

## TOWARDS A CLINICAL DIDACTICS: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN TEACHING GRADUATION COURSES

Merie Bitar Moukachar\*

Centro Universitário UNA, Belo Horizonte - MG, Brasil

Sérgio Dias Cirino\*\*

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte - MG, Brasil

**ABSTRACT:** This article is based on a doctorate research which develops the thesis that teachers' previous education in Psychology leaves marks which will influence their actions when teaching Educational Psychology in License Degree Courses, practicing what we have named *clinical didactics*. Our aim is to discuss this practice in the teaching of Educational Psychology, approaching topics that contribute to the reflection on the necessity of teaching the contents of Educational Psychology *clinically*, although still *didactically*. Therefore, we shall approach the use of clinical didactics for the teaching of Psychology, for the teachers' training and the social-affective dimension within this training because we have realized that working in the technical perspective in this discipline is not enough and we also have to work on the personal education of the subject-students, future teachers, for their classroom practices in the current world set.

**Keywords:** Educational Psychology. Teacher training. Clinical didactics.

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\*Doctorate degree in Education – Faculdade de Educação/Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. (FaE/UFMG). Professor at Centro Universitário UNA – Belo Horizonte/Contagem. E-mail: <merie.moukachar@gmail.com>.

\*\*Doctorate degree in Psychology – Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Associate Professor – Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). E-mail: <sergiocirino99@yahoo.com>.

## POR UMA DIDÁTICA CLÍNICA: PSICOLOGIA DA EDUCAÇÃO NAS LICENCIATURAS

**RESUMO:** Este artigo parte de uma pesquisa de doutorado que desenvolve a tese de que a formação anterior do(a) professor(a) em Psicologia deixa marcas que influenciam sua ação no ensino de Psicologia da Educação nos cursos de Licenciatura, praticando o que denominamos *didática clínica*. Neste texto, o objetivo é colocar em discussão essa prática para o ensino de Psicologia da Educação, discutindo temas que contribuem para a reflexão sobre a necessidade de ministrar *cl clinicamente*, mesmo que ainda *didaticamente*, os conteúdos da referida disciplina. Abordaremos, portanto, o uso da didática clínica para o ensino de Psicologia, a formação docente e a dimensão socioafetiva nessa formação, pois a conclusão que delineamos é que, nessa disciplina, não basta trabalhar somente na perspectiva técnica, mas também na formação pessoal do sujeito-aluno, futuro professor, para a prática na sala de aula, no mundo atual.

**Palavras-chave:** Psicologia da Educação. Formação docente. Didática clínica.

### INTRODUCTION

Look, I miss classes... Why? Because I get tired. I think that... being a teacher and be really involved with the profession, with them, with the students and everything, is more than what a human being can endure, because it is very psychological, you know? [...] Because you get involved with their problems and... and... you do not always get any revenues back. [...] Because, the teacher is still seen by most students as the enemy, isn't it? That is, there is a big gap between teachers and students, teachers and principals. The feeling I have is that no one understands each other [...] It's hard to deal with this situation... [Prof. Celsa - SP]<sup>1</sup>

Statements with such issues, described by a teacher, are heard along our daily work at schools, and, in most cases, there are no satisfactory answers. This fact unveils, to say the least, the difficulty and complexity of the teachers' working daily routine dealing with their students, pointing out the fragility of the conditions existing at the schools, in several of their segments.

We have observed that nowadays, such phenomena, as described in the above statement, do jeopardize the positive effects of the teaching-learning process throughout the several stages of the Education. We have found that the challenges in the classrooms of Elementary or Second Grade schools, where undergraduate teachers attending a License Degree Course will work, are great. The difficulties they face can be due to a number of aspects, varying from inadequate infrastructure to the lack of knowledge of methodologies more appropriate for the profile of students of a particular community.

In the teachers' training in License degree courses, we noticed that most graduates are insecure about the knowledge they

will be required when they start their professional practice. This is because, quite often, in the courses they attend, there is a significant gap between what is taught and the contents that will actually be demanded in their professional performance as teachers. Among these contents, we shall discuss, here, the lack of support that, even though partially, could be sustained by the knowledge to be achieved in the subject Psychology of Education, a compulsory subject in most syllabus of License Degree Courses.

Therefore, the main focus of this article is to discuss a different way to deal with this subject. In order to do so, this study proposes a reflection based on Moukachar's Doctorate Degree research (2013) which develops the thesis that a teacher's previous graduation in Psychology leaves marks that will influence on his/her practices, as well as on the objectives and contents of the teaching in the subject Educational Psychology in License Degree courses. Such a teacher, when carrying out what we have named *clinical didactics*, unveils those marks, that is, those characteristics from the education in Psychology. This, somehow, influence the preparation of their students, who are teachers under training, to face the classroom, in the school inserted in the contemporaneous world set.

The aim of this paper is to debate this practice to develop it within the teaching of Educational Psychology, along the training of teachers, opening our outlook towards the reflection on the possibility of teaching the contents of Educational Psychology both clinically, although still didactically. We start from a simple and generic assumption that the way teachers carry out their work, selects and organizes the content of the subjects, and the choice of this or that teaching way contributes significantly and in different ways to the understanding and intake of the overall knowledge by the students, in any training. Here, however, we will approach, more specifically, how it occurs concerning the knowledge of Psychology.

