

Teacher training as a social movement for education in the triple border

La formación docente como movimiento social por la educación en la triple frontera

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Abstract

The article describes the Pedagogía de Frontera movement, which provides continuing education for teachers and the school community in the municipal network of Foz do Iguaçu, as some schools have a large number of children of other nationalities, mainly Hispanic-Americans. Teachers from Unila, Unioeste and Ifpr provide training with the aim of discussing and rethinking pedagogical practices that consider the linguistic and cultural diversity present in the local context, enabling an intercultural and decolonizing pedagogy in the Triple Border. A critical-reflective training is proposed so that they can think about other pedagogical practices that coincide with local demands. One of the results is the inclusion of Spanish and English in elementary school. It is expected that the teaching work will continue to promote changes in favor of an intercultural and decolonizing education.

Keywords: social movements, border, education, teacher training.

Resumen

El artículo describe el movimiento Pedagogía de Frontera que ofrece formación continua para los docentes y la comunidad escolar de la red municipal de Foz de Iguazú, pues algunas escuelas presentan un elevado número de niños de otras nacionalidades, principalmente hispanoamericanas. Profesores de Unila, Unioeste e Ifpr imparten la formación con el fin de discutir y repensar prácticas pedagógicas que consideren la diversidad lingüística y cultural presentes en el contexto local, que posibiliten una pedagogía intercultural y decolonizadora en la triple frontera. Se propone una formación crítico-re-

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flexiva para que puedan pensar otras prácticas pedagógicas que coincidan con las demandas locales. Uno de los resultados es la inclusión de la lengua española e inglesa en las escuelas de enseñanza básica. Se espera que el trabajo docente continúe promoviendo mudanzas a favor de una educación intercultural y decolonizadora.

Palabras clave: movimientos sociales, frontera, educación, formación de profesores.

Introduction

Studies on the relationship between social movements and education demonstrate that this relationship is the path to transforming society where critical subjects awaken and integrate, leading to struggles and mobilizations. It is a complex relationship, and depending on the pedagogical practices carried out and the context in which it is situated, it can be presented as a form of decolonization because, according to the reflections of Catherine Walsh (2013), this concept proposes resistance to the persistence of colonial models and brands, so it is necessary to march along a path of permanent struggle where “positions, horizons, alternative constructions, projects of resistance, transgression, and creation can be found” (Muraca, 2018, p. 4).

Similarly, Paulo Freire (1987) states that subjects can reinvent the world as they are decision-makers who can fight for freedom and autonomy, thus breaking with oppression and conditioning them to an education that considers these peculiarities in order to change the course of their history and reality. Social movements must be based on dialogue and consider action and reflection so that they walk side-by-side and complement each other because where there is no effective circularity between action and reflection, according to Muraca (2018), it is not possible to speak of social movements.

The objective of this article is to present the activities developed ethnographically by the Pedagogía de Frontera movement aimed at teachers and the school community of the municipal network of Foz do Iguaçu, by professors from the Universidad Federal de Integración Latinoamericana (Unila), the Universidad Estatal del Oeste del Paraná (Unioeste) and the Instituto Federal do Paraná (Ifpr), to discuss and rethink pedagogical practices to work with the linguistic and cultural diversity present in schools, and to enable other pedagogies for other subjects (Arroyo, 2012); and contribute to rethinking invisible identities and cultures in border educational spaces.

The argument presented here is based on authors such as Goldar (2008), Gohn (2011), and Arroyo (2012), as it is a social movement developed in the municipality of Foz do Iguaçu, in the triple border area between Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. This social movement started its activities in 2016 and was born from the social commitment of teachers from Foz do Iguaçu as a form of resistance to the demands—or lack thereof—concerning border schools and the cross-border community of which they are part. This achievement was only possible because the border witnessed the participation of its main educational institutions—public universities (including the Ifpr) and the Municipal Secretariat of Education (Spanish: *Secretaría*

Municipal de Educación, Smed) and teachers of the Municipal Public Network—in the struggle for the same goal: an education based on the peculiar characteristics of the border context, that is, one that respects the linguistic and cultural diversity of the tri-border territory.

This article will provide a theoretical summary of social movements and their relationship with education to justify the activities of the *Pedagogía de Frontera* movement and the process of mobilization and political coordination with governmental organizations of the municipality in order to make this movement a reality.

Social movements and education: a transformative relationship

When observing social movements in the modern world, as Gohn (2011) states, it can be seen that they represent the social tensions that are beginning to erupt all over the world, in search of a form of organization that aims at the inclusion of excluded people. Thus, activities in the border education movement also aim to include people who suffer exclusion because of their language and culture, which causes social tensions. Breaking with this social reality is one of the idealized objectives.

Addressing the relationship between social movements and education, Gohn (2008) clarifies from the outset that education is not limited to school education, carried out in the school itself, but goes beyond, as knowledge is also produced in other spaces. The author also cites the educational nature of the practices in social movements during negotiations, dialogues, or confrontations between members of civil society and the public bodies involved.

