

DEVELOPMENT PERIODIZATION IN HISTORICAL-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY: CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING PRACTICE IN CHILD EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to present research results which deals with the importance of knowledge about the periodization of human development on the part of the teacher for a pedagogical practice, in order to promote the aged 0 to 3 years students' development and learning. Initially, we present a discussion about the development periodization from the perspective of Historical-Cultural Psychology and then we address pedagogical practice in Early Childhood Education. Finally, we present the results of interviews carried out with five professionals. The results obtained denote a maturationist view of development and a teaching practice based on empiricism and everyday knowledge, with a lack of theoretical foundation about the part of the interviewees, which points to the need for greater training in the area. The Historical-Cultural Psychology theoretical foundations have the potential to improve the Early Childhood Education teachers' practice, so that they can carry out their activities aiming to promote the cognitive and affective development of students.

Keywords: child development; child education; historical-cultural psychology

Periodización del desarrollo en la psicología histórico-cultural: contribuciones para la práctica docente en la educación infantil

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar resultados de una investigación que trata de la importancia del conocimiento sobre la periodización del desarrollo humano, por parte del profesor, para una práctica pedagógica que fomente el desarrollo y aprendizaje dos alumnos de 0 a 3 años. Inicialmente, presentamos una discusión sobre la periodización del desarrollo en la perspectiva de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural, y en la secuencia abordamos la práctica pedagógica en la educación infantil. Por fin, exponemos los resultados de entrevistas realizadas con cinco profesionales. Los resultados obtenidos apuntan una visión *maturacionista* del desarrollo y una práctica docente basada en el empirismo y en los conocimientos cotidianos, con carencia de fundamentación teórica por parte de las entrevistadas, lo que apunta a la necesidad de más capacitación en el área. Los fundamentos teóricos de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural presentan potencial para instrumentalizar profesores de la educación infantil, con la finalidad de que desempeñen sus actividades objetivando promover el desarrollo cognitivo y afectivo de los alumnos.

Palabras clave: desarrollo infantil; educación infantil; psicología histórico-cultural

Periodização do desenvolvimento na psicologia histórico-cultural: contribuições para a prática docente na educação infantil

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar resultados de uma pesquisa que trata da importância do conhecimento sobre a periodização do desenvolvimento humano por parte do professor para uma prática pedagógica que promova o desenvolvimento e aprendizagem dos alunos de 0 a 3 anos. Inicialmente, apresentamos uma discussão sobre a periodização do desenvolvimento na perspectiva da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural e na sequência abordamos a prática pedagógica na Educação Infantil. Por fim, expomos os resultados de entrevistas realizadas com cinco profissionais. Os resultados obtidos denotam uma visão *maturacionista* do desenvolvimento e uma prática docente baseada no empirismo e nos conhecimentos cotidianos, com carência de fundamentação teórica por parte das entrevistadas, o que aponta para a necessidade de maior capacitação na área. Os fundamentos teóricos da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural apresentam potencial para instrumentalizar professores da Educação Infantil, a fim de que desempenhem suas atividades objetivando promover o desenvolvimento cognitivo e afetivo dos alunos.

Palavras-chave: desenvolvimento infantil; educação infantil; psicologia histórico-cultural

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INTRODUCTION

The historical course of early childhood education in Brazil is permeated by great difficulties and inequalities in the care provided to the population. As Meneguete (2017) mentions, the 1990s can be indicated as a great milestone for education, due to advances in the approval of legal provisions in relation to the education of this age group - an achievement that is presented as a result of the struggle of various social movements in for education in the country. Among these legislative advances, in the 1996 LDB, we have the incorporation of early childhood education as an integral part of school education, recognizing day care centers as teaching institutions and not just care institutions (Pasqualini, 2006). However, as an impact of the delay in recognizing daycare centers as educational institutions, we realize that academic production in this area still lacks materials that provide a basis for teaching practice with children, especially from zero to three years old (Pasqualini, 2010).

Regarding productions in the area of early childhood education, Tavares (2021) carried out a survey of data in the Scientific Electronic Library Online database, of articles that specifically addressed the pedagogical practice aimed at children aged from zero to three years. She used the following descriptors: Vygotsky + Early Childhood Education; Vygotsky + Early Childhood Education; Vygotsky + teaching; Vygotsky + teaching; Teaching activity+ Early Childhood Education; Pedagogical Activity + Early Childhood Education; School Education + Early Childhood Education. The author found the presence of a bias of maturational concepts of development and ideas very similar to those defended by the Childhood Pedagogies which promote the mischaracterization of early childhood education as a space for schooling, placing the teacher as a secondary agent in the teaching activity.

