

Compared studies as a research method: writing a curriculum history using curricular documents

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ABSTRACT

The article presents research that contributes to the history of education, with a focus on reflections on the theoretical and methodological issues that arise from the use of comparative study procedures, aimed at writing a particular curricular history, through the study of national curriculum documents. The research aimed to writing a particular curricular history, through the study of curriculum documents. The methodology used in this research is guided by explicit theoretical foundations, the comparison of areas and the investigative procedures that support the election of comparative study as a research method. By choosing the grounds, areas and procedures, we try to analyze the differences and similarities, to exploit them to the fullest to find out how they express themselves, to track the contents of the information in the context in which they are presented, to contextualize them, that is, to establish relations with the different situations in which a curricular history was/is produced.

KEYWORDS

research in education; comparative studies; history curriculum.

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ESTUDOS COMPARADOS COMO MÉTODO DE PESQUISA: A ESCRITA DE UMA HISTÓRIA CURRICULAR POR DOCUMENTOS CURRICULARES

RESUMO

O artigo apresenta uma pesquisa concluída, inscrita no campo da história da educação, com foco na reflexão sobre as condições teóricas e metodológicas que se colocam à utilização dos procedimentos do estudo comparado. A pesquisa objetivou a escrita de uma história curricular particular, por meio do estudo de documentos curriculares. A metodologia empregada nesta investigação está orientada pela explicitação dos fundamentos teóricos, das áreas de comparação e dos procedimentos investigativos que sustentam a eleição do estudo comparado como método de pesquisa. Ao elegermos os fundamentos, as áreas e os procedimentos, tratamos de analisar as diferenças e as semelhanças, de explorá-las ao máximo para descobrir como se expressam, de rastrear os conteúdos das informações no contexto em que estão apresentadas, de contextualizá-las, isto é, de estabelecer relações com as distintas situações em que foi/é produzida uma história curricular.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

pesquisa em educação; estudos comparados; história do currículo.

ESTUDIOS COMPARADOS COMO MÉTODO DE INVESTIGACIÓN: LA REDACCIÓN DE UNA HISTORIA CURRICULAR POR DOCUMENTOS CURRICULARES

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta una investigación concluida, inserida en el campo de la historia de la educación, focalizando la reflexión sobre las condiciones teóricas y metodológicas que se utilizan en los procedimientos del estudio comparado. El objetivo de la investigación fue el de escribir una historia curricular particular, mediante el estudio de documentos curriculares. La metodología utilizada se orienta por la explicitación de los fundamentos teóricos, de las áreas de comparación y de los procedimientos investigativos que sustentan la elección del estudio comparado como método de investigación. Al escoger los fundamentos, las áreas y los procedimientos, tratamos de analizar las diferencias y las semejanzas, de explorarlas al máximo para descubrir cómo se expresan, de rastrear los contenidos de las informaciones en el contexto en el que se presentan, de contextualizarlas, es decir, buscamos establecer relaciones con las diferentes situaciones en que una historia curricular fue/es producida.

PALABRAS CLAVE

investigación en educación; estudios comparados; historia del currículo.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the history of education by writing a particular version of the history of curriculums, that focuses on the analyses of official curriculum documents published between the 1970s and 1990s, establishing relationships and correlations to revive comparative studies as a research method.

The documents from the 1970s were published between 1976 and 1979 by the National Special Education Council (CENESP), an organ of Brazil's Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), in the format of curriculum proposals for the fields of mental, auditory and visual disabilities and for gifted students. The document from the 1990s was published in 1999 by MEC's Secretariat of Special Education (SEESP) and entitled *National Curriculum Parameters: Curriculum Adaptations* (strategies for educating students with special needs).

Considering these documents, the perspective of writing the history of curriculum is delineated on one hand by a process that admits a deconstructive logic, by introducing successive discourses from society, schooling processes, teaching and learning as a pedagogical control tactic. On the other hand, the approach seeks expressions of school culture that are materialized in the set of the norms that define what knowledge to teach and what conduct to inculcate, as presented in a curriculum project by means of what is intended (curriculum expectations and intentions) and by what occurs and where (curriculum reality).