It is considered that education occurs in different settings and not only in the classroom since it is a social practice and therefore is made up of different phenomena and processes that collaborate in the development of critical subjects and participants in social decisions.

In this sense, social movements are believed to be sources and agencies of knowledge production because struggles for education involve the struggle for rights and are part of the construction of citizenship. It is also believed that social movements for education encompass issues of school content and gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, human rights, and many others. It must, therefore, be reiterated that the work of the *Pedagogía de Frontera* movement, which will be briefly presented, strengthens the struggle for equitable education for all border inhabitants.

In the same line, Ribeiro (2002) agrees with the propositions of Gohn in highlighting the educational character of social movements. These authors discuss education from the same point of view. In their own way, each one maintains that the effective exercise of citizenship and education are processes that occur jointly and simultaneously and, therefore, are inseparable. From an innovative perspective, Ribeiro (2002) analyzes the active participation of citizens in political decisions and the relationship of social movements in this process. According to the author, the main objective of social

movements is the development of social change; she argues that such movements provide a different perspective on education by contributing to the political formation of citizens. For this reason, this article agrees with her assertion that

an expanded conception of education encompasses the training processes that take place in social practices related to the different manifestations of human coexistence that occur in family life, work, leisure, political participation, and school learning (Ribeiro, 2002, p. 115)

The analysis developed by Gindin (2013) is also relevant when he cites the role of the educational organizations of workers and points to militancy as a form of education. The author analyzes the Brazilian political situation and the dispute over the influence of political parties on trade union organizations. Although this article will not dwell on this debate, it is necessary to say that the work of the *Pedagogía de Frontera* movement is justified as a social movement because it considers that by fighting for a border pedagogy through teacher training, a person fulfills their role as an educator. Therefore, in agreement with the author, it can be stated that militancy, as a formative aspect, is relevant for anyone working in education. There is a certainty that a role has been played in this way, since it is to be assumed that, far beyond the formal knowledge addressed with teachers, political training and awareness of the importance of uniting as a group to fight for the same ideal resulted in something much greater. The result was the understanding that the political engagement of the educator in social movements is fundamental to the enhancement of their critical-reflective consciousness, as well as in the transformation of their pedagogical practice.

Based on Gohn (2008), it is possible to indicate some fundamental points through a retrospective approach to the relationship between education and social movements in Brazil. In the second half of the 20th century, movements like the Paulo Freire method and the *Ligas Campesinas* appeared in Brazil. In the 1970s, it is possible to point out the relationship of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) with non-formal education, which also sought to provide political training to their participants, giving them tools for a critical vision of the world. The BEC were the gateway to urban social movements that fought for daycare centers, transportation, health posts, and housing, among others. Gohn (2011) also indicates that the 1980s were characterized by a strong relationship between education and social movements in the sense that “Movements began to list a new agenda of demands, and also a new political culture was built, altering the public policies in place” (p. 347).

According to the same author, in the 1990s, the socio-political scene was radically transformed. This period deserves a separate chapter, as it changed the national political composition with the end of the military regime and the rise of opposition sectors to positions of power. New actors entered the scene, such as NGOs and other third sector entities—the emergence of other, more institutionalized, forms of popular organization—such as the national forums for the Struggle for Housing, Urban Reform, Popular Participation, and others. Partnerships between organized civil society and public authorities gained strength and were boosted by state policies,

such as the experience of the Participatory Budget and the “Bolsa Escola” Program.¹ It is worth mentioning here a particular movement, Ethics in politics, which had decisive historical importance since it contributed directly to the (democratic) removal from office of a president of the republic, an event never before recorded in the country’s history. At that time, it also contributed to the resurgence of the student movement, which now presented a new profile of action, the “painted faces”.

In a society like that of Brazil, marked by *machismo*, it is essential to point out the historical events that occurred simultaneously: women’s groups were organized, and these groups created networks to raise awareness of their rights and fronts for struggles against discrimination. Moreover, the homosexual movement, which began to organize acts of protest and large annual marches, also gained momentum. Something similar happened with the black, or Afro-descendant, movement, which began to fight for the construction of its identity and also against racial discrimination. The demobilization of many social movements also marked this period, with an emphasis on neoliberal policies, the weakening of trade unions, and the new Law of Guidelines and Bases (*Ley de Directrices y Bases*, LDB) for education.

According to Gohn (2008), struggles and movements for education have a historical character and are procedural, and therefore occur inside and outside schools and in other institutional spaces. Struggles for education involve struggles for rights and are part of the construction of citizenship.

Speaking of the demands for education in the (formal) school education movements, the author states that there are several axes in Brazil, especially concerning elementary schools. For the analysis developed in this text, the most relevant for this context is “Pedagogical projects that respect local cultures” (Gohn, 2011, p. 350). This demand refers to the local community organization, the record of the existing experiences of participation in the region, and the construction of poles of identity that singularize the schools according to the local socio-political and social culture, which redefines the concept of participation in the sense of broadening its field and meaning.