In the survey carried out, Tavares (2021) also located theoretical productions that emphasize the importance of the teaching process for the development of children, who we can consider as students, given that they attend formal education. It is in this way that we understand Early Childhood Education as one that aims to socialize knowledge, as proposed by Historical-Critical Pedagogy (Saviani, 2011).

Taking this position into account, the objective of this article is to present the results of a research that deals with the importance of knowledge about the periodization, by the teacher, for a pedagogical practice that promotes the students' development and learning from 0 to 3 years old. We understand that for the development of a teaching practice aimed at developing the students' maximum potential, it is necessary for this teacher appropriates various scientific knowledge, masters the curricular contents to be taught, to be instrumentalized with themes aimed at leading students to learn, knows the history of education, has access to educational policies, among other topics that permeate

pedagogical practice. However, in this article, we would like to highlight among these, the importance of knowledge related to the periodization of child development.

In order to develop the theme, in this article we will initially discuss the periodization of development based on Historical-Cultural Psychology. Next, we will approach the pedagogical practice in early childhood education, and in a third moment we will present data obtained from professionals who work with children from zero to three years old, from a children's institution, in a city located in the northern region of Paraná.

THE PERIODIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The Historical-Cultural Psychology is based on the method of historical and dialectical materialism, understanding that reality is historically and culturally determined. Human development is constituted by the intertwining of biological and cultural laws, since throughout the history of the human species cultural laws have become more complex, in order to move biological laws to the background; these have been overcome by incorporation by socio-cultural historic laws (Leontiev, 2004).

As highlighted by Leontiev (2004), the entire course of human development was only possible through the beginning of the work activity, which is analyzed as an activity that aims to satisfy a need. For this purpose, the individual makes changes in nature, creates new transformation instruments, and, through language (symbolic instrument) transmits these human productions to new generations. The author makes it very clear that man is born inside an evolutionary development of human characteristics that differentiate hominids from their primate ancestors, in other words hominization, but in order to humanize himself, he needs to appropriate the culture. Tanamachi, Asbahr and Bernardes (2018) emphasize, based on Marxist ideas, that in the process of transforming nature, man himself is transformed.

In man, activity appears as an element of culture, originating in social life and being a product of history. The activity, in addition to being responsible for the individual to appropriate the productions created by humanity, inserts him into social life, as analyzed by Elkonin (1987). The author points out that each stage of psychic development is characterized by an explicit relationship between the child and reality, by a precise and dominant type of activity. The transition criterion from one stage to another is precisely the change in the main type of activity (Leontiev, 2010, p. 64). Therefore, Leontiev (2010, p. 65) emphasizes that "The main activity is then the activity whose development governs the most important changes in the psychic processes and psychological traits of the child's personality at a given stage of their development".

Vygotski (2006) analyzes that in each period of development the so-called neoformations appear. Neoformations that cause the emergence of higher psychological functions; in this process, there are stable periods and

periods of crisis. The crisis is beneficial, according to the author, as it means a turning point, of transformation and passage to a new form of relation with reality. The historical context in which the subject is inserted, together with the new needs that arise as the appropriation of culture occurs in the interaction with other people, leads to new formations in the psyche, the use of new mediating resources (instruments and signs) that they change the subject's relationship with reality and with himself. This environment, for the author, is characterized by class relations (Vygotsky, 2004).

Elkonin (1987) highlights three main periods of development: early childhood, childhood and adolescence. In this article we focus on the domain of knowledge inherent to the periodization of the development of children from zero to three years.

The first year of a child's life is a period of intense development, and it is at this time that the first child development crisis occurs, it is called postnatal crisis. It is characterized by the transition from intrauterine to extra uterine life and by the first developmental guiding activity, direct emotional communication. As Vygotski (2006) argues, the postnatal period is marked by the baby's dependence, who needs the adult to guarantee his survival. At this age, Vygotsky and Luria (1996) point out as a characteristic of the child their dependence on organic sensations to understand their reality, since they lack the developed perception of space and the conditions to distinguish the elements that make up reality. Therefore, there is a strong need for communication between children and adults, because this communication process has the potential to form other activities and promote knowledge of the material world (Magalhães, 2011).

For Pasqualini (2006), at this moment, the adult's role in the communication process is responsible for meeting the child's needs and for establishing their contact with reality. It is the adult who presents all the objects and designates the way in which the child relates to them. Thus, Magalhães (2011, p. 51) highlights the following:

Emotional communication with the adult is the most important condition for all subsequent psychic development, it is what provides the emergence of a more complex communication, carried out through words. In this period, the development of language is the element that is linked to the new formations and presents itself as a premise for the modification of the child's social relationships, reorganizing their performance in the world, whether their relationship with the adult or their relationship with social objects, introduced to her by the adults.

