



SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: ARTICULATIONS THROUGH THE CURRICULUM IN BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights Vygotsky's contributions to the discussions on the school curriculum in the perspective of Inclusive Education. The structure of the presented topics refers to the methodological approach guided by the bibliographical research. It reports elements essential to school knowledge. It discusses the technical and critical conception of curriculum and the process of democratization of knowledge and propose the curricular adaptation as a methodological resource for the learner to achieve the superior psychological functions desired by Vygotsky in the development of learning. The conclusion is that school knowledge thought under Vygotsky's theses may be the basis for the curriculum of the future (YOUNG, 2002). This will be possible if this proposal is elaborated and executed by all the agents involved in this process.

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INTRODUCTION

Sociocultural theory underlies the present discussion. Their contributions provide the analysis of the school curriculum in the perspective of inclusive education. The text is structured in topics that cross the theoretical field of the curriculum. The first topic is entitled: *Concepts of curriculum: technique and criticism*, where the characteristics of this field of research are exposed. Its main thinkers and theoretical approaches in order to emphasize that the conception of curriculum is linked to the pedagogical practice of the teacher in the classroom. The second item deals with school knowledge as the basis of the curriculum in the sociocultural theory. We present Vygotsky's five theses for the development of higher psychological functions, corroborating with the thinking of Michael Young (2002; 2007; 2010) in relation to the differentiation of theoretical knowledge and everyday knowledge. The next topic, democratization of school knowledge, presents the importance of the full democratic exercise of subjects.

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This is done through school relations promoting the participation of teachers, employees, students, parents and responsible in the preparation of school proposals and not only in their execution. In the last topic, the emphasis is given to the expansion of the definition of Inclusive Education and the proposal of curricular adaptation. This fundamental articulation for the democratization of school knowledge. Providing access to all, with or without some special educational need. Thus, the school curriculum becomes an important methodological resource for the consolidation of inclusive education.

Concepts of curriculum: technical and critical aspects

To talk about the school curriculum, we will return to the basic question: What is curriculum? The answer can vary greatly depending on the conception of education one has. Etymologically, the term curriculum finds its root in the Latin word *curriculum*, derived from the verb *currere*, which means path or course to follow. Many consider curriculum as the division of the disciplines and the selection of the contents worked by them. Nevertheless, in a broader view, this should contemplate the whole process lived in the school. Sacristán (2000: 125) conceptualizes curriculum as jointly planned

learning experiences that should arrive at previously defined learning outcomes. Formulating each other through the systematic reconstruction of human experience and knowledge. All this under the recommendations of the School and in order to the permanent development of the learner in their personal and social skills. The curriculum conceptions that subsidize and support academic studies and the elaboration of public policies directed to the school curriculum in the Brazilian context, are marked by two perspectives: technical and critical (Macedo, 2012). Understanding the theoretical field of curriculum requires a process of deep analysis of these two perspectives. However, in this study, we will focus only on the main characteristics and thinkers of these two perspectives. The technical perspective, according to Macedo (2012: 720), [...] encompasses from the efficiency proposals of the 1920s to Piagetian approaches such as those of Cesar Coll or the recent pedagogies of competence, necessarily going through Ralph Tyler and a whole rationality for which the curriculum is a list of objectives and competences operational or objectified content.

The influences and developments of Tylerian rationality, the technical traditions of the field of curriculum, have placed greater emphasis on the relationship between school education and social and economic life. Important points in the discussions about the curriculum were dropped. This provided fertile ground for critical movements to denounce the limitations of this perspective (Macedo, 2012). Because of these movements, from 1970 emerge in the United States and England and in the 1980s in the Brazilian context, ways of thinking the curriculum as a political text, as an instrument of reproduction of social inequalities. Thus emerges the critical perspective in the field of curriculum, which denounces how the power relations that surround society, influence curricular decisions and policies. With a Marxist bias, this perspective proposes a curriculum project linked to the emancipation of the subject from the oppressive relations of capitalist society (Macedo, 2012). From these movements comes the New Sociology of Education in England and the American critical strands. They redefine the problem of knowledge in the curriculum that has in Michael Apple its greatest exponent. In England, British sociologist Michael Young figures as a precursor to the New Sociology of Education. He places as the center of sociological studies the process of legitimation, selection and transmission of scholarly knowledge. In Brazil, Antônio Flávio Moreira and Alice Casimiro Lopes are important names. They defended the thesis that school knowledge should be at the center of curriculum development. Thus, in the context of curriculum theories, school teaching and learning are limited in the question of knowledge. It is observed that in the document published by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, entitled "Inquiries about curriculum", in the axis: Curriculum; Knowledge and Culture, Moreira and Candau (2007: 18), define the "curriculum as experiences that unfold around knowledge." This conception of curriculum supports the theoretical intentionality proposed in this study: to reflect on the ways of conceptualizing knowledge from Vygotsky's contributions to the school curriculum in the perspective of inclusive education.

