

# **PEDAGOGY: THE SPACE FOR EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article points out the importance of pedagogy as the specific realm within the university for the development of educational studies and educators' professional training. From then on, it addresses the national curricular guidelines which have been lately defined by the National Council of Education for the Pedagogy Course. To that end, after considering the historical and theoretical emergence of the pedagogy concept, it identifies the theory-practice relationship as the fundamental problem from which the two main pedagogical currents arise ending up in a dilemma and feeding the polemic character of pedagogy. Against this background, the paper analyzes the place education occupies within the Brazilian university, where Pedagogy plays a major role. Finally, it briefly examines the national curricular guidelines revealing a paradoxical situation: the document is at the same time extremely limited and too extensive; it is very limited in the essentials and too extensive in the accessories. Considering this finding, the work is concluded by proposing a possible way around the paradox.*

*PEDAGOGY – TEACHER EDUCATION – EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS – HISTORY OF EDUCATION*

## **THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF PEDAGOGY**

Over the years of the so-called western civilization, pedagogy has been developed as a correlate to education, understood as the way one perceives or establishes the educational

process. Education has effectively emerged as an irreducible reality in human societies. There are no distinct boundaries between its origins and those of mankind itself. As man makes an effort to understand education and attempts to make intentional interventions in it, expert knowledge has evolved from Greek Paideia, to Roman Empire and to the Middle Ages and continues into modern times strongly connected to the term pedagogy.

In such background, pedagogy has been developed in close connection with educational practice, emerging as the theory or science of this practice and being identified in specific contexts with the very intentional way to provide education. Throughout several centuries pedagogy established a rich theoretical and scientific tradition over the educational practice which must continue to be developed in spite of, and even due to, the numberless objections it has faced in the history of human thought.

Since Ancient Greece there have been two notions to the concept of pedagogy. From the one hand, it has been thought of as strongly connected to philosophy, based on the ethical purposes that lead the educational activity. On the other hand, it carries the empirical and practical meaning which is inherent to Paideia, understood as educating children for life, which reinforced the methodological aspect already present on the etymological sense of pedagogy as means, path: the guidance of children. Since the 17th century, both aspects tended to be unified as it is demonstrated by the effort employed by Comenius. Proceeding in the same way Bacon did for Sciences in general, Comenius tried to tackle the methodological issue of pedagogy. In this way he attempted to establish an articulated pedagogical system in which the ends in education were considered as the basis to devise its means, summarized in didactics as the art to teach everything to everyone. It was with Herbart, however, that both aspects of pedagogical traditions were identified as distinct, being unified within a coherent system: the ends of education, which pedagogy should devise on ethical grounds, and the educational means, which the same pedagogy builds on psychological grounds. Thereafter, pedagogy has been consolidated as a university discipline, being established as the academic area of studies and research in education.

Within the scope of idealism, pedagogy tended to melt into philosophy, being considered as applied philosophy and thus identified with philosophy of education, in its positive aspect counterpointed to its negative aspect, as exemplarily expressed by Gentile's judgment: Pedagogy is the "source of annoyance to our teacher education school which wished to be the source of annoyance to universities and all future teachers, teaching them

what cannot be taught”. In fact, Gentile denies the link between ethics and psychology as made explicit by Herbart. As an adept of idealism, Gentile thinks pedagogy identifies with philosophy. Understanding education as the development of spirit itself and teaching as theory in action, according to Gentile the method is the teacher himself/herself, who cannot abide by any didactic program: methods cannot be taught. Hence, his memorable phrase, which peremptorily refuses the identification between pedagogy and the methodology of teaching or didactics.

Within the scope of positivism pedagogy was, at the outset, incorporated to the educational practice. This accords with Durkheim’s understanding (1965), to whom pedagogy is a practical theory, focused on the attainment of the educational phenomenon, counterpointed to the scientific theory, which is focused on the knowledge of the educational fact, a task which is up to the sociology of education to undertake. Later on, still in the scope of positivism, there was an effort to give a scientific character to pedagogy. Rather than being granted with scientific autonomy, however, pedagogy was simply transferred from one kind of submission, that to philosophy, to another: the submission to the empirical sciences acknowledged as such and which became the model for pedagogy. Recently, nevertheless, mainly since the late 70’s of the 20th century, pedagogy has gone down the path of scientific autonomy which is no longer susceptible to further objections, as it is admitted by Schmied-Kowarzik, Frabboni and Genovesi. According to Schmied-Kowarzik (1983, p.7), “within the practical sciences, pedagogy is, precisely, one of the richest in tradition”. Franco Frabboni has attempted to articulate education and pedagogy in the context of what are called new paradigms which have gained great circulation since the 1990’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this context he acknowledges, without restrictions, the scientific statute of pedagogy as it can be seen on his book *Manuale di pedagogia generale*, written with Franca Pinto Minerva (1994, p. 56-107). Giovanni Genovesi, in turn, states very clearly:

Pedagogy is an autonomous science because it has its own language and is aware of how to use it according to its own method and its own ends and, by this language, pedagogy generates a body of knowledge, a series of experiments and techniques without which any construction of education models would be impossible. 1999, p. 79-80.

According to the author, the role of pedagogy as science is no other than to offer rationally justifiable and logically defensible formal models for the education of the individual, distinguishing the variables that make up such models as instruments of interpretation and proposition of a set of educational events (p.98).

## **THE PRACTICE-THEORY RELATIONSHIP AS A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF PEDAGOGY**

In its multi-century trajectory, the most outstanding feature of pedagogy can be identified in the relationship between practice and theory. Understood as the “theory of education”, it has become evident that pedagogy is a theory of practice: the theory of educational practice. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that if every pedagogy is the theory of education not every theory of education is pedagogy. In fact, the concept of pedagogy takes us back to a theory that is developed taking educational practice as the starting point and the point of reference. As the theory of education, pedagogy attempts to somehow tackle the issue of educator-student relationship in general or, in the specific case of the school, the teacher-pupil relationship, guiding the teaching-learning process. Thus, those theories that explain education without aiming at the development of guidelines that apply to the educational activity are not considered pedagogy. The theories that fall within this scope are the theories of education stemming from human sciences which are turned to the analysis of the educational phenomenon, as it occurs to the sociology of education, educational psychology, biology of education, economy of education, educational anthropology.

## **THE TWO MAJOR PEDAGOGICAL TRENDS**

From the pedagogical point of view, we can consider that the different conceptions of education can be grouped in two great trends: the first would be defined by the pedagogical conceptions which would prioritize theory over practice, subordinating the latter to the former, being practice melted in theory in the borderline. The second trend, conversely, would

be defined by the conceptions that subordinate theory to practice and, in the borderline, theory is melted into practice.

In the first group there would be the several modes of traditional pedagogy, be they part of the religious or lay approaches. In the second group we would find the different modes of the new pedagogy. In other words, we could say that in the first case there would be concern for “teaching theories” whereas in the second case emphasis is placed on “learning theories”.

In the first trend the main problem used to be translated by the question “how to teach?”, and the answer to it was the attempt to formulate teaching methods. Yet in the second trend the main problem is translated by the question “how to learn?”, which led to the widespread use of the motto “learning to learn”.

In historical terms, the first trend was dominant until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The unique characteristic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the shift to the second trend that became predominant though without disregarding the traditional conception that confronts the new trends, competing with them for the influence over the educational activity in schools.