A baby initially does not feel the need to communicate, nor has the means to do so. Its main manifestations can express the discomfort or satisfaction feeling, and the adult, with coexistence, comes to understand these manifestations, supplying the child's needs and seeking

to establish a relationship with him.

In this first year, the next guiding activity is being prepared: the manipulative object. Cheroglu (2014) states that this activity is nothing more than the product of the child's active relation in the social environment, and it does not appear suddenly, but it is elaborated from the beginning of life. For this to occur, effective direct emotional communication with the baby from the first year of life is necessary.

When object-manipulative activity begins, the child begins to be interested in objects around him. In the first months of life, the mother/baby relation can be considered even as a symbiotic relation, but with this transition to manipulative object activity, the adult gives up his place of centrality to objects, becoming a background for the child's perception, as mentioned by Cheroglu (2014).

In this sense, Cheroglu (2014, p.102) also emphasizes that this transition of the adult role should not be seen as something negative, as if it lost importance, because "The adult continues to be the organizing agent and promoter of the conditions in which child activity takes place. He introduces object actions, promoting the young child's active interest in object manipulation. At school, the teacher can enrich the child's relationship with objects once he understands his role in the relation of mediating the child's relation with the instruments.

A characteristic of manipulative object activity is that the child initiates the distinction between the adult and the social object, starting to understand the functionality of objects, analyzes Magalhães (2011). According to the author, it is a period that demands a series of psychomotor skills from the child, thus increasing the demands of the environment on him.

For Tolstj (1989), in this period the child receives a great number of information about the world and the instruments developed by humanity, which come to have meaning for him. Language plays an important role in organizing the adult's mediation relation with objects. Almost at the end of this period, when the child approaches the third year of life, he has the possibility of restructuring his memory, which becomes voluntary and stands out in the group of higher psychological functions. Another point to be highlighted is that it is in this period that the link between thought and language occurs (Vygotski, 2006).

As highlighted by Silva (2017), the end of the third year significantly changes the child's social situation, increasing their possibility of intervention in the middle. This fact can lead to conflicts with adults, which can reach in the three-year crisis.

This is a period in which the child, despite the demands of the environment, is still unable to organize the reasons for their actions in a hierarchical manner, with emotions and interests being very unstable (Leontiev, 1978). The child's actions portray an initial process of the hierarchy of motives, in which he has the condition

to perform an action, but not necessarily linked to the motive he would like to achieve, as proposed by Leontiev (1978).

In this sense, we emphasize that the crisis of the three years is the result of the restructuring of the reciprocal social relations between the child's personality and the people around him. According to Vygotski (2006), it should be seen as positive, as it denotes the search for the child's autonomy; it gives indications that is expanding the child's relation with reality and with himself.

Vygotski (2006) presents some characteristics of the three-year crisis, one of which is negativism, which is characterized by the child's opposition to everything proposed by an adult. This denial occurs exclusively because the child does not want to respond to a request from an adult. Another characteristic described by the author is stubbornness, which concerns the child insisting on a certain action, for not accepting that his desire is not answered and not by the object of the action itself; stubbornness is linked to the need to have one's wishes fulfilled (Vygotski, 2006). Finally, rebelliousness is another characteristic of the three-year-old crisis, the opposition to rules in general, which can be exacerbated in children placed in too rigid environments. The behavior can also be characterized by insubordination, because the child wants to perform all activities alone, demonstrating a desire to have autonomy (Vygotski, 2006). It is a period that leads to greater independence and activity on the part of the child, in addition to changing their relationship with the people around them. An internal restructuring oriented towards social relations is perceived.

Within the manipulative object activity, we have the basis for the emergence of the protagonist game or the play of social roles. In the words of Elkonin (2009, p.216), "the origin of the starring game has a genetic relationship with the formation, guided by adults, of actions with objects in early childhood". Thus, during the second year of life, and also in the third, as the adult presents the objects to the child and shows their use, he is also carrying out the activity of designations and social meanings, creating possibilities for the next period to develop, characterized by role-playing games, in which the child can transpose the function and/or meaning from one object to another. In this sense, Elkonin (2009, p. 226) states:

The typical way to use substitutive objects in the game is that the forms (that is, objects that lack a specific use, such as sticks, chips and puzzle pieces) are inserted in the game as complementary material for thematic toys (dolls, animal figures, etc.) and act as means of performing such an act with the fundamental thematic toys (...). Thus, the beginnings of the playful action occur. Its further evolution depends on the emergence and development of the role that the child would assume when performing this or that action.

