


BEYOND CONTENT: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN FACILITATING LEARNING <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.002-002>

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ABSTRACT

For there to be meaningful learning, it is necessary to transform the traditional conception of teaching, shifting the focus of the teacher as a mere transmitter of knowledge to a role of facilitator of learning and placing the student, the Person, at the center of this process. Based on the theoretical contributions of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, this essay discusses the importance of student autonomy, the construction of a welcoming educational environment, the perspective of the class with encounter between people and the recognition of subjectivity in the teaching-learning process, in school processes. Motivation

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is a central concept in this theoretical discussion, understood by us as a fundamental element, influenced both by internal factors and by the relational context established in the classroom. Throughout the text, we discuss how the student-centered approach, which displaces educational actors and processes from their traditional configurations, favors the development of not only cognitive but also emotional skills, promoting deeper and more transformative learning. In this way, meaningful education, which we understand here, requires going beyond the mere transmission of content, in the search to enhance the integral growth of the Person, respecting their needs and promoting teaching based on dialogue, trust in encounter and mutual recognition.

Keywords: Meaningful learning. Student as a Center. Motivation. Teacher-student relationship.



INTRODUCTION

Contemporary challenges in the field of education bring demands about deep reflections on the nature and methods of teaching, especially with regard to the creation of a meaningful learning process, which considers the person involved in the process. After all, education is a human action and for men.

The traditional educational model, which has been hegemonic in most institutionalized education, and which is predominantly based on the transmission of content in a linear and impersonal way, does not favor the promotion of the integral development of students and the rapid social, cultural and technological transformations have been demanding pedagogical practices that consider the multiple dimensions of the human being, encompassing not only cognitive aspects and general intelligence.

It is there that we understand the student-centered approach, proposed by Carl Rogers, as a significant and urgent alternative for a more humanized education, which goes beyond the mere instrumental pragmatism that often serves only to pass the year or in some external evaluation.

Rogers (1979), in his theory of learning, argues that education should be a process of self-discovery, in which the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, creating conditions for the student to develop fully and authentically. In his view, learning truly occurs when the educational environment allows the student to feel accepted, understood, and able to explore their own experiences and feelings. Rogers emphasizes that the quality of the relationship between teacher and student is fundamental to the success of the learning process, advocating that an environment of unconditional and respectful accessibility facilitates the development of autonomy.

In addition, Abraham Maslow's theory about motivational processes, thought from human needs, complements and strengthens Rogers' proposal, by proposing that human motivation is intrinsically linked to the satisfaction of basic needs, in a proposal of order, starting from the most essential to the most self-fulfilling (Maslow, 1954). According to Maslow, for human beings to reach their full potential, it is necessary that their fundamental needs, such as security, belonging, and self-esteem, are satisfied, met.

When we bring this to the educational context, we are faced with the fact that the motivation to learn, which is more radically related to the processes of self-realization, is directly (and primarily) related to the recognition and fulfillment of these needs, in addition to cognitive needs. In this sense, for learning to become meaningful, it is necessary that the school environment is able to meet these multiple dimensions of the student, providing him



with a safe, affective, space of recognition so that, only then, he feels motivated to something that is of the order of self-realization: learning.

The role of the teacher, then, transcends the figure of transmitter of knowledge and becomes, for Rogers, a facilitator of the learning process. This implies a posture of active listening, empathy and recognition of the individuality of each student. The learning environment, from the perspective of Roregirana, should be one where the student can, in addition to acquiring new knowledge, also develop his self in a positive way, free to be, always considering himself accepted in his uniqueness, through a positive consideration.

From this perspective, it is important to emphasize that motivation should not be seen only from the influence of external factors that would drive learning, but also as an internal process, closely linked to the development of the person as a whole. Maslow (1954) emphasized that motivation is multifaceted and that the satisfaction of emotional needs, affection and self-esteem must be prioritized so that the individual feels motivated to explore his intellectual and creative potential.