In this sense, the periods of the publications are considered as spaces and times of projections of the (re)invention of the principles of a fair school, which is understood as an object of a new educational contract between society and government, which incorporates ways to include "everyone," specifically students with disabilities. The curriculum documents are read as a set of means, objects and artifacts that were and are specifically prepared to facilitate the realization of educational processes in schools and classrooms.

Added to this apprehension is the "place" that these documents occupy in the space of curriculum studies, because they differ from other types of materials given that they are designed to fulfill certain functions through the diffusion and practical development of *teachinglearning*¹ processes in a given curricular project of an also given school system.

In this sense, from a critical perspective, curriculum documents have a very direct repercussion on the implementation standards of this new contract and of the diffusion of knowledge that is necessary for it, considering that they affect the production and dissemination of educational practices.

Therefore, we begin with the premise that comparative studies allow recovering the macro-social aspects and the micro-educational dimensions in which curriculum is materialized. Thus, based on data collection, bibliographic analysis and different methodological and historical evidence from comparative studies

1 We use this spelling to express understanding of the indivisibility between teaching and learning (SILVA, 2008)

in the studies of history, education and education history, we arrive at curriculum policy and history.

This study is guided by an explanation of the foundations and by the choice of areas of comparison of the investigative procedures that took shape in this writing as the terrain for the selection and application of historical-comparative study as a research method. By selecting the foundations, the areas and the procedures, we sought to analyze differences and similarities, to explore them to the maximum and discover how they express and, track the information content in the context in which it is presented, and contextualize it. In other words, we establish relations with different situations in which curriculum history was and is produced.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: THE CONTEXT OF COMPARATIVE STUDIES

The reappearance of comparative studies in the final decade of the 20th century, in the academic environment and in research in history of education, with different purposes and theoretical and methodological alignments, has led us to questions from the production of generalizations and singularities, with the aim of improving educational systems, and of giving privilege to the structural data, as an effort to find the method.

In production focused on assisting in the improvement of educational systems, Hans (1961) records that this form of study would only be possible after affirmation of the conception of “National State”, and of the understanding of the differences of values existing in various social, cultural and geographical formations, and the normative structure. Concerning the emphasis on structural data, Bereday (1968, p. 12) states that comparative analysis is not a simple method, but a science “whose object is to untangle the similarities and differences of educational systems”.

For Malet (2004, p. 1.311) these studies are undertaken as a reaction against:

- a) the objective and closed conditions of the educational and cultural phenomena that functionalism tends to promote;
- b) perspectives of social evolutionism, which, blinded by a continuist historical conception and a pragmatic approach to educational facts, tend to neglect processes of social change;
- c) consensualism, which prevents scientific work from questioning its purposes, which is the best way to elude them, especially when the spaces for intervention go beyond national borders.

In the current context, the perspective seems to focus on different units and objects, determined by culture and discourse, and for Schriewer (2009, p. 95) this endows the analysis with the condition of

becoming an explanatory argument, insofar as it can identify through conceptually informed reconstructions, solutions to historically realized

problems as particular achievements of that which is structurally possible in different sociocultural scenarios or configurations.

To understand it in this way, we have witnessed a process of construction of configurations that present an opportunity to combine theories of conflict and theories of consensus, descriptive and conceptual approaches (cf. Nóvoa, 2009), the theory of reflection related to reform and scientific theory related to the understanding of the differences between educational systems (Madeira, 2009) and differences and similarities in the quest for direction/meaning for educational processes (Ferreira, 2009).

However, what seems most significant in this process is the capacity of the comparative study to be used with a plurality of perspectives, approaches and methodologies and to indicate limits for understanding of educational facts or phenomena, which it compares, representing itself as an important tool for understanding and analyzing educational reality.