The traditional conceptions, since their origins in Plato’s and Christian pedagogies to the pedagogies of the humanists and nature pedagogy, in which Comenius was included, as well as the idealistic pedagogy of Kant, Fichet and Hegel, to the rationalistic humanism, which expanded especially as a consequence of the French Revolution, and to the theory of evolution and Herbart-Ziller system, would always end up in a teaching theory (Suchodolski, 1978). Guided by instruction-centeredness (intellectual education), they thought school was a teacher-centered agency, whose task was to transmit knowledge that had been gained by humanity in a logical sequence, placing on the students the role of acquiring the knowledge that was transmitted. In such context, practice was determined and molded by theory, which provided both the content and the way the teacher would transmit it, resulting in the acquisition by the students. This trend reaches its highest peak in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century being the methodology of intuitive teaching centered in the teaching of things. This method already has in its core the origin of the new trend, for it demands direct contact with touchable objects.

The renovation trends, in turn, have always led to the issue of how to learn, i.e., to learning theories, since their early theorists such as Rousseau and also Pestalozzi and Froebel, to Kierkegaard, Stirner, Nietzsche and Bergson (Suchodolski, 1978), until they reached the

New School movement, the non-directive pedagogies (Snyders, 1978), the institutional pedagogy (Lobrot, 1967; Oury, Vasquez, 1967) and constructivism. Taking learner-centeredness as basis, they conceive school as an open space to students who act on their own initiative and acquire their own learning and broaden their knowledge by interacting with each other and with teachers. The teacher has the role to give support to students helping them in their own learning process. The axis of the pedagogical work moves from intellectual understanding to practical activity, from the logical to the psychological aspect, from cognitive contents to learning methods or processes. Such pedagogies are characterized by the primacy of practice over theory. The latter should subordinate to the former, rejecting any attempt to guide it, i.e., that would provide it with guidelines that should be followed in practice and so it restricts itself to the utterances that stem from students' own activity with teachers' follow-up. This trend gains strength at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, becomes hegemonic under the New School movement until the beginning of the second half of this century and, as it faced critical objections, it ensured its prevalence by taking on new versions, among which constructivism is probably the most widespread in the present day.

If in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the emphasis of educational propositions was placed on the teaching methods that were formulated from philosophical and didactic fundamentals, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the emphasis shifts to learning methods, establishing the primacy of the psychological fundamentals of education. In such context, there is the emergence of a new pedagogical conception with a new model for teacher education, whose origin can be found in Dewey, to whom, in educational practice, “the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher – and upon the whole, the less consciousness there is, on either side, of either giving or receiving instruction, the better” (Dewey, 1979, p.176).

This emphasis on the experience of the student who is responsible for his/her own learning can also be detected in Piaget and in constructivism, although Dewey's philosophical matrix, which refers to Hegel, is different from Piaget's, influenced by Kant. According to Piaget (1983, p.39) “an epistemology conforming to the data of psychogenesis” is not empiricist, i.e., does not result from observations, neither stems from innate or a priori forms, “but could consist only of a constructivism, with a continual elaboration of new operations and structures”. By making such assumption he is, although in

another way, centering the issue of knowledge on the experience that already exists or is to be lived by the pupil.

Summing up, the two major pedagogical trends seem to conduct us to a truly theoretical aporia: both are coherent and plausible though apparently mutually excluding. Their penetration in schools made teachers face a practical dilemma that deserves further analysis.

## **SCHOOLS IN FACE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL DILEMMA**

The opposition between both trends derives from the distinct emphasis that each one of them place on the several elements that are part of the pedagogical process. The first, traditional, trend places emphasis on theory, reinforces the role of the teacher, considered the one who has expertise and, therefore, the theoretically-grounded knowledge, and, as such, has the responsibility for teaching it to students by using adequate procedures that make up the teaching methods. The second trend, with renovation features, places emphasis on practice, and reinforces the role of the student who is considered the one who can only learn in practice. Having the initiative of action, students manifest their interest for what deserves to be learnt and, with the help of the teacher, take the necessary steps needed for their education that make up the learning method by which they, the very students, build up their own knowledge.

Having outlined the contraposition between both pedagogical trends, we can see that the recurring presence of the opposition between theory and practice in education is here expressed as the contraposition between teacher and student. In everyday classroom practice, students tend to constantly claim the primacy of practice: “this course is too theoretical”, they say; “it should be more practical”. The teacher, in turn, tends to defend the importance of theory claiming that if it is not valued in the learning process it will be later on, in social life, in the professional occupation: “don’t be so anxious”, the teacher tells the students. “You will see in the future that what I am teaching you is very important, essential indeed, to everyone’s lives”.

Is that really so? Judging by the recurrent appeals made by students for courses to be more practical-oriented, we conclude that they do not take it so seriously, they do not believe

in the teacher's claim. In fact, only later in time will the teacher's word prove to be right or wrong. Students will be able to see for themselves only after the course completion and their professional insertion: "It is true. I never realized it when I was a student but now I see that those things the teacher taught me are really essential to my practice". Or else: "That teacher deceived me. Those things he taught me have no connection with the practice I develop in my professional work". However, as this former student does not return to school to bring the evidence obtained in his professional experience, new classes enroll and the same opposition repeats itself indefinitely: students claim a more practice-oriented course and teachers insist on the importance of theory. And the problem is not solved, resulting as a real dilemma, i.e., an embarrassing situation with two equally difficult ways out<sup>1</sup>.

At the root of the problem lies the understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in terms of formal logic, to which the opposites exclude one another. Thus, if theory is opposed to practice, one excludes the other. Therefore, if a course is theory-oriented it is not practical; if it is practice-oriented, it is not theoretical. Moreover, as the teacher has been cast in the role of advocate of theory while the student argues in defense of practice, the opposition between theory and practice is reflected in the pedagogical relationship as the opposition between teacher and student. Nevertheless, it is understood in a more or less consensual way that both theory and practice are important in the pedagogical process, in the same way it is recognized that such process takes place in the teacher-student relationship, which makes it impossible to exclude one of the poles so as to benefit the other. It could be said, therefore, that theory and practice as well as teacher and student are indivisible elements of the pedagogical process. In these terms, a way out of the dilemma by one of its poles has proved to be equally difficult and, at the limit, impossible. That is the reason why the two existing pedagogical trends of the present time are found to be equally unable to solve the pedagogical dilemma.

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<sup>1</sup> Dilemma is a term derived from Greek (δύλημμα). This word comprehends two elements: the particle δι, which is the elision of the preposition and also adverb διά which, in this case, means "separating", "dividing", "from one side and the other"; and the word λημμα, which means "lemma", "theme", "proposition", "the premise of a syllogism". Dilemma, therefore, means "a double premise", which also leads us to the sense of an argumentation in which two contradictory conclusions are equally and logically possible. From this technical meaning, the sense of dilemma has been generalized as expressing a difficult situation with two equally difficult ways out.



## **SOLVING THE DILEMMA**

Therefore, the pertinent question to be raised is: would there be another way, another pedagogical trend that would help solve the dilemma in which one finds the pedagogical trends of the present time entangled?

In order to answer such question one should bear in mind that the validity of formal logic, as the name suggests, is restricted to forms. Logic is built out of language and, therefore, it regulates the modes of expression of thought and not the way we think. Formal logic, as such, affects the analytical and, therefore, abstract moment, as thought attempts to get hold of the concrete reality which is the unity of diversity, for it is the synthesis of multiple determinations, and therefore something complex that articulates opposing elements. In order to apprehend what is concrete we should identify its elements and for that purpose we isolate them, separate them from one another by an abstraction process and such procedure is called analysis. Once this is done, we should take the opposite direction in order to apprehend what is concrete, i.e., reorganize the identified elements by rearticulating them in the whole they belong to in such a way as to perceive their relations. In this way we depart from a diffuse, chaotic, syncretic view of the phenomenon studied and by the abstraction process, the analysis, we come to a synthetic, articulated, concrete view. Well, such procedure which allows us to grasp reality as an articulated whole made up of elements which juxtapose to each other, which act and react one over the other in a dynamic process, has been made explicit (under the name of dialectical logic elaborated by Hegel, at the beginning of the 19th century. Thus, if formal logic is the logic of forms and therefore abstract, the dialectical logic is the logic of contents, and in this way a concrete logic which incorporates the formal logic as a necessary moment in the processing of knowledge.

