

THE TEACHING PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND SIGNIFICANT TEACHING CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT: This paper intends to discuss in theoretical levels the teaching practice in higher education considering the challenges of contemporary times. We want to cover up the close relationship between the quality of education and the work of the teacher within the classroom. We also intend to expound the teacher and student relationship, emphasizing the importance of the way to communicate, how to relate affectively, the dynamics and observations for the organization and motivation of teachers' work. The theoretical support for this study is based on the thought of Alexis Leontiev, Vygotsky, his contemporary V. V. Davidov and J. C. Libâneo, who understand the pedagogical practice as a cognitive process that aims to create conditions for the development of abilities and skills seeking learning autonomy and the independent thinking of students. In this perspective of teaching, the teacher places the student in a constant learning activity, in order to promote the acquisition of abilities, the development of skills and competencies for the student to learn by him/herself and be able to reflect on this process. The educator, from activities that include the use of diverse and attractive features to students, should privilege the reflexive action, dialogue and exchange of knowledge and experiences. Finally, we intend to generate a discussion about the role of teaching in higher education, the teacher-student relationship and the cognitive process, which takes place in the act of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Pedagogy. Teaching. Learning. Cognoscitive Process.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is thoroughly discussed in higher education, the close relationship between the quality of teaching and the teacher's work inside the classroom, in other words, much of the success or failure of the students' education is imputed to the teachers' work. In fact, the essence of what happens in higher education is the quality and effectiveness of education on the part of teachers and thus the quality and effectiveness of learning on the part of students.

For quality and effectiveness to happen on both sides, the focus is on teaching and learning of concepts, theories, activities, so that learners can develop the ability to think and learn, learn to study, to relate contents, to form values and attitudes and, mainly, to perform

as professionals and citizens in a reflective, critical and active way in society. Global training of the individual is the big target of a quality education within the University environment.

So, pedagogical projects, course syllabuses, class plans, continuous evaluation processes, extracurricular activities, among others are formulated and implemented. The focus is always the student, what he learns what he needs to learn and how to do it. The reference to the activities of teaching is learning, that is, the good professor is seen as one who teaches well, one who is able to make the student learn efficiently on the basis of a personal relationship with knowledge. In this sense, the act of teaching depends on knowing how individuals learn, what makes sense and is meaningful to learners.

The educator José Carlos Libâneo (2003, p. 01) mentioned three important aspects in this learning perspective:

1) learning is related to the research activity of both the student and the teacher. It implies promoting situations in which students learn to get information, learn how to locate them, analyze them, connect them with previous knowledge, also, giving them their own meaning, drafting conclusions, observing field situations and recording them, for problem solving, among other examples; 2) learning needs to be meaningful; a significant knowledge is one that turns into a student's cognitive instrument, expanding both the content and the form of their thought; 3) University learning is associated with learning how to think and learning how to learn. Today, University education needs to help students to develop thinking skills and identify procedures necessary to learn.

Given this, the methodology of the teacher must be one that helps their student to think, to reflect on the knowledge and skills acquired, not only in the classroom, but in the entire university environment and also outside it. Students must be able to think with the conceptual tools and research processes that the teacher provides and thus form their own sense of the contents and science learning. The teaching most compatible with this proposal is one that contributes to the students to learn how to think for themselves, to be able to relate to science, technology and media to their life, weaving thoughts that allow dealing with reality.

2 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this work is to discuss, in theoretical levels, teaching practices in higher education, considering the challenges of contemporary times. It intends to cover the close relationship between the quality of teaching and the teacher's work inside the classroom facing the challenge of promoting training and building cognoscitive skills, through

the mastery of certain knowledge. It also has the objective of descanting about the relationship between educator and learner, emphasizing the importance of the way of communicating, affectively relating the dynamics and observations for the organization and motivation of teachers' work.

