

## COLLABORATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES: AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF THE HISTORICAL-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

This article, initially published in the journal Contribuciones a Las Ciencias Sociales, addresses school inclusion from the perspective of Lev Vygotsky's Historical-Cultural Theory, seeking to offer theoretical subsidies for the understanding of the relationship between learning and language development by relating the interlocutions with a pedagogical practice in the public school of Espírito Santo. It highlights the World Conference on Education for All, which defends school inclusion, and legal measures, such as Law No. 10,436/02, which aims to guarantee school access and participation for all. The research, carried out through the participatory methodology, reports the experience with a deaf student and her multi-segregated class, in a settlement school, located in the state of

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Espírito Santo, Brazil. It highlights the importance of collaborative work between teachers of Specialized Educational Service (AEE), regular teaching and Libras interpreter to promote the psychic development of students in signifying the cultural and social. It reaffirms the relevance of the school as a space for learning and mediation in the process of hominization.

Keywords: Historical-cultural. Deafness. Field. Apprenticeship.



### **INTRODUCTION**

This work was originally published in the journal Contribuciones a Las Ciencias Sociales. The emergence of the Historical-Cultural Theory, presented in a brief historical, cultural and philosophical contextualization, is supported by historical-dialectical materialism, based on Marxist bases and brings as its main contributions the understanding of how human development occurs from the perspective of its precursor, Vygotsky, with emphasis on the way in which its concepts and assumptions reflect on the vast reflections on the understanding of the human psyche and the process of hominization, as well as its implications in the field of Special Education.

At this juncture, it is essential to resume the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990, with the proclamation that education favors personal and social progress and, among other findings, refers to the idea of "satisfaction of basic learning needs ". And, in order to provide an adequate environment for learning in the field of public policies for the school inclusion of deaf students, measures were adopted to ensure their participation in the interactions of the school context so that they are part of the interlocutions that permeate this scenario.

Among these measures, Law No. 10,436/02 and Decree 5,626/05 are included. I also highlight Decree No. 7,611/2011, which provides for the Specialized Educational Service (AEE) and the Operational Guidelines for Special Education in the state of Espírito Santo with a proposal for the work of the SEA articulated with common education, that is, the collaborative work of the specialist teacher.

In compliance with this current legislation, this study carried out through the participatory methodology of the experience report type with the collaborative work lived in a multigrade class of 7th and 8th grade, where a deaf student studies, aims to contribute to the reflections on the inclusive processes that take place in the education networks to ensure the learning of public students of Special Education.

Thus, the interlocutions between the Historical-Cultural theory with the pedagogical practice are focused on a perspective of articulation between the SEA teacher in the area of hearing impairment and the regular school teacher, mediated by the Libras interpreter, in stimuli to expand the expressiveness of the deaf student in the learning context.

### HISTORICAL-CULTURAL THEORY AND EDUCATION

Lev Seminovich Vygotsky was born in the city of Orsha in 1896 and died in 1934, before he was even 38 years old, due to tuberculosis. Despite the short production time, his



works brought revolutionary contributions, especially to the explanation of how human development occurs.

And this Historical-Cultural theory is born from a nonconformity, or rather, it arises from an attempt to overcome the explanations coming from two strong philosophical currents of the time, which are described as follows by Rego (1995),

On the one hand, there was a group that, based on the assumptions of an empiricist philosophy, saw psychology as a natural science that should stop at describing the external forms of behavior, understood as mechanically constituted abilities. This group limited itself to the analysis of the most elementary processes and ignored the complex phenomena of conscious, specifically human activity. On the other hand, the other group, inspired by the principles of philosophy, understood psychology as a mental science, believing that human psychic life could not be the object of study of objective science, since it was a manifestation of the spirit (Rego 1995, p. 28).

These theories were no longer able to explain and understand the differentiation between the development of man and animals and how the process of hominization of man occurs. It was precisely in an attempt to overcome this crisis in psychology that Vygotsky, together with his group of researchers, mainly Leontiev and Luria, sought a new approach that would enable the junction between these two predominant approaches at that time.

