

# International Journal of Human Sciences Research

## PAULO FREIRE AND THE TEACHER OF THE EARLY YEARS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PRODUCTIONS AT UNESP (2010-2021)

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<http://lattes.cnpq.br/1415518800713655>

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**Abstract:** The general objective of this work was to investigate the articulation between Paulo Freire's work and the training and performance of teachers of the early years of elementary education, through a qualitative research approach supported by bibliographic research. Through the critical analysis of the academic production of Postgraduate Programs in Education at UNESP, UNICAMP and USP from 2010 to 2021, the research was developed in two stages. The first was the analysis of the works "Education and Change" and "Pedagogy of Hope" by Paulo Freire and, subsequently, the bibliographical research was carried out. It is evident from the first stage that the analyzed works provoke reflections about change, hope, and liberation from oppression, which shows the transforming character of education for the construction of a pedagogy of hope. As to the second moment, related to the bibliographical search, it was identified after analysis and application of filters that the productions from USP represent a real outstanding research about Paulo Freire, and that UNESP stands out in the productions about teachers of the initial years/cycle I; UNICAMP, on the other hand, presents an absence of productions in both themes. At the end of the research, it was concluded that the articulation between Paulo Freire and the training and performance of teachers of the initial years/cycle I is still very timid. This theme must be introduced in initial and continuing education courses in order to be reflected in future academic works.

**Keywords:** Paulo Freire; Early Years Teacher; Cycle I teacher.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a social phenomenon and is related to the cultural, scientific, economic and political context of a society. The act of educating is also a social process with a strong influence throughout history.

Contrary to the so-called 'contemporary society' in which the various technological, social and cultural transformations happen quickly, an emancipatory aspect of education becomes relevant that values the process of humanization, based on the awareness and transformation of individuals and society as a whole.

In this sense, the study of the works and ideas of the educator and philosopher Paulo Freire directs researchers and scholars to understand the human being in its entirety, in which education is a tool for changing and transforming society through the critical development of subjects.

Thus, this research is directed towards the articulation between Paulo Freire's thought and the training and performance of teachers in the early years of Elementary School. Through a qualitative research approach, a bibliographical research was carried out with a critical analysis of the academic production of the Graduate Programs in Education at UNESP, UNICAMP and USP, from 2010 to 2021.

Among the specific objectives, it was necessary to identify and analyze the works "Education and Change" and "Pedagogy of Hope" by Paulo Freire, to identify research on Paulo Freire in the academic production of the Graduate Programs in Education, to identify research on Paulo Freire in the academic production of the Post-Graduation in Education researches on teachers in the early years of elementary school, critically analyze the selected production and reflect on being a teacher in the early years of elementary school in public schools based on the results of the selected productions.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Considering the objectives of this study, a qualitative research approach was developed based on bibliographical research based on

Lima and Mioto, 2007.

A bibliographic search process was carried out in which academic productions related to the themes “Paulo Freire” and “being a teacher in the early years of elementary school” were analyzed. As a procedure, the following steps were followed: 1) Identification of the academic production of Postgraduate programs in Education in the period from 2010 to 2021; 2) Tabulation of quantitative data; 3) Reading and analysis of abstracts of all papers found; 4) Systematization by themes through analysis of abstracts; 5) Selection of productions focusing on Paulo Freire and the training and performance of teachers in the early years of Elementary School and, finally, 6) Full analysis of research and identification of their results on the subject.

Bibliographical research was used in this study with the purpose of deepening and expanding knowledge about the researched theme, having the opportunity to learn about studies and research already carried out, expand the look on the theme, clarify doubts and change perspectives and concepts (LIMA ; MIOTO, 2007). This research procedure is characterized by a literature review on the main theories that guide scientific work. This is what is called a bibliographical survey or bibliographical review, which can be carried out in books, journals, Internet sites, among other sources (PIZZANI et al., 2012).

The bibliographic search is carried out from the survey of theoretical references already analyzed and published and, as a result, it is important that the researcher has understanding of reading to organize the survey and reflect and write about what he analyzed (FONSECA, 2002).

According to Salvador (*apud* LIMA; MIOTO, 2007, p. 41), the analysis of the materials selected for this type of research is divided into five phases: bibliographic material recognition reading, exploratory

reading, selective reading, reflective or critical reading and interpretive reading. Based on this, this bibliographic research was carried out in the database of the Graduate Programs in Education at UNESP, UNICAMP and USP, from 2010 to 2021, using the website of the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTB) to identify studies on Paulo Freire and Teacher of the Early Years.