But... *clinical didactics* in Educational Psychology? Why? Which contents are to be dealt with? In order to find answers for these questions, the development of this text will be held in three stages. A first stage, in which Psychology is debated in its relation to Education, within a teacher's training, approaching the application of *clinical didactics* as an enhancement of this training; a second one, in which is carried out a reflection on how teachers' training is being developed, highlighting the affective dimension within this training, which corroborates the proposal of a more sensitive rationality and of the *clinical didactics*; and a third and last stage, concluding our ideas about what we have named *clinical didactics* in Educational Psychology.

## IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE DISCIPLINE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: *CLINICAL DIDACTICS* AS ONE OF THE POSSIBLE WAYS

When discussing the frequently difficult relationship, which is set between Psychology and Education, accepted as two fields of knowledge, Larocca (1999, p. 44) states about the discipline Educational Psychology, in which this relationship outcomes that

[...] the Educational psychology cannot lose the door-keys of the world in which it lives and should consider that each one of these worlds is full of contradictions as much as it is contradictory the relationship between these worlds. As Educational Psychology embodies the contradictory unity of being and not being just Psychology and that of being and not being just Education. In the field of the training it offers it ought to look at the same time at the subjective being (person/student) and at the concreteness of its insertion in the world of social and historical relations, world in which the school is also inserted.

It is worth pointing out that the relation between Psychology and Education in Brazil, specifically, has a long and complex history. Nevertheless, in this study, this topic will be approached, exclusively, from the conceptual viewpoint, and not from the historical point of view due to the fact that it is not based on researches of this nature. Because of that, we can turn to Coll (1999) where, despite bringing in his texts the perspective from Catalunha and Spain, we find experiences with similarities. In such a way, taking him and his contextual perspective as a starting point, we seek to have a better knowledge of this discipline, which is sometimes dealt with as the application of psychological knowledge to Education and sometimes dealt with a bridge-discipline between Psychology and Education.

We found in this author's work one the most important assumptions in the statements made by educators until late 1950, which is of an Educational Psychology considered primarily as a field of application of the psychological knowledge, that is, the concept of a Psychology applied to Education. And besides that, still based on Coll, there remains an idea of the application of an "old" knowledge, ready-made and finished, in any situation, even though a new one. Nevertheless, Coll (1999) brings a good discussion about how the notion of *psychology applied to education* was relocated to the notion of *educational psychology*. This caused, at the same time, in Psychology as a profession, in the Educational Psychology, the relocation of a more clinical-medical perspective of intervention – centered on the student and on his/her learning difficulties – to a more educational-type perspective – turned to the schooling processes –, to which is of interest for the ideas that will be developed along this study.

In such a way, this author brings us proposals which are alternative to the notion of Psychology applied to Education, which

[...] are transcribed as a different notion of Educational Psychology, tending to regard it as a bridge-discipline between Psychology and Education, with a specific object and above all, with the purpose to generate new knowledge about this object of study. (COLL, 1999, p. 41)

which, as said before, would imply significant changes in the understanding of the relationship between the psychology knowledge, the theory and the educational practices.

We can also turn to Gomes, (2010), searching for a contextualization of this discussion, as it refers to the Faculty of Education (FaE) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) to approach the dilemma faced by the educators between adopting the notion of Educational Psychology as an applied discipline or as a bridge-discipline clearing out that

[...] our challenge and the psychologists' in general is to treat psychology not as a mere field of psychological knowledge application willing to construct its fundamentals and specific study object based on the knowledge of psychology and also the knowledge of educational phenomena. (GOMES, 2010, p. 15)

In our view, there would be the possibility of a two-way street in this perspective to approach the Educational Psychology, which would bring new productions and contributions both to Psychology, on one side, and to Education on the other side. Therefore, we are prone to consider it as a bridge-discipline, and we agree with Coll (1999), who points out that the subject should study and examine the Education, one of the areas in the realm of human activity, with the conceptual and methodological tools pertaining to Psychology.

These ideas can be found, in a certain way, in the practice of clinical didactics in the classroom, which we will originally find in Baibich (2003), in her studies about the psychology teacher's training. The author proposes that the teaching of Psychology, besides being a producer of transformations, considering that it is a pedagogical activity, also turns to what she names clinical didactics, here understood as a "concern towards changing, preventing, improving a certain situation and finding answers for problems" (BAIBICH, 2003, p. 81).

In this model, the author believes that both the clinical attitude as the attitude to cause changes in the classrooms are legitimate actions belonging to the psychology teacher's activities and adds that there is a possibility of articulating these elements as landmarks of the learning process. This thought reflects the meaning of a methodology and

didactics that, in this study, we are willing to relocate to the role of the discipline Educational Psychology in the teachers' training.

Larocca (2000, p. 65), when approaching specifically the teachers' training, points out issues regarding the direction of the questions that we propose in this study, when he says that

[...] the graduates, future teachers, although showing to be almost always enchanted by the psychological knowledge that they gather in the courses, understand little or nothing about how it will be useful in their analysis and interference in the educational field and for the benefit of a citizen-education.

In such a way, the author confirms the need to measure the importance also attributed to the contents elected in the teaching of the psychological knowledge. What is observed is that this knowledge, most of the times, despite causing "enchantment" in many students, do not produce the effects that are to be expected, as a supportive knowledge for their future everyday work.

