

## **The class at the university: space-time relationships**

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### **Abstract**

*In the context of the pandemic, this paper discusses the classroom as a space-time for the production of knowledge, methodologies and pedagogical practices, relationships and interactions in higher education. The discussion draws on qualitative approach research data used for data survey interviews with three Physical Education, History and Pedagogy teachers, undergraduate degrees that train basic education teachers at a Brazilian public university, and information from class observations. The results show that teachers who innovate in the treatment of knowledge in classes do so based on relationships: teaching-learning, teacher-student, content-method, object-evaluation, teaching-research, theory-practice, total-local knowledge.*

**Keywords:** Classroom, Space-time, Relations, University.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Covid-19 pandemic has required governments of all affected countries to take measures to ensure social isolation. Educational institutions are the most affected in view of their potential to aggregate children and young people who attend classes for at least five hours a day. Social isolation has led these institutions to use digital technologies to make it possible to offer education to the thousands of students who are unable to attend school and live with teachers and colleagues.

This situation reinforces the understanding that the didactic-pedagogical process, mediated or not by technologies, developed in the classroom space-time - face-to-face-physical and/or virtual-on-line, presupposes personalized effective teaching methods presented by the teacher in the relationship with the students.

The class is understood as space-time for the production of knowledge, methodologies, evaluation and pedagogical practices. The didactic processes that occur in classes are socially determined. At the same time, they express the teacher's conceptions about society, education, training, knowledge, teaching, learning and class (QUIXADÁ VIANA; SILVA, 2017).

This paper intends to discuss the current challenges faced by the teacher, their implications in the conception, organization, and development of the classroom in higher education, and the possibilities to constitute innovative processes aimed at the construction of knowledge. It uses the results of research conducted with three university professors who train basic education teachers.

### **II. METHODOLOGY**

The research conducted by Silva (2011) included graduation courses in Physical Education, History and Pedagogy offered at a Brazilian public university. The qualitative approach of the research aimed to ensure the accuracy and credibility required in a scientific work as shown in the basic characteristics discussed by Bogdan and Biklen (1994), such as: direct contact of the researcher with the participating professors and the researched environment; relevance attributed to the process of data collection, rather than the product; attention to the "meaning" that people attribute to things, facts, situations and speech.

In order to survey the empirical data, interviews were conducted with the professors and observations were made in the classes they taught with the objective of identifying innovations in the teaching, learning, researching and evaluating processes, and which signal breakdowns as to how to treat knowledge in the university.

### **III. RESULTS**

The analysis of the interview data and class observations made it possible to identify innovation characteristics in the construction of knowledge in the university.

The perspective of innovation assumed in this article is characterized by: "a break with the usual didactic style and the protagonism that identifies the processes of gestation and development of new practice" (LUCARELLI, 2007, p. 80).

An innovative teaching practice can only be understood in the historical context of individuals, groups or institutions and is linked to the epistemological and methodological dimension, i.e. the way knowledge is worked out in class and the didactic processes that favour this construction. For Silva (2011), the relationships established in class are a requirement for the constitution of innovative teaching, learning, research and evaluation processes. In this sense, the analysis of the interview data and class observations made it possible to identify relationships seen as possibilities for facing the challenges presented to the work of the higher education teacher. These challenges are:

