

Imagining, creating, building together: school psychologist practices in times of pandemic

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Abstract

This article is intended to spur reflections on school psychologist's remote practices and its impacts on the strengthening of collectives in the commitment for the transformation of educational frameworks during the pandemic period caused by the new coronavirus (COVID-19). The propositions of Lev Vygotsky and other scholars from the Cultural-Historical Theory set the theoretical-methodological grounds for the discussions and analysis presented. The data derived from two online interventions – one in Basic Education and another in Higher Education – developed by the authors of this paper during the period of social isolation caused by the pandemic. In both contexts, and as the guiding axis of our discussions, art was used as a mediating tool, a cultural instrument that through aesthetic experience promotes the creation of new meanings and senses of oneself, of others and the world. The importance of the school psychologist to recognize him/herself as a professional whose main role is to invest in the construction, maintenance, and transformation of the bonds established among the different actors inserted in educational contexts was emphasized.

Keywords: Historic-cultural psychology; Pandemics; School psychology.

Based on updated data made available in the COVID-19 Information Sheet, developed by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization in Brazil, on May 9, 2021, 157,973,438 confirmed cases and 3,288,455 deaths caused by COVID-19 were reported worldwide (Organização Pan-Americana de Saúde, 2022). Currently, considering the potential availability of vaccines, the prospects are more encouraging in the world; however, Brazil is still in a difficult situation, as evidenced by the daily

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moving average of deaths which in the first week of May 2021, was above the mark of 2,000 cases per day, which still warns us on the presence of the pandemic (“Brasil Registra Média de 2.092 Mortes”, 2021).

Thus, a specific and widespread measure recommended by the World Health Organization and by the Ministry of Health in Brazil in order to flatten the COVID-19 and death cases curve, and which greatly impacted people’s daily lives, was the social isolation. Since we deal with School and Educational Psychology, we must address the direct and indirect consequences arising from the measures of social isolation in the context of Education, such as, for example, the damage to teaching, socialization and development, as day care centers, technical schools, colleges and universities had to be shut down. The isolation prevented socialization with the extended family, with friends and with the entire support network thus aggravating the vulnerabilities; stress, an impact factor on children’s and adolescents’ mental health; the increase in violence against children, adolescents and women, and the consequent decrease in the demand for assistance and protection services; use of media/screens such as television, computers, tablets and smartphones; increased hunger and food risk in part due to the closing of schools and day care centers in addition to losses in family income, among other factors (Ministério da Saúde, 2020).

In this sense, based on the systematization of knowledge about the implications for mental health of the individuals due to the pandemic, many studies in the field of Psychology have been developed. Among them, we highlight the study by Schmidt et al. (2020), which, through a review of the technical-scientific literature produced in different countries, with a view to summarizing recent developments related to COVID-19, highlighted the diversity of Psychology intervention actions in the context of the pandemic.

Among the demands of impact for School Psychology, currently psychoeducational proposals, such as the systematization and offer of informative materials and the structuring of actions that involve assistance for care in its different dimensions.

It is understood that through the construction of a relational field, it is possible to favor practical help in crisis situations, addressing themes such as the recognition of affective-emotional reactions, characterization of anxiety symptoms and negative emotions, among others.

Therefore, among the references that support our understandings and actions, we position Critical School Psychology, which through theoretical-methodological propositions define the resistance practice of Brazilian psychologists, advocating Education as a field that promotes human development (Souza et al., 2018), even in times of intense psychosocial suffering, such as that we are currently experiencing.

It is based on these considerations that we position our professional performance in the current pandemic situation, which, on the one hand, triggers the profound psychosocial suffering of a nation and on the other hand, shows us a fruitful and complex field for the performance of Critical School Psychology. Once committed to promoting social justice and reducing inequalities, we understand that it is necessary to act in defense of oppressed populations deprived of their basic rights such as health and education. Thus, the urgent demand for relational spaces and dynamics that favors a recursive movement of speaking and listening as a field for the process of reality meaning-making that favors the consciousness expansion and promotes development (Gomes et al., 2018).