We also understand that this knowledge should be discussed based on what we dealt as object of research in the Doctorate degree, which, in that opportunity, we named *teaching action*. Baibich (2003, p. 75, emphasis added) discussing about the results of another research conducted in the field of License degree in Psychology points out that

Among the students who do not see themselves as fully qualified, there are those who point out flaws in the performance of some teachers in the same way that those who felt fully qualified mention the performance of the teacher of Teaching Methodology in Psychology – MEP - and PEP as responsible for their habilitation. Therefore, we can notice that, in general, *in the students' evaluation, the teacher is almost totally responsible for the student's training, which is also generally supported by the traditional heritage from the educational system.*

This is exactly what we want to give some thought to herein, that is, how teachers develop the contents in their classes of Educational Psychology in the License degree courses. Despite working on the presumption that students and teachers are co-responsible for the teaching-learning process, we have chosen to discuss what it is the teacher's share in this relationship, as the students, taking into account this and other researches, usually attribute to the teachers, in large part, the responsibility for their own learning.

According to Almeida and collaborators (2003), who also report a research conducted on what teachers say about the contributions of Psychology, the teachers themselves do not see quite clearly this contribution and what is most surprising is the evidence that "the use of psychological knowledge is held in a context of common sense and spontaneity" (ALMEIDA et al, 2003, p. 9). Yet, in this research, when

teachers were asked about the factors they identify as facilitators or hinderers of their students' learning process replied that

the aspect and condition that mostly eases the learning process, lies in the teacher's practice, especially with regard to the strategies used in the classroom, the content approached and the teacher's ability to interact with students. Teachers mention that learning is facilitated when the teacher builds up a welcoming and free environment, keeping and cultivating a relationship with students based on dialogue, affection and respect. (ALMEIDA et al, 2003, p. 10)

Teachers complement these impressions referring to elements such as sensitive eyes and words of encouragement; that would lead to the personal development of the student, the upgrade of self-esteem and the positive development of self-concept. So, we understand that if the relationship with their students is perceived in such a way by the teachers, it is important to give some thought here to whether it was not that type of relationship that they – when still teachers being trained – wish their teachers had developed towards them, when students.

In this regard, we go back to Larocca's text (2000), which, when referring to relational and methodological aspects suitable for the psychologist-teacher to develop psychological knowledge for the students in different types of training, comes closer to the scenario we want to establish in this discipline as proper for the use of *clinical didactics*, when pointing out that

When it comes to teaching, in the dynamics of classroom events, the teacher's own pedagogical and methodological decisions produce different demonstrations from the students, in addition to the fact that, in the pedagogical relationship, in constant interaction and change, lies the student's subjectivity as well as the teacher's subjectivity plus each one's socio-cultural dimension, forged within past and current objective conditions which are namely, historically and socially produced. (LAROCCA, 2000, p. 63)

In our classrooms, for example, as teachers, this is a constant concern. And we ask ourselves, as Morais (1988) does in the presentation of the book he organized, not only about *what the classroom is*, but also about *what it should be*. "Political space bearing history? Magic space for human encounters? Place in which beautiful words conceal the hard conflicts lived in a shade of time? Space in which subtle affective or doctrinaire seductions take place?" (MORAIS, 1988, p. 7).

Ultimately, as we, ourselves, feel it, a space in which the students feel and resent themselves, personally, according to this or that established pedagogical relationship. In the web of relationships that are interwoven within the classroom space, enhanced by most diverse kinds of feelings, as pointed Larocca (2000, p. 63) in the



above excerpt, “lies the student’s subjectivity as well as the teacher’s subjectivity plus each one’s socio-cultural dimension”.

This remark leads us to restate the fact that the teacher educated in Psychology has several skills to deal with these issues in their classroom and can take hold of resources learned in their previous training to work in this dimension, conceiving the practice of *clinical didactics* which we aim to conceptualize herein. But how do we understand the “elements” which, according Baibich (2003), would serve as landmarks of the learning process and part of that practice?

Initially, we searched for Almeida (1999, p. 107, emphasis added) who points out that the school

[...] Has not found that the change must take place not in the type of relationship – actually, the only one that should prevail is the original one (teacher-student) - but on the teacher’s performance, assumed as that of *an observer, wise interpreter, able to identify the obstacles that are established between the pair teacher-student, to better know how to deal with the web of relationships* that are created when taking hold of the knowledge.

We find this teacher’s performance important, which requires these features and elements, such as those highlighted in this author’s excerpt, which constitute, in our view, skills and abilities<sup>2</sup> in the psychologist’s education. Furthermore, we identify those elements as those present in the instruments pertaining to the psychologist’s expertise, such as workshops, group dynamics, listening skills and other marks of the Psychology that long to favor the rise of the subject.

Searching for a definition, however, it is still important to clarify what, here, we understand by the terms “clinic” and “didactics”?

First, “didactics” will be strictly treated here as systematic reflection and search for alternatives to the problems yielded from pedagogical practice, but considering it with the political sense that has been recovered by researchers’ effort in this field (CANDAU, 2009).

Afterwards, giving thought to clinic, here, implies to think of clinic in a broad sense, compared to the traditional clinical model in Psychology, which has been going through changes, experiences of reinvention and re-creation of its expression. We note that this has been happening in response to different contexts for which psychologists are being required, diversifying their practices, their performances and the elements they are made of.

