

WE ARE NOT THE SAME AND WE DO NOT LIVE LIKE OUR PARENTS

NÃO SOMOS OS MESMOS E NÃO VIVEMOS COMO NOSSOS PAIS

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to try to understand, through a personal narrative, our own education, and how those experiences influenced our teaching practice, by trying to understand the pedagogy that has shaped us. To this end, we presented a case study of doctoral student in a course entitled Brazilian Education: theoretical and methodological foundations at a private university in Southern Brazil. In the light of Braga (2019), Silva (2017) and Freire (2000), we concluded that her professional training was technical. Consequently, she became a teacher of higher education strongly influenced by banking education, against which she likes to think she is fighting against (Freire, 2000). We concluded that we cannot claim ignorance of the facts that make us up, we cannot deny the contradictions or the correlation of forces of our feelings and values. We need to go beyond, to try to recognize that they exist, to know them, to understand them, so that we can overcome them, or at least try to do so (Morin, 1999).

Keywords: education; pedagogy; teacher education; transformations in education.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste artigo é tentar compreender, através de uma narrativa pessoal, a nossa própria formação e como essas experiências influenciaram a nossa prática docente, procurando compreender a pedagogia que nos moldou. Para tanto, apresentamos um estudo de caso de uma doutoranda em um curso intitulado Educação Brasileira: fundamentos teóricos e metodológicos em uma universidade privada do Sul do Brasil. À luz de Braga (2019), Silva (2017) e Freire (2000), concluímos que sua formação profissional foi técnica. Consequentemente, tornou-se professora do

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ensino superior fortemente influenciada pelo ensino bancário, contra o qual gosta de pensar que luta (Freire, 2000). Concluimos que não podemos alegar desconhecimento dos fatos que nos compõem, não podemos negar as contradições ou a correlação de forças de nossos sentimentos e valores. Precisamos ir além, tentar reconhecer que eles existem, conhecê-los, compreendê-los, para que possamos superá-los, ou pelo menos tentar fazê-lo (Morin, 1999).

Palavras-chave: educação; pedagogia; formação de professores; transformações na educação.

THE TASK AND THE UNREST

*My pain is realizing
That although we have
Done everything we did
We are still the same
And we live
We are still the same
And we live like our parents
(Belchior, 1976)*

This paper analyzes the impact of an academic writing activity in the Ph.D. program in Education, in Brazil. The objective of the activity was to write a paper linking the readings of the course, proposed by the professor, and our journey as teachers. It is important to emphasize that the program accepts students from a diverse array of fields of knowledge and, for this very reason, for many students, the course represents an introduction to Brazilian Education studies.

In other words, the course offers a holistic view of topics concerning Brazilian Education and historically contextualizes, with a clear, concise and objective definition, different periods of Brazilian Education, which is no easy enterprise for students coming from fields that are not teaching related. Thus, as a student in the course, I could not help but question, which pedagogy influenced me. Why had I opted for the Ph.D. program in Education? What was I doing there? Why does a teacher at the end of her career know so little about Brazilian Education? Feeling ashamed, I dwelt on the list of suggested readings and took a retrospective tour of my education to answer those concerns. I used the “self-narrative” tool (Passeggi et al., 2013) to reflect on my upbringing and education while bearing in mind that everything we experience forms and transforms us. From now on, the text will go on in the first person singular, because it is a narrative of the self, myself.

The self-narratives as a methodology enable the recovery of memories, comprise procedures of a process that promotes an encounter "with oneself," and that seeks to unveil "how I became what I am" and "how I have the ideas [that] I have" (Josso, 1988, p. 41). That means one needs to analyze and reflect on their experiences and the relationships established with other subjects throughout their lives to create memory references.

To speak of memory references is to say they are symbolic of what the author understands as constitutive elements of their formation. Remembrance-reference or memory reference means, at the same time, a concrete or visible dimension, which appeals to our perceptions or social images, and an invisible dimension, which appeals to emotions, feelings, meaning, or values. The memory reference can be qualified as a formative experience. That is because expertise and knowledge serve either as a reference to numerous situations or as a unique and decisive existential event in life. These are experiences we can use as an illustration in a story to describe a transformation, a state of affairs, an affective complex or a situation, and an event. Moreover, this story presents us to others in sociocultural ways and representations; they are different ways of talking about oneself, their identity, and their subjectivity.

Thus, I consider this a vibrant, formative, and awareness-raising process, especially as it highlights voices, emotions, experiences, and representations that, when shared, contribute to a better understanding of the ways of being and being in the profession.

My purpose is to point out how I realized the pedagogical ideas that comprise me. I intend to maintain a dialogue with Silva (2017) and Braga (2019), on the lines defended in their thesis, when they stated that the colonization and settlement of my country have always been part of a specific plan. A worldwide plan to organize the world after the Second World Wide (WWII). Since its settlement, Brazil has been a dependent economy, following its metropolis's guidelines and full filling their needs. After WWII, the country followed the flight plan of the North eagle, the United States of America.