In this way, Vygotsky's thinking emerges, as already demonstrated by Young (2002) in his article: Durkheim, Vygotsky and the Curriculum, as fundamental to the understanding of knowledge as a central aspect of the curriculum and, from the perspective authorizing, humanizing,

and developing higher mental functions (typically human complex modes of thinking).

School knowledge as the basis of the curriculum in Sociocultural Theory

The discussion about school knowledge is a central element in curricular studies such as Young (2002; 2007; 2010), Apple (2006), Moreira (1995; 2003; 2007), Lopes (1999; 2011) and other thinkers. The curriculum explains the process that pass through the constitution of school knowledge and its role in the schooling process. This is characterized, in a Vygotskian perspective, as a process of humanization (apprehension of the culture produced historically by the human race). Knowledge is therefore the central element of the curriculum. Thus, it becomes possible to understand the process of construction of the elaborated / scientific knowledge in the child in the process of schooling. This internalization of scientific knowledge, which is characterized for Vygotsky, as the most sophisticated mental function of the human and its relation to everyday knowledge is fundamental to think the curricular organization and the curriculum's delineations and implications in the process of development of higher psychological functions (complex modes of thinking). Bringing Vygotsky's thinking about knowledge closer to curricular studies needs to recover the foundations that structure sociocultural theory. For this, the analysis of Rego (2011: 41) on the main vygotskian theses stands out.

The first thesis refers to the individual / society relationship:

Vygotsky states that typically human characteristics are not present since the birth of the individual, nor are they merely the result of pressures from the external environment. They result from the dialectical interaction of man and his socio-cultural environment. At the same time that the human being transforms his environment to meet his basic needs, he transforms himself. This thesis explains a concept of man as a socially constructed subject from the appropriation of human culture. For sociocultural theory, we are not born endowed with typically human forms of thought. These forms are constructed through social processes of interaction and mediation. From it we can also extract the conception of knowledge as a product of human culture, built in a historical and social time.

These aspects are related to the second thesis of Vygotsky's thought:

The specifically human psychological functions originate in the individual's relations and their cultural and social context. That is, human mental development is not given a priori, it is not immutable and universal, it is not passive, nor is it independent of the historical development and social forms of human life. Culture is, therefore, a constitutive part of human nature, since its psychological characteristic is through the internalization of historically determined and culturally organized ways of operating with information (Rego, 2011: 41).

In this thesis, Vygotsky points out that the development of specifically human psychological functions, among them the capacity to construct scientific knowledge, does not occur naturally. That is, it does not derive from a strictly biological process, since it depends, in addition to the existence of a

constituted mental structure, of processes of social and cultural mediation, of exchanges, relationships and social interactions. In this context, the school is characterized as a fundamental space for the construction of socially elaborated knowledge. The school organizes pedagogical moments that allow the development of higher psychological functions.

The third thesis refers to the biological basis of psychological functioning:

[...] the brain, seen as the main organ of mental activity. The brain, the product of a long evolution, is the material substrate of the psychic activity that each member of the species brings with it at birth. However, this material basis does not mean an immutable and fixed system (Rego, 2011:42). This idea translates the concept of brain plasticity advocated by Vygotsky and Luria. The brain is not conceived in the sociocultural theory as a rigid organ, but rather as "an open system of great plasticity, shaped throughout the history of the species and individual development" (Oliveira, 1992: 69). Luria (1986) proclaims that the brain is the organ of human learning. The brain has plasticity, cognitive flexibility as a consequence of the interference of the cultural and social dimension in its functioning. The fourth thesis refers to the processes of mediation that surround human activities. According to Rego (2011: 42),

[...] These are the technical instruments and systems of signs, built historically, that mediate human beings among themselves and of them with the world. Language is a mediator sign par excellence, because it carries within itself generalized concepts elaborated by human culture.

The above statement highlights the instruments of mediation (technical and symbolic) that enable the process of apprehending human culture. Here language is a central and constitutive element of the process of humanization as a result of its mediating dimension and its contribution to the construction of thought.