The collective construction of a transforming practice: art as mediation in times of crisis

In search of possibilities for the performance of the school psychologist in the framework of pandemic, social isolation and remote and/or hybrid teaching, we ask ourselves: what can school psychologists do away from school? According to what has been shown in different performance contexts of these professionals, the need for a committed attitude to social transformation and social justice is highlighted (Andrada et al., 2018; Gomes et al., 2018; Souza et al., 2018; Souza & Arinelli, 2019). However, how is this reflected in

practice when we are inserted in contexts of inequalities and multiple vulnerabilities that make up Brazilian public education?

This urgency puts us in communion with the scientific understanding advocated by Stetsenko (2016) and Vianna and Stetsenko (2014) with regard to the objectives that should guide research in Education. According to the authors, the construction of a praxis committed to the ideals of a society based on social justice and equality implies the affirmation of a transformation activist position by researchers and, in our case, by psychologists, as well as committed in ensuring the promotion of this positioning in the operating scenarios. To paraphrase the authors, it is about providing access to cultural tools that enable the subjects to configure an activist position to sought-after future collectively in a society that is under constant construction, recognizing, therefore, the participatory-collaborative role of each one and not the mere ability to reproduce or adapt. In this sense, we understand that assuming a transformation activist position implies a continuous act of being-knowing-doing, the present, the past and the possibilities of the future of the context in which we are inserted, thus transforming actual reality (Stetsenko, 2016).

In a dialogue with these assumptions, Souza et al. (2018) advocate the use of art as an instrument of intervention in psychological practices, especially in educational contexts. The central element of analysis in the use of art is the way in which artistic expressions affect the subject (Vygotsky, 1925/1999), since art, as a human cultural production, streamlines the psyche through the sensitive and promotes experiences capable of transforming the way of perceiving, knowing and acting in the world. The artistic work is not seen only as a product of imaginative processes undertaken by the artist, but as a mediating materiality that composes culture and creates the conditions for new possibilities of imagining and understanding reality (Dugnani & Souza, 2016; Souza et al., 2018). It is about this power in the mobilization of affections and, consequently, in the actions of the subjects, that this article defends the power of art as an instrument of the school and educational psychologist, especially in the most complex moments, when dialogue and the construction of spaces relations are hampered, as in the current humanitarian crisis.

The use of art, as proposed by the Russian author Vygotsky (1925/1999), as a psychological instrument, is based on the effect that the works produce on the subjects and as a powerful mediating instrument of dialogic spaces capable of configuring themselves as enhancers of educational collectives, including by remote teaching. The fact that the author advocates the rejection of “[...] the conception of art as ornament” is then ratified (Vygotsky, 1925/1999 p. 329, our translation)⁴. Because it operates in a different logic, outside the logical-rational pragmatic field of everyday life (Duarte, 1986), access to art can and has the function of expanding awareness, even and fundamentally in times of crisis.

Method

What makes it possible to carry out this type of research and analysis is the commitment made to approach the subjects in their social and personal constitutions, as well as in the relationships they establish with their context, considering that it is from this relationship that the phenomenon emergence will be possible just like it manifests itself in reality (Souza, 2019). This understanding, in line with the assumptions of Historical-Cultural Psychology, cannot be operationalized using the traditional research paths. Therefore, adherence to the precepts of Qualitative Epistemology – as proposed by Fernando González Rey – has shown not only to be a consistent methodological path, but also a theoretical foundation that contributes to a deeper understanding of the present, as it offers tools and concepts capable of integrating contradictory aspects of reality in a dialectical analysis (González Rey, 2002).

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⁴ In the original text: “[...] a concepção da arte como ornamento” (Vigotski, 1925/1999 p. 329).

Therefore, based on the assumptions anchored in the historical-dialectical materialism and the commitment to know to transform and transform to know, we assume the intervention-research as a dialectical pair supporting the *praxis* of the critical school-researcher-psychologist (Souza, 2019). This, in turn, is constituted by the link between action and investigation and allows us, psychologists-researchers, to enter a field of material and subjective linking, both for the consolidation of indicators for analysis, and, in a more emphatic way, for the establishment of action strategies, aiming at changing processes (Andrada et al., 2018).