In this context, the dialog with the human and social sciences is no longer sufficient for any study if it does not consider, in the explanation of any educational fact or phenomenon, relations with the political, economic, and or philosophical convictions of the society which it serves, as it is ineffective to compare educational changes without a minimum of analysis about the historical significance of the period when these changes took place.

According to Popkewitz (1998), we are facing a new epistemology of knowledge, of a sociohistorical nature, which defines research perspectives focused not only on the *materiality* of educational facts, but also on the symbolic markets that describe, interpret and locate them in a given space-time.

From a theoretical-methodological point of view, the “reinstitution” of a past, linked to education, refers us more particularly to a history of comparative education, from a demographic history, converted into a kind of social history that rethinks the historical materialist notions of “infrastructure” and “superstructure”, passing through the history of material culture. This history is dedicated to the study of material objects in their interaction, as the most concrete aspects of life, correlating them in their social uses and appropriations, and concluding with a history of the mental perspectives, used in the selection of a privileged perspective and in an extensive approach to sources as a contribution to broaden the conception of documents.

This movement of the history of comparative education places us before research procedures that are marked on one hand by the identification and analysis of educational issues, defined by geographic belonging, but in the sense of an interaction with certain symbolic markets; and, on the other hand, determined by the apprehension of educational time-spaces, marked by economic and political regulations that go beyond the borders of different states and countries.

Regarding the symbolic market, understood as that which designates certain areas inhabited by multiple and competing voices, we find documents as sources and / or sources as documents, which witness a social production of meanings, which requires considerations about polyphony, polysemy, context, discursive and

positional competition, *habitus* and places of interlocutions. Therefore, it is a market that is inhabited by groups that produce and present circular discourses.

What is desired, ultimately, is the possibility to “have one see and to have one believe” as a part of the construction of reality, or better, of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1989). Part of this construction, within the exercise of writing of curriculum history, is delineated by the premise that curriculum documents are inducers, or reinforcers of expectations in relation to culture, education and social practices, that the society wants to promote in schools.

Therefore, we turn to curriculum theory, that is, to a theory of education that encompasses what is happening inside classrooms and schools and assumes the school institution as a specific place for the transmission of knowledge and acquisition of habits and capabilities. According to Forquin (1993), studies of curriculum and curriculum theory, reporting mainly on educational processes, organization, legitimation and transmission of content, compose a field that significantly contributes to reflections on the relationships between school, culture and their implications.

METHODOLOGICAL ROUTES: CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS AS SOURCES IN THE WRITING OF A CURRICULUM HISTORY

Curriculum documents are considered as objects and sources. As objects, they are understood as printed documents that select, legitimize and distribute knowledge, and mobilize discourses in the production of the truths of the schooling process. In this sense, they operate in the selection and distribution of knowledge that reaches the schools, and in the way that it should be received. This understanding allows the analysis of their materiality, that is of how they provide material support for the construction of practices in educational spaces. According to Batista and Galvão (2005, p. 16) researching printed documents “also requires examining the quality of the texts, [...] describing their support and themes.”

As sources, particularly written and dialogical ones, they occupy, on one hand, privileged space for the reconstitution of the educational ideologies or mentalities, removed to a particular official projection; on the other hand, they differ from other sources because they contemplate a very particularized purpose, that is, the fulfillment of functions determined by the diffusion and practical development of educational processes, based on a network of intertextualities that is fed by the educational policy for the execution of the educational processes in schools and classrooms.

In this context, historicizing curriculum documents as objects and sources requires considering the conditions of their production, or better, that the content itself cannot be dissociated from the place occupied by this printed document in the history of education and curriculum. Just like any other type of printed document, curriculum documents “embody knowledge” (Darnton, 2010, p. 16).

In the last two decades, in discourses on school education and schools, it has been common to point out that curriculum is not as an innocent and neutral element of disinterested transmission of social knowledge. It is strongly determined

by power relationships that unequally distribute opportunities for school success to different sociocultural groups.

