

THE PERMANENCE OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY?

Julia Damacena Caccia ¹ ; Eliane Domingues ¹ 

ABSTRACT

The research aimed to understand the work carried out by psychologists in order to guarantee that indigenous students stay at the university. Six psychologists with connections to public universities located in the South, Southeast, and Mid-West regions of Brazil were interviewed. The interviews were carried out individually via Google Meet and followed a previously established script, which was recorded and then transcribed. After transcribing and reading the interviews, we listed the following topics for discussion: 1 - actions developed; 2 - difficulties and challenges; 3 - strategies and recommendations. Among the main actions developed are the psychologists' participation in committees with the objective to guarantee that students stay at the university, actions with the academic community, and specific actions with indigenous students themselves, whether individual or in group. Thus, the work challenges are those related to bonding – the formation and the risk that the emotional bond becomes a relation of dependence –, the challenges of temporality and understanding the role of Psychology. We conclude that Psychology can contribute to the permanence of indigenous students at universities. To achieve this, it is not necessary to abandon inefficient theories and techniques. Listening and asking good questions are fundamental resources that must be combined with other forms of knowledge.

Keywords: student permanence; indigenous people; university; psychology

La permanencia de los estudiantes indígenas en la universidad: ¿lo qué hace la psicología?

RESUMEN

En la presente investigación se tuvo como objetivo conocer el trabajo realizado por psicólogos visando a la permanencia de los estudiantes indígenas en la universidad. Se entrevistaron seis psicólogos que tienen o que tuvieron vínculo con universidades públicas localizadas en las regiones Sur, Sudeste y Centro-Oeste de Brasil. Las entrevistas se realizaron individualmente, por el *Google Meet*, siguieron un plan previamente establecido, fueron gravadas y transcritas. Tras la transcripción y la lectura de las entrevistas, listamos los siguientes temas para discusión: 1- acciones desarrolladas; 2 - dificultades y desafíos; 3 - estrategias y recomendaciones. Entre las principales acciones desarrolladas, están la participación de los psicólogos en comisiones que visan a la permanencia de los estudiantes en la universidad, acciones con la comunidad académica, acciones específicas con los propios estudiantes indígenas, individuales o en grupos. Entre los desafíos del trabajo, están los relacionados al vínculo – la formación y el riesgo que el vínculo se transforme en un vínculo de dependencia –, los desafíos de la temporalidad y la comprensión del papel de la Psicología. Concluimos que la Psicología puede contribuir con la permanencia de los estudiantes indígenas en la universidad, para esto, no es necesario abandonar sus teorías, sus técnicas; la escucha y la formulación de buenas preguntas son recursos fundamentales, que deben ser conjugados con otras formas de conocimiento.

Palabras clave: permanencia del estudiante; indígenas; universidad; psicología

A permanência dos estudantes indígenas na universidade: o que faz a Psicologia?

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa teve como objetivo conhecer o trabalho realizado por psicólogos visando à permanência dos estudantes indígenas na universidade. Foram entrevistados seis psicólogos que têm ou que tiveram vínculo com universidades públicas localizadas nas regiões Sul, Sudeste e Centro-Oeste do Brasil. As entrevistas foram realizadas individualmente pelo *Google Meet* e seguiram um roteiro previamente estabelecido, foram gravadas e transcritas.

¹ State University of Maringá – Maringá – PR – Brazil; juucaccia@gmail.com; elianedomingues3@hotmail.com

Após a transcrição e a leitura das entrevistas, elencamos os seguintes temas para discussão: 1- ações desenvolvidas; 2 - dificuldades e desafios; 3 - estratégias e recomendações. Entre as principais ações desenvolvidas estão a participação dos psicólogos em comissões que visam à permanência dos estudantes na universidade, ações com a comunidade acadêmica, ações específicas com os próprios estudantes indígenas, individuais ou grupais. Entre os desafios do trabalho, estão os relacionados ao vínculo – a formação e o risco de que o vínculo se transforme em um vínculo de dependência –, os desafios da temporalidade e a compreensão do papel da Psicologia. Concluímos que a Psicologia pode contribuir com a permanência dos estudantes indígenas na universidade; para isso, não é necessário abandonar suas teorias, suas técnicas, pois a escuta e a formulação de boas perguntas são recursos fundamentais que devem ser conjugados com outras formas de conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: permanência estudantil; indígenas; universidade; psicologia

INTRODUCTION

Based on covenants by the Fundação Nacional do Índio – Indian National Foundation (FUNAI) with public and private institutions, the inclusion of indigenous peoples at Brazilian universities started in the 1990s but there is still very little information on these actions. In the 2000s, there were more consistent experiences concerning the entrance and permanence of indigenous students in Higher Education, in graduation as well as in post-graduation, in consonance with the implantation of affirmative action at this level of education (Amaral, 2010).