I emphasize that there are limits regarding the extent and depth on my part for executing the task that I am proposing. However, I elect the present time as a point of reference to think of the past, as Soares (2001, p.57) states: "I seek myself in the past and I see myself as others; I do not meet *who I was*, I meet someone who is being rebuilt by who I am, as the mark of the present." This reflexive 'me' was present throughout the course, and I think that it will not depart because I firmly believe that we, as teachers, whenever we are in our classrooms, are never the same as our predecessors and instructors; we are different every day, every class...therefore, we can be the difference we believe needed in Education.

As mentioned in the title, I believe we are *not* the same and do not live like our parents. Different from what is in the chorus of a famous Brazilian song from the

dictatorship times, written in 1976 by the Brazilian singer-songwriter Belchior (1946-2017) and recorded by the renowned singer Elis Regina. This song expresses the loss of love and faith by the young people tortured by the military in the country. Times when the red-covered books were burnt in squares and schools because the military taught they were communist propaganda. What a shame! After much suffering, people believed they should be good citizens like their parents, love their country, and serve the military without question. Nevertheless, music has its way of life, and the message was taken in another way: resistance. That is why I chose to use a pun in the title of my paper.

EVERYTHING WE LIVE THROUGH TRANSFORMS US

*I don't wanna tell you, my great love
About the things I learned from records
I wanna tell you how I lived
And everything that happened to me
Living is better than dreaming
I know love is a good thing
But I also know that any corner is smaller than life for anyone
(Belchior, 1976)*

Being the firstborn in a family of four children, in 1965, my parents had high expectations about my upbringing. My father was the fourth child in a family of nine children, and he was the only one not working in the car industry because he was a topographer. My mother, the fourth child in a large family, never finished elementary school because she was taken out of school at nine so she could babysit her newborn niece. For those reasons, I was a first-generation college student, born in Taubaté, São Paulo, in the southeast of Brazil.

My parents got married on the very day of the 1964 military coup, and by December 1969, they had already had four children. As a result, they experienced the military dictatorship in a region that was very politically active at the time because it was the industrial area and the economic center of decisions for the country once all the international corporation headquarters were there. Braga (2019) exposes in detail how the business-military dictatorship was implemented without great difficulty in the country since it placed itself under the aegis of control of the inflationary process of the time and the acceleration in the rhythm of national economic development. Implemented with the aid of a robust repressive state apparatus, which silenced resistance movements, it put in place a policy of wage suppression and guaranteed

that workers remained a social class that was "depoliticized, controlled, and subordinated to their employers and the military apparatus, so that it was more productive and easily super-exploited by capital" (BRAGA, 2019, p. 90). This contextualization is necessary to bring light to our points of view.

The second point is that none of my parents got into college but always ensured their children did so, education was vital for both of them. Perhaps we should bring up that they lived, as parents, the education reform of both elementary and high school levels via Act 5692/71, a Brazilian law that implemented mandatory schooling for all Brazilian children from elementary to high school. In addition, it is essential to highlight that the proposals of this Act were nothing but a strategy by the Brazilian government to soothe several sectors of a society in crisis. Regarding elementary schools, we, the children, were attending at the time, the Act provided the extension of school time and increased vacancies, which meant, at first sight, the possibility of inclusion of lower classes into schools. High schools, on the other hand, shifted their emphasis to professional education, which created an expectation that professional training would guarantee the possibility of getting good jobs and income in a country that was going through the so-called economic miracle in South America. In other words, it was a time of high economic growth during the Brazilian military dictatorship between 1969 and 1973.

In 1972, I started my formal education, so I can say that I initiated school education at a moment when technicist pedagogy emerged. According to Tezgiden (2016)

technicist teacher education programs aim to educate teachers as passive technicians, who transmit knowledge produced by experts, neither questioning its underlying purpose, validity, or reliability nor assessing the situation of their school context. The notion of passive technician teachers originates from the writings of American sociologist Donald A. Schön (1987), who criticized the traditional teacher education model as "technical rationality." (TEZGIDEN, 2016, p.122)

As mentioned by Braga (2017), from the 1940s, when professional education became official, until the 1970s, when technicist thought was consolidated in Brazil via the education legislation, the specter of Communism and the countries in South America did not escape the "red scare." (BRAGA, 2017, p.37)

When I was five years old, my parents moved to Bolivia, where we witnessed the *Coup d'État* by General Hugo Banzer. Even though the situation was politically unstable in that country, my father held a high position in an engineering company, so we remained there for around two to three years under the protection of the Bolivian army. Yes, the Bolivian army.