In fact, the existence, in school systems, of curriculum mentality, understood as the conscience of the system, in which it itself is inserted, and of the options that guide it, as well as of the model that is conveyed and on which accomplished actions are based, winds up institutionalizing “various, at times contradictory elements” (Nóvoa, 1991, p. 52), in other words, aspects that lead to the reinforcement of state power and, simultaneously, to “a technology that mediatizes the distribution of power” (*idem*, p. 53).

In the curricular field, the versatility, competence and practical importance of knowledge have served the justification of a new curriculum that is validated by values of emancipation, integration, social relevance and updating of knowledge. It is in the framework of these ideas that we are conceiving knowledge, schools and their professionals as active agents in the configuration of processes that make the curriculum richer, more rigorous and more reflective. However, we understand that knowledge production and distribution only occur through the location of the domination of the subdued and not by the decolonization of knowledge that creates and has created this condition.

We understand that curriculum documents produce a specific culture, with types of organized and selected symbols, which are directly related to types of students and to the way they make use of this type of knowledge, which is socially stratified and represents conflicts. It is based on these conflicts that it becomes possible to understand the economic and cultural functions of educational institutions.

In this sense, these documents create and recreate places, creating an educational, economic and social world through an organized set of meanings and practices that are related to a central and effective process that dominates these meanings, these values and these actions that are experienced in and through the access to knowledge.

We know, however, that these documents are not able to account for all the shortcomings of the society considering the different groups and their educational needs. But it is in the impossibility to construct curricular differentiation that we find the fulfillment of the formal (and ideal) concept of equal opportunities by means of a singular curriculum for all students.

Whether because of the level of detailing and fragmentation that they have attained, or because of the complexity of their formulations or the juxtaposition of unexplicit conceptions and concepts, the local curriculum documents are centralized, complex and have little integration among the education levels.

Although they materialize less elitist discourses, these documents still have characteristics of an elite culture, for example, as in what is privileged and in the way that this knowledge is presented. In this process of appropriation, called recontextualization (Bernstein, 1990), the curricular discourse acts as a set of rules to embed and relate two other discourses: the “instructional discourse” – specialized in the fields of knowledge that is expected to be transmitted by/ in the school – and the regulative discourse – a discourse associated with pedagogical values and

principles. The regulative discourse creates order, a relationship of identity in the instructional discourse.

In these documents the regulatory discourses feed on the existence of some students who would be in a more favorable class position and or class condition to meet the implied requirements. In other words, the agents are differentiated by their cultural capital (class position), by their economic capital (class condition) and, more specifically, by their organic condition.

Therefore, they tend to complexify the prescriptions about what should be taught in schools, including not only thematic content, but also approaches, methodological recommendations, assessment tools and forms, and indications about the training required for the teachers.

THE METHODOLOGICAL ROUTES: THE SELECTION OF THE AREAS TO BE COMPARED

The areas for comparison, selected based on their configuration, are closely linked with the movement of educational organization. In the case of this study, these areas are not limited to description but intend to present arguments related to the theoretical concepts, hypotheses, or explanatory models, with which we have chosen to establish the comparability between the movements mentioned above, observed in the documents. For a better construction of this observation we present some guiding questions, namely:

- a) What topics are most focused on the organization of the educational process?
- b) What aspects and dimensions of these topics have been emphasized and privileged?

To find the answers to these questions we have developed procedures for the categorization and analysis of the issues identified, to reveal the multiple approaches and perspectives of the documents studied. Among these multiple approaches we emphasize school space and time as areas that are intrinsic to the production of an essentialized identity of deficiency in the educational plan.

The first of the tasks, organized through a categorization, is the examination of the information in the curricular documents about space and time. For this purpose, the main exercise is to track the conditions of production of school space and time as an area for comparison, which requires understanding them as not limited to a series of observable facts, but as elaborately idealized, according to which in the action of comparison it is possible to detect explanatory models.

It is important to emphasize that the foundation of the categorization of space and time is fed by the conditions of the contingent crossing between them, and the context of the distribution of knowledge, which characterizes the object of the curriculum documents. From an “immanent” perspective they reside in relation to knowledge as experience and from a “transcendent” perspective they reside in relation to space and time as areas.