To this end, the present study was developed from research on literature in the areas of education and Educational Psychology, with a focus on teaching methodology, didactics and contemporary educational psychology. Literature review was opted, in order to analyze and discuss the topic in theoretical levels.

Broadly and without the pretension of exhausting such fruitful theme here, the study is based on the thought of Alexis Leontiev, Vygotsky, his contemporary V. V. Davidov and J. C. Libâneo, who understand the pedagogical practice as a cognitive process that seeks to create conditions for the development of capacities and abilities aimed at autonomy in learning and students' independence of thought.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The fundamental importance of the act of teaching is well known in human formation, in order to live in society, and that teachers are an integral part of the educational process, being essential for the formation of generations and social standards that we seek. The first commitment of the professional activity of a teacher (teaching work) is certainly to prepare students to become active citizens and participants in the family, at work and in cultural, social and political life. The teaching work also aims to the mediation between society and students. In that regard, the Russian thinker Alexis Leontiev stated that the essence of human activity presupposes not only the actions of a single individual, taken alone, but also their actions under the conditions of social activity (1978, p. 17).

José Carlos Libâneo adds that "today, education at all levels, need to unite the research process logic with the products of research (...) the access to the contents, the acquisition of scientific concepts have to go through the process of research, the ways of thinking and investigating the taught science "(p. 02). What really matters is that this relationship of unity between objective-content-method constitutes the basis of the pedagogical process.

The question, therefore, is how a teacher and, consequently, their students internalize the investigative procedure of subject that they are teaching/learning. This involves forms of thought and thinking skills that propitiate a reflection about the investigative methodology for content, that is being learned. I call this, teaching to acquire the means to think through the content. In other words, to develop in students the theoretical thought, that

is, the process by which reveals the essence and development of objects of knowledge and so the acquisition of general cognoscitive methods and strategies of each science, in order to analyze and solve professional problems.

The professor should focus on the reflective action, dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and experiences, based on activities that contemplate the use of diverse and attractive resources to students, that is, they are enunciator of different voices, such resources must be seen as a means of presenting meaning, and it is up to the students to learn to decode them and give them meaning. It should be kept in mind that teaching involves the process of global educating the student, in addition to his training for the social, political, economic and cultural life (MALIK, 2003, p. 19), given that humans are historical beings who carry out their practical activities in dealing with nature and coexistence with other men. "Only in society, and not by isolated act, humanity was able to break the natural bonds of its existence and through the interactivity among their peers to humanly develop" (MORAES, 2007, p. 107)

Corroborating with the prospect that teaching and learning are universal means of cognitive and human development, Vygotsky, in *Thought and Language* (1999, p. 31), states that "teaching promotes ownership of culture and the development of thought and that both processes are united among themselves and form a unity". In a significant education, while students form scientific concepts, they incorporate thought processes and vice versa, they also form the theoretical thinking, develop cognitive actions, by solving problems that give rise to mental activity (LIBÂNEO, 2003, p. 03).

That way, students assimilate theoretical knowledge (science), abilities and skills related to this new knowledge. This is equivalent to say that the teacher puts the student in a constant learning activity, in order to promote acquisition of skills, the development of skills and competencies for students to learn by themselves and reflect on this process.

The theoretician V. V. Davidov, follower of Vygotsky studies and author of an original design on teaching, based his theory on pedagogy that rests on empirical thinking to structure the content of school curricula. For him, the problems of learning and education are important issues for the contemporary psychology, since they determine the physical development of the individual processes (SHUARE, 1990, p. 180). For this reason, the guide of school reform should be determined by a scientific program that aspires to improve the whole didactic-educational process and this will interline in a harmonic and omnilateral development of the personality of the student.

Davidov also argues that this didactic-educative process, basically consists in finding general solutions to problems or specific situations, seizes the general concepts and most central laws that support a content, to apply them to specific situations. For him, the concepts

should be used as mental tools for the student to deal in a practical way with problems, situations, dilemmas. Thus, the student uses the concepts to develop the cognitive basis of action, reflecting and taking conscience of their learning, i.e. the assimilation of action only happens by the fulfilment of tasks by the student (1988, p. 68).

