

Extension Activities in the training of history professionals

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RESUMO

Este artigo discute a formação de profissionais de história e o papel que cabe (ou caberia) aos cursos de história na contemporaneidade mediante as atividades concebidas para extrapolar os muros das universidades – ou seja, a extensão. Realiza-se um estudo de caso sobre as Atividades Acadêmico-Científico-Culturais exigidas nas Licenciaturas pela Resolução CNE/CP nº 01/2002, tomando como exemplo o caso específico do curso de história do *campus* de Natal da UFRN. Para subsidiar essa reflexão, aborda-se a elaboração de currículos e a determinação de atividades pela perspectiva das teorias curriculares. A seguir, reflete-se sobre como nossas visões são transpostas para a maneira como concebemos atividades de extensão nas graduações. Palavras-chave: currículo; extensão; cursos de graduação.

ABSTRACT

In this article, we discuss the training of professionals in history and the role expected from history courses at present by looking at activities that are designed to go beyond university walls – in other words extension activities. As a case study we use the academic, scientific and cultural activities required in licentiate courses in accordance with CNE/CP Resolution 01/2002, taking as a example the specific case of the history course of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Natal campus. To support our ideas, we look at the making of curricula and the determining of activities from the perspective of curriculum studies. After this we reflect on how our views are transposed to the manner we organize extension activities in undergraduate courses.

Keywords: curriculum; further education; undergraduate courses.

When the subject is third level teaching of history, the question that most assiduously appears not just at the prescriptive levels, such as in course policy and pedagogic projects, but also in the research field, such as talks given in round tables or the presentation of works, is the relationship between teaching and research. Even better, training for teaching or training for research, which leads to other discussions: relations between licentiate and bachelor degrees,

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or between theory and practice, for example. Our concern here is to add to the discussion about undergraduate courses in history the question of extension activities as part of the training of future history professionals – and not only as a set of extraordinary activities which students have to do to complete their course –, seen from the perspective of the issues raised by the critical theory of curriculums. We commence with the academic, scientific and cultural activities created by CNE/CP¹ Resolution 2, dated 19 February 2002, for teacher training courses for Basic Education. We will use as an example the case of the history course on the Natal campus of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN).²

ACADEMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND THE ROLE OF EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Academic, scientific and cultural activities (ACC) were included in curricular structures of undergraduate courses by force of Resolution CNE/CP 2, dated 19 February 2002, which established the duration and the number of hours for Licentiate classes. These activities are conceived as moments in which the students can enrich their education with extra-academic experience, through which ties between students, universities and communities can be reinforced. In the text of the Policy and Pedagogical Project (PPP) for the history course of UFRN on Natal campus, there is a type of prior definition about what characterizes these activities, namely:

The curriculum allows a total of 210 hours for ‘other forms of Academic, Scientific and Cultural Activities,’ in which shall be included various activities that the student, at their own initiative or at the suggestion of the course, can carry out outside the classroom. This flexibility will give students the opportunity to take advantage of *expressions that involve abilities and skills that the formal curriculum does not recognize*.³

We can thus understand that the non-recognition of skills by the formal curriculum is the stimulation for the participation of students in activities outside the university classroom, promoting their insertion and interaction in the community and in this way optimizing the return for society that is expected from third level teaching institutions, as well as providing graduates with contact with ‘reality.’

Formally, by the determination of the collegial body of the aforementioned

history course a resolution was approved which described the activities that count for the hours required. The activities which count are divided into three groups: teaching, research and extension, and are included in a list of activities each of which is allotted a determined quantity of 'hours.' The first resolution, approved in 2004, was modified by a later one in 2007. The latter resolution added more activities. While the 2004 Resolution had six teaching, eight research and six extension activities, the 2007 Resolution had nine teaching, eleven research and eleven extension activities. Tables 1 and 2 include some the extension activities⁴ mentioned in the two resolutions, the object of our concern here.

