INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Karoline Lemos Schneider [1]; Euge Helyantus Stumm [1]; Roberta Zanini da Rocha [1]; Daniela Centenaro Levandowski [1]

ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe innovative teaching and learning strategies used in the disciplines of Developmental Psychology I and II of the Psychology course at a federal university in southern Brazil, as part of a project linked to the Programa de Iniciação à Docência (PID)[2] of that university. Diversified activities and techniques adapted to the different contents have been proposed to ensure the participation and engagement of students, such as observation, creation of educational games, development of conceptual maps, analysis of audiovisual and artistic materials, narrative creation and discussion of cases. Carrying out these activities and techniques has proven to be effective in promoting theoretical-practical integration, considering the students' reality, and in building psychological reasoning for understanding the multiple phenomena associated with human development.

Keywords: developmental psychology; teaching methods; psychology teaching

Prácticas innovadoras en la enseñanza de Psicología del Desarrollo

RESUMEN

En este artículo se tiene por objetivo describir estrategias de enseñanza y aprendizaje innovadoras empleadas en las asignaturas de Psicología del Desarrollo I y II del curso de Psicología de una universidad federal del sur de Brasil, como parte de un proyecto vinculado al Programa de Iniciación a la Docencia (PID) de esa universidad. Actividades y técnicas diversificadas y adaptadas a los distintos contenidos han sido propuestas para garantizar la participación y el compromiso de los discentes, tales como observación, creación de juegos educativos, desarrollo de mapas conceptuales, análisis de materiales audiovisuales y artísticos, creación narrativa y discusión de casos. La realización de esas actividades y técnicas se ha mostrado eficaz en la promoción de la integración teórico-práctica, considerando la realidad de los estudiantes, y en la construcción de un raciocinio psicológico para la comprensión de los múltiples fenómenos asociados al desarrollo humano.

Palabras clave: psicología del desarrollo; métodos de enseñanza; enseñanza de la psicología

Práticas inovadoras no ensino da Psicologia do Desenvolvimento

RESUMO

Este artigo objetiva descrever estratégias de ensino e aprendizagem inovadoras empregadas nas disciplinas de Psicologia do Desenvolvimento I e II do curso de Psicologia de uma universidade federal do sul do Brasil, como parte de um projeto vinculado ao Programa de Iniciação à Docência (PID) dessa universidade. Atividades e técnicas diversificadas e adaptadas aos diferentes conteúdos têm sido propostas para garantir a participação e o engajamento dos discentes, tais como observação, criação de jogos educativos, desenvolvimento de mapas conceituais, análise de materiais audiovisuais e artísticos, criação narrativa e discussão de casos. A realização dessas atividades e técnicas tem se mostrado eficaz na promoção da integração teórico-prática, considerando a realidade dos estudantes, e na construção de um raciocínio psicológico para a compreensão dos múltiplos fenômenos associados ao desenvolvimento humano.

Palavras-chave: psicologia do desenvolvimento; métodos de ensino; ensino da psicologia

[1] Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre – Porto Alegre – RS – Brazil; psicokarolineschneider@gmail.com; eugestumm@gmail.com; robertazrocha@gmail.com; danielal@ufcspa.edu.br

[2] Teaching Initiation Program.

INTRODUCTION

Human development is regarded as any process of gradual change that takes place by means of interactions in a determined context, involving physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes (Aspesi, Dessen, & Chagas, 2005). The study of human development includes different aspects of the vital cycle, from conception to old age. Concerning psychology, this study consists of a set of theories that are applicable to diverse areas of professional practice (Barros & Coutinho, 2020).

Consequently, in the National Curricular Guidelines for Psychology graduation courses (Brasil, 2018), Developmental Psychology constitutes a basic area of formation because it supports the comprehension of different familiar and individual normative processes (Aspesi et al., 2005). Based on these guidelines, the Psychology course of the Federal University of Health Sciences of Porto Alegre (UFCSPA) is provided, in its most recent version, with two disciplines of Developmental Psychology, with a prospect of availability in the second and third semesters of the curricular matrix. In the first one (Developmental Psychology I) Developmental Psychology is studied as an area of knowledge that is provided with diverse theoretical perspectives on human development, in chronological order of systematization. Thus, the students get introduced to the theoretical perspectives of Freud, Erikson, Bowlby, Piaget and Bronfenbrenner and, also, with the family's life cycle, considering the USA model proposed by Carter and McGoldrick. In the second discipline (Developmental Psychology II), students investigate the individual life cycle, from childhood to old age and death, in the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial realms.