Therefore, it is worth highlighting that despite the coincidence of the name “clinic”, our proposal of this distinguished practice for the teacher’s work in the classroom and our reflection on this issue take a different direction from the possible uses of the term “clinic” in this traditional perspective, which is exactly what is criticized by many



authors, who we agree with. In our proposal, after several researches, we opted for the term “clinic” aware of the semantic risks. However, this is the term that manages to capture the dimensions of clinical work within the boundaries that interest us as it refers to embed both the point of view of didactic reflection as the restatement of the positive aspects of the psychologist’s clinical work, which we do not want to lose hold of. The *clinical didactics* sets up precisely this teacher’s action, who, being a psychologist, does not take the risk of overacting, playing the role of a psychotherapist. The psychologist’s action is limited to making the subject-student stride on the individual pole (as a person) and on the collective pole (as a future professional), thus, strengthening his/her capacity to criticize, at the same time, the social reality and himself/herself inserted in this reality.

Considering this wider sense of clinic, Pereira (2012) tells about a guideline or clinical work attitude for which the author brings an explanation that can come closer to what we are approaching here. Pereira’s words (2012, p. 31) assist us in the uphold of what we are explaining here as “clinic” in the broadest sense.

The *clinical guideline of work* induces the subject to think over his/her practices, actions, knowledge in addition to understand phenomena and foster solutions. Such guidance is not an infallible guide to action, but the reference to a constant questioning of situations by the “living creature”, be it the subject or the institution. The clinic in the broad sense is what, before a complex problem, has rules and offers theoretical and practical ways to assess the situation, think about interventions, put them into practice, analyze their effects and “correct the focus” (Pereira, 2012, p. 31).

Finally, we understand that these elements that constitute the practice of clinical didactics, which we have identified in the Educational Psychology teachers’ action, can mainly contribute, in the preparation of this future teacher’s emotional viewpoint together with the preparation based on technical viewpoint, to face their professional future in the everyday life at schools in the contemporary world. But, are there teacher training models that can contemplate these practices? How have the teachers been educated in our country?

## **ON HOW TEACHERS ARE EDUCATED AND THE *CLINICAL DIDACTICS* AS A POSSIBLE BALANCE BETWEEN REASON AND SENSIBILITY IN THIS EDUCATION.**

In terms of theoretical and practical models of teachers’ education, the most widespread are those related to the model of technical rationality, which, according to Diniz-Pereira (2007), is also known as positivist epistemology of practice, for which education

professionals should be those who solve instrumental problems using the selection of the most suitable technical apparatus for specific purposes. Thus, according to this technical rationality model, educational issues are basically technical problems that can be solved by rational theories and procedures from science and the teacher is considered a technician who sets the practice of pedagogical rules.

Schön (2000) criticizes this model, which the author considers inappropriate, saying that the real-world problems are neither so clearly visible nor structurally well designed. Consequently, longs to deconstruct this technical perspective arguing that such training does not provide the necessary creativity to the professional to be able to respond to the different demands imposed by the practice. For the author,

[...] because the only case transcends the categories of existing theory and technique, the professional cannot treat it as an instrumental problem to be solved by the application of one of the rules contained in the stock of professional knowledge. This issue has not been included in the manual. (SCHÖN, 2000, p. 17)

Accepting Schön's (2000) criticism, there is an alternative view of teachers' training, which, according to Diniz-Pereira (2007, p. 256), would be "more descriptive and interpretative than explanatory and predictive", regarded as practical models of teachers' training which emerged from early twentieth century. For Carr and Kemmis (1983), as cited by the author, according to the practical rationality model, educational reality is much too pliable and reflective to allow technical systematization.

Even taking into account that this practical rationality model advances as to overcome barriers posed by the positivist model of teachers' training, there are still considerations that neither of them can overcome the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism, which polarizes and is considered reductionist from the viewpoint of the targets of educational processes. This dichotomy discussed here regarding the models of education is also frequent in other aspects, in the field of teachers' training. As Torres (1998, p. 173) points out,

[...] much of what we perceive as 'new trends' in the field of teachers' education, are often old tendencies renewed by the new educational policies, or changes in emphases within a dichotomous and binary vision that understands the educational policy as an option among peers...

Thus, criticizing the dualism in both conceptions, either the technical or the practical, there is still a third perspective that, according to Diniz-Pereira (2007), is the model of critical rationality, which adopts a dialectical view, for which education is *located socially and historically*, it

is a social, political and ultimately a problematic activity, and the main objective of this model is the transformation of the education and the society. This model requires that teachers, besides being researchers, take a critical stance in the researching activity. Much more than considering the teacher as the one who raises issues, the teacher is conceived as someone who does raise problems, but holds a political view on the matter, proposing directions for a critical dialogue.

We also find in Torres (1998) the defense of alternatives for teachers' training that are likely to get closer to the ideas of the critical rationality model, when the author raises the question, debating the teachers' training, asking who this teacher is, arguing that

Today, we witness increasingly a great contradiction: while defending the need for a "new school" and a "new teaching role" in a world increasingly interconnected and complex, with huge social and educational unsatisfied demands, teachers' training decreases and becomes narrower, concerning either the time or objectives, scope, quality and relevance. (TORRES, 1998, p. 180)

And, for the author, there is a gap between the real teacher who teaches daily in the classroom and the ideal teacher who the contemporary educational reforms count with and who are only there in words and paper, because, as she says, this teacher has not been invented yet, therefore, would not exist.