Table 1 – Some of the extension activities stipulated in Resolution no. 01/2004 – *Criteria for the measurement of academic, scientific and cultural Activities*, approved by the collegiate body of the UFRN history course, Natal Campus

Activity	Points (values expressed in hours)
1. Participation in academic events in the area of history, or related areas, such as courses, congresses, seminars and conferences 1.1. international or national level. 1.2. regional or local level.	10 hours 5 hours
2. Internship in the area of history, or related area, in public or private institution. 2.1. From 60 to 120 hours. 2.2. Above 120 hours.	40 hours 20 hours
3. Specific work for history professions carried out in museums, archives, documentation centers and similar institutions	1 hour of ACC per hour of work
4. Participation in artistic presentations in public or private institutions, such as theater, music, poetry and dance shows, or painting or photography exhibitions. Presentations must be connected to academic or social projects	20 hours per production
5. Promotion and/or participation in regular cultural activities, such as cinema groups and related activities in public and private institutions	10 hours per semester

Table 2 – Some of the extension activities established by the 2007 Resolution – Criteria for the measurement of academic, scientific and cultural Activities, approved by the collegiate body of the UFRN history course, Natal Campus

Activity	Points (values expressed in hours)	Activity
1. Participation in congresses, seminars, symposiums, meetings and similar events in the area of history, or related areas: 1.1. international level. 1.2. national level. 1.3. regional or local level	Activity @ 20 h Activity @ 15 h Activity @ 10 h	40 hours 45 hours 50 hours
2. Participation in mini-courses, workshops and similar events in the area of history or correlated areas: 2.1. international level. 2.2. national level. 2.3. regional or local level.	1 h @ 4 h ACC 1 h @ 3 h ACC 1 h @ 2 h ACC	40 hours 40 hours 40 hours
3. Attendance of conferences, talks and similar events in the area of history or correlated areas.	Activity @ 4 h ACC	40 hours
4. Internship in the area of history, or related area, in public or private institution.	3 h @ 1h ACC	100 hours

We, thus, found an increase in the number of hours to be counted for activities such as participation in events. These were also divided; international events counted for more hours than national, which in turn had more hours than regional and local.

To leave aside the prescription of academic, scientific and cultural activities and to analyze how these were being experienced, we looked in the archives of the Coordination of History for the records of how students how completed this work load. We concentrated on obtaining data for students who entered university from 2004 onwards who had completed the course by the date this research was completed, which resulted in three groups:

- 2007.2 – Both Licentiate and Bachelor students finished;
- 2008.1 – Only Bachelor students;
- 2008.2 – Again students from both degree courses finished.

There emerged two forms of counting academic, scientific and cultural activities: by the total amount of hours for each activity and by the quantity of certificates.

At first, we thought of processing the information according to the quantity of hours which students spent on them, since this would reflect the time spent on the activities. However, this involved some difficulties: for example the amount of time counted did not necessarily represent the time spent on the activities. For each hour of participation in a mini-course, workshop or similar event in the area of history, or in a related area at the regional or local level, two hours were counted according to the collegiate body resolution. How could we know if an abstract published in the annals of a congress, or something similar, at the national level actually represented the fifteen hours of the life of a graduate, as determined by the document? These determinations are to a certain extent 'arbitrary.' The distribution of hours according to activities still serves a basis to discuss how academic, scientific and cultural activities are thought, but it presents some limitations in relation to the quantification of information and how students are using this time.

We thought, therefore, of the possibility of taking into account the number of certificates and declarations presented by students to the course coordination. This shows us a gross number of activities carried out and confirmed our suspicions that emerged when we tried to measure the activities by number of hours. A large part of the academic, scientific and cultural activities carried out by undergraduate students were those classified as 'extension.' Table 1 presents the number we arrived at, dividing the activities according to the three areas in which they are categorized by the collegiate body resolution:

Table 1 – Quantity of certificates per group and per area

Group	Extension	Teaching	Research	Total
2007.2	261	13	50	324
2008.1	140	1	5	146
2008.2	250	11	36	297

Source: UFRN. Coordination of the history course. Minutes of meetings of history collegiate body, 1998-2008.

