

Integrative pedagogical practices: the link between integrated secondary education and integral education

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ABSTRACT

Integrative Pedagogical Practices guide the teaching and learning process through interdisciplinary and contextualized actions, establish a relationship between theories and practices for comprehension as a whole, or as close as possible, associating them with concrete reality. The question that guides the study is: “how do Integrative Pedagogical Practices contribute to an integrative education in Integrative High School (IHS)? In the light of historical and dialectical materialism, fundamental concepts answer the guiding question. The method applied for this study was qualitative-descriptive through bibliographic analysis. Classic authors from the theoretical basis of Professional and Technological Education in Brazil are studied, allowing a contextualized historical and social discussion about the duality of school and professional education and its consequences. The main concepts covered are Integrative Education, Integrative High School (IHS) and Integrative Pedagogical Practices. This study showed that integrative practices applied in the IHS can lead to the students’ integrative education. Therefore, the proposal of integrative education in IHS can be achieved with Integrative Pedagogical Practices, through the mediation of different knowledge in an integrative, contextualized, and interdisciplinary way.

Keywords: Occupational Education. Vocational Education. Integrated Professional Education. Curriculum Integration. Educational Practices.

Resumo

As Práticas Pedagógicas Integradoras orientam o processo de ensino e aprendizagem por meio de ações interdisciplinares e contextualizadas, integrando teorias e práticas para apreensão do conhecimento em sua totalidade ou o mais próximo, associando-as com a realidade concreta. Pela potencialidade dessas práticas para a formação integral, emerge a questão que norteia este estudo: como as Práticas Pedagógicas Integradoras contribuem na efetivação da formação integral no Ensino Médio Integrado (EMI)? À luz do materialismo histórico e dialético, são trazidos conceitos fundamentais que se aproximam da resposta à pergunta norteadora. O método aplicado para este estudo foi o qualitativo-descritivo por intermédio de análise bibliográfica. São estudados autores clássicos da base teórica da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica no Brasil e que permitem a discussão contextualizada histórica e social acerca da dualidade da escola e do ensino profissional e

suas consequências. Os principais conceitos abordados são de Formação Integral, EMI e Práticas Pedagógicas Integradoras. Este estudo mostrou que as práticas integradoras, se efetivada no EMI, podem levar à formação integral do estudante. Portanto, a proposta de formação integral no EMI pode se concretizar com as Práticas Pedagógicas Integradoras, por meio da mediação dos diferentes saberes de forma integrada, contextualizada e interdisciplinar.

Palavras-chave: Educação Profissional. Educação Profissional Integrada. Integração Curricular. Práticas Educativas.

Introduction

Integrative practices are pedagogical actions that go beyond interdisciplinarity. They are practices that consider knowledge as a unit wherein the parts integrate into the whole without fragmentation and division. Araujo and Frigotto (2015, p. 70) suggest, "About the ideas of contextualization, interdisciplinarity, and teleology, we propose to think about strategies to organize content from the perspective of an integrative curriculum." This is how students should achieve integrative learning.

Such new educational action passes through the prism of curriculum integration, contextualization, dialogue between disciplines, interdisciplinarity, connections among several knowledge sources, and integrative projects as integrative mechanisms. Consequently, integrating, dialoguing, and promoting interdisciplinarity within different areas of knowledge are not easy tasks. In this sense, Araujo (2014) highlights the relevance of Integrative Practices so that students may attain a comprehensive education with technical and intellectual capacities to constitute a new reality.

These practices will help students understand scientific and technical knowledge in context with the social environment, as Henrique and Nascimento (2015) argue. Integrative projects promote the application of the knowledge one develops in their social reality that is necessary to their development and that of integrative learning, forming the basis for the emancipation of the working class, as suggested by Araujo and Frigotto (2015). Therefore, we can help prepare emancipated students who will be able to transform their realities with the conscious, planned, ethical, and political application of these practices.

This paper aims to investigate integrative pedagogical practices (IPPs) and how they are applied in Integrated Curricula in Secondary Education (ICSE) to promote integrative learning for students in this education modality. Since integrative pedagogical practices are applied in other countries, the focus of this study is to understand these practices in the context of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Brazil. Thus, we sought to conceptualize IPPs as an alternative to achieving integrative learning for students in ICSE. Araujo (2014) believes that developing Integrative Practices requires creating an environment that enables teachers and students to appreciate bold activities and a broad understanding of specific facts (without ignoring the whole) by making connections to the social context.