However, Torres (1998) points out that teacher's training does not escape the binary logic that prevails among education policies in our country. There is, in fact, an "eternal chance to choose among peers, which hindered the full and systemic understanding of the problems and educational change" (TORRES, 1998, p. 173). For this author, "a set of old and new tensions, usually understood as 'options', mark the definition in this field." (TORRES, 1998, p. 174). That is when she says that we find paired themes, because they become central themes within the discussions only to be refuted by others that come into play as opponents, such as *ages* versus *training*, *teacher's knowledge* versus *student's learning*, *initial training* versus *in-service training*, *teachers* versus *educational technology*, *general knowledge* versus *pedagogical knowledge* and so on.

In the 80s, according to Freitas (2002), the socio-historical character of teachers' training was highlighted, and advanced conceptions were produced and evidenced in this training, conceptions that sought

[...] overcome the dichotomies between *teachers* and *specialists*, *pedagogy* and *license degree courses*, *specialists* and *generalists*, as the school progressed to the democratization of power relations within itself and for the construction of new collective projects. As an important part of this theoretical construction

from concrete changes in the school field it conceived the education professional who has in their teaching and pedagogical work their particularity and specificity. (FREITAS, 2002, p. 139)

During this period, in the 80s, it could be seen the debates stirring up when approaching syllabus reformulations in the training of teachers for kindergarten and early grades of elementary schools, brought to the field of Pedagogy. In this course, syllabus changes grew and prospered, based on concepts considered most progressive and advanced, proposing new challenges to improve the training of kindergarten teachers and the early grades of elementary school.

For the final grades of elementary school and high school, teacher training is dependent, more significantly, on the Faculties of Education and its post-graduation programs.

Freitas (2002, p. 140-141) states that “the syllabus changes and the movement of the universities has not kept up at the same intensity and at same time, the debates and reformulations developed in pedagogy courses of different IES.” This happens despite the situation that contradicts this result of intense processes of permanent debate, which take place in the universities in the *License Degree Forums*, which are spaces institutionalized and fed to contribute and deepen the debates on teachers’ training leading to overrunning, necessarily the model “3+1”, that was used since the foundation of the License degree courses in the 30’s. Under this model, the students do the disciplines with specific contents from their original course along a period of three years, and only later on and/or in separated they do the pedagogical subjects that are in the syllabus of the License degree course, during the period of one year, which explains why the model is called “3 + 1”.

The structure of the course, based on this model, has been criticized by several authors, such as Diniz-Pereira (2007), Larocca (2000), Almeida et al (2003) among others, mainly because it does not provide a link between the theoretical and practical aspects of this training and also because it considers the teacher not more than a single knowledge broadcaster. When these authors analyze the teacher’s training in the License degree courses, suggest that there should be an integration between the specific content with the pedagogical and the interrelation between theory and practice, as one of the possible alternatives to overshoot the model “3 + 1”.

Since the Law of Directives and Basis for National Education (LDBEN) 1996, according to Diniz-Pereira (2007), publications and discussions were incited and added “new questions for old problems”, bringing requirements and effective changes that have been marking the teachers’ training. However, this author remarks and we, ourselves,

observed that in our doctorate research, that, in fact, this model “3 + 1” has not been fully overcome, once the disciplines of content, under the responsibility of the students’ original courses, precede and even articulate very little with pedagogical subjects under the responsibility of the Faculties of Education. Therefore, this structure, regarded as fragmented in the teacher’s training in the License degree courses, that is the way we see it too, is still present, and consequently, we have checked and emphasized that it would be very convenient and even required, not only to protest, but carry out further studies and reflections about its limits and perhaps revisiting the model, we may redesign it, to fulfil other possible applications.

Regarding the constitution process of a teacher’s training course, André (2010), analyzing this field, based on five criteria suggested by Marcelo<sup>3</sup>, sees already the possibility of advancement and more promising initiatives in the constitution of this field of study, either in the field of research or in movements from scholars specialized in the organization of events, debate forums, which, she says, “has been helping to better define the specific object of teachers’ education and has been contributing to put forward the knowledge in this field “(ANDRÉ, 2010, p. 180). It reaches our interest, because the author believes that the focus of the researches turns to be the teachers’ conceptions, representations, knowledge and practices and that the researchers start to emphasize the teachers’ practices, showing the concept of education as a *continuum* and link them to training experiences.

The *clinical didactics* proposed here goes in this direction. Whenever developed in a different way in the teachers’ training, in the classes taught by psychologist-teachers, in the discipline Educational Psychology, *clinical didactics* would aim to prepare, and prepare emotionally, besides theoretically, the student, future teachers, to deal with risky situations and to be a “good” teacher as stated by the authors. Then it would not be the technical rationality model in teachers’ training any more, neither the practical rationality nor the critical rationality, but it would be necessary to propose, here, a model that was more humane and sensible setting up what we may call as the sensible rationality model (BRAGANÇA, 2009) for the teachers’ training.

For the configuration of a teacher’s training model bearing these characteristics, we believe to be necessary to take into account the affective dimension, that is, the dimension of emotions in the process of teaching and learning, which we consider as essential and believe it should not be under the charge of each teacher’s individual differences.

We emphasize here that despite the significant number of studies that approach this dimension, the affective aspects present

a major difficulty to be studied, starting from its own definition. Affective aspects? Or should we say emotional? For a deeper debate on this issue, it would be important to have a backward-look of the use of these terms, which could better develop ideas about the origin of each of them when related to affective phenomena and applied in researches and studies. However, for this study, we consider enough to mention Pino's<sup>4</sup> statement cited by Leite and Tassoni (2002, p. 116), who points out that "such phenomena [affective] refer to subjective experiences that reveal how each subject is affected by the events of life or, rather, the sense that these events have for him/her".