The number of activities carried out under the auspices of what the history course called 'extension' activities is so much greater than the other that is also corresponds to the list of the number of hours.

In a questionnaire sent by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to course coordinators from which students had already graduated under the new Pedagogical Project, probably in April 2008 due to the position it occupied in the archives, we were able to obtain information which confirmed what we found in our survey. To the question 'Among the complementary activities carried out by students who graduated in 2007, what was most prioritized and why?', the Coordination answered:

Extension, since the largest offer of actions in DEH-UFRN⁵ have been those of extension, especially linked to the Improvements in the Teaching of History project (2006) and events organized by NEHAD.⁶ It was noted that the extension actions were concentrated in DEH, with few actions even in CCHLA,⁷ and that most are aimed at the internal public of the course.⁸

Also asked was what were the least prioritized actions and the reasons for this, to which the following reply was given:

Teaching and research. The lowest number of actions offered is in the area of research, since few grants are offered by DEH and there is little interest in voluntary work among students. In relation to teaching, there are few experiences, with most activities being related to internships in state and municipal schools. (ibidem)

In accordance with the diagnosis of the Course Coordination, Figure 3 lists the principal activities carried out by students, which were compared to the certificates delivered. In addition, we can state that this was the standard for students who completed the course in other semesters.

Figure 3 – Activities carried out by students of the history course, 2004-2008

Teaching	Research	Extension
Internship in state school; Teaching assistant positions in UFRN; Teaching assistant in field work; Teaching assistant in tourist guide training project.	Presentation of panel in Humanities Week; Presentation of work in local seminar.	Participation in mini-courses; Attending talks; Monitor of event; Technical visits; Technical trip; Monitor in university entrance exam; Internship in Câmara Cascudo Museum; Grantee for extension project; Participation in extension event.

Source: UFRN. Coordination of history course. Minutes of meetings of collegiate body of the history course of UFRN, 1998-2008.

Resolutions concerning academic, scientific and cultural activities for other courses in the Center of Human Sciences, Letters and Arts, such as the Bachelor and Licentiate of Geography and the course of Letters, also followed the same tendency as the course of history. The separation between teaching, research and extension activities is present in all three and the listings are similar. In a superficial survey with the coordinators of these courses we obtained the information that most of the required hours are fulfilled by extension activities. Therefore, at least in relation to graduating students who are part of the Center of Human Sciences, Letters and Arts, there is a type of harmony in relation to what is being carried out as ACC.

Based on these two indications – a large part of the activities are ‘extension’ and offered by DEH/UFRN –, some questions emerge: does the academic, scientific and cultural activities represent the insertion of students in the community? Do they involve abilities and skills that the formal curriculum does not recognize? Do they involve an extension of the history course to the community?

To help in the analysis of these issues, we used the insights of Henry Giroux⁹ into curricular questions: “What counts as an insertion activity?”;

“How can the relations, the valorization of certain activities and the hierarchy between them influence the profile of what it is wanted to produce?”; “At whom are the products of these activities aimed?”; “How does the evaluations and the attribution of values to activities influence the profile that it is intended to produce and to legitimate knowledge?” Taking as an example his concern with the subjects who determine and produce curriculums, who hold the right to say what counts as an activity and how it is evaluated and which legitimate the purposes of what is determined, we looked for the thoughts of those who produced and constructed the extension activities in the course in question – the professors themselves.

We can start with the fact that the completion of these activities is seen as problematic by professors on the course. In an interview held under the auspices of research with professors from the UFRN history course, the interviewee stated:

P: Do you believe that ACC has served the purpose of integrating students in the community?

R: For the large majority no. Also in the same manner as the PCC, they have been fulfilled badly, as a formal obligation, something which students have to do. Many think that it is excessive. 200 hours... we work especially with the freshers, saying ‘you have to from the first semester take part in activities, meetings, congresses, symposiums.’ There is no point ... they do not have time. For better or for worse, the university is always holding some events that have opportunities for students to participate in, but they are only concerned at the end. This meeting of post-graduates has 113 inscribed, but very few are actually participating. (Professor A, interview in Costa, 2010)

Therefore, in addition to the ‘bad compliance’ of academic, scientific and cultural activities, a type of accommodation was discovered: what was most immediate was what was carried out, in other words what most often were the activities carried out by the department or the university.

