

The transition from 5th to 6th grade in elementary school from the perspective of Historical-Dialectical Materialism

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The study focuses on the critical transition from the 5th to the 6th year in Elementary School, highlighting the influence of Historical-Dialectic Materialism on pedagogical practice. Based on authors such as Marx, Leontiev and Duarte, Historical-Dialectical Materialism connects the formation of the social being to the relationship with nature through work, highlighting the importance of educational work to shape humanity in students. This is essential for a flexible and adaptable pedagogical practice, capable of considering the diverse social and emotional transformations that students experience. This theoretical work illuminates the value of Historical-Dialectical Materialism in understanding education, showing how education plays a crucial role in forming a student's identity, helping to deal with the complex transition to Elementary II and promoting an educational environment that considers the various changes that occur in this phase of development.

Keywords: School Transition. Elementary School. Pedagogical Practice. Educational Work.

Transição do 5º ao 6º Ano do Ensino Fundamental sob a perspectiva do Materialismo Histórico-Dialético

Resumo

Apresenta-se uma discussão bibliográfica sobre a transição crítica do 5º para o 6º ano no Ensino Fundamental, sob a ótica do Materialismo Histórico-Dialético. Tem como objetivo discutir as contribuições do Materialismo Histórico-Dialético para as práticas pedagógicas dos professores dos alunos que vivenciam o processo de transição do 5º ano para o 6º ano do Ensino Fundamental. Fundamentado em autores como Marx, Leontiev e Duarte, o Materialismo Histórico-Dialético contribui para a compreensão da educação e a prática educativa dos docentes que devem estar preparados para lidarem com a complexa transição para o Ensino Fundamental II e promoverem um ambiente educacional que considera as diversas mudanças que ocorrem nessa fase escolar. Conclui-se que entender o Materialismo Histórico-Dialético é essencial para elaboração e aplicação de práticas pedagógicas flexíveis e adaptáveis, capazes de considerar as diversas transformações sociais e emocionais que os alunos experimentam nessa transição.

Palavras-chave: Transição Escolar. Ensino Fundamental. Prática Pedagógica. Trabalho Educativo.

1 Introduction

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The transition from the 5th grade to the 6th grade is a much-discussed topic in education research, as pointed out by authors such as Silva (1997), Gusmão (2001), Paula et al. (2018), among others cited throughout this text. Given the constant research in this field, we understand its relevance for scientific dissemination and its correlation with theories such as Historical-Dialectical Materialism.

The main problems faced by students in these grades are the increase in the number of teachers and subjects, the change of school, as well as the excess of activities to be carried out at home, assignments, tests, and the biological and social changes that are typical of their age. All of this causes emotional discomfort, which can lead to these students failing at school (Paula *et al.*, 2018).

One cannot fail to point out the number of school failures that occur in this transition process as a matter of concern. National data released by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (Inep) showed a failure rate of 4.7% for the 5th grade. In the 6th grade, the rate increased by 10.2%, making it the year with the highest failure rate in all of elementary school.

As a result, there is a need for action to be taken in order to make the transition process smoother for students. In this process, teachers play an important role in thinking up pedagogical practices that take into account their specificities and the delicate moment of transition they are experiencing.

Corroborating the above, Lameu (2013) argues that elementary school teachers, in its second phase, need to recognize the difficulties presented by students during the transition from 5th to 6th grade, understand that this process is not easy and that there is a need for ongoing training to understand and intervene in it. Interpersonal relationships between teacher and student and care for affectivity in the classroom are of fundamental importance during this shift. Therefore, we understand that diversified teaching practices

that take into account the different transformations that students experience, both socially and emotionally, are necessary.

These distinctive pedagogical practices can be developed as soon as teachers can link their pedagogical practice to the history and philosophy of the social being, science and education, using the category of work as a guiding principle, based on the framework of Historical-Dialectical Materialism (Adams and Moradillo, 2022; Moradillo, 2010). We believe that, through the movement of thought and the fundamental laws that define the organizational form of men in society, and considering their history, it is possible to rethink and propose changes in the scenario of the transition between these two grades.

