
Historical-Critical Didactics: essential basis for class struggle in school education


Didática Histórico-Crítica: bases essenciais para a luta de classes na educação escolar

Didàctica Histórico crítica: bases essencials per a la lluita de classes en l'educació escolar

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This critical review is based on the book entitled “Fundamentals of Historical-Critical Didactics” - robust synthesis of theoretical-practical assumptions that make it possible to understand the organization of teaching work in the light of Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Marxism. Beforehand, it is worth highlighting that this work is not a prescription on “what to do” in pedagogical practice, but ultimately contemplates needs of two orders, which in fact inspired the title of this review, placing dialectically the foundations for class struggle and pedagogical practice in school education: 1st) It is necessary to understand the Marxist conception of the human being, society, knowledge and school education within the contradictory relations of capitalism and actively intervene in social transformations; 2) It is understood that historical-critical didactics and its essential elements are developed in light of the method of political economy and a historical project that is put at the service of a new

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society, this work guarantees the theoretical-methodological bases for the work pedagogical approach intentionally situated from the perspective of a counter-hegemonic Pedagogy. Native of a theoretical accumulation of studies and research on the subject, this work represents the commitment policy of its three authors: Professor Dr. Ana Carolina Galvão Marsiglia, who acts as professor at the Department of Teaching Theories and Educational Practices of the Postgraduate Course at Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES); Professor Dr. Tiago Nicola Lavoura - teacher holder of the University of Santa Cruz (UESC-Ilhéus, Bahia) and Professor Dr^a Lígia Márcia Martins, professor in Educational Psychology at the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP/Bauru, SP), linked to the Postgraduate Program in School Education at UNESP/Araraquara, both considered exponents of Historical-Critical Pedagogy, critical intellectuals and collaborators in the struggle by promoting debates about the advancement that this theory achieves by elucidating the purpose of school education: that of humanization.

Historical-Critical Pedagogy is based on the science of History, understood as a science unitary and Philosophy as a tool that problematizes human existence in a non-spontaneous – in this sense the work on screen a) highlights Marxism as a philosophical foundation didactics; b) understands the role of the school focused on knowledge transmission actions classics for developmental teaching that synthesizes the movement between content, form and recipient; c) situates theory and practice as a unity of opposites; d) observes the challenge of overcoming understanding linear, procedural, formal and unmethodized method. Therefore, these objectives are covered in the exhibitions held in the 5 chapters, which we can establish some analyses.

In the first chapter, whose title is “Historical Elements About Didactics: From Ratio Studiorum to Post-Modern Didactics”, Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) in a diachronic analysis, show that before school became the main expression of education, educational processes took place in empirical relationships within the work process itself. The authors show that only in the 17th century Didactics clearly emerges as an important part of school, an institutional category on the rise, as the dominant instance of education in the transition to capitalism.

With its birth demarcated in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern age, this field aims to precursors of the formulations of pedagogical systems - Wolfgang Ratke (1571-1635) with Didactics conceived as the “new art of teaching” and later Comenius (1592-1670), with emphasis on his understanding of didactics as “the art of teaching everything to everyone”. In this sense it is interesting observe how the authors establish an analysis of the beginnings of Didactics and its process of dynamic constitution, capturing its four fundamental themes: educational objectives, content, methods and evaluation (GALVÃO, LAVOURA E MARTINS, 2019, p. 11). Furthermore, Didactics in this analysis

is always conceived from a pedagogical theory that guides the relationships between teacher and student in the pedagogical process. In this way, the authors highlight the relationship between technique and art, since technique allows the structure and organization of educational work, and art contemplates the characteristic of originality of the teacher's creative potential in teaching techniques.

Understanding that Didactics is marked by a position towards the world, it is a pedagogical theory that supports a method, and therefore a social purpose. The authors point out how the changes in social relations of production directly impacted school and work teaching teachers. In the work we can capture 4 predominant and hegemonic periods in pedagogical ideas in Brazil: 1st) Monopoly of the religious aspect and traditional pedagogy (*ratio studiorum* ahead!); 2nd) Coexistence of the religious and lay aspects of traditional pedagogy; 3rd) Predominance of Pedagogy New; 4th) Productivist Pedagogical Concept.

It was only at the end of the 1970s that counter-hegemonic formulations were forged: Pedagogy Historical-criticism (Dermeval Saviani); Popular Education (Paulo Freire at the helm!); Basic pedagogies anarchist; Critical-Social Pedagogy of Contents (José Carlos Libâneo). Furthermore, the authors point out important considerations about the differences between the formulations of Libâneo and Saviani, the predominance of Post-critical Pedagogies, with emphasis on the illusions of Pedagogies of "learning to learn". This debate set out in the book is fundamental to breaking with the hegemony of post-modernity in Brazilian schools, which sing the siren song in the teachers' ears neoliberal and, ultimately, the denial of historically accumulated knowledge.

In the second chapter, entitled "Historical-Critical Pedagogy: 40 years", the authors attentively and rigorous, return to the origins of Historical-Critical Pedagogy (PHC), from the first effort in 1979, passing through the milestone of a vigorous resumption in 2009 at the UNESP seminar in Araraquara, to the current challenges for its development and consolidation. In this chapter we can highlight the collective character of this Pedagogy, which in the last 40 years has been developing through effort of teachers spread across networks throughout Brazil.