In this sense, this essay seeks to reflect on the concepts of meaningful and humanized learning, in the light of the contributions of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, and how these thinkers can/should influence the current understanding of the role of the teacher and the student in education. To this end, we chose as the general objective of this study, to analyze how a student-centered approach, which recognizes its emotional and social dimensions, can promote a more meaningful and effective learning. In this way, we follow a path that discusses the student-centered approach as a path to an education that recognizes and values the student's subjectivity and autonomy in the learning process, in addition to exploring the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, considering the creation of a school environment favorable to self-realization.

The proposal is, therefore, to contribute to a reflection on current pedagogical practices, highlighting the importance of considering the student in his totality as a Person. This recognition not only facilitates the learning process, but also makes education a means of personal and collective transformation, where both the teacher and the student are seen and respected in their individualities and potentialities.

A STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH: PATH TO MEANINGFUL LEARNING

During the second half of the twentieth century, the world saw an attempt to reconnect men with educational processes so that they would meet the interests of students and take them as the center of the learning process. These ideas were disseminated under



the strong influence of Dewey, an American psychologist, who turned his interests to children's learning, proposing the concept of active school.

Dewey (1965) already argued that the inflexible routine of schools did not contribute to the development of learning, on the contrary, it even stopped this process. This is very clear when we read:

The traditional school is organized to allow one to practice certain mechanical skills and certain ideas, without considering the practice of other desirable moral and emotional traits in a personality. How to learn, in fact, honesty, kindness, tolerance, in the regime of lessons scheduled for the next day? Only a real life situation, in which one has to exercise a certain character trait, can lead to its practice and, therefore, to its learning. Hence it is necessary for the school to offer a living social environment, whose situations are as real as those outside the school (Dewey, 1965, p. 34).

This discourse was, in fact, an anticipation of the significant learning that Rogers (2001) would propose, and Dewey's thought was understood to such an extent that the core of his ideas for education, which provided the emergence of a new horizon in the context of school institutions, inaugurated the perspective of a teaching that was centered on the teacher, was now student-centered.

In confrontation with the reality of his time, in view of the situation in which North American schools found themselves, Carl Rogers (1902 – 1987) proposes a new posture to be assumed by therapists and teachers towards the person with whom they related based on their professions. In fact, Rogers' ideas not only dealt with an organizational or structural change in the school, but also raised an epistemological discussion about various educational issues (roles played by teachers and students, conceptions of learning, curriculum, among others), in addition to inaugurating a new paradigm and rethinking the necessary posture for teaching action that was intended to be centered on the student. Here we find an aspect for broad discussion, since this posture does not occur by magic, but requires a break with the paradigms already introjected and with the culture that tends the practice, but in order not to distort the focus of this discussion, we will return to this idea in future studies.

From the moment one thinks of a school whose center is the student, one must also think of a teaching-learning process that is focused on the student as a complete person, without dissociating cognition and feelings. Rogers and Rosenberg (1977) demonstrate their dream of this school when they say that "there should be a place for learning by the whole person, with their feelings and ideas integrated" (p. 143). He conceived learning as a broad process in which cognitive elements, feelings (curiosity, vibration, passion) and experiential elements (prudence, self-discipline, self-confidence, emotion of discovery) were



involved, hence the importance of a profound change, not only in the methods, but also in the teaching posture.

It is from this change in posture that we see another concept emerge that, for Rogers, is inseparable from the idea of student-centered learning: the perspective of the teacher as being nothing more than a "Learning Facilitator", but this concept we will deal with later.

This theoretical movement situates Rogers' approach in a non-directive perspective, since the teacher would not have the function of predetermining, at all, what the student will learn, in what order the contents will be arranged, and what time he will have to learn what was thought for him. This is directly linked to the idea of learning that is meaningful to the student, a fundamental concept for Rogers and which has had difficulties to be widely discussed in school and scientific environments, which still opt for more programmed models.

