

## Development of Pedagogy as a discipline and its impact on Higher Education in France<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Pedagogy constitutes a discipline that has been differently developed in Europe. In relation to the European disagreement about Pedagogy and its implications, it is evident that History of Education plays an unquestionable and relevant role. This article studies the historical evolution of Pedagogy as an academic discipline in France through a rigorous historic and educational analysis of the origin and development of scientific Pedagogy. Results show in France have coexisted two clearly differentiated educational trends: teacher training, which was imparted in écoles normales and based on practical contents; and, Pedagogy, which was linked to theoretical study and universities. This collaborates to the fragmentation of the pedagogical discipline and the French institutional structure. In conclusion, despite having impulsed the science of Pedagogy in Europe in the 17th century, its influence and presence in Higher Education has not been successful until recent times.

### Keywords

First Higher Education. History of Education. Pedagogy. Pedagogy and Education.

### Desenvolvimento da Pedagogia como disciplina e seu impacto no Ensino Superior na França

### Resumo

A pedagogia constitui uma disciplina que se desenvolveu de forma diferente na Europa. Em relação ao desacordo europeu sobre a Pedagogia e suas implicações, é evidente que a História da Educação desempenha um papel indiscutível e relevante. Este artigo estuda a evolução histórica da Pedagogia como disciplina acadêmica na França por meio de uma análise histórica e educacional rigorosa da origem e do desenvolvimento da Pedagogia científica. Os resultados mostram que na França coexistem duas tendências educacionais claramente diferenciadas: a formação de professores, ministrada em escolas normais e baseada em conteúdos práticos; e a Pedagogia, que estava vinculada ao estudo teórico e às universidades. Isso contribui para a fragmentação da disciplina pedagógica e da estrutura institucional francesa. Em conclusão, apesar de ter impulsionado a ciência da Pedagogia na Europa no século XVII, sua influência e presença no Ensino Superior não tiveram sucesso até tempos recentes.

### Palavras-chave

Educação Superior. História da Educação. Pedagogia. Pedagogia e Educação.

<sup>1</sup> Traduzido para o inglês por Marina Lima Pompeu.

## **Desarrollo de la Pedagogía como disciplina y su impacto en la Educación Superior en Francia**

### **Resumen**

La Pedagogía constituye una disciplina que ha evolucionado de forma disímil en Europa. Ante el desacuerdo europeo en relación con la Pedagogía y sus implicaciones, resulta evidente que la Historia de la Educación desempeña un rol de incuestionable relevancia. Este artículo estudia la evolución histórica de la Pedagogía como disciplina académica en Francia mediante un riguroso análisis histórico-educativo del origen y desarrollo de la Pedagogía científica. Los resultados muestran que en Francia han coexistido dos vertientes educativas claramente diferenciadas: la formación del profesorado, impartida en escuelas normales y basada en contenidos prácticos; y la Pedagogía, ligada al estudio teórico y las universidades. Esto coadyuva a la fragmentación de la disciplina pedagógica y de la estructura institucional francesa. En conclusión, a pesar de haber impulsado la ciencia de la Pedagogía en Europa en el siglo XVII, su influjo y presencia en la Educación Superior no han sido exitosos hasta tiempos recientes.

### **Palabras clave**

Educación Superior. Historia de la Educación. Pedagogía. Pedagogía y Educación.

## **1 Introduction**

Education is a phenomenon integrated into the development of the person, so complex that it's necessary to analyze it from multiple perspectives to understand it (LUENGO NAVAS, 2002). Language is one of the essential aspects to understand the lack of consensus in continental Europe concerning education, for example, the terminological conflict between Pedagogy and Education (BIESTA, 2011). While Anglo-Saxons assume a certain unity under the term Education, heterogeneity in the German language emerges in concepts such as Bildung, Pädagogik, or Erziehung, among others; Pédagogie and Sciences de l'Éducation in French, etc. The subject to be studied here has evolved over the centuries in very different ways within the European continent itself (JUDGE, 1982), and this isn't only because of history (BIESTA, 2011), but also due to their own cultural traditions, which conditioned the development of their national educational systems (PEPIN, 1998). Although in recent years there have been glimpses of convergence between some countries in terms of educational discipline and its conception, significant differences persist, probably arising from different historical paths (FURLONG; WHITTY, 2017). This fact supports the heterogeneity in the traditions of Education and Pedagogy as subjectives and researching this subject aims, among