In order to serve as a basis for the development of role-playing activity, the manipulative activity of objects must be included in the system of human relations and reveal its true social meaning, since in this way the desire to perform an activity is formed in the child socially meaningful and valued. This moment will constitute the preparation for school learning (Cheroglu, 2014), highlighting the non-linear character of this process.

For this reason, knowledge about the periodization of child development has great potential to enrich teaching practice with children from zero to three years old, as it allows teachers to understand how the child's relationship with reality occurs in the constitution of his psyche, and how they can contribute to development through the appropriation of curricular knowledge. With this knowledge in hand, the teaching organization can be directed considering the main activity at each age.

PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

When we carry out a historical analysis of early childhood education, it is evident that this stage of education has been undervalued, making it difficult to build a pedagogical identity in this segment. Pasqualini and Martins (2020) point out that early childhood education ended up being built on the basis of ideas and theories that mischaracterize its role and distort the children schooling in this age group. "The balance of this story is none other than the inexistence, in the 21st century, of the consolidation of early childhood education schools, as mediating educational spaces between the everyday and non-daily spheres of children's lives" (Pasqualini & Martins, 2020, p. 444).

Arce (2012) states that in early childhood education the assumptions of Pedagogy of Childhood have been influencing pedagogical practice. In this perspective, according to the author, the knowledge is seen as an individual and collective construction and not as an objective representation of reality. Therefore, the teacher's work ends up having little influence on the student's development. Starting from New School and Constructivist ideas, teaching ends up being in the background, since the student is able to learn even without an adult to teach, his development depending more on interactions than on the appropriation of knowledge, comments Arce (2012)

Pasqualini (2006) points out that within the pedagogical perspectives self-titled Pedagogy of Childhood or Pedagogy of Early Childhood Education, there is a pejorative character attributed to teaching in early childhood education. In this sense, it is proclaimed that the institution of early childhood education should appear as an educational and non-school space. Within this perspective, some authors argue that there is a distinction between school and day care, proposing that the school has the student as its subject and its fundamental object is teaching through classes, and the day care center has the child as its subject and its object is the educational ac-

tivities relations within a space of collective conviviality.

We understand that early childhood education plays a fundamental role in promoting child development. From a historical-cultural psychology perspective, teaching addresses the intellectual and affective dimensions of the child, since these are inseparable. Teaching starts from the intentional and conscious act of the teacher aiming at the appropriation of the human-generic heritage by the child, in this way we defend teaching with children from 0 to 3 years old (Pasqualini, 2006).

Another point to be highlighted regarding the theoretical construction in early childhood education would be the care-education binomial that historically is also present in pedagogical practice, as highlighted by Pasqualini and Martins (2008). The constitution of this binomial is the result of early childhood education got late to the framework of educational institutions. Before this period, care for children from zero to three years was carried out in institutions called care, based on an charitable view. According to Pasqualini and Martins (2008), these places had as their main objective to guarantee food, hygiene and safety, and the educational actions were aimed at compensating for the lacks presented by the families, who were considered incapable. For Pasqualini and Martins (2008), the binomial educating-caring brings harm when it tries to establish limits between caring and educating, since care and education are intrinsically related dimensions.

In our understanding, the school must always prioritize scientific knowledge and the cognitive and affective development of students. In this sense, Mukhina (1996) highlights the importance of valuing knowledge about child development, especially for teachers, so that they have support to recognize the children's manifestations that must be observed in each period of development. When the teacher knows the development of the student's psyche, he may be able to create strategies to lead the teaching in order to provoke, with direction, this development.

The formation of the child's psyche does not occur spontaneously, passively, as it is necessary to develop a relation of interaction and appropriation of culture, so that the child appropriates the most developed forms of knowledge (Vygotsky, 2010). It is necessary to systematize the curricular contents to be taught to children, regardless of the level of education.

For the improvement of pedagogical practice, it is important that the teacher appropriates different contents; when we highlight the importance of valuing the knowledge inherent to the periodization of human development to enrich the pedagogical practice, we are not excluding the importance of the others. It is necessary to understand how the development laws relate to learning.

Mukhina (1996) also states that teaching will promote development through the appropriation of social experience. The adult must understand that teaching

must take development into account, in order to guide it. "The directive role of teaching in the child's psychic development is manifested in the fact that the child assimilates new actions, initially through the action of the adult and later alone" (Mukhina, 1996, p. 51).