For this purpose, from January 13 to 19, 2022, the bibliographical research was carried out using the following filters: “UNESP”, “UNICAMP”, “USP”, “PAULO FREIRE”, “2010-2021”. It is noteworthy that the material collected during the research was critically analyzed from the theoretical foundation of Lima and Mioto (2007).

Then, the articulation of Paulo Freire and the teacher of the early years of Elementary School was investigated through the results of the bibliographical search, in order to construct a critical analysis of the selected productions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here we bring a description and synthesis of Paulo Freire’s works entitled “Education and Change” and “Pedagogy of Hope” and, later, we present the analysis of the bibliographical research in the Graduate Programs in Education at UNESP, USP and UNICAMP on the topic researched.

### EDUCATION AND CHANGE WORK

A book initially written in Spanish and released in Brazil in 1979, it is a work that stands out for its objectivity in which the educator shows his proposals and important techniques for adult literacy, allowing the illiterate to understand these techniques so that, when learning, they become become a reflective subject and able to transform society. Freire (1979) wrote the book based on experiences of his educational praxis,

and its predominant subject is the change and politicization of society through the educational process.

In the first chapter “The Professional’s Commitment to Society” an investigation and an introduction of Freire’s ideas and principles are carried out in relation to man and the professional’s commitment, since “commitment would be an empty word, an abstraction, if not involved the lucid and profound decision of who assumes it, if it did not happen in the concrete plane” (FREIRE, 1979, p.15).

The first condition of commitment is the ability to act, think, and be able to understand the conditioning of consciousness in this environment. Without this competence of awareness of the action of the world, the individual does not cross the borders set by the respective world, becoming a submissive individual, incapable of compromise. However, the individual who is involved with humanity cannot be considered neutral, as neutrality is the portrait of weakness and fear of commitment.

The second chapter “Education and the Process of Social Change”, has several subtopics, which are summarized:

- Knowledge-Ignorance: “Education is permanent. There are no educated and non-educated beings. We are all educating ourselves.” (FREIRE, 1979, p.28). However, wisdom comes from ignorance, so there is no absolute wisdom and no absolute ignorance, only a perspective of knowledge and ignorance.
- Love-Dislove: love is a subject’s task, and “There is no education without love [...] “whoever is not capable of loving unfinished beings is not capable of educating” (FREIRE, 1979, p.29).
- Hope-Desperation: employs hope as the main means in education, since “An education without hope is not education.”

(FREIRE, 1979, p.30). Thus, the burden of education is for those who believe in it, because those who educate need courage to take risks, not fear.

- Man – A Being of Relationships: shows the principle of the process of association, as it states that man “is in the world and with the world”. Differentiating the I and a non-I makes it possible to step out of oneself and project oneself onto the other, transforming man into a being of relationships and not just of contacts.
- Characteristics: addresses that it is in the education of the individual that reflective awareness must be developed so that he can understand his environment and also modify the environment in which he lives. According to Freire (1979, p.30): “Man tends to capture a reality, making it the object of his knowledge”. However, man has the capacity to achieve a new reality, constituting it as an instrument of his knowledge.
- The Creative Impetus of Man: Freire (1979) shows that in every man there is a creative impetus that arises from the incomplete man. It is fundamental and necessary to offer opportunities for students to discover themselves. A teacher who gives his students an individual conception makes it difficult for that student to develop critical thinking.
- Concept of Society in Transition: says that there is no transition that does not provoke a beginning, a development and a point of arrival. However, our tomorrow is based on the past and materializes in today, and that is why we need to know what we were and what we are, to know what we will be.
- Characteristics of a closed society: Freire (1979), says that the closed society is

defined by the conservation of status or privilege and by expanding an entire educational system to maintain this status. In this society, it is the elite that strictly controls the popular classes.

- Alienated society: the alienated society is known by the similarity of another society, leading to the absence of its identity, degrading its own culture. The individual believes that to be developed it is necessary to reproduce others in their standards of living, education, diversity, among others. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate, criticize and reinvent according to each reality.
- A Society in Transition: it is shown that a society in transition develops into new principles for society. However, when society comes together, an evolution begins in which it is recognized and called democratization, where individuals begin to impose themselves in the political system of society, finding in education a means for a new condition and begin to demand more schools..
- The 'Banking Consciousness' of Education: shows that the teacher is still recognized as the main means of education, where the student constantly obtains learning and becomes a deposit of knowledge. In this sense, Freire proposes an education that employs the individual as a transforming being of his own reality.
- Consciousness and Its States: presents an education that disposes man to be an inventor and revolutionary of his respective life. This way, Freire shows that it is important to put an end to naive consciousness in order to encourage critical consciousness, abandoning explanations based on consensus and failing to see reality as inert.