Meanwhile, here in Brazil, my uncles, who worked in factories in the Paraíba River valley, in the state of São Paulo, joined the ranks of strikers and my grandparents took donations to parishes, strengthening solidarity networks of social movements. When we returned to the country, we never lived in the state of São Paulo again. My father held positions of trust in engineering companies in charge of constructing hydroelectric plants, and we moved practically every year. My mother, who did not have a profession, followed with the offspring. In other words, we attended a school wherever possible, usually in settlement areas built around hydroelectric plants; these schools were privately run schools that won public bids to run branches on the construction site, paid by the government, and the students did not pay tuition.

There was a misleading sense of equality in that school environment, for there was only one school for all the employees' children. However, inequality was present in terms of school supplies, shoes, language, and especially the cultural repertoire of the students since children of the management staff could travel during vacation, visit museums, and were acquainted with different realities. However, children of construction workers seldom had such experiences. Since my parents were from humble origins, I could play with all my classmates and bring them to our house whenever I felt like it, but this was not the rule; children of engineers played with children of physicians. Children of domestic workers played with children of construction workers and drivers. Thus, the conservation of the establishment was guaranteed.

When I took the course on Brazilian Education, I was continuously facing the fact that my parents' families had grown apart from us because they and their families had been on opposite sides in that historical moment of the 1970s. My grandparents and uncles belonged to the working class, while my parents had bourgeois aspirations, even though they let me play and study with whomever I wanted. My parents followed the flight plan laid by the "eagle in the North," the United States of America (SILVA, 2017), while the rest of the family tried to resist, like the South American condor.

Silva (2017) states that the Brazilian bourgeoisie from that time "saw in compulsory professional education in high school a mechanism that guaranteed their exclusivity in the access to university" while lower classes "saw the increase in registrations and the chance of quality education for the job market as a possibility of social ascension" (Silva, 2017, p.210). Little by little, I understood the reasons that led my parents to give so much importance to education. Life went on, and when I got into high school, we were already living in the state's capital, so my siblings and I attended a "good high school" and therefore entered a public university. Public universities, at that time, were free of charge, held the most qualified staff, and offered the possibility of developing research of almost all sorts. The prestige attached to them was enormous, and any parent should be proud of a kid attending one.

I finished high school with training in Clinical Pathology because I was a girl, and the Franciscan Order high school I was attending did not allow me to study Electronics, which was my wish, because I would be the only girl there. Of course, that was not appropriate for that school, and my parents simply complied with the guidance of the principal, a Franciscan friar. I was furious; I was the first student from that school that did not enroll in entrance exams for Law School, Medical School, or one of the Engineering courses. I was the black sheep; the school administrators held several meetings with my parents to try to change my mindset toward attending a Human Sciences undergraduate course that was not Law School. It did not work!

That is how I became the first person in my family to enter university. In this case, much to my parent's chagrin, I enrolled in History, and the year was 1983, the first year after the military dictatorship was over. When I started attending a public university, I had a reality check and felt very confused. My classmates were much older than I was, some of them had relatives whom the military government had arrested, and they mentioned names that I had never heard before: Marx, Engels, Foucault, Arendt, Levy-Strauss, Gramsci. At the most, I only knew who Socrates, Plato, Balzac, Shakespeare, Poe, Machado de Assis, and José de Alencar were. For the first time, I questioned my upbringing and education. According to one of my professors, I was an excellent student, whatever that meant to him. I earned third place in the fearsome entry exam at the state's federal university and understood almost nothing in the Brazilian History classes. How was that possible? How could I be a good student? I did not have much difficulty in Philosophy and Anthropology classes because I was used to reading some classical works; I slowly concluded that I had entered a course that would teach me to problematize reality, see the contradictions, and feel the paradoxes; it was very enriching. For my surprise, I heard reports about Brazil that was foreign to me until then. I started being closer to my relatives, especially my dad's parents. How could they have been so open-minded, so brave, and so generous?

It was not easy because we were living in the 1980s, and, even though I was already in college, my world was a bubble, I had always been protected from any harm, and I scarcely understood the details of my older classmates. They were concerned with the dilemmas involving the production of scientific knowledge and the relationship between science, education, and society. According to Braga (2019), this was the reorganization period of the struggle to defend public education. It was a period of effervescence, but I did not understand it very well because I was the perfect example of the ideal student for the traditional paradigm. Thanks to the technicist pedagogy, I could not question or argue just repeat formulas and ideas.

Finally, I started reading about the horrors the military dictatorship committed against students and militants. I spent hours in the university library trying to understand the motives for which artists, educators, philosophers, sociologists, and

clergy members were exiled. Then an inveterate questioner started to take over me, displeasing my parents and friends from adolescence in every single way, listening to punk rock, shaving my hair, and dating the underdogs. However, my professors seemed very pleased with my changes and encouraged me to read, even more, ask more questions, write more often, and speak up my mind in class. I entered university thinking I would be an archivist and decided to be a teacher; I took both my bachelor's and graduate degrees concurrently. My professors had a lot to do with that change in plans. The white middle-class gifted student chose to be a teacher. How come? What was my problem? Low salaries, long working hours, and little social prestige. There and then began my professional career and my passion for teaching began.