Considering them as inseparable perspectives, in methodological terms, space and time are expressed by the “juxtaposition” in relation to their contents, while they simultaneously portray a kind of “complicity” with the didactic guidelines. What seems to be in play between the juxtaposition and the complicity is the strictly ideological character of the areas, by performing a task of legitimation, which can be used as a conceptual tool for an analytical reflection that problematizes its own statutes.

With regard to the analysis of the areas we have highlighted, we sought support from previous studies about these areas. These studies allowed fundamentally overcoming the supposed incompatibility between the universalism of the areas space and time – identified in the school form and considered to be ethnocentric by definition, given that as methodological products of a particular historical-social experience, the institutionalization of the school and a cultural relativism – that is intended to be impartial – they are identified as historically and socially specific categories.

The area *space* helps to describe and analyze how the architecture of schools and classrooms contains an educational program, an agenda that provides individuals cultural and school experiences with implicit goals. For Benito Escolano (2000) the study of the school space incorporates symbols and signs, that ensure a clear identity, and transmits certain messages of common meaning to the people of the school, therefore,

the codification of the school architectural language has given rise to a whole series of invariants that can be analyzed as a text that transmits images of firmness, order, harmony, security, beauty ... These invariants can adopt different styles, but as a system constitute an entire discourse with meaning. (*idem*, p. 23).

About school space, Viñao Frago (1998) affirms that there are two possible analyses: the first focuses on school space as a place, in other words, it analyzes the school as the place where the pedagogical act occurs, with all the possible implications of the school building structure and of the land on which it is located. The other analysis needed to understand the school space is related to its understanding as a territory, that is, in its relations with all that circumscribes it, with other nearby spaces, with the uses that are made of its geography.

School space, from the perspective of the area of comparison, expresses manifestations not only of ideals of pedagogical organization, but also cultural contents and various aesthetic, social and ideological signs.

In the same order, we consider *time* as another variable of this translation, associated to the *space*, since time takes control of it and offers it identity. “The marks of time are more than ‘a small contingency that inhibit or facilitate’ school activity, every time they condition representations and perceptions of the spaces and also their planning and their uses.” (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 107).

School times are certainly multiple, and together with the ordering of the space, participate in the school culture. The rhythmic organization of school life is expressed in the daily passage and in the daily routine, in the duration, in the alternations, continuities and discontinuities of the activities, originated in different contexts, and in the sequences and rhythms of the school relations and practices.

Expressed in the regulations and teaching guidelines, school time is imposed on teachers and schools and, of course, on families, becoming the central support of the quality of the learning of individuals.

Thus, time and space, as areas of comparison, are carriers of their own logic, a social logic that transforms them into a place where human intentions are manifested. It is exactly this logic that defines them as curricular objects, therefore, objects that should be analyzed according to the transformations that take place inside the schooling and educational process.

CURRICULUM HISTORY WRITTEN BY CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

Based on the areas selected, we emphasize that the procedural character of the comparison is immersed, on one hand, in the search for the similarities and differences expressed in the selected documents, and, on the other, by the meaning of this comparison, in other words, the dynamics placed in course by the discursive transformations of school and educational conditions, going beyond mere description.

The first document analyzed was from the late 1970s and established the curriculum as a proposal defined for the areas of disability (mental, visual, auditory, physical and giftedness) on a national level to be promoted in all regions and schools to safeguard normative legitimacy and technical rationality in the curriculum development process. It should be emphasized that the document was presented to the public as part of a set that covered five areas of disability (mental, auditory, visual, physical and giftedness) and expressed an understanding of integrative² education in which the training, recovery and adaptation of the disabled would configure, when possible, an opportunity for access to the regular educational system.

To enact this curriculum, based on the idea of curriculum adaptation, the notion predominated that individuals belonging to bio-socio-cultural groups separated from the classical school culture and from the “standard culture” should be placed in special groups to be worked with at the level of their deficiencies and, therefore, the curricular responses, in this theoretical-ideological conception, are materialized by the creation of school networks or of different classes.

