrees and accepted to participate in the research by signing a Term of Consent.

We used an online questionnaire with open and multiple-choice questions to collect data, afterwards analyzed using content analysis. To keep participants' integrity, participants were given the letter "P," referring to "professor," followed by a number according to the order in which the questionnaires were returned, starting with "1" in ascending order and the letter representing their institution.

The aim was to understand the different conceptions of *innovation* that ground the

pedagogical practices related to the researchers, seeking to comprehend what an innovative pedagogical practice is and how it is established. The first question was: "How do you evaluate the pedagogical practices used in the subject you teach in Pedagogy? Do you consider them innovative?". As an answer, 85% of participant professors considered their practices innovative and 15% did not consider so. Seeking to understand why the professors consider their pedagogical practices innovative or not, the questionnaire asked: "In question 5, you answered whether you consider your practices innovative or not. According to your reply to that question, answer: Why? Explain your position, writing what you understand as an 'innovative pedagogical practice"'.

The answers showed that there is no single understanding among professors about what an *innovative pedagogical practice* is. Such finding corroborates the argument of different authors that theoretically ground this text, amongst them Carbonell (2002) and Tavares (2019), who understand that the term *pedagogical innovation* has a polysemic, plural, and complex character, assuming a variety of meanings, depending on the subjects' different epistemological conceptions.

From the researchers' answers, we could identify some criteria that can be used to define an innovative practice. The answers portray central elements that help understand the criteria participants used to define their practices as innovative or not. They are: students' protagonism; rupture with the traditional; new; technologies; research; and active methodologies. Students' protagonism was the central element professors most frequently cited, appearing implicitly or explicitly in 11 answers.

According to Ferreti *et al.* (2004), *students' protagonism* is not a new concept dating from the 1920s-1930s, based on Dewey's studies and used by educators and theoreticians in Brazil. The authors stress that students' protagonism is a concept open to several interpretations, normally associated with other concepts, such as participation, autonomy, citizenship, and social responsibility. They add, "(...) an author can talk about 'protagonism' in contexts where others would use 'participation', and vice-versa; there are also cases in which two expressions are used as synonyms" (Ferreti *et al.*, 2004, p. 413).

The term *protagonism* comes from the Greek *proto*, meaning *the first, the principal*, and *agon,* meaning *fight*, i.e., the *main fighter*. In the theater, the term designates the *main actor*, the one leading the plot. In education, the term *protagonism* designates students' action as the main character of an initiative or activity, having as an end the solution of real problems, that is, an active and constructive participation in school, community, or society (Costa, 2001).

Therefore, students' protagonism shows itself as a condition for innovation because, besides breaking away from the modern relationship subject-object, it recognizes students as subjects of pedagogical practice (Cunha, 2019). Participants' answers point out different ways to understand *students' protagonism*, in which the term assumes different meanings: students' participation, students as learning subjects, and meaningful learning.

Regarding the meaning of *students' participation*, there are five answers:

1. P1A: "[...] as students' broad participation is promoted";
2. P3A: "Nowadays I do a different class management, with more time for students' action";
3. P4A: "[...] because I could put the students into action [...]";
4. P5A: "[...] effectively allow students to make, act, read, research, build knowledge";
5. P1E: "is a practice that stimulates students' interest."

Thus, students' protagonism influences their effective participation in the teaching-learning process and the construction of knowledge. In its turn, this implies the problematization and the critical

reflection of knowing, i.e., being a participant in thinking, not only making; exercising autonomy; constructing and constructing oneself, and being the agent of ones' formation, so that "[...] the subjects of the innovative process participate in the experience, from the conception to the result analysis. In this sense, the vertical structure of power crumbles and the collective becomes responsible for the teaching and learning process through the proposals created" (Cunha, 2019, p. 25).

On the other hand, students' active participation in their educational process represents a change on their role in the classroom, from the object to the subject of knowledge. About this role change in students' behavior and action in the teaching-learning process, as *learning subjects*, four answers also give meaning to students' protagonism:

1. P3A: "[...] give students a new role in class";
2. P4A: "[...] because I could set students into action, granting them the responsibility for their work, for their learning";
3. P6A: " [I] consider it innovative because during every process we seek to place the student as the subject of learning, but sure teachers cannot lose their authority";
4. P1C: "Innovative practice requires leaving the margins and going to the center."

Cunha (2019, p. 27) highlights that being the protagonist of learning results in "[...] students' participation in pedagogical decisions, the valuing of students' personal, original, and creative production, stimulating more complex and non-repetitive intellectual processes [...]", getting away from single parameters and stimulating learners' authorship when building knowledge. In the same context, Imbernón (2012) points out that one can generally see two opposite poles in the teaching and learning processes: *passive* learning, when teachers take the protagonism in an explanatory class, and *active* learning, in which students play the protagonist role in the teaching-learning.

Students are protagonists when they assume an active and participative posture, placing themselves in their learning processes. That is, when they leave the margins and move towards the center, as mentioned by P1C, as opposed to being a simple spectator, a characteristic of traditional pedagogy. This banking model of education, the traditional one, does not rely on students' participation because it considers them as learning objects and not subjects (Freire, 2020a). As passive receivers of content transmitted by teachers, students' job is to copy and memorize to reach good results, not aiming their development. In this model, students are at the margins of the process, and nothing is done to move them to the center.

