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## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER MEDIATION FOR DEVELOPING A CHILD'S MEANINGFUL BOND WITH THE STUDY ACTIVITY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** The study presented was prepared and carried out during the year 2022-2023 based on the Scientific Initiation project, linked to the research project entitled “The Social and Cultural in Training and Educational Praxis: Implications of Historical-Cultural Theory and Pedagogy Historical-Critical in Teaching, Learning and Human Development in School Education”, linked to the Study Group and extension project named Theoretical-Methodological Foundations of Historical-Cultural Theory: Concepts for thinking about educational work with children. The problem that guided the study sought to answer the following question: How is it possible, through pedagogical intervention, to enable the appropriation of scientific content in a meaningful way for students? The general objective of this project was to understand how the teacher can qualitatively guide the learning of culture designed in a way that generates a link with the student’s reality, enabling the creation of a deep relationship between the recipient and the socialized knowledge. The study’s methodology was bibliographical research, based on the critical dialectical method and Cultural Historical Theory. Therefore, the contributions of Historical-Cultural Theory were presented together with Historical-Critical Pedagogy, and their immeasurable importance for human development, teaching and learning, as well as an analysis of the category of mediation as an essential element in the performance of teachers, as well as in the formation of human beings with the virtue of school education. Furthermore, the work presents the periodization of the child’s psychic development enriched by the analysis of the Guide Activities, developed by Lev Semionovitch Vigotsky and the Pedagogical Practice developed by Dermeval Saviani. The teacher’s mediation in children’s learning and development in Elementary School is

also explored as essential, since the chosen approach points out that human beings need mediation through social relationships, especially from more experienced human beings, in order to develop. It is intended to contribute to this study in order to rethink the teacher’s work and development through the Study Activity.

**Keywords:** Education; Elementary School; Teacher mediation; Bond, Development; Study Activity.

## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge regarding School Education has always presented and continues to present several difficulties that directly reflect on the appropriation of scientific content and also on the development of children. Many of these issues are based on the mediation process of teachers in educational spaces, mainly in classrooms or school environments.

For this reason, the present study is based on understanding the importance of teacher mediation when pursuing the objective of creating meaningful links between the recipient and actual knowledge. In view of this demand, in-depth study of the periodization of child development becomes essential, as it is from the mediations and social interactions themselves that higher psychological functions develop (FACCI, 2004).

It is worth highlighting that such mediations do not happen by chance and are not simple attitudes, as they “[...] involve intentional planning and the choice of powerful mediators for the development of teaching.” (MELLO, 2020, p.88). For this reason, teacher training is a crucial demand for the effective development of these conditions, since “The development of special higher psychic functions in students must be the priority in the relationship with school content.” In this sense, the main objective must be guided by the mediation of teachers, with the aim of fully

developing higher psychic functions based on very well-defined intentionality.

In addition to intentionality itself, the social factor is primordial and must always be taken into consideration, occupying an important position in the choice of mediations for development, as Altenfelder states, “This means that the psychological world is configured based on man’s relationship with its environment, which we cannot forget, is marked by a culture and a historicity, therefore an objective, collective, social and cultural world.” (2015, p.61).

Authors such as Saviani, Vigotsky, Mello, Martins and many others present in the study contributed to the foundation of this work, being explored through the critical dialectical method, also through Cultural Historical Theory through bibliographical research. This methodological path was chosen, since it is understood that the method is the means by which it is possible to appropriate existing knowledge worked from qualitative syntheses.

## **THE PERIODIZATION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

When studying the teacher’s mediation in the development of children’s meaningful bonds, it is necessary to understand human psychic development. According to Marilda Facci (2004), higher psychological functions result from each mediation arising from the subject’s interactions with the world around them, through the most varied instruments. Therefore, psychic development happens from social activity and to think about it, the Historical-Cultural Theory, by Vygotsky and his collaborators such as Leontiev, Luria, becomes indispensable during studies. It is important to start by highlighting that, according to Vygotsky, this development does not have an adaptive character but rather a socio-evolutionary one.