Participants

The presentation of the practices developed by psychologists-researchers during the period of the pandemic and the social isolation caused by the new COVID-19 coronavirus are derived from two different educational contexts. The first of them is characterized as an intervention carried out in the context of initial training, linked to the University Extension Project League of Psychology in Health, geared at students of courses in Biomedicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Nutrition and Dentistry. It was constituted, therefore, from the creation of a relational space during the months of May and September 2020, totaling 15 weekly meetings held remotely, through the Google Meet platform, with previously scheduled times and an average duration of 2 hours. In total, the intervention had the participation of 176 students, and the use of different materiality's such as photographs, movie clips, poems and songs, defined as mediating resources for the approach, reflection and dialogues about the demands and needs experienced by students. in the period of the pandemic.

The second context of action, from which the data analyzed in this article derive, concerns the experience of psychologists-researchers working with adolescents from Elementary School II and High School in a state public school located in a city in the interior of the State of *São Paulo*. A total of 22 meetings online were held via Google Meet, with an average duration of 60 minutes, having as main characteristic the use of different artistic expressions – such as painting, sculpture, music and poetry – to mobilize reflections in a space for dialogue for students to express what they were thinking and feeling about the social isolation caused by the pandemic. The meetings took place between May and December 2020 and had the participation of approximately 20 students.

In both cases reported, in Basic Education and in Higher Education, the intervention arose from the demands presented to the psychologist-researchers by the students in each context. These, in turn, are linked to the research group Processes for the Constitution of the Subject in Educational Practices, led by Prof. Dr. Vera Lucia Trevisan de Souza, from the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, Postgraduate Program in Psychology. Constitution of the Subject in Educational Practices has been developing actions in support of public schools and other educational contexts since 2007 and is composed of undergraduate, master's, doctoral and post-doctoral students, in addition to researchers who originated from the group. In the state school in question, collaborative practices have been developed with the entire school community – students, teachers, managers and families – since 2016, and in the above-mentioned higher education institution, since 2015. It is noteworthy that the information expressed in this article is derived from the research projects approved by the Ethics Committee for Research with Humans, assuring compliance with all ethical precepts regarding scientific production.

In addition to the theoretical assumptions that define interventions in different fields, advocating the use of art, in the constitution of the field and space for the re-signification of the subjects involved in the interventions, is the guiding thread that aligns the different actions and that highlights the focus of our actions and discussions, shedding light on possible responses to the latent demands imposed on School Psychology in the context of the pandemic. With the use of mediating materials – music, films, images, paintings, poetry,

drawings, etc. – as a strategy to get closer to the subjects and facilitate the identification and construction of the senses and meanings generated thereby during the intervention process (Souza, 2016; Souza et al., 2018), we consolidated the construction of a collective relational space.

Instruments

Supported by Qualitative Epistemology, as proposed by González Rey (2005), the construction of analysis indicators is aligned with three fundamental principles: (1) the constructive and interpretative character of knowledge; (2) the interactive character of the knowledge process, and (3) the significance of singularity as a legitimate level of knowledge production. According to the author, production of knowledge, based on the historical and cultural understanding of the process of human development, points at an interpretive posture that demands a continuous effort from Psychology to integrate and reconstruct analysis indicators that can only be constituted based on present and dialectical reading with empirical confirmation. In this way, interpreting is a process that advances from the efforts we take to constitute, in the field of senses and meanings, the manifestations of the subjects towards a complex analysis of their condition as social agent.

The information obtained through the different resources was organized and translated by the construction of intelligibility indicators, which advance the understanding of the problem raised by the research. For this purpose, the classification of “pre-indicators” was adopted as an analysis perspective, as described by Aguiar and Ozella (2013) and Aguiar et al. (2015), which refers to an action of prior identification of the inserted words and in a certain way. constant in the participants’ reports, and which, once identified, will guarantee points of convergence. At that moment, these points still considered as “floating” were essential for the “agglutination process of pre-indicators”, so that only then, the actual construction of the research indicators can be carried out and guarantee the elaboration of the research meaning cores.