According to Paulino (2008), the first initiative that guaranteed access policies for indigenous peoples at public universities were the intercultural degrees. In 2001, the State University of Mato Grosso (Unemat) created the first intercultural degree for higher education, followed by the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR) in 2003. In addition, there was the demand for teacher formation in intercultural degrees, and higher education for indigenous peoples became an important topic in the indigenous movement. According to Paulino, the first ethnical-racial policy in Brazil was implemented in the state of Paraná in April of 2001, by State Law no. 13.134, from April 18 2001, which initially determined the creation of three new vacancies (and then six) in regular courses in state universities to be taken exclusively by indigenous students. “The state universities of Paraná were the first institutions of Public Higher Education to offer vacancies to indigenous students in regular courses, these institutions were followed by the UEMS” (Paulino, 2008, pp. 30 - 31).

With Law number 13.134/2001, Paraná was the first state to implement the specific college entrance examination as a policy – College Entrance Exams for the Indigenous Peoples of Paraná – after 2002 (Amaral, 2010). The University of Brasília (UnB) was also a trailblazer by realizing an exclusive selection process for indigenous students, 2006 (Secom UnB, 2021), and the first federal university to establish affirmative action in the form of supplementary vacancies for indigenous students. However, such policy was not regimented by a Law but by a resolution by the very University Council (Paulino, 2008).

Later on, there were significant advancements with the purpose to reformulate and increase the inclusion of indigenous people in education. The advancements include, the enactment of National Law number 12.711, from August 29 2012, which established that higher education institutions that were connected to the Ministry of Education and federal institutions of technical training for high school level students should mandatorily keep vacancies for self-declared indigenous candidates. This Law, known as the Affirmative Action Law was an important stage in the fight for recognition for rights and for equality of access for self-declared black and indigenous students at Brazilian federal universities. It instituted mandatory adoption of such policies, which previously depended on the initiatives of each institution.

Nowadays, according to Luciano and Amaral (2021), the entrance of indigenous students at university is already reality, the number of registrations in the country's universities, according to data from the Censo da Educação Superior do Ministério da Educação, or Higher Education Census of the Ministry of Education, rose significantly – from 7224 registered students in 2010 to 57706 students in 2018. However, the matter of permanence of indigenous students is still a formidable challenge.

Many students need to leave their villages and have difficulty to survive in the urban centers where the universities are located, especially the students from private universities that do not have the support by public programs of student assistance. In general, the happiness felt with the acceptance in selection processes, in affirmative action or on full competition, an impossible dream for most, soon turns into suffering in an unfair struggle to enter, stay and graduate from university (Luciano & Amaral, 2021, p. 27).

The difficulty to enter, stay and graduate from a course in higher education does not limit itself to material matters, it is also caused by a series of other situations that produce suffering, such as: the reference of basic schooling for their academic formation; the limits for institutional supervision at the universities; the experiences of interculturality in the academic environment and the feeling

of being a foreigner at the university (Amaral & Baibich-Faria, 2012).

Besides, there is the creation of an indigenous stereotype by non-indigenous peers; the experience of social and institutional prejudice; the relationship non-indigenous classmates and teachers; performance in the course and the learning difficulties, which falls upon individuals and not upon institutions, producing feelings of guilt and anxiety (Hur, Couto, & Nascimento, 2018).

Such adversities, and others that could be listed here, significantly interfere in permanence of indigenous students in the academic environment and are issues that can or cannot be objects of intervention and reflection by psychology. Aware of the practice of psychologists and student assistance and in support for policies for inclusion and permanence of indigenous students at the university, our objective in the present research is to get to know the work realized by psychologists at universities with indigenous students, their difficulties, challenges, strategies, and their recommendations.

METHOD

It consists of a qualitative research that is descriptive and exploratory with the realization of semi structured interviews by means of the Google Meet platform. The participants of the research were selected by the criterion of convenience.

Participants

Six psychologists participated in the research. They were four women and two men with formation experiences ranging from two to twenty-four years at the moment of the interview. Three of them are connected to the university as psychologists and are engaged in commissions for support to permanence of indigenous students at the university where they work. One of them has an ongoing postgraduation and the other two had postgraduation connections and developed research works and/or academic activities referring to the theme. Among the six participants, three had contact (by means of disciplines, events, and projects) with indigenous peoples' themes during graduation and three declared that they did not.