Therefore, we intend to demonstrate the importance of experimenting with IPPs in ICSE. For Araujo (2010), these practices push the limits of fragmented education and assume a scientific and reflective to integrate students' education as a whole, which is the main objective of ICSE. This study proposes a theoretical exposition to explain IPPs and how they are applied in ICSE to promote students' integrative learning. Through this discussion, we aim to conceptualize these practices as the key to



achieving integrative learning in ICSE. In this sense, the theoretical exploration also seeks to understand the historical process of CTE and its duality along with ICSE in aligning with Integrative Practices and integrative learning.

Since its inception, Vocational Education has been characterized by discrimination and duality, and its target audience is manual laborers who were denied a comprehensive education throughout history. This education modality aimed toward the “unfortunate” is characterized by welfare and moralism and focused on “straightening out” society’s misfits. Therefore, an educational project to include and emancipate students was not considered. This is made very clear by Caires & Oliveira (2016, p. 45):

In light of the establishment of the republican regime, the liberal and positivist schools of thought, which were privileged in this context, were attuned to the precepts of Catholicism. Vocational Education was directed toward the unfortunate through these precepts as a preventive and compatible pedagogy.

As a consequence, ICSE emerges as an educational project that aims to combat these historical distortions of Vocational Education and provide students with the possibility of integrative learning that has historically been denied to them, especially those of the working class. Frigotto, Ciavatta, & Ramos (2010) defend the potential that CTE has to make unitary education effective based on its characteristic of presenting an integrated curriculum for secondary and technical education. However, an integrated curriculum within ICSE alone does not guarantee integrative learning if the disciplines do not establish the necessary connections and integrations to ensure theoretical consideration, and if it is not combined with practices that appropriate knowledge in its social context.

This study asks the guiding question: “How do integrative pedagogical practices effectively contribute to integrative learning in ICSE?” To answer this question, we assume that ICSE is aligned with these practices to promote the contextualized integration of the disciplines and contribute to the development of teaching and learning in a manner that provides a panoramic and articulated view of the scientific fields. The experience of this interdisciplinary model of learning, which joins theory with practice, answers this study inquiry to some extent.

This research is relevant because it considers and discusses the importance of understanding Vocational Education and its duality as a historical process with many cleavages and few significant advances and also because it places IPPs as the mediator between ICSE and integrative learning to possibly transcend this structural duality. It considers that experimentation with IPPs can transform fragmented, noncontextualized, mechanical education into an integrative, contextualized, problematized, and interdisciplinary one from the perspective of students’ integrative learning in the field of CTE (Araujo; Frigoto, 2015). Thus, this study aims to amplify understanding of the importance of IPPs in ICSE as the link to CTE students’ integrative learning in Brazil.

This is a qualitative bibliographic study in which we collected all the data from secondary sources and performed a comparative analysis using concepts formulated by Brazilian authors who research this topic. Its theoretical basis emerges from the historical and dialectical materialism perspective which has mainly originated from



Gramscian concepts of the unitary school, a school designed to break with dual education. “There is no human activity in which *homo faber* can be separated from *homo sapiens*” (GRAMSCI, as cited in MÉSZÁROS, 2008, p. 49, emphasis added). The great challenge is to overcome the historical duality of vocational and “technical” education.

Method

This paper aims to understand Integrative Pedagogical Practices in ICSE in CTE in Brazil through a qualitative approach. Qualitative research answers very specific questions related to the social sciences and education. “Qualitative researchers aim to expand rather than to limit understanding” (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 1994, p. 62).

This is a bibliographic study, substantiated by data collected exclusively from databases, such as SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), Google Scholar, the *HOLOS* journal, the CAPES Portal de Periódicos (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), and other repositories, covering the following topics: integrative pedagogical practices, integrative curricula in secondary education, curriculum integration, and integrative learning. The conceptual bases adopted herein are aligned with historical and dialectical materialism.

The search focused on the implementation of ICSE in the period between 2004 and 2020. During the search, several files related to the topics were found, and the criteria for selection were those closest to the study’s objective. The bibliographic search also made use of theoretical frameworks by Brazilian authors known for their research on the topic addressed in this study: Araujo (2008), Araujo & Frigotto (2015), Caires and Oliveira (2016), Moura (2014), Ramos (2008), and Saviani (2007), among others.

