

Research in the field of psychopedagogy



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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the specificity of the type of research appropriate to the field of Psychopedagogy, through the interlocution between the two authors who sign the chapter. Being both structuralists, they are based on this philosophical school when discussing reasons to recognize qualitative research as being the most appropriate when it comes to clinical Psychopedagogy, both because of the conditions of the work setting – a praxis – as well as about the client.

Keywords: Psychopedagogy, Fundamentals of Research in Psychopedagogy, Qualitative Research.

1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2016, I was invited to make an interlocution with my dear friend and always admired epistemologist Sara Pain, from a text of hers with the title *The scope and specificity of research in the field of Psychopedagogy*. With great joy and passion for the theme, we did a duet, she in Paris, me in Rio de Janeiro, at TEKOA-Center for Learning Studies. And almost nothing else happened, but the two intertwined lines¹, stored in the computer, precious yes, but nothing more.

Today, looking for something else, I discovered them in a poorly classified collection. And I started to think about the still freshness of this theme, 7 years later. This article is, therefore, the outcrop in writing of what was the duet presented. The voices, mine and hers, are mixed in a dialogue between people who like to research and accept the challenge of doing so, knowing that grace is in, with each investigation, new questions arise, in a spiral that ends...

She and I agree that research in the field of psychopedagogy is imperative, but it requires great caution on the part of those who do it, since we are not talking about a theoretical ground, which seems

¹The writing of Sara Pain *The scope and specificity of research in the field of Psychopedagogy* that motivated my dialogue with the author was translated in 2016 by Maria Luiza Leão, Director of Tekoa, PhD in Educational Sciences. Paris V. Sorbonne.



to us firmer, even if hypothetical. The field of psychopedagogy has specific characteristics to which research papers do not always respond clearly.

The first to take into account is that psychopedagogy is not a science properly speaking, but, still considered, a praxis, a therapeutic practice that intervenes on a multifactorial practice, that of learning. But this praxis does not come out of nowhere. It is based on some theoretical pillars that are articulated within a common philosophical framework, under which structures are built that must harmonize with each other, so as not to lose the systemic balance of their parts, needing to meet, also, the movement of continuous balancing, which is life. No day is the same as the other and, for each day, the psychopedagogue needs to think both about the service he will do, and, at the same time, be prepared to receive a "same *new* client", the one who emerged from the last session, restructured with the material of what happened in the interlude of days. This is the client who will present himself in the next session. Like the sands of a beach that stand on changing elevations driven by the wind and, in this way, always surprising the walkers, so is the setting of the psychopedagogical session.

Of course, psychopedagogy has, of course, scientific references that serve as its foundation, but it justifies the veracity of these foundations more than these foundations justify it. Like all practice, the main justification for its relevance is its efficiency. The effects of psychopedagogical action are, for field research, more relevant than the causes that produce them. It's not just about the effects considered on the success/failure axis. It is, first, to consider the facts that the subject produces in a learning situation: experiences, gestures, behaviors, expressions, etc.

Being an eminently practical discipline, the specific objective of research in psychopedagogy does not aim at foundations and principles that it draws from other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, biology and even philosophy. Thus, a theme such as the differences in intellectual performances according to socio-economic classes is properly sociological, it will not tell us anything about the functions of learning; A theme about the genesis of a specific notion, proper to epistemic psychology, will not inform us about our central interest, which is the various strategies that the different individualities mobilize within the same structural level.

Lack of attention may be a topic of pharmaco-medical research, but the location in the brain of an attentional zone adds nothing to the knowledge of attention fluctuations in relation to circumstantial variables: interest, duration, routine, etc. Psychoanalysis can unravel the traumatic moment linked to a lost epistemic function, but the interpretation is hardly likely to account for a more extensive cognitive behavior. Thus, in a child who omits the letter "h" in the word man, an (unsuspecting) psychoanalyst can easily identify a conflict of identification. However, the subjects who comment on this error and repeat it for all words that have a mute letter, the description of this symptom can guide the professional to consider the symbolic relationship of the subject with the law that governs what is not pronounced by voice.



So shouldn't we worry about these studies from other sciences? Of course. Because, in the microcosm of each learner is the mark of the biological, socio-relational, affective instances, of their ancestry and of their history.

If we add to the uniqueness of the client, that initial aspect that we brought - psychopedagogy as a praxis - we ratify the certainty that the proper use is the qualitative model, because, in general, the empirical sciences conclude their research by *descriptive* findings, when it comes to realizing what happens, or does not happen, in each case in which the subject acquires, or does not acquire, a precise knowledge or competence; *explanatory*, which relate the effects to their causes; *interpretive*, relating each behavior to the moment of its symbolic institution.

In the specific case of interpretation within the psychopedagogical setting, "it means communicating to the client, in the form of signaling or confrontation, what he understands of the meaning of his behavior and conflicts, translating, if applicable, the psychic mechanisms that led to the formation of the symptom."²In fact, in relation to interpretation, when performed in the psychopedagogical space, when appropriate to the client, it will be inserted in the associative chains of its psychic system, acting in a structuring way. It is important to point this out.