In this way, the teacher's work must aim at the re-qualification of the student's psychological functions, such as perception, attention, memory and thinking, for example. Teaching must be guided considering, in addition to real development – what has already been carried out –, also the proximate development, that is, what is in the process of development. For Vygotsky (2010, p. 114, author's emphasis),

Teaching oriented to a stage of development already carried out is ineffective from the point of view of the general development of the child, it is not able to direct the development process, but goes after it. The theory of the scope of potential development gives rise to a formula that exactly contradicts the traditional orientation: *the only good teaching is what goes ahead, to development.*

Systematized teaching, guided by the teacher, provides development and leads the individual to a greater understanding of reality, to have access to cultural heritage. We understand, as Saviani (2011, p. 06) analyzes that educational work "(...) is the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each single individual, the humanity that is historically and collectively produced by the set of men". Regarding the exercise of pedagogical practice, this should aim to make the student appropriate the most elaborate productions of culture, since the "historical development explains the traces of human activity objectified and crystallized in the objects of culture and organizes the child's activity" (Pasqualini, 2006, p. 193).

For Pasqualini and Abrantes (2013), the concern with the organization of pedagogical practice must take into account the content-form-recipient triad, requiring harmony among the cultural elements that must be taught to students. In early childhood education, it is important to consider the general laws that govern the development of each age group with which the teacher works, having an understanding of the capacities had already achieved by children and their future possibilities, which establish the objective to be achieved in the teaching process.

We understand that the mastery of knowledge about the periodization of child development can help in proposing a teaching that promotes development. However, we cannot leave aside the other knowledge that is essential in the educational process, whether scientific, artistic or philosophical, among others. In this way, the teacher needs to be equipped in relation to the knowledge that guides the transmission/appropriation of curricular contents.

In the next item we will dedicate ourselves to pre-

senting how these data presented are verbalized by the teachers who participated in the research that we aim to expose in this article.

RESEARCH WITH TEACHERS

The field research was carried out in 2020 with five professionals: one early childhood education teacher and four daycare assistants who work in teaching with children aged from zero to three years old. The objective was to apprehend the conceptions that the teachers had about the concepts of periodization of child development and its relation with the development of their teaching performance.

The research was developed in a Municipal Center for Early Childhood Education in the north of the state of Paraná, which serves the following classes: Full time A: 4 months to 1 year and 8 months; Full time B: 1 year and 8 months to 2 years and eight months; Full time C: 2 years and eight months to three years; Infant IV: 4 years old; Child V: 5 years. Professionals who worked at the time in the integral A, B and C classes were invited to participate in the study. The criterion for selecting the participants was to work in the age group of the research and to voluntarily accept the participation.

The research relied on the ovation by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Human Beings of a public university in Paraná. As a procedure for obtaining the information, we chose to carry out a semi-structured interview. Due to the historical period experienced, in which the population has been affected, since 2020, by the world pandemic of Covid-19, which imposes several protocols of social distance and prohibitions of collective and in-person activities, the interviews took place remotely. The semi-structured interview was guided by a script, with 12 (twelve) questions referring to the understanding of child development and the teaching performance of the interviewees. We use fictitious names to name the professionals.

The study participants were all female, with a mean age of 39 years. Regarding professional qualification, all had higher education and postgraduate training, two of them with postgraduate degrees in early childhood education. Regarding teaching experience in early childhood education, the group has an average of 7.6 years of teaching experience, and 5.8 years of accumulated experience in early childhood education.

From the material collected during the interviews, we selected three main axes of analysis. The choices of this axis were made through the contribution to the research objectives and given the importance perceived during the analysis of the interviews. The analysis of the material started from the theoretical framework of cultural-historical psychology.

The axes were as follows: Axis I, "Understanding development and learning", presents the presentation of how the participants understand this theme, as a way to feed the discussion on how these conceptions will im-

pact pedagogical practice. Axis II, "Function of the early childhood education school", analyzes the proposition about the objectives of the participating institution, in terms of its objectives as a teaching space. And, finally, Axis III, "Organization of teaching practice and activities carried out". It is important to mention that all names are fictitious.

Below we present some discussions about the responses obtained.

Understanding of development and learning

For the present research, the participants' understanding in relation to development and learning is fundamental for the discussion about how the domain of knowledge inherent to the periodization of child development can influence the teaching performance. When we questioned how human development takes place, we were struck by statements that point out that development occurs naturally from conception, not emphasizing the historical and cultural factors involved in the process.