This search to understand the development of the human psyche was then called Historical-Cultural Psychology. For this, it is important to consider as a fundamental aspect in Vygotsky's ideas, the intertwining between these two processes: the biological and the cultural, as "[...] a development immersed in history and culture, in nature and society, in the reciprocal constitution between man and the world [...]" (Andrade and Smolka, 2012, p.700). This means that man humanizes himself in the relationship with the other and with the environment, through instruments and signs constructed by himself, throughout the process of hominization.

There is also an emphasis on the contribution of culture, cultural integration and the historical dimension, with a strong Marxist influence and the historical-dialectical materialism theory, being understood as a theory of human activity placed in opposition to naturalism and the passive receptivity of the empiricist tradition, whereas:

The change, the dynamics and the transformation in nature, in man, in conceptions and in knowledge become causes and effects, motives and objects of the many changes in the functioning of the subject who, (con)living, creates different ways of acting in the world and of changing himself and the other (Andrade and Smolka, 2012, p.702).

Vygotsky's production infers the human being always related to his historical-cultural context. For the social environment, the relations built by man in history and by history,



constitute man. Thus, in order to understand the great contributions of this author, it is essential to emphasize the moment in which his theories were elaborated.

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE VYGOTSKYAN VIEW

Understanding that human development is cultural and historical, that is, it reveals the long process of human formation of man, who operates in nature and in himself as part of this nature, as a historical and cultural being, can contribute to reflect on development from school spaces.

The child is born a social being and his singulization as a person occurs concomitantly with his learning as a member of the culture, that is, the development occurs in the emergence of the culture and later in the field of individualization.

In his general law of development, Vygotsky explains the importance of the collective in the lives of children, regardless of whether there is any deficiency.

All functions in the child's development appear twice: first, at the social level, and then at the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then within the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, and concept formation. All higher functions originate from the real relationships between human individuals (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 64).

In this way, it is stated that the higher psychic functions need relationships to exist. They are not born. But they are constructed and developed from intrapsychic processes, from the conditions made available to each subject in particular, as Rego (1995) explains:

Vygotsky dedicated himself to the studies of the so-called higher psychological functions, which consist of the typically human mode of psychological functioning, such as the capacity for planning, voluntary memory, imagination, etc. These mental processes are considered sophisticated and "superior" because they refer to intentional mechanisms, consciously controlled actions, voluntary processes that give the individual the possibility of independence in relation to the characteristics of the present moment and space (Rego, 1995, p.39).

It is then understood that all higher functions, originating from the relationships between individuals, are the basis of the human learning process, which also applies to the formation and development of concepts. This implies that in school activity, in tasks, in action, in challenges, in problems, it is that higher psychic activities are carried out. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the school space is the privileged locus for the development of maximum human possibilities.

And, in this context, the role of the teacher as an organizing agent of the learning conditions of his students is of paramount importance. Because mediated activities cause a series of transformations in each student, where their understanding of reality and their



ways of acting are mediated by the other, by signs and instruments, that is, they are constituted by mediation (Rego, 1995).

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

In the theses and assumptions defended by Vygotsky during the beginning of the twentieth century, the theoretical and conceptual foundation is found, the relevance of the participation of each and every child in the production of culture, emphasizing the unique contribution of each one to the social dynamics. In this sense, the problematization of the student with disabilities and their participation in an integral way in the social, cultural and historical environment is presented as the basis for the object of study, necessary for the discussion about the child with disabilities and their development.

Throughout history, children with disabilities have hardly been able to effectively occupy the place of student in regular school. It has always been difficult for them to participate in school practices, when considered a premise of a priori disability. And the places destined for them were the specialized institutions, whose essential social function was welcoming, caring and even tutelage. These were environments marked by segregation, which prioritized activities of daily living, work and manual development, which characterized the participation of these children in social practices. However, such actions sometimes limited the production of knowledge and development characteristic of the schooling process, in favor of a lesser pedagogy.