Students' movement to the center of the educational process does not mean displacing teachers from the center to the margins. Volkweiss *et al.* (2019) call attention to this perspective because teachers have been expected to have an advisory role, minimizing the teaching dimension and dislocating the axis of learning.

Therefore, participative management involves teachers and students in the educational process. Students' protagonism does not imply dismissing the role of teacher educators. Teachers' actions allow students to develop and enact their protagonism in an interaction process, strengthening the autonomy of both as subjects in the teaching-learning process.

> Participative management does not mean teachers abdicate their professional role, which always differs from students' roles. Teachers continue to be responsible for guiding the process but share with students the decisions over the pathways and criteria used to define the intensity of

> the activities, as well as welcoming suggestions on the directions of the work developed. Participative management requires reflexive attitudes regarding knowledge because it presupposes different understandings and abilities to deal with complexity (Cunha, 2019, p. 25).

Thus, this perspective understands teachers and students as subjects of educational practice in different positions, but both active in their teaching and learning processes (Cunha, 2019).

> This way, the educator is no longer the one that only educates but the one who, while educating, is educated in dialogue with the student that, when being educated, also educates. Therefore, both become subjects of the process in which they grow together and arguments of authority are no longer valid [...] (Freire, 2020a, p. 39).

This is what Imbernón understands (2012, p. 58) when stating:

> One might have the impression that making students participate in class implies that teachers will do nothing. But that is not what happens. Leading students to participate implies greater activity preparation, follow-up during execution, and an adequate presentation of the results for the whole class.

Hence, students are protagonists; they build knowledge and build themselves as subjects; however, with teachers' intervention as mediators, building a *bridge* between students and knowledge. Therefore, saying that students are protagonists does not annul nor decrease teachers' role; on the contrary, it recognizes their central role in the teaching-learning process so that "[...] students will transform themselves into real subjects of constructing and reconstructing the knowledge taught, alongside the educator, equally a subject of the process" (Freire, 2020b, p. 26).

Volkweiss *et al.* (2019) understand that the teacher needs to be the protagonist of the educational process to also allow students to be protagonists. Teachers who only instruct, reviewing book content without adding or reflecting on anything, just mechanically reporting contents, often decontextualized and fragmented, void of meaning for the students, who stimulate the equally mechanical reproduction of contents are not protagonists in teaching and cannot instigate their students to be so when learning.

> [...] a professor with no autonomy to create their own materials and texts, concerned only with fulfilling legal demands, not showing nor incentivizing students' critical spirit, probably seeing students as passive individuals regarding their learning, not stimulating protagonist students' formation and development (Volkweiss *et al.*, 2019, p. 3).

Thus, teacher educators should seek, through their praxis, to favor the creation of reflection spaces so students can be the protagonists of their learning process. To do so, their action is key as mediators of students' critical spirit and protagonism through a questioning, reflexive, and challenging pedagogical practice.

Teachers who base their pedagogical practice on mediation and interaction with students, who instigate searching and building knowledge, deny the traditional formula of content reproduction and subject standardization. This practice can be considered innovative as it promotes students' protagonism, having as a goal "[...] another type of knowledge and a more active participation of students

in the learning process" (Carbonell, 2002, p. 16).

Regarding students' protagonism, meaningful learning is another point highlighted in three answers:

1. P7A: "Innovative pedagogical practice is the one involving students intensively and meaningfully in all teaching-learning processes [...]";
2. P2C: " I understand that an innovative pedagogical practice needs to conduct a class project in which students can be involved and produce meanings with the contents, foreseeing their current and/or future practices";
3. P1E: "It is a practice that stimulates students' interest, which considers students' reality, difficulties, and potentials".

According to Cunha (2019), students' protagonism assumes a vital condition for meaningful learning, based on active participation in the educational process. Hence, students' participation helps the process of understanding and building knowledge, giving it meaning, as knowledge is built, reflected, and problematized by the students and not simply received and deposited without their participation.

Imbernón (2012) understands that in active learning, students play a stronger role and participate in education, consolidating meaningful learning. Therefore, in these processes of knowledge construction, the contents learned must be meaningful to the students so that they can play their role in the learning process and ensure its effective implementation.

For the author, the traditional educational method is not enough for effective learning, adequate to social reality. Teachers' role is to create conditions to provoke a meaningful relationship with knowledge by developing of students' potentials, whose guidance and follow-up work is strongly present in the innovative pedagogies, so that "[...] in actual learning, students transform themselves into real subjects to construct and reconstruct learned knowledge, alongside the educator, also a subject of the process" (Imbernón, 2012, p. 49). So, this turn toward the students is also the role of the teacher-mediator, who is concerned with forming people, aware that they do not work with objects, seeking to educate, instruct, and transform them (Tardif, 2014).

Thus, students' protagonism, through meaningful learning, is a key element in developing innovative pedagogical practice because it seeks to overcome traditional methodology paradigms through a practice of critical-reflexive education that substitutes the transmission of ready and finished knowledge without meaning to students.