And, it's also important to remember that Wallon (1961) draws a distinction between emotion and affectivity. Emotion, for him, is the manifestation of subjective states holding organic compounds; therefore, it has a biological character, causing, according to the author, changes in the muscle tone. Meanwhile, affectivity, according to Wallon, involves the emotions - that would have biological origin - added to the feelings - that would have psychological origin. Therefore, in a child's development, framed by Wallon, affectivity appears only in a later period, when the symbolic elements arise. That's when, the emotions go through changes and are added to the feelings and then make up what is called affectivity.

Here, we bring Dantas (1992), studying Wallon, where we found several notes in that direction. This author presume a trend which she calls "perverse circuit" of emotion: the tendency "to emerge in moments of incompetence, and then due to its structural antagonism with the rational activity, cause a failure even greater" (DANTAS,1992, p. 89).

And yet,

In the interaction between adults and children, whose emotional temperature is higher, the results of that "perverse circuit" are felt frequently. For being so rarely approached as a theme, this issue goes to a forefront: *the education of emotion must be included among the purposes of the pedagogical action, which implies to know intimately how it operates.* (DANTAS, 1992, p. 89, emphasis added)

If the emotion or the education of emotion must be included among the purposes of the pedagogical action, as the author states with "to know intimately how it operates", we can assume here that this should go through the knowledge of how emotion functions, in the teachers. And going further, we believe that in the teachers, since their training, because they will deal with all these phenomena, in their future professional field, that is, in the classroom, with their students, children and adolescents. It seems that the authors who debate the process and development of this emotional aspect, which goes through the

teaching-learning process, do not involve working with the teachers still in their training, regarded here as necessary, to achieve what is proposed by Dantas (1992) as “to know intimately how emotion operates”.

A fact observed in the classroom during our doctorate degree research illustrates quite well how this dimension has appeared and can be worked on in the License degree Courses. In one of the classes attended, talks about grades were flowing as if the speakers were kidding and, within this atmosphere, the teacher jokes with a student, who had provided an answer not exactly correct, saying she will get a “zero”. It is noticeable that the student shows a quite hurtful expression. Shortly after, the teacher turns back to that student, who had showed to be hurt, as the teacher seems to have grasped the student’s reaction related to the said word - “zero” –and resumes the conversation trying to (re)establish, at another level, the relationship.

In his essay “The Psychology and the teacher” Vigotski (2004) also presents ideas on this relationship that can exist between teacher and student stating about the “old school” (VIGOTSKI, 2004, p. 454), that attributed value to grades, the tests and to the control, and how it distorted the teacher much more than the student. For him, in this text, the teacher was demanded to know his/her object or a program, but then pedagogy became a complex and science-based art and the scientific method now requires from the teacher to be more dynamic and more prone to collectivism, in which the school is also involved. Vigotski (2004, p. 455) then states that

The teacher must live in the school community as an inalienable part of it and in this sense, his/her relationship with the student can achieve such strength, transparency and elevation that nothing similar will be found in the social scale of human relations. But, this is only half of the matter. The other half shows that the teacher also has to reply to an opposite requirement. He/she has to be a teacher up to the end and, at the same time, not only a teacher, but something beyond being a teacher.

This classroom set described here and experienced in the research, among others, placed close together to Vigotski’s words shows what we are naming as distinguished relationship between students and teachers, pointing to both the work with the affectivity dimension, and to a more sensible rationality sensitive and more human rather than technical rationality that prevailed in the “old school”, paraphrasing what Vigotski points out in his text.

We agree with Leite and Tassoni (2002) when they point out that there is the need not only of human and material resources in the school or the need of a pedagogical proposal that addresses to this emotional perspective, but also, fundamentally, we propose



distinguished strategies in the teachers' training which enables that the own teachers also think about themselves within this dimension, self-training, at once, with reason and sensibility, which we believe to be equally required elements in the teachers' training and could frame what we here name *clinical didactics*, a concept that we shall describe throughout the next section of this study.

## IN ORDER TO FRAME THE CONCEPT: SETTING UP THE *CLINICAL DIDACTICS*

To be assisted in the task to delineate the concept of *clinical didactics*, it will be required, initially, to clear out how we understand the relationship between reason and sensibility in the teaching practice. In addition, we shall depart from some theoretical frameworks that deal with this issue and also from other empirical data obtained in the doctorate research carried out by Moukachar (2013).

This articulation between reason and sensibility is found in Campos (2003), in a biographical text about Helena Antipoff (1892-1974), which specifically approaches aspects of this educator's intellectual life. In this text, Campos (2003) emphasizes, the articulation of science (reason) with the practical aspects directed to the social and human world (sensibility) in Antipoff's thought, who had as base for her thinking, in addition to the interactional perspective coming from Geneva, the Soviet social-historical perspective.

About reason and sensibility, the author describes the educator's life, concluding that

The scientific attitude, however, would not be enough to turn the ideas into practice. As noted Abgar Renault (1981)<sup>5</sup>, intelligence and culture should be allied to certain human qualities, such as the ability to arise in the other the wish to collaborate in a collective enterprise. At each stage of her track, Helena Antipoff knew how to match scientific reason and sensibility towards the other in objective proposals, practices, of great social and human extension (CAMPOS, 2003, p. 228).