In tracing an overview of contemporary Latin American social movements, the author highlights those that have stood out the most. She indicates that sectors of the environmental movement have become politicized in some regions, such as the struggle against the introduction of paper mills in Uruguay or the struggle against open-pit mining projects in the Mendoza region of Argentina, which create serious socio-environmental problems. According to Gohn (2011), it is also necessary to highlight the resumption of the student movement, especially in Chile, with the Penguin Revolution and occupations in public universities in Brazil, “a struggle to improve the quality of education, against educational reforms, acts of corruption and misuse of public funds” (p. 340).

¹ The Bolsa Escola Program was approved by Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and is considered one of the most important instruments for combating poverty and social exclusion. The program was implemented with Decree No. 16.270, published in the *Diario Oficial de Brasilia* on January 11, 1995. As of 2001, the federal government began to adopt the program. The criteria for selecting beneficiaries are families with per capita income of less than half the minimum wage and who have children in school. The age group of the children served was 6 to 15 years old. <https://www.educabrasil.com.br/bolsa-escola>.

In Brazil, the black movement achieved the policy of social quotas in universities and even advanced to the University for All Program (Spanish: *Programa Universidad para Todos*, Prouni)². It should be noted that this progress occurred due to government support through public policies, which gave rise to contradictory results. According to the author, when considered as rights, social demands opened space for citizen participation. However, this movement also caused losses, as government policies established structures of social control, which ended the autonomy of the movements. According to Gohn (2011), the federal programs Prouni and Reuni (Program to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities)³ respond to social movements regarding the demands historically presented by these groups fighting for their rights, especially when it comes to education.

Analyzing the results of the achievements attained through the work of social movements, Arroyo (2009) indicates that universities in general are pressured to open specific courses for leaders, activists, and educators linked to land movements, teacher training, indigenous education, rural education, *quilombolas*, and others. Like Gohn (2011), the author states that the various movements, especially the black movement, promoted affirmative access and permanence policies in universities. He states that the struggles for basic, professional, and youth and adult education are becoming stronger, as they have increasingly sought to guarantee their right to education and knowledge. It is believed that the struggle for education in the border context must also have its space, with educational, linguistic, and cultural policies that take into account its peculiarities.

Arroyo (2009) points out that the phrase “let us occupy the latifundia of knowledge” has been the political slogan of social movements linked to the struggle for the countryside and the training of teachers for indigenous, rural, and *quilombola* education.

“Let us occupy the latifundia of knowledge” has been the political cry of the rural movements in the inaugural class of land pedagogy and indigenous, peasant, and *quilombola* teacher training courses. Universities are under pressure to open specific courses for leaders, activists, and educators. The movements, in the diversity of their activities, have been playing a reconfiguring role in our selective and exclusionary educational systems and their regulatory pedagogies, bringing new shocks to the field of knowledge, production, research, and systematization. (Arroyo, 2009, p. 2)

It is believed that this slogan can also be intoned in the training courses offered by the Pedagogía de Frontera movement. In all the languages in the context, it is time to show the slogan that comes from the triple border.

² University for All is a program of the Brazilian federal government created to provide full and partial scholarships for undergraduate and sequential courses of specific training in private institutions of higher education.

³ The Program to Support Federal University Restructuring and Expansion Plans is a program instituted by the Brazilian federal government through Decree 6 096 of April 24, 2007.

Characterization of the triple border

The cities that make up the triple border have a combined population of around 600 000 inhabitants: Foz do Iguaçu (256 088 inhabitants); Puerto Iguaçu (80 020 inhabitants); Ciudad del Este (387 538 inhabitants); in addition to having a significant contingent of people from all over the world who come to the region attracted by this important commercial and tourist center. The Ministry of Integration, in Ordinance No. 125, published in the *Boletín Oficial de la Unión* on March 21, 2014, defines twin cities as those characterized by economic and cultural integration between neighboring countries. Montenegro (2007) states that

The presence of immigrants of diverse origins is evident in the region: cultural diversity is not limited to Paraguayans, Argentines, and Brazilians but is complexified by the presence of Arabs, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, and indigenous people, among others. Part of this presence is linked to the international movements of workers and individuals who move, for various reasons, in search of life opportunities throughout the globe. (Montenegro, 2007, p. 7)

In the triple border area, physical proximity makes it possible for subjects to cross the three sides of the international border, which forms a multiple, hybrid, dynamic space where cultures, languages, and identities dialogue and where processes of exclusion, non-acceptance, and looking down upon others often arise with the creation of negative stereotypes, which give rise to prejudice.

Living on the border means constantly intertwining different languages and cultures. It means living the experience of constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing identities at all times, in different social situations, and learning to recognize the multiplicity and temporality of socio-cultural identities. The border is a cultural construction designed by its inhabitants, who constitute its social, cultural, and political relations. The subjects who construct these social spaces have different life histories and expectations. It must be understood that this construction will not always occur peacefully and homogeneously. Accordingly, this article concurs with Albuquerque (2006) when he states that “borders can represent flows, but also obstacles, mixtures, and separations, integrations and conflicts, dominions and subordinations. They represent spaces of power, various conflicts, and different forms of cultural integration” (Albuquerque, 2006, p. 5).