From the analysis of the professors' answers, *rupture with the traditional* was the second central element identified as a criterion to define an innovative practice. This element appeared, implicitly or explicitly, in seven answers. Rupturing with the paradigm of traditional teaching is a characteristic of innovative pedagogical practice (Carbonell, 2012; Cunha, 2019; Imbernon, 2012; Saviani, 1980), which happens under different perspectives, considering the ampleness of educational praxis.

Under a perspective of overcoming the traditional model of education, thinking the practice implies epistemological changes, i.e., transformations in paradigm, from the concept of knowledge up to its problematization in a more encompassing dimension that results in a change on the objectives of the educational practice.

> The rupture with the traditional way of teaching and learning means, mainly, understanding knowledge from an epistemological perspective that questions the academic procedures inspired by the positivist principles of modern science. [...] the adhesion to the paradigmatic rupture

> means recognizing other forms of producing knowledge, incorporating the social-historical dimension of knowledge and its axiological dimension that merges subject and object (Cunha, 2019, p. 24).

Participants' answers show elements that characterize the rupture process compared to the traditional paradigm in several senses. Because of that, one first needs to understand the meanings teachers attribute to the rupture with tradition to understand its relationship with establishing an innovative pedagogical practice.

The analysis starts from the meaning of rupture with the traditional educational model through *overcoming expository class*, an element characteristical of the conventional and conservative educational model. Four answers understand pedagogical practice through this angle:

1. P3A: "[...] to not center in expository classes [...]";
2. P10A: "[...] beyond the already known methods and techniques, escaping the standard molds of theoretical development";
3. P11A: "every practice that escapes the traditional [format], regarding the student, the methodology, the evaluation, teachers' posture, and teaching objectives, which aims to change teaching";
4. P2F: "[...] because it breaks away from the traditional and transmission logic of teaching".

Teachers' answers have in common the understanding that pedagogical innovation happens through the rupture with traditional practice from the change in the way of teaching, especially regarding the traditional practice of content transmission through expository classes. Traditional practice has always been grounded on the exposure of content by teachers to students in the audience, in a one-way street, as a type of lecture in which students have no right to question (Becker, 2012). In this *banking logic*, according to Freire (2020a), a good teacher is the one who can transmit more knowledge and the good student the one that can accumulate more knowledge. In banking education, teaching is *depositing*, whose method finds a place in teachers' narrative that guides the mechanical memorization of content narrated, which *fills* students. Thus, "[...] the more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are." (Freire, 2020a, p. 33).

In this practice, teachers' efficiency is measured by their capacity to transmit knowledge orally to the students—knowledge that is not produced by the teacher or the student. A problem with expository classes is not allowing students to participate. Another is not diversifying teaching methodology, which is entirely centered on the teachers' oral explanation. The criticism of expository classes is its passive imposition of students as mere listeners.

However, this does not mean that expository classes should be banished and rejected. As Imbernón (2012, p. 15) highlights:

> [...] The issue is not an expository class but how it is presented in practice, how knowledge transmission takes place, and how it happens; that is, how this expository class becomes a transmitting class of unidirectional and boring communication.

Therefore, what is advocated is the reformulation and renovation of the expository class. According to Anastasiou (2006), many changes are needed regarding teachers' practice. Amongst them,

the strategies used concerning traditional expository classes stand out. Teachers' exposure to content is not over, but the standard, traditional, Jesuitical classical model is.

Imbernón (2012) proposes a distinction between what is considered an expository or a master class and a class that *purely transmits knowledge*. In the former, though the teacher is the center of education, students can interact; in the latter, education is unidirectional, and the teacher is like a speaking bust that completely disregards students' characteristics, participation, and context.

The author (2012) does not intend to condemn expository class or teachers' oral presentations but its shape in the educational process. According to him, it is easy to give an expository class. However, it is hard to give a *good* one. In a class that only transmits knowledge, teachers are solely concerned with content, assuming that explaining it is enough for students, being more concerned with the results than learning. In expository or master classes, teachers are not so concerned with demonstrating knowledge, because their interest is in students' learning process, through which they can improve their teaching practice.

> [...] This does not mean that, often, expository class does not correctly develop the understanding of a subject and cannot motivate students. However, based on this motivation and understanding, it is important that teachers apply new strategies to lead students to analyze, work, and reflect, aiming to increase learning. It would be more difficult, though more satisfying, to teach how to think than to teach ones' own thoughts (Imbernón, 2012, p. 21).

Expository class is a characteristic of a traditional education methodology. It is this model's main, if not the only, education method. Teachers should transmit knowledge through oral exposition because this model understands that teachers are the only ones who know something while students know nothing. Teachers give a type of lecture in every class, and it is up to students to listen to it and absorb its contents. However, we understand that this is not the most adequate method for teaching-learning. First, because it does not diversify the method; second, because it does not instigate students to think as contents are ready; third, because it does not challenge students to reflect, question, or produce knowledge because they are only asked to listen; fourthly, because it does not make the necessary connections with students' knowledge and for meaningful knowledge.

