

The importance of a plural curriculum and its effects on teaching-learning processes in the light of gender issues

A contextualização de um currículo plural e seus efeitos sobre os processos de ensino-aprendizagem à luz das questões de gênero

Ludmila Lins Bezerra 

University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Real Village, PT, Portugal.
ludlins_@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article proposes a discussion about the aspects of the curriculum and their possible effects on the learning process based on gender issues. Therefore, the central issue of curriculum analysis and its effects on the learning process requires some questions regarding the structuring of the curriculum and the social changes in this path. The school contributes to this process by mirroring its social relationships in experiences, by privileging some and making others invisible. So, it is through a theoretical and structural reflection that we seek to contribute to a possible practical reflection in the educational field. Thus, this research is about Curriculum Studies and Gender Studies. The research methodology is characterized as qualitative, exploratory and bibliographical. As for the challenges to problematize gender issues in the teaching-learning process, it is concluded that it is necessary to re-signify the school curriculum and teaching practices so that it is possible to deconstruct the barriers characterized by the gender factor.

Keywords: Curriculum. Gender. Teaching-learning.

RESUMO

O presente artigo propõe uma discussão sobre as vertentes do currículo e seus possíveis efeitos no processo de aprendizagem pautados nas questões de gênero. Para tanto, a problemática central da análise curricular e seus efeitos no processo de aprendizagem necessita de alguns questionamentos, relativamente à estruturação do currículo e às alterações sociais nesse trajeto. A escola contribui para esse processo ao espelhar suas relações sociais nas vivências, ao privilegiar umas e invisibilizar outras. É, pois, por meio de uma reflexão teórica e estrutural que se busca contribuir para uma possível reflexão prática no campo educacional. Esta pesquisa situa-se, portanto, nos Estudos do Currículo e dos Estudos de Gênero. A metodologia da pesquisa é caracterizada como qualitativa, exploratória e bibliográfica. Quanto aos desafios para problematizar as questões de gênero no processo de ensino-aprendizagem, conclui-se que se faz necessário ressignificar o currículo escolar e as práticas docentes para que seja possível desconstruir as barreiras caracterizadas pelo fator gênero.

Palavras-chave: Currículo. Ensino-aprendizagem. Gênero.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary scenario, it is possible to point out aspects that indicate cultural diversity, whether by the colour of the skin, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or age group. Along with this diversity, it is possible to verify the (pre-established) demarcations corresponding to the spaces to be occupied. Specifically for this article, we will focus on the gender factor. The existence of barriers built by gender is, most of the time, initiated and reproduced in the school and in its curricula. In this way, it is valid to reflect on the implications of the curriculum, in the different forms of learning mediation in the light of gender issues.

The purpose of this article proposes a discussion about the aspects of the school curriculum and its possible effects on the learning process based on gender issues. It is pertinent to problematize the structuring of the curriculum with a plural perspective within the teaching-learning process. In this way, the manuscript is organized as follows: in the first moment we discuss the construction of the history of the curriculum, in the second moment we bring the reflection on gender in the school space and its barriers and, finally, we bring the theoretical crossing of the genre and curriculum from the sexist education that materializes in the school environment.

It is therefore necessary to analyse, seek to deconstruct and overcome inequalities in gender relations, based on the perception that gendered behaviours are a social construct. In order to do so, we will explain how the curriculum in the field of education was historically structured. It is valid to understand the curriculum and its social, political and cultural crossing in the contexts in which they are developed.

We can even say that there has always been a hidden element of inspiration in the construction of the curriculum – the re-signification of education – the history of the curriculum has reached a stage of revolution that has altered the entire perception of knowledge. The concept of interdisciplinarity came so that there was a communication between them, together with that, it was necessary (and still is) to rethink pedagogical practices and their possible effects on the learning process.

However, the history of the curriculum, as it developed, soon distanced itself from the school space. For example, the boundaries originally demarcated around learning, to make it knowable, proved to be very complex and dynamic.

We are faced here with the fact that we discussed the curriculum, its construction, the relevance of its problematization, but we did not do the same with the school structure.

Late modern societies are characterized by 'difference'; they are crossed by different social divisions and antagonisms that produce a variety of different 'subject positions' – that is, identities – for individuals. (Hall, 2003, p.17)

This leads us to another consideration: the history of the curriculum, although it is itself a creation of culture, and due to practically scientific attitudes, now has to deal with situations that will not be properly included in it. That is, activities that report to race and gender are included in an “extra-curricular” way. These social markers bring cultures, therefore, experiences that can be developed and composed in the lived curriculum.