It is in this perspective that we take hold of the elements brought by Campos (2003), who makes the link between reason and sensibility, described for Antipoff, towards the elements that we search to identify in the action of Educational Psychology teachers in the License degree courses in the research previously referred. We mean to identify this space of more sensible and humane relationships, which focus on the social aspects, between Psychology and Education, where, Antipoff, a psychologist and educator, as has been seen, had already stridden, in 1930.

It is clear how this provides a base for the logic thinking of this text that debates the teaching action of one who, in addition to being

a teacher, is a psychologist and, therefore a worker of emotions and affections, what leads to this sensible rationality model. But, what does it mean to work on the students' emotion in the classroom? In this sense, we seek for the support from Leite and Tassoni (2002), who claim that the act of teaching and learning involves a complicity built in interactions not only of what is spoken, but “grasped by the eyes, the body movement that welcomes, listens to, observes and seeks the understanding of the student's point of view” (LEITE; TASSONI, 2002, p 137).

The teachers, who were the subjects of the referred research, indicate that their track in the teacher's training and professional practice, in Psychology, interfere in the way of thinking and in the relationship with the students, leading them to respond to their questions in a different way and contribute to “help the student more” when he/she emerges as a subject in the classroom.

According to the teachers, this can also occur when, willing to know about how to work with the phenomena, students end up working with their own living questions, leading them to work, at this time, on this subject that comes up replacing the student. Still, they end up saying that it is the collective class that works and they, the teachers, just do the “finishing”. We can theoretically get support from Wallon (1961), to discuss this feature of using the collective, when he points out that “all of those who observe, reflect or even imagine, abolish within themselves the emotional disorder” (WALLON, 1961, p. 79). It seems that those teachers try to do what this author recommends, about getting rid of the emotion through the effort to make it represented or worked on, in this “finishing” that they mention to do so that the subject-student does not leave their class emotionally shaken.

Regarding the discussions that arise in the collective, but about personal issues, the research points out towards what we call *clinical didactics*, as it refers to the treatment/*clinically* of the collective, reaffirming that “it is the group itself that heals this subject” (a teacher's words), but it is up to the teacher to coordinate or mediate these discussions *didactically*. What rules the teachers' work is the knowledge they have, but “it is... It is the Psychology knowledge that they... it turns out... to be theirs... to be held. It's more than my knowledge as a psychologist... what I want, at the end of the term, is the students themselves to be, at some extent, a psychologist to be sensible enough towards the others' suffering...” (a teacher's words).

The teachers point out that, as psychologists, they build this sensibility together with the student, developing in the student, as we understand, what we may call here sensible rationality, which is the model that they seem to use. Thus, in addition to exercising the sensibility of

the sensible listening, the student also becomes sufficiently sensible, from the psychology knowledge which he/she starts holding. “Because psychology is not only for us to carry out an analysis of the student. It is not that. It is for us to make this... this subject become more sensible towards some one else’s suffering.” (a teacher’s words).

Thus, it is enunciated, with the clearness allowed by the practice, the same clearness that the theory allows Campos (2003) when evoking the need to bring closer reason (science / theory) and sensibility (turning the eyes towards the social and human world) noticed in the track of the educator Helena Antipoff.

That is why we defend not only the reevaluation of these affective aspects in continuous development and their importance in these pedagogical relations, but also the development of educational activities based on this logic of the importance of the socio-affective dimension in the teaching-learning process. We understand that these actions can go on drawing these practices which are pictured *didactically*, and we suggest, here, that they are also pictured *clinically*.

It is worth highlighting that the proposal of a *clinical didactics* does not mean to make didactics *clinical* or *psychotherapeutic*. That will go within the boundaries of a *didactics* in the sense that this clinical aspect will qualify it, adding to the technical training, holding theoretical and practical content, considered here, based on the referred research, equally also fundamental in the teacher’s training.

Therefore, it is not in the direction of making the education clinical that we guide our proposal. The clinicalisation is a recurrent issue and a phenomenon that has been causing controversy and discomfort in teaching and education. This is because treating school issues clinically has been leading to other procedures and explanations, equally controversial and harmful, such as the pathologization and medicalization of the education, and taking hold of an adaptational manner, justify this process, that is, take for granted that biological aspects would be on the basis of pedagogical problems.

We agree with Souza (2008), who argues that the return to that position, which had long been criticized, turns out to respond directly, but mistakenly, the teachers and school managers’ demands. We also understand it as a mistake, as it starts from a reductionist view that disregards the schooling process and the school as a territory where social and individual relations are joined in a network of complex relationships which need to be analyzed as such. It is exactly in this perspective that we are here dealing about a pedagogical practice that, based on a more sensible model will be able to manage this complex network, turning in a more humane way, towards those who are involved in it.

To complete this item and aiming at systematizing the proposal to delineate the practice of *clinical didactics*, we can highlight the elements that could be further developed in the teachers' practices in training courses<sup>6</sup>, starting from the knowledge of psychology and Educational Psychology, namely: i) the development of the ability of a qualified hearing, either for groups of students, or for individuals; ii) the development of the ability to drive sensible look upon their students; iii) the development of the ability to work with groups; iv) the development of the *art of being flexible*, that is, the required flexibility to meet the diversity in the classroom; v) the development of the ability to make the classroom into a living classroom, bringing to the classroom experience - artificial space - a bit of life experience; and yet vi) the ability of mediation through affection, that is, to seek for the totality of teaching and learning, in relationships also mediated by affection and closeness in optimum level, which can be experienced in this relationship.