Following this same line of thought, Libâneo emphasizes that this methodological procedure to teach learning is organized in three non-linear moments: the reflection, the analysis and the internalization of the concepts. The first consists in student's awareness about the goals and reasons of a certain activity, in addition to the recognition and understanding of the conditions necessary to study and learn the contents; this moment is divided into motivation (Why learn it? What's the point?) and guidance of student learning activity (In what way? What are the commands?). The time of analysis is the study of content, from concepts to problem solving by means of practical actions or operations (exercises, activities); the role of analysis is to guide and help students to develop the ability to make generalizations and inferences from cognitive conflict, aiming at individual and group cognitive actions to tackle the problem. Finally, the internalization of the concepts is the ability to operate internally with the concept presented, i.e. the moment the student turns the concept into content and instruments of thought, assigning meaning and see reason in this acquisition and elaboration of knowledge (LIBÂNEO, 2005, p. 189-191).

When the student performs the whole process, he can turn something abstract and theoretical into a practical and concrete tool and not only learn the contents, but, mainly, seize it, turning it into knowledge. To work this methodology in the classroom, the teacher has to rethink their practice, move on to a deep planning of their lessons, plus: a) be prepared, i.e. having deep knowledge of the central and general concepts of the discipline, as well as of its investigative procedures; (b) know the theoretical conceptualization transiting the reality surrounding the pupil, showing the relevancy and applicability of such knowledge; c) know how to choose concrete examples and relevant and practical activities that demonstrate transparently of such concepts, thus challenging the student and providing moments of analysis and internalization; d) promote the creation of new problems, i.e. more complex learning situations, with higher degree of doubt that needs more initiative and creativity of the student (LIBÂNEO, 1994, p. 32-39).

As Advisor, the educator must provide conditions for learning that enhances the student's knowledge and previous knowledge, considering factors such as motivation, interest, relevance, dynamism, etc. The teacher encourages the student to interact and think critically about the world, enabling the development of a meaningful and coherent education with proposals for a higher education and more democratic society.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the end of our route, but without wishing to deplete so fruitful theme, we conclude that the contemporary teacher must avail themselves of interesting, dynamic and relevant activities to the reality of the student that will help minimize the pressure of the error, with the objective of contributing to a more effective and meaningful learning. The personal taste of the student must also be taken into account, since it will help awaken their interest in learning and will cooperate to purchase and/or improvement of skills needed to master certain content. The learner should be able to summarize, explain, discuss, and evaluate what they read, what he learns, understanding and interrelating information and content with their life, producing references and meanings. In other words, learning must be meaningful and make sense based on the reality of the student, or there will not be acquisition and construction of knowledge not even productive knowledge.

It is known that the human cognoscitive activity requires prior orientation and analysis of learning conditions. Come to think of it, in order to develop cognitive actions, the educator must provide conditions for learning that enhances the student's knowledge and previous knowledge, considering factors such as motivation, interest, relevance, dynamism, etc. It is also the responsibility of the educator to promote personal interactions necessary for producing the internalization of concepts and the appropriation of the strategies and tools needed for the solution of problems and conflicts. In these interactions activities that promote a high level of generalization are included (using different types of reasoning), exercises linked to logical procedures (identification, demonstration and application of concepts) and activities that promote the socialization of the learned subject (exposure, interaction and communication). In this way, the teacher ceases to be a mere transmitter of information and becomes a mediator that privileges and promotes students' autonomy, awakening in him the critical, reflective and active sense. The challenge, then, is to integrate conscious way, social criticism and this new methodology, i.e. teaching for life. The integration of all of these features should target the development of competence in critical reading, reflection and world socialization of knowledge, also, through exchanges and dialogues among peers.

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