In an attempt to make clear his perspective of learning beyond reason, Rogers, in his reflections, will recall a metaphor presented by one of his teachers who told them (his students, including Rogers) not to want to be a wagon full of ammunition, but a machine gun; in a search to say that they should no longer be deposits of systematized knowledge that they may never use in their practical lives, but that they could make use of what they were learning there because this learning made sense for their lives.

Once this metaphor marked Rogers (2001, p. 323), he began to think about what this machine gun would become and understood that, in order to be this instrument and not a warehouse, one would have to want to learn what was really important to him. For Rogers, the desire to learn is the first and greatest step for learning to occur. The student does not learn when the teacher teaches! This is a mistaken thought held for many generations and its echoes can still be heard today. The student learns when he learns, which can even be influenced by the teaching action, but this does not determine it at all. That is why Rogers will say that "what can be taught to another person has no great consequences or any significant influence on behavior" (2001, p. 318).

"You can lead the horse to the water, but you cannot force it to drink, nor can you force the individual to learn" (Ferreira, 2003, p.154). It is there that we see the great importance of discussing and expanding the place of teaching and the complexity of what is meaningful learning, since, between student, teacher and learning processes, the same thing happens as between horses, riders and the desire for water (respecting the due proportions and without any pejorative character).



That is why Rogers (2001) will tell us that people are interested in learning only what has an influence on behavior, that can be useful for their lives, that makes sense. For there to be learning, in this way, it needs to be self-discovered and self-appropriate. Hence the importance of the school and, especially, the teacher, being ready and open to abandon old ways of thinking, so that it is possible to promote meaningful learning. This reinvention goes through a deep and personal experience, and cannot be taught to anyone. It goes through the experience of the encounter with oneself, a frank and revealing encounter. That is also why, for Rogers (2001), one cannot teach another person how to teach.

Meaningful learning can only exist if it is born from the student himself, if it arises from his interests. No one derives meaning from learning except the one who idealized it from his own interests and "moved"¹² his whole being to acquire it.

Hence Rogers says:

By meaningful learning I mean learning that is more than an accumulation of facts. It is a learning that causes a change, whether in the individual's behavior, in the future orientation he chooses or in his attitudes and personality. It is a penetrating learning, which is not limited to an increase in knowledge, but which deeply penetrates all parts of his existence. (2001, p. 322)

This meaningful learning goes directly through contact with problems and that will only be possible if we consider Student-Centered Learning. If the teacher is authentic, accept and understand the student's condition and provide an atmosphere of facilitation and motivation for learning. We will discuss this more specifically below.

TEACHING AND LEARNING: TEACHER AND STUDENT IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FACILITATES LEARNING

Here we seek to resume the perspective of the teacher as a facilitator of learning, since Rogers cannot see any other posture for him, and starting from the idea that one wants to provide the student with a place for him to be himself, develop his creativity and learn through his own interests in order to generate meaningful learning and, consequently, pleasurable.

Being a facilitator in the learning process, as we have already indicated, implies that the teacher ceases to be the "master", holder of all knowledge, to be "in fact, a facilitator of learning and especially only that in relation to the learner, a resource" (Forisha and Milhollan, 1978, p. 177).

¹² This concept is directly linked to the theory of motivation applied to school and will be resumed later.



But it is only possible for the teacher to assume a facilitator posture if he trusts "in the student's ability to think and learn for himself..." (Freire and Tambara, 1999, p. 95), in addition to cultivating attitudes that favor self-realization, driving and directing their actions towards creative activities that favor improvement (Britto, 1986, p. 77). We will try to describe some of these attitudes or steps based on the Rogerian approach.

The first of the characteristics that we would like to highlight, in addition to being the first presented by Rogers about meaningful learning from the action of the learning facilitator, is that learning will be as much more significant as the student's contact with real problems, which only occurs from the moment the teacher conceives the student as a full and capable being. Rogers (2001) will say that the student should not be deprived of any type of problem. Thus, the facilitator is someone who believes in the student's capabilities, in their potential to learn.