The school is a propitious space with multiple relationships, for the production of diverse knowledge, with the potential to expand the role of people with disabilities in broader social practice. This presupposes a space for human formation that values the differences and peculiarities of each individual. In this way, the teaching experiences lived in the school environment become the driving force of human development.

The author argues that psychic functions are internalized social relations, that is, that the experiences signified are constitutive of the personality, admitting that, in the process of development, the functional structure and the brain organization are distant from the innate biological mechanisms, to the extent that they are dynamized with the creation of new connections, provided by the relationships with others and mediated by the instruments built and modified throughout history by the brain itself. humanity. And these psychic functions, socially developed, overlap with biological mechanisms, coming to predominate in the orientation of behavior.

In this sense, in his book "The Construction of Thought and Language", Vygostky states: "Meaning mediates thought in its path towards verbal expression, that is, the path



between thought and word is an indirect path, internally mediated" (Vygotsky, 2001, p. 479). Therefore, it defends the idea of internalization of social relations, based on the assumption that each person, in their singularity, internalizes their relationships with the cultural environment and constitutes themselves through this interaction, contributing to the formation of higher psychological functions that, inherent to the human being, are developed through the relationship with the social environment. According to the Vygotskyan manuscripts of 1929: "[...] Personality is the set of social relations. The higher psychic functions are created in the collective" (Vygotsky, 2000, p. 35).

Vygotsky (2022) highlights the importance of social relationships in the formation and development of people with disabilities by the conception that these relationships are higher than the limits of disability. On the other hand, the organic limitations imposed by the disease are confronted by the infinite possibilities of development of the person from their sociocultural environment, regardless of their physical, intellectual or mental condition.

From this perspective, it is necessary to understand the existing possibilities in the educational space and enable the interaction between all students as a determining factor in their formation and constitution, strengthening the concept of inclusion and avoiding school segregation based on the categorization of "normal" and "abnormal".

# **METHODOLOGY**

The participatory methodology of the experience report type is what anchors the work in question, which was developed during the proposal of collaborative activity experienced in the professional trajectory of one of the authors with a deaf student, enrolled in a multigrade class (7th and 8th grade), in a settlement school, in the municipality of Conceição da Barra, located in the north of the state of Espírito Santo, 250 km away from the capital Vitória, Brazil.

The choice of the institution, a small public school in the state network, which offers elementary education, was made by considering the difficulties faced by the school community regarding inclusive processes.

Therefore, the following report preserves the ethical aspects and intends to contribute to the reflections on these processes that take place in the education networks, aiming to ensure the learning of public students of Special Education.

### **EXPERIENCE REPORT**

When considering the National Policy on Special Education from the perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), which proposes that Special Education acts in conjunction with



regular education in order to meet the specificities of its students within schools, it is also noted that the reception of deaf students is always treated as a challenge. Because, according to Fagundes and Nunes, "it implies accessibility, not only architectural, but in the aspect of providing possibilities, approximation, breaking down barriers, including communication that in many cases schools do not yet have" (Fagundes and Nunes, 2023, p.4).

That said, it is worth reinforcing the format of the practice and its context. The teaching experience that this report deals with was a collaborative work, more specifically the presentation of a seminar, with evaluative weight, articulated between the teacher in charge of Natural Sciences – Natural Sciences being a component of the school's curricular organization and not as a reference to the area in a generalized way – and the SEA teacher, specialist in Hearing Impairment. This articulation aimed to verify the students' ability to understand and transmit the content to other colleagues.

As for the place where the practice took place, it is a rural institution, linked to the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), which values the pedagogies of Rural Education, with a curricular matrix based on the principle of collectivity and self-organization, valuing collaboration, partnership, dialogue and collectivity. This school has thematic rooms and, in the routine, it is the students who change environments in each class. And, to serve the community, the school works in three shifts, with the municipal network, in the provision of Early Childhood Education, and the state network, in the provision of Elementary Education and Youth and Adult Education. Due to its location, it includes educators and students living in the settlement itself, for the most part.