The construction of meaning nuclei is constituted as an interpretive-constructive action by the researcher, which has its legitimacy when associated with the development of zones of meaning that expand and advance the meaning of the objective launched by the investigative work (González Rey, 2005), and which, based on our research, initially took shape by indicators related to material conditions of life, feelings and emotions as well as the process of social distancing that were experienced by students, and which constituted the basis of the process of meaning their demands and needs.

In line with the principles of CNS n° 580, of March 22, 2018, this research contemplated by the Research Project “Human Development and Humanization: contributions of Historical-Cultural Psychology” and had the prior approval of the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Alfenas – CAAE n° 44531815.2.0000.5142.

Results and Discussion

Mourning in isolation contexts

When the findings of the two practices developed by researcher psychologists were put into dialogue, sharing the numerous known disparities between basic and higher education, but also the similarities in the use of art as a psychological instrument (Souza, 2019) and the pandemics to which both education levels were – and still are – embedded into, the variability of themes raised was multiple. The developed practices were based on the analysis of the human development process in educational contexts and were based on discussions of previous studies, grounded on the systematization of time, context and process triad, as a core of indicators for the understanding of the complex recursion of the process of meaning-making and

resignification of the material conditions of life, of the relational bonds that greatly impact the possibilities of subjectivation of experiences.

In order to understand the dimensions of human development, “[...] considering historical and political elements; social and economic, cultural and individual, rational and affective, material and subjective elements at the same time” (Gomes & Souza, 2021, p. 34, our translation)⁵, at a time when we are all devastated by the continental dimensions and impacts of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, advocacy of Psychology as a field of knowledge of resistance and coping with ethical-political suffering is necessary. What can be evidenced from the analysis indicators, represented in the speeches and expressions of the students, is that the uncertainty and threat posed by the new coronavirus, as well as the difficulty in building a new perception, current and future, of the social context impacted by the excessive number of deaths reported as a result of the pandemic, constitute a source of negative emotions that impact students’ possibilities of action and, therefore, of coping with the current situation.

In the context of Higher Education, some repeated reports among students encompass the intensity of the difficulties currently experienced by them, which were triggered by the relationship between what they were seeing in the photographs used and what they experienced in their daily lives during the pandemic:

During this period I faced moments never thought of before; [...] my psychic state has never been so intense and aggravated; [...] in addition to the difficulties that everyone is going through, I am very concerned about the financial aspect, we are already depending on government resources (emphasis added).

One of the analyzes resulting from the meetings held with students, based on the use of art, which favored the emergence of sensations about a process of meaning-making of material conditions and re-signification of their experience, took place with the unveiling that mourning time, which alarms us daily, in view of the report of the number of deaths, contamination, the challenges imposed on health services, the direct and indirect impacts on the mental health of the population, also impacts us subjectively. In this moment of intense psychosocial suffering, the intersection of social subjectivity and individual subjectivity, that is, the subjectivation process, is potentiated from affections that paralyze us, given the feeling of impotence, revolt and helplessness, as described again by the students who dialogued and made a relationship between what they were seeing in the photographs used and what they were experiencing in the pandemic’s daily life: “*I feel that I am not living life as I should; [...] I feel like I’m paralyzed, nothing is moving, I always seem to go back to square one, and no one can help [...]*” (emphasis added).

We support our analyses and interventions in the understanding that every social event constitutes and is uniquely constituted by each subject who collectively makes up society – psychosocial unit – and that, therefore, the feeling of social mourning resulting from the pandemic, demands from Psychology a contextual analysis of individual and collective action of resistance and joint confrontation. Therefore, the suffering caused by the pandemic, as a complex psychosocial phenomenon, “[...] is amalgamated with the productive, economic and political bases of a given society, unfolding in the constitution of the individual who lives and feels personally the ills of exclusion/inclusion” (Sawaia & Silva, 2019, p. 25, our translation)⁶.