The third chapter "The role of the social worker in the process of change", presents the worker as a main intermediary for the processes of change in society, emphasizing that the social structure is action and not inertia. In the process of adult literacy and awareness, it is necessary to consider the context of society in which this process takes place. To this end, the educator seeks to prove that changes in social structures are feasible, however, they require an analysis of the environment in which the being is accustomed, so that he can act on this reality and transform it.

The last chapter "Adult Literacy and Conscientization", exposes the process of adult literacy as a possible key to the awareness of the being. Freire (1979) says that teaching goes beyond a simple discourse of constituted arguments, as it is in the action of teaching that the student has the benefit of recognizing the ontological vocation of man, to then provide fundamental questions for this individual to transform his reality. Man is the subject of education and not the object of it, and it is based on learning about his circumstances that this individual will be able to examine his environment and intervene in it.

### **WORK PEDAGOGY OF HOPE**

"Pedagogy of Hope: reunion with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed", was written in 1992, during exile in Chile, and reflects the different types of scenarios lived by Paulo Freire during his life trajectory. This work was written in a scenario of dismay due to the fact that Freire received criticism regarding his role as a teacher. The Pedagogy of Hope is a book that restores hope to the oppressed subject, emphasizing that it is necessary to fight against oppression in favor of freedom.

In the first moment of the book, Paulo Freire talks about his childhood and adolescence experiences with the children of rural and urban workers. He exposes that

he experienced the cruelty of the heads of the dominant classes until the beginning of his career at the SESI school. However, it was through these experiences and with the difficulties he went through and witnessed throughout his life, as well as the interaction and dialogue with ordinary individuals from dominated classes, that Freire observed how the organizations of classes are rooted in society. From then on, the denominations of “oppressors” and “oppressed” arose.

Freire states that when he was called to work at SESI, he was apprehensive to see the direction in which the context of Brazilian education was transposing, such as the relations between schools and families in popular areas. For Freire, the presence of the family in schools and for democratic participation was of paramount importance. He also points out the need for continued education of all who are part of the institution, so that there is a mediation of students and their families in the purposes of the school.

Throughout the chapters, Freire mentions his experience of 4 and a half years in Chile, a period that contributed to his improvement in relation to democratic popular education with the popular masses. The educator also talks about some elements of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed that have or have not provoked criticism over the years. One of the criticisms was in relation to the use of sexist vocabulary, as Freire pronounced in relation to men in a way that women were placed, which was not merely a problem of language, but of ideology, because if women were said, men would not go feel introduced, as this comes from female discrimination conditioning. However, for a transformation to occur in society, a change also needs to occur in the midst of ideology, leaving behind all traces of a sexist past and women's domination. Freire begins to write himself in a language that is no longer universal, as he considers that transforming

language is part of changing the world.

However, another criticism of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed was presented by Freire, in which he refers to distancing by not mentioning social classes, and mentioning only the concept of the oppressed, and this expression would have become so confusing. Class struggle is one of the factors in the history of society, and it is not something that is studied in specialization courses, but in the historical moment and in everyday life. However, this does not mean that knowledge of workers' struggles cannot occur through theoretical-practical training courses for workers' leaders and the democratization of schools.

In the third and last moment of the book, Freire tells some facts, occurrences and meetings in which he participated in relation to his book 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. Freire uses the term 'existential fatigue' to demonstrate the condition of workers who had to leave their country of origin because they did not have job opportunities, and then accepted to work in other countries. It is not only physical, but also mental fatigue, arising from the fear that the oppressed feels of the oppressor, that is, of his boss. And it is through fear that the oppressed individual is prevented from fighting and seeking a better working condition, etc.

However, it is from this that comes the relevance of having a problematizing school institution, which is at odds with content and domesticating proposals, that is, which is a democratic and open school of education.

The work ends by addressing that the 'Pedagogy of Hope' is the hope that individuals have to idealize a more integrated world, even with so many adversities. Therefore, it is the duty of the progressive educator to guarantee the hope of the oppressed and to collaborate in the formation of a critical perception of our context, showing the differences in social

organization.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC SEARCH: GENERAL RESULTS

Through the analysis of surveys carried out on the BDTD website, in the period from 2010 to 2021, we identified the data presented in Table 1. We emphasize that the indications (I) represent the quantity of productions without filter, when using the filter of the institutions (USP, UNICAMP and UNESP) we have the productions found (E). After analyzing the productions with the purpose of the research, we have the selected productions (S) for analysis.