Meanwhile, the document from the 1990s, the second analyzed document, was a construction that sought to respond to the so-called “school for everyone” movement (post Declaration of Jontiem, 1990). In 1998, the Ministry of Education and Culture published the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN), which expressed the national curriculum (in the prescriptive form of an official curriculum), understood as a guide. One of the criteria that justified them was the adoption of a general structure of subjects and their respective content, but not their contextualization. In 1999, the Secretariat of Special Education published

2 The principle of the integration was educationally expressed by means of the Law on National Education Guidelines and Bases No. 4024 of 1961 and Law No. 5692, 1971.

the curriculum document, intended to ensure education of the disabled, entitled *National Curriculum Parameters: Curriculum Adaptations*.

In the case of the inclusive school we understand that the proposition of curriculums has been a strong characteristic. In the exercise of proposing something that should be followed, the curriculum is understood as a manipulable, understandable, quantifiable and relatively stable object, and therefore it changes, molds and is fixed in a controlled manner.

Accordingly, it was possible to adapt the regular curriculum when necessary, to make it appropriate to the peculiarities of students with special needs. Not a new curriculum, but a dynamic, changeable curriculum, that could be expanded to truly serve all students.

This curriculum format promoted that everyone, regardless of their origin and life experiences, should be offered the same paths so that they can achieve the same ends, opting for uniform responses that are based on knowledge that is considered universal; therefore, a curriculum organized in this theoretical-ideological framework would offer all students the same kind of curricular routes, methods and materials, in an attitude of homogenization and assimilation.

The concrete conditions of the curricular organization for the education of individuals with disabilities vary in the way that school times and spaces are ordered. For the latter, more or less oscillating rules were used, with a more or less sedentary occupation of space, with greater or lesser dependence on the clock for the measurement of time.

In the curriculum document of the 1970s, special classes were established as learning communities of equals, with adapted curriculums, aimed at promoting the socio-cognitive and emotional development of the disabled who would be sent to the class. The distribution of time was regulated by a biological notion, determined by different degrees of disability and by using the clock as one of its tools, that is as one of the best strategies for measuring and controlling the operation of this class and its activities. As a result, the periods of more strenuous activities and activities, that required more effort and attention, were shorter, and the time dedicated to achieving each objective, depended on the degree of complexity.

The construction of the space involved issues of control, vigilance, discipline and, above all, diffusion of ideology. The special class was designed by an essentially physical perspective, embodied in the architecture of the school building, and in its internal divisions and subdivisions. Far from the idea of producing, as much as being a product of a new form of culture, this class would constitute and incorporate the multiple meanings produced in this same place when related to other places.

One of the key elements in the configuration of the school culture of a particular educational institution, along with the distribution and uses of time, discourses and the conversational and communication technologies used in it, is the distribution and the uses of space, in other words, the dual configuration of the latter as a place and as a territory. (Viñao Frago, 2005, p. 17).

The space constructed in and by the school serves to shape the individuals who are part of this social interplay, i.e. these individuals are the results of the spaces they inhabit. In the new school form established by the special classes, the prospect of delimitation of the space of action of the disabled was outlined, making undeniable the designation of marginal places for those people who were also considered as marginal and deviant.

Special education thus continued to try to consolidate educational projects that would provide so-called “disabled students” the benefit of education in regular schools.

One form of this project was published in the *National Curriculum Parameters, Curriculum Adaptations* (1999), which operated with the idea of difficulty in the establishment of the curriculum concept, considering the different angles involved. It identified this project as being central for schools, since it was linked to the very identity of the school institution, to its organization and functioning and to the role it played, or should play, based on the aspirations and expectations of the society and culture in which it was inserted.

As for time, this document affirmed that it should be organized considering the student support services and respect for the particular rhythm of learning and performance of each one (*idem*, p. 42). The spaces were preferably those of support services, notably the common classroom and resource rooms.