Let us consider the problem of the relationship between theory and practice having in mind such dialectical understanding. Theory and practice are distinct and fundamental aspects of human experience. Under such condition they should and must be considered in the specificity that differentiates them, one from the other. Although distinct, however, such aspects are inseparable, and one is always defined and characterized in relation to the other. In this way, theory exists because of practice, which means that theory has been set and developed solely because of the practice that it simultaneously operates as its fundament, purpose and criterion of truth. Theory is therefore deeply dependent on practice. The

problems addressed by theory are posed by practice so theory will only make sense when it is put into action by man in an attempt to solve the problems brought by practice. A theory has the role to clarify practice, making it coherent, consistent, rational and efficient. Practice, therefore, also depends on theory, since its consistency is determined by theory. Without theory practice would end up being blind, fumbling, and losing its specific feature of human activity. Indeed, human action is an activity that fits into purposes, i.e., it is guided by a goal that one seeks to attain. Marx gives the following example to illustrate it:

A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. (Marx, 1968, v. 1, p.202)

Well, the act of mentally foreseeing what will be carried out means exactly that human practice is determined by theory. Therefore, the more solid is the theory that guides practice the more consistent and effective is the practical activity. That is why, when faced with the remarks from students: “this course is too theoretical it should be more practical”, I was always inclined to answer: “I wish it were theoretical for we are in great need of theories”.

In light of these remarks, let us get back to the confrontation between theory and practice that made teachers and students oppose. If examined in dialectic terms, we note that rather than being mutually excluding, theory and practice are mutually including opposites, and this clears the way for the unity between theory and practice. Before we step forward to name such confrontation as meaningless, however, we should analyze it to understand the reason for its persistence.

As we deepen the analysis on the grounds of language itself we notice that instead of a binomial, we have a quadrilateral. Within the theory-practice opposition there is a hint of the opposition between verbalism and activism: What opposes theory in an excluding attitude is not practice but activism; in the same way, what opposes practice in an excluding attitude is verbalism and not theory. For activism is “practice” without theory and verbalism is “theory” without practice. That is: verbalism is empty-talk, idle chattering, the worship of empty word; and activism is the action for action’s sake, blind practice, action without a final destination, aimless practice.

Well, I believe that we are able to clarify the so-called “imbroglio” that is caused by the claim “this course is too theoretical, it should be more practical”. In fact, this situation can be described in the following terms:

Moved by activism and in the name of practice students criticize the teacher’s verbalism, which they think is theory. The teacher, in turn, in the name of theory defends his verbalism against the practical claim from students and calls them activists.

We can, therefore, understand why both pedagogical trends of the present day, that treat theory and practice as mutually excluding opposing poles, have entangled in a dilemma which they would never be able to solve. The way out from the dilemma demands another theoretical approach which may overcome this excluding opposition and may counterbalance theory and practice, as well as teacher and student, in a comprehensive unity between both poles which, being set one against the other, facilitate and trigger the pedagogical work. It is the role of historical-critical pedagogy to develop this new theory.

In this new approach education is understood as mediation at the heart of the global social practice. The social practice is, therefore, the starting point and the point of arrival of the educational practice. Hence, a pedagogical method derives from the social practice in which both teacher and student are inserted, although with different positions, which is a condition for them to build up a fruitful relationship in the process of understanding and working towards the solution of the problems posed by social practice. It is the role of the intermediate moments of the method to identify the questions raised by the social practice (questioning), to make available the theoretical and practical instruments for their understanding and solution (operationalizing) and to enable their incorporation as elements that are part of the students’ own life (catharsis).

## **PEDAGOGY: A CONTROVERSIAL FIELD**

What stands out in the trajectory of pedagogy, according to the previous analyses, is its controversial feature. Especially over the 20th century, the pedagogical thought has been crossed by opposing trends, disputing hegemony in the educational field. Conservative pedagogy *versus* progressive pedagogy, catholic pedagogy (spiritualist) *versus* lay pedagogy (materialist), authoritative pedagogy *versus* autonomy pedagogy, repressive pedagogy *versus*

liberating pedagogy, passive pedagogy *versus* active pedagogy, pedagogy of essence *versus* pedagogy of existence, banking pedagogy *versus* dialogical pedagogy, theoretical pedagogy *versus* practical pedagogy, teaching pedagogies *versus* learning pedagogies and, covering the whole panorama and in a certain sense, encompassing the other oppositions, traditional pedagogy *versus* the new pedagogy. In an attempt to make their own integrants cohesive, each one of the conflicting groups would write their own discourse emphasizing the differences and focusing on the points that distinguished them from their opponents, and they would choose the slogan that best typified each position and had greater power of attraction in order to gain new adherents.

The current of analytic philosophy of education, understanding that philosophy is concerned with the clarity and consistency of the statements related to phenomena and not to the phenomena as such, considers that the role of the philosophy of education is to make the asepsis of the educational language, refining it from its inconsistencies and ambiguities. This philosophical current, as such, has performed different kinds of analysis on the logic of the pedagogical discourse.

Israel Scheffler, in the book *The language of education* looks into the definitions in education, the educational slogans, in addition to the educational metaphors, and explores in detail the several usage contexts of the verb to *teach* in connection with the verb to *tell*.

In Chapter 2 Scheffler starts to show the difference between slogans and their definitions; while the latter are considered clarifying the former are stimulating, and their aim is to unify the educational movements: “they express and foster at the same time the spirit community attracting new adherents and providing reassurance and strength to veterans” (1974, p.46). Just as what happens to the religious and political slogans, the educational slogans are a result of a partisan spirit. In this way, Scheffler thinks “it is idle to criticize a slogan for formal inadequacy or for inaccuracy in the transcription of usage” (p.46), but he understands that there is an important analogy between them and their definitions. Although slogans are unifying symbols of ideas and attitudes, “with the passing of time, however, slogans increasingly begin to be interpreted more literally either by adherents or by the critics of the movement they represent” (p.46-47). On this route, they tend to be considered “as literal doctrines or arguments, and no longer as unifying symbols” (p.47).

Scheffler stresses that in the case of education, differently from what happens in the political and religious arenas, its agents are not subordinated to an official doctrine neither are

they organized in confessional groups. Under such circumstances, “the educational ideas, initially formulated in carefully written and frequently difficult texts, soon become influential in popularized versions among teachers” (p.47). And there is no way of controlling such process by submitting it to discipline or leadership which may preserve the conception in its original form. Scheffler sums up his remarks by stating that a critic to slogans, both from the literal as well as from the practical aspect, is needed, and the original doctrines should be object of an independent evaluation.

Next, this author takes the very example of Dewey’s influence, remarking that his “systematic, carefully formulated, and well specified statements”, would soon be translated into “fragments of impact that would work as slogans to the new progressive trends of the American education” (p.47). And in spite of Dewey’s reaction criticizing the way his ideas were used, which was also taken into account given his incontestable status of an intellectual leader of the renovating movement, “progressive slogans have taken on a life of their own. They have been defended as literal statements and attacked as such” (p.48).