The universities where the interviewees conduct or conducted their activities are public institutions, located in the Brazilian South, Southeast, and Midwest regions. According to the participant selection criterion, participants were supposed to have a degree in psychology and develop or have developed actions with indigenous students at Brazilian public universities.

Procedures

The research was approved by the Permanent Committee of Ethics in Research Involving Human Beings, protocol no. 4594317. Participants were contacted via e-mail and, after acceptance, researchers also sent them by e-mail the free informed consent term, or Termo de

Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE). The semi structured interviews followed a script with questions or referring to professional formation, to contact with the indigenous peoples' themes in graduation and in postgraduation, realized activities involving indigenous students at the university, difficulties at work and strategies developed to overcome such difficulties, recommendations and the contributions of psychology for the permanence of indigenous students at the university. Initially, researchers realized a pilot interview with a psychologist that is within the selection criteria, with the purpose to test the question script.

Initial contact with the participants was made by e-mail and took place by means of the previous knowledge that researchers had on the work developed by the psychologist with the indigenous students at the university or indication by any other professional. The initial intention was to interview psychologists from all regions of Brazil and use the snowball sampling, where the first interviewed person indicates the second one and so on, but that was not possible because the psychologists (except for the pilot interview and for the last interviewed person) did not indicate anyone that would not fit the criteria for the realization of the research. In our network of contacts, we did not identify or did not obtain acceptance by professionals to be interviewed in the north and northeast regions, along with jurisdictions with the most numerous indigenous populations in Brazil.

The interviewed or recorded and realized individually by means of the Google meet platform at a scheduled time according to the availability of each participant. At the beginning of the interview, each participant declared having read and the being in accordance with the TCLE. After the realization of interviews, they were transcribed. After finishing the reading of the scripts and discussing them, a researcher listed the themes that should be highlighted regarding the proposed objective of the interview: 1 - developed actions; 2 - difficulties and challenges; 3 - strategies and recommendations. The discussion of data had a descriptive character, and the researchers attempted to present the contributions by the interviewed people with their actions and reflections, and also try to establish some relations with the scarce literature regarding these themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 - Actions developed with the indigenous students at the university

In this category, we aimed at presenting the actions developed by the psychologists in the work with indigenous students. All names of the mentioned professionals throughout the text are fictitious in order to preserve the anonymousness of participants.

Luciana works in a sector that provides assistance to the inner community of the university, articulating

actions of student assistance along with the commission that supports indigenous students. The psychologist provides assistance to individuals, in groups and in round tables with students.

Regarding a group work realized with indigenous students, Luciana tells us that it worked well in 2017. In 2018, however, the students did not accept the proposal and the interaction of the professional with the students was restricted to individual consultations. In 2019, there was a proposal to retake the group work in collaboration with another psychologist. However, since the meetings were not happening in a continuous way like in the first year, the professional noticed that there was not demand. In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the section where she works started conducting online round tables for all students at the university, and the indigenous students also participating, which led to participants requesting that the meetings took place weekly.

The round tables with indigenous and non-indigenous students organized by Luciana promoted meetings with and without pre-established themes. On days without specific themes, the psychologist gave participants the opportunity to talk about their experiences with the objective to observe what the most recurrent themes were. At some moments, she proposed certain themes to be discussed because she noticed that there were many reports on matters related to specific cultural situations, to racism, to inequality, and to gender.

The participants got interested in the themes and there were round tables with themes such as: indigenous trajectories and experiences; black students' trajectories and experiences; machismo and misogyny; the challenge of being a woman, especially at university and, also, being a woman at the university and having children; gender and sexual orientation issues, and so on. The psychologist pointed out that whenever she tried to approach the themes also in the indigenous context, so that students could report what it was like to them to experience such issues, and that they felt comfortable about sharing them with students who were not indigenous. Because of the remote lessons and the difficulties faced by some students, especially the indigenous ones, to keep up with distance learning during the pandemic – whether for lack of structure, of an Internet connection, or for other reasons – the frequency of participation in round tables went down.

The non-commitment or the continuity of group activities, with the objective to care for indigenous students at the university, were also reported in the article by Hur, Couto and Nascimento (2018), which presented an operative group session realized with indigenous students at the UFGO, while the initial proposal was the realization of five sessions. According to the authors, there was little interest in participating in the group, and the four students who were present

in the first session did not demonstrate intention to continue the activities.