The authenticity of the facilitator is the second characteristic indicated by Rogers (2001). If the teacher presents himself as he is, without fear of manifesting his good or bad feelings, the students will see him "as a frank person and will trust him" (Ferreira, 2002, p. 156).

Being authentic is not an easy activity. Schools are permeated by the culture of non-error, where, at all times, students hear that they cannot make mistakes. That is why teachers are commonly associated with superheroes of knowledge, since they spread a discourse of perfection and, when it comes to weaknesses or imperfections, at least, these are not welcome in the school environment.

In order to exercise the role of facilitator, the teacher must "strip himself of the traditional 'role', 'mask' or 'façade' of being 'The teacher' and become a real person with his students" (Forisha and Milhollan, 1978, p. 177), who feels, gets tired, has limitations and, sometimes, does not want to be there either. Rogers (2001) will say that he must be the person he is, authentic in his relationships with the students: this is what matters most.

Being the person he is, the teacher, without fear or pretense, will be able to develop appreciation for the student, which means being interested in his feelings, opinions and thoughts, in his person, in addition to acceptance and understanding. But this is not just any understanding. It is an empathetic understanding, the third of the facilitator's characteristics, without pretense of hierarchizing them, since they are all equally indispensable.

Empathic understanding is the characteristic by which the teacher seeks to understand how the student reacts in his singularity, perceiving, in a sensitive way, how the teaching and learning process seems to him (Rogers and Rosenberg, 1977). In other words, empathic understanding is the ability to consider the being and feeling of the other in



its fullness, validating it in its truth and fullness, even in the temporality of emotions and perceptions, approaching with understanding respect the place that the other occupies, in our case the teacher from the student's place.

For Rogers and Rosemary (1977),

This attitude of putting oneself in the student's shoes, of considering the world through his eyes, is almost unknown in the classroom. But when the teacher responds in a way that makes the student feel *understood* – rather than judged or evaluated – there is an extraordinary impact (p.150).

This happens because through empathetic understanding, the teacher can perceive the student in his context, seeking to feel his difficulties and understand this experience in order to accept him as he is, and in his needs. This movement is fundamental for the construction of a climate that favors meaningful learning, which will always take place, in the Rogerian perspective, from a frank, free and fruitful encounter (Rogers, 2001). From this, the teacher will be both recognizing the limitations (which are proper to being a Person), as well as favoring the development of the student's potentialities, and will be able to understand him in his process, "valuing him as a person" (Ferreira, 2002, p. 157), thus enabling not only intellectual growth, but of the Person in its totality.

Another aspect to be considered, as previously mentioned, for Rogers, education, unlike therapy, has numerous resources and methods, many techniques that can help in the learning process. However, these resources "should be made available to students and not taxed" (Rogers, 2001, p. 332). This is only possible from a great sincerity and sensitivity of the teacher in the rupture of his historical professional role, since, over time, he has been assigned the role, not only of indicating paths, but of guiding the students. Hence the importance of teachers breaking with the place of power they still occupy, in a more horizontal educational process.

THE MOTIVATION OF THE PERSON OR THE PERSON OF MOTIVATION: A PERSPECTIVE OF CHALLENGES

In the course of the development of psychological theories, curiosity and interest in explaining what made someone like certain things and not others have always figured, have so much predisposition for certain subjects and not others, engage in learning certain practices while others seemed impossible to learn.

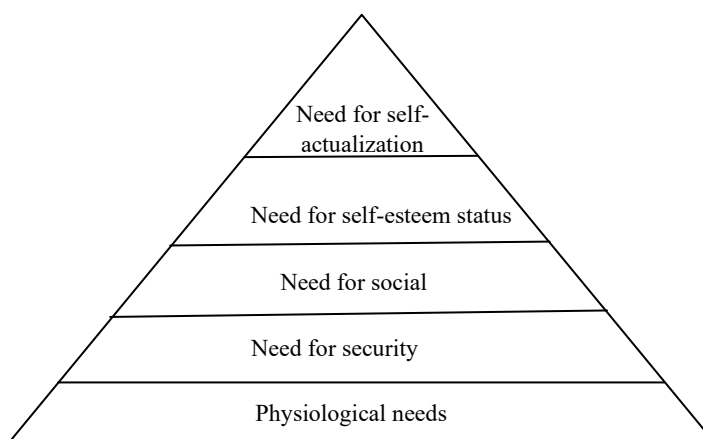
According to the humanist perspective, the human being is a being of needs and his behavior will be directed towards the satisfaction of these, regardless of the phases of his