Psychic functions can be divided and

studied into two dimensions: elementary and higher. In short, elementary psychic functions are linked to nature and in a way do not yet differentiate us as human beings from animals, since “[...] they guide the immediate responses to stimuli and express a fusional relationship between the subject and the object.” (MARTINS, 2016, p. 15), therefore, they are characterized as immediate responses and reflexes to stimuli. Meanwhile, the higher psychic functions are the result of social work, social relations and mediations that the environment in which the subject is inserted presents, developing through the transformations instructed by the physical and social surroundings of this environment, through “[...] of the transformations conditioned by the activity that sustains the individual’s relationship with their physical and social surroundings, [...]”.

The child must not be alone in any way during the process of developing their psyche, they depend on and rely on external mediations that concern material and intellectual culture, in addition to the historical aspects that surround them.

According to Camilo:

[...]according to the Vygotskian perspective, man is born with the unlimited capacity to learn and develop maximum human potential, provided that in the presence of adequate living and educational conditions, resulting from shared teaching, the collaboration of more experienced partners, whether children older or more experienced; [...].

Therefore, these aspects can be transmitted by parents or guardians of children since birth, becoming even more emphasized with their introduction to school, where there is direct contact with teachers and other students in which they will exchange rich experiences.

Vygotsky presents the two levels of development that help us understand it in general. According to the author, the level of

effective development is understood as “[...] the level of development of the child’s psycho-intellectual functions that was achieved as a result of a specific development process already carried out.” (VIGOTSKII, 2010, p.111), that is, they are classified by the actions that the child is already capable of performing alone, without the help of others.

On the other hand, the level of proximal development refers to “[...] what the child is not yet able to solve independently, but which with help they are able to solve.” (MARSIGLIA, p.37), that is, it can be carried out with the help of an adult, or even another more experienced child, but it is still not achieved successfully in isolation. In other words, it is the development that is close to the final result and of course, can be stimulated, therefore, it needs some help to carry out certain tasks related to this function. It is important to understand that proximal development becomes effective through stimuli and work that generate curiosity and the desire to carry out certain actions, thus guiding the child.

For this reason, following Saviani’s pedagogical practice, also presented by Martins, (2016, p. 26), it is extremely important that we, pedagogues and educators, put into action the initial social practice, where the “[...] teacher and student present themselves as distinct social agents, representing differently the social practice that is common to them [...]” (MARTINS, 2016, p.28) in order to map the spontaneous knowledge already acquired by our students on a given subject, whether with family, other colleagues, neighbors, among other means, as well as identifying the level of effective and proximal development, to we establish stimuli that are capable of guiding the objective of sequencing the development of each child.

Vigotsky, according to Nunes and Silveira, understands that teaching is a primary and founding condition for effective development,

making them interdependent and reciprocal. Attached to teaching and development, there is learning. Concept that according to the etymology of the word: ‘`*aprehendre*’`’.

[...] We can conceive of learning as a process in which a person “appropriates” or makes certain their knowledge, strategic skills, attitudes, values, beliefs or information. In this sense, it is related to change, meaning and expansion of the individual’s internal and external evidence. What he can and needs to learn within each culture. (NUNES, SILVEIRA, 2009, p.13).

By connecting all the terms, it is possible to state that the qualification of development depends on learning through teaching, even in terms of quantity, and as a complement, “the ‘quantity’ of development achieved qualifies the teaching possibilities” (MARTINS, 2016, p.20) thus justifying the dialectical relationship between the terms and the importance of understanding them, as pedagogues, for the application of school activities and pedagogical practices in general.

Saviani presents the importance of teaching and development always going together, through all the topics of his Pedagogical Practice, which need to happen in a dialectical way. After the initial social practice, the teacher is responsible for conducting the problematization, a stage that “understands the main problems identified by the initial social practice” (SAVIANI, 1984, apud MARTINS p. 74), identifying what needs a solution and what knowledge can assist the class. Educational objectives become better defined during this stage, and executed based on the questions generated, directing knowledge that does not exist, but will come to exist.