And in the fifth thesis,

[...] psychological analysis should be able to preserve basic characteristics of psychological processes, exclusively human. This principle is based on the idea that complex psychological processes differ from the most elementary mechanisms and can not therefore be reduced to the chain of reflexes. These more sophisticated modes of psychological functioning, which develop in a historical process, can be explained and described. Thus, in approaching human consciousness as a product of social history, it points in the direction of the need to study the changes that occur in mental development from the social context (Rego, 2011: 43).

This principle of sociocultural theory is central to the discussion about the curriculum and its role in the mental development of children, young people and adults with or without special educational needs in the process of schooling. For the construction of knowledge or conceptual elaboration is for Vygotsky the most sophisticated mental function of the human. It also shows the essential function of the school: to enable the development of complex modes of thought (higher psychological functions) through the teaching and learning process directed to the apprehension and construction of elaborate /scientific knowledge (conceptual formation).

The principles postulated above highlight the contributions of socio-cultural theory to curricular discussions and school teaching. The elaborated / scientific knowledge must be based on a pedagogical and curricular model that aims at the development of higher mental functions. That is, in complex modes of thought, which differ from the spontaneous and pragmatic modes of thinking and understanding. This differentiation between everyday (spontaneous) knowledge and elaborate (scientific) knowledge in the classroom acquired through systematic and intentional teaching (Rego, 2011). The cognitive movement of the child in the school space and in the classroom must have markedly more complex dimensions. This requires the development of elaborate thinking, the existence of self-regulated consciousness, and a degree of logic and abstraction nonexistent in the child's relationship to spontaneous knowledge. These elements corroborate Young's (2007) thinking, which argues for the need to differentiate between everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge in the process of school knowledge formation and in the organization of the curriculum.

The incursion for the postulates of sociocultural theory shows their contributions to the process of teaching and learning in schools and important aspects of curricular organization. For Vygotsky (2009), it is the school that presents to the child the system of scientific concepts and not the daily experience. Young approaches Vygotsky by inferring that the core element of the curriculum consists of knowledge. This relationship between knowledge type and modes of cognitive functioning is extremely significant for school education, as it provides clues and parameters that indicate that it is within the framework of the construction of scientific knowledge that the child develops the higher psychological functions (complex modes of thought), the which demonstrates that this should be the basis of the school curriculum. It is in the complex theoretical framework outlined by Vygotsky and Young that we can find fundamental elements to think about the organization of the process and pedagogical work in the school context, rescuing what some curricular theories seconded: knowledge as the basis of the curriculum.

Defectology and compensation theory in Vygotsky

In this direction it is important to emphasize that the Vygotskian theory thinks that the cognitive development of the person, with or without disability, as a synthesis of multiple determinations that are part of the dialectical process of constitution of the intrapsychic intrinsically related to that which is placed in the extrapsychic scope. Thus, it is in social relations that the formation of what is properly human is possible and it is not possible to understand the same, disregarding historical and social reality (Vygotsky, 1997). Vygotsky's experience with teacher training led to the study of learning and language disorders, the various forms of congenital and acquired deficiencies, such as aphasia. At the time, he used the term defectology to refer to the study of children with some type of disability, at that time called the "defect". Whether this physical or mental defect, he questioned as determinant of capabilities and incapacities of the subject. In his criticism of Defectology, Vygotsky denounced that the contents taught led to misery, and that the work structure was artificially prepared by breaking the contact with the normal environment, artificially adapting the child's world to the defect, thus school education for anti-sociability.

[...] Our school, instead of withdrawing the child from the isolated world, usually develops in the child habits that lead to even greater isolation and intensifies their separation. Due to these defects, not only does the general education of the child become paralyzed, but also its special learning is sometimes reduced to zero (Vygotsky 2010:41).