development¹³ which, according to our understanding, occurs throughout life (Taniart, 2009). Human needs have always been present in history as an essential condition for survival. They were the ones who pushed men to change, to invest in certain actions, to desire some things and not others, to select their habits and customs.

Many theories in this regard have emerged in an attempt to explain the behavior of men in relation to their motivation, but for this work, we are based on the perspectives of Abraham Maslow (1908 -1979).

In an attempt to describe the ways in which he understood the foundations of human motivation throughout his personal history, Maslow (1970, apud Serrano, 2003) proposed the concept of Hierarchy of Needs that pointed to the fact that men would be focused primarily on the satisfaction of their most basic needs and only then would the will arise, the reason, to satisfy the others.

Maslow (1970, apud Serrano, 2003) will say that human needs obey a certain hierarchy or a scale of values that need to be transposed. In this way, when satisfying one need, the next soon arises in its place. For him, the motives of human behavior are organized in a pyramidal structure. Here we dare to propose this structure considering the classic representations usually available in books to exemplify social stratification. According to Maslow's theory, human needs would be organized as follows:



Source: The author

In this way, we understand that motivational behavior is directly linked to the needs of human beings and goes from the inside to the outside, the latter being an important one to

¹³ According to ANTUNES (2001), development "is the same as growth if applied to the aspect of the individual. In the school context, it is the process of transformation that the person goes through, on which the School interferes. In a constructivist approach, it corresponds to the different stages of complexity of knowledge throughout the learning process. When examined from a social perspective, it refers to a set of changes, intentionally desired, which represent the overcoming of a stage, considered inferior, by another judged quantitatively or qualitatively superior.



stimulate or stop what naturally drives men. Thus, a close connection is seen between Maslow's motivation and Rogers' significant learning regarding the protagonism of the subject and his personal reality.

In order to better understand what each of these motifs would be, we will discuss a little about each of them in order to make a reflective exercise about them also in the school context, following the ideas of Maslow (1970, apud Serrano, 2003).

Physiological **needs** are linked to the organic character and everything that provides its balance (food, shelter, air, water, among others). It is the most basic of all needs. Without this need being met, people will feel uncomfortable, in pain and will find it difficult to concentrate. As long as this need is not satisfied, the other needs will not make sense and there is no search for them. Therefore, a poorly fed or sick student will have his learning condition deeply compromised, since he will only move on to other needs after satiating it.

The second category of needs is **security**. According to Maslow, this need is linked to stability and is expressed by the desire for physical security, financial, family and health security. In the educational context, we have the importance of an environment that is not hostile, threatening or inhospitable to the student. Children, especially, need a place where they feel safe to develop. This certainly involves the action of the adults who make up the educational institutions that must, for example, combat any type of bullying. The absence of this safe environment can directly affect the emotional structures of children, preventing the emergence of a good self-image and self-esteem.

Once the needs for security are satisfied, human beings will feel **the need for social affections**. Here we leave the corporeal dimension and enter an exclusively human-relational dimension. Feeling the need for love, acceptance and affection is a particular characteristic of men. At school, this category of need is fundamental for the development of people who are still building concepts about themselves. Rogers (1983, p. 131) will deal with this aspect when he says that the people of the future¹⁴ "are in search of new forms of approximation, intimacy, shared goals. They are looking for new forms of verbal and non-verbal, sentimental and intellectual communication".