In order to promote good teaching practices, the UFCSPA is provided with a Teaching Initiation Program, or "Programa de Iniciação à Docência" (PID). This program grants scholarships and offers monitors with the objective to get students more comfortable with the teaching experience and to stimulate cooperation among teachers and students. Also, this program contributes to teaching improvements in graduation by means of new pedagogical experiences and practices (UFCSPA, 2015). In this context, it has been possible to develop, since 2011, the project named Understanding Human Development by means of Practical Activities of Teaching and Assessment, or "Compreendendo o Desenvolvimento Humano a partir de Atividades Práticas de Ensino e Avaliação - PIDH", connected to the disciplines of Developmental Psychology I and II in the Psychology graduation course of this University.

The project comprehends two eminently theoretical disciplines and its general objectives are: 1. Updating materials and devices for teaching-learning in a practical character; 2. Implementing activities of teaching and assessment that facilitate the learning process; 3. Consolidating the integrative role played by these disciplines with other disciplines of the same series by means of interdisciplinary assessments; and 4. Promoting a greater intradisciplinary integration in the contents of the assessment activities. This article presents, in a summarized way, the pedagogical experiences developed throughout the last five years of execution of this project (2016-2020), in order to promote reflections on the teaching of Developmental Psychology.

The project is coordinated by the teacher who are responsible for the disciplines. It is executed in partnership with scholarship and volunteer monitors. Each year, the university releases a public notice announcing the concession of these scholarships. That is the occasion for teachers to present their projects, which are assessed by an institutional commission of interdisciplinary character. Throughout the academic year, the monitors produce reports (partial and final) of the activities. Also, the monitors annually present the results of the project at an institutional event.

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: REPORT OF INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCES AT A FEDERAL UNIVERSITY IN THE SOUTH OF BRAZIL

The developed activities include the use of different techniques for the promotion of learning, based on the perspective of active methodologies, especially the problematization methodology and the use of educational games (Fujita, Carmona, Shimo, & Mecena, 2016). During the construction of activities, the objective is to engage the students in a critical and active thinking, while respecting the multiple ways of constructing knowledge.

In the two disciplines, diverse dynamics and techniques have been used. They are adapted to the different contents in order to guarantee the participation and the engagement of the students. Among these techniques, we can mention observation activities, the creation of educational games, the development of conceptual methods, and the analysis of audiovisual and artistic materials, narrative creation, and case discussion. The starting point is the understanding that the culture and the reality experienced by the students are fundamental elements for the construction and production of knowledge (Freire, 2011).

In Developmental Psychology I, the monitors organize guided tours to some institutions, so that the students can realize observations on the children. In order to do it, they contact different locations – child education schools, dance schools, socialization projects for children with disabilities, for example – to present the activity. With the agreement of institutions, tours are scheduled (in pairs) for students. This task aims at stimulating the exploratory technical view, by means of the theoretical-practical integration of the studied contents. In addition, it can be the basis for other assessment activities.

Based on the description of the behaviors manifested by the children during the observation, which originates

the observation report, the students must produce a critical and theoretical analysis. This analysis must contemplate the developmental aspects that were perceived in the children's behavior, so that connections and reflections can be established between theoretical knowledge and real experiences. This observation report produced by the students is ruled by technical guidelines and norms of scientific writing approached in another discipline in the Psychology course (Academic Writing, or "Redação Acadêmica"). The discipline is offered in the same semester of the curricular matrix, concomitantly to Developmental Psychology I. Thus, the same observational practice serves the purpose of assessment activity for both disciplines. The teachers work collaboratively in the construction of the guidelines for students to produce the report and also in assessing this technical product.

More recently, this activity has been used as part of the examination of another discipline, named Integration Seminar I, or "Seminário Integrador I", offered in the same serie of the Psychology course. On the third discipline, the students are stimulated to construct a poster based on the activity of observation of the children. The poster is supposed to display part of the mentioned developmental analysis, with the addition of reflections and understanding of other disciplines of the serie or of the semester, such as Psychometry Fundaments and Basic Psychological Processes. The poster is also constructed by means of guidelines provided in the Academic Writing discipline.