In the context of the border, the school is where these phenomena develop; while it is constructed as a space for coexistence, it is also revealed as a place of disputes and resistance. Such conflicts can be recognized in border schools because, in these institutions, language can represent a barrier between groups, which potentiates conflicts that have been established socially and historically. This situation aggravates the challenges found in border schools, and contributing to overcoming them is one of the purposes of this work.

Therefore, driven by results such as those mentioned above by Gohn (2011) and Arroyo (2009), this movement seeks, as an organized group, to fight for the defense of the linguistic and cultural rights of each border student that constitutes the school space belonging to the sociolinguistically complex environment of the tri-national border. Like the groups above, which have achieved governmental responses to

their demands, including the institutionalization of programs that guarantee the rights claimed, the demand for teacher training in the border context is being met, as they are, day after day, living with the complexity of multilingualism, an inherent characteristic of contexts such as this one. It is believed that through the activities of social movements, such as the one mentioned here, the demands may one day become a priority for governments, that is, they will respect them.

At present, analyzing the reality in which one lives, Gohn (2016) states that education, in general, is remembered as one of the possibilities of civilizing space in an era filled with violence, fear, and incredulity. For the author, the struggles for education can be the basis of a new history, in which the school can be a resource for the formation of active citizens based on shared interactions between the school and the organized civil community.

It is believed that the work developed in the social movement *Pedagogía de Frontera* has fulfilled this role, and the motivation comes from and for its continuation, despite all the adversities that have been faced, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next, the role of the State is questioned, and it is emphasized that the State does not perceive the needs of the border region.

Fighting for education without substituting the role of the State: a premise

It is necessary to clarify that the authors of the present article corroborate the fundamental premise that Gohn has been defending for some years, that is, “the participation of civil society in the struggle for education is not to replace the State, but so that the State fulfills its duty: to provide quality education for all” (Gohn, 2016, p. 10).

Likewise, Arroyo (2011) affirms that the collectives and movements that are so active in societies’ social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics have historical experience that their rights will not be guaranteed without the State. It is clear that the actions of a social movement to fight for a social right are aimed at demanding that the State fulfill its role in order to serve everyone, without any distinction, and in the case of education at the border, without distinction of the languages and cultures of the students of other nationalities who come to the Municipal Education Network of Foz do Iguaçu.

The tensions between social movements and the State are longstanding and, according to Arroyo (2011, p. 94), occur because the movements, in the fulfillment of their role, demand State policies and, at the same time, because they know the distance between the proposal of such policies and their practical effects, they point out the limitations caused by this distance and seek proposals that go beyond the limitations. Such tensions are also linked to the fact that the movements demand recognition as existing political and policy subjects.

Likewise, the social movement described here has also demanded that the State fulfill its role. The (re)implementation of languages—Spanish and English—in municipal schools is one of the aspects that exemplifies this. In the 1990s, Spanish

was already part of the primary education curriculum—the first segment—in Foz do Iguacu. However, for political and governmental reasons, it stopped being offered in 2005, and since then, this social right has been relegated. In order to fight for the above cause, the *Pedagogía de Frontera* movement has made efforts to sensitize the school community about the importance of this step and has also called on the political strength of the municipal authorities. Accordingly, meetings were held with different groups linked to the municipal government, the mayor himself, and the city council. As a result of this activity and the political and governmental regulation of this historic moment for the municipality, the law that approved the (re)implementation of languages in the municipal schools of the city was passed in the House, a progress that can be counted among the achievements reached.

Taking into account the principle pointed out by Gohn (2011) regarding social movements, when she states that “they are sources of innovation and knowledge-generating matrices” (p. 334), a beginning was made in the organization of the training offered to elementary school teachers in the city of Foz do Iguacu so that they could continue the work initially proposed by the Intercultural Border Schools Program (*Programa de Escuelas Interculturales de Frontera*, PEIF)—but now with the peculiarities of the reality at hand.

It is considered that this aspect contributes to the validation of the movement since the activities are innovative, and it is necessary to adapt them to the new reality. At the same time, it is a knowledge-generating matrix because it has, among other things, the objective of offering a training program in intercultural and multilingual education for teachers of the Municipal Education Network of Foz do Iguacu. This network develops strategies to work with the cultural and linguistic diversity present in the schools of Foz do Iguacu.

The following is a brief presentation of the emergence of the *Pedagogía de Frontera* movement and its activities.

Intercultural Border Schools Program: the end of a government program and the beginning of a social movement

The basis for understanding the Intercultural Border Schools Program (PEIF) is the research carried out by Lorenzetti and Torquato (2016), in which they recount the history and development of the program. These authors state that it had its official start in 2005 and arose from similar ideas conceived by the ministers of education of Argentina and Brazil. They showed interest in an intercultural proposal as a new stage in the relations between their countries.

According to Flores (2010), the PEIF, created by a bilateral Brazil-Argentina initiative, proposes a transformation of border schools into intercultural institutions that offer their students an education based on a new concept of the border, linked to regional integration, knowledge, and respect for the culture of the neighboring country.