The organization of the SEA in this school unit is based on the Operational Guidelines for Special Education of the state network of Espírito Santo and describes some specificities for rural education schools, with the purpose of achieving differentiated forms of communication in all stages and modality of education. Thus, seeking to ensure a specialized educational service that plans "[...] actions that contemplate the sociocultural differences and specificities of each group, providing resources and services necessary for the development of the potential of these students" (Espírito Santo, 2023, p.08). This also implies the orientation that the services in the resource room, in rural and full-time schools, take place in classes of the Diversified Part of the curriculum, in order to ensure the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC).

Flor (fictitious name of the deaf student) is in adolescence, at the age of 14, and lost her hearing in childhood, due to complications from meningitis. She studies in the eighth grade of elementary school in a multigrade classroom (7th and 8th grade), as already



mentioned. This class has an average of 14 to 15 students and has a sign language interpreter in its organization.

This student has learned Libras and, although she already uses it, her vocabulary repertoire is restricted, which is attributed to the absence of professionals in her school career. She has a greater affinity with the Science component and still has many difficulties, especially due to the delay in language acquisition. This knowledge is essential for the development process of every human being. After all, it is through language that the world is signified and in its social relations, as a student, I did not have access to language. And these signs are belatedly being signified.

In this regard, Vygotsky (2001) in his studies, defines the relationship between man and the world as a relationship mediated through signs, with language being the main mediating element in the formation and development of higher psychological functions.

By understanding the formation of the human being through a mediated relationship, Vygotsky (2001) highlights the importance of language in social relations, emphasizing the importance of the representations and meanings we give to the word, because "The word devoid of meaning is not a word, it is an empty sound. Therefore, meaning is an indispensable constitutive trait of the word. It is the word itself seen in its inner aspect" (Vygotsky, 2001, p. 398). In this sense,

The meaning of the word is a phenomenon of thought only in so far as thought is related to the word and materialized in it, and vice versa: it is a phenomenon of speech only in so far as speech is linked to thought and focused by its light. It is a phenomenon of discursive thought or of the conscious word, it is the unity of the word with thought (Vygotsky, 2001, p. 398).

For the author, meaning is responsible for mediating thought in its path towards verbal expression, that is, the path between thought and word is an internally mediated path (Vygotsky, 2001). In this understanding, the person internalizes his relations with the cultural environment through signs and instruments, and constitutes himself through this interaction, contributing to the formation of higher psychological functions.

And, it is understood that the relationships that make this internalization feasible appear in different stages of the reported activity. One of these moments was the division of the class into groups chosen through the draw. Flor composed with four students. And, as it is a collaborative work, the SEA teacher and the Libras interpreter were responsible for guiding and assisting the group of the student in evidence, while the regent teacher divided the time of attendance to the groups in general. However, she paid attention to the doubts that arose in Flor's group, especially in the process of understanding the content.



Flor and her group were responsible for four themes that were equally divided among the four components of the group. Flor was left with the theme: Climate change and environmental imbalance. And, in the division of responsibilities, the interpreter mainly helped the other students in the group while the SEA teacher mainly helped the student Flor. And in order for the theme to be explored in a visual way, in addition to the hours of service in the AEE, the classes of the curricular component in question were also used. And so, a model was built contemplating basically four scenarios.

In order to address climate change and environmental imbalance, the following scenarios were set up: a dry river; a forest burned with dead animals; the advance of the sea; and the floods. All these realities that affect not only Brazil, but several places in the world. With special attention to two of these scenarios due to the proximity to the student's experiences. Because, in periods of heavy rain, the place of settlement, the plantations and the school are flooded. Based on this, the student built her own school environment, including the yellow color that characterizes her. The other close scenario is the advance of the sea, being a reality that the student experiences in Conceição da Barra.