Another professor problematized this question. He said:

You will see two problems: one of the convenience of the student – he works, has a family to take care of. Then what is provided by the university is what will be looked for. This is a question of market, of a society that is ever quicker, which imposes dynamics... The person cannot go to the Ribeira to participate in a social project because he has to make money, he has to eat. Then here is the place

where this subject, conditioned by the labor market, will get these classes. I do not think that this is a cruel mechanism, rather it is a possible mechanism and useful for these people because the full time student is increasingly rare. Then what is possible? It is to ensure that what is provided by the university is increasingly more wide-ranging and increasingly more democratic and I have increasingly seen this type of thing here. You can carry out activities where the focus of participation covers the society which is the only place where this society can come together. This is the opposite face of the thing. You can hold events in the university that includes those social minorities that do not have a voice nor representation in any place. It depends on you stimulating the history professional who have a more open and democratic vision in relation to what are extension activities. However, this is not a limiting factor nor a perverse one. It can be used well, doing better activities outside the university. And it is this type of posture, for example, that in see in certain professionals understanding that this is pernicious when it is not. (Professor B, in Costa, 2010)

In addition, to highlighting a logic that that needs to be rethought in the university, the availability of undergraduate students, the professor suggests an ‘inversion’ of the manner in which extension is thought: instead of representing it as going beyond the walls of the university, he proposes exactly the opposite, bringing society within the university. This does not mean that there is no longer a dialogue between the two.

In relation to extension, we think that the reflection should be proposed under the auspices of the institution itself and principally based on our reference science – history.

A recurrent question about the practical return of human sciences, for example, is that this is not as evident as in other applied sciences. There are less laboratories, less companies, less evidence of a ‘material’ return to society. Nevertheless, there are those who consider this specificity not as a deficiency, but as something that characterizes our field, since our logic needs to be different from what some call the ‘hard’ sciences. Renato Janine Ribeiro repositions this aspect as the principal strength of the human sciences:

If the foundation and functioning of the human sciences are different, the practical effect of the knowledge acquired will – also – be radically different from the other sciences... What is in play is its use for a knowledge which involves, as something difficult and essential, the fact of being from man about man, which in itself touches at its very core knowledge and action, reason and passions.

Therefore, its efficacy does not take place on the plane of the production of things, but in the construction of the human world – ranging from the apparently individual plane, that of psychology, to the social plane. Out of this there emerges a practical dimension of knowledge in human sciences which is not to be discarded ... Applications of this order, when they use previously generated knowledge and guide this towards practice, constitute the *output* of human sciences much more closely that technology for the other sciences.¹⁰

Following this logic, what do we historians have to say about the knowledge we produce? How to dialogue with society through our output, our instrumental work? What is the role of the university in this relationship?

It is possible to elucidate this question if we look at little at how we conceive the construction of our curriculums.

CURRICULUMS AND THIRD LEVEL TEACHING OF HISTORY

Since the 1970s in curricular studies there has been a frequent focus on investigations between the written document (prescription) and the ‘applied’ document. What Ivor Goodson said has been commonly accepted, so it should cause no shock to acknowledge this, “The written curriculum provides us with a witness, a documentary source, a map of a terrain subject to modifications.”¹¹ Research that starts with the analysis of prescriptive or pre-active levels – of legislations and curriculums – ‘on paper’ – to concentrate on how these curricular programs are practiced has been piling up without, however, relinquishing the relationship established between the two phases – the pre-active and the active. This is because what it is intended to be done based on what the curricular/legislative documents propose depends to a great extent on how these are organized and prepared.