The above program was developed within the Mercosur (Southern Common Market) education sector. It was established as a regional policy, specifically between the twin cities on one side and the other of the border with Brazil. According to Lorenzetti and Torquato (2016), initially, the participating schools were located in

the cities of Dionísio Cerqueira (Santa Catarina, Brazil) and Bernardo de Irigoyen (Misiones, Argentina), Uruguayana (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), and Paso de los Libres (Corrientes, Argentina) and the policy was extended the following year to more schools on the border with Argentina. The program initially focused on bilingualism. It was later realized that the program should act as a border-integrating mechanism, and therefore it was necessary to work from an intercultural perspective.

The following year, 2006, the PEIF acquired a multilateral character when it was incorporated into the Mercosur Education Sector Action Plan (Sector Educativo del Mercosur, SEM). Flores (2010) states that this year the project expanded to the municipalities of Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, and São Borja and Itaqui, Rio Grande do Sul. In 2007, the program was extended to Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The socio-institutional diagnoses were conducted in the schools and municipalities selected by the ministries, and the sociolinguistic diagnoses were carried out by teams of advisors from the countries and representatives of the ministries.

The main activities of the program were developed in the so-called Arco Sul of the border strip, the name used by the Federal Government to refer to the border strip of the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.

Until 2010, the schools relied on government advisory services provided through the work of the Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo en Política Lingüística (Ipol), which offered continuous training to teachers and guided the crossover. As of 2011, the direction was different: universities close to the border regions were invited to participate in the program. 2012 was positively marked with the inclusion of PEIF in the Mais Educação⁴ program, an initiative that arose in response to the agreement signed between Mercosur member countries, as an attempt to institutionalize the program by transforming it into a national policy and not just a government program. 2013 saw a rapprochement with the municipal education departments and a search for partnerships with neighboring countries. With the change in the national political scene in 2015, Brazil lost the budget allocated to the PEIF and, consequently, other elements of the program. In 2019, Brazil withdrew from the education sector of Mercosur and ceased to be a protagonist in the institutional processes of education in the Organization of Ibero-American States, thus highlighting the views of the federal government⁵ concerning this sector.

Throughout its development, the program has suffered inconsistencies and received varying attention depending on many factors, including the governments in power at the time, which were also in crisis. In Brazil, the lack of institutionalization of the program led to a lack of the necessary funding for its proper development. Integration between schools in neighboring countries was not possible without the proper budget provision, which meant the end of the crossover (exchange of teachers between the mirror schools that participated in the program).

⁴ The Mais Educação Program, created by Interministerial Ordinance No. 17/2007 and regulated by Decree 7. 083/10, constitutes a strategy of the Ministry of Education to induce the construction of a comprehensive education agenda in state and municipal educational networks that extends the school day in public schools to at least seven hours a day, through optional activities in the following macrofields: pedagogical follow-up; environmental education; sports and leisure; human rights in education; culture and arts; digital culture; health promotion; communication and use of media; research in the field of natural sciences; and economic education.

⁵ At the head of the federal government is the president of the republic, Jair Messias Bolsonaro, who took office on January 1, 2019.

In addition, other key issues for the program depended on government support, such as teacher training. The municipal departments of education gradually took over this funding and, in some cases, were unable to provide the necessary support, which led to the discontinuity of the main elements and, in the case of Foz do Iguaçu, to the interruption of the program.

Since then, there have been few initiatives in the universities; groups of professors who, as a form of resistance, work on offering an intercultural and multilingual program and who hold on to the certainty that it is necessary to act responsibly and inclusively with the subjects; cross-border efforts are added to continue the previous activities of the PEIF, within the bounds of possibility.

It was in this perspective that the group (Pedagogía de Frontera) emerged as an organized social movement, as it sought, at the same time, to build affirmative symbolic representations through discourses and practices and to project feelings of social belonging in its participants through the development of identity as a group and as subjects belonging to the border setting that also constitutes them. The above was only possible because the border witnessed the activity of its main educational institutions—public universities (including the Federal Institute of Paraná) and the Municipal Secretary of Education (Smed), and teachers of the Municipal Public Network—which united around the same objective. As a way to support the affirmation of this work as a social movement, the guide is the concept of Goldar (2008) when she states that

(...) social movements are understood as those formations that, with varying degrees of consolidation and some permanence over time, are structured around common interests and a strong identity component; that emerge in society with a certain capacity to raise issues, demands, proposals, etc., that are not supported by the current social order. Thus, they are disruptive and embody the possibility of developing processes of social transformation (Goldar, 2008, p. 70)

Based on the concept proposed by the author and also on the results obtained during the project since 2017, a brief description of the activities is presented in the following section, as well as the necessary reflections for further research into the topic proposed in the article.

Pedagogía de Frontera, a social movement

The work of the Pedagogía de Frontera movement is presented here. The present authors concur with Goldar (2009) when she states the social and political strength of social movements.