Descriptors	I	E	S
Paulo Freire	2.880	211	26
Early Years Teacher	2371	183	36
Teacher cycle I	740	51	13
Total	5.991	445	75

Table 1: General data of the productions found and selected

Source: The author, 2022.

With the descriptor “Paulo Freire” a total of 2,880 results were obtained. With the filters “Unesp”, “USP” and “UNICAMP”, “2010-2021”, “Portuguese”, the number of works dropped to 211. Of these, only 26 were selected after reading the abstracts, as they were close to the theme, a total of 12 dissertations and 14 theses.

Using the descriptor “Teacher of the Early Years”, a total of 2,371 were found. With the filters “Unesp”, “USP” and “UNICAMP”, “2010-2021”, “Portuguese”, it reached 183 results. After analyzing the abstracts, 36 productions were selected, consisting of 22 dissertations and 14 theses.

Finally, in the case of the last descriptor “Professor do Ciclo I”, a total of 740 results were found, which after applying the filters “Unesp”, “USP” and “UNICAMP”, 2010-2021”,

“Portuguese”, it increased to 51. After reading the abstracts, 13 productions were selected, 09 of which were dissertations and 04 theses.

It was verified the absence of works with the descriptors “teacher of the initial years” and “teacher of cycle I” at UNICAMP. Regarding the selected productions, there was a highlight for USP on the theme about Paulo Freire and Professor of the early years. In the case of UNESP, the relevance was in the descriptors of the teachers of the initial years and cycle I.

According to data in Table 2, 26 works were analyzed in relation to the descriptor “Paulo Freire”. During the analysis process, focus was placed on identifying the objective, methodology and research results.

	DISSERTATION	THESIS	TOTAL
UNESP	2	3	5
USP	6	7	13
UNICAMP	4	4	8
TOTAL	12	14	26

TABLE 2: General data for the Paulo Freire descriptor.

SOURCE: The author, 2022.

Of the five Unesp productions, it was noted that all are female authors. However, two advisors are female and three are male.

In the analysis process, it appears that three productions constitute doctoral theses and the other two are master’s dissertations. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2017 (1), 2018 (2), and 2019 (2). However, it was observed that the researches are diversified between the campuses of Presidente Prudente, Campos de Marília, Campus of Araraquara and Campus of Rio Claro.

Regarding the 13 productions found at USP, seven are female authors, and six are male. However, five advisors are female and eight are male.

During the analysis process, it was found that seven productions are doctoral theses,

and six are master's dissertations. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2010 (1), 2013 (2), 2015 (3), 2016 (2), 2017 (2), and 2019 (3). Another observation is that the research found on Paulo Freire is in several faculties at USP, not only in the area of education, but at the Institute of Physics, Institute of Chemistry, Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences campus, Arts, Sciences and Humanities campus, and Institute of Mathematics and Statistics.

In the case of the eight productions found from UNICAMP, it is noted that there was an exact division in relation to the gender of the authors. However, all eight advisors are male.

Throughout the analysis process, it was verified that four UNICAMP productions are master's dissertations and that the other half are doctoral theses. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2010 (1), 2012 (1), 2013 (1), 2015 (3), 2016 (3), and 2017 (2). It was observed that the research found on Paulo Freire is centered in the area of education, more specifically developed at the Faculdade de Educação de Campinas.

During the analyses, we highlighted three elements of the selected productions in relation to Paulo Freire: objectives, methodology and results. Regarding the objectives, the works present a relationship with each other regarding Paulo Freire's contributions and perspectives in the teaching process and in education in general. It must be noted that no research was found that directly articulated the author with the teacher in the early years of elementary school.

As for the methodology, we highlight the option for a qualitative approach and note the presence of fourteen bibliographical researches: Alves (2017), Pinto (2019), Gerbasi (2013), Alberto (2015), Zimmermann (2016), Nicoletti (2017), Lima (2018), Lemos (2020), Pereira (2020), Milton (2013), Araújo (2015), Carvalho (2015), Machado (2017) and Lira

(2015).

There is also a research with a semi-structured interview (PONTES, 2017), and another of a hermeneutic nature (NUNES, 2012). The others used projects (KAUANO 2019), conversation circles (ALMEIDA 2011), interviews (OLIVEIRA 2014) and discussions and data analysis (SCHIVANI 2010 and EPOGLOU 2013).