Mariana is one of the professionals that also has a connection with the university, and works as a psychologist in the educational area connected to pro-rectories for a student assistance. Just like Luciana, Mariana also realizes individual consultations with indigenous students, but she emphasized that her mission as an educational psychologist is to search for collective solutions:

I can provide consultations, that is part of my job, but I cannot stay the whole day providing consultations individually, listening to problems, and do nothing, you see. So regarding the demands that we have received at the institution, the mission is to articulate, put a group together... pressure the institution in different instances (Mariana).

Regarding collective solutions, Mariana developed a working group with student assistance professionals to think about the permanence of indigenous students at the university. The objective of the group was to show that the whole institution is committed to the permanence of these students. The group produced reports on the purpose of permanence programs to the administration of the institution. In addition, the psychologist also conducted a capacitation course with the participation of indigenous students for university staff members. Another psychologist that has a connection with the university is Paulo, who also works in the department of student affairs. The psychologist considers that he plays a role of mediator by participating in the construction of affirmative action policies, and because he is in contact with indigenous students and, at the same time, he directly contributes to the psychological view. Paulo also provides academic guidance to students, and in this case, he believes he plays the role of translator and advisor: "it's as if I had the function of translating academic language, and academic bureaucracy, and they demand answers to the following questions "what is this like? What's that like? Who should I look for?". Paulo also provides professional guidance, because the change of course is a recurring demand:

They come with a view of the course and, very often, it's not what they were looking for... Due to influences since childhood we can see that it is not an individual but rather a collective decision – many times a decision of the village – was influenced by other factors, well... it is a non-comprehension of what the course is like, and there are so many questions, and then it happens (Paulo).

Gustavo, on the other hand, is a member of a project that works with indigenous people and communities, is taking a post-graduation course, and realizes psychotherapeutic with an indigenous person. Regarding assistance, Gustavo reported that he does not feel so much of a difference between indigenous and

non-indigenous people, and mentioned that one of the reasons might be that he has participated in projects with indigenous people throughout his graduation course.

Fernanda and Marta developed activities with indigenous students during the already concluded post-graduation. During post-graduation, Fernanda worked in the services sector for the inner university community, with psychological services for diverse demands, personal as well as academic, that needed listening and care. She said that she “realized individual consultations because, at the first moment, that was the demand of the institution”, and there was great difficulty for acceptance of group consultation. There was “an institutional culture that demanded individual consultations”.

However, Fernanda gradually managed to make the institution accept the fact that the group activities were powerful in the strengthening of the common demands and the recognition of the processes, which facilitated the search for solutions and strategies. Thus, she managed to organize groups in order to also work the personal and academic demands of the indigenous students in a collective way. In addition, she also gave lectures to professors and course coordinators “who were not prepared and, many times were not willing to get ready to receive the indigenous student” (Fernanda). In the lectures, the psychologist approached the importance of considering diversity within the classroom and stop thinking of education as something restricted and traditional.

Just like Fernanda, Marta also participated in discussion groups with indigenous scholars during their post-graduation. At the university where she realized her research, only one pedagogue helped the indigenous students, in the beginning as well as throughout the course. However, there was a center that the indigenous students themselves created, where they had autonomy and a horizontal condition of mutual help.

On the developed actions, it is important to highlight the engagement of professionals that have connections with the university in the articulation of policies for permanence and affirmative action for students, an action that must involve the academic community as a whole. Regarding specific actions with indigenous students, they have been individual (whether for psychological service, punctual or professional orientation) or collective. The group discussions and round tables are closer to the social modes of the indigenous peoples, according to Luciana. In addition, we highlight the role of “translator”, in the speech by Paulo, from the academic language to a more accessible language for indigenous students, and the role of “mediator” between the academic and the indigenous world.

2 – Difficulties and challenges in the work with indigenous students at the universities

The greatest difficulties and challenges mentioned by the professionals include: the construction of a therapeutic

relation that makes sense to indigenous students, the challenges of temporality, the comprehension of the role of Psychology by the indigenous students and the risk of creating a relation of dependence. Besides that, professionals also mentioned difficulties referring to the very structure of the university.

On the construction of the therapeutic relation, Luciana questions herself:

[...] How to make this therapy make sense? Or how are going to conduct this therapy? Because it seems to me that, in individual service, it is not a ... At least in the long term [...] It is of the moment, it is more momentary like this, more situational. I am in a situation, I am afflicted, I want to talk, and then they go there and talk about it, and then they stop coming. It might be like this and it might be enough and it might work, but I am always afraid that “maybe she needed more”? Or “maybe he needed more and maybe I did not understand what he needed”? This is the challenge I feel I am in, until today (Luciana).