In view of this, this paper aims to discuss the contributions of Historical-Dialectical Materialism to the pedagogical practices of teachers of students who are experiencing the transition process from 5th grade to 6th grade. It should be noted that this is a theoretical work, based on authors such as Marx (1978; 2006; 2008), Leontiev (1978), Duarte (1993, 2004, 2007, 2012, 2016), Martins (2013) and others. The theme arises from discussions on the theoretical framework in question, held during the course "Education and Knowledge", taken in the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Catalão (PPGEDUC/UFCAT).

For this article, we carried out a bibliographical survey that discusses Historical-Dialectical Materialism and its possible correlations with the pedagogical practices used by teachers of students who have gone through the transition from 5th grade to 6th grade. We didn't establish any time frames, types of texts, or specific locations for the investigation. We only considered the concepts and ideas in the selected texts, in accordance with our objective.

In terms of structure, this article is organized into 4 topics: first, there is the Introduction, which seeks to contextualize the research theme; then, the topic entitled "General Aspects of Historical-Dialectical Materialism", which discusses work as the foundation of man, this being the main category of the theoretical framework; the topic "Teacher Performance in the Transition from the 5th to the 6th Year of Elementary School: the educational work in focus", which seeks to demonstrate how teacher training based on

Historical-Dialectical Materialism can contribute to the transition process of students from the 5th to the 6th Year of Primary School; finally, the final considerations are presented, in which reflections on the research theme are presented and connected with the objective set out initially.

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2 General Aspects of Historical-Dialectical Materialism

Historical-Dialectical Materialism was founded by Karl Marx (1818-1883), a German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. He argued that the working class should promote a revolution to overcome the exploitation of their labor by the bourgeois class, in other words, he criticized the capitalist mode of production that seeks profit from the exploitation of labor.

Thus, it can be seen that work is the central category in the discussions of Historical-Dialectical Materialism, as it is through it that man becomes what he is. On the process of man's constitution through work, Martins (2007, p. 44) states that:

Work is a process that connects man to nature, representing actions that, by working to change nature, also work to build man himself, modifying his nature, developing his faculties and actually constituting him as a human being.

Thus, the importance of work in the constitution of man is clear for Historical-Dialectical Materialism. In Marx's (1978) perspective, it is through work that man asserts himself as the subject of his existence, building a human world and humanizing himself in the process.

Through his work, man transforms nature in order to satisfy his needs (Marx, 2006), which are related to the search for his own existence. In this sense, Duarte (2004) points out that when men produce the means to maintain their existence, they begin to transform nature, appropriating and objectifying it. It is in this process that new needs arise for human beings.

Analyzing the category of work, Moradillo (2010, p. 56) argues that "[...] work is the generic essence of man. Work understood as man's organic exchange with nature and as anticipation of the final product". Understanding man's relationship with work means understanding man as a being who projects, plans and builds the future and, in doing so, goes beyond and produces universally:

The animal is immediately one with its vital activity. It is indistinguishable from it. It is it. Man makes his vital activity an object of his will and consciousness. He has conscious vital activity. This is not a determinacy (Bestmtheit) with which he immediately coincides. Conscious vital activity immediately distinguishes man from animal vital activity [...]. This is why his activity is free [...]. The practical engendering of an objective world, the elaboration of inorganic nature is proof of man as a conscious generic being, that is, a being who relates to the genus as his own essence or [relates] to himself as a generic being [...] the animal produces only under the domination of immediate physical want, while man produces even free of immediate physical want (Marx, 2006, p. 84-85).

From the aforementioned author's conceptions, it can be seen that man uses nature to meet his needs and that this is also related to his consciousness. For Marx, man transforms and is transformed by nature, and is a living organism, an "animal" with a biological structure, but which has social habits or behaviors (Marx, 2006).

In this context, it is possible to observe that there is a difference in the way in which existence is produced between animals and humans (Adams; Moradillo, 2022). Discussing this difference, Leontiev (1978) and Duarte (2004, 2007) point out that, with the aim of satisfying their biological needs, animals carry out activities that may have different levels of complexity, but always with the aim of organic satisfaction. But it is work that transforms the animal into man, as Engels (1999) points out, for this process promotes anatomical and physiological changes in the brain, organs and senses. Extending the discussion, Adams and Moradillo (2022) point out that Engels and Leontiev show that, when it comes to human beings, work is carried out by men in order to satisfy their biological needs, but in the process they create cultural needs.