This social force and the politics of collective action of the various social movements of the continent still feed on their capacity to make visible and express the temporariness and naturalness of social institutions; embodied in the same bodies, they claim that institutionality is a social construct, so it is provisional and can be modified, and nothing is ever given. Therefore, they trigger social movements in themselves, an intrinsically political dimension in an emancipatory perspective (Goldar, 2009, p. 72)

It is from the statement of the author that the political dimension and emancipatory perspective of the proposed work are recognized since it was born from the social commitment of a group of teachers from Foz do Iguacu as resistance to the lack of commitment of the government of Michel Temer (2016) to the border schools and the cross-border community that they are part of. The title of social movement is also defended with what Gohn (2011) says when she states that “Movements make diagnoses about the social reality, build proposals. Acting in networks, they carry out collective actions that act as resistance to exclusion and fight for social inclusion” (p. 336).

Accordingly, it is believed that the interaction of the members of the group in contact with the educational institutions in the schools of Foz do Iguacu characterizes this work as a social movement since it represents an organized social force for the development of activities that generate sources of creativity and socio-cultural innovations to also respond to social needs. It is important to emphasize that, according to the demolinguistic analysis⁶ conducted by the Municipal Secretariat of Education, in 2017 there were 372 students of other nationalities enrolled in municipal schools, mainly Paraguayans and Argentines, a multiple and unique reality that requires training in the reflection of the context for the didactic-pedagogical reception in these conditions—a social need that awaits the proposal of creative and innovative activities.

Gohn (2011) also states that “Experience is recreated daily, in the adversity of the situations faced”. It was precisely for this reason, in the face of the adversity caused by the end of the PEIF, that the group resized the activities to be carried out after its creation since, without the budgetary commitment previously given, it would be impossible to continue with the program in its entirety.

Before addressing the activities of the group, it is necessary to corroborate the statement made by Gohn that a social movement is not an isolated process but is of a political and social nature, which must seek networks of coordination in daily practice and inquire about the political, economic, and socio-cultural situation. In the planned activities, it was also necessary to seek political coordination in Foz do Iguacu. Meetings with councilors, the mayor, and the Municipal Secretariat of Education team were essential for the movement to become a reality.

The movement started its activities in 2016 and includes the participation of teachers from various public institutions: Universidad Federal de Integración Latinoamericana (Unila); Universidad Estatal del Oeste del Paraná (Unioeste); Instituto Federal de Paraná (Ifpr); Secretaría Municipal de Educación de Foz de Iguazú (Smed). The initiative was born from a demand of the municipal teachers themselves, who realized the need to seek training to work with the cultural and linguistic diversity present in the municipal schools of Foz do Iguacu.

⁶ Demolinguistic analysis, understood as the analysis of the size, structure, evolution, and general characteristics of linguistic groups, considered from a quantitative point of view. Demolinguistics statistically studies the structure and dynamics of linguistic groups and the laws that govern these phenomena. The boundaries with the sociology of language are blurred, although demolinguistics focuses on the analysis of flows and contingents of linguistic groups.

The idea and methodology of the movement

From the beginning, the movement planned a permanent training program in border education aimed at teachers of the Foz do Iguaçu municipal education network, with a preference for schools with a high number of students of other nationalities.

The methodology used was based on critical and analytical work in meetings with the school community, emphasizing teachers. The training of teachers was developed in two main stages. The first was awareness-raising, with conversation circles, films, debates, and open workshops discussing the concepts of border, interculturality, multilingualism, and territory. Then, the school and the community involved listed the main challenges of living together in Foz do Iguaçu. In a second stage, working groups were formed to define lines of action and implement the planned activities, elaborated by and for the school community itself to awaken world views that tolerate, respect, and recognize the differences surrounding them: linguistic and cultural plurality.

Therefore, in agreement with Candau (2016), pedagogical practices were chosen from the perspective of critical interculturality because

(...) it stimulates collective processes and thus contributes to the formation of nonconformist subjectivities, capable of questioning the status quo and favoring the construction of socio-cultural dynamics aimed at recognizing the different subalternized and discriminated groups and building social and cognitive justice (Candau, 2016, p. 31).

Catherine Walsh (2009) says that the concept of interculturality goes beyond being an interrelation or communication. It indicates processes of deconstruction of “other” thoughts, voices, practices, and social powers, another way of thinking and acting concerning and against modernity-coloniality. For the author,

The project is not simply recognizing, tolerating, or incorporating the differences within the established matrix and structures. On the contrary, it is to implode—from the difference—the colonial structures of power as a challenge, proposal, process, and project; it is to re-conceptualize and re-found social, epistemic, and existential structures that stage and equitably relate diverse processes, practices, and cultural ways of thinking, acting, and living. (Walsh, 2010, p. 79)

Thus, in the meetings with teachers, the discussions were based on essential topics to reflect education on the border, especially because they are not discussed in traditional initial or continuous training courses. This process is important to highlight the peculiarities that make up the schools located in a border context and the recognition of the teacher as a transforming subject of this territory. The encounter of various cultures and identities is one of the greatest challenges for public school education in an intercultural perspective located in a complex context such as the border. Given the new demands and realities of society, it is essential to rethink concepts that help to understand it, and for this reason, the following topics were addressed:

- Border: understood not only as a limit but also as a “between place” Bhabha (2001) where conflicts, dialogues, and interculturality arise.
- Language, cultures, and identities: multiple, dynamic, hybrid, and in constant transformation (Bhabha, 2001; Hall, 2005; Rajagopalan, 1998; Santos & Cavalcanti, 2008). As part of society, the subject shares their linguistic practices and cultural meanings and is in a constant process of (re)constructions of identity.
- Interculturality: a critical intercultural education seeks to promote cultural negotiation, to recognize the “other”, for dialogue between different social and cultural groups. It insists on the influence of cultures on each other (interdependence) and the development of capacities to resist cultural conflicts between different values, considering that the cultural process implies dynamism, transformation, and reinterpretations (Candau, 2014; Cavalcanti & Maher, 2009).
- Linguistic prejudice: according to Bagno (1999), many prejudices arise from the relative social value attributed to different ways of speaking, i.e., prejudices are not based on the language but its practitioners.
- Empathy: Chalifour (2008) conceptualizes empathy as the process by which a person is able, in an imaginary way, to put themselves in the role and situation of another to perceive the feelings, views, attitudes, and tendencies of the other, in a given situation. According to Nowak (2014), empathy is the most powerfully disruptive force globally; it is second only to love. To respect a human being is to believe that they are unique and, as such, the person has the conditions to learn to live in the way that best suits them.
- Interdisciplinarity: understood as mutual exchange and interaction of diverse knowledge in a reciprocal and coordinated manner where the interests of each discipline persist. However, it seeks solutions to its problems through coordination with other disciplines. Fazenda (2003) has been proposing interdisciplinarity as a basic principle of teacher training because, according to this author, interdisciplinarity is neither taught nor learned but only lived and exercised.

In order to encourage discussions, the aim is to provoke reflections on the way of life of those belonging to cultural groups of sociolinguistic complexity in Foz do Iguaçu, with the promotion of questions about the power relations that allow the creation of stereotypes about the cultural meanings of those who, in terms of power relations, are in a disadvantaged situation and, therefore, are considered “backward”, “inferior”, or “primitive”. The objective was to emphasize that stereotypes are homogenizing and essentializing labels constructed based on hegemonic cultural meanings taken as models to be followed.

Parallel activities

It is important to highlight that, in parallel with teacher training, the group has been engaged in the struggle for the (re)implementation of Spanish in the municipal schools of Foz do Iguaçu. For this purpose, a series of activities were carried out. In 2019, the mayor and other municipal authorities received the authors of this work in a meeting where they had the opportunity to explain the plan developed to enable the teaching of Spanish in municipal schools. After extensive discussions, planning, and political will, the project was approved by the city council, which, after an extension, considered the implementation of Spanish and English in the primary schools of the municipality.

Since then, the work has been developed on several fronts: 1) the training of Spanish and English teachers from an intercultural perspective; 2) the organization of the curriculum for Spanish and English languages in elementary school (initial grades), and 3) the production of didactic materials to work directly with the students. This is a resizing of the initial project, an objective that was not expected to be achievable (although the desire for quality education in a border context is always present) but with which the authors are very satisfied; after all, it is a great advance for education in Foz do Iguaçu and a source of pride for the movement that fights for intercultural education.

In order to start the implementation of these languages (Spanish and English) in the municipality, two pilot projects were implemented in 2019 in two elementary schools in Foz do Iguaçu: an English course for elementary school students (first years of the Irio Manganelli municipal school, located in the Morumbi I neighborhood, in the eastern region of Foz do Iguaçu) and a Spanish course for elementary school students (first years of the Arnaldo Isidoro de Lima municipal school, located in the Vila C neighborhood), both with an intercultural-discursive theoretical-methodological approach. Several work stages were established to implement the courses, involving at least the following dimensions: inter-institutional, administrative, logistical, academic, pedagogical, political, and didactic. Through face-to-face and distance meetings, the team discussed and planned the basic curriculum of the course,⁷ taking into account the interdisciplinary content, languages, subjects in a border context, and the possibilities of intercultural experiences. The main objective of this initiative was to offer intercultural training to the students of the municipal network and also for the school and its community to become aware of the importance of promoting, through coexistence in education, more respectful and supportive forms of coexistence that reduce the distances between “us” and those who are considered “others”.

Throughout its activities, an average of 120 students from first to fifth grade attended Spanish and English classes. The project has the long-term objective of extending this

⁷ Based on pedagogical and administrative meetings with the management and educational committee of the school, four classes were created (two in the morning and two in the afternoon), with 20 places each, with a total workload of 20 hours per class, with students from the first to the fifth year. The main teachers of the course were English and Portuguese literature students, under the guidance of professors and graduate students linked to the institutions participating in the program.

opportunity to all municipal schools, which will be possible thanks to the work of the teachers of the municipality, who have already been trained for this purpose.

Among the practices developed and the positive results achieved are teacher training courses; implementation of languages in the municipality; approval of a municipal law and implementation of a pilot project offered in municipal schools; scientific initiation projects; publication of scientific articles; participation in national and international events; and development of a postgraduate project.