On the other hand, there are contents and moments in which expository classes are needed to explain and deepen theoretical knowledge. Anastasiou (2006) and Imbernón (2011) defend a new way of sharing knowledge through a dialogued expository class, in which content presentation happens with students' participation, breaking away from the one-way strategy in which the class is *given* by the teacher and watched by the student. Thus, a methodological change is proposed, seeking to overcome the paradigms that have been predominant for centuries and are obsolete in current society. Similarly, Carbonell (2002) understands that expository classes should not be dismissed; the key is its end, frequency, and use context.

Hence, teacher's role is to challenge and stimulate students to build an interactive relationship with the learning object (Becker, 2012). Anastasiou (2006) called *ensinagem*[2] the strategy of diversifying pedagogical practice and overcoming the traditional methodology of education, which means a teacher's

[2] Translation note: The term is a neologism coined by Anastasiou (2006), who merged the words *ensino* (teaching) and *aprendizagem* (learning) to create the portmanteau word *ensinagem*. To keep this blended meaning, the word in Portuguese will be used in this text.

action that simultaneously involves students' teaching and learning.

> It is a teaching action that results in students' learning, overcoming the mere teachers' reciting of content. Because it is known that in traditional classes, which enclose themselves in an exposition of topics, the only guarantee is exposition itself, nothing can be said about students' grasping of content. In overcoming traditional exposition as the only way to explicit content, we find *ensinagem* strategies (Anastasiou, 2006, p. 20).

According to Anastasiou (2006, p. 20), subjects' involvement as a whole is key in the ensinagem process, whose knowledge includes *what, how, why, and to what end* one teaches and learns. *Ensinagem* should allow "thought, a situation in which each student can re-elaborate content relations through mutually determined and conditioned aspects, in a joint action of teachers and students."

Ensinagem can be seen as a way to rethink pedagogical practice with diversified strategies encompassing and mobilizing the inseparable teaching and learning processes. There is no teaching without learning, nor learning without teaching. Thus, *ensinagem* is an alternative to overcome traditional education paradigms and, in this rupture movement, represents an innovative pedagogical practice.

The second meaning of rupture with tradition, observed in the answers, is *change/transformation.* The innovative pedagogical practice under these lenses appear in four answers:

P11A: "[...] an education that makes a difference and transforms";

1. P1B: "that in fact reflects a freeing education which we talk so much about in Pedagogy";
2. P1C: "the practice should be innovative in the sense of movement, transformation";
3. P2C: "[...] the dialogic interaction is key to understanding innovative pedagogical practice".

Thinking innovation in the pedagogical practice through the bias of rupture with tradition from change/transformation implies many factors. P11A's answer points out some elements in which the professor considers change: "every practice that escapes from the traditional and this can be about the student, the methodology, the evaluation, teachers' posture, and teaching objective, which has a change of education as an objective. An education that makes a difference and transforms".

Professor P11A cites some aspects of change regarding students' role and, consequently, teachers' posture, methodology, and evaluation. The first two aspects were already discussed. Evaluation is understood as one of the dimensions of pedagogical practice (Zabala, 1998).

In the traditional perspective, evaluation is associated to performance and results, a sanctioning and qualifying instrument, in which evaluation is restricted to the students and the object of evaluation is limited to learning, with a selective and standardized character (Zabala, 1998). Luckesi (2008) also observes that the traditional evaluation is used to classify students according to their performances and results, in a quantitative and not qualitative perspective, consequently, punitive. For the author, in this type of evaluation, the teacher controls students in an authoritarian and conservative way.

Evaluation, from a traditional perspective, measures students' capacity to retain knowledge, not learn. According to Freire (2020a, p. 39),

> [...] the more students exercise in filling the deposits made, the less they develop in themselves the critical awareness that would result in the insertion in the world as agents to transform it. As subjects. The more passiveness is imposed to them, and more naively, instead of transforming,

> the more they tend to adapt to the world, to the reality partialized in the received deposits

However, changes have been undertaken in evaluation processes aiming to broaden or modify this concept of evaluation towards an innovative perspective, not limited to students' results or performance but considering their progress in process, radically changing how evaluation is conceived, not as a selection but centered in students' possibilities (Luckesi, 2008; Zabala, 1998). Thus, evaluation can either be adjusted to the traditional model of education or integrate an innovative proposal amidst a renovated practice. This movement starts by questioning what is understood as evaluation and its objective, ceasing to be an instrument of students' classification and punishment, and start to have a constructive end, whose changes present enough elements to be considered in the scope of innovation, as all converge towards overcoming traditional pedagogy models.

With a renewed practice, through a change process focused on students' learning and development, the banking knowledge is broken, and a renovated, transformed, and transforming practice is sought. This aspect can be seen in P11A's answer when affirming: "[...] which has changed in education as an objective. An education that makes a difference and transforms.". Thus, thinking about change means considering a problematizing pedagogical practice grounded on an emancipatory perspective, as Freire (2020a, p. 40) understands:

> The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher […] Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality. […] the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated.