others, to understand and advance educational phenomena and realities. Likewise, given that universities are increasingly competitive and internationalized institutions, it's in their interest to know their position on the value they place on the study of pedagogy and its research (FURLONG; WHITTY, 2017). Furthermore, pedagogical thinking is not limited to empirical criteria, as we are dealing with a science linked to education through a nomothetic approach that forms a dynamic way of thinking that transcends the limits of factualism (RAJSKI, 2019).

Furlong and Whitty (2017) classify the study of education and pedagogy into three groups that, although considerably different, shouldn't be considered unrelated, as they can sometimes overlap. The first, academic knowledge traditions, is a grouping of pedagogical knowledge traditions based on theoretical foundations. The second, traditions of practical knowledge, encompasses pedagogical traditions framed in educational praxis. In other words, those who seek productivity beyond the production of theoretical knowledge. The third, the integrated knowledge tradition, would be the one that encompasses the previous traditions. Another key aspect of studying pedagogical traditions is whether their discourse is vertical or horizontal. The former tend to be based on academic knowledge, whereas if they belong to horizontal discourse, practice-based knowledge will predominate (HORDERN, 2017).

## 2 Methodology

This article aims to clarify the evolution of issues related to pedagogy in France to the present day and analyze its presence in higher education today. This objective, given its proportion, is divided into the following specific objectives a) to disseminate the course and historical development of the discipline of pedagogy in France, as well as its ethos from its origins to the present day; b) to inform about the current situation of pedagogy as a subject in French higher education; and c) to analyze their strengths and challenges, in order to contribute to their improvement.

In terms of methodological aspects, this contribution employed a qualitative methodology, understood as obtaining information in a descriptive way (QUECEDO LECANDA; CASTAÑO GARRIDO, 2003). Therefore, rigorous content analysis is proposed through its history and peculiarities, leading to a historical-educational

exposition (RUÍZ BERRIO, 1976) based on a systematic literature review, considering the applicability of this research insofar as it could contribute to the understanding of the aspects of French educational and pedagogical systems.

### **3 Problems associated with pedagogy in France**

French education is strongly influenced by naturalist and encyclopedist trends (MCLEAN, 1990), the latter considered one of its pillars, as it's based on principles of rationality, universality, and equality, whose objective is to transform society to benefit its citizens. Thus, while the development of reason is encouraged by rationality, the suppression of social inequalities through educational activities and the promotion of equal opportunities are the objectives of universities. In addition, the social and moral dimensions of the educational system are highlighted by the application of the principle of secularism, as they are considered to be the exclusive responsibility of the family (PEPIN, 1998).

In France, the recognition of pedagogy as a scientific discipline dates back to the 17th century, when Comenius implored the need to create an experimental pedagogy (MALET, 2017). Durkheim also looked to education for a solution to the problem of moral unity in the French industrial society (FLOUD, 1965; SOËTARD, 2011). With the publication of *Émile* in the 18th century, Rousseau dramatically revolutionized French education, because he considered that Education had the power to form the human being at its origin, given the freedom that is generated from the confrontation between the individual's natural desire and its place in the social order, directing this freedom to the constitution of an independent personality (SOËTARD, 2011). In the early 19th century, when Herbart, Cournot, and Compayré, among others, worked to make way for pedagogy, the so-called emerging social sciences, including psychology and sociology, became much more influential, playing a crucial role in the theoretical, institutional, and ideological advance that happened between 1883 and 1914, the Science de l'Éducation (MALET, 2017). Education as a discipline aims to share methods, history, values, and discoveries about scientific and technological progress, an objective for which Pedagogy is necessary (LÉNA, 2002). At the beginning of the 20th century and until the First World War, the educational appeal gained a new

scientific legitimacy (BLANCKAERT *et al.*, 1999). After the educational lethargy resulting from the two world wars, the end of World War II led to several educational reforms in France, mainly structural ones, which were implemented by De Gaulle during the 1950s and 1960s as a result of educational needs and social changes of the time (PROST, 1997).