This socio-affective development is fundamental. Only after his contentment can the individual see his self-esteem needs satisfied, the fourth, according to Maslow's pyramid. Because of this need, which will only arise after the satisfaction of the other three, the

¹⁴ When we quote Rogers talking about the person of the future, we do not understand this person as someone who will emerge, but as someone who is built in daily and personal history, intertwined in the history of humanity and that, therefore, this person of the future is, in fact, a person of the past, present and future. Thus, we understand that this characteristic of the person of the future is, in fact, a characteristic of the person who manifests himself in history with greater or lesser intensity, always responding to the social events around him.



student feels the need to be accepted, esteemed, recognized, respected as a person and, above all, to be prestigious.

This aspect is directly linked to the relationship that the student will have with concepts about himself, which go through the concepts that others make of him. If the last two needs mentioned are not met, the student may be more insecure and with little courage to take risks.

The last of the five needs is **self-actualization**. The highest of needs if we consider the hierarchy proposed by Maslow. It is linked to the desire to feel that you are doing your best, overcoming challenges with your own abilities. Here we find the highest potential of the human person, perhaps the ultimate end of existence. Every man seems to carry within himself a great desire to feel fulfilled through his own acts.

The great challenge of contemporary schools is to walk along paths that favor the emergence of this need in the lives of their students, since it would guarantee autonomous learning.

These ideas are compatible with those of Rogers in his Student-Centered Learning as he places the "motives" as being something that arises from the person himself in the relationship with the environment in which he lives; at the same time that it faces the individual as a subject of himself, self-motivated, creative, complete, thus making self-discovery learning possible (Rogers, 1972).

When we say that Rogers believed that the human person is self-motivated, this perspective is consistent with Maslow's, since Maslow conceives motivation as something that comes from within the person, from his interior to his exterior.

Hence we can consider, without any kind of paradox, what Rogers says:

I get very angry with the idea that the student must be "motivated". The young person is intrinsically motivated, to a high degree. Many elements of his environment pose challenges for him. He is curious, he has the eagerness to discover, to know, to solve problems. The sad side of most education is that, after the child has spent years and years in school, this intrinsic motivation is very well deadened. But it still exists, and our task as facilitators of learning is to elicit this motivation, to discover what challenges are real for the young person and to provide him with the opportunity to face them (p. 131).

Although the quote above categorically mentions young people, children are no different. They are curious, explore physical spaces, love to ask questions, and this profile is a clear demonstration of this intrinsic motivation for children. However, earlier every day this motivation that each individual brings with him, is suffocated by the norms, by the pre-established scripts, and by the traditional curriculum that conditions the ways of learning. This intrinsic motivation, which for Rogers (1972) exists naturally in each individual, is used



by him to support the role of the facilitator in motivation. He is not the one who will provide the motivation. Their role is only to arouse this motivation, to favor real situations that allow this motivation to spring from within the student himself. The facilitator will only provide stimulus situations. Everything else is up to the student. And Rogers believes that motivation will emerge.

This is the great challenge in the midst of the knowledge society, the exhausting school situations, the precarious working conditions to which teachers are subjected, the low salaries, the psychological pressures to which everyone is subject and which has also been affecting the processes of school performance.

In order for the teacher to be a facilitator in the process of rediscovering motivation by the student, it is necessary, first, to rediscover his own motivation, which, despite being stifled, certainly still exists. It is necessary to allow this professional to also be free, autonomous, creative; May your practice also be self-discovery. That their needs are met and that they are given the right to dream and rebuild their practice beyond the curricular constraints, matrices and evaluative goals.

TEACHER AND STUDENT: THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN TWO HUMAN BEINGS, WHERE FULLY RECOGNIZING ONESELF AS A PERSON IS DECISIVE FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING

All the diversity of human actions configured from the contact with others "equal" to oneself, whether they are psychotherapists, school, religious, assistance, bring with them the indispensable condition of the "encounter" with their essence.

