

Values, intentions and conditions for education and teaching

There have been demonstrations and protests of different natures in Brazil lately and various attempts to explain them. As a rule, they indicate the population's general feeling of dissatisfaction with government spheres, political parties and the performance of their elected representatives. Among the many agendas that divide the attention of *Education and Research*, this issue focuses on one whose importance seems undeniable to all segments of society: education.

Access to school and teaching situations is diverse in Brazil – both from a historical perspective and from the consideration of regional aspects –, according to the social and economic conditions of different strata of society (LIBÂNEO, 2012). Similarly, the role assigned by society to school has undergone changes, expressed, for example, in the documents that guide its work, which are produced in different contexts.

As every process of change, the proposed amendments in the school are accompanied by contradictory feelings, mixing disbelief and hope, fears and longings. This may justify and arise from a discourse often present in different areas, which emphasizes the existence of a school crisis and the loss of school's legitimacy. Despite such discourse, an important part of the training of individuals occurs within the school and society still has several expectations not only about the institution, but also about several teaching situations that occur in the school or in other spaces, supported by educational goals.

We could talk about numerous demands related to education and to the desire that it be constantly linked to processes of improvement of individual and social conditions for integrating subjects. Nevertheless, the aim here is to focus on a demand of teaching professionals which is usually disregarded, especially by managers and governors: appropriate conditions for the development of the work of such teaching professionals.

But what does this refer to?

Our position is: yes, it is necessary to ensure essential and sufficient conditions to develop education work. This work cannot be done with quality under any conditions, under the lack of infrastructure and adequate human resources.

Certainly, teaching takes on different characteristics depending on the levels of activity in which it is developed. Suitable working conditions are not the same for all education professionals, both in formal education, at all its levels, and in non-formal education, with all its nuances and formative intentions. Similarly, one cannot overlook the wide differences in the current conditions of different educational institutions in Brazil.

Therefore, in many cases, requiring appropriate conditions for teaching begins by struggling to ensure minimum physical-material structure, which involves water and power supply, facilities to receive people, ranging from bathrooms to classrooms, whose number, size, lighting conditions, ventilation, and furniture are adequate. It is worth noting that these shortages are not restricted to the most remote locations, far from large urban centers although they are undoubtedly more common in certain regions. The disparity of conditions which schools, training centers and their agents are subjected to is present all over the country (REGO; BRUNO, 2010).

A major problem pointed out by school professionals is the number of students per class, which, despite the specificities of the different levels of education, usually remains above what is considered appropriate for the development of quality work. Very large classes reduce teachers' possibility of knowing their students better and following more closely the development of learning processes (SOUZA, 2011). One is unable to minimally deal with the diversity of the class when it is not possible to adapt times, spaces and knowledge (CORTESÃO; STOER, 2003); with excessively large classes, one cannot clearly identify possibilities and difficulties, nor undertake the movements required by flexibilization. And this problem cannot be solved by the presence of an assistant teacher or something like that; it is necessary to ensure conditions for the development of qualitatively better interactions between teachers and their students.

The quality of these interactions is also influenced by the curriculum guidelines to which teachers are connected in their teaching work. Excessively detailed curriculum proposals, which tend to closely define everything teachers should do in every moment of their classes, do not promote the development of specific strategies for every teaching situation. One can choose large definitions around the themes to be addressed in the schooling process, but what develops in school is the result of teacher-student-knowledge interaction, which is outlined in an institution that has its traditions, accumulates experiences that can not be disregarded, and deals with the challenges of education according to what it considers a priority (GIMENO SACRISTÁN, 2000). In the face of the many attempts to control this process, attention should be paid to the fact that the area of autonomy of the school and teachers cannot be only declarations of intent in official documents.

Non-formal education also suffers from problems related to the public: how can one ensure the access of a vast portion of the population to it when most museums and non-formal education centers are located in large urban centers? What becomes most essential as the educational goal of an exhibition space: interactions or the possibility of enjoyment (MARANDINO, 2015; GOHN, 2006)?

Questions like these evidence the challenge of infrastructure and of qualified professionals to organize and conduct exhibitions and interactions. And, just as in schools, working conditions may pose an obstacle to the expansion and the improvement of activities in museums and non-formal education centers.

In this issue, we will focus on this theme, that is, the debate on values, intentions and conditions for education and the teaching process to take place, bringing texts that help us think about different contexts and perspectives in which teaching influences, impacts on or even defines learning situations, as well as about the way in which learning situations influence, impact on and define contours of teaching.