This perception is evidenced in the ideas of a teenager when the group was talking about the relationship between what they experienced in their daily life and during the pandemic what they observed and felt when looking at the painting *Azure day*, by Yves Tanguy, painted in 1937, the surrealist work brings to the foreground some colorful shapes accompanied by a vast space with little or no shape on the screen:

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⁵ In the original text: “[...] considerando os elementos históricos e políticos; sociais e econômicos; culturais e individuais; racionais e afetivos; materiais e subjetivos, a um só tempo” (Gomes & Souza, 2021, p. 34).

⁶ In the original text: “[...] estão amalgamadas às bases produtivas, econômicas e políticas de uma determinada sociedade, desdobram-se na constituição do indivíduo que vive e sente na carne as mazelas da exclusão/inclusão” (Sawaia & Silva, 2019, p. 25).

I don't know if it's a path or a river. It catches my attention that I can't see the end. [...] The future is the same: we make plans, but we don't know where they will lead us. [...] It varies a lot from the thinking, from the history of each one of us [...]. *We are living in a moment of uncertainty*. In the images too, we're not sure, and we interpret in a way that our head says is right [...] but *I don't see anything that leads to the blue day* (emphasis added).

In this sense, the solidified uncertainties in the material conditions of life, intensified in the context of the pandemic, bring to light the unveiling of the structural social and economic ills of our country, as well as they trigger social constitutions of exclusion and marginalization, in the most varied forms, that constitute the subjectivity of subjects submitted to these conditions. It is from an intentional action of Critical School Psychology, in the promotion of “[...] interfunctional migrations, which can favor the development of more creative ways for the subject to think, feel and act in the world” (Gomes et al., 2018, p. 140)⁷, which we move on to the possibility of expanding the ways of meaning-making of what is experienced. As illustrated in the following lines, in the same movement of appreciating works of art and reflecting on what we see. The work *Narcissus*, by Caravaggio, shows a squatting boy gazing at his image that seems to be reflected:

– It is a boy who looks at his reflection in the future. Regardless of who you are, when you turn 15 and enter high school, everyone charges you. What will you study, what will you work with, and when you say, they ask you, are you sure? And then you charge yourself for that.

– And we don't even know if there's going to be a future. *How to think of a future? You don't know if there is going to be one?* (emphasis added).

When asked, usually, by family members and/or teachers, about the future, adolescents did not always have the opportunity to verbalize what they really felt. And it was facing the challenge of mobilizing more creative ways to recognize themselves and their possibilities of intervention in the world that the use of artistic expressions, in the remote model, allowed the group of students to experience the emotions and affections of everyday life from another logic: aesthetics (Duarte, 1986). This offered them the possibility of feeling the emotions linked to the unpredictability of the present and future of a safe place. Thus, they questioned *Narcissus'* posture, who stares at his own image reflected in Caravaggio's work, to then reflect on the actual questions received from so many others and that constitute their current and future lives, even if they did not have the material conditions to imagine the near future. The experience of artistic appreciation in a collective dialogic space assured them, from the expansion of meaning-making about what each student was seeing and feeling about the works presented, to also broaden the understanding of their own life and shared reality (Souza et al., 2018; Souza, 2019). What can we see when students discussed after reading the poem “*O Tempo*”, by Mario Quintana:

– Enjoy as time goes by!

– I think the poem *tells us to enjoy it as if we were going to die tomorrow*. Look at things in a different way. Enjoy family moments. We don't know when we're going to die!

– We have to enjoy it more. Don't leave things for tomorrow. Learning to look with new eyes, valuing the small moments. *When I get out of this quarantine, I'll enjoy the little moments of life much more* (emphasis added).

And so, if the constitution of the indicators related to time is objectively and subjectively aligned with the process of mourning meaning-making, considering the present material conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the structuring of the indicators triggered show they were also bound to demands

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⁷ In the original text: “[...] *migrações interfuncionais, que podem favorecer o desenvolvimento de formas mais criativas de o sujeito pensar, sentir e agir no mundo*” (Gomes et al., 2018, p. 140).

in the relational field, especially for the expression and reflection of students, provoked into dialogue by researcher psychologists based on a photograph of a girl in a landless movement camp school, in the work *Terra*, by Sebastião Salgado:

Psi⁸: What do you think might hinder her studying?