Among the research results, it can be generally observed that they deal with educational debates, with the transformation of education as an instrument of change and with the search for the construction of critical and reflective subjects within society. They also expose a problematizing and humanizing education, bringing a discussion committed to the construction of critical subjects.

Now in relation to the descriptors "Teacher of the Early Years" and "Professor of Cycle I", Table 3 initially shows the result of 3,111 productions with the descriptor "Professor of Elementary Education" in the database of Postgraduate programs from USP, UNICAMP and UNESP. After using the search filters, 234 papers were found. Thus, after reading and analyzing the productions, 49 studies were found that were close to the theme. During the analysis process, the objective, methodology and research results are emphasized.

	DISSERTATION	THESIS	TOTAL
UNESP	24	7	31
USP	7	11	18
UNICAMP	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>49</b>

Table 3: General data - early years teachers and Cycle I teacher.

Source: The author, 2022.

UNESP (Teacher of the early years): It was noted that eighteen productions are female authors and four male. However, twelve advisors are female and ten are male. In the analysis process, we verified that four



productions are doctoral thesis, and eighteen are master's dissertations. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2011 (2), 2012 (1), 2013 (5), 2014 (1), 2015 (1), 2016 (2), 2017 (4), 2018 (1), 2019 (4), and 2020 (1). However, we observed that the researches are diversified between the campuses of Presidente Prudente, Marília, Araraquara, Rio Claro, Bauru, São Paulo and Ilha Solteira.

USP (Teacher of the early years): It was found that twelve productions are by female authors, and two are male. Of these, five advisors are female and nine are male. It was verified in the analysis procedure that four productions are master's dissertations and that ten are doctoral theses. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2011 (2), 2012 (1), 2013 (3), 2014 (2), 2015 (2), 2016 (1), 2017 (2) and 2019 (1). However, we observed that the research found on Professor of the Early Years is located in several USP colleges, not only in the area of education, but in the Faculty of Dentistry, Institute of Chemistry and Institute of Bioscience.

UNESP (Professor Cycle I): It was observed that six productions are female authors, and three are male. However, six advisors are female and three are male. In the analysis process, we verified that three productions are doctoral thesis, and six are master's dissertations. As for the year of defense, it is noted that the dates vary between 2010 (1), 2011 (1), 2012 (1), 2013 (2), 2014 (1), 2015 (1) and 2016 (1). About the location, as Unesp is a multi-campus university, research is diversified between the campuses of Presidente Prudente, Marília, Araraquara, Rio Claro and Bauru.

USP (Professor Cycle I): An exceptionality was identified: all productions are female authors guided by women. Throughout the analysis process, it was verified that one production is a doctoral thesis, and that three are master's dissertations. Regarding the year of defense, it is noted that the dates

vary between 2011 (1) and 2018 (3). It was observed that the research found on Professor do Ciclo I is in the faculty of USP in São Paulo, in the area of education.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By understanding and researching Paulo Freire and the teacher in the early years of elementary school, it was found in the results of the analyzes of the productions that USP represents a highlight in research on Paulo Freire. UNESP stands out in productions about teachers in the early years/cycle I. UNICAMP, on the other hand, presents the absence of productions about teachers in the early years/cycle I.

The articulation between Paulo Freire and the training and performance of teachers in the early years/cycle I is very timid, since most research does not show a direct relationship between the works and thought of Paulo Freire and the teacher in the early years of the elementary School. It was also noted that many studies show the presence of Paulo Freire in higher education and even in contexts outside of education.

It is considered necessary to be able to unite Freire's conceptions of education with the performance of teachers in the early years of elementary school in public schools, since the professional dimension requires a permanent search for training. In other words, being part of this movement to build and develop education requires awareness that we are incomplete beings, a key concept in Freire's thinking, and also that education is part of life while reality is problematized in order to transform it.

The works "Education and Change" and "Pedagogy of Hope" provoke reflections on change, hope and liberation from oppression. It is possible to perceive, from these works, that education provides conditions for the development of knowledge, criticality and

values, which lead to transformation towards the construction of a pedagogy of hope. Therefore, in the teacher's performance, it is perceived the need for change in education and in the formation of personal development and enrichment so that they have innovative methodologies to train students.

Therefore, it is concluded that the articulation between Paulo Freire and the training and performance of teachers in the initial years/cycle I is very timid in the result of the bibliographical search presented, and that the purpose of relating these themes remains, since it is necessary to have hope to, according to Freire's thought, transform the world through education. It is believed that this way, the relationship between these themes will compose future quality research on emancipatory practices of education through well-trained teachers.

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