Results and Discussion

Based on the readings and the conceptual foundations of historical and dialectical materialism, we present the results and discussion on three topics. The first is a historical contextualization of education in Brazil. The second discusses the concept of ICSE. The third topic presents the concept of IPPs and discusses their relevance in achieving integrative learning in the context of ICSE.

General Considerations About the Historical Process of Vocational Education in Brazil

Throughout its history, Vocational Education has been characterized as a “second-class” education. It is discriminated and divided and not considered a priority. Vocational education in Brazil began with Nilo Peçanha’s Decree no. 7.566 on September 26, 1909. As indicated by Caires & Oliveira (2016, p. 45):

[...] in this period, [the decree] ordered the creation of 19 Apprenticeship Schools in the capitals of the Brazilian states and in the city of Campos (the birthplace of this president), which were to offer free Primary vocational Education and were supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce.

According to historical research by authors such as Caires & Oliveira (2016), the origin of Vocational Education is associated with welfare activities for the poor and unfortunate, which did not serve educational purposes. Over time, it turned into a dual education system, providing propaedeutic education to the bourgeois class as well as catering to those who perform manual labor. Over time, it became educational, but the division remained. Lies the great challenge: to create a school that promotes integrative, emancipative education available to all students.

When we look back and analyze the genesis of schools, it is clear that they came to serve the privileged class. Thus, they emerged from class division. Before schools, when there was no private property, education was transmitted from generation to generation equally. Saviani (2007) states that everything was common in primitive societies. Education was a natural process, passed on from generation to generation because there were no class divisions, which began with the emergence of private property. Schools emerged from this division. Furthermore, the author points out that they were designed to meet the needs of the dominant class, which had leisure and free time, unlike the majority who had no access to this academic education and only worked. In short, schools were created by and for the elite, and the working class received education to participate in the workplace itself.

As capitalism evolved and the means of production expanded, a more qualified labor force was required to meet the demands of the labor market, not the labor word. According to Saviani (2007), as the needs of the means of production expanded, the educational offerings for workers also expanded, but the main interest behind this increase was to meet market demands, not the proletariat's integrative learning. At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, schools became available to part of the population to meet the needs of capital, not workers' needs, but social segmentation remained. The elites received an intellectual education, while the manual laborers received a technical education devoid of theory. It is a dual education that molds leaders on the one hand and the class that makes a living from their labor on the other, which is still very evident today. In the words of Araujo (2008, p. 55),

The history of Brazilian education, including vocational education, is marked by a dispute between two projects: a pragmatic one, which seeks to subordinate education to the immediate interests of a given reality, and a practical pedagogical one, which is oriented towards a type of education that is committed to building a more just future and seeks an educational model that favors workers' qualification processes.

Moura (2014) notes that one of the greatest challenges to breaking this structural duality in education goes beyond the competence of schools, requiring a change in the current mode of production. Thus, ICSE is promoted as a way to overcome it. However, there are many challenges, as Moura (2014) points out. ICSE is only one possibility for such structural change as it integrates practice and theory, no longer



relying on the empty technique of theoretical support, as in the beginning of the history of vocational education.

Integrated Curricula in Secondary Education

ICSE is an education modality that is officially offered in many institutions, such as federal institutes and state departments. ICSE aims to integrate general and specific knowledge to form a curricular whole (RAMOS, 2008). Thus, the concept of ICSE must consider three aspects from the perspective of integrative learning: omnilaterality, which contemplates education “based on the integration of all dimensions of life in the educational process”; integration, which discusses the inseparability between Vocational Education and Basic Education; and “the total integration between general and specific knowledge” (RAMOS, 2008, p. 16).

For Ramos (2017), the debate over ICSE reached its height in 1980, when a new National Educational Bases and Guidelines Law (commonly known in Brazil as LDB) was intensely discussed publicly. According to Ramos (2017), Brazilian educators were committed then to directing national education from the perspective of the unitary school. However, this did not happen. Had it been implemented, this duality in education, especially in vocational education, likely would have been a thing of the past. Therefore, the effort to overcome the duality of education between manual and intellectual labor must be continuous. To this end, an equal education for everyone that does not distinguish social class is necessary. Over time, with civil society fighting for public schools for all, ICSE began to emerge to break from this historical dualism in education.