Within this context, the capitalist mode of production arises, related to the search for private property, the accumulation of capital and the quest for profit, through control of

the mode of production and the exploitation of labor, which is a real activity that generates product, and therefore value (Marx, 1978). Capitalism emerged in the 14th and 15th centuries, a period marked by the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age, the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of wage labor, in which the working class began to sell their labor force to meet their needs.

Thus, with capitalism gaining strength, man's relationship with work changed, since, for the capitalist, work began to have only productive aspects. According to Marx (1978, p. 75), productive labor "is a determination of that labor which in itself has nothing to do with the determined content of labor with its particular utility or peculiar use-value in which it manifests itself". The author goes on to say that the worker who performs productive work is productive; and the work that directly generates surplus value, i.e. that which increases the value of capital, is productive.

In this way, new categories emerge, namely: the commodity, which is "first and foremost an external object, a thing which, by its properties, satisfies human needs, whatever their nature, whatever their origin, whether they come from the stomach or from fantasy" (Marx, 1978, p. 41), money, which will allow the exchange of commodities, and capital, which relates to the profit made by the capitalist through the exploitation of labor. In this sense, Moradillo (2010, p. 109), when analyzing Marx's ideas, argues that:

For Marx, in this collection of commodities that constitutes bourgeois sociability, there are only two fundamental types of commodity: one which is labor power and the other which is all the other commodities. The value of labor power, which is associated with a certain amount of abstract labor socially necessary to produce the means of subsistence for the worker and his family, is contracted by the capitalist for a value below what it is. In other words: part of the worker's labor power becomes the labor necessary for their subsistence and the other part becomes surplus, where the surplus value is realized, transformed into more value.

The author gives a brief description of the process of exploitation of labor by the bourgeoisie. Thus, in this process of exploitation, it is not in the interest of the ruling class that the working class has access to excellent educational conditions, given that, if it does, it will promote consciousness and seek to transform society.

Having said this, we are now discussing the role of education in the process of forming individuals, since work is the foundation of social being, but it is only one of the moments of social reality. In addition, there are others, such as sociability, language and consciousness. Education, for example, has also appeared since the dawn of time in the need to share experiences (Moradillo, 2010), i.e. other human needs arise from work, including education.

Silva (2015) also argues that Marx places the schoolmaster, teacher or professor (current nomenclatures) as the individual who performs work productively or unproductively. As someone who intends to do it, is involved in a process and intends to obtain a result to satisfy their needs, to produce something that has use value or even a commodity. In the case of teachers, through their work they change themselves and others. This direct relationship between the worker-teacher and the product of his work (the educated student) has various consequences for society.

When discussing work in the field of education, Saviani (2011) states that it is through work that the products of people's activities are developed, as well as their capacities and the development of their knowledge and habits. In this way, from a Marxist perspective, teaching work is configured as non-material work, because the product is not separate from the act of production. In other words, objective knowledge, which must be improved by the learner, remains linked to the subjects participating in the process and is not separate from the teacher.

In the same vein, Saviani (2003) adds that education is "non-material work", because it has to do with ideas, concepts, values, symbols, habits, skills, in other words, it deals with the production of knowledge. The author also points out that non-material production can be distinguished in two ways:

The first refers to those activities in which the product is separated from the products, as in the case of books and artistic objects. In this case, there is an interval between the product and consumption, making it possible for there to be autonomy between the product and the act of production. The second concerns activities in which the product is not separated from the act of production. In this case, there is no gap; the act of production and the act of consumption are intertwined. Education falls into the second category, in which the product is not

separated from education, i.e. it is simultaneously produced by the teacher at the moment when he transmits systematized knowledge and the student appropriates this knowledge, i.e. it is through non-material work that man knows the world (Saviani, 2003, p. 12).