The content was not taught in a single moment, but talked about at different times and at different stages in the construction of the model. In addition, the student also had access to videos in Libras on the subject. And, within her possibilities, she sought to research to understand what was proposed.

In reference to this, it is important to understand what Vigotsky (2022) points out, as the objectives must be the same for students, with or without disabilities. The issue is accessibility to the curriculum. And, in this regard, the model was not the only path chosen. She also resorted to slide presentations, and like the other students, it was necessary for her to choose which contents would be present on the slide, as well as it was necessary to expand the research and analyze what would be said in the presentation of the work.

The other colleagues were also studying and researching her themes, although not all of them interacted with Flor. And, in order to stimulate interaction and highlight mediators who favored the understanding of the content during the presentations, the SEA teacher and the interpreter guided strategies so that the presentation dynamics were more visual, which would contemplate not only Flor, but all the other students. Thus, with the help of the Natural Sciences teacher, more visual experiences were developed. One of them was over the air and had the use of a syringe and, by pulling the back, placing a finger on the front and then pushing, it was possible to perceive that the air was present.

Education is a properly human phenomenon and the child has always been a social being. Thus, the formation of the singularization of this subject occurs in learning,



development and emotions, that is, in the emergence of the cultural, social and historical environment, in which the school space is inserted. This environment is loaded with meanings and needs to be accessible and truly meaningful, inclusive, that promotes the development of students with disabilities in an integral way, based on their peculiarities and possibilities, in no way focusing on their limitations, but valuing their potential.

During the realization of the proposal, not all moments were harmonious, sometimes the student did not want to study the theme, preferring to build the model, which is attributed to the affection she has for manual work, playful activities and production, considering her artistic skills or, possibly, to the lack of knowledge of the meanings of words, in addition to having a learning deficit linked to the delay in language acquisition. And, in this observation, both in the conception of Vygotsky (2022) and Bakhtim (2006), words contribute in the sense of signifying the world, they are part of the process of human constitution that occurs through language.

And, in order to bring meaning to the multitude of ideological threads and to contribute to the constitution of the student, sometimes, during the production of the model, the SEA teacher dialogued about the theme, about the representations of the scenario and the possible facts that contextualized each one of them. This is done by alternating the use of videos and written research.

Arriving at the presentation of the seminar, although Flor had sought with the interpreter and the SEA teacher a work already ready and was unsuccessful, she traveled her own paths supported by the meaningful words with which she built her presentation. She took the model to the class and explored the theme, making herself understandable to her colleagues, fulfilling the objectives of collaborative work. In this regard, Padilha states that: "It is up to the school, however, to have non-uniform resources and procedures so that students have the possibility of walking beyond their limits" (Padilha, 2004, p. 77).

It is in this perspective that schools must conceive their pedagogical practices, providing deaf students with the meaning of the ideological threads that constitute the world around them, investing in their capacity, with stimuli that enable learning. In order to, thus, signify the cultural, the social, often emptied around it, seeking to contribute to the development of the human psyche and to the process of hominization of each student.

### CONCLUSION

Vygotsky, when formulating the Historical-Cultural Theory, states that human development is constituted by the junction of natural and social aspects, by which he



announces a vital issue in the process of hominization, the primary source of psychic development: culture.

The featured author makes it clear that he was a scholar beyond his time and with ideas that underlie current theories and continues to contribute to reflections on mediation and interaction for learning, in school spaces, as well as the importance of the environment in the development of the subject.

Therefore, understanding its main assumptions implies understanding the need to break with paths that privilege exclusionary educational models and trace new paths towards a society that allows all individuals maximum humanization. All this, through appropriations of material and intellectual goods produced by humanity historically and culturally, that is, through the equitable appropriation of the culture in which the subject is inserted. It is at the service of the right of a subject that is not limited to its limitations, but in the conception that it is endowed with possibilities, which must permeate the understanding of Inclusive Education.



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