An important point regarding reflective practice, another indication of change concerning pedagogical practice, is the dialogical interaction, cited by P2C: "[...] dialogical interaction is key to understand innovative pedagogical practice". Freire (2020a) understands that a problematizing education, that breaks away the vertical schemes of banking education, does not materialize itself as a practice of freedom without overcoming the contradiction between students and teachers or without dialogue. To Freire (2020), the dialectical movement of action-reflection expresses the binomial of the dialectic unity of praxis as "[...] the reflexive doing of action. Knowledge that critically refeeds making, whose result once again reflects on doing and, then, both continually remake each other" (Kronbauer, 2010, p. 41). That is the knowledge that leads to action and action that leads to knowledge through a dialogical reflection in a continuous dialectical movement.

The 'new' was another central element identified in the participants' answers as a criterion for defining an innovative practice. It was present implicitly or explicitly in five answers. Again, professors' answers attribute different senses to what is understood as new; changing something; new perspective; new experience; reinvent.

Professor P2A understands the 'new' as adding something: " I think that innovating is adding something to what was already done, improving learning." According to Carbonell (2002), the idea of innovative practice associated with the new or novelty is a common view regarding the concept of innovation If the introduction of an improvement to the traditional is understood as adding something to what was done, the 'new' can be seeing as doing something *different*- introducing something to what

already exists or, yet, to renovate. Following this logic, Carbonell (2002) understands innovation as renovation, through the introduction of new projects, programs, materials, teaching and learning strategies, didactic models, curricula, and management in the educational dimension.

Thus, the 'new', in the sense of adding something, can or not have an innovative character, depending on the reason and the character of the proposed change. Incorporating something new into the pedagogical practice can be understood from an innovative perspective if it opens space for improvement and/or the renovation of teaching and learning processes, whose change implies modifying the bases of practice. Introducing something new, external to the practice, does not necessarily represent a pedagogical innovation if it does not change practice, being restricted to a technical and instrumental change.

In another sense, the 'new' is understood as changing something. Professor P3A answered: "I consider it compared to what I used before. In this case, novelty implies not focusing on expository classes but giving students a new role in class. Nowadays, I manage classes differently, giving more time for students' actions".

One can also see the 'new' as something that changed when compared to an old practice. This meaning is evidenced in P3A's answer under two aspects: overcoming the expository class and students' role change, both already discussed in previous criteria. The professor completes the answer by saying: "Today I manage the classes differently, with more time for students' action." We can perceive in the answer the idea of something new, which means a new position from teachers in the classroom, giving more space for students' participation. That is, a change in how to organize and manage the pedagogical practice culminates in overcoming the traditional model of education focused on teachers and expository classes. Thus, novelty can be understood as innovative.

The *'new',* then, becomes one of the faces of innovation. However, not everything that is new or a novelty can be considered innovative only because it is new, as P8A stresses: "I think that many things we label as innovative in education have already been used and/or studied". Thus, an aspect to be observed regarding innovation is pioneering, in the sense of producing something that changes the traditional forms of pedagogical practices established in the classroom and teachers' everyday life, i.e., which results into something new, not only remodeling what exists (Nikolai; Pensin, 2013).

Hence, Carbonell (2002) stresses that in education, as in other social scopes, it is common to change the names of things while everything stays the same. In other words, the *same old 'new'*. On the other hand, the author understands that one cannot go to the other extreme and start from zero because the educational process is a symbiosis between accumulated pedagogical tradition and the need to change with time. Innovation is the result of a balance "[...] between collectively accumulated knowledge and the constant need to rethink it" (Carbonell, 2002, p. 82).

Ferreti (1980, p. 56) understands that innovating means "[...] introducing changes in an object in a planned fashion, seeking to improve it". Thus, innovation is associated with the idea of improvement or betterment concerning what was already done, adding, or changing something. However, concerning the 'new', one should understand that improvement for itself, or the simple modification of something, does not represent innovation.

Thus, pedagogical innovation should be associated to change, improvement, and rennovation, reminding that, though every improvement implies change, not all change implies improvement (Carbonell, 2002; Farias, 2006). Changing something that already exists does not always

represent innovation if the change does not have the character of overcoming or renovating. In education, improving pedagogical practice establishes an innovation when representing a rupture with the traditional practice of education. An example is expository class, which continues to exist, but changes by adding an essential element for teaching-learning: dialogue. This way, the expository class becomes expository dialogued and improves pedagogical practice and, consequently, learning.

Hence, for novelty to be innovative, change should engender transformation and renovation. To be characterized as such, an innovative pedagogical practice requires more than introducing new elements, whether technological, methodological, or didactic; it requires a change of conception and attitude, that is, new ways of thinking, making, and being a teacher.

Another meaning given to the *new* is identified in P10A's answer: "Innovative pedagogical practice is the one that transmits a new experience to the student beyond the already known methods and techniques, escaping the standard patterns of theoretical development." In this sense, novelty indicates a change in how the student is used to behave in class through new experiences and the proposal of activities with different approaches and methodologies, as P10A mentions: "[...] beyond the known methods and techniques."