But what would this essence be? It is only about that which carries within itself the core of the human noun. What makes man man, what makes him different from everything else and, at the same time, equal to those of his species. However, paradoxically, when discovering reason, which presents itself as a facet of this human essence and which should bring man even closer to his being, this facet was chosen as the only aspect of human representativeness, through the Cartesian logic "I think, therefore I am". In fact, reason became the very human essence and for a long time in school "everything that counted, everything that was of the slightest importance, happened from the neck up" (Rogers, 1977, p.175). Not to mention that individuals are constantly faced with conflicts regarding what they are and what they demand from them (society), about what they should be. From then on, what Rogers (2001) will call incongruity arises, which generates suffering.



With the dissemination of humanist ideals, the world saw the birth of a new way of looking at interpersonal relationships, including within schools, which should be based on a congruent and authentic behavior.

Congruence means that he accepts his real feelings. He then becomes a real person in his relationships with his students. He may be enthusiastic about subjects he likes and bored with those for which he has no predilection. He may be irritated, but he is equally capable of being sensitive or sympathetic. Because he accepts this feeling as his own, he has no need to impose them on his students, nor does he insist that they react in the same way (Rogers, 2001, p. 331).

The teacher-student relationship ceases to be an institutional relationship to assume a binding character, where teacher and student are affected by the "frankness" of feelings. Through this relationship, teacher and student do not only meet with each other, but with the human essentiality present in the other.

Since the movement of the Pioneers of the New School, in Brazil, there has been a search for humanist ideals that opposed the vision of man based on capital, the exploitation of labor or conductivist reductionism¹⁵. These demonstrators wanted to see the encounter of the school, of its agents, of the men who composed it, with the human essence: the encounter of man as the human, with man himself.

Although it seems obvious that in class relationships there is an encounter between people, what actually occurs there is not a mere collective encounter, but the encounter between two people, since beings affect each other and perceive themselves in pairs, called by Marchand (1985) educational pairs. The most incredible thing to think about is that, whether we think of class relationships as collective or in educational pairs, this issue (of the class as an encounter) is constantly forgotten and suffocated in the face of the goals to be met, the contents to be taught and learned, the evaluations to be carried out and the concrete answers to be given to the educational system. to parents and society.

Faced with the obligation to meet certain requirements at a given time, teachers fiercely pursue their target, forgetting that their profession is, in fact, an encounter with someone who also brings passions, who here has an affective connotation and who "is the dawn that gushes from being together" (Maffesoli, 1985; apud. Gomes, 2000, p.25), in addition to wants, dreams, desires and emotions.

But in addition to the bureaucratic aspects, these postures and methodological choices happen, above all, because the teacher first forgets who he truly is. Of not finding himself frankly with his essence, which makes him a participant of a nature different from that of other animals. This is what Rogers (1977, p.130) will discuss when talking about

¹⁵ Synonymous with behaviorism, behaviorism.



"being who you really are". Here we refer to the fullness of the being that carries within itself potentialities, affections, freedom and creativity, but also derogatory aspects.

However, by being who one really is, men will have to allow themselves to be flawed, imperfect, in need of being in constant transformation, and all this goes against the rationality that feeds the perfect human being. To be a man in his totality is to face human fragility. So much so that Rogers will say: "another way of learning is to confess my own doubts, to try to clarify my enigmas, in order to better understand the real meaning of my experience" (2001, p. 319). Rogers did not possess a naïve view of human nature. He was aware that people carried good and bad potentialities in themselves and that depending on the situation, these and those could be present or not.

However, the school, historically, has been constituted as the place of correct answers, where error is inadmissible and the teacher, the cicerone of this odyssey (school odyssey) is the figure that personalizes the idea of wisdom, competence and capacity. That is why ideas that permeate infallibility are associated with his image. However, what Rogers will propose is exactly the opposite: through an approximation of the teacher with the essence of the human, he can allow himself to make mistakes, feel pain, suffer, become impatient, get tired, be people... Like this

When the facilitator is a real person, being what they are, and relates to the learner without dressing up in a façade, they are much more likely to be effective. This means that the feelings he experiences are within his reach, available to his perception, and that he is able both to live and be these feelings and to communicate them if he wishes. It means that he comes for a direct, person-to-person encounter with the learner, coming to him on a person-to-person basis. It means that he is being himself, not denying himself. It is present to the student (Rogers, 1977, p.149)

In this way, the learner will not only be in front of the one who knows more than him and who can accompany him along the paths of learning, but in front of someone who allows himself to be people of flesh, blood and feelings, who allows himself to make mistakes, to get it right, to be free, creative, capable, unfinished, happy, sad and so many other things, in order to tell the learner that he can also be and feel it, not needing disguises or pursuing an ideal far from what it is to be people.