Another criticism made by Vygotsky in this educational context was the error of thinking that the essence of educational work was to develop organs that were not affected by disability - an idea linked to the biological compensation of the "defect". As a methodological and pedagogical alternative, the author proposes the use of special technical-methodological resources that allow the person to compensate for their limitation by creating other ways that guarantee their insertion in the productive life in full collaboration with the non-disabled. Thus, coherent with dialectical thinking, Vygotsky stresses in the deficiency the tendency to its opposite, that is, the potential. He sees that limitation brings with it the contradictory possibility of overcoming as a tendency, but not as a direct mechanical consequence. These are central concepts in Vygotsky's studies on the education of the handicapped: compensation and overcompensation. Considering the studies on the process of compensation in Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Vygotsky discusses the understanding of the compensatory process in the light of the materialistic method dialectical history that can be summarized as follows:

The education of children with different disabilities must be based on the fact that, along with disability, the psychological tendencies of opposite orientation are also given, the compensatory potentialities to overcome the deficiency are given, and precisely these are the ones that are at the forefront of development of the child and should be included in the educational process as their driving force. [...] Believing that any deficiency will compensate is as naive as thinking that any disease ends undoubtedly in recovery. Primarily we need criterion and realism in valuation, we know that the tasks of overcompensation of such deficiencies as blindness and deafness are enormous, while compensatory flow is poor and scarce; the path of development is extraordinarily difficult, but it is therefore more important to know the right direction (Vygotsky 1986: 47).

Compensation refers to the substitutive process that ensures development. That is, when one or more ways of apprehending the world and of expression are not intact or can not be formed, the individual can choose others that are intact. This allows him to be in the world and with him to relate. In this sense, this theory does not conform to biological limits, but to overcoming them. By pushing for the establishment of new positions on old issues, such as that disability is a factor impeding development. This view, that disability is not only a weakness, but also potentiality, results in an important reference in favor of the possibilities for the various professionals in their work with education. Vygotsky's concern was to change the way disability is understood by freeing it from the biological and limiting bias. While acknowledging the organic basis for disability, he argued that the larger issue was the way culture dealt with it. For him, the learning of the child with intellectual disability is related to the stimuli offered by the social environment. In the school the relationship with teachers and colleagues, will allow the subject a greater

development, mediated by instruments and signs that help him to dynamize his learning.

Democratization of school knowledge

The school currently faces new challenges, among them, to establish more adequate conditions to attend to the diversity of the individuals who participate in it. To achieve this quality in education, there is a need to renew the entire educational structure leaving behind traditional teaching.

However, what is democratizing? According to the Aurelio Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (2003), it means making accessible to all classes; popularize. Democracy presupposes a possibility for all members of society to participate in all decision-making processes that pertain to their daily lives, that is, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, and so on. In this perspective, the entire school community should seek the democratization of school relations by promoting the participation of teachers, employees, students, parents and responsible in the elaboration of school proposals and not only in their execution. This process is important because, according to Paro (1997), the one who performs only renounces being subject. On the other hand, every human being is subject by nature, therefore, by being excluded from the elaboration, participating only in the execution of what one has elaborated and determined, he loses his humanity. It is not enough for the individual to attend schools. It is not enough to have access to scientific concepts so that their internal processes of development are triggered. It is necessary to have access to an appropriate teaching situation. Vygotsky warns that "when he speaks of teaching, he does not refer to any teaching, but to one who" advances to development ", to" good teaching. " In exposing the differences between learning and development, he emphasizes: "[...] a correct organization of the child's learning leads to mental development" (Vygotsky, 1986: 115). The guarantee of effectiveness of the process of acquisition of knowledge and consequently of personal and social growth and development of the individual related to the school, must be anchored in the Pedagogical Political Project of the educational establishment. This, starting from the organization of its Curricular Proposal can offer subsidies to educators.

Expansion of Inclusive Education and curricular adaptation

In this direction, the process of expansion of Inclusive Education in Brazil has grown since the 1980s. According to Sasaki (2002), with the emergence of the struggle for the rights of people with disabilities, despite the difficulties, it had the consistent support of conscious and participative citizens. The actions of international movements emphasized Inclusive Education. Although it did not have such denomination in the period, but this strengthened the cause. One of the reasons for the growth of this movement, according to Zamoner (2014), was to the post-war phase, where the wounded became disabled, and being rehabilitated, they could return to production. Analyzing this period on inclusive education that has gained many supporters, it can be considered that it was because those rehabilitated would no longer depend on the government. Contextualizing in the current period, one wonders if the intention of the insertion of the students with intellectual deficiency in the regular education is not the same, that is, of saying that they would cease to be incapable. It is

not necessary to associate deficiency with special education, nor does every deficiency require specialized care, but some pedagogical and technological resources for knowledge mediation. In this context, the *Education for All* guidelines were recommended in the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994). Discussions about the Inclusive School have gained strength. This proposal was supported by Brazilian Law No. 9,394 / 96 - Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB, 1996), which defines the State's duty as "[...] specialized educational assistance for students with special needs, a regular educational network [...]" (Article 4, III), guiding educational policies ever since, and providing the legal basis for the propagation of Inclusive Education, and the actions that followed. Other important legal documents, such as Brazilian Law no. 7,853 / 89, called the Integration Act, and the 1990 Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) reaffirmed the right to education and the notion of social integration. Decree 3298 of 1999 (which regulated Law 7853/89) provides for the option of specialized schools only when the education of ordinary schools can not meet the educational or social needs of the student or when necessary for the well-being of the student.