These varied questions are brought by fourteen articles and an interview, presented by researchers from different institutions in Brazil and abroad. From Brazil, there are productions from three different geographical regions, from institutions from six states; and from abroad there are texts by researchers from Cuba, Argentina and Spain.

The first two articles highlight the intention of becoming a teacher and the difficulties faced by teachers and students in today's schools.

We open the journal with a text by Denise Freitas Brandão and Maria Benedita Lima Pardo, "The interest of Education students in teaching". The survey was conducted with students from different years of the degree in education at Universidade Federal de Sergipe and sought to analyze their interest in teaching. As for findings, the authors reveal that, although students recognize the importance of teachers to society, the social devaluation of the career is one of the reasons for dissatisfaction with the course. Nevertheless, a large percentage of students expresses interest in becoming teachers, but they do not plan to be involved with teaching in the long run. The authors conclude that the improvement in teacher working conditions is one of the aspects that may reverse this situation.

Then, in the article entitled "School, secondary education and youth: the massification of a system and the pursuit of meaning", Elisete Medianeira Tomazetti and Vitor Schlickmann evaluate what they call "secondary education crisis", bringing to light elements such as the loss of the authority of teachers and institutions and the youth's failure to recognize the social role of the school. The authors also indicate that the crisis can be the motivation for teaching reconfigurations and can enhance the development of teachers and students.

A sequence of three other texts allows reflecting on the relations between teaching and assessment, from a general to a more local perspective.

The authors Sônia Ferreira Lopes Toffoli, Dalton Francisco de Andrade, Antonio Cezar Bornia, and Gladys Quevedo-Camargo, in the article "Assessment with construct-response items: validity, reliability, comparability, and fairness", conduct a more theoretical study, describing the principles that underlie tests, in order to support the reading of the data of large-scale assessments. Such study is justified by the fact that such assessments influence not only public education policy, but also the work developed in classrooms and the choices that support them.

In the text "Academic achievement and sociocognitive student interaction in a virtual environment", Ana Borgobello and Néstor Daniel Roselli analyze the academic performance of Argentine university students in virtual environments, considering aspects of

socio-cognitive interactions; it is worth noting that the course analyzed was not composed only of virtual interactions. The authors found differences between the habit of using and the pleasure to use the virtual platform, as well as differences in aspects related to the content of messages, not only with respect to cognitive characteristics.

Focusing on the context of Spain, Antonia Ramírez García, Jacqueline Sánchez-Carrero and Paloma Contreras-Pulido work with the idea of media literacy, in the article “Media competence in primary education in the Spanish context”. The study referred to in the article was conducted with 581 pupils aged 9 to 10 years, in order to assess media literacy levels. The involvement of these students with activities on computers was analyzed from the perspective of skills and knowledge expressed in relation to the media, taking into account six dimensions: language, technology, production and programming, reception and audience, ideology and values, and esthetics. Given the findings, the authors state there is a need for greater attention to media literacy.

Continuing this issue of *Education and Research*, with focus on teaching, two texts put into play the role of Brazilian intellectuals in the face of practical interventions in education.

In the article “Social sciences and intelligentsia: science, education and politics”, Livia Bocalon Pires de Moraes discusses the relation between the ideas of Brazilian intellectuals and their influence on the planning of education. She highlights the ideas of Anísio Teixeira, Fernando de Azevedo, Florestan Fernandes, and Darcy Ribeiro, besides the influence of the two last ones on movements such as *Campanha pela Defesa da Escola Pública* [Campaign for the Defense of Public School].

By studying historical sources, especially newspapers in Rio de Janeiro, in “Body education and school hygiene in Rio de Janeiro press (1930-1939)”, Edivaldo Góis Júnior and Leonardo Mattos da Motta Silva seek to analyze the role intellectuals played in educational practices associated with hygiene. The authors point out the effective participation of intellectuals such as Fernando de Azevedo and Anísio Teixeira in the organization of education in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s.

Two other articles of this issue examine the teaching of matters which have remained controversial until today.

In “Tensions concerning the teaching of Portuguese: interfaces between genre and linguistic analysis”, Telma Ferraz Leal, Ana Carolina Perrusi Brandão and Leila Nascimento da Silva analyze the practice of two Portuguese language teachers who propose activities involving letters from readers. The main objective of the article is to analyze the relation between work on discourse genres and linguistic analysis. The discussion is based on four main teaching situations encountered and reveals low frequency of reflection on linguistic resources common in that genre. The authors relate this to the teachers’ difficulties to work on the didactic model of genre in activities that address the grammatical aspects that letters from readers have in common.