In chapter 3, "Historical-Dialectical Materialism as a Philosophical Foundation of Pedagogy Historical-Critical" is a pillar of pedagogical theory itself, therefore indispensable for understand the political and pedagogical role of school education in Brazil. In the first part of this chapter, the authors present the work category, from the Marxist tradition, through the following route: the metabolic relationship between human beings and nature; the stages of anthropogenesis, guided in Leontiev (1978); work as a vital activity in Marx (2010) and Marx and Engels (2007); the pair individual-human gender dialectic; the appropriation-objectification process; the determinants of capitalist-type society.

Using this arsenal, the authors establish a dialectical movement between school and society, showing the relevance of mediation of educational work. Once again, educational work central exhibition in Historical-Critical Pedagogy, and this work stands out for scrutinizing its character of mediation between singular (individual) and universal (human gender) within this pedagogical theory.

Even in the face of so many limitations of alienated work, these philosophical bases must be appropriate by basic education teachers, so that they develop a true ontological conception of Education. In this way, the authors present a method of apprehending reality that surpasses incorporation of formal logic, as it seeks to reveal the processes of reality beyond appearances.

Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) present a rich debate on the dialectical method in the interior of the Marxian tradition, explaining the differences in the dialectics of Hegel and Marx, exposing the limitations of the logic of formal knowledge, pointing out the need for concepts to the detriment of representations, presenting the movement between reality and theoretical thought, and what else the rigor in understanding the dialectic between singular, particular and universal draws attention. This is an essential chapter, as it is the basis for the historical-critical didactic method, however we credit him with a status of equal importance for the debate on method in the field of Marxism. Therefore, in our analysis, this chapter can be read in the entire book by teachers as a basis for Didactics in Historical-Critical Pedagogy, or it can also be read separately in universities as a robust reference for understanding the method in Marx.

At the beginning of Chapter 4 entitled “Historical-Critical Pedagogical Theory”, the authors resume the philosophical bases of pedagogical theory, fundamentally based on Dermeval's elaborations Saviani on the nature and specificity of education. From this canonical notion of pedagogy historical-critical, Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) advance in their contributions presenting the movement between content, form and recipient, that is, the triad of historical-critical didactics. This is a milestone of this work, because what had been accumulating at PHC about “what to teach”, “how to teach” and “who to teach” has now been systematized in a careful exposition with the inseparability between the fundamentals and pedagogical practice.

To our warm readers, we can only indicate what the chapter has in store for you: the notion of content schoolchildren based on the relationship of appropriation-objectification and human gender; the debate on homogenization as the overcoming of the individual's particularity by the condition of being generic; understanding of knowledge, content, subjects and school curriculum; the relationship between teaching and learning, and consequently content and form; the debate on world conception; classic as content selection criteria; the relationship of the student as recipient.

Still in this chapter we can highlight the dialectical understanding of the pedagogical method, overcoming immediacy and historical mistakes. Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) explain that the moments of the method are articulated in educational work, taking social practice as a starting point and arrival, because through the movement from syncretism to synthesis each singular individual can incorporate effectively the cultural instruments of human universality as a process of catharsis. Therefore, there are mediating elements in the particular activity of pedagogical action (problematization and instrumentation).

Chapter 5, whose title is “Fundamentals for Historical-Critical Didactics”, begins with a analysis of the current situation in the development of this topic. The authors present a critique coherent with the problematic apprehensions of professor João Luiz Gasparin and at the same time honest by recognizing the importance of this inaugural attempt in the field of Didactics. However, following the tradition of scientific rigor of Marxism, the authors point out the limits and contradictions of work by Gasparin (2002): The reduction of the pedagogical method (based on Marx's method) to teaching procedure; the sequencing of steps to the detriment of dialectics; reductionism of movement from syncretism to synthesis through the mediation of analysis, to a schematic relationship between practice-theory-practice; didactic transposition; the rapprochements with the new-school movement.

In addition to Gasparin's notion, Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) present relationships essential elements of the method, appropriating Marxist dialectics, the understanding of activity and development in historical-cultural psychology and in more recent productions by PHC itself. In this chapter, teachers will find in a more explicit way a theoretical arsenal capable of illuminate understanding of pedagogical method and teaching activities. Therefore, some elements they must be highlighted in historical-critical teaching: the ontological dimension is fundamental; transmission of knowledge is nuclear; teachers must master their teaching object; proposal of schooling cycles enables an expanded conception of the axis and dynamics of the teaching; the unity between teaching and learning (which in turn, are contradictory and inverse).

It is important to reiterate that this chapter is the result of a study whose basis is found in the initial writings by Saviani (1984; 2011) and successive approaches in recent years, which culminated in articles and chapters of books such as Marsiglia et al (2019), Marsiglia (2011;2013), Lavoura and Marsiglia (2015), Lavoura and Martins (2017), Lavoura (2018), among others. PHC is a theory of collective construction and this topic is no different, as its challenges and needs are posed in pedagogical practice of Brazilian schools and must be faced by teachers in general.

This book summarizes essential bases for pedagogical practice in the light of historical-critical pedagogy, if placing it as mandatory reading for those who believe in an omnilateral formation, and,

therefore, beyond the limits of capitalism and into the becoming of a new society. We recommend strongly to read this work for all teachers and other basic education professionals, that you will find in the writings of Galvão, Lavoura and Martins (2019) theoretical-robust and solid methodologies for pedagogical work rich in mediations.

In this way, we emphasize that this work joins the writings of Dermeval Saviani, Newton Duarte and Lígia Márcia Martins (in her other works) as a classic of Historical-Critical Pedagogy. For knowing that the classics always have something to tell us, we will have in the book “Fundamentals of Didactics Historical-Critical” and in the crystallized work of Ana Carolina Galvão, Tiago Nicola Lavoura and Lígia Márcia Martins, a safe support for the challenges and struggles that await us on the school floor.

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