After such clarifications are provided, he then goes through the slogans “we teach children, not subjects” and “there can be no teaching without learning” which can be inserted in the process of the diffusion of the New School. To give an example, I will briefly refer to the statement “we teach children, not subjects”. What do we mean by this expression? From the grammatical point of view, it will not be sustained because the verb “to teach” is bitransitive and thus is followed by both the direct and the indirect objects. In fact, grammatically speaking it is not possible to say that one teaches nothing to someone else neither is it possible to say one teaches something to nobody. The action of teaching actually implies that something is taught to someone. Therefore, we should say that “we teach subjects to children”, and so the statement “we teach children, not subjects” would not make sense; in the same way, it would not make any sense to say “we teach subjects, not children”. So, what is the reason for such statement? Well, it justifies itself because it is not about a definition but a slogan. And, as a slogan, it functions as a symbol binding adepts together around the idea of children-centeredness in the educational process. In other words, from the initial consideration that the attention of educators had been excessively turned to the content of learning, leaving to second place the very children who are the purpose and the reason of being of the educational process, the motto “we teach children, not subjects” was coined. The aim was to warn teachers that their main concern should be the learners and that the

curriculum and, therefore, the education content should be organized around the learners' interests.

Thus, one must conclude that “we teach children, not subjects” is a *slogan* that the New School launched against the Traditional School. In other words, considering that, with the predominance of the Traditional School, the rod was bent towards the subjects, the New School, practicing the “theory of the curvature of the rod”, tried to bend the rod towards the children's side. In so doing, however, due to the mechanism described by Scheffler, according to which *slogans* are defended as if they were literal statements, the motto was spread as if it were the real expression of a pedagogical truth. We can conclude that the New School, contrary to the way I have used the “theory of the curvature of the rod” in the book “*Escola e Democracia*” [School and Democracy], has been using it as a device which establishes the real truth. In fact, the way I have used it, I did not mean to suggest that I intended to state any truth when using the slogan of the “theory of the curvature of the rod.” On the contrary, I made clear that I was pushing the rod towards the other side; that I was, therefore, making an issue; I was inverting the current way of thinking. And that, if the correct position was not on the side of the New School, it was not on the side of the Traditional School either (Saviani, 2006, p.57).

These considerations suggest we should be cautious when judging pedagogical trends. Hence, the question is not whether we should stick to them or reject them on account of the slogans through which they were or have been spread. In short, if slogans are to be criticized for both the literal and the practical aspects, the “originary doctrines” should be subject of an independent assessment, i.e., they should be coolly examined from the point of view of its definitions, meeting the demands of scientific criticism.

## **TO OVERCOME THE CONTROVERSY**

Gramsci, in his 'Prison Notebooks', written in 1932, coincidentally in the same year the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education was launched in Brazil, recorded some keen observations and concluded with the following comment:

A distinction must be made between the creative school and the active school – including the active school shaped by the Dalton method. Every unitary school is an active school, even though it is

necessary to place limits on libertarian ideologies in this field and to claim vigorously the duty of the adult generations – that is, of the State – to “shape” the new generations. The active school is still in its romantic phase, in which the elements of struggle against the mechanical and Jesuitical school have been morbidly exaggerated for oppositional and polemical reasons: it must enter the “classical,” rational phase and find in the goals it seeks to attain the natural source for developing its forms and methods. (Gramsci, 1975, v. 3, p. 1537; in the Brazilian edition, 1968, p.124).

As far as I am concerned these guidelines may apply to our performance as the faculty of the Pedagogy Program. Instead of feeding the polemic among the pedagogical trends, particularly between the so-called traditional concepts and the renewed ones, we should accept the invitation to enter the classical phase, which has achieved improvement, overcome the problems brought by controversy and recovered the elements that have withstood harsh conditions due to their permanent nature.

## **THE SPACE OF EDUCATION IN THE BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITY**

Attempts to move education studies into higher education go back to the reform of public education in São Paulo in the early Brazilian Republic. Law no. 88, of September 8, 1892, established the Higher Teacher Education School program, which aimed at the teacher education for secondary school teachers (Reis Filho, 1995, p.162). Despite the fact that this legislation continued until the reform which took place in 1920, the expected higher education course was never introduced.

This issue was later resumed in 1931 when the Statute of Brazilian Universities anticipated that, for an institution to become a university in Brazil, among the courses there should be one of Education, Science and Letters.

Minister Francisco Campos, in a long presentation of reasons, explains why the School of Education, Science and Letters was established. According to him, this school, having great influence on cultural life, would bring “the true university nature” to the higher education institutions, thus transcending the professional interest and giving the university the nature that defines it: universality (2000, p.127). This general aspiration, however, results in the next paragraph, not only relativized but, in fact, its meaning is inverted. The minister

argues that among “developing countries, like ours”, the high culture should not be an exclusive goal. In fact, it should generate “immediate benefits.” Thus “the special and mixed nature of our School of Education, Science and Letters, which unites at the same time cultural functions with a highly utilitarian and practical role” (Ibidem).

This way, rather than an institute of disinterested studies from a professional point of view, dedicated to the cultivation of human knowledge in its universality, as formerly indicated, there would be an institute whose establishment would be motivated by its “utilitarian and practical” nature. The minister justifies this inversion considering where our culture stands, a culture marked by “teaching with no teachers, that is, where teachers educate themselves, and all our culture is purely autodidactic” (Ibidem). It starts to become clear now that the reason for the inclusion of the word “education” in this new school, instead of “philosophy”, points to the issue of teacher education. This is what is made explicit in the next paragraph, where it is stated that this new college could not limit itself to being “an ornament or a pretentious decoration in poor people’s homes” (Ibidem). On the contrary, it should take on a “pragmatic character”, falling upon teachers’ preparation, especially on the basic and fundamental subject matters.

According to its idealizer, the new college would not just be an “organ of high culture or pure and disinterested science”, but it should be, “above all and eminently, an Institute of Education”, whose essential role would be teacher preparation, particularly of those to teach at High School for Teacher Education and at the last years of Elementary school plus middle school. This proposal, however, was never performed.

The way pedagogy was introduced in the university was effectively paved by the Institutes of Education, conceived as environments that foster education which is viewed not only as object of teaching, but also of research. In this scope, the two major initiatives were the Institute of Education of the Federal District, structured and implemented by Anísio Teixeira, in 1932, and directed by Lourenço Filho; and the Institute of Education of São Paulo established in 1933 by Fernando de Azevedo, both inspired by the ideals of the New School.

With the reform instituted by Decree n. 3.810, of March 19, 1932, Anísio Teixeira proposes the eradication of what he considered the “vice of constitution” of the High Schools for Teacher Education, which “trying to be, at the same time, schools of general culture and professional culture, fail deplorably to fulfill both objectives” (Vidal, 2001, p.79-80). In order to do this, he transformed the High School for Teacher Education into Teachers’ Education



School, whose curricula included, already in the first year, the following subjects: Biology of Education, Sociology of Education, Educational Psychology; History of Education; Introduction to Teaching, observing three aspects: a. principles and techniques; b. subject matters including calculus, reading and language, children's literature, social studies and natural sciences; c. teaching practice, carried out through observation, experimentation and participation. As a support to the practical nature of the education process, the Teachers' Education School had a backup structure which involved: a. Kindergarten, primary school and secondary school, which worked as a field of experimentation, demonstration and teaching practice; b. Institute of Educational research; c. Central Library of Education; d. School libraries; e. filmotheque; f. School museums; g. Broadcasting.

With Fernando de Azevedo, the Institute of Education in São Paulo, followed the same track, also creating its Teachers' Education School (Monarcha, 1999, p.324-336).