In this speech, Luciana also reports that there is also a challenge related to temporality in the assistance to indigenous students, to her this difficulty is related to the context of “time” in the western vision. She complements by saying that:

The indigenous students are a priority in our work, but maybe we could have done better in terms of continuity [...] That is a challenge for Psychology. Sometimes I feel that difficulty. It is a different timing [...] I believe that we, all the time, have to discover this timing. Indigenous people do need psychological support. It is a different time and form from what we are accustomed to and have prescribed in western therapies (Luciana).

Paulo also mentioned such difficulty when discussing “the scheduled time obstacle”:

When they arrive, we have a more peaceful schedule. It is like, “Look, we are done for today. Let’s get together next week and talk about it, ok? It is much easier that way. But with a scheduled time, it usually goes like this, ‘well, came to my office on Monday at two so we can talk’, this is a greater challenge (Paulo).

Regarding temporality, Rejane Nunes Carvalho, Kaingang psychologist, presents important reflections. In her opinion, the illness of indigenous students at the university is related to the existence of a time zone by means of which students guide them themselves even when they are not used to it. It is known as the “clock dictatorship”. She reports that in her house there was no clock and that her grandfather asking I did himself by some light and shadow and that indigenous people have another sense of time, “we eat and sleep when we

feel like it" (Carvalho, 2020, p. 27). Entering a university, indigenous students need to adapt to schedules. They have to change their lifestyles, and the way they talk, and write and behave" (Carvalho, 2020, p. 27). In the same sense, Carvalho (2020), Angelin, Zoltowski and Teixeira (2017, p. 4) write:

While the academic environment considers time routines to be the most adequate form of organization for studies and tasks, indigenous students in general perceive temporality in a cyclical way, but planning is not something they lack or need to develop.

Luciana also argued that the periodic nature of individual psychological service does not make much sense to indigenous students, hindering the construction of the therapeutic relation.

That is what I am going through at this moment, I was providing assistance to an indigenous student, who was not all right... She had been having online assistance and... then she disappeared. And then, she stopped the connection. I know it happens to non-indigenous students too, but what I have observed is that, to indigenous people, it does not make much sense to spend too much time in an individual consultation... (Luciana).

Fernanda presented difficulty with the comprehension of the role of psychology. "First, there is the comprehension of what Psychology, which often has many social representations. So why should I need a psychology?" (Fernanda). As a consequence, the psychologist reported that there was sometimes "a mix of resistance, shame (...), mistrust" (Fernanda). Regarding the comprehension of what psychologists do, Paulo says:

I spent a lot of time thinking whether there is protection by the shaman or what would the role of the psychologist be in the cosmivision of that ethnicity. What I was representing as a transferential ethnicity. That is what we need to understand: does the shaman provide advice? Does he do what he preaches? Does he provide orientation? So many times I felt I was in that position, and ok, psychoanalytically it consists of assuming the transference, see how it is going and how to work on it, but there was always the question: within the cultural dimension, what role am I playing, and the cure role? If it is the cure, it is not the psychologist, and how does he manage that ethnicity? It is more or less what they expect? (Paulo).

Back to the connection issue, if at a first moment, we can think of the difficulty to establish a therapeutic relation that makes sense to indigenous students, such difficulty can be overcome, and when that happens

at least partially we can think of the risk of creating a dependence relation. This is a preoccupation of Paulo: "because they are in an environment that is essentially different, diverse, often alone and everything, they have a tendency to get connected in a dependent way. So I think that is a challenge". Gustavo also brought out this issue by reporting that, in "Psychology, it is rather difficult to draw a line between implication and reservation". In the same sense, Mariana comes up against her own professional limitations, because she feels the need to fill out the blanks:

I have difficulty to understand the moment to propose nothing, to leave, to be absent [...] So, sometimes, according to the indigenous students' own demands, I go on Saturday, I can do something. I sometimes I feel that ... even thinking from the psychological point of view, it is important to provide space for demand, leave the scene for a while, let it be... Learn to... What is my limit? What is the place of the other one? Not occupying space, leave space for other people, especially to the indigenous students themselves (Mariana).