- Rose: Development occurs continuously. (...) the person will go through development throughout their lives, at each step, in one way or another, they will adapt. (...) at school it goes according to their performance by age.

- Daisy: Since the child's conception and over time.

- Jasmine: Human development occurs from the conception of that child.

- Hydrangea: It starts from the nursery (...). The mother brings the child, then we have to start human development from the cradle.

- Violet: It occurs along with development, from conception to the rest of life.

Seeking to illustrate the findings in the field research, we found the following answers in relation to the question regarding the learning process.

- Margarida: I believe a lot in stimuli, what they see, hear and what we can encourage them to do.

- Jasmine: He will receive the first stimuli, which is what will lead to his significant learning

- Hydrangea: (...) through practical activities (...) It's free, free activity. Because I learned that their learning there is more than that. There [in early childhood education] they are really free, there is not much to do.

- Violeta: I believe that the way the child stays and lives, and the way he is stimulated, is by imitation.

The emphasis given to the stimuli received by students in the learning process is probably influenced by the Piagetian vision that permeates education since the 1930s. At that time, in Brazil, the educational system was influenced by the New School, which was resumed with constructivist ideas in the 1990s, based on Genetic Epistemology (Facci, 2004). In the case of early childhood education, Arce (2012), when discussing the main peda-

gogical influences at this level of education, states that Childhood Pedagogy has been guiding discussions and practices that unite influences from different authors that could be grouped together as New School representatives. This aspect can be noticed in the speeches of the teachers.

We highlight Vygotsky's (2010) words about the relation between learning and development, when he states that there is an interdependent relation between them, stressing, however, that these are different processes. Learning promotes the development of the child's internal processes, but occurs only when there is a direction of this process. The appropriation of curricular contents provokes the development of higher psychological functions, which, in turn, will enable the appropriation of new knowledge, and thus, a dialectical relation between teaching and learning will be established.

In the speeches presented, it is evident, in addition to the maturationist conception of development, the lack of emphasis on the role of the school as a promoter of development and the need to improve knowledge to support the discussion. Abrantes and Martins (2007) discuss the importance of pedagogical practice being based mainly on scientific knowledge, both in curricular content and in the development of the child's psyche. Saviani (2011) also clarifies the importance of the school in the socialization of knowledge, in the humanization process. We remember, as stated by Leontiev (2004), that the process of humanization occurs through the educational process, through the appropriation of culture.

Another point that we can make in view of the material raised concerns the movement of appreciation of practical knowledge to the detriment of theoretical productions. One of the interviewees explains that the teaching activity takes place "more through practical activities, because they don't have much way to learn to read, to write, so we pass more on the practices". This excerpt illustrates a recurring thought among the participants, that there is a division between the pedagogical content and what they call "practical activity", evidencing that there is a valuation of certain knowledge that cannot yet be achieved by children who attend daycare.

Both (2016, p. 127-128) talks about valuing the various contents present in the school:

From the Historical-Cultural perspective and from the Historical-Critical Pedagogy, the knowledge capable of promoting human capacities is not only that materialized in writing, but also in other forms of being objective such as in musical genres, in the arts, in cinema, in theater. All are part of the cultural heritage of humanity that needs to be appropriated by each individual to form and promote the development of their human capacities.

Kindergarten School Function

Historical-Cultural Psychology understands that it is

up to the school to provide the student with the appropriation of the most developed cultural forms available in the society in which he is inserted. As highlighted in the words of Scherer (2010, p. 20), education "(...) is a social activity without which the human race cannot reproduce itself, since the psychic development of subjects depends especially on the knowledge that is transmitted to them. With its internalization, not only the form but also the content of the child's mental activity is modified". In this perspective, the teacher's work needs to be directed and planned.

During the interview process, we asked about the purpose of the early childhood education school, obtaining the following answers:

- Rose: The school is there to help form new citizens, to teach how to contribute so that he [child] can become a calm person within society, so the school comes with this purpose.

- Daisy: Many say that it's just taking care, but I believe it goes much further than that. Taking them to know a new world, interacting in socializing with other people, children, affection, creating affection, affection, friendship, I think it goes beyond just caring.

- Jasmine: I believe that [Child Education] is where the first support, teaching and learning of that child takes place, the school has to be welcoming, it has to be a stimulating school, it always needs to look for the best for the child.

- Hydrangea: [The CMEI] is not just a school, it has everything there, not just learning but also a school. I think it needs affection, love, recognition, reception from the parents first.

- Violet: In my point of view, I believe that there is still a long way to go for early childhood education. It is seen as an assistentialism way and not as an education center.