Going back to the influence of factors such as the language alluded to at the beginning of this work, it's important to notice that in France Sciences de l'Éducation had a greater impact than Pédagogie, as it contributed to the evolution and development of the discipline, which fits in the Furlong and Whitty's (2017) academic knowledge traditions and Hordern's vertical pedagogical discourse (2017). However, Mialaret (2010) highlighted that the ethos of Sciences de l'Éducation had also been affected by the emergence of new theories and, therefore, suggested a reformulation of modern educational thinking according to these new scientific parameters. Since its origin, it has been subject to political and social demands, conflicts with similar subjectives, etc., and its importance as a field of study between the world wars was significant, especially in some Western European countries. We are talking about a discipline that has been subjected to economic, sociocultural, political and other disciplines, and the underlying problem of its interdisciplinarity has been rediscovered. This is the main fact that justifies why their progress was so closely linked to the development of other social and human disciplines (MALET, 2017), especially in France. In recent decades, the objective has been to achieve a theory of pedagogical praxis that defines the object of science that states what it is, while articulating the philosophy's objective that leads to thinking about what should be (SOËTARD, 2011). In other words, Pedagogy would be this way for the individual to educate themselves according to nature and society, guaranteeing their own autonomy, since, according to Malet and Garnier (2020), the relationship between education and citizenship is the oldest that exists.

#### **4 The university tradition in France**

The university institution in France precedes Humboldt (CHIANG, 2012; LEISYTE; ENDERS; DE BOER, 2009; SCHIMANK; WINNES, 2000), which implies that

the division between teaching and research in these institutions is achieved by combining university departments with groups of non-university research (CLARK, 1997). The Université Impériale was created by Napoleon and the humanities role was then reduced to just a few degrees (FRØLICH *et al.*, 2010). However, since 1966, with the establishment of the Académie des Sciences, teaching and research have been dichotomized into two distinct sub-systems. The Universités and Grandes Écoles assumed teaching responsibilities, while other institutions and research bodies not linked to university institutions continued to carry out research responsibilities. These types of centers were governed by their statutes, managed their budgets, research staff, etc. (KRAUSS, 1996). Even during the 1960s, a binary system in higher education prevailed in France, consisting of the traditional faculties and the grande écoles. The former, although enjoying their autonomy, were generally grouped into universities, whose responsibility stayed with the académie, the regional educational authorities. The latter was no more than a modest group of prestigious institutions from the 19th century and the previous century.

Although reforms in French higher education have always taken place, its philosophy has hardly changed significantly. The same goes for the methodology, which consists mainly of the traditional master class in large classrooms for large audiences that isn't conducive to student participation. During the 1960s, Higher Education underwent an agonizing reassessment in which there was concern that the key to professional success lay in having obtained a higher degree in one of the grande écoles, which led to questioning the importance and existence of the the university system that for some time had been one of the main sources of pride in France (OSGOOD, 1966). To promote the visibility and globalization of French universities at the beginning of the 21st century, structural reforms in Higher Education began, whose main objective was to strengthen and increase the autonomy, academic excellence, and financial responsibility of their universities (CAPANO; REGINI, 2014). The success of this renovation led the French government to continue promoting concentration policies and the modernization of spaces and facilities (DE BOER *et al.*, 2017).