Underscoring the taboos around sexuality education, in “Sexuality education at the itinerant school of MST: students’ perceptions”, Luiz Fabiano Zanatta, Silvia Piedade de Moraes, Maria José Dias de Freitas, and José Roberto da Silva Brêtas analyze school practices in schools of Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra (MST – Landless Movement), in Paraná state. The results point to education with paradoxical characteristics, with a strong link with the binomial health-disease.

Then, two articles put into discussion the role of teaching and formal education beyond the canonical themes in the curriculum guides and references. The texts focus on education for social and cultural relations and education for the development of creativity.

In “Multiculture and interculturality: implications of a lack in education”, Fernando Carlos Agüero-Contreras and Cándida Rosa Urquiza-García perform a theoretical reflection on education from a sociological and anthropological perspective. The study was conducted in the student residence of a Cuban university, and shed light on sociodemographic data on satisfaction regarding access to culture, health and social relations. The student residence was considered a relevant scenario of educational life because of the cultural diversity that exists there. From the results, the authors point out the theoretical deficit in formative management in the university residence, which limits the scope of the educational project, especially the development of more consistent socialization processes.

In a study on the university degree in fashion design, Jonathan Gurgel de Lima and Isabel Cristina Italiano aimed to investigate the role played by formal education in the development of the creative potential of students. “Fashion design teaching: using draping as a pedagogical tool” focuses on the rare opportunities to use creativity in traditional strategies. The authors analyze the role of draping in the engagement and development of students in creative processes.

The three articles which close this issue of *Education and Research* explicitly address non-formal education, starting from general ideas and reaching concrete actions, focusing on the perspective of the space of non-formal education or the perspective of the teacher who takes students to that space.

In the article “Dermeval Saviani’s thought and education in science museums”, Rafael Cava Mori and Antonio Aprigio da Silva Curvelo review education in museums and science centers and highlight the growing role of these spaces as places that can contribute to raising the quality of science education. Saviani’s ideas are used to support the proposition that one can establish a relationship between school knowledge and museological knowledge.

From the reality of Biblioteca Infantojuvenil Maria Mazzetti, in Rio de Janeiro, in “Education plan for a library for children and adolescents: initiatives and mediations”, Cristina Carvalho discusses the importance of the activities of human, cultural and artistic education that go beyond the scope of schooling and formal education. The author concludes that an education plan that defines the profile of the institution

should consider the space, the audience and the assurance of quality training of the professionals involved.

In “Activities in a science center: reasons given by educators, their conceptions and articulations with schools”, Geide Rosa Coelho, Vitor de Carvalho Breda and Thales Renan de Aguiar Brotto conduct a study aimed at analyzing the reasons why teachers organize visits with their students to science centers. To this end, they have interviewed fifteen teachers of schools in the metropolitan area of Vitoria city, in Espírito Santo state, seeking to evaluate their conceptions of science centers, their ways of participating during visits and the possibilities they identify for the relations between visits and school activities. The authors state that there is a need for offering conditions for teachers to reflect more on the role of science centers and possible articulations between them and educational practices.

Last, the interview with Professor André D. Robert, Head of École Doctorale Éducation, Psychologie, Information et Communication (EPIC), Université Lumière Lyon 2, addresses education policies in France, with special emphasis on the teacher unions and education reforms over the past seven decades. In the analysis, the interviewee discusses the relationship between economic regimes, State and school, evidencing the complex social interplay which results in the success or failure of the various reforms conducted by successive governments.

The articles gathered in this issue, as well as the interview with Professor André D. Robert, allow resuming some ideas presented at the beginning of this presentation text. Therefore, we affirm the need for education work to break with the notion – which is still very present in the discussions on the subject – that the school is the institution that will transform the country, leading to social justice. The school cannot and should not assume such role. As a social institution, it has a specific role in the education of new generations, but it cannot change anything unless society undergoes broader transformations. Seeking quality of education implies articulating many fronts, including the improvement of initial and continuing teacher education, the valuation of non-formal education spaces, careful production of teaching materials, investment in infrastructure, increase in the attractiveness of the teaching profession, remuneration consistent with the social relevance of the teacher’s work, the development of strategies to use the results of external evaluations as ways to identify weaknesses and to support schools and teachers. There is no single solution to the problem of education in Brazil and, in the face of the complexity of the theme, it should be noted that one can only tackle the education problem with massive investment of public resources, since we do not give up the historical achievements related to the access to free public education.

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