Based on the elaborated objections, the content begins to be worked on using instruments, both theoretical and practical, with the instrumentalization stage. “It is (...) the collection of appropriations that the

teacher has to aim at in the act of teaching, that is, the objectives, the selection of content and teaching procedures, the teaching resources that he will use, etc.” (MARTINS, 2016, p.30), and therefore, the objective is to take advantage of the teaching materials that best fit the content and profile of the classroom, within the school’s possibilities, such as textbooks, research, videos or technologies in general, to have impulses that cause psychic transformations.

Finally, we reach catharsis. It is the synthesis of processes, in the “effective incorporation of cultural instruments, now transformed into native elements of social transformations” (SAVIANI, 1984, apud MARTINS, 2016, p.26), therefore, it makes it possible to say that learning existed in the environment, as the child no longer only has spontaneous knowledge of certain content through teaching. Catharsis is the objective of all of us, pedagogues, teachers and educators, as it is there that transformation takes place in the student’s life.

Following all the stages, the final social practice takes place differently from the first, as it qualifies with all the pedagogical intervention experienced.

“[...] the qualitatively superior social practice, representative of the point of arrival, will be so according to the implementation of the teaching project, in the process of intersection between the student’s path (learning) and the teacher’s path (teaching).” (idem).

With this completion of teaching, the child becomes interested and seeks to apply their new knowledge in their reality, in their daily lives. Whether telling parents, siblings, seeking to know even more and go deeper, or even applying it in a practical way, when feasible.

There are several studies that discuss the issue of psychic development from birth to old age. Among the authors studied, we

highlight Martins (2016) in the investigation into the periodization of human development. According to the analysis carried out to prepare this study, we observed that human reasoning is born from distrust, from the need for discovery, while development requires activities that stimulate it and enable such discoveries. Psychic functions develop through the activities that determine them and for this reason, Elkonin and Leontiev declare that there are different guiding activities, or main activities that determine and characterize the stages of development during childhood.

According to Silva (2018), the first activity that guides development is called Emotional Communication and takes place in the baby’s first year of life. During this period, the baby is completely dependent on their parents or guardians, and for this reason they need emotional communication from them, even if they do not understand the language, to satisfy their demands, such as hunger, pain and sleep, for example. It is up to parents and teachers to know how to read the signals presented by babies in the most diverse ways possible, in order to understand their real needs and respect each baby’s time, as “In this scenario, babies hear, see, feel and feel move based on the spatial and temporal organization established by adults.” (SILVA, 2018, p.25).

Often this organization by those responsible and even by the school leaves something to be desired, not sending necessary stimuli and materials for this very important period, generating certain consequences such as possible delays in speech, emotions and feelings, as they have not received enough conditions to appropriate themselves. of such qualifications. For this reason, breaking with the welfare idea implemented in daycare centers and nurseries is extremely important. Currently, we understand that the role of the school is much greater than just caring

for children, feeding them and ensuring their health while their parents work, as the pedagogical work and psychological development made possible for the baby is immense. Camilo helps in understanding the importance of such stimuli through emotional communication, saying that:

This communication is still not verbal, but emotional. The anticipatory initiative of adults to speak to the child before he is able to respond or understand and to bring objects closer for him to see and pick up creates new needs: the need for communication and manipulation of objects. (2008, p.135)

It is at this moment that the bases for the formation of sensorimotor actions occur, as the baby absorbs all the things that happen around him, stimulating memory to develop language in the future. The first relationships that occur during this period are also extremely important, as they receive affection, empathy and all other demonstrations that occur within their experiences.

During the second year of life, children begin to develop Instrumental Object Activity as the main activity in their lives, where it begins. “[...] the assimilation of socially elaborated procedures of action with objects and, for this assimilation to occur, it is necessary for adults to show these actions to children.” (FACCI, 2004, p.68). This means that they become minimally independent from adults for some activities, such as crawling to the toy and picking it up, and thus begin to relate objects to certain functions, made possible by adults, who demonstrate, even involuntarily, such functions present in the day. the subject’s daily life, always highlighting the importance of their intermediary.

Language is a form of mediation between the subject and the object of knowledge, and begins to appear during this stage. According to Vygotsky “[...] the child’s thinking evolves as a function of mastering the social means of thought, that is, as a function of language.”

