

Paulo Freire's conception of education for the working class - social and pedagogical intervention from the public school

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Abstract

The central issue that guides the text is based on the thesis that Paulo Freire's conception of education brings together principles and practices of an education directed toward the working class that is inside and outside the school and gives him the conditions to carry out social and pedagogy in reality. It retakes the central categories of the conception of education of Paulo Freire and brings new discussions on the contribution of the Freirean work to the Infantile Education, Information and Communication Technologies and for the construction of the popular public school supported in pedagogical practices that allow the social and pedagogical intervention. It includes bibliographical revision and already allows to conclude by the current conception of education of Paulo Freire and its pertinence for the accomplishment of social and pedagogical interventions to face the current issues that cross the basic and higher education as a whole, in view of the current dispute around an Emancipating Human Formation.

Keywords: Paulo Freire. Education. Socio-pedagogical intervention. Emancipating Human Formation.

1 Introduction

Paulo Freire's conception of education, among other central categories, has, as far as concerns the human being, its freedom and emancipation as objectives. In its proposal, in order to concretize this education, presents the dialogicity and the contextualization as strategies from the generating themes, but mainly the transformation of reality, the change as the result. In this sense, its conception of education brings the proposal of pedagogical and social intervention, because it results from a formative and social process, it aggregates values, principles and strategies of action with a view to guaranteeing human and social rights, as well as justice and humanization.

Thus, the central question that guides the text is based on the thesis that Paulo Freire's conception of education brings together principles and practices of a working class education that is inside and outside the school and contains elements that allow the construction of social and pedagogical interventions. The text is structured around two axes, the first places the concepts of intervention, social intervention and pedagogy and the second presents the central categories of Paulo Freire's conception of education that guide social and pedagogical intervention.

It includes bibliographical review and already allows to conclude, from Paulo Freire's current conception of education and its pertinence for the accomplishment of social and pedagogical interventions, to face the current issues that cross the basic and higher education as a whole in the view of the current dispute around an Emancipating Human Formation.

2 Social and Pedagogical Intervention - understanding its senses

Initially it is necessary to point what is meant by Intervention, Social Intervention and Pedagogical Intervention. For this, we take as a reference the discussion on social and professional intervention in the field of Social Work and the discussion on Pedagogical Intervention in the field of Pedagogy. Regarding the intervention, for Pereira (2012, p.2):

It is a process in which a system-intervener (person, group, organization, community or social network) is assumed as a social resource of the client system (person, group, organization, community or social network), interacting through a communications system with a view to helping it meet a set of social needs, stimulating stimuli and combating obstacles to the desired change.

All professionals who have a system-intervener practice and an initial and continuous training, appropriate to the type of intervention, such as psychologists, anthropologists, social workers, pedagogues, are in the field of professionals who perform social interventions.

Regarding conceptions of social intervention, Pereira (2012, p.3) presents two conceptions of social intervention, a conservative, assistentialist, that aims to “respond to subsistence needs (*physiological*-food, health, shelter and *safety* - work, clothing, education) and a progressive one that aims to “respond to the needs of participation (promotion of citizenship, creation of conditions so that each person can participate in the process of development and democratization of the society in which he/she lives)”.

Regarding pedagogical intervention, this consists of a set of actions to heal, solve some pedagogical difficulty, especially those related to the teaching-learning process. The term socio-pedagogical intervention therefore comprises a pedagogical intervention with a social dimension in a transformative and emancipatory or progressive perspective, as defined by Pereira (2012). In this sense, it is considered that the categories present in Paulo Freire’s work bring the perspective of sociopedagogic intervention, since at the same time it transforms, promotes the change of pedagogy, gives it a social, emancipatory meaning and can make the human being also transform him/herself and transform his/her reality.

As for the professional intervention, Mito and Nogueira (2013, p.64), analyzing social policy and Social Work and the challenges that this relationship presents for professional intervention, say that: “Professional intervention turns to the implementation of national policies” and that “A specificity given by its object of professional intervention are the expressions of the social question” (IAMAMOTO, 2003), with actions focusing on the articulation of the necessary resources to enable the social protection of single individuals or groups of subjects, users of different sectoral policies (MIOTO, NOGUEIRA, 2013, p.68).

Thus, for the social worker, all his/her professional activity is oriented around and for the purpose of the social protection of the subjects, that is, for these professionals, social intervention is inherent in their profession.