Returning to the central theme of this writing, given the type of phenomenon that characterizes our practice, the objective of the research is to arrive at a description of the individual psychopedagogical fact as unique and unpublished; it cannot serve a generalization, however, it can, by its richness, become exemplary. He is not just one in a sample; he is one in his uniqueness, yet he brings with him evidence of all the elements. And, we must not forget that "the only cases are full of laws".³ If the sample results do not always explain the singular, also the singular does not necessarily have to "fit" in the parametric statistical modal curve. Lewin's ideas illuminate the contemporary debate about individual cases, as well as legality and theory in psychology; Why not extend them to psychopedagogy? We will be well accompanied.

It is then *the personal adventure in a situation that* interests us, as well as everything that in the act of learning is updated, that is, the cognitive potentialities, but also the habits, the skills, the prejudices, the inhibitions, since we will find the integral individual in each creative learning. Creative, not in the social sense, but in the reflective sense: while the subject reproduces the shared knowledge in an original way, for himself.

In fact, the process of creation cannot be linked only to the field of Arts, Design, Crafts. We have to broaden the concept, because to create is to find a new (at least for you) way to structure the elements

² Mamede-Neves, Antonio (1983) *Metapsicologia da Interpretação*, Rio de Janeiro: Autografia, 2022.

³ Lewin, K. (1931). The conflict between Aristotelian and Galileian modes of thought in contemporary psychology. *Journal of General Psychology*, 5, 141–177 (tradução livre)

Tateo, L. (2013). Generalization as creative and reflective act: Revisiting Lewin's conflict between Aristotelian and Galileian modes of thought in psychology :*Theory & Psychology* 23(4):518-536



of a whole. And for this, the subject of knowledge uses two of the possibilities of thought: the *reproductive and the productive*. Thanks to the first, it keeps in itself a cast of memories that lead it to recognize internal excitations or elements of the external world; second, it uses them for the development of productive thinking, that is, it constructs the hypothetical-deductive reasoning that occurs through the creative imagination (be it artistic, useful or speculative), or by reasoning. It used to be said that by artistic creativity, the beautiful would be produced; by the practical way, the useful; and, finally, by speculative, one would try to find the truth... There is no consensus.

In any case, we know that thinking presupposes the support of an organization – the psychic organization – which constitutes a system of representations of internal impulses, objects and bonds perceived in the real world, of the experiential moments and actions of the individual himself, all of this received as information by the psyche, recorded in it and signified by it. In fact, the psychic system performs a double job: it transforms perceptions, external and internal, into images and mental operations, always integrating them into the set of already structured records, while modifying its own structures of operation, depending on the entry of new information into the system itself.

Through this possibility, that is, after receiving the information, registering it and signifying it and, above all, storing it, it is possible, to the thought, to work with mental representations of the external reality, organized in structures of operation capable of allowing the thought to put into action *Anticipation mechanisms*, perhaps the most important feature of its functioning. It is from this structured thought that the possibility of becoming organized and disciplined or refractory to life situations emerges; or to anticipate and see solutions, to weave singular plots, original for the historical moment in which it is conceived, that is, to create a new one.

And why don't we lose the focus of reality? Because thought is "kept on track" by the control of selective perception linked to reality.

When we affirm that thought does not make a linear reading of the world, we are certainly not relying on the theoretical bases of the analytical, the logical-theorists, defenders of the presuppositions of the *natural sciences*, in contrast to *sciences of the spirit*. We are relying on the proposals of the *Continental*, the historical-literary ones that defend the difference of the sciences of the spirit and the structural functioning of the mental space.⁴

Having the reach and the established approach, it remains for the researcher, the methodological referral. He must be appropriate to the epistemic theory that underlies the pedagogical experience he describes. For us, this referral is constructivist. This imposes two obligations: first, the construction of a learning situation whose theoretical description is as complete as possible; The notion to be acquired and the notions implied will be defined exhaustively, considering the intellectual level of its genesis, as well as its historical and symbolic scope. This constitutes a basis for addressing the

⁴ D'Agostini, Franco *Analytic and continental*, Madri: Catedra Ediciones, 2010.



symbolic aspect of the notions, since we inherit the concepts with the conflicts he faced at the time of his appearance. The richer in potency the proposition, the richer will be our observation of its uptake by the subject; We can indicate what he takes, what he rejects, what leaves him indifferent. The second obligation is logical: it is not enough to establish a relationship, for example, between an acquisition and a condition; it is also necessary to confirm that this obligation is false (that there are situations where the relationship is not verified) and that there is reciprocity between the terms (that the presence of one ensures the presence of the other), because the description must allow us to make deductions, not to arrive at universal generalizations, but to identify some constants of behavior as comprehensive as possible; including all or almost all elements or aspects of the subject in question.

When it comes to human action, such as learning, exceptions to logical rules broaden the field of research, opening up to unprecedented, even contradictory possibilities that make the wonder of subjective variability. However, to better ponder a conflict, to make the impossible appear, one must be able to frame the possible. With this, the mute zone emerges, the intertext, essential to the psychopedagogical process in action.

Finally, we cannot forget the therapeutic character of psychopedagogy. The descriptive analysis of the behaviors raised by the situation will allow us to evaluate the psychopedagogical potentiality of the proposition - the variability of responses it elicits; the necessary adjustments to its application - of the demands, of the material, of the quality of the requirement; the placement of this situation in a continuous program or in a more potent research. And thus, the conducts of care are known, a subject that is still very little written in the books that deal with psychopedagogy.



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