This duality was ratified by Decree no. 2208/1997, promoting the separation of general education and vocational education, and remained in effect until its repeal in 2004. The revocation of Decree 2208/1997 and the promulgation of Decree no. 5.154/04 (BRASIL, 2004), which addresses ICSE from the perspective of a polytechnic education and unitary schooling, emerges as the opportunity to supplant this structural duality. Decree no. 5.154/04 was made possible by the approval of the 1988 Constitution and LDB no. 9394/1996, and it was validated on July 23, 2004, when it was finally published. Based on article 4, section 1 of this Decree, vocational education now represents the following:

I – integrated curriculum, offered only to those who have completed primary education; the course is planned to guide the student towards a secondary-level technical and vocational qualification in the same educational institution, with single enrollment for each student.

II - concurrent, offered only to those who have completed primary education or are in enrolled in a secondary education program in which the complementarity between secondary-level vocational education and regular secondary education presupposes the existence of separate enrollments for each program, as in the following cases:

a) in the same educational institution, taking advantage of available educational opportunities

b) in different educational institutions, taking advantage of available educational opportunities



c) in different educational institutions, through intercomplementarity agreements that aim to plan and develop unified pedagogical projects

III – subsequent, offered only to those who have completed secondary education (BRASIL, 2004, n. p.)

According to Frigotto, Ciavatta, & Ramos (2010, p. 37-38),

Decree no. 5154/2004 attempts to reestablish the legal, political, and institutional conditions that the dispute over LDB in the 1980s sought to ensure. From then on, depending on the direction in which the political and theoretical dispute goes, the “tie-breaker” between progressive and conservative forces could lead to overcoming or definitively consolidating the dualism in Brazilian education.

Even so, it is possible to note methodological and pedagogical problems and difficulties in the context of schools, particularly in ICSE, which is the object of analysis of this study. This process has hindered the definitive breakdown of this dual model, such as the lack of integration between theory and practice, common core and technical disciplines, the world of labor and the content taught, and a lack of contextualization, among others. Given these findings, it is possible to verify the absence of integrative practices in school activities.

The integrated curriculum in secondary education was designed based on a conception of unity and totality between the parts and the whole, reflection and action, and theory and practice in the production and construction of knowledge. Its instruction was based on the integration of curricular components through interconnected and integrative school activities.

Only from this perspective, by understanding pedagogical practices in connection with a broader social practice, is an integrated curriculum, or integrative learning, capable of promoting the essential but not only formal changes needed in Brazilian education and, particularly, in vocational education (ARAUJO, 2014, p. 122).

Finally, to implement ICSE in this format, integrative pedagogical practices, in conjunction with connections between different knowledge sources are required.

Integrative Pedagogical Practices

The implementation of ICSE from the perspective of integrative learning requires pedagogical practices that transcend the dual, fragmented education structure. Araujo (2014) notes that the everyday integrative practices experienced in the integrated curriculum model of education may present a formidable challenge to the dual model of education, the characteristics of which are detrimental to students' full development. The consequence of this division directly influences education and makes it unilateral (in that it promotes a fragmented view of reality), especially in vocational education.



The duality begins to break when the teaching and learning subjects incorporate into their pedagogical practice the articulation between thought and action as dialogical practices that make it possible to understand and transform the reality that is experienced daily (ARAUJO, 2014, p. 39).

Therefore, this study presents integrative practices as a means to develop education in its totality, contrary to the fragmented education that has reigned for so long. Such practices seek to redefine teaching and learning methodologies toward the integration of disciplines through interdisciplinarity and the problematization of content, which favors the development of significant, emancipative learning. According to Henrique and Nascimento (2015, p. 69), “integrative practices, such as the integrative project, are fortified in the context of an integrated curriculum that strives for a human being’s integrative learning.” Thus, the purpose of the integrated curriculum is integrative learning, which becomes emancipative when it is supported by an integrative pedagogical practice.

Moura, Lima Filho, & Silva (2015) agree that, from the perspective of a just society, the objective is a multilateral, integrative, and polytechnic education. Consequently, experimentation with Integrative Pedagogical Practices in ICSE is necessary to achieve integrative subject learning. To this end, we seek a political pedagogical policy, based on and aligned with integrative learning actions (contrary to divisive educational practices), that are led by integration and cooperation and that promote autonomy to broaden the horizons of pedagogical practices, especially for teachers and students. This entire process is based on dimensions of action and thought from the perspective of unity between the parts and the whole, reflection and action, theory, and practice, thus constituting its praxis. For Freire (1987, p. 44), “There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis.” The interaction between action and reflection exposes the world, and by announcing it, we problematize it, and by questioning it, we transform it (Freire, 1987).