However, some elements in this answer clash with an innovative pedagogical practice. *Transmitting* is a prerogative characteristic of traditional education. Associating an innovative practice with the act of transmitting is, at the very least, contradictory because innovation opposed to tradition. As the answer mentions *methods and techniques*, we can also analyze innovation because pedagogical practice is not restricted to technique. Thus, it is not limited to *giving classes*. This way, though the diversification of approaches and methods is essential for a class not to be limited to teachers' oral explanation and promote active learning, it is important to stress that the simple use of new technologies or teaching methods is not enough to characterize an innovative pedagogical practice because such change does not surpass the 'making' dimension.

Another sense concerning the 'new' can be seen in teachers' answers: *a new perspective*. This understanding is present in P8A's answer: "[...] I believe in new perspectives to new educational and social contexts". Therefore, the 'new' surpasses the classroom and encompasses students' life context in a more meaningful way and a broader social context. As a social practice, education must consider the social, historical, and cultural contexts. If not, it becomes a practice alienated from reality. Thus, thinking a new perspective for the pedagogical practice goes beyond the traditional, following a reflexive practice and contextualized criticism.

Cultural and social changes reflect in the educational context. Thinking the pedagogical practice considering the demands of school routine in the face of constant changes is thinking under a new perspective, approximating students' world to the school's world. Imbernón (2012) understands that teaching consists in organizing and planning practices that seek to explore new ideas, structure knowledges, and apply them to new contexts, an interactive model in which the teaching context has fundamental importance.

We can also observe in P8A answer that: "[...] each innovation has a formative project, a theoretical base, which is often not apparent". The professor is aware that the innovative pedagogical practice requires theoretical ground, even if it is not evident.

Finally, one last meaning given to the *new* appears in P2D's answer, who understands innovative pedagogical practice as "reinventing everything we have done and always reinventing

ourselves". Therefore, *new* is associated to *reinventing*, which appears in the answer into two perspectives: regarding the object, when mentioning *reinventing everything we have done*, and regarding teachers themselves when saying *always reinventing ourselves.*

In the first perspective, reinventing what has already been done would be something new and different, based on a movement that brings change through thinking, resignifying, or renovating pedagogical practice. The point is not only introducing something different or changing what already exists but reinventing, creating again, inventing once more, and giving a new meaning to what already exists, as the professor mentioned. There is an innovative character in this perspective, which leads to renovation. In the second perspective, reinventing turns itself to teachers' actions, in this case to teachers themselves, in the sense of *reinventing themselves,* changing their pedagogical practice, leaving their *comfort zone*, and seeking new ways of teaching, beyond the tradition, in constant improvement, through a new thought, which materializes a new way of acting and being a teacher.

To Freire (2020a, p. 58), "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.". Thus, teachers need to reinvent their pedagogical practice and themselves, not accepting knowledge as a finished and ready product but acting through a continuous and permanent learning process, aware of its incompleteness as a human being and a teacher, because only then men and women can become educatable: when they recognize themselves as incomplete (Freire, 2020a).

In this movement of always learning and reinventing oneself, through a reflection exercise over teachers' practice, new practices are shaped and materialized as innovative. P4A's answer stands out attention when referring to *comfort zone.* In this answer, the professor's mobilization to escape the standards rather than accommodate to the usual practice can be seen. Leaving one's *comfort zone* is breaking away from the ties of practice, of the *'I've always done this and it worked*'; it is opening up to the new and accepting the challenge of changing, starting by reinventing oneself. This means that the innovative pedagogical practice starts with teachers, with a change in how they see and understand the teaching-learning process and understand themselves as trainers and subjects of a transformative praxis.

According to Imbernón (2012), for innovative pedagogical practice to materialize, teachers should leave behind the comfort of the *old* to face the challenge of the *new*. This way, teachers do not accommodate to the knowledge already known but is permanently restless to seek new knowledges. Freire (2020b) calls it *epistemological curiosity*, i.e., the questioning restlessness that mobilizes subjects, seeking novelty in a constant movement of action and reflection.

Technology is another central element that appears in three teachers' answers as a criterion that characterizes innovative pedagogical practice.

1. P7A: "Innovative pedagogical practices involve students intensively and meaningfully in all the teaching-learning processes, using new technologies";
2. P9A: "Because I seek to include a diversity of technological activities in the classes";
3. P2B: "[...] the mastery of technologies".

In this case, the meaning given to technology is clear: the use and diversification of technologies in the classroom. These professors understand that innovative technology is, in some way, related to the use of technologies or new technologies in the educational processes.

Cunha (2005) understands that change seeing through the bias of technology introduction in

the teaching-learning process consists in a partial and generalized modification of the class that does establish an innovation. As Carbonell (2002) understands, this modernization is only a symptom of modernity, not change. According to the author, education has changed little regarding contents and century-old and traditional school practices, which are more updated rather than modified. To him, technological artifacts "[...] play the identical role of textbooks and are limited to dictating the same old lesson. The format changes and nothing else" (Carbonell, 2002, p. 16).