#### **4.1 Educational reforms impacting higher education**

Just before the end of the 60s, Loi no. 68-978 du 12 novembre 1968 d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur led to the abolition of the characteristic disciplinary formation created in 1806 by Napoleon, while new educational institutions with a public and multidisciplinary nature emerged: the universities. This new educational legislation was built on three principles: the inclusion of members such as the student body in active participation in the institution's educational community and the decision-making procedures; the formality of the institution's autonomy, which, due to traditional centralism, remained that way until the late 1980s; and, finally, the multidisciplinary nature of universities. Until 1968, the governance of French university institutions depended on a confederation of faculties (CAPANO; REGINI, 2014). This fragmentation remained virtually unchanged for several decades until external demands demanded higher effectiveness and efficiency in decision-making (MIGNOT-GÉRARD; MUSELIN, 2002) so that the role of collegiate bodies weakened (BOFFO; DUBOIS, 2005).

In the 1970s, “Loi n° 71-575 du 16 juillet 1971 portant organisation de la formation professionnelle continue dans le cadre de l'éducation permanente” part of Higher Education was reformed, creating university departments to meet the demands and needs of continuous education. In the 1980s, Loi n° 84-52 du 26 janvier 1984 sur l'enseignement supérieur called for significantly more ambitious reforms in higher education as a whole. Among other measures, it increased the autonomy of higher education institutions, improved the orientation of incoming students, made lifelong learning one of the university's missions, and, for the first time, provided the possibility of access to higher education based on the accreditation of professional expertise. In addition, a body (Conseil des études et de la vie universitaire) was created to manage academic issues and encourage the participation of the educational community and a Higher Education Evaluation Committee (Comité national d'évaluation) that assessed the quality of universities public and private and the grande écoles. At the end of the 80s, “Loi n° 89-486 du 10 juillet 1989 d'orientation sur l'education” was responsible for new suggestions for implementation in higher education. Some proposals revolve around the need to actively involve in guidance and counseling processes, the

disciplinary role of the Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur, and improving teachers training. The latter was directly linked to the establishment of the Instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres (IUFMs), which were mainly university centers for the training of elementary and secondary teachers. Until its inception, future teachers were trained in the écoles normales d'instituteurs, which, despite belonging to the higher education, had no connection with the university.

After the first glimpses of the recognition of professional expertise to access to Higher Education, with the "*Loi n° 92-678 du 20 juillet 1992 relative à la validation d'acquis professionnels pour la délivrance de diplômes et portant diverses dispositions relatives à l'éducation nationale*", qualifications recognition is allowed for all those who can prove that, through their professional experience, they have specialized knowledge in a particular subject or profession. In the same year, the Instituts universitaires professionnalisés, the university institutes of professionalization, responsible for three-year training for intermediate-level positions between senior technician and engineer or senior executive (*Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et de l'innovation*, 2010). In 1995, the then French Minister of Education, François Bayrou, drew up the États généraux de l'université, a document with proposals focused in simplifying and modernizing university specializations, the scholarship system, student participation, etc. (PERUCCA, 1995).

#### **4.2 Structure of higher education diplomas prior to EHEA**

Alongside the educational reforms that brought about irreversible changes in French higher education, it's worth mentioning its structural changes, especially in the organization and hierarchy of its diplomas before the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Until then, six different types of degrees existed simultaneously: *diplôme d'études universitaires générales* (DEUG), *licence*, *maîtrise*, *diplôme d'études approfondies* (DEA), *diplômes d'études supérieures spécialisées* (DESS) and *Doctorat*.

The qualifications *diplôme d'études universitaires générales* (DEUG) could be done after the end of the baccalauréat. Therefore, they were part of the initial level of university studies in France and their origin dates back to the 1970s, through the Arrêté



du 27 février 1973 relatif au diplôme d'études universitaires générales, although it has also been affected by changes. The last of these changes was regulated by the Arrêté du 9 avril 1997 relatif au diplôme d'études universitaires générales, à la licence et à la maîtrise, a document that regulates its duration, totaling two courses.

Another of the oldest French qualifications is the licentiate degree, which dates back to the Napoleonic era with the Décret du 17 mars 1808 fixe le fonctionnement de l'Université. Of course, it has undergone many changes since then, the last of which in 1997, regulated by the Arrêté du 9 avril 1997 relatif au diplôme d'études universitaires générales, à la licence et à la maîtrise. Before the reform of university studies in Europe, the license lasted only two semesters, as it was the second level of higher education and it was necessary to have the DEUG or to have completed 80% of the course load.