This concern with curricular studies started with the questioning of the initial concepts of curricular organization, such as those of the Americans Bobbitt and Tyler, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century and identified as utilitarian and technical, since the authors saw the functioning of schools as being comparable with that of industries and companies, stipulating precisely what targets and objectives should be attained, as well as adapting labor to fill positions in the labor market. This curriculum is seen from a technical vision, centered on questions of organization and development.¹²

A revision of this manner of conceiving curriculums was consolidated in the 1970s and has been called ‘critical theory’ – some studies refer not only to

curriculums but to education in general. Among the authors/scholar recognized and identified as belonging to this group are: those from the United States in a movement that was called 'reconceptualization,' including William Pinar, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, Michael Apple and Henry Giroux; those from the United Kingdom, with Sociology of Education, and including Michael Young and Basil Bernstein; Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron from France; Gimeno Sacristán from Spain and Paulo Freire from Brazil.

Despite the risk involved in the attempt to summarize the thought of some many and so varied authors, it can be said that what links their concerns is the questioning of the curriculum within the educational, school and curricular organization; its connection with the social relations of production and the discussion of ideology, power and knowledge.

By way of example, drawing once again on Henry Giroux, let us look at a series of questions to be asked when analyzing a curriculum:

1. What appears as curricular knowledge?
2. How is this knowledge produced?
3. How is this knowledge transmitted in the classroom?
4. What types of social relations in the classroom serve to mirror and reproduce the values and norms incorporated in the social relations accepted in other dominant social places?
5. Who has access to legitimate forms of knowledge?
6. In whose interests is this knowledge used?
7. How are the contradictions and political tensions measured through acceptable forms of school knowledge and social relationships?
8. How are the predominant methods of evaluation used to legitimate existing forms of knowledge? (Giroux, 1997, p.49)

He continues:

At the core of these questions is the recognition that power, knowledge, ideology and education level are related in patterns of complexity in constant transformation. The bond which creates these inter-relationships is of a social and political nature, and is both a product and process of history ... This approach demands forms of curriculums that deepen the consideration that knowledge is a *social construction*. It also emphasizes the need to examine the constellation of economic, political and social interests that the different forms of knowledge can reflect. (ibidem, emphasis added)

This type of reflection is of interest to us, since it problematizes the prescribed curriculum— giving it historicity, identifies *who speaks and from*

where they speak in that document. Gimeno Sacristán also highlights this aspect by affirming that:

The curriculum, in its content and in the forms in which is presented to us and presented to students and professors, is a *historically configured* option which is built within a determined social, political, cultural and school plot; therefore, it is burdened with values and assumptions that have to be deciphered. A task that has to be fulfilled at the level of socio-political analysis and from the point of view of its 'more technical' instrumentation, discovering the mechanisms that operate in its development within school fields.¹³

This is why we identify with this perspective of critical theory, given than it is based precisely on this drawing of attention to the socio-cultural construction of curriculums: in its relationship with society, with ideology, with culture and with power; in the expansion of its study, from its prescriptive phase to the interactive phases and therefore 'creating' other dimensions, such as the curriculum presented to professors and molded by them, the real curriculum, the evaluated one, the hidden one, etc.

We noted that this identification is attributed to a narrow familiarity between what these authors see as the construction of the curriculum and what historians propose are treated as our sources. However, who does not remember Le Goff's 'document/monument,'¹⁴ so often cited by others and us, when Sacristán speaks of a 'historically configured' option? Or Certeau's social place¹⁵ which is now so well known, when it is said that the curriculum is loaded with value that it is necessary to decipher?

In our case we can say that taking the documents that the historians make for themselves, for their own training and activities makes the question even more interesting, since, like a 'letter of intentions,' these prescriptions and curriculums, approached in this manner, reveal the discourse that these professionals consider the right one, the correct one to be done. They reveal a practice that tries to legitimate its position and purpose in universities, in societies and also in other sciences. Nor does this escape from the ties that bind it to its time, in the way that history is being raised, discussed and transformed – as a historical process and also as scientific knowledge. Analyzing the conditions of production of documents/monuments means in this case going after this relation of forces which hold the power to construct these curriculums: both what results in success and attempts which were not made concrete.