We notice that the Institutes of Education were devised so as to incorporate the demands of pedagogy that intended to establish itself as knowledge of scientific nature. This way, they intended to provide "a quantitatively more significant teaching of humanities and sciences" in order to overcome the inadequacies of the old High Schools for Teacher Education characterized by both "a hybrid course and an exiguous professional curriculum" (Tanuri, 2000, p.72).

Both the Institute of Education of the Federal District and the Institute of Education of São Paulo were upgraded to university level: the Institute of Education in São Paulo moved into the University of São Paulo – USP – founded in 1934 and the Institute of Education of Rio de Janeiro moved into the University of the Federal District, established in 1935. And that was the foundation on which the Higher Teacher Education School Programs for the high schools for teacher education were built, and were later spread all over the country due to the Decree-Law n. 1.190 of April 4, 1939, which shaped the National School of Philosophy of the University of Brazil.

Taken as a point of reference to the other schools of higher education, the paradigm resulting from the Decree-Law n. 1.190 spread throughout the country, providing the model known as "3+1 scheme", adopted in the organization of the Licentiate degree and Pedagogy programs. The former prepared teachers to teach the several subjects of the curricula of the secondary schools. The latter prepared teachers to teach in High Schools for Teacher Education. Both courses followed the same scheme, that is, three years dedicated to the study

of specific subjects and one year for teacher preparation. As the model of teachers' preparation at the higher level gained ground, it lost its reference of source, whose support was provided by the experimental schools, which were supposed to provide a background for research meant to give a scientific nature to the education processes.

## **THE COURSE OF PEDAGOGY**

As the above mentioned Decree n. 1.190/39 established the National School of Philosophy, it structured it in four sections: Philosophy, Sciences, Letters and Pedagogy, also adding Didactics considered a "special section". While different courses belonged to each one of the Philosophy, Sciences and Letters divisions, the Pedagogy division, as well as the special section Didactics, were in charge of only one course each, whose name was identical to the section. This was the origin of the Pedagogy Course.

All the courses of the National School of Philosophy, and also the other colleges of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters established in the country, were organized in two different ways, due to their standard model character: bachelor degree programs, a three-year program, and the licentiate degree programs. The Pedagogy Program was established as a bachelor degree program together with all the other courses of the other sections of the university. The licentiate degree would be obtained upon the year-long didactics course, which is added to the bachelor degree course. This is the origin of the famous "3+1 scheme".

The full curricula were defined for each one of the courses. For the Pedagogy Program, the curriculum was as follows: 1st year: Mathematics Complements; History of Philosophy; Sociology; Biological Fundamentals of Education; Educational Psychology; 2nd year: Educational Psychology; Educational Statistics; History of Education; Sociological Fundamentals of Education; School Administration; 3rd year: Educational Psychology; History of Education, School Administration; Compared Education, Philosophy of Education. We can see that Educational Psychology stands out since it is the only subject that is common to all grades. Next, there is History of Education and School Administration, which are part of the syllabus of two grades. The other subjects were given just a year of study.

The year-long Didactics Course, had the following subjects: General Didactics, Special Didactics; Educational Psychology; Biological Fundamentals of Education;

Sociological Fundamentals of Education; School Administration. Thus, if a bachelor who holds a degree in pedagogy wanted to obtain a licentiate degree, they just had to attend General Didactics and Special Didactics since the other subjects were already part of their bachelor degree course curricula.

When the full closed curriculum for the Pedagogy Program was established, with a similar syllabus for the Philosophy, Sciences and Letters and disconnected from the investigation processes about the education topics and problems, the model implemented by n.1.190 of 1939, rather than opening a way for the development of academic environment of pedagogy, it eventually confined this space to a solution that is believed to be universally valid in conclusive terms, and this model increasingly worsened the problems that they had avoided to tackle. In fact, supposing that the professional profile of someone who holds a degree in pedagogy would have already been built up it conceived a curriculum which would give students a bachelor degree in pedagogy as if it were a technical degree in education. The students would then be certified as teachers upon the General and Special Didactics courses. But, which would be the specific technical functions of this professional? Up to what extent would the curriculum suggested cater for this technician? As for the teachers with a licentiate degree in Pedagogy, which subjects would they be able to teach? Probably the subjects that were part of the bachelor's degree curriculum, in the same way that occurred with the Philosophy, Sciences and Letters sections. However, as for the other sections, the subjects were somehow part of the secondary school curriculum, thus ensuring that the preparation of teachers who would be in charge of these subjects would be provided by the Schools of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters. Differently, in the case of Pedagogy, the subjects were hardly part of the curricula of the high schools for teacher education as the Organic Law of High School for Teacher Education designed a curriculum in which there was a predominance of subjects of general culture rather than professional education. Moreover, this law determined that in order to teach in High School for Teacher Education "the higher education degree was, as a general rule, sufficient" (Silva, 2003, p.14). As a kind of consolation prize, the students who held a licentiate degree in Pedagogy were given the right to teach Philosophy, History and Mathematics in secondary schools.

This structure prevailed until after the approval of the first National Education Guidelines and Framework Law – LDB – n. 4.024, of December 20, 1961.

A new regulation of the Pedagogy Program resulted from the Official Opinion 251 by Counselor Valmir Chagas and approved by the Federal Council of Education in 1962. In the text, the author reflects on the undefined situation of the course and refers to the relative controversy over its maintenance or extinction. He also suggests the horizon announces the preparation of primary teachers in the under graduation courses and the preparation of education specialists in graduate studies, which is a hypothesis that would lead to the extinction of the Pedagogy Program. He considers, however, that the referred hypothesis could only be taken into account in a future moment, justifying, although provisionally, its maintenance at the beginning of the 1960s in the 20th Century. As a consequence, he proceeds with its regulation making only small alterations in the effective structure used until that moment.

As for the duration of the course, it was defined that it would be four years long encompassing the bachelor degree and the teacher education programs, which correspond, therefore, to the previous duration. The difference lies in a certain flexibility, since the teacher education program disciplines could be attended concomitantly with the bachelor degree program disciplines, with no need to wait for the fourth year.

As for the curriculum, the generalist character remained, that is, the technical qualifications had not been introduced yet. Contrary to the previous regulation, the distribution of the syllabus in the four years of the course was not implemented. This task was to be accomplished by the institutions.

The licentiate degree program consisted of the following subjects: Education Psychology: adolescence and learning; Elements of School Administration; Didactics; Teaching Practice. Taking into account the repeal of the “3+1” scheme, the practice that became generalized was to attend Educational Psychology, Didactics and Elements of School Administration in the second and third years of the course, and Teaching Practice in the fourth year. As for the Pedagogy Program, students had to attend Didactics and Teaching Practice so as to obtain their licentiate degree since Educational Psychology and School Administration were part of their course curriculum.

The entry into force of the university reform law (Law n. 5.540) passed on November 28, 1968, enabled a new regulation of the Pedagogy Program, which was turned into action by the Official Opinion 252/69 of the Federal Council of Education – CFE –, also by Valmir Chagas, which gave rise to the CFE Resolution n. 2/69. In his official opinion, Valmir Chagas

situates the theme referring to the antecedents of the matter, from Decree n. 1.190, 1939 to the official opinion 251/62, clarifies the reasons of the options chosen and presents attached the draft bill of the Resolution.

Having argued in his official opinion that the profession that corresponds to the education sector “is just one and, by its nature, not only does it admit but it also demands different ‘modalities’ of capacity deriving from a common base” (Brazil/CFE, 1969, p.106), the rapporteur concludes that there is no reason for creating one more course. In this way, he considers that the different aspects implied in the preparation of the education professional can be reunited under the general title of the Pedagogy Program which will have both a common and a diverse part. The former will account for the common ground and the latter for the different modalities of capacity translated in the form of qualifications.