In order to work on the development of these skills, we have made a deeper investigation in the literature, collected ideas and we have been working, experimentally, with activities in our classrooms, such as asking students to *tell the story of their lives*, *write letters*, take part of *psycho-educational workshops*, *write memorials* and *drawing*, which are contents of the *clinical didactics* and prepare the student, in a distinguished way, to **be** a teacher, in today's world schools. All of this has undoubtedly been contributing to the systematization of the methodology of this distinguished practice, called here *clinical didactics*, in our work fronts, and aims at the development of practical material, for its development as a concrete product that can contribute to the initial and continuing training of teachers in the Basic Education.

## SEARCHING FOR *CLINICAL DIDACTICS* IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: AND THE JOURNEY GOES ON...

We present in this study, a debate about teachers' training and essentially about the contribution of psychological knowledge to this training. We have pointed out problems in the practices and effects in the teaching of this knowledge, and we aimed to understand how Psychology can really contribute to fulfill the needs of the reality that License degree course students – future teachers – will face in their professional life.

We have seen that, beyond the content-form principle, consequently, beyond the articulation of content and form using, for instance, different strategies for this, it is utmost to work on the reality of the professional life of License degree course students in

what it affects them while a person who experiences it now and will experience it in the future. This leads to make the License degree course classroom into a living classroom. However, we know that doing so, the Educational Psychology teachers will face hazards which they will have to deal with, becoming, in our viewpoint, a complex task, as it brings to the scene the subject who lives it, with the issues pertaining to himself/herself. But...

We believe that a training model that includes these practices is necessary and possible. Here we outline some ideas for this model that would rescue the reflection, but still reconcile reason and sensibility, setting a model named *sensitive rationality model*, which we refer to and whose concept we want to go on developing. So far, we started based on the ideas from Campos (2003) and what we found in Bragança (2009), and, based on this, we are defining it as training based on a more sensible pedagogical rationality, that counteracts to the technical rationality in teachers' training and that embraces the multiple dimensions involving the construction of knowledge and life itself. In addition to these theoretical aspects that guide us, we have been looking for the systematization of these ideas and of what sensible rationality would be in our own work as teachers and in our professional practice, proposing to the student's activities that make the subject emerge in the everyday routine of our classroom.

We believe that a contribution from Psychology is necessary and possible, and that using its strategies it is possible to work on the subject and on the demands that arise from that, surrounding their personal training for the professional practice, working on an enlarged scale of the *clinic*, having as base the knowledge of our Psychology, which has theoretical and practical means to assess and intervene in troublesome situations, and, we long to supplement and reaffirm, *didactically*.

Therefore, we believe that it is necessary and possible, based on a distinguished training model as the one we have proposed here, to sophisticate the application of what we have named here *clinical didactics*, which embodies those components or psychological marks that have already been identified in the practices of psychologist-teachers, but were identified, based on other researches, as concrete possibilities also in the practice of other teachers trained in different fields.<sup>7</sup>

We hope this practice may cause effects in the work carried out with subjects that emerges in this classroom context, as students, but with issues that refer to their future as teachers. We hope this practice may contribute to enhance the development of the human being through their experiences and lessons learned in this exercise of reflection. Finally, we hope that this practice may help to ensure

the rescue of the humaneness in the school daily life as we believe that teaching implies “teaching not only the reason, but also the feeling and the will” (SACRISTAN, 2010, p. 87).

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This is the statement from a Basic Education teacher that was extracted from a documentary named *Pro dia nascer feliz* (2006), directed by João Jardim.

<sup>2</sup>Competence and skills are described in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>articles of the National Curriculum Guidelines (BRAZIL, 2011) for the Psychology courses and state “to reassure to the



practitioner the basic mastership of psychological knowledge and the capacity to apply it in different contexts which require investigation, analysis, assessment, prevention and performance in psychological and psycho-social processes and the enhancement of life quality.” (emphasis added) For more information see: [www.portal.mec.gov.br](http://www.portal.mec.gov.br)

<sup>3</sup>The criteria suggested by Marcelo (1999), from which Marli André started this investigation so as to define the steps that are being taken by researchers on the teachers’ training field in Brazil, in order to accomplish these professionals’ autonomy, in summary, are: (1) existence of an own object; (2) application of specific methodology; (3) a community of scientist with their own communication code; (4) integration of participants in researches; and, (5) recognition from managers, politicians and researches of the teachers’ training as a fundamental component in the quality of the educational action. Cf. MARCELO, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. PINO, Angel. *Afetividade e vida de relação [Affectivity and life of relation]*. Campinas: Faculdade de Educação, Universidade Estadual de Campinas. (mimeo)

<sup>5</sup>RENAULT, Abgar. Helena Antipoff. *Boletim do Centro de Documentação e Pesquisa Helena Antipoff* [Bulletin of the Center for Documentation and Research Helena Antipoff], 1981, v.1, p. 33-35.

<sup>6</sup>There are researches being developed that aim to identify these elements as concrete possibilities also from the practice of the *clinical didactics* carried out by teachers holding different field training.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. GARCIA, 2014.

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**Mailing:**

Merie Bitar Moukachar  
Rua Resedá, 299, Santa Efigênia  
Belo Horizonte | MG | Brasil  
CEP 30.240-410

Sergio Dias Cirino  
Av. Antônio Carlos, 6627, sala 4080, Pampulha  
Belo Horizonte | MG | Brasil  
CEP 31.270-010