Last reformed in 1997, the maîtrise was created in the mid-1970s by the Arrêté du 16 janvier 1976 relatives au deuxième cycle des études universitaires and constitutes a qualification at a higher level than the previous ones, lasting only one academic year, with eight areas of specialization: science and technology; arts and culture; theology; humanities and social sciences; arts and languages; law and political science; economic and social administration; economics and business; science and techniques of physical activity and sport.

At the next level, two grades were divided: *diplômes d'études supérieures spécialisées* (DESS) and *diplôme d'études approfondies* (DEA). The DESS emerged in the mid-1990s with the objective of Décret n° 95-2607 of 25 December 1995, fixing the general cadre of the regime des études et les conditions d'obtention des diplômes nationaux d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS). These studies had an unquestionably professional and business orientation, although they were university degrees. On the other hand, the DEA dates from the mid-1960s (Décret no. 64-857 du 19 août 1964 dans le cadre du troisième cycle d'enseignement) and both its purpose and its orientation are academic. Therefore, it was the main qualification to reach a doctorate. Finally, the Doctorat, regulated by the Arrêté du 30 mars 1992 relatif aux études de troisième cycle, was and still is the highest existing academic level.

## 5 Pedagogy as a discipline in France and its role in higher education

Although pedagogy was part of the university education system before other European countries, it was always together with other related disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc. This lack of initial autonomy contributed to its late institutionalization and is one of the reasons why, even today, there are still traces of its fragmentation (MALET, 2017). The origin of pedagogy as a discipline in France dates back to 1880 (MOREU CALVO; VIRANOU TORRANO, 2009), as it was one of the first European countries to prioritize the creation of a science of education, while, in many other countries, the positive science model was predominant (OTERO URTAZA, 2003).

Gaston Mialaret (2010), one of the main experts in the area in France, explained that the academy had declined the use of the term "Pedagogy" for university degrees in favor of the "Sciences of Education". In 1883, Pedagogy or "Science of Education" was for the first time part of the art faculties, thus encompassing ambitions of a scientific, moral, and political nature (MALET, 2017) and coinciding to when H. Marion was appointed professor at the Sorbonne University, thus Pedagogy obtained university status in France (OTERO URTAZA, 2003). This procedure was broadened as the discipline became more specialized and specific, meaning that this is a period of disciplining pedagogy (HOFSTETTER; SCHNEUWLY, 2014) and that would be fundamental for its structuring as a scientific field (MALET, 2005).

In the mid-twentieth century, there was a renewal of educational research that significantly contributed to the structuring and development of educational research *Sciences de l'Éducation*, for the creation of the *Institut pédagogique national*<sup>2</sup> (IPN) and the *Institut Français d'Éducation* (IFE), although the new subject didn't reach universities until the late 1960s when the new discipline was boosted in French universities (MALET, 2017). The inclusion of the Sciences de l'Éducation as an independent discipline in the French universities took place in 1967, after being disconnected from the universities to which it was traditionally linked when a *maîtrise* was created at the universities of Bordeaux, Caen, and Paris-Sorbonne (MALET, 2017).

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2 The IPN arises to inform policy and practice in the educational system and contributed to the assimilation of the profile of educational researchers, later it was renamed *Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique* (INRP).

When the Sciences de l'Éducation reached the universities, pedagogy was the responsibility of the écoles normales, whose main objective was to train future teachers for primary and secondary education. However, the link with the university institution was non-existent, focusing on teacher training with a practical and professional approach (FURLONG; WHITTY, 2017). With the study of Sciences de l'Éducation, the training of teachers at the university took place in parallel with the teachers training in the normal écoles until the 1990s, and therefore independent (MALET, 2017), which became one of the main difficulties in the institutionalization process of teacher education at the university (MALET, 2017). Sciences de l'Éducation is one of the reasons for the structural fragmentation of French Higher Education (FURLONG; WHITTY, 2017). In summary, and agreeing with Malet (2017), given all these issues so intrinsically linked, not so much to its nature, but more to its course, it isn't surprising the low scientific status of the subject in France.