– I was looking deep in the background, it seems that she is studying alone, she is learning alone. I found her notebook very thin too. *I think I got used to studying with people next to me.* I don't know if I would get used to studying in a room alone. At the beginning [of the pandemic and the interruption of classes due to the sanitary measures adopted] it was quite complicated to get used to: *being on my cell phone all the time, having to interact with teachers through the apps,* having to get used to the living room environment at home, and, did not listen to the questions of others to be able to understand mine. Before I had 7 lessons a day, now I do 1 lesson a day. Everything in me is loose, all this because I don't have anyone studying with me, other people around motivate me. At school, I built friendships with some people, we talked daily and I spent a good part of the day with my friends. The school itself has a very important meaning for me (emphasis added).

In the excerpt above, we can demonstrate the intentionality in choosing the works presented to students with a view at making possible the meaning of the difficulties that students were facing in the new educational scenario. From the structuring of the meetings with a focus on the use of material ties with the intention of favoring new and other fields of meaning-making of material and relational conditions of life, it became possible, as a group, to observe the lack that this group was making regarding the teaching and learning process. The sharing of emotions in the face of needs and demands in relation to insecurity with the professional future and the tensions generated by the need for social distancing from friends and family were identified and discussed, making room for the resignification of these same feelings and perceptions. Thus, it was also unveiled how this different access to education greatly impacted the quality of use of currently possible means of communication, and which pointed to a change in the perception of technology, as described in the following excerpt, which describes the students' discussion based on the photographs mentioning the use of technology:

[...] at first *it impacted me and I cried a lot;* [...] after a while *I managed to change the way I analyze my difficulties* around me; I realized that *technology could help me.* I also needed to learn to deal with *souvenirs and time, a lot of time alone* (emphasis added).

When we refer to one of the indicators significantly present in the expressions of students, which is the insecurity experienced in relation to the professional future, we cannot neglect the direct link established with material conditions. And in this sense, the feeling of uncertainty heightened at this time, and is even marked as a time of mourning, has been generating different emotional reactions that enhance two distinct forms of coping. On the one hand, it was quite clear to us the identification of students who, in the face of uncertainty, reduced their experience field to a minimum, and in these cases, daily difficulties in resuming daily activities were commonly reported. On the other hand, we were also able to see a coping repertoire, which seems to be a mechanism for denying material conditions, imposing a rhythm that is aligned with and demanded by productivity models. See below the students reported what they felt with different works, the last talk referred, especially, to the painting *The Weeping Woman*, by Pablo Picasso:

– I think I could always study more, but the two hours are already an effort!

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⁸ When artistic expressions are presented for the appreciation of the participants in the meetings, psychologists-researchers make use of reflective questions with a view at promoting the expression of the subjects. These moments are signaled, in this article, by the abbreviations "Psi", indicating the moments in which the statements correspond to the psychologists' questions, as opposed to the moments signaled by the symbol "–" that says about the participants' syntheses.

- I think we need to do more. I think that we should focus on one thing and work on that.
- I've been trying to take it one day at a time, I allow myself to cry when I want to and do other things when I'm more excited.
- Me too, I've been trying to take it one day at a time, if I'm more productive, I do more. The next day, I see how my body is and then I do what I want.
- For me it appears as anguish, as she mentioned, this thing about deadlines, because I get anguished about things without a deadline, but at the same time, it brings me the feeling of anguish and hope, which is what I'm feeling now.

In our analysis, the meaning-making process in a split context bears an impact in fragmented experiences. On the one hand, based on the deprivation mode the experience is reduced to responding to the demands arising from the maintenance of the primary needs of life. On the other hand, a way of experiencing exuberance, in line with the impositions of the productivity model, with a focus on individuality and ranking of life experiences in relation to external demands. Experiences that make it impossible, each in its own way, processes of subjectivation of our ways of life, as recursive and complex fields that demand the recognition of the flow of affects involved, so that we can establish an interchange of subjectivation of life. As can be seen in the reports below of student conversations, based on the analysis of the song "The world is a mill", by the Brazilian singer, Cartola:

Despite the frustrations, and knowing that my plan will not work, both in my personal and professional life I accepted and thought it was better to stop suffering and get all the energy for a new plan, based on the conditions I have now; [...] the challenge is to always accept what cannot be changed, without losing the inspiration to keep changing; [...] The thing is to accept that the moment is difficult for everyone, accept that we have to take care of ourselves and take care of those we love, and this is easier when we can share experiences (emphasis added).