Thus, we can observe that scholars such as Duarte (1993, 2004, 2007, 2012, 2016), Martins (2013) and Saviani (2011), based on Marx's studies, correlate the constitution of work to the social being for the school, mainly from the discussions on educational work. These new ideas must be (re)thought through the mediation of educational activity. This is why teacher training based on this theoretical framework is so important. In the following topic, the discussions on educational work are explored in greater depth.

3 Teacher Performance in the Transition from the 5th to the 6th Year of Elementary School: the educational work in focus

In ontological terms, work has priority and is understood as the mediation between human beings and nature. Education exists because work enabled the leap from the organic sphere. Teaching is, therefore, a teleological afterthought. Nowadays, in the current configuration of capitalist work, work cannot be done without teaching. In this way, we understand that the process of forming humanity today requires teaching work.

In this way, work is a form of production in society, as is education, so the two together have great importance in the process of forming humanity in individuals. But for this process of formation to take place, educational work is necessary, which Saviani (2003, p. 13) defines as:

[...] the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each individual, the humanity that is produced historically and collectively by all men. The object of education concerns, on the one hand, the identification of the cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals of the human species in order for them to become human and, on the other hand, and concomitantly, the discovery of the most appropriate ways to achieve this goal.

It can therefore be seen that educational work is an intentional action to produce humanity in individuals, in order to guarantee the scientific knowledge that has been historically produced by society. In addition, Saviani (2011, p. 12-13) states that:

Thus, the object of education concerns, on the one hand, the identification of the cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals of the human species in order for them to become human and, on the other hand and concomitantly, the discovery of the most appropriate ways to achieve this goal.

Duarte (2016), commenting on Saviani's speech, points out that this conception of educational work uses the dialectical concept of reproduction, i.e. that it is a matter of producing anew, in each individual, the humanity that is objectified in culture. Silva (2017, p. 81) adds that:

Educational work therefore acts on a part of nature, which is human nature. If work is, in Marx's words, "the universal condition of the metabolism between human beings and nature", we could say, now based on Saviani, that educational work is the universal condition of the metabolism between human beings and human nature itself.

On this subject, Duarte (2012) sees educational work as a direct and intentional production. Connecting the ideas of Marx and Saviani, specifically on the teleological character of work, the author says the following:

At various other points in his work, Saviani demonstrates his support for Marx's ontological analysis in "Capital" of the essentially teleological nature of the labor process. Thus, Saviani could not fail to define educational work as an activity intentionally directed towards ends. This is why educational work differs from spontaneous forms of education that occur in other activities, which are also purpose-driven, but which do not produce humanity in the individual. When this happens in these activities, it is an indirect and unintentional result. Therefore, production in the educational act is direct in two senses. Firstly, it is a direct relationship between educator and learner and, secondly, the direct result of educational work must be the humanization of the individual (Duarte, 2012, p. 54).

The discussion presented by the author demonstrates the relationship between educational work and Historical-Cultural Psychology and Historical-Critical Pedagogy, based on Historical-Dialectical Materialism when thinking about education. We understand, therefore, that not just any educational work will generate learning for the students, but one that is intended to produce the subjects' humanity.

This is why Saviani (2011) argues that educational work must be intentional in terms of human formation so it involves direct and intentional teaching. This requires both the "identification of the cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals of the human species for them to become human" and the discovery of the "most appropriate ways to achieve these goals" (Saviani, 2011, p. 13). Therefore, not just any teaching will be able to promote the shaping of humanity in individuals, but a developmental teaching:

Developmental teaching is therefore learning that promotes transformations in subjects' representations of objects and phenomena that are empirically captured. These transformations, in turn, result from the fact that conceptual systems are interposed between subject and object, which, in this way, requalify the contents of consciousness (Magalhães; Martins, 2020, p. 6).

The quality of teaching, conceived in an intentional and planned way, taking into account the dialectic between content and form in the concrete situations of school education, is what qualifies the development of students, enabling humanization in its maximum historically and socially constituted possibilities (Martins, 2013). In this way, we can see that educational work will contribute to the quality of teaching in the different contexts of education. In this paper, we are focusing on the transition process from 5th to 6th grade, which is a major challenge for students at this stage of education.