The common part consisted of the following subjects: General Sociology; Education Sociology; Education Psychology; Education History; Philosophy of Education; Didactics.

The diverse part contemplated the following degrees: Educational Guidance; School Administration; School Supervision; School Inspection; Teaching of the disciplines and practical activities of High Schools for Teacher Education.

This regulation of the Pedagogy Program, despite the attempts of modification made by the Federal Council of Education and the organized movement of educators, remained in effect until the approval of the new National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (n. 9.394), on December 20, 1996.

The most characteristic aspect of the referred regulation was the introduction of qualifications in order to train “specialists” in the four indicated modalities (Educational Guidance, School Administration, School Supervision and School Inspection), as well as teachers of high schools for teacher education. The qualifications aimed to train technicians with supposedly well specified functions in the school and teaching system levels which would shape a labor market also supposedly already well established, demanding professionals with a specific training that would be supplied by the Pedagogy Program, which had been restructured exactly to meet this demand. However, the double supposition revealed to be inconsistent. Neither were the functions corresponding to the mentioned “specialists” well described, nor could one suppose the existence of a labor market which would demand professionals who would correspond to the proposed qualifications.

It seems that the way the pedagogy program issue was tackled reveals a problem that lies in the conception of education as subordinate to the market logic. Thus, the preparation offered by the schools should serve the social productivity, adjusting as much as possible to the market demands which, in turn, are determined by laws which rule a market society such as the one in which we live. Under the circumstances, the educational issue is markedly reduced to its technical dimension, departing from its art character and relegating to the sidelines the demands of scientific base. That is why there was the ambition of training education specialists by means of a few rules published externally and mechanically conveyed, coordinated with the training for their application in the school functioning level. That is the reason why some subjects were considered sufficient: “Structure and Functioning of Teaching” and “Principles and Methods”, as well as another one which somehow relates to the “specialist” in reference: “Teaching legislation” for inspection, “Statistics” for the administration, “Curricula and Syllabus” for supervision and “Vocational Guidance” and “Educational Measures”, for guidance. It is an assumption, therefore, that school is duly organized and teaching is functioning within these adequate parameters. It is up to the specialist to fit in it to ensure its efficiency by a technical rationality which maximizes its productivity. It is, in short, what I call “a productivist conception of education” which, boosted by the “theory of human capital” formulated in the 50s in the 20th century, has become dominant in the country since the end of the 1960s and has been hegemonic until today.

Valnir Chagas, who had participated in the Work Team, which elaborated the proposal of the university reform, also took part in the Work Team of Law n. 5.692 of August 11, 1971 being the rapporteur and the main mentor of this reform. After Law n. 5.692/71 was approved, the counselor dedicated himself to working on the regulation of all the teaching system in accordance with the new legislation. Between 1973 and 1975 he elaborated a set of Indications which were reunited in the book *Formação do magistério: novo sistema* [Teaching Education: a new system] (1976). This set of measures intended to replace the “Pedagogy Program”, which suggested a very restricted view, by the “higher studies of education”, a much broader category and supposedly complete. In this way, the following predictions made by Valnir Chagas in his Official Opinion 251/62 were confirmed: “if we focus on the experience of systems in which the education of the school teacher is already

provided by higher education establishments, the existence of a special course of Pedagogy certainly will not make sense” (Brazil/CFE, 1963, p.60).

Along the line of this prediction, the counselor elaborated in 1975 the Indication 70. The novelty of this indication lies, according to the slogan launched by its author, in “bringing out the specialist in the teacher”, because the suggested training presupposes receivers already with a teaching education degree, which would situate this training in the level of a *lato sensu* professional degree. The author, however, supposedly also to encompass the “transitory solution” of those who have only attended high school, situates it in the under graduation course, by qualifications which are added to a previous teacher education program.

It is evident, therefore, that in Chagas’s conception there would not be room for the Pedagogy Program, at least in the under graduation level. It is curious to notice that the new National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) at the same time that raised the preparation of teachers to higher education level, it kept the under graduation in Pedagogy when it stated in Article 64:

the preparation of education professionals for administration, planning, inspection, supervision and educational guidance for the basic education<sup>2</sup> will be done in under graduation courses in pedagogy or in graduation level, at the discretion of the teaching institution. In this structure the national common ground would be guaranteed.

The referred indication was approved by the Minister of Education, but because of the doubts raised and the pressures of the organized educational movement, its entry into force was cancelled, prevailing the structure provided in the official opinion 252/69 until the approval of the new LDB. According to Iria Brzezinski (2002, p.82), the “package” of indications approved by the CFE boosted the educators’ movement which “was against the possible changes which, in its essence, defended the extinction of the Pedagogy Course and decharacterized even more the profession of specialist in pedagogy, which would slowly become extinct.

The movement of educators around the discussion of preparation of professionals in education materialized during the 1st Brazilian Education Conference in 1980, when the Pro-Participation Committee for Reformulation of Pedagogy and Licentiate Degree Programs was created. In 1983, this committee turned into the National Commission for the Reformulation

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<sup>2</sup> Encompasses nursery school, pre-school, elementary school and high school and special education.

of the Courses for Preparing Educators – Conarcfe – which by its turn, in 1990, turned into the National Association for Training of Education Professionals – Anfope – which is still operating.

The educators' mobilization was important to keep the debate alive, to coordinate and socialize the experiences which took place in different institutions; to keep the surveillance over the measures of educational policy; to make explicit aspirations, grievances and perplexities which struck them; and in order to reach some consensus on certain points which could signal towards the solution to the problem. In concrete terms, two impelling ideas arose out of the movement. The first was that teaching is the axis on which stands educators' preparation. From this idea, among the institutions prevailed the tendency of organizing the Pedagogy Program around the education of teachers, either for teaching qualification, for 2<sup>o</sup> level education schools or mainly to work in the first grades of elementary schools. The second idea was expressed in the "national common ground". In several of the events, this idea was resumed and explicated more by its objection than by its approval. Indeed, the understanding that the "national common ground" does not coincide either with the common part of the curriculum or with the idea of minimum curriculum started being assimilated. Rather, it would be a principle to inspire and to guide the organization of the courses to prepare educators all over the country. Its content, however, could not be fixed by a distinguished scholar, by a government agency or even by a casual decision of an educators' assembly. It should come from the analyses, debates and experiences that were carried out enabling, in a medium-term process, to reach a consensus on the fundamental elements which should base the preparation of a critical and conscientious educator, able to intervene effectively in education in order to transform the Brazilian society.

As one can see by the aforementioned article of the present LDB, the notion of "national common ground" was incorporated into the text of the new National Education Guidelines and Framework Law. However, its content still remains a bit blurred.

In the period being discussed, that is, from the beginning of the 1970s, the Graduate Studies were established and it was in this context that education experienced a vigorous development which strongly involved the universities, expanding in this way, significantly, the academic space of education. This development brought closer the related areas of human sciences consolidating itself as the place of education in the university. But this occurred at the expense of the departure of pedagogy as theory and education practice. Thus, while the



Graduation Programs in Education showed all their magnitude, the Pedagogy Course dwindled and faced such a deep crisis that we have the impression that it will never be able to overcome it. A new component of this crisis appears in the present situation with the controversy related to the Higher Education Institutes and Higher Teacher Education Schools.

## **CURRICULAR GUIDELINES AND THEIR PARADOX**

Probably the current crisis the Pedagogy Program is in has to do with the delay to define its curricular guidelines, which came to happen only this year, 2006, when we are approaching the 10th anniversary of the new LDB (National Education Guidelines and Framework Law); therefore, a way behind all the other areas. After several comings and goings, it was approved on December 13, 2005, by the National Council of Education/Full Council – CNE/CP –, the Official Opinion 5/2005, reviewed by the Official Opinion CNE/CP 3/2006, approved on February 21, 2006, and homologated by the Minister of Education on April 10, 2006.