We support the defense that it is through and in Education that new signs are intentionally presented and appropriated by students, as a basis for their processes of resignification of ways of thinking and acting, through "[...] ways of relating, to the interaction with singular subjects, who feel, think and carry their stories that are expressed in the ways of being today and projecting themselves into the future. That is, subjects that must be taken in full" (Gomes & Souza, 2021, p. 50, our translation)⁹.

What we can put into evidence from the meetings held, in which the different indicators were triggered, to which we draw here attention to the presence/absence gap, is that through the use of mediating materialities, we, psychologist-researchers, assume an important and necessary action that guaranteed "[...] the encounter of the subject with his/her affections and with his/her peers materialized by the expression of what one feels and thinks" (Andrada et al., 2018, p. 21, our translation)¹⁰. Thus, we had the possibilities to broaden the subjects' understanding on what they felt and thought, as pointed out in the report below in which the students talked based on the analysis of the song "Amarelo", by the singer Emicida:

[...] even if I sometimes feel discouraged and discredited, I keep trying; [...] I have the impression that I don't know how to study, but if I don't, then it's time to learn again; [...] I try to maintain the routine, no more and no less, and I keep walking" (emphasis added).

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⁹ In the original text: "[...] modos de relacionar-se, à interação com sujeitos singulares, que sentem, pensam e carregam suas histórias que se expressam nos modos de ser na atualidade e de se projetar no futuro. Ou seja, sujeitos que devem ser tomados por inteiro" (Gomes & Souza, 2021, p. 50).

¹⁰ In the original text: "[...] um encontro do sujeito com seus afetos e de seus pares materializados pela expressão do que se sente e pensa" (Andrada et al., 2018, p. 21).

Due to a context intensely experienced through emotions that sometimes paralyze, sometimes extremely and automatically mobilize, added to the fragility of relationships and social contacts, from the impossibility of physical encounters, we were able to evidence the effect of technology on the perception of students about themselves, the others and the world. We understand that, with the social isolation resulting from the pandemic, the use of technologies constituted the main form of access to the outside world. However, when we refer to the dubious forms of meaning of the experiences that were pointed out by the students, what we found is that this same tool that favored access to the relational world also promoted the exhaustion of our physical and emotional stamina, which are so much in demand in the processes of unveiling reality, critical thinking and building coping strategies.

– [student's message in chat] A tired person!

– At first I would say that he would be stepping on his own head and that caused me psychological fatigue! The sculpture represents this, the man is tired, but what tires him is the head itself and he is trying to overcome this by putting his head to the side, stepping on it. The head plays tricks on us all the time and he may be stepping on his head due to the uncertainties of the future. I believe he might be tired of it, and that he might be trying to get over the thoughts trampling on his head.

– He's squeezed.

– Nobody is comfortable that way, twitching, arms, head. He looks tired, in pain.

– It's like the current quarantine situation, living this moment is uncertain! Distance learning is difficult to get used to and we have to adapt to it. And we feel it in the body.

– I feel more tired, I feel more sleepy and lazy in classes for being online. And as I'm alone at home, I don't do anything, then at night I have insomnia.

– Me too! I went to sleep these days it was already 7 am!

– I can't deal with changes so fast and this reflects on the body and mind; it's hard to get used to it.

Psi: Can you divide body and emotion from the psychological?

– Seeing from this side, you can't. One affects the other, so they are interconnected.