In a further approximation with Certeau, thinking about these questions

allows us “something that can be said without either something legendary (or ‘edifying’), nor atopic (without belonging)” (2007, p.77). He states:

From one to the another history remains configured by the system in which it is elaborated. Now, as in the past, it is determined by a fabrication located in some point or other of the system. In addition, the consideration of this place, in which it is produced, is the only one that allows historiographic knowledge to escape from the unconscious of a class which does not even know itself as a class, in the relations of production, and for this reason does not know the society in which it is inserted. (ibidem)

This signifies locating the Policy and Pedagogical Projects of courses as historic documents, scrutinizing the forces that mold them, that attribute importance to one or other activity, as we have seen in the list of extension activities. Which concepts of history are these that give more credit to certain categories of events than to others? And help us in the last instance to investigate the question that disturbs us: for whom and for what is this history taught and practiced in the university? And what is the role that we, academics, play in this?

Since we understand the stage of undergraduate studies as also one of the production of historic knowledge and professional training, adopting this viewpoint can, thus, help us reflect on the professional role of history that it is intended to be produced, since settled on the basis of what a historian does and on the historic knowledge that is deemed legitimate to achieve this objective, we interrogate the PPP in light of some of the questions raised by Giroux (1997): what counts as curricular knowledge, and how is this knowledge transmitted in the classroom? How do relations in the classroom, between teaching staff and students, mirror the norms of other environments? At whom is the historic knowledge produced in universities aimed? What methods of evaluation legitimate this knowledge?

In relation to the normative environment of a university curriculum, in Brazil a hierarchy has to be followed: the 1996 National Education Law (LDB),¹⁶ which governs the specific National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) for each course and in harmony with the Policy and Pedagogical Projects for each higher level teaching institution and prepared for the collegiate body of each course.

In summary, observing the LDB, higher level education is expected to stimulate cultural creation and the development of the scientific spirit and

reflexive thought; the training of graduates in different areas of knowledge, apt for insertion in professional sectors; the encouragement of research work and scientific investigation and the desire for cultural and professional improvement; the promotion of the dissemination of cultural, scientific and technical knowledge; the encouragement of knowledge of the problems of the world and the promotion of extension activities with the population as a whole.¹⁷

It is, thus, possible to point to a dual function for the university: it is a place for the preservation and reproduction of knowledge, but expectations of innovation, creation and creativity also have to be met. Added to this is the 'labor market' factor and we have already established that there is a delicate and complex scenario that sustains this institution. Therefore, it is to be expected that a curriculum for a third level teaching course should reflect these characteristics: in the internal forum we have to pay attention to the discussion and to the dynamics of area of knowledge, and externally it is necessary to create opportunities of return to society, both through training for the labor market and for ethical formation which meets the greatest needs of the community.

It is these relations that justify the tripod on which the Brazilian university is based, or at least on which it is proposed to be based – research-teaching-extension –, allowing the creation (research), conservation (teaching) and multiplication (extension) of knowledge.¹⁸

We also agree with Michel de Certeau when he states that: “The institution does not just give social stability to a ‘doctrine’. It makes it possible and surreptitiously, determines it” (2007, p.70). This is the reason why we conceive universities not only as innovative and pioneering, but also much more as preservers of the knowledge and scientific practices that keep the group cohesive, whose conservation and professionalization practically occurs through the fact of belonging to an academy, which needs to be constituted as a space that allows conditions for this professionalization to occur. This is the reason for the growth of the emphasis attributed to “how to do history”, and “how history is practiced in the curriculums of undergraduate courses,” even because:

Methods serve as the initiation to a group (it is *necessary* to learn or to practice good methods to be introduced into the group) and to have relations with a social *force* (the methods are the means through the power of a body of lettered masters is protected, differentiated and manifested). (Certeau, 2007, p.73, original emphasis)

It is this practice that guides the attribution of determined activities as 'extension' or not, and counting more hours than others in the education of future history professionals.

The listing of activities counted as academic scientific and cultural reflects the manner how we organize ourselves in history courses. Furthermore: they reflect how we think about what is around us, how we practice our profession and for what the product of our work serves. Logically, we cannot not take into account the reality of professors: students who work and who have little time or lack the conditions to dedicate themselves to activities outside their own classrooms.