It should be noted that the project described here received international recognition in 2018. The Organization of Ibero-American States (Spanish: *Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos*, OEI), through the Regional Program for the Development of the Teaching Profession in Latin America and the Caribbean (Profesión Docente en América Latina y el Caribe, Predalc) considered the Pedagogía de Frontera program one of the 30 most innovative initiatives in education. Predalc considered that the innovation of the programs is represented by their counter-hegemonic character vis-à-vis the nation-state and the reflection on the strategies of pedagogy from and for the border.

As a result of this recognition, one of the members of the Pedagogía de Frontera program was able to participate in a workshop organized by the OEI in Colombia to exchange innovative practices. The initiative was also noted as part of a repository of experiences with potential for replication in other Latin American countries. The selection of the project by the OEI indicates the recognition of its importance for rethinking and transforming education on the border and the positive result of the group's union as a social movement.

Final considerations

Unfortunately, current social policies, in general, continue to be conducted by government officials as benevolent practices that empty the meaning of the public sphere. Civil, political, and social rights are generally patterned on welfare actions without being conceived as part of the exercise and recognition of civil and social rights of citizenship. Thus, acquired rights are transformed into benefits to be granted.

Because of this, it is necessary to look for renewed practices for the construction of a new social reality that seeks to reject the old ways of doing politics and, from a different position, to look for democratic alternatives that build concrete possibilities for the future.

In Pedagogía de Frontera, being a group formed by different institutions seeking the same ideal and fighting against the same oppressive processes and subjects, the characterization of the work carried out as a social movement is defended. An attempt has been made to point out the aspects that corroborate this statement throughout this article. Therefore, it is reaffirmed that, as a group, as a social movement, the objective was to work to form a new reality in the schools of Foz do Iguaçu—a reality in which everyone has the right to be respected, regardless of the language they speak and the culture they express.

Therefore, it is believed that, in the field of border education, the Pedagogía de Frontera group has demonstrated that it is possible and necessary to think of particular spaces for the production of knowledge and pedagogies (Arroyo, 2012).

The movement presented here aims to give a voice to those who seek to occupy the spaces of right in the school community, those who should be guaranteed the right to speak their language and manifest their culture without suffering any prejudice or exclusion, especially when it comes to educational contexts. The action consists of raising awareness and clarifying that using different languages in different contexts is a right of any citizen and not a benefit granted by some and achieved by others.

Therefore, this article agrees with Goldar (2008) when she speaks of educational practices saying that “In this perspective, we are undoubtedly public educators who aim for our educational practices to converge in emancipatory aspects capable of effectively advancing in the transformations that make it possible to achieve more just and humane societies” (p. 70).

For social movements to be successful, many challenges must be faced. Firstly, it is necessary to end politics based on clientelism and corruption and, secondly, to strengthen respect for the rights and duties of all people. The authors of this article, therefore, agree with Gohn (2011) when she states that

We understand that for this, ethical commitment and social participation are fundamental, as well as the political will of the democratic forces, organized for the construction of a society of a public space different from the neoliberal model, built on exclusions and injustices (p. 356).

Social movements are of utmost importance for the formation of a democratic society when it comes to enabling the insertion of more and more people into the society of rights. Thus, Gohn (2011), using the considerations of the French sociologist Touraine, states that “movements are the heart, the pulse of society”. The author also adds that social movements “express energies of resistance to the old that oppresses or the construction of the new that liberates” (p. 336). In this perspective, it is believed that, as a group, the pulse of the border has been reached, resisting the collapse of teacher training from an intercultural perspective, typical of education on the border (since the PEIF was interrupted) while constructing new ways to ensure such training, by joining forces, channeling energies previously dispersed in individual actions, developing purposeful practices, and seeking the construction of collective actions to resist exclusion and fight for social inclusion.

When thinking about the scope of a program like the PEIF it stands out that it requires a mutual commitment of many public and political entities and the community. However, to achieve the broad objectives that have been put in place for a while, it is necessary to go further. Public investments are needed to enable its development, and the current government does not seem to prioritize border education. However, for the movement, this priority is reiterated every day in the classroom. Therefore, the aim still is to resist and fight for intercultural education.

From the intercultural practices mediated with teachers, a significant change in positioning is expected through understanding the need to approach differences no longer as something negative that generates tensions and conflicts, but as something enriching, where the “other” is significant and above all valued. By being mediators in the teaching-learning process, demonstrating people skills, and establishing a climate of trust and respect, teachers also begin to value and stimulate their students, which contributes to breaking down prejudices and the linguistic and cultural stigmatization that permeates the triple border area, thus collaborating to build a more democratic and humane society. This is an extremely important attitude in this context since, as

Bortoni-Ricardo and Dettoni (2003) state, ignoring linguistic and cultural diversity is a way of contributing to deepening and perpetuating social differences.

The Pedagogía de Frontera social movement and its activities are not enough to make schools inclusive and intercultural, but it is one of the paths that can lead to achieving these ideals. This certainty gives the necessary energy to continue moving on. It also reinforces the conviction that teacher training in a perspective of intercultural education in a border context is a political and pedagogical commitment.

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