Technology is applied to the pedagogical practice as an instrument, which continues as external, as its use does not change the practice's structure and internal organization. Therefore, it is restricted to the *form*, not to the *content*, because, in terms of knowledge, this is not changed through the means it is taught. Hence, it is not technology use that measures *if* and *how* the practice is innovative. Introducing technologies into a traditional pedagogical practice is not enough to make it innovative.

Carbonell (2002, p. 20) highlights that information society seeks to introduce technology in the field of innovation as a solution to any problem. However, in education "[...] its contribution is more quantitative than qualitative, more centered in the how than the why, more in the packaging than the content", that is, to the author, equip classes with technological devices and learn their languages is not enough to produce change in education.

> Besides this, there is a tricky aggregated value: imagining that it is culturally enough to be updated in the mastery of some instrumental abilities and the access to an increasing informational arsenal, while what should be a priority is not the mastery of a strategy to navigate but how to discriminate relevant information, analyze, and interpret it; that is, to critically think socially-built knowledge (Carbonell, 2002, p. 20).

In other words, innovating is a complex process that goes beyond the mere introduction of technologies or new technologies in the classroom, which implies a movement to break paradigms, having as an end the transformation of teaching and the overcoming of a traditional pedagogical model. Therefore, the simple modernization of the classroom cannot be understood as pedagogical innovation, as it does not change the conceptions and conservative practices of teaching-learning.

Hence, it refers to a restricted change to teaching tools that often do not surpass the basic level of navigating through content because their complexity level does not allow understanding, analyzing, interpreting, and critically reflecting information to transform it into knowledge. Technology plays the role of the didactic book, the booklet, and the content presentation. Therefore, it is not a pedagogical innovation because the means are changed but not the ends.

On the other hand, Carbonell (2002) understands that the teachers' figure is essential for the intelligent, creative, and innovative use of new technologies. It would be pedagogically counterproductive for education to combat technological resources because their use can help turn the pedagogical practice more dynamic and attractive, even regarding students' protagonism because they allow for a more interactive relationship between teachers and students.

In fact, educational practice occurs with or without technology, as it is a means and not an end. Thus, a practice can be innovative with or without technology, because technology does not grant the innovative character to the practice, but the way it is thought and developed. Such understanding can be seen in the answers of professor P11A, who states: "[...] Not necessarily through technology [...]", and P2C: "[...] Even if there are technological resources involved, the key is a dialogical interaction to

understand the innovative pedagogical practice".

Thinking the pedagogical practice under an innovative perspective implies building alternative actions that are not supported by partial modifications, limited to techniques and didactic resources (Nikolai; Pensin, 2013), but which promote changes in the teaching and learning processes through a reflection *of* and *about* teachers' practice, aiming to promote the transformation of subjects and realities, creating changes that leads to a new way of thinking education, a new teachers' paradigm, toward an innovation more focused on the process than on the product, which is not so concerned with "[...] the final result itself but the multiple small results, objective and subjects, which succeed and connect each other" (Imbernón, 2012, p. 31).

Technology is a support resource for the pedagogical practice, as an instrument, a tool for education. This means that simply introducing technologies in the educational processes does not represent pedagogical innovation because it is not the use of technologies that makes a pedagogical practice innovative, as this can happen with or without technology; one does not demand the other. Introducing technology in the educational process does not establish a rupture or overcome a traditional educational model. A teacher can *give* a completely traditional class using technologies or develop an innovative pedagogical practice without using them. Therefore, the use of technological instruments is not enough to characterize a pedagogical practice as innovative because the first do not change the latter, as they continue to be external, in the level of instruments and appearances.

Research is another central element that appears in the answers as a criterion that characterizes innovative pedagogical practice. *It is* mentioned in two answers:

1. P1A: " I think it is innovative as it promotes students' broad participation and incites research";
2. P5A: "[...] because the academics effectively deliberate [...] researching, building knowledge to, later, creatively socialize it, playfully, helping build knowledge [...]".

Notably, only two professors mentioned research as a criterion for defining their practices as innovative, despite the importance of research in the process of rupturing with the traditional paradigms of education. The traditional model has no space for research because it assumes learning as a mechanical process of content reproduction through repetition and memorization. For that very reason, research is a criterion, per excellence, in building innovative pedagogical practice because it promotes thinking and questioning, as opposed to ready answers. Research opens up possibilities to build knowledge, investigative reflexively, critically, and meaningfully. In traditional education, there is no research because content is already finished and ready to be transmitted to students, such as in books, booklets, and others, including the internet, which has been a source for school search, though, often without reflection and criticism.

Research instigates students to seek and build knowledge through investigation and critical reflection. Thus, students are stimulated to think, question, analyze, and critically reflect. Such posture takes pedagogical practice to the scientific level of knowledge production (Libâneo, 2004), opposing the traditional practice of knowledge reproduction. Therefore, incentivizing research is an innovative pedagogical practice that stimulates students to be the subject of their learning process and act in knowledge production. Teachers should get rid of old habits and, instead of teaching students the correct answer, propose to teach them how to think and make questions, motivating their wish to know and seek

answers.