Regarding the issue of implication and reservation mentioned by Gustavo, according to Figueiredo (2007), this general idea of care is based on what the caretaker does as an implied presence (support, recognize, approach) or as a reserved presence (give space and wait), and that the excess of implication is not feasible. In face of excess of implication, individuals start feeling reduced and, concerning reservation, there is dependence on attention and approval by others, a state of alienation. Thus, the conduction of an analysis requires the analyst to be able to keep, simultaneously, an implied and a reserved presence (Figueiredo & Coelho Jr., 2000), while it is necessary to have a dynamic equilibrium between these forms of presence. Although the mentioned authors refer to psychoanalytical practice, speaking of care and implied and reserved presence, their ideas also help us think of the issues raised by the interviewees when it is also necessary to deal with implication and reservation.

Finally, concerning the difficulties referring to the university itself, Mariana mentioned two major difficulties: the structure of the institution and the need for recognizing structural inequality by the people who work in the institution. The psychologist made a reflection on the structure of the universities, because although many of them have access policies, there are rules and regulations that make the process difficult:

When these people enter by means of affirmative action policies, they arrive at an institution that does not want them in fact. We tell them that we want them, but well, when they come and found out there is an item that prevents them from making their registration, or when they do not have accommodations or a scholarship... (Mariana).

Mariana's speech reveals an important point: even if there are access policies, the structure of universities is still limited by the desire that populations considered minorities do not stay at the institution, that is, discourse does not agree with practice. This can be explained by the fact that higher education institutions are historically produced without any consideration for indigenous, black, and poor populations. So, when these people enter university by means of affirmative action, they arrive at an institution that does not truly accept them. To complement, Mariana mentioned an analogy made by an indigenous student:

'I do not feel really comfortable, it seems like I have arrived at the university'... this comparison to an invitation does not really work. You do not feel welcome. There is no sofa, no refreshments, just an open door [...] it is like you are invited to walk in but there is no one there to receive you and I do not know what I am supposed to do here' (Mariana).

To Krenak (2019), the university reproduces the racist, prejudiced, discriminatory, and classist thought that exists in our Brazilian society, "strange bodies always need some time for adaptation to get inserted into the context" (p. 13). The indigenous leaders complements by emphasizing:

It goes beyond thinking of the presence of indigenous students at the university. I hope that the presence of people from these original populations might agree with the environment of universities in Brazil, so the university becomes transformed by critical thought regarding what this privileged institution in western society elects as a place for cultivated thought, of complex ideas and of planning of what is delivered to society as a norm for good existence for a civilized community that is contemporaneous and reproduces the capitalist system of the labor world. (Krenak, 2019, p. 14).

3 – Strategies and recommendations for work with indigenous students at the university

The interviewed psychologists, in addition to exposing the difficulties and challenges that they face at work with indigenous students, also presented the strategies that they use to overcome such difficulties, the challenges and recommendations for those who are facing the same difficulties.

Concerning the construction of the connection and the comprehension of the role of psychology for indigenous students, Fernanda reports that, before proposing any specific action, she started hanging around the same spaces as the indigenous students so she could get to know them.

So, there were days when I stayed at the space for people to see me, get to know me, without official

consultations. I went there and tried to see what they were doing, talk for a while, know about routines, introduce myself, make myself a familiar figure. So this was a great strategy, like, take it easy and never put anything before our relationship. This experience really needed to happen, they really needed someone there so they could say 'wow, there is really someone I can trust here? Can I really trust? I think so, I will set up a session?'. Sometimes, people, after seeing me there so often, say 'ok, let's schedule a consultation', 'well, I am going to take part in the group' (Fernanda).

Fernanda added that the fact that she had gotten to know an indigenous village made a huge difference in the construction of the connection. It allowed indigenous students to see her as someone who appreciates their knowledge. Although getting to know and becoming well-known is fundamental for constructing a connection, Fernanda believes that it is also necessary to understand the demands of the indigenous students so that they could construct solutions and strategies together.

Mariana also emphasized the importance of knowing the culture of the indigenous students, because "when you are doing your practice and you realize that it is a reality that you do not know, the least you can do is to seek elements to familiarize with".

To Luciana, it is fundamental to understand the meanings individuals give to their own experiences, getting to know how indigenous students manage to learn things, in the intellectual dimension as well as in the emotional one, how they elaborate problems, difficulties and anguishes, "[...] when you get sad, what does this sadness mean to these populations? The relation with the husband, the familiar relation with the child, we can see it the same way?".

In the same direction as the previous speeches, Marta adds that getting another person's logic and their symbolic world, helps us stop "projecting our own perspectives on other people". In order to get to know other people's logic, listening is fundamental: "it is always the other one that is going to give the clues (...) psychology is not the one that is going to have a protocol *a priori* to apply" (Marta). To Mariana, knowledge comes with the capacity to listen to "someone else who is there telling me something I don't understand, including, sometimes, their own language".