- **Teacher-student:** observed in all classes in the teachers' search for building a democratic, affective and collaborative pedagogical relationship. It was based on respect for culture, ideology, values and beliefs differences and whose power of decision and action, shared by teachers and students, favored the constitution of a classroom environment conducive to the construction, production, meaning and resignification of knowledge.
- **Teaching-learning:** the commitment of teachers to overcome dichotomous, linear, mechanical and reproductive teaching practices was observed. While teaching, teachers learned from the knowledge and experiences of students. This perspective favored the vision of knowledge as a construction that encouraged doubt, questioning and problematization in class.
- **Theory-practice:** teachers sought to connect theoretical content to practice. This way of conceiving knowledge is one of the axes of innovative practices in higher education class and aims at overcoming the dichotomous conception that treats knowledge in a fragmented and static way. It gives a new meaning to the articulated content of the actions that are developed in real life and at work situations. By developing teaching based primarily on the real problems of the professional field of the future teachers, teachers advanced towards overcoming the traditional teaching – focused on transmission/reproduction of information, rules and theories – and created the possibility for students to think and learn.
- **Teaching-research:** teachers research and teach, and the knowledge produced in research contributes to the quality of teaching. The teaching-research relationship involved teachers and students as active participants in the investigative process, fed the reflections on the issues studied, bringing meaning to them in the light of theoretical-practical studies, and contributed to establishing the necessary relationships between the contents that are worked during classes and the practices analyzed in the research processes. The activities observed, and which enabled the teaching-research relationship, were carried out both in groups and individually, based on problems and/or issues that favored the construction and systematization of knowledge. Besides, activities of research initiation were observed, such as: monographic researches privileged the dialogue with authors/studies of a specific area; bibliographic research works were carried out as a first insertion in the field of research; contact with the concrete reality of the school was made; their relevance in the graduation courses, of knowing, questioning and understanding the problems of the school that may foster future research; and research on specific themes involving the community was encouraged.
- **Objectives-evaluation:** in the classes observed it was possible to identify that evaluation is related to implicit and explicit objectives of the educational institution systematized in its institutional pedagogical project. Being a category that guides teaching, learning and researching processes in class, evaluation interferes in the organization of the class and of the institution as a whole, given the way it is expressed in its pedagogical project (FREITAS, 1995).
- **Content-method:** contents worked by the teachers made it possible to reach the educational objectives, and the methodology organized pedagogical actions qualifying the didactic process. The selection and organization of the content, methods and teaching techniques are based on the criteria of meeting the needs and interests of students, seeking to overcome the mere rationalization of the teaching process (characteristic of the conservative model that excels in time control to ensure efficiency and productivity in the distribution of content as didactic units and teaching strategies means). The relation of the content to the method as observed in the classes is, therefore, fundamental in its constitution in a critical perspective, as a way to face the daily life practical problems.
- **Total-local knowledge:** it was up to the teachers to organize didactic processes articulating the scientific knowledge – historically built by humanity – to the local, regional, cultural, experiential knowledge of the students, in the perspective that "all knowledge is local and total" (SOUSA SANTOS, 2003, p. 60). Teachers encouraged students in the study of concepts and theories resulting from research developed locally (within the training institution), with a view to extend them to other social and professional contexts. The knowledge treated as possibilities of human action, from a local space-time, demanded a methodological plurality and brought the knowledge studied in class closer to that produced by researchers around issues of local and national context. They can also guide and update the knowledge, articulating it to the interests of society. Although teachers, in developing their work, express conceptions of education, society, man/woman, teaching, learning, arising from their training and personal, academic and professional experiences, one cannot disregard the influences of values, norms, rules, processes consolidated in the institution and which are still strongly influenced by traditional pedagogy. The centrality of such a didactic process falls on the teacher, as well as on

the cognitive content transmitted to students, the discipline and memorization (SOUSA SANTOS, 2003). They are also influenced by technical guidelines, inspired by the principles of rationality, efficiency and productivity with a neutral vision of scientific knowledge. The influences of these ideals justify the adoption of conflicting fundamentals and the difficulty in establishing innovative processes in higher education.

Thus, it is necessary to overcome: a) the distance between what is proposed in the teaching plans elaborated by teachers and the guidelines coming from the National Curricular Guidelines of the Courses; b) the absence of pedagogical formation of teachers, which makes difficult the articulation of the epistemological dimension and the pedagogical dimension in teaching; c) the professional solitude characteristic of the higher education teaching profession, which produces individualized work and inhibits the constitution of shared innovative cultures that contribute to revitalize teaching and learning; and d) the absence of a political-pedagogical project at universities, built collectively, which prevents the guidance of teaching activities of teachers and students and innovative processes in higher education.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The class, a privileged space-time of human, academic and professional formation, can take place in conventional and non-conventional spaces, in the face-to-face and/or distance modality, based on principles, relationships and interactions that favor the construction of knowledge in a participative and collaborative way. Teaching is a social practice, however, conceiving and planning classes are solitary actions that can be transformed based on the constitution of the relationships discussed in this article, without the risk of transforming university teaching into a question of methods and techniques, emptying it of its cultural, political and scientific references.

The organization and development of the class is a great challenge for teachers and students who live with an immense range of external appeals. The ways to build a favorable didactic process for the production of knowledge based on the relationships discussed in this article involve overcoming much deeper and more complex issues, such as the appreciation of education and teaching by society and government.

In this sense, it is believed that the class needs to be conceived, organized and developed within the context in which it is situated, with the teacher recognizing whom it serves, what its purpose is, and considering the commitment that it assumes as an instructor of future teachers. Therefore, the university teacher needs to experience a continuous formation that enables him to understand the social and educational reality with all its contradictions and possibilities.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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