(1993, apud FACCI, 2004, p. 68). Even though it is immensely important, language is not the main activity during the current stage, its main role is to assist in the assimilation of objects with their respective functions.

Role Play becomes the next guiding activity in development, the main activity during early childhood. Its main function is to introduce children to the world, allowing them to represent human relationships. During this period, through play, the child “[...] tries to integrate an active relationship not only with the things directly accessible to him, but also with the wider world, that is, he strives to act like an adult.” (LEONTIEV, 1998b, apud FACCI, p.69).

During playful games, the subject can perform activities that are unfeasible for them in the real world, such as driving a car or an airplane, cooking, or even working and understanding the rights and duties of individuals in these roles, in which they are completely influenced by all human activities, since the main character is the man, in both cases, because, “[...] the child takes possession of the concrete world of human objects, through the reproduction of the actions carried out by adults with these objects.” (FACCI, 2004, p.69), concluding that they are not instinctive but rather determined by the content that children absorb from the adult world.

After all the guide activity steps, we finally arrive at the study activity. It generally begins with the subject’s insertion into the school environment, in which they meet countless other people who were not previously in their circle of coexistence. At that moment, “The child has grown, developed physically, increased his vocabulary and is no longer satisfied with doing symbolically what adults do. It is now necessary to know what they know” (MARSIGLIA, 2011, p.49), but, like none of the guiding activities, the transition

does not happen completely naturally. It is necessary to prepare the child with a student attitude, so that they can assume new rights and duties, new obligations that study as the main developmental activity entails.

Studying from the beginning is seen as more important to parents, making children really feel like they are doing something more relevant, as Marsiglia says:

“[...] the child begins to carry out a socially important activity. If before their parents thought they could interrupt their games, now the attitude changes and the child's 'study time' starts to be respected and is not interrupted.” (2011, p.49).

And then, during this stage, consciousness and theoretical thinking arise. Together, they allow the child to understand the need for study as the teacher develops pedagogical methods that spark their interest.

The transition between the stages presented happens individually, with particular characteristics and time for each subject, but always causes changes in behaviors and functions. These changes occur due to the need to replace them with others, often generating crises that arise at the end of each stage. In this sense, for Davidov (apud CAMILO, 2008, p. 137), Vygotsky had concluded that during the crises of the first year, three and seven years, intense changes occurred due to the remodeling of the child's needs, as well as their experiences internal.

Vygotsky examined in detail the crisis of the first year, three years and seven years and came to certain conclusions regarding the essence of these sudden changes in the child's development: the essence of each crisis consists in the restructuring of internal experience, the restructuring of needs and motives. (DAVIDOV, 1986; apud CAMILO, 2008, p. 137)

Crises have an indefinite start and end time, and are commonly characterized by a difficult phase to educate, full of conflicts and negative

attitudes, especially with parents and teachers. Fortunately, despite being very difficult, “Crises show the internal need for changes in stages, (...), as an open contradiction arises between the child's way of life and their possibilities, which have already surpassed that way of life.” (FACCI, 2004, p.74), therefore, they can be minimized through the qualified training of teachers, the pedagogical team and even parents who care about the knowledge of these phases, thus taking coherent attitudes that help with the development of your child in the best way possible.

## **TEACHER MEDIATION IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Numerous studies from psychology in general seek to understand through which means the human being develops, and one of the authors studied for the presentation of the following research based on the socio-historical approach, states that “[...] the human being develops constitutes as a human being in the life and education processes that he experiences, that is, he learns to be human in the social relationships in which he participates as an active subject” (MELLO, 2012, p.366), and all these relationships happen through mediation, along with culture and activity. The concepts presented make us understand that the human being is inserted in the environment, and develops based on his relationships and experiences in this environment, “This means that the psychological world is configured based on the relationship between man and his environment, which We cannot forget is marked by a culture and a historicity, therefore an objective, collective, social and cultural world.” (ALTENFELDER, 2015, p. 61).