Therefore, as pointed out by Francisco Júnior (2014), school agents must be aware of the main barriers and difficulties caused by these processes, both in the transition from childhood to adolescence and the transition from 5th to 6th grade, to promote systematic monitoring and help students cope with school difficulties. From the above, it can be seen that to contribute to the transition process described here, teachers

need to develop educational work that is intentional and takes into account the students' teaching and learning process, in order to provide contact with scientific knowledge.

Furthermore, this educational work must be intended to promote the process of students adapting to the new reality, which has a greater number of teachers and, consequently, different ways of working, as well as a greater number of contents and activities to be developed. In addition, the numerous social, physical and emotional changes experienced by students at this stage of their lives must be taken into account, as highlighted by Gusmão (2001), Paula et al. (2018), Silva (1997).

Exploring these difficulties, we point to the words of Cunha (2016), who states that the transition to the 6th grade of elementary school can create expectations in students, which, in turn, results in fears and learning difficulties caused by changes in routine. The author adds that one of the problems is related to the number of lessons per day and the time allocated to each subject. In addition, students have to do their work and hand it in on the dates proposed by the various teachers, as well as organizing materials and content.

Siqueira (2019) argues that the teacher's work should be directed towards mediating the theory-practice relationship, in a dialectical way, in global social practice, in order to transmit the knowledge historically accumulated by humanity, which will be mirrored in the development of an educational and intentional work in their pedagogical performance.

We therefore point out that Historical-Dialectical Materialism has a contribution to make to the pedagogical practice of teachers who work in the process of transitioning students from the 5th to the 6th year of elementary school, by allowing them to develop educational work that considers aspects of history, philosophy and science, articulated with the specificities of the students, leading them to take ownership of the new school reality.

Given that the social function of education is not general, the adaptations to each stage qualitatively raise human education through the knowledge historically produced and systematized by humanity. We understand that the qualitative leap that is expected,

through the pedagogical practices of 5th to 6th grade teachers, corresponds to the preparation of teachers and students for this moment of transition, a better quality in the teaching and learning process, and lower levels of school failure (failures, retentions, recoveries and progressions).

4 Conclusions

Historical-Dialectical Materialism, proposed by Marx, discusses work as the relationship between man and nature, and therefore as the foundation of social being. This is a category that contributes greatly to thinking about the different contexts of society, especially in the field of education.

Based on its understanding of work, Historical-Critical Pedagogy presents educational work as a way of intentionally developing humanity in students. As such, it is considered to be one of the contributors to the improvement of teacher training that accompanies the transition process of students from the 5th to the 6th year of elementary school, as it will allow teachers to develop pedagogical practices that take into account the scientific content, the specificities of the students, the adaptation to the new routine, the number of teachers and subjects, as well as the physical, social and emotional changes that the students experience.

The research in question makes a significant contribution to the field of Education and Pedagogy by offering a sound theoretical and practical approach to tackling the challenges of the transition from 5th to 6th grade. Firstly, the research conceptualizes and theorizes the specific challenges faced by students during this critical educational transition. It then provides an understanding of these challenges, something valuable for teachers, parents and researchers interested in supporting students during this phase of change.

In addition, the research highlights Historical-Dialectical Materialism as a fundamental theoretical basis for pedagogical practice. It highlights the importance of considering the relationship between work, education and the formation of humanity. This

solid theoretical basis can positively influence teacher training and the quality of teaching in the transition period from 5th to 6th grade.

We are aware that no action in the school context should be taken out of context. The statements presented here about the possible contributions of dialectical historical materialism in the transition from 5th to 6th grade only make sense if the student is at the center of the discussions. Knowing the reality and the feelings that surround them in this period is fundamental to thinking about the processes and promoting a qualitative leap, which is one of the many determinants that will facilitate the transition at this school age.

As a suggestion for future research, it would be interesting to compare transition experiences in different countries or regions. This could provide valuable insights into effective educational approaches in diverse contexts and collaborate with researchers from other fields, such as psychology, sociology and neuroscience, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect this transition between school years.

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