Therefore, the IPPs implemented in curricular components need to be incorporated in teaching practices as a central resource in the pursuit of an integrative, emancipative education. Integrative practices occur through the connection between various areas of knowledge, and interdisciplinarity is one of the approaches in ICSE. According to Pacheco (2012), interdisciplinarity is regarded as an organizing curricular principle and as a teaching and learning procedure, since the concepts of multiple disciplines are directly intertwined with the reality to be investigated. From this angle, the interdisciplinarity found in a teaching practice that reconnects various sources of knowledge requires considerable dialogue and integration mediated by IPPs. However, it was found that this not only depends on didactic solutions, but on ethical and political solutions as well and, most of all, on ethical and political commitment. Such an alignment between integrated curricula, integrative practices, and integrative learning should always go together. Pacheco (2012, p. 60) states that “The integrated curriculum organizes knowledge and develops the teaching and learning process so that concepts are apprehended with a system of relationships of a concrete totality that one intends to explain/understand.”

Within this logic, IPPs are produced every day in schools through various mechanisms such as interdisciplinarity, which presents itself as a means of integrating knowledge without compartmentalization. It means to engage in teaching



practices with interconnected disciplines in constant dialogue. Knowledge is not compartmentalized; it is integrated into a whole, represented by the parts that form the unit. Hence interdisciplinary knowledge expands to contextualized learning with its logic for students. According to Martins, Lima, & Freire (2020, p. 15),

[...] interdisciplinarity can present itself as an integrative element; not as a bridge for different types of education, but as a new attitude to reconnect and expand knowledge and to foster more meaningful learning in people's lives.

As for integrative practices, they can be applied in various ways, every day, in schools: expository lessons, interdisciplinary classes, field trips, fairs, workshops, educational games, integrative projects, seminars, competitions, guided study, and numerous other methods of teaching and learning (ARAUJO; FRIGOTTO, 2015). These practices articulate different types of scientific knowledge and also relate to the reality that one can observe. They favor seeing the bigger picture without neglecting its parts and the possibilities for social change.

However, the implementation of IPPs is not simple. Castro & Duarte Neto (2021, p. 13) verified some obstacles: "organization of pedagogical time, lack of training to work with the integrated curriculum, and absence of institutional strategies and programs to develop ICSE." For IPPs to occur, they need to arise from collective dialogues, integrative didactics, permanent training, and the integrative teacher's attitude, and they need to be guided by the concept of praxis (ARAUJO; FRIGOTTO, 2015).

Castro and Duarte Neto (2021) also note the importance of developing institutional programs which operate with integrated curricula to promote discussions about their practice, integrate actions and projects, and offer physical structures so that integrative practices may indeed happen.

Final Considerations

This study contributes to a better understanding and reflection of IPP in ICSE from the perspective of students' integrative learning in the field of career and technical education. A historical contextualization of education sheds light on the historical process full of cleavages and with few advances. In primitive communities, education was a communitarian process where people learned from each other in an egalitarian manner. However, the emergence of class divisions among people resulted in a division in education from which the school we know today emerged. Therefore, the school arose from a duality, for two classes: the intellectual class and the manual labor class. As discussed in this paper, this duality has compromised education over generations.

Such fragmentation in education, especially for the working class, has contributed to the perpetuation of many social injustices. This study intended to present some approaches to transcend it, such as experimenting with integrative practices in ICSE from the perspective of an integrative, emancipative education within the unitary school model.



Due to their relevance in redefining teaching and learning methodologies through interdisciplinarity, Integrative practices in ICSE contribute to integrative learning by molding emancipated citizens with the ability to articulate thought and action and theory and practice, enabling them to understand and transform their reality. Finally, this study aimed to provide a clearer understanding of the proposed IPP in ICSE aligned with knowledge integration through interdisciplinarity.

Given the relevance, breadth, and importance of this topic, we recommend further studies as it would be helpful to closely investigate the process of experimentation with IPPs in the ICSE modality, in the field of CTE, within the context of integrative learning. We also propose studies that present a full debate on research that focus on IPPs throughout history, its challenges and possibilities.

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