Are these activities significant for extension? In what manner do the large quantity of participations in seminars, talks and meetings mark what we historians, with the privilege to be allocated in universities, want to say to society? And how we are listening?

The marking of activities related to publications, abstracts, participation in regional, local and national events seems to follow a logic that reproduces the mechanisms of academic legitimacy, necessary for functions of the socialization of knowledge in events and publications, but still lacking in relation to breaking out of the university circuit.

As an example we can take the most important moment that currently brings together the community of historians, the National Symposium of History, held by the National Association of History (*Associação Nacional de História - Anpuh*), which was held for the twenty-fifth time in the Federal University of Ceará in July 2009.

The number of people inscribed, which grows each year (seven thousand in 2009), has raised concerns among those who intend to participate both in the Association and the Symposium. At the roundtable entitled 'Contemporary Dialogues about the Professionalization of the Historian,' undergraduate students questioned members of the podium about rumors that for coming events undergraduates would no longer have the right to present their work in panels. To which the president of the Association at the time answered that it was a precipitated question, observing that at that Symposium an award had been created for the best presentation of a panel.

This concern reveals that, due to the magnitude already acquired or the search to increase the points and the evaluation, events are increasingly restricting the participation of undergraduates. As a result we are limiting the amount of opportunities that undergraduate students can have to fulfill their ACC, by ranking hours according to the same logic as the events themselves,

reducing the importance and the meaning of the participation of the same students, to the extent that we reproduce the classification of events as local, regional, nation or international. To what point does the counting of this type of activity for undergraduate meet the purpose of 'extension activities'? Are not local events – organized by students or the fruit of their own mobilization – more significant and therefore, deserving of 'more hours' than international and national events, many of which undergraduates only have access to as listeners? It is necessary to give attention to the specificity of undergraduate studies, to that which is really reachable by students or which can be encouraged within the limits that are placed for the counting of academic, scientific and cultural activities.

Counterparts are also necessary for the students themselves. The involvement of students in academic life and its knowledge, the understanding that the undergraduate course constitutes a stage with distinct stages and practices from previous levels, especially awareness of the role that the public university plays in Brazilian society, need to be present in academic centers, in corridors, in classrooms. How many students know the Policy and Pedagogical Project of their own courses?

Finally, undergraduate courses need to think about how they have acted as regards the meaning of the occupation and training for the 'new spaces for history professionals to act' of which so much is talked about. Partnerships with sectors such as tourism, cultural goods, teaching (dialogue with other educational institutions appears to always be conflictual), memory, events, editorial services and consultancies need to be established if there exists the intention for the discourse of a university 'in touch' with society to be put into practice. As Hobsbawm said, "The problem for historians is to analyze the nature of this 'meaning of the past' in society and to locate its changes and transformations."¹⁹ We can, thus, call the responsibility of establishing this dialogue with society the "balancing of the relationship between academic or scientifically produced knowledge and other forms of the production of knowledge, in the construction of historical culture", as we have heard Joana Neves²⁰ defend. This effectively signifies the course of history as the producing body of some type of specialized knowledge positioning itself in the community, without its actions being ephemeral or of little effect. We need to define our position – even if allocated within the university – in the middle of the relations that are established with the past. And history courses need to be the instruments through which this is done.

The configuration of university curriculums reveals the insertion of

measures aiming the better compliance of the functions expected of these institutions in society. There is a demand for better practice, for an affinity between the content learned and the reality lived, options historically configured by a context that demands professionals ethically committed to science and the world. It requires the formation of professionals who know how to deal with the unexpected, who are flexible and creative in regard to overcoming the difficulties that arise and who is aware of the specificity and the privilege of being part of a higher level teaching institution, responsible for a large part of the specialized knowledge in the country.