This integration with other disciplines of the curriculum makes it possible to apply the knowledge obtained in the Developmental Psychology classes in diverse contexts. It also allows students to establish connections between the contents. Therefore, the intention is to produce an interdisciplinary knowledge that goes beyond the frontiers of the disciplines. In the planning and execution of this assessment task, the monitors help the students have their questions answered, give suggestions, and verify the advancement of the process and the pertinence of the developed work.

In the Developmental Psychology II discipline, the students revisit this report of children observation and develop a lifeline of the observed child, based on the construction of hypotheses on their life history before and after the observed moment. For example, if a four-year-old child was observed in the previous semester, the work must include hypotheses on the child's first and third childhood, based on what was observed concerning the child's second childhood. Thus, it is possible to promote the integration of the two disciplines of Developmental Psychology.

More recently, as an alternative to this assessment activity, it was implemented, in this same discipline, an activity named "Childhood Detective", with the aim at promoting the advancement and integration of the contents referring to childhood development. In groups, the students are invited to describe situations in the three phases of childhood, considering the cognitive, psychosocial, physical, and emotional aspects. Based on these descriptions, another group of students will be expected to identify which developmental process is approached in that situation and in which phase of childhood it generally takes place. In addition to the game-like character, the production of situations and the providing of answers contemplate the pedagogical character of the activity.

The monitors also produced, during the last years, different educational games for reviewing contents in Developmental Psychology I, characterizing the production of game-like tools for learning and teaching that resulted in the creation of domino and memory games. In these games, the task consists of connecting the authors to their concepts and the concepts to their definitions. In addition, there was the creation of crosswords and word hunt games on developmental theories, as well as quiz games on the virtual environment of the disciplines (in this case, the UFCSPA provides the Moodle as a tool). In addition to the educational potential, these activities got the students familiar with these learning and teaching devices, in order to produce a Psychology formation that dialogues with the digital media.

In the Developmental Psychology II, there is the promotion of the observation of old-age individuals. In order to do it, the scholarship holders contact and organize visits by students to elderly people and also programs of physical activities for elderly people. It is suggested that, whenever possible, the students should interview the observed elderly person on themes that are connected to the studies at advanced ages, and their perception of their health conditions, their relationships and their feelings regarding death. Then, students produced a report with the collected data, articulating them with the studied concepts and theories. Alternative versions of this activity have already been proposed, in the format of analysis of a film chosen by the students on old age (due to the impossibility of observing an elderly person) and in the realization of an interview with a professional that works on the theme of death (firefighters, gravediggers, coroners, oncologists, undertakers, etc.).

Besides these activities, the monitors constantly update a stimuli bank with comic book stories, posters, songs, movie excerpts, videos, documentaries, and memes that are illustrative of the contents studied in the two disciplines of the project. This bank can also receive contributions by the students. The audiovisual devices are used in the complementation of classroom materials and for the production of examinations. They are reviewed once every semester. The employment of these resources leads to a dialogue between the theories and concepts and the generational context of

the students, engaging them in the production of their own comics, memes, and other creative materials on the contents of the disciplines. The development of these creative materials by the students takes place in consonance with production of conceptual maps.

The conceptual maps have been used in the past few years as a means of systematizing the contents of the Developmental Psychology I discipline. Thus, students are stimulated to produce, in pairs, maps of the studied theories and their main concepts and assumptions. This activity promotes the capacity of synthesis and articulation of ideas in addition to composing one of the examinations of the semester.

Another activity proposed in the two disciplines is the construction and the discussion of cases or short narratives that illustrate the studied concepts. Sometimes, the cases are constructed in groups by the students; in other situations, cases are elaborated for discussion in the classroom by the monitors, under the supervision of the teacher who provides guidance to the project.

Concerning the assessments of the disciplines, in addition to the activities that have already been mentioned, there are tests composed of dissertation and objective questions. In order to review contents before the test, the monitors organize applied study scripts and realize a meeting with the students for answering questions based on this material. The monitors also contribute to the elaboration of tests suggesting questions. The tests must lead to the integration of theoretical-practical aspects in interlocution with the audiovisual, such as the analysis of song lyrics, comic books, and book excerpts. Tests in general are individual but mixed tests have already been realized with questions to be answered individually and in groups.