The common classrooms were spaces considered as regular *teachinglearning* environments, in which were also matriculated, in a process of instructional integration, students with disabilities who were able to follow and exercise the planned curricular activities of regular education at the same pace as so-called normal students. In this sense, they constituted their own social space, ordered in a dual dimension. Institutionally, by a set of norms and rules that sought to unify and delimit the action of their subjects; and on a daily basis, by a complex network of social relations among the subjects involved.

In reference to the common rooms, time within them appeared to be divided into hourly units related to the teaching of different fields of knowledge and to recess. The structure of hourly units established changes in the school management system because with teachers facing an external organization time was identified as a determining factor in the teaching and learning process and it wound up formulating types of activities whose structure involved learning strategies based on the results.

The resource rooms were specialized pedagogical support services, led by a specialist teacher, which complemented the educational service provided in the regular teaching. To be admitted, the student should be enrolled in a regular classroom in elementary school from the 1st to 9th grades, and would receive care according to their needs and could be attended 2 to 4 times a week, not exceeding two hours a day.

School time seemed to be conditioned by a simplistic and, at the same time, complex interpretation. It was simplistic in the sense that time was converted into an indicator of a capacity with a broader range of results, considering a more accurate coverage of the students' needs. It was complex because the activities would wind up contextualizing time, as the material instrument of the students' learning.

Time, therefore, not only establishes the socialization of the individuals, but also represents an order that is experienced and is learned in school. [...] The routine, ritualistic and exhausting use of social time standardized at school to form capable, rational, and industrious men does not lead us to believe that the school effectively does not only want to shape cognitive dimensions, but to organize and systematize into experiential times behaviors, and temporal and corporal relations of the practical life of children and youth. It is proposed to organize and manage time, more than to transmit knowledge. (Correia, 1996, p. 56-57).

This was certainly the rationalized order that shaped the marks of a particular form of treating disability, that is, disability in relation to a “form of school”. Thus, the resource room would produce a clash of cultures, by imposing its model on the schooling model, that is:

a closed and totally ordered space for the accomplishment of each of its duties, in a time so carefully regimented that no place is left for an unexpected movement, each submits their activity to the ‘principles’ or ‘rules’ that govern it.” (Vincent, 1994, p. 14).

The educational spaces are constructed of meanings that can transmit values, they can impose its laws and the school architecture is “a silent way of teaching”, which can also be seen as an integral part of an economy of time. Meanwhile, to undertake the education of the disabled, school times were hierarchized by the need to maintain order, but this instituted time may not be experienced passively by the students.

It is noteworthy that the study of the curriculum documents allowed us to map a subtle and silent process of creating what we call a new pedagogy of time and space, that became a mediator of curricular practices.

FINAL NOTES

Defining and describing the foundations, areas and procedures of the comparative study, as exercises in writing a particular curricular history, allowed us to overcome the almost always visible dichotomies between the method and “the idea of practicing it” in a very specific context such as curriculum documents.

The “economy” of this definition and description of the comparative study, by referring them to the condition of a methodological system, by virtue of our proposal, consists in its power to “make and unmake the causalities” and to “express a practical relation of objective limits”. This relation is inscribed in the historical and educational observation of the effects of language and communication on the production of the discourses in the “market” of curriculum documents, which operates with certain specificities, the selection and distribution of knowledge.

Taking the spaces and the times as areas for comparison, the investigative procedures revealed that they are constructions in which there is no neutrality, but places that represent symbols, signs and marks of these relationships, that is, a part

of the educational dynamic. The spaces and the times, established and delimited by the curriculum documents, permeated by discipline and order, seem to define other ways to conceive of disability and difference in and of the educational process.

Finally, the curriculum documents, conductors of the process of writing curriculum history by means of comparative studies, seem to have been conceived only as guides, supervisors of the work of teaching, often underemphasizing the debate of “why to do” by virtue of the appreciation of “how to do”. However, they profess the idea of progress and they are intended to be innovators and founders of a new logic of school organization and of access to school knowledge.

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