Through the answers, we observed that the interviewees present a view that the objective of early childhood education institutions would be more linked to the insertion of the child in society, an opinion expressed in the words of Rose and Daisy. In Hydrangea's speech, the split between caring and educating is evident. Finally, only Jasmine mentions an objective related to the development of teaching and learning in children.

Early childhood education coexists with a contradiction about its objective, which diverges between performing teaching or care activities, which directly impacts the relations among teachers, students and the appropriation of scientific knowledge to support the activities carried out by teachers. This teaching stage has its origin associated with the advance of capitalist society, changing the role of women in productive society and the need for a solution to the underlying demand, which would be the care of the children of these women who had to be incorporated into the labor market. This origin,

among other factors, ended up highlighting affective issues at the expense of the importance of scientific knowledge. The teachers placed great emphasis on the need to transmit confidence to children, valuing more emotional factors than factors related to the learning process of curricular contents.

The teachers highlighted the importance of affection, which we consider essential in the teaching and learning process. However, the understanding of the affect-cognition unit is not clear, emphasizing the affective aspects, the “love”, as if this alone promoted the student’s development, devaluing scientific knowledge.

As Vygotsky (2001) emphasizes, in order to overcome spontaneous knowledge, access to scientific knowledge is essential. How are they going to humanize their students, in the sense of appropriating historically produced knowledge, if they themselves are not instrumentalized in this knowledge? One way to achieve this objective would be initial and continuing teacher training courses that provide them with tools about the role and importance of the school in the process of humanizing students.

Organization of teaching practice and activities carried out

It is extremely important to understand how the teachers organize the pedagogical activities, verifying if they take into account the characteristics of the development of the child’s psyche in relation to the class they work with. Below we present some reports from professionals on this topic.

- Rose: He [the teacher] has to have his routine there after the planning he produces weekly. The activities, as he [Student] can. I believe that in this way the teacher can make this difference for the children and for the students.

We have annual planning, which we divide into two-month periods, and there is a weekly one, in which we develop content per week.

- Daisy: Ah! I think I seek more and more to know new things, always be updated about new proposals. I think we always have to be willing to learn more, seek more.

- Jasmine: The teacher has to be a person who likes to work, who likes children, the first requirement. He has to be a dedicated person who **knows the entire teaching process**. Because he has to be a stimulating teacher, also active, participatory and always try to go according to the child’s age group. It’s no use preparing a class that doesn’t match the reality of that classroom either.

- Hydrangea: I have always tried to work within, as they say, within what they can work, I never do anything outside (...). I always respect within their age. I didn’t try to run away, because they talk like this: it’s a weak class. But that’s what they can do, if you try to force a little they don’t want to, it

makes you lazy, and you take it like this, doing more practical there, with blocks, pedagogical mat, some educational toys and working on what you want from them, it’s better, it is much more productive, so to speak. [Hydrangea cites an example of an agreement among the pedagogical team as a solution to be able to develop activities with groups of different levels of development, was to reduce planning to practical activities].

- Violet: I believe that seeking more training, getting to know the public more, the child who is working. I believe this is it.

A relevant point to be highlighted in the speeches presented refers to the association of the quality of the teaching practice with the work within the material possibilities of the school or the individual capacity of the students, not mentioning the progress that the teaching activity should produce in the student.

We can highlight that the young child relates to the environment in an empirical way, which does not exempt the professionals responsible for directing their teaching and learning process from being guided by theoretical thinking to guide and plan their practice. Only in this way is it possible to understand reality, so it is up to the educator to develop in children the bases on which theoretical thinking will be developed (Martins, 2011).

The teaching activity should not be guided by common sense or by the teacher’s empirical experience in relation to the organization of teaching activity. Moraes (2009) emphasizes that, as much as the teacher’s practical knowledge is rich, a theoretical foundation is necessary for the realization of a quality practice.

In order to understand the relationship between teaching activity and mastery of scientific knowledge, we asked: what criteria are used to select activities carried out with children?

- Rose: First of all, we do the planning. Then we go to observation and observing a lot, it goes according to what they are learning at the moment. Their age also influences a lot, but it is through observation of activities with new experiences for them, whether in a group or individual activity. It depends on the space and time that we have here. So all this, observation, experience, group or individual activity, space and time.

- Daisy: Research according to the BNCC. We organize the lesson plan, for example, we are going to work a little on the children’s movement, but in what way, we are going to work on music for them to dance, it’s like, everything researched. It’s focused on the lesson plan, then there’s development, then we’ll observe the child as he develops in the activity, in the game, in their movement while running. (...) This planning is annual, which we used to do and through that we did the weekly (...) each day has a record of the activity applied to that day or if the activity is during

the week, for example, this week we will work on something all week, then each day we work with some objective with that class, but within that week.