It is considered, therefore, that social and pedagogical intervention are categories and actions that should guide all professions, but for the pedagogue, the social worker and the psychologist, for

example, by the character of their professional activity, these are placed as important and fundamental elements to the promotion of social protection and citizen education and emancipation. In this sense, the work of Paulo Freire brings categories and concepts that analyze and contribute to the pedagogical and social action in this perspective. Here are some of these categories.

3 The central categories in Paulo Freire's conception of education and its contribution to social and pedagogical intervention

This part of the text discusses Paulo Freire's conception of education and its contribution to social and pedagogical intervention from the central categories Humanization, Emancipation, Awareness, Dialogicity and Transformation, resuming the discussion already held in Quaresma (2012) and it presents the discussion in Barros and Choti (2014) on the relevance of the Freirean categories to the regular school, Information and Communication Technologies; the pertinence of the Freirean work for the construction of the popular public school and discussion about the convergence of the Freirean work with the applied philosophy.

Regarding the Humanization, according to Freire (2005) human beings seek it through the conquest of their social and human rights. The search for this humanization occurs in the struggles for justice and freedom, for example.

The humanizing process also includes commitment and responsibility to the other as a person, professional and citizen, that is, it is a humanization of the self for oneself and for the other. But for the humanization the human being needs to get rid of all forms of oppression and seek his emancipation. And in this sense, Freire discusses in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* work all forms and relations of oppression, as well as he says that the oppressed in a certain relationship ends up being the oppressor in another, needing him to recognize himself as the oppressor to get rid of this condition, releasing him/herself and assisting in the process of liberating the other.

Thus, emancipation is fundamental for humanization, because from it the human being frees himself from oppression and starts to self-manage, to be the subject of his life, to put him/herself in the world by him/herself and for him/herself.

But to seek humanization and emancipation one must be aware of the problems and contradictions of reality. This awareness is not acquired passively, but from knowledge, understanding, analysis and critical reflection of reality. It is from this path that conditions are created to intervene and transform reality. Dialogic education appears as a strategy to overcome banking education and promote awareness.

For Freire (2005, p. 91), "If it is saying the word with which, "pronouncing" the world, men are transformed, dialogue imposes itself as a way by which men gain meaning as men". Thus, the dialogue is made by the exchange of ideas; by disagreement and agreement; by the questions, by the debate and free position of ideas, without the hierarchy interfering in the right to take a stand and/or disagree; by convergence and divergence, but mainly by the respect for the other, that even thinking differently, has the right to think, even different from me. Here it is important to bring a discussion about the convergence that Romão (2000) makes between Paulo Freire and Edgar Morin, as far as dialogicity is concerned, that is, they both consider that the human being is, dialectically, unity in diversity, "[. ...] insofar as the unique identity of the human species, given by culture, can not erase the multiplicity of cultures" (ROMÃO, 2000, p.33) and Freire's dialogical rationality and Morin's idea of a "provisory science", "undecidable" (ROMÃO, 2000) is put in. The purpose is to overcome

the science of the absolute and question the science itself. Therefore, the teaching practice is not “just teaching the contents, but also teaching the right way of thinking”.

Regarding transformation, “for Freire, man is a *being-in-situation*, a being of labor and transformation of the world, of praxis, of action and of reflection, therefore, can not be understood outside his relations with the world, with life, with work” (QUARESMA, 2012, p.190). Transforming through work, acting in a reality are, therefore, processes of intervention.

In this process, education contributes if it makes possible the awareness of social problems, injustices, society’s oppression mechanisms, as well as the acquisition of instruments that allow the transformation of this reality. In this way, Paulo Freire’s conception of education brings in itself possibilities of intervention in the reality.

It is important to emphasize that these categories Humanization, Emancipation, Awareness, Dialogicity and Transformation understand Freire’s conception of education as means and ends, that is, they need to happen in the formative process to be constituted as a greater purpose of education and more, the educator and the student have to experience these categories to make and have real, concrete meaning.

As regards the relevance of the Freirean categories to the regular school and the Information and Communication Technologies, we first read Maciel (2011) apud Quaresma (2012), which says that Freire’s conception of education is a proposal of education for the working class as a whole, in addition to a popular conception of education, is a conception of education that says about the need for an education for the class that sells its workforce in the city and in the countryside, which has and does not have access to school. The question posed in QUARESMA (2012) includes an analysis that there is, by some theorists in Brazil, a posture of summarizing Paulo Freire’s conception of education in popular education, disregarding its contribution to regular education in general.