It is important to emphasize that the concept of Inclusive School determines a new posture of the common school. Proposes actions that favor social integration in the pedagogical political project, curriculum, teaching methodology, evaluation and attitude of learners. The role of the school in this context is to enable teachers and staff to meet this demand. It organizes and adapts itself to offer quality education for all, including for students with special needs. Inclusion, therefore, does not mean simply enrolling students with special needs in the ordinary class, ignoring their specific needs, but it means giving the teacher and the school the necessary support for their pedagogical action. The need to think about a curriculum for the inclusive school was made official from the measures developed with the Special Education Secretariat of the Ministry of Education. From the creation of the National Curricular Parameters. This document explains the concept of curricular adaptations, considered as: "[...] strategies and criteria of teaching performance, admitting decisions that allow to adapt the educational action of the school to the peculiar ways of learning of the students, considering that the teaching-learning process presupposes attending to the diversification of the needs of the students in the school (MEC / SEESP, 2002). In general, one can speak of two types of curricular adaptations, the so-called "accessibility adaptations" to the curriculum and the pedagogical adaptations". The first ones refer to the elimination of architectural barriers so that the student can attend the regular school with autonomy, participating in the proposed activities for the other students. These include "physical, material and communication conditions" such as: access ramps and adapted toilets; support of interpreters of LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language) and / or teacher training and other colleagues; transcription of texts for Braille and other educational resources adapted for the visually impaired; use of alternative communication with students with cerebral palsy or difficulties in speaking, etc. Curricular adaptations, on the other hand, are modifications of the planning, objectives, activities and forms of evaluation, in the curriculum as a whole, or in parts of it, to attend students with special needs. Curricular adaptations are the way to meet students' learning needs. It is worth noting that, according to MacLaren (1998), the curriculum:

[...] represents much more than a syllabus, a text in the classroom or the vocabulary of a course. More than this, it represents the introduction of a particular form of life; it serves, in part, to prepare students for dominant or subordinate positions in the existing society. The curriculum favors certain forms of knowledge about others and affirms the dreams, desires, and values of select groups of students over other groups, often discriminating against certain racial, class, or gender groups (MacLaren 1998: 116).

The inclusion of students with special needs in the regular class implies the development of adaptive actions. These aim at the flexibility of the curriculum, so that it can be developed effectively in the classroom, and meet the individual needs of all students.

According to the NCPs, these curricular adaptations are carried out at three levels: Adaptations at the level of the pedagogical project (school curriculum) that should focus mainly on school organization and support services, providing structural conditions that may occur at the level of classroom and on the individual level. Adaptations related to the class curriculum, which mainly refer to the programming of activities developed for the classroom. Individualized adaptations of the curriculum, which focus on the teacher's performance in the assessment and the attendance to each student.

Inclusive Education, from the curricular point of view, means that the student with special needs should be part of the regular class, learning the same things as others, even in different ways, and it is up to the teacher to make the necessary adaptations.

Final considerations

Vygotsky's thinking about the genesis of typically human higher psychological processes encompasses elements and guidelines essential to the organization of the school curriculum and the process of teaching and learning aimed at the development of complex modes of thought where the construction of scientific / as a central element. Cultural Historical Theory leads us to think of school knowledge as the basis for future curriculum considering the differentiation of theoretical knowledge and everyday knowledge proposed by Young in his article: Durkheim, Vygotsky and the curriculum of the future. The school curriculum plays an important role in the process of learning and development, insofar as the pedagogical experience arising from the dialectic relation that is circumscribed in it can enable advances in the process of acquisition of higher functions. Thus, the course of the considerations outlined here goes through the approach of the Cultural Historical Theory to the nuances of the constitution of school knowledge, which for Young is the basis of the curriculum of the future and culminates in the proposal of curricular adaptation based on the Theory of Compensation in Vygotsky. If we consider that all limitation can generate compensation, the school must have a pedagogical project that provokes compensations offering strategies and resources that could not be done without this mediation.

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