In view of the above, it is the role of the education professional responsible for

training children at school to understand that mediation is of enormous importance and that their performance must occur with excellence, especially when working with the perspective of Historical-Cultural Theory, as it is through mediation in the relationship established with other human subjects, they develop higher psychic functions, conditions that differ from animals (MELLO, 2020, p.74). According to the author, humanization occurs as higher psychic functions are developed, through the internalization of content, which comes from adequate mediation by people with more experience and the available instruments which are offered and presented to the child (MELLO, 2012, p.369). Mello also highlights that mediation concerns the individual interpretation of each subject, that is, there may be different impacts coming from the same experience lived by children of different ages, and because they are interpreted in different ways, they generate different meanings (2012, page: 370).

It is important to highlight that human beings do not appropriate each and every mediation, they need to present and work especially with intentionality. "The mediating activity must modify and deepen as individuals create new learning needs for themselves and, therefore, to develop themselves." (MELLO, 2020, p.80). Such intentions must accompany the development process of individuals, so that they do not "settle", moving away from the approach to the developmental function of mediations.

For man's relationship with the environment to occur, it is necessary for him to acquire instruments. Animals satisfy their needs in the most natural way possible, seeking food directly from the forest when they feel hungry, while humans do not behave this way. It needs numerous utensils to be able to feed itself when it is hungry, such as the plow, the knife, the fire... instruments created by our

own species and passed on to new generations through mediation, as the more experienced teach the inexperienced. "According to the historical-cultural approach, the relationship between man and the environment is always mediated by human cultural products, such as the instrument and the sign, and by the 'other'" (FONTANA, CRUZ, 2013, p. 58)

Signs are called by Vygotsky as "psychological instruments", "While the instrument is externally oriented, that is, towards modifying the environment, the sign is internally oriented, modifying the psychological functioning of man." (FONTANA, CRUZ, 2013, p. 59) Therefore, signs are artificial and abstract means that directly imply the relationship between the human being and the environment, since it is the creation of a symbolic universe, worked between generations that results of collective activity objectified in culture, as presented by Martins, in which "[...] a supra-individual production is revealed to be shared among men and transmitted to new generations, that is, it requires teaching." (MARTINS, 2016, p.16-17).

Language is seen as the most important sign for humanity, as it is part of the thought elaboration process, since the subject associates the word with the object or action carried out by adults, who mediate this relationship.

Therefore, Vygotsky postulated the development of speech as a decisive qualitative leap in the humanization of the psyche, as it results from the intersection of thought and language, functions that in their origins follow distinct and independent lines of development. Therefore, the development of thought and language maintains a close alliance with the process of word complexity." (MARTINS, 2016, p. 17).

The human being through language develops individually and collectively, as it is necessary for the establishment of development



relationships between human subjects. Given this importance, we understand that “Both systems merges, forming an intertwining of two genetic processes [genesis], but essentially different.” (MELLO, 2020, p.77), that is, organic and cultural plans merge in the child’s development.

Over the years, research has shown that the binomial of Learning and Development are inseparable aspects in the child’s education process. This statement refers to the fact that:

[...] the development of learning occurs at the same time as human development. We do not need to wait for the maturation of internal structures in children and young people, such as physiological structures, to develop appropriate teaching for learning. (VIGOTSKY, apud MELLO, 2020, p.75)

Therefore, it is understood that learning and development must be stimulated mutually, so that the two can actually exist with excellence, as they are linked, not happening in isolation.

Mello contributes to the understanding of the importance of mediation in the joint process of learning and development, “[...] in the processes of learning and human development there are crucial moments specific to each individual that are related to a series of other previous moments and subsequent experiences in society.” MELLO, 2020, p.78). The experiences children have at school can contribute to the student’s integral development. It is important to highlight what the school institution needs to produce.

[...] pleasurable experiences with a given object of knowledge, in which students feel respected in their interests and their reality, in which they feel capable, can positively mobilize the student to continue learning. On the other hand, situations in which they feel disrespected, incapable of learning, can create an aversion to certain knowledge or even school discipline. (ALTENFELDER, 2015, p.68)

According to Mello (2020), for these factors

to happen effectively, quality mediations are necessary, never separated only by the child’s age or school year. It is up to the teacher to observe and understand the needs of each student, based on their particularities, generating qualified mediations.