Paulo, on the other hand, speaks of the importance of developing a cultural and historical sensibility and mentioned the following situation as an example:

We had a student from an ethnicity that was practically decimated in the 1960s, and there only 60 individuals left, and he came here and he had this persecutory narrative, in which white man is a threat, a destroyer, etc. So as a got to know the history of his ethnicity, I finally understood his

behavior, why he behaved so aggressively, often so hostile, and the meaning of it all, and maybe the meaning was in the very history of the ethnicity. He was quite difficult to deal with, he was always on the defensive, so I think it is fundamental to have cultural sensibility (Paulo).

Another issue raised by Paulo is the need to rethink the setting for assistance to indigenous students. He says:

Many times, I feel the need to create a peripatetic clinic, which is a clinic that is out of the setting, with consultancy done while walking around the university space, and introducing them to the university space. It should not take place in the confinement of a classroom, it takes place in another space for integrated experience. In my opinion, that makes more sense than face to face interaction for indigenous students (Paulo).

The peripatetic clinic mentioned by Paulo receives different denominations in the literature. Among such names, Lemke and Silva (2011) found the proposal by Rolnik (1997), which used the term “nomadic clinic” to present a clinic that takes place outside determined rules, going beyond familiar territories; the one by Lancetti (2006), which used the term “peripatetic praxis” to designate diverse experiences that take place peripatetically, that is, in movement, and the one by Araújo (2006), who used the term to hint at a form of support that takes place without a fixed location, during excursions, for example. What these proposals have in common is their itinerant nature, without a fixed clinical setting, that might take place out of offices and institutions, they can be thought of as ways to the construction of a therapeutic relation that makes sense to indigenous students and to handle diverse temporalities (Lemke & Silva, 2011).

Concerning the recommendations, Mariana affirms that Psychology can contribute by asking good questions. Sometimes, we do not need questions, we need questioning, such as: “Is that so? Is it really like this? Why? Since when? Could it be someone else? Who?”. These basic little questions of School and Education Psychology that already part of the framework of our area” (Mariana). In addition, Psychology might have to read other disciplines, other authors, from other areas, such as anthropology and sociology, especially the anthropologists “who are the ones to did the work first”, according to Marta. The reading of indigenous authors such as Gersem Luciano Baniwa, Rita Potyguara, Davi Kopenawa and Ailton Krenak, is also fundamental and is reinforced by Mariana and Gustavo. In a nutshell, asking good questions and creating connections between Psychology and other forms of knowledge is an urgent task.

Regarding the structure of the university, Mariana

says that it is necessary that the university recognizes its own institutional racism and inequality. Thus, the way Mariana handled the situation is based on always introducing in the discussions the legal and institutional aspects of the inclusion and the permanence of indigenous students in the university. She also said that she has realized the importance of working collectively, of forming networks, and of finding people who are also committed to the matter to support and strengthen the struggle.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of the research was to get to know the work realized by psychologists at the universities with indigenous students, their difficulties, challenges, strategies and recommendations. Regarding the actions developed by the professionals, we highlight the participation in commissions with the purpose to help students stay at the university, actions with the academic community and with the indigenous students. Concerning actions with indigenous students, the psychologists questioned the effectiveness of their interventions. The group that has no continuity, the student that does not return to the nest consultation. What do these situations mean? Has the demand already been fixed or the student could not even express himself? Regarding situations like this, it is possible to think that the student does not understand what psychologists do, if it was possible to construct a therapeutic connection in the different temporalities and how one of the strategies to handle these matters can be rethinking delimited, pre-established spaces, and inflexible timetables.

Following the questionings, we can ask what is the role of psychologists and what would be the contributions of Psychology in the inclusion and in the permanence of indigenous students at the university? Certainly, psychologists can play a fundamental role in supporting and listening to indigenous individuals, and contribute by asking good questions, according to Mariana – “Is that so? Why? Since when? Could it be someone else?” –, in addition to serving the function of “translator” of academic language to a language that is accessible to indigenous students, and of “mediator” between the academic world and the indigenous world, according to Paulo.

As conclusion, for psychologists to contribute to the inclusion and permanence of indigenous students in the university, it is not necessary to abandon their theories, and their techniques, it is necessary to dialogue with other forms of knowledge, with indigenous cultures and with other disciplines such as anthropology. In addition, it is important to read indigenous authors, develop a historical and cultural sensibility, learn to listen and get to know indigenous individuals, and consider their alterity. Thus, it is necessary to find balance between implied and reserved presence and not knowing.