Finally, theater activities are proposed in order to stimulate engagement and interaction among students. In these activities, the students in small groups, are invited to produce and role-play a situation that represents the studied contents. For example, this technique was adopted in the study of the theory of psychosocial development by Erikson (1971). The students organized small sketches in order to illustrate each one of the 8 psychosocial crises proposed by the author. This activity also led students to illustrate signs and symptoms of "Normal Adolescence Syndrome", proposed by Maurício Knobel (1981). After the presentation, the whole group discusses the scenes.

The presented activities have been realized in the last five years of implementation of the project, constantly improved, prioritizing the use of innovative devices for learning and teaching. Thus, there is a search for qualification of the teaching of Developmental Psychology, so that it happens in an engaged, creative way that is connected to different realities by means of diverse languages.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the last five years, the implementation and the execution of this project of initiation to the teaching profession has proven efficient for promoting the integration of theoretical contents to practical experiences of the students. By means of the materials, didactic resources, and proposed examinations, it becomes possible to construct a psychological reasoning for the comprehension of the multiple phenomena and processes associated to human development. Consequently, there is formation, though theoretical, that is integrated with practice and with different developmental contexts.

The proposal to use game-like activities and creativity to stimulate the engagement of the students constitutes an educational challenge. Traditional academic formation does not offer the necessary devices for the creation of a participative teaching model, cooperatively constructed. On the other hand, the long-term commitment to this practice, in addition to leading to an improvement of the project and an amplification of the perspectives of the activities, has facilitated the process of construction of this model of teaching with students and teachers who are responsible for the disciplines. In this sense, the efforts employed by the scholarship holders and by the teacher who idealized the proposal have yielded positive results. The failure rate in these disciplines has decreased since the implementation of the project. Besides that, the disciplines have been assessed by the students and the pedagogical materials used in the classes and in the examination activities have been regarded as facilitators of the students' learning process. Thus, the execution of the project seems to facilitate the learning process in these disciplines and leads to a comprehension of how the contents studied in the classroom manifest themselves in everyday life. In this sense, the students who attended these disciplines, when entering basic professional internships, usually refer to the developmental aspects observed in the practice, and repeat the observed examples.

The monitors (scholarship holders and volunteers) also benefitted from the project because they were able to develop skills related to their teaching profession and reflections on learning-teaching methods. The monitoring also offers the opportunity for obtaining in-depth theoretical knowledge on human development since teaching is a study method after all. Then, it is possible to notice that the practices developed in the project emancipate students and monitors to the position of agents so that they also become constructors of knowledge.

REFERENCES

Aspesi, C. C.; Dessen, M. A.; Chagas, J. F. (2005). A ciência do desenvolvimento humano: uma perspectiva interdisciplinar. In: M. A. Dessen; A. L. Costa (Eds.), *A ciência do desenvolvimento humano* (19-36). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

Barros, R. A.; Coutinho, D. M. B. (2020). Psicologia do Desenvolvimento: uma subárea da Psicologia ou uma nova ciência? *Memorandum: Memória e História em Psicologia*, *37*, 1-26. https://doi.org/10.35699/1676-1669.2020.12540

Brasil. Ministério da Saúde. Conselho Nacional de Saúde. (2018). *Resolução nº 597*. Aprova o Parecer Técnico nº 346/2018, que dispõe sobre as recomendações do Conselho Nacional de Saúde à proposta de Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais do curso de graduação em Psicologia. Available at: <https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/diarios/219922554/dou-secao-1-30-11-2018-pg-199>. Accessed on July 24, 2020.

Erikson, E. (1971). As oito idades do homem. In: *Infância e sociedade* (pp. 227-253). Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

Freire, P. (2011). *Pedagogia do oprimido*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.

Fujita, J. A. L. M.; Carmona, E. V.; Shimo, A. K. K.; Mecena, E. H. (2016). Uso da metodologia da problematização com o Arco de Maguerez no ensino sobre brinquedo terapêutico. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação, 29*(1), 229-258.

Knobel, M. (1981). A síndrome da adolescência normal. In: A. Aberastury; M. Knobel (Eds.), *Adolescência normal* (pp. 24-62). Porto Alegre, Artes Médicas.

UFCSPA. Pró-Reitoria de Graduação. (2015). *Regulamento do Programa de Iniciação à Docência (PID)*. Disponível em: https://bit.ly/3iVRL53 . Accessed on August 10, 2020.

This paper was translated from Portuguese by Régis Lima.