Finally, *active methodologies* appear as a central element in the answer of a teacher who understand innovation as: "the one that allows teaching learning through active methodology, that is, mobilizes learning styles". According to Moran (2018, p. 4), "active methodologies are teaching strategies centered in students' effective participation when building the learning process." Such methodologies promote active educational environments and place students as protagonists at the center of the teaching-learning process in opposition of teaching as an act of transferring knowledge. There are various and countless methods associated with active methodologies: problematization, inverted classroom, project-based learning, programming, learning contextualization, hybrid education, *design thinking*, STEAM curriculum development, and games, among others, which promote students' reflection and autonomy with teachers' guidance (Moran, 2018).

Imbernón (2012, p. 49) argues in favor of introduction active methodologies contraposing exclusively expositive activities, from a methodology that is more "[...] interactive, focused not on teachers' univocal communication relationships but bivocal and multidirectional relationships, so that students can build their own leaning in the relation with their classmates' learning". Consequently, we understand that active methodologies contribute to students' active participation in building knowledge and learning. On the other hand, we cannot affirm that the pedagogical practice is innovative based only on the introduction of active methodologies. Other elements regarding the dynamic of the practice itself need to be considered, which are not limited to the classroom didactics or teaching techniques. In this sense, P11A's observation stand out by stating that pedagogical practice does not "[...] necessarily take place through technology or active methodologies". This answer shows an understanding from the teacher that ratifies what is under discussion, i.e., that the innovative pedagogical practice is characterized by the change in practice itself, not externally but internally.

Therefore, it is important to involve students in activities in which they have a central role. However, if the activity does not promote reflection, mobilization, and critical construction of knowledge, their participation will not be active. Active participation and protagonism require "[...] students' participation in the pedagogical decisions, the valuing of students' personal, original, and creative production, stimulating more complex and non-repetitive intellectual processes" (Cunha, 2019, p. 27). Hence, it is not enough to simply involve students in activities that require their participation in task execution, as this is not active participation.

FINAL REMARKS

The analysis of innovative pedagogical practice criteria attributed by the teachers in our sample allows some reflections and considerations.

The criteria that give meaning to the innovative pedagogical practice are subjective, thus, have a polysemic character and vary according to the research participants' knowledge, interpretation, and experience. Such criteria show teachers' understanding of what they consider an *innovative pedagogical practice,* which grounds their practices.

We analyzed the criteria used to understand what an innovative pedagogical practice is based on some central elements in the participants' answers. These were students' protagonism; rupture with tradition; new; technology; research; and active methodologies. The analysis of these criteria shows that

not everything understood as pedagogical innovation is indeed an innovative pedaogogical practice.

Students' protagonism is an important element to consolidate an innovative pedagogical practice, as the student leaves the margins and a passive posture and takes the center in the learning process, as an active subject and no longer as an object. However, such change does not imply displacing teachers to the margins. However, it establishes an interaction between teachers and students through mutual cooperation and meaningful learning, in which both sides are subjects.

The rupture with tradition represents an innovative practice from the opposition and overcoming of traditional educational practice, exclusively focusing on expository class and knowledge transmission and reproduction. The rupture with the traditional logic of education is an essential condition for a pedagogical practice to be innovative, based on a new way of thinking the proposal of new or renovated teaching practices.

The 'new' assumes an innovative character regarding the pedagogical practice when it assembles or changes something in a pioneering manner, establishing itself in an effective change regarding traditional pedagogical practices and resulting in a novelty that makes a difference, not only new clothes for something that already exists.

Technology, as an end in itself, does not represent an innovation in the pedagogical practice. The simple introduction or use of technology in classes is not an innovative pedagogical practice because technology is a didactic instrument. This tool presents itself as a means, not an end. Teachers' action, not the technologies used, makes a pedagogical practice innovative. However, this does not mean marginalizing technologies, which are important as a didactic resource, but understanding their role in the educational process, as technological innovation and not as pedagogical innovation.

Research is a relevant element for innovative pedagogical practice due to its role in producing and disseminating knowledge, as well as students' protagonism. In traditional pedagogical practice, students are understood as objects, not as subjects; they do not participate in knowledge construction; they are a mere receiver of finished content transmitted by teachers. When students understand themselves as subjects of the teaching-learning process, they are perceived as someone able to build and produce knowledge. Therefore, overcoming the limits of traditional education practice, the practice takes on an innovative perspective.

Active methodologies promote students' protagonism through their active participation in teaching- learning process and knowledge building. However, regarding technologies, one should be attentive to the goal of the pedagogical practice, as it is not restricted to classroom didactics or teaching techniques. Thus, teachers' work makes a difference in establishing an innovative pedagogical practice, its thinking, knowing, acting, and being teachers, which will constitute the innovative character of the educational practice.

Finally, we point out the importance of reflecting on what an innovative pedagogical practice is and how it is established to consolidate a more assertive conception about this concept. This movement can ground and evoke the creation of innovative pedagogical practices in teachers' education courses and the consolidation of an innovative teacher.

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Submitted: 04/06/2023
Approved: 03/29/2024
Preprint: 03/22/2023

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 – Research project management, writing, analysis and discussion of text data, text editing.
Author 2 – Research advisor. Participation on investigation, methodology, review, writing, text editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this article.