The third and last detail, which is by no means little, is that my parents raised their three daughters and their only son in a manner that was very eccentric for those times. There was no difference in gender treatment at home. Because they always valued education, we all had the same opportunities for academic development and were encouraged to seek our personal and professional achievement, sometimes with a specific resistance but without extremism.

I became a teacher with a bachelor's degree in History, then a professor of English and English Literature. I have been in classrooms for over three decades, and I truly believe that little has changed since my time in high school. In agreement with Silva (2017), I can tell that, in Brazil,

schooling was used as a convincing resource in favor of imperialism. Adopting capitalism as an ideology for the education of South-American youth integrated the hegemony project by foreign powers. In Brazil, which is the focus of this research, professional training in high schools followed the same guidance. In this framework, schooling was used as a convincing resource in favor of imperialism. (SILVA, 2017, p.21)

Perhaps this is why we can still perceive a significant fragmentation in knowledge, a lack of flexibility of curricula in universities, a meritocracy that is present in school environments and guidance to teach students to answer questions and not formulate them. Is this our role as educators? I hope not!

Morin (1999) recalls and agrees with Marx when he asked *who would educate the educators?* in addition, replies to that question saying that educators need to educate themselves, because that is the only way to change the traditional paradigm and offer a change in thinking. The author believes that the change has to start within the teachers and professors; and I second that.

WE ARE NOT THE SAME AND WE DON NOT LIVE LIKE OUR PARENTS

*Your lip and your voice
Ask me about my passion
I say I am delighted
Like a new invention
I will stay in this city
I will not go back to the wilderness
Cause I see it coming in the wind
The smell of the new season
(Belchior, 1976)*

When seeking to understand my upbringing, which most certainly influences my teaching practice, I tried to understand which pedagogy influenced me. Why did I choose a doctorate in Education when my master's had been in Linguistics? What was I doing there? I started the course feeling quite embarrassed for a teacher at the end of her career, but I underwent a reflection on my family origins and revisited some notations in my notebook, and suggested readings in the discipline.

In this narrative process about myself, I noticed some of my ideological beliefs and recognized them as constituents of my worldview, thus feeling less embarrassed and valuing my life history beyond the professional realm (Volochinov, 2011). Because as Morin (1999) stated, educators need to educate themselves, that would be the only way to start implementing changes in the actual educational system. I tried to do that kind of reflexive exercise aiming to critically think about my education and try to make changes for a less fragmented teaching.

Las but not least, I concluded that my formal education was technical, and thus I became a university professor with a DNA strongly marked by the “banking education,” against which I like to think I am fighting. Freire coined this concept of banking education in his work entitled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in 1974, referring to students as “receptors” and teachers as “depositors” of information. Similarly to a financial transaction performed at a bank, depositing and withdrawing money. He believed it was a way to hinder the intellectual growth of students (Freire, 2000, p.73). Of course, it suited the military dictatorship and the historical moment the country lived at that period. However, can we do something different? Why do I have the bittersweet taste that very little has changed? How can teachers do things differently from the way they learned?

For me, an excellent way to teach students to formulate hypotheses, ask questions and problematize the contents. How can we do it? I try to promote creativity and establish a friendly class atmosphere where they can speak their minds and share their personal opinions. That is important because I believe that learning will only

occur if it is meaningful to the learner, and it will only be meaningful if it connects the content and the learner in an authentic experience.

We are not the same and do not live as our parents, as simple as that! We live in a world with plenty of devices, different jobs, different countries, different people, and different values, just to mention a few differences. Our parents could not anticipate the information overload we face. Therefore, from my point of view, it is not acceptable to have teachers only repeating old recipes, not trying new tools, and new ways of approaching their contents. The wind of changes has blown. Covid-19 has challenged us to think outside the box and do the best for our students. Let us face the challenge for the last time. Let us bring our students closer to us, showing them that, on the one hand, we have a lot to learn from and with them in terms of digital literacy, social media and media literacy.

On the other hand, we have our life experience and professional expertise to offer them in return. In the end, in collaborative work, we can provide less conservative ways of teaching and learning to future generations. Maybe, the generations to come will be able to ask better questions to make the world a better place for all.

Today, we cannot claim ignorance about the facts that constitute us or deny the contradictions and the correlation of forces of our feelings and values, but we need to go further. We need to recognize that they exist, to know them, understand them, be able to overcome them, or, at least, try to do so. Belchior (1976) mentioned, "It is you who love the past, and you do not see that the new always comes."

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