The text of the Official Opinion was accompanied by a Resolution which translated into 15 articles the ruling of considerations expressed in the text body of the Official Opinion. Notice that the language of article 14 in the Resolution approved as an appendix to the Official Opinion CNE/CP 5/2005 reads as follows:

The education of all other Education professionals, as provided under the art. 64 of Law n. 9.394/96, will take place in graduate courses specifically structured for this purpose, open to all who hold a licentiate degree.

Sole Paragraph. Graduate courses might be regulated by the respective education systems, as provided under art. 67 of Law n. 9.394/96.

The Official Opinion and its respective Resolution were approved by the Full Council, unanimously, but with statement of the vote by three counselors. In his statement of the vote, César Callegari called attention to the conflict between the provisions in article 14 and the language of article 64 of LDB, understanding “that what a Law provides for may only be otherwise provided for by another law”. The matter was sent for homologation and after

analysis by MEC technical department the Minister sent the process back to CNE to be reviewed, submitting an amendment proposal for article 14 in the following terms:

Art. 14. A licentiate degree in Pedagogy under the terms of the Official Opinion CNE/CP n. 5/2005 and this Resolution ensures the preparation of education professionals provided for in art. 64, in accordance with item VIII of art. 3 of Law n. 9.394/96.

Paragraph 1 Such professional education might also be offered in graduate courses specifically structured for this purpose, open to all who hold a licentiate degree.

Paragraph 2 Graduate courses referred to in § 1 of this article might be complementarily regulated by the respective education systems, as provided under the Sole Paragraph of art. 67 of Law n. 9.394/96.

In view of the Official Opinion CNE/CP 3/2006, approved on February 21, 2006, the Council accepted the amendment proposal and defined the language for the Resolution, eventually homologated by MEC on April 10, 2006.

One must recognize that the approved guidelines are affected by an ambiguity which was already present in the first version, where the education of the so-called education specialists had deliberately been left out. That is so because the management, planning, coordination and evaluation functions, traditionally perceived as peculiar to education specialists, had been incorporated by the teaching function as roles of those who leave the Pedagogy Program, trained in accordance with the new guidelines. With the amendment of article 14 the ambiguity becomes explicit in the normative text itself since, even not regulating the education of specialists, it is formally admitted.

In short, the spirit presiding the making of the national curricular guidelines for the Pedagogy Program was the belief that a Pedagogy specialist is a teacher with a licentiate degree to work with “early childhood education and the initial years of elementary school; in high school in the teacher education modality, and in professional education courses in the area of school services and support, as well as in other areas in which pedagogic knowledge is required”, as provided in article 2 and reiterated in article 4. That is the purpose, the objective of the Pedagogy Program. And how should institutions carry out the organization of the program bearing this objective in mind? Which guidelines should be followed? What orientation does CNE establish as a common substratum for the whole country to guarantee a minimum uniformity for the referred program?

Regarding teaching and learning conditions and procedures to be observed, the Resolution text refers, en passant, to “contributions of knowledge such as the philosophic, historic, anthropologic, environmental-ecologic, psychological, linguistic, sociological, political, economic, cultural”; in the sense, however, of “application to the education field.” And it starts using copiously terms such as:

- scientific and cultural knowledge, ethic and aesthetic values inherent to learning processes, socialization and the construction of knowledge, all that in a dialogue with different world views;
- a repertoire of information and skills formed by a plurality of theoretical and practical knowledge, which will be consolidated in the teaching practice, basing themselves on principles of interdisciplinarity, contextualization, democratization, social pertinence and relevance, ethics, and affective and aesthetic sensibility; overcoming social, ethnic-racial, economical, cultural, religious, and political exclusions among others; consciousness of diversity, respecting differences of such nature as environmental-ecologic, ethnic-racial, gender, age brackets, social classes, religions, special needs, and sexual choices among others;
- dialogue between different kinds of knowledge, values, ways of life, philosophical, political and religious orientations peculiar to the culture of the indigenous people they work with and those coming from the majoritarian society;
- training of teachers of schools for those remnants from *quilombos* or schools which are characterized by receiving populations from specific ethnicities and cultures.

Regarding the way the program structure should be organized, the Resolution foresees, in article 6, three nuclei: 1. Basic studies; 2. Deep and diversified studies; 3. Integrating studies for curricular enrichment. In the three cases it is more a list of tasks and a set of exhortations that are presented rather than the specification of the curricular components that should integrate the referred nuclei. Among the profusion of tasks and exhortations, the Resolution mentions “the study of Didactics, of pedagogic theories and methodologies, of teaching work organization processes”. Next, it mentions “the decodification and utilization of codes of different languages used by children, in addition to the didactic work with

contents, pertinent to school first grades, concerning Portuguese language, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Arts, and Physical Education”.

One can see by the terms used in the Official Opinion and in the Resolution texts that they are impregnated by the spirit of the so-called new paradigms which have prevailed in contemporary culture, in general, and particularly in education. The result places us before the following paradox: the new national curricular guidelines for the Pedagogy Program are, at the same time, extremely restrictive and too extensive: very restrictive in the essential and far too excessive in the accessory. They are restrictive in relation to what is essential, that is, to what configures Pedagogy as a theoretic-practical field having a load of knowledge and experiences resulting from centuries of history. But they are extensive in the accessory, that is, they expand in multiple and reiterated references to the language now in evidence, permeated with expressions such as environmental-ecologic knowledge; plurality of world views; interdisciplinarity, contextualization, democratization; ethics, and affective and aesthetic sensibility; social, ethnic-racial, economical, cultural, religious, and political exclusion; diversity; differences; gender, age brackets; sexual choices, as the Resolution terms quoted before makes evident.

In short, the referred paradox did not allow to answer the proposed questions satisfactorily. Thus, it is foreseen that institutions will have difficulties concerning the way they should organize the Pedagogy Program and with regard to the guidelines to be followed. For it is not easy to identify in the CNE Resolution an orientation that ensures a common substratum within the country to guarantee a minimum uniformity to the mentioned program.

## **BEYOND CURRICULAR GUIDELINES**

In view of the result materialized in the national curricular guidelines for the Pedagogy Program, we could think of making an auto critic of the movement we triggered in 1980, when the 1<sup>st</sup> Brazilian Education Conference took place. The movement might not have been capable of focusing its attention on the essential issues related to the education of the educator, in general, and of the pedagogy specialist, particularly, addressing instead the aspect of the program organization. As a consequence, the excessive worry about regulation, that is, the organizational aspects, might have hampered the examination of more

substantive aspects concerning the meaning and content of Pedagogy itself, on which basis the correspondent program should be structured.

However, it does not seem to have been the decisive point. Considering today's cultural climate and the characteristic of the CNE as an agency that reflects the dominant view and that, given the friendly relationship among councilors, leads to a compromise; having also in mind that previous dispositions of the Council itself (see Official Opinion CNE/CES 67/2003, of March/11/2003) had conceptualized the curricular guidelines setting up very loose guidelines in the name of conceding institutions flexibility and creativity in curricular organization, the guidelines for the Pedagogy Program could hardly differ much from what is recorded in the approved document.

Having ascertained that, the only path open to us, in face of the actual fact, is to try to take advantage of such looseness, practicing the proclaimed flexibility and creativity. Doing so we can surpass the approved guidelines and focus the activities of the Pedagogy Program in the essential aspects, welcome students, and place them in an environment of intense and demanding intellectual stimulus to instigate them to delve deeply into the classics in Pedagogy as a reference to understand the way school functions and deliberately interfere in the teaching practice developed in its interior.