With the loi d'orientation sur l'éducation in the 1990s, the Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres (IUFM) emerged and, with them, initial teacher training is once again part of the local university system (CORNU, 2015). In 2013, these centers were replaced by the so-called Écoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Éducation (ESPE) to improve teacher education in France and its results in the PISA report. Expectations are now placed on cooperative work between ESPEs and universities to provide quality initial and in-service training for future teachers (FURLONG; WHITTY, 2017). Furthermore, while specialists in pedagogy coexisted with other specialists in these centers, the educational research work was carried out in institutions such as the Institut de Recherche d'Economie de l'Education (Iredu) and the Laboratoire de Sociologie de l'Education (LAOT; ROGERS, 2015), although, in the last decade, the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (INRP) and the Center International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP) have made the most contributions (GARCÍA GARRIDO, 2013).

## 6 Final considerations

One of the first conclusions is about the terminological conflict that exists, not only in Europe but also in France itself, regarding what is understood by pedagogy in this work. It should be remembered that Pédagogie has traditionally remained in the

shadow of Sciences de l'Éducation, the latter being those who have contributed to the improvement of the pedagogical discipline in the country. Following the parameters of Furlong and Whitty (2017), established at the beginning, the first specific objective of the research is answered. From them, it's possible to conclude that the ethos of pedagogy as an academic discipline in France would initially be close to the traditional academic knowledge that the authors establish. This question also demonstrates that the French discourse of Sciences de l'Éducation is consistent with the classification of vertical discourse established by Hordern (2017). However, the development of the discipline over time shows less academic interest in favor of increasing attention to theories dealing with educational praxis. Thus, we agree with Mezzaroba and Carriquiriborde (2020) on the relentless and necessary search for a balance between theory and practice in the educational field, and this is an issue that will likely continue to be of interest and concern in the future.

Concerning the current state of Pedagogy as a discipline in French Higher Education, this question is fundamental to explain the reasons why, also according to the contributions of specialists such as García Garrido (2013), French universities have traditionally shown little interest in this discipline, both in its teaching and research functions, a characteristic that makes this type of institution of a pre-Humboldtian nature (CHIANG, 2012; LEISYTE; ENDERS; DE BOER, 2009; SCHIMANK; WINNES, 2000). This issue only began to change in the last decades of the 20th century, when the discipline gained momentum at the highest academic levels. Furthermore, the wave of renewal that took place in France over the century, which also facilitated the creation of the European Higher Education Area, is palpable.

After analyzing the strengths and challenges of the discipline under study, there is undoubtedly still a need to promote educational research and, especially, pedagogical research in France. We are talking about one of the most relevant European countries concerning Education, a laboratory country, whose history and initial potential about this subject predated most countries and, therefore, taken as a reference and model to be followed by other European countries, such as Germany, in its more theoretical dimension, or England, about the distinction between Pedagogy and teacher training in Higher Education, and even Spain (OTERO URTAZA, 2003). We agree with Sánchez Lissen and Sánchez Franco (2019) when they mention the

fact that Education, like society, is, unfortunately, a polarized field, so it's necessary to continue working towards common ground.

According to Mialaret's (2010) statements, it is necessary to contribute to the reformulation of contemporary pedagogical thinking using current scientific standards and, as a good university institution, meet the needs of its students (CRUZ NEYRA; TOLEDO ESPINOZA; MENDONZA RAMÍREZ, 2021). One of the measures could contribute to the generation of academic knowledge about Pedagogy and its research, so that the discipline finally reaches its goal of growing, not as a multidisciplinary branch of education, but as a scientific and academic discipline with autonomy, independence, rigor and determination in Higher Education and French universities. In this sense, it might be interesting to complement this study with research about pedagogy as a discipline in French university degrees. In other words, research on the education of university students in clearly pedagogical and non-teaching content and skills, both at a basic, generalist (undergraduate) and a specific and specialized (postgraduate) level.

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