In this sense, Barros and Choti (2014) bring, in the collection organized by them, “*Opening Paths to a Transformative Education - essays in Social Education, Applied Philosophy and New Technologies*”, several articles by authors from Brazil, Spain and Portugal, in which a common point is the pedagogical and social thought of Paulo Freire and his contribution to the construction of a popular public school from early childhood education to higher education, bringing also an analysis of ICT, based on Freire’s work, as well as inter and transdisciplinarity.

Regarding the relevance of the Freirean work to the popular public school according to Scocuglia (2014: 95), “the practical-theoretical proposals of Paulo Freire can contribute to the construction of a popular public school in the sense of interests, demands and desires of its educators and students protagonists”. Thus, from what this theorist says, it is affirmed that as practical-theoretical, the proposals of Paulo Freire have a character of social and pedagogical intervention, since it says of an education that contains in itself, besides the central categories of the Freirean work, already presented above, commitment to the working class as a whole. In this sense, Scocuglia (2014, p.98) also says:

We defend the idea that Paulo Freire’s praxis, his legacy and the multiple connections of his political-pedagogical thinking can contribute a lot to a

public school practiced as a space conducive to the development of everyday values, culture and emancipatory needs of the popular strata. And, in this sense, build a counter-hegemony based on their civil, social and political rights. A school where children, young people and adults feel that they belong to and “own” them, and that they devote and prepare themselves to receive them as they are (with their respective identities of protagonists in their history and in the history of the world) and not how the school would like them to be.

It can be seen, in the quotation above, that in addition to contributing to the construction of a public school focused on the emancipatory needs of the popular strata, Freirean praxis can also contribute to the construction of counter-hegemony, that is, both processes require pedagogical intervention and, in this emancipatory perspective, adds the social dimension by bringing civil, social and political rights within themselves. Therefore, it is considered that the conception of Freirean education as praxis includes the perspective of social and pedagogical intervention for the school as a whole.

It is therefore understandable the attack to the work and the title of patron of Brazilian education by sectors of society that disagree with the possibility of an education that contributes to the political formation of the working class and aims at its emancipation. On the other hand, there are those who understand, respect and spread his work.

Another analysis on the dimension of the Freirean praxis in relation to pedagogical and social intervention is the discussion of Rastrojo (2014) on convergences between emancipating Freirianism and the analytical-argumentative orientations of Applied Philosophy.

Initially, Rastrojo (2014, p.150-151) says that Applied Philosophy comprises reflective practices that allow a graduate in philosophy to guide a person or a group of people around two purposes, the first would be “[...] the acquisition of tools for personal autonomy and for making vital decisions (or improving ones) [...]”, and the second “[...] the attainment of an ontological maturation that will dissolve certain circumstances, that can be lived problematically”. It presents the definition of the discipline, quoting Barrientos (2010 b, p.158; 2011b, 111; 2013b), that would be:

Process of conceptualization and/or clarification (unveiling) about relevant issues (meaningful and/or essential) for the consultant whose objective is to improve the acts of thinking of the person (of the action of thinking at the moment in which one is thinking) and/or debugging of their real content (contents materialized in the sessions) and whose result usually is the well-being (improvement of the person’s life, increased criticality with respect to ideologies, deepening in his life, etc.) (Barrientos 2010b : 158; 2011b: 111; 2013b) (RASTROJO, 2014, p.151).

In this way, he says that any reader of Paulo Freire will be able to distinguish between his theory and Applied Philosophy, because “both are designed as educational activities that fight against the ideological imposition of the powerful through the unveiling of the arguments with which it is sanctioned the direction of the actions of the masses” (RASTROJO, 2014, p.153).

The convergences pointed out by Rastrojo (2014) between Applied Philosophy and Freire bring two aspects which he identifies by I and II. In convergence I, he presents the objectives that are of individual emancipation to Social Democracy, that is, for him the central categories in Freire's work, such as "insertion and emersion", "consciousness", "change", "new man", "reading the world", discussed in works such as "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" and "Education and Change", deal with individual emancipation in contribution to social democracy. In convergence II, he presents techniques and methodologies, method and amethodology. It begins by bringing the following dialogue between Paulo Freire and António Faúndez:

The method for you is a set of principles that have to be continually recreated, to the extent that the other and always different reality requires that these principles be read in a different way. And enriched in a different way (António Faúndez) - I completely agree with this (Paulo Freire) (Freire and Faúndez, 1985: 39 apud RASTROJO, 2014, p.171).