The long dialogue above, in which the students talked about the sculpture Adam by Auguste Rodin, illustrates how the impacts of the condition of isolation, subjected to fear and unpredictability, materialize psychosocially in the students' lives. It is from the twisted body sculpted by Rodin that students attribute meaning to the painful process of having their study routines suddenly changed to the condition of apprentice separated from the relationships that configured the educational context. Thus, when we are concerned about the prevalence of indications of the Mental Health theme, in the meetings held, we do not disregard the necessary and urgent discussion of the issue, we just provoke ourselves in the reflection that further analyses about this phenomenon are necessary and will only be possible with an alteration of the paradigm, contemplating the unveiling of political, economic and social structures, which currently have a decisive impact on the possibilities of human development in the context of the pandemic.

The prevalence and intensity of the themes that permeate the debate on Mental Health, and more precisely on the process of mental illness, when accepted in a reduced way and outside the material and social demands of the time of mourning that students are experiencing uninterruptedly throughout the last 12 months, favors the chronification of a psychologizing look, "[...] we witness a subjective emptying in the face of countless options and contradictions in the indifferent every day, mass apathy, adhesion to the system without any criticism, as a survival strategy" (Novaes, 2017, p. 128, our translation)¹¹. However, it is

¹¹ In the original text: "[...] assistimos a um esvaziamento subjetivo face às inúmeras opções e contradições no indiferente cotidiano, apatia da massa, a adesão ao sistema sem nenhuma crítica, como estratégia de sobrevivência" (Novaes, 2017, p. 128).

now that School Psychology, at a time of health crisis, has much to contribute and favor with an intentional action, fruitful experiences for the expansion of the subjects' consciousness, through conscious decision-making of their ethical, social and political issues purposes that involve the profession and its performance.

We consider that our interventions, intentionally targeted, contemplate the time of mourning and a context of isolation experienced, with a view to forming a collective capable of configuring new ways of seeing and feeling for students. It is from the guarantee of these spaces of speech and reflection that the construction of new realities capable of mobilizing the *transform-action*.

Final Considerations

Firm in the commitment to face psychosocial suffering, we advocate the power – and the importance – of art in promoting pauses in everyday life, at the same time favoring the construction of new senses and meanings about what was experienced. Thus, our practices in different educational contexts are based on the effort to understand the Psychology of Art as the effect that the work produces on the subject in expanding the possibilities of meaning-making of the relationships undertaken in the present framework.

To that effect, we advocate that the creation of a fruitful experience for the recognition of the flow of affections, and of all the gear that will enable intentional coping actions by the subjects, is only possible in collective and collaborative experiences, which, on the one hand, if they are not experienced physically, proved to be possible and effective through virtual means. And from our experiences, both in Basic Education and in the Higher Education Institutions, a relational space was created, directed by School Psychology to students in their different contexts. It was through the establishment of relational practices, mediated by art, which configures itself as the social in us that the sense of presence of the collective-collaborative materialized, even in times of absence.

Advocating the use of this psychological instrument in the remote interactions we have been undertaking within the educational contexts in a period of social isolation implies a continuous and insistent bet on the fostering of collective dialogic spaces, in order to promote the expression of subjects and the consequent transformation in their ways of thinking, feel and act. It is worth noting that this investment was also fraught with failures, from the difficulty of student access to the chosen platform, the instability of internet, as well as the lack of instruments to facilitate the access of these students who sometimes participated in the meetings from electronic devices borrowed from other family members in their respective homes. The choice of the artistic expression that could best affect the subjects was not always accompanied by the possibility of online presentation and, also as newly users of this remote instrument, differences were evident about the students' choice.

The challenges announced here are still present while this article is being written, as we remain in a scenario of social, political and economic instability due to the persistent proliferation of the virus and the inefficiency of the State in the elaboration of emergency public policies aimed at education in the country. But it is urgent that we ask ourselves, as professionals committed to the emancipation of education in this country, what can School Psychology do without the school physical space? Even though we still don't have the answer to this complex and important question, art, as a psychological instrument of this professional, has been effective as a great ally.

Contributors

C. GOMES was responsible for the conception and design, analysis and interpretation of data and discussion of results. F. P. MEDEIROS contributed to the analysis and interpretation of data and discussion of results, conception and design. G. S. ARINELLI and P. C. S. V. ZUCOLOTO was responsible for the review and approval of the final version of the article, conception and design.

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