But despite these arguments, Rogers (1977, p.146), quoting Archibald MacLeish, will say that "we do not feel our knowledge. Nothing could better illustrate the failure of our civilization... Knowing without feelings does not constitute knowledge and inevitably leads to the irresponsibility and indifference of the public and even, possibly, to its ruin."

Here we find a topic that deserves a lot of attention. If the relationships between teacher and student do not go through the dimension of a frank, hopeful and affectionate



encounter, the man that the school seeks to form is, in fact, disfigured. Perhaps, we cannot even say that there is a man there. In fact, fragmentation determines the death of the human, the end of its indivisible essence.

Any learning that aims at meaning, that is intended to be relevant to the student and that seeks to go beyond a simple encyclopedism, must pass through the permission of a frank and honest encounter between the subjects involved there, breaking with the denial of the possibility of error and failure, conditions condemned by the post-modern capitalist society. It is necessary to rediscover the pleasure of constructive error, of failures as a possibility to rethink existence and change attitudes towards the other and for the other, since everyone shares the same human potentialities (good and bad). This can significantly favor empathy.

The student is a person! The teacher is a person! And they are complete people, "not the abstract incarnation of a curricular requirement or a sterile channel through which knowledge passes from generation to generation" (Rogers, 2001, p. 331), they carry with them all that they are at all times. Their problems, their stories, their joys and dreams are inseparable from their existence.

This is the great demonstration that one cannot conceive of the teacher, for example, as someone dissociated from his personal issues, from his conflicts and reunions. It is too much to ask teachers to forget their conditions of existence as men, workers, father or mother, student, provider and so many other circumstances or roles to be developed and that affect them indisputably.

If we want to conceive our students as complete people, it is necessary to allow the existence of humanity within school institutions, allowing the teacher to be fully a person and not to avoid what he feels or wants for his life, so that the student is also able to be a "man". Only in this way will it be possible for two human beings to meet, so that one learns like the other to be real people.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The search for meaningful learning challenges traditional teaching models and requires a deep reflection on the role of the teacher, the student and the educational structure itself, especially in the midst of a neoliberal education process. The Student-Centered Approach, advocated by Carl Rogers, highlights the need for an environment that favors the development of autonomy, creativity, and self-knowledge, allowing learning to be an authentic and transformative experience. From this perspective, the teacher is not only



a transmitter of knowledge, but a facilitator who creates the conditions for the student to be able to actively engage in the learning process.

By integrating Abraham Maslow's ideas, we understand that the student's motivation is directly related to the satisfaction of their most fundamental needs so that, thus, they can access the need for self-realization, where we understand that the desire to learn new, intellectualized things resides. The school cannot be just a space for instruction; It should also be a place where the student feels safe, belonging and valued. Learning, therefore, happens in a deeper way when the school experience dialogues with the emotional and existential aspects of those who learn.

In this sense, the relationship between teacher and student is not only a pedagogical encounter, but a genuinely human encounter. Mutual recognition as people – with stories, challenges and potentialities – is decisive for learning to become more than a simple absorption of content: it becomes a living, pulsating and meaningful process.

Throughout this essay, it has been argued that a truly transformative education involves respecting the student's individuality and cultivating relationships that foster trust, autonomy, and a genuine desire to learn. Thus, more than a methodology, Student-Centered Learning is an ethical commitment to the integral development of the human being, rescuing the ontological meaning of learning.



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