For Rastrojo (2014), Freire proposes for his critical work the re-creation and constant adaptation of the methodology to the circumstances of each cultural geography. In this sense, a methodological, pedagogical and philosophical principle is to pay attention to the importance of the specific contexts of the environments and subjects, as Freire points out in *Cadernos de Cultura* (Culture Notebooks).

Another aspect of the Freirean methodology highlighted by Rastrojo (2014, p. 183) is the dialogue, which, as he says, is the basis for the development of dialectic education aimed at liberation. In the convergence he makes between the dialogue in Freire and in Applied Philosophy and citing other authors, he says the following:

Returning to Garcia Manzano, Rivas and Domingo, the characterization of the dialogue they propose is close to that of Freire when they point out among their singularities the openness (García Manzano, Rivas and Domingo, 2005: 24), freedom (ib. *ibid.* : 2005: 25), humility, respect and cordiality (*ibid.*:2005:27), acceptance, empathy, coherence and authenticity (*ibid.*, 2005: 28).

The questions above raised by Rastrojo (2014) concerning the relations between the Freirean work and the Applied Philosophy refer to convergences that seek the individual autonomy of a free and emancipated being for the construction of a society that is also free, emancipated.

Regarding the discussion about the contribution of the Freirean work to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Choti (2014, p.210) says that when thinking about this topic a question was asked: "How would Paulo Freire react to so many changes taking place in schools nowadays, both socially and through the growing use of information and communication technologies (and which is no longer possible to deny)? "And he completes that he found the answer partially in the quotation that follows:

It will not be, however, with this school not linked with life, centered on the word, that it is highly rich, but on the word "miraculously" emptied of the reality it should represent, poor of activities in which the learner gains experiences of making, that we'll give Brazilians or we will develop in them

the criticality of their conscience, indispensable to our democratization (FREIRE, 1959, p.102 apud CHOTI, 2014, p.210).

For Choti (2014, p.211), this quote showed him “the broad vision and healthy curiosity that Paulo Freire had [...]” and he challenged him to discuss ICT,

[...] considering the increasing globalization and a society where communication and information are constantly accelerating and innovating, it is necessary to reflect on the work of the school for an organizational responsibility and the work of the teacher and the student as “actors” of the learning process, attempt to rescue the improvement of values and attitudes, the ability to seek and use with competence the information of their daily life and the commitment to citizenship.

That is, Choti (2014) sees in Paulo Freire a posture that integrates into the formative process what reality poses as a problem, solution or news. Thus, he shares the idea that if Paulo Freire was alive, he would certainly establish dialogues with ICT and defend the idea of an emancipatory appropriation of the resources that it offers.

Thus, for Scocuglia (2014), the categories dialogue, democratic management, awareness, educators’ re-education, problem-raising education, question pedagogy, experience knowledge, generating themes, pedagogical directivity, collective work as a principle, respect for (cultural) rights of the popular classes to knowledge are ways and strategies for social and pedagogical intervention, in view of the construction of the popular public school; Rastrojo (2014) also presents the dialogue, the question, the decoding as strategies from the Applied Philosophy for the intervention; Choti (2014), in the relation he establishes of Freire’s work with ICT, presents the posture of search, research, inquiry and acceptance of the new that Freire proposes; Quaresma (2012) presents generative themes, limit situations, unprecedented-feasible, coding and decoding as methodological strategies in the teaching-learning process that enable the construction of actions in view of a sociopedagogical intervention.

Final Considerations

The article started from the proposition that the Freirean work comprises a conception of education for the working class as a whole, that is, from the city and the countryside, which is inside and outside the school, that studies in regular schools or in experiences of non-formal education giving them the conditions for social and pedagogical intervention.

In this sense, it brought contributions from Barros and Choti (2014) that present new ways of analyzing Paulo Freire’s work for the construction of an emancipatory public school, indicating the use of ICT in a reflective and emancipatory perspective, a path not yet explored in Brazilian researches.

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