In addition to the quality of mediations, Saviani presents intentional planning as essential, which consists of organizing actions based on thinking in the form-content-recipient triad, resulting in concrete development. Martins complements this idea by saying that:

[...] the selection of content and the organizational form in which learning occurs, for Historical-Cultural Psychology, are not factors that can be secondary. In the same way, for Historical-Critical Pedagogy, it is necessary to identify in the educational act under which conditions learning truly operates in the service of the individual’s development. (MARTINS, 2016, p. 21).

The thoughts of the authors mentioned above, Saviani and Martins, are intertwined as they share the same objective, the promotion of development, based on historical-social practices. According to Martins, man as a social being is presented from his development through relationships with the environments that link him to nature, as he acquires, according to his experiences, and typically human characteristics that ensure him.

Giving importance to everything that has already been presented, it is necessary to relate and clarify the role of the school, as well as the teacher’s connection, to all learning and development processes, taking into consideration, the entire periodization based on mediations. According to Marsiglia,

The role of the school institution is, therefore, extremely important for the child to appropriate the knowledge of humanity, as human qualities are crystallized in them, so that they know how to use instruments and are encouraged to develop progressively.

(2011, p. 39)

In the school training process, two types of mediation can occur from the professional who works directly with the child, such as the teacher. Sforni clarifies that (2008, p.7) “[...] in the school context there is a double mediation, one that refers to the relationship between teachers and students, the other linked to the relationship between students and the school content” that must be led by the teacher.

In view of this fact, “Pedagogical mediation runs the risk of not being effective in learning and, worse, preventing it, if it is not exercised in this process of complex awareness and intentionality of the end to be achieved.” (MELLO, 2020, p.81). The author presents the need to interpret the experiences of each student, which are clearly not the same, therefore, pedagogical mediation tries to thoroughly seek the needs of the present classroom or the school in general, and thus generate mediations that agree with these indispensabilities.

In addition to understanding these needs, the school must strive to influence students to seek knowledge, based on the real interest in learning through intentional relationships, not only on the part of students, but also on the part of teachers.

This is because intentional relationships must be reciprocal, that is, the student needs to develop intentionality about their need to learn, at the same time that teachers need to deeply expand their intentionalities in proposing mediating activities. (MELLO, 2020, p.78-79).

Reciprocity through the search for knowledge based on intentional relationships becomes responsible for the success or failure in the learning and development process. Such failure often happens, but the direct causes of it certainly do not appear, as it can often be caused by some inefficiency at the school, or other problems. And for

the symptoms of delay not to appear, the solution presented lies precisely in the search for knowledge by the teacher and the entire school structure, so as not to cause the loss of the fluidity of development. Therefore, “The educator, as a more experienced partner, is the one who mediates the child with the world intentionally, seeking the maximum possibilities for the individual’s development.” (MARSIGLIA, 2020, p.36).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studying the periodization of development and the mediation process of the processor for teaching and learning from the perspective of Historical-Cultural Theory allows us to understand the importance of the intentionality of teaching actions, together with the relevance of the social factor. It is concluded that learning and development are inseparable factors and intentionality is a crucial principle for both to happen.

The studies carried out by Mello contribute to the understanding of the way in which this principle must relate to the social factor, and thus needs to be present in the activity plan for a class, as “[...] the teacher’s activity has as its fundamental characteristic intentionality, as he perceives the learning needs of his students, and also visualizes their needs” (MELLO, 2020, p.88).

In addition to the individual development of the child, it was also possible to understand that all the processes studied during the research are essential for humanity, transmitted by the school institution, as shown by Marsiglia.

The role of the school institution is, therefore, extremely important for the child to appropriate the knowledge of humanity, as human qualities are crystallized in them, so that they know how to use instruments and are encouraged to develop progressively. (2020, p.39)

I conclude by highlighting that all the

knowledge presented in this work is of immeasurable importance for the teacher training process, since both theory and pedagogical practice are instruments capable of assisting in the mediation process in search of the child's psychic development.

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