In the appropriation of certain measures, certain questions remain relevant which need to be rethought from the point of view of our science of reference, for example 'how can we establish dialogue between extension activities and history?' From the moment that these are the purposes of a higher level course, they have to be dimensioned for the scientific education of undergraduates. In other words, extension activities cannot be treated simply as a set of activities appended to the work load of undergraduates so that they can complete their courses, but rather problematized as the basic component of their training in the field of the science of history.

Logically each of these curriculums and measures carries in them the marks of those who have the competence to produce them. What counts as an insertion activity, or the ranking of determined practices, legitimating some type of knowledge, ends up reproducing what is taken as the standard in terms of a university career. There is a harvest to be opened to the awareness that history now needs to meet different demands of the contemporary world and contemporary society that is outside the university walls, therefore the question of extension activities strongly needs to be part of the formation of its professionals. However, this formation is still constrained by the non-overcoming of the problems we have known for so long: the separation between bachelor and licentiate degrees, resistance to the former, the accommodation of the latter, pedagogic knowledge seen as technical knowledge, the ranking of content, etc.

This feeds the narrowing of the function that we can demand for our category, frequently confronting difficult battles – such as the regulation of the profession or the work load of history in primary and secondary school teaching. While we remain content with a less ambitious form of teaching history at the higher level, we will continue to remain speaking just to ourselves.

NOTES

¹ Conselho Nacional de Educação/Conselho Pleno (National Council of Education/Full Council).

² The following reflections are the result of research carried out for my Master's Thesis entitled *A formação de profissionais de história: o caso da UFRN (2004-2008)*, defended in March 2010 in the Post-Graduate Program of History in the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), in João Pessoa.

³ UFRN. Departamento de História. *Projeto Político-Pedagógico do Curso de História*. Natal: 2004 (mimeogr.), p.54, our emphasis.

⁴ Not all the activities listed are included in the table. For the purposes of the discussion in this article, we preferred to select some of the activities which we will mention during the text which are most frequently carried out by students. For the complete resolutions, see COSTA, 2010.

⁵ History Department on the Natal campus of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN).

⁶ Group of Historic, Archeological and Documentation Studies, linked to the Department of History.

⁷ Center of Human Sciences, Letters and Arts, of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Natal campus.

⁸ UFRN, Coordination of the Course of History. File: Course Collegiate Body, 2008.

⁹ GIROUX, Henry. *Os professores como intelectuais: rumo a uma pedagogia crítica da aprendizagem*. Porto Alegre: ArtMed, 1997.

¹⁰ RIBEIRO, Renato Janine. *A Universidade e a vida atual: Fellini não via filmes*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 2003, p.90-91.

¹¹ GOODSON, Ivor F. *Curriculum: teoria e história*. 6.ed. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes, 1995, p.21.

¹² SILVA, Tomaz Tadeu da. *Documentos de identidade: uma introdução às teorias do curriculum*. 3.ed. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2009, p.21-27.

¹³ GIMENO SACRISTÁN, J. *Curriculum: uma reflexão sobre a prática*. 3.ed. Porto Alegre: ArtMed, 2000, p.17, our emphasis.

¹⁴ LE GOFF, Jacques. *História e memória*. 5.ed. Campinas (SP): Ed. Unicamp, 2003.

¹⁵ CERTEAU, Michel de. *A escrita da História*. São Paulo: Forense, 2007.

¹⁶ BRASIL. MEC. *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional: Lei nº 9.394 de 20 dez. 1996*. Brasília, 1996. Available at: www.planalto.gov.br/CCIVIL_03/LEIS/L9394.htm. Accessed on 24 May 2007.

¹⁷ BRASIL. MEC, 1996, art. 43.

¹⁸ Schematically divided to emphasize the three dimensions. This does not signify any lack of consideration of the fact that there is creation in the teaching and extension processes as well.

¹⁹ HOBSBAWM, Eric. *Sobre História*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998, p.22.

²⁰ NEVES, Joana. Participação da comunidade, ensino de história e cultura histórica. *Saeculum: revista de História*, João Pessoa: DH/PPGH/UFPB, n.6/7, p.35-47, jan.-dez. 2000/2001, p.46.

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