REFERENCES

- Amaral, W. R. (2010). *As trajetórias dos estudantes indígenas nas universidades estaduais do Paraná: sujeitos e pertencimentos*. (Doctoral Thesis). Postgraduate Program in Education, Federal University of Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. Recovered from http://www.pppe.ufpr.br/teses%20d2010/d2010_Wagner%20Roberto%20do%20Amaral.pdf
- Amaral, W. R., & Baibich-Faria, T. M. (2012). A presença dos estudantes indígenas nas universidades estaduais do Paraná: trajetórias e pertencimentos. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, 93(235), 818-835. Recovered from <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbeped/a/F8qWHQJMzZtZL4VRYqq9Dnq/?lang=pt&format=pdf>
- Angelin, A. P., Zoltowski, A. P., & Teixeira, M. A. P. (2017) A construção do projeto de vida e carreira em estudantes indígenas: um estudo exploratório. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 29, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-0310/2017v29i161330>
- Araújo, F. (2006). *Um passeio esquivo pelo acompanhamento terapêutico: dos especialismos à política de amizade*. Niterói: Fábio Araújo.
- Carvalho, R. N. (2020). *Kanhangang êg my há: para uma psicologia Kaingang*. (Final Course Work). Degree in Psychology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Recovered from <https://lume.ufrgs.br/bitstream/handle/10183/212727/001116972.pdf?sequence=1&isAllow>
- Figueiredo, L.C., & Coelho Jr., N. (2000). *Ética e técnica em psicanálise*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- Hur, D. U., Couto, M. L. B. S., & Nascimento, J. S. (2018). Estudantes indígenas na Universidade: uma sessão de grupo operativo. *Vínculo*, 15(2), 99-119. <https://doi.org/75d323ad165443c59fb-33b1>
- Krenak, A. (2019). A presença indígena na universidade. *Maloca: Revista de Estudos Indígenas*, 1(1), 9-16, Recovered from <https://econtents.bc.unicamp.br/inpec/index.php/maloca/article/view/13194>
- Lancetti, A. (2006). *Clínica peripatética*. São Paulo: Hucitec
- Lei nº 13.134, de 18 de abril de 2001. *Reserva 3 (três) vagas para serem disputadas entre os índios integrantes das sociedades indígenas paranaenses, nos vestibulares das universidades estaduais*. Diário Oficial, Paraná, BR, nº 5969 de 19 de abril de 2001. Recovered from <https://www.legislacao.pr.gov.br/legislacao/pesquisarAto.do?action=exibir&codAto=4440>
- Lei nº 12.711, de 29 de agosto de 2012. *Dispõe sobre o ingresso nas universidades federais e nas instituições federais de ensino técnico de nível médio e dá outras providências*. Diário Oficial da União, seção 1, p. 1. Recovered from <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei/2012/lei-12711-29-agosto-2012-774113-norma-pl.html>
- Lemke, R. A.; Silva, R. A. N. (2011). Um estudo sobre a itinerância como estratégia de cuidado no contexto das políticas públicas de saúde no Brasil. *Physis: Revista de Saúde Coletiva*, 21(3), 979-1004. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-73312011000300012>
- Luciano, G. y Amaral, W. (2021). Povos indígenas e educação superior no Brasil e no Paraná: desafios e perspectivas. *Integración y Conocimiento*, 10(2), 13-37. Recovered from <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/integracionyconocimiento/article/view/34069/34532>
- Paulino, M. M. (2008). *Povos indígenas e ações afirmativas: o caso do Paraná*. (Master's Dissertation) Postgraduate Program in Education, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Recovered from http://www.redeacaoafirmativa.ceao.ufba.br/uploads/ufrj_dissertacao_2008_MPaulino.pdf
- Rolnik, S. (1997). Clínica Nômade. In Equipe de Acompanhantes Terapêuticos do Hospital-Dia A Casa (Ed.), *Crise e cidade: acompanhamento terapêutico* (pp. 83-87). São Paulo: Educ.
- SECOM UnB. (2021, 19 de abril). UnB completa 59 anos gerando impacto dentro e fora dos ambientes de ensino: Inovadora desde a concepção, instituição mantém princípios de seus criadores na valorização da diversidade e da ciência. *UnB Notícias*. Recovered from <https://noticias.unb.br/76-institucional/4911-unb-completa-59-anos-gerando-impacto-dentro-e-fora-dos-ambientes-de-ensino>

Submitted on: January 05, 2022.

Approved on: May 08, 2023.

This paper was translated from Portuguese by Régis Lima.