- Jasmine: At the nursery, I helped with bathing, feeding, activities, when the teacher was producing, bathing, diapering and helping the teacher was my routine. I already had a routine ready, I was also at bedtime sometimes.

- Hydrangea: Look, I look like this, I look within the (...) new law (...), I've always tried to work within it (...), work with a handout, I do a lot of research, so I don't keep copying, I like to research, and get inside this law and read, all those handouts that are the ages I'm working, always looking to work there, because here, now, they don't want us to work outside.

- Violet: So with my children, as I work with babies, I use activities according to their age and potential. I try to work on activities that can involve all of them, because they are different ages. As far as possible, then, I work on what I believe is best for their development.

Rosa, Margarida and Hydrangea emphasize the foundations of their performance. In view of the answers presented, we see a difficulty in explaining which criteria are anchored in the teaching practice of the interviewees.

Among all that was presented, it is evident, in the organization of the interviewees' pedagogical practice, the split between the activities of care and education. Faced with this split, the time allocated to pedagogical activities is reduced in relation to other daily activities and even relegated to the background. On the other hand, we argue that early childhood education institutions should be configured as complete educational spaces, with no division between types of activity, as mentioned in the words of Chaves and Franco (2016).

In the interviewees, we observed the intention of a search for student learning, however we did not perceive a deepening of theoretical knowledge, only an experience through the practice of the accumulated years of profession.

As we can see, the answers show that the interviewees expose ideas that are placed in society, permeated by the reflection of a history of early childhood education that still places little emphasis on the process of appropriation of scientific knowledge at this level of education. They claim that they are based on the pedagogical document that guides the practice in the institution, however, when we observe the documents, we consider a pedagogical proposal that does not state the directions to be followed in the institution's teaching process. This is not a unique characteristic of the researched institution, but common to the reality of early childhood education.

Incurring this discussion cannot summarize the reality of a particular institution, which has its particularities. However, it is necessary to discuss the working conditions imposed in our society governed by capitalism, based on

the idea that capitalism does not aim at human emancipation. We should mainly discuss the precariousness of professional training and the lack of institutional incentives for ongoing training.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the theoretical assumptions of Historical-Cultural Psychology, we defend the need for early childhood education teachers, who work with children aged between zero and three years, to appropriate the knowledge inherent to the periodization of child development, in order to support pedagogical practice.

Emphasizing that our objective is not to summarize the teaching activity in early childhood education to this knowledge, we defend teaching, at any stage of the schooling process, based on consistent theoretical foundations in relation to the contents taught, the history of education, an understanding of society and school linked to class relations, among other factors that permeate the teaching-learning process.

We observe, with regard to the theoretical currents that influence the pedagogical practice of early childhood education, which has a great influence on the Childhood Pedagogy, resulting in a school model centered on the student as the main object of teaching practice, which has autonomy and ability to direct what content will be developed in the classroom. A naturalistic view of development, which defends the learning potential as something that is already in place after birth, with the teacher only stimulating and accompanying what is already given to the child by nature.

Early childhood education suffers from the marks left by its historical constitution, its late recognition as belonging to the field of teaching, leaving it even more vulnerable to the means of production of contemporary knowledge. Faced with all this, it still seeks to break with the propositions of Childhood Pedagogies, anti-school ideas and, mainly, the binomial caring and educating. This whole context is reflected in the emptying of theoretical knowledge regarding the periodization of child development, reproducing pedagogical actions based on experimentation, in practice, without establishing the necessary relationship with theory. Such a way of carrying out the pedagogical practice can make it difficult to oppose the prevailing social conditions that have been devaluing science, which do not emphasize the importance of knowledge at all levels of education.

Through the analysis of pedagogical planning and the relationships established between child development and teaching practice, we highlight a scenario where we are far from offering children who attend daycare centers an education that contributes to the whole development process. We emphasize that this reality is not particular and unique to the institution participating in the research field, but it can be considered a representative element of a totality, constituted by the history of these

institutions and the pedagogical currents that support national education.

At this point, we do not intend to exhaust the possibilities of study in this area, we understand that there is still a long way to go in research regarding the teaching of children from zero to three years old. Historical-Cultural Psychology can contribute to an education aimed at developing the maximum possibilities of the student and towards an emancipatory schooling. Knowing the general laws of development and the active role it must play in this process, the teacher can be instrumental in organizing it consciously.

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