I think that the program organization should look for a way out of the crisis of the traditional school model aiming at constructing a new model, adequate to the new conditions peculiar to today's society. Pursuing to address this issue, the axis of the organization of school education in the conditions of our time came to my mind by the way Gramsci (1975, v. 3, p.1544-1546; in the Brazilian edition, 1968, p.134-136) brings forward the schooling issue. I refer to the passage in which he mentioned how central to the old school was the Greek-Roman culture, translated into cultivating Latin and Greek languages and respective literatures and political histories. The educating principle of the traditional school was shaped following this path, "to the extent that the humanist ideal, which is personified in Athens and Rome, was spread in the whole society", and it was "an essential element of the national life and culture". Latin, as a dead language, allowed for the study of an entire historical process, analyzed from its birth till death. But Gramsci adds: "apparent death, since Italian, with which Latin is continuously compared, is modern Latin." Studying the history of books written in Latin, its political history, the struggles of men who spoke Latin, the youth sank in history and acquired "a historicist intuition of life and the world, which becomes a second nature, almost a

spontaneity, since it is not pedantically impressed upon by the externally educative ‘will’.” And he adds: “Such study educated (without the expressed will of doing so) with teacher’s “educative” intervention reduced to a minimum: it educated because it instructed”. Obviously, he notes, that was not due to a supposed educative virtue intrinsic to the Greek or Latin languages. Such result was a product of the entire cultural tradition, alive not only at school, but mainly out of it. Once “the traditional cultural intuition was modified”, school went into a crisis and together with it the study of Latin and Greek. Hence the conclusion: “It will be necessary to replace Latin and Greek as the fulcrum of the educating school. Such replacement will occur, however, it will not be easy to set the new subject or the new series of subjects in a didactic order that yields equivalent results”.

Since the first time I read this passage in the 70<sup>th</sup> of last century, I have always wondered which subject or subjects might perform in a new school adapted to current times a role equivalent to the one performed by Latin and Greek in the old school. And an idea started to take shape in my mind. Such idea is that History might exactly be the subject that would take the central place in the new educating principle of the school of our time: a unitary school for guided by the same principle, that of the radical historicity of man, and organized around the same content, the history of mankind itself, identified as the usual way to educate fully developed individuals. Indeed, to what other form could we resort “to produce, in each particular individual, the humanity historically and collectively produced by mankind” (Saviani, 2005, p.13) other than making them to dive into history itself and, applying the “classic” criteria, allow them to experience the most significant moments of such true human temporal adventure?

I roughly drafted this idea when discussing the pedagogic project of the Pedagogy Program of the School of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo, and I suggested that the history of elementary school might be the axis of curricular organization. In fact, through history the several elements that are presently considered as necessary for teacher education will be observed at its birth and development, and the conditions and reasons that lead to the recognition of their need for teacher education will become clear. With such curricular design the disciplines of the Pedagogy curriculum linked to philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, statistics, politics and school management, as well as to didactics, early childhood education and a number of methodologies of subjects of elementary education etc., would not be studied as something

static and schematic but alive, in close articulation with the history of teaching, that is, the very object of their study. I think this idea unfolds richly in a way that could be explored by the group of faculty members from the Pedagogy Program as they carry on their teaching work with the students, week after week, month after month, year after year. Doing so, I believe we could recover the long and rich historical trajectory of pedagogy. It will rise as a consistent body of historically constructed knowledge which reveals itself as capable of articulating in a coherent set the various approaches to education, departing from and arriving at the teaching practice itself. One hopes that a program structured this way will prepare pedagogy specialists with a sharp consciousness of the real world they will act upon, with an appropriate theoretical base which will allow them to act coherently, and with satisfactory technical tools which will enable them to act effectively.

Having history as the axis for the organization of curricular contents, and the school as the privileged locus to learn how teaching work is performed, it will be possible to articulate, in a unified process, the education of the new pedagogy specialists in its various modalities. Following this path it will be possible to achieve, at the same time and same process, the five objectives provided for in the Resolution: to educate to be a teacher 1. in early childhood education, 2. in the initial years of elementary education, 3. in high school in the teacher education modality, 4. in professional education courses in the area of school services and support, and 5. in other areas in which pedagogic knowledge is required. And that is not all. The education for management activities and, therefore, the initial training of the specialists referred to in article 64 of LDB may also be considered in the same project. The reason for that is: when we focus the educational process in the school unit we are building the future pedagogy specialist capacity to understand fully the way school functions. Thus, a living school, operating fully, requires a management process that ensures the presence of teachers teaching disciplines articulated in a curricular structure, in a coordinated, supervised and evaluated action, in the light of the goals one seeks to attain. Well, a student who is prepared to work as a teacher assimilating the elementary knowledge that integrates the school curriculum; studying how the teaching of such knowledge is graded, sequenced and coordinated throughout the school years; understanding the integral nature of the personality development of each pupil in the learning process; and apprehending the way actions are planned and administered, this student will be receiving training simultaneously to take charge of teaching, to coordinate and supervise the teaching practice, to guide pupils'

development, and to plan and manage a school; and, if this education is ensured, he will also be able to inspect the way other schools function. Obviously, over the grounds of that initial education, it would be advisable that mainly those who will perform the mentioned roles within the teaching systems do graduate courses to deepen, improve, and specialize in the subjects.

The focus on how school functions does not mean, however, to place students from the beginning of the course in direct contact with schools to experience and get acquainted with them. On the contrary. When students enter the Pedagogy Program they had at least an 11-year experience at school. So, they are fully acquainted with school. At this point, it seems that they should part from basic school, live the university climate intensely, dive into the study of the classics in Pedagogy and into the philosophical and scientific foundations of education, in order to get hold of theoretical tools that would enable them to analyze how early childhood education schools and elementary education schools function, crossing the threshold of the common sense acquired by their immediate experience of long years in the school institution. From that point they will be able to turn their eyes to elementary school, but they will look at it with different eyes. They will be able to analyze the teaching practice, led by the pedagogic theory, beyond the level of *doxa* (common opinion) to reach the level of *episteme* (knowledge methodically organized and theoretically grounded).

Finally, it is not unduly to stress the pressing need for us to strive to organize in higher education institutions, in the direction suggested before, the specific sphere of educational studies and research that at graduation level turns around the Pedagogy Program. Failing to do so, students will go through courses, will receive a university degree, but will not go beyond *doxa*, reducing higher education to a mere formality, a registration.

As a matter of fact, that is exactly what the data concerning the written expression of last year students from a Higher Teacher Education School to prepare teachers reveal, as shown in the article by Alda Junqueira Marin and Luciana Maria Giovanni, “*A expressão escrita de concluintes de curso universitário para formar professores*” [The written expression of last year students from a university program for teacher education] (published in this edition). Students are leaving higher education institutions “in a deplorable condition or situation in relation to the communication processes and access to the symbolic universe of western culture”. That is, the level of “a second nature” was not reached, as Gramsci puts it; the catharsis I refer to in my book *Escola e democracia* [School and Democracy] (2006) was



not reached. Students go through higher education without changing their previous “culture”, they stick to a kind of thought still with strong pre-literacy characteristics. From that, it is not difficult to foresee the kind of quality the pedagogic work of these new teachers will have at early childhood education and elementary education schools. They will inevitably contribute to enlarge and deepen the failure of the school system, worsening a vicious circle that must be broken at some point. Let’s strive to break it through the point represented by the Pedagogy Program, organizing it in the way proposed in this article.

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