It is equally valid that some knowledge of these cultures is shared with the subjects who live together, seeking to better understand the society in which they live, respecting and relating to the most varied characteristics and cultures, without being defined as “other” or “different”. The frontier of difference needs to be crossed and re-signified.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The methodology adopted in this article was the bibliography, which according to Gil (2002) is developed based on material already prepared, in specific books and existing articles. As

for the nature, the study can be characterized as qualitative, as it to deepen the discussion on the theme of curriculum, gender and the teaching-learning process. This manuscript can also be considered exploratory, which according to Gil (2002) aims to improve ideas. In this way, the present research is characterized as qualitative, exploratory and bibliographical, and seeks to reflect on the theme already exposed from theoretical references that structuring concepts of the article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A limited and static curriculum in a plural and dynamic society

The curriculum has a broad and complex concept and is the result of several practices, carried out from different perspectives in different situations, involving subjects with their varied experiences. This broad understanding that involves the construction and practice of the curriculum, in most cases, ends up being restricted to a mere document that divides disciplines and theories without taking into account this vast cultural plurality.

In addition to its global understanding, the curriculum encompasses pedagogical disciplines and practices, and here it is important to consider: How has the curriculum evolved in recent decades? What perspectives guide the curriculum today? How do gender relations walk in this curricular evolution?

The curriculum is influenced by social, political and cultural contexts. It is useful to consider that, like education, the curriculum is constantly under construction and has multiple definitions.

The curriculum, despite the different perspectives and the different dualisms, is defined as a project, whose construction and development process are interactive, which implies unity, continuity and interdependence between what is decided at the normative or official level, and at the level of the real plan, or the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the curriculum is a pedagogical practice that results from the interaction and confluence of various structures (political, administrative, economic, cultural, social, school, ...) on the basis of which there are concrete interests and shared responsibilities. (Pacheco, 1996, p. 20)

The history of the curriculum begins in the United States, in the 20th century, where the philosopher and pedagogue John Dewey (1859-1952) problematizes education and launches the principles of the progressive school, in which the child is the central concern of the process and construction of the resume. Based on Dewey's ideas, in 1949, the American educator Ralph Tyler (1902-1994) launched a work that questioned the educational objectives, the organization of experiences and how they were evaluated to know if the objectives were achieved. In his research, Tyler concluded that each process is unique, because each school has its specific experience, the author, therefore, dispensed with the understanding of a unique curriculum (Pacheco, 1996).

Gímeno and Pérez (1989) point out that in the early 1950s there was a remarkable search for curriculum studies, essentially in Tyler's style, where the effects achieved on students are described. However, this understanding of the curriculum had a major change in the education crisis in 1957 relatively linked to the technological and scientific advance with Sputnik¹. From then on, there was a need to emphasize science education based on a curriculum that defines what students should learn in schools. Gímeno and Pérez (1989) defines this vision of curriculum as based on the disciplinary conception of scientific knowledge.

¹The Sputnik space program was created by the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s to prove the efficiency of artificial satellites. For more information: Porto Editora – Sputnik on Infopédia. Porto: Porto Editora. [https://www.infopedia.pt/\\$sputnik](https://www.infopedia.pt/$sputnik)

The relationship of Sputnik to the curriculum is based on the idea that the curriculum in Mathematics was outdated, since the students were not being sufficiently prepared to be “productive and competitive” individuals while Sputnik travelled to the moon (Shoenfeld 1991).

The 1970s saw the construction and discussion of the relationship between curriculum theory and practice and at this moment there was a significant expansion of the opposition of Tyler's Curriculum Theory. Freitas (1998) indicates that the refusals of the tylerian model, the learning-by-objective paradigm and quantitative assessment gave rise to many different theoretical developments.

For the technical theory of the curriculum, limited in the uniqueness of the subject essentially limits the curriculum as a product, organizing the pedagogical practice from a predefined plan. Pacheco (1996, p. 37) states that “the most common concept of curriculum is linked to a structured learning plan centered on contents or students or even on previously stated objectives”.

In this sense, the legitimation of the curriculum takes place through administrative decisions about what the teacher should teach, which is previously determined. In practical theory, the curriculum is seen as a process under construction, defined and carried out by the teacher, in different ways, adapting to the most varied contexts. Pacheco (1996) points out that its legitimacy is procedural and dynamic.

In its critical aspect, the curriculum is seen as the result of a joint action by teachers, who have a critical perception of the learning process, respecting and considering the experiences and identities of the learning subjects.

The curriculum has always been managed and will always have to be managed, that is, deciding what to teach and why, how, when and with what priorities, with what means, with what organization, with what results... But most of these decisions were distant. of the school and the teachers, at a central level, almost limiting the curricular management — the decisions — of the teachers, at the collective level, to the distribution of contents by quarters and the attribution of grades, and, at the individual level, to the planning of their daily classes. (Roldão, 1999, p. 25)

We can see that throughout the 20th century, there were different perspectives regarding curriculum theories. It is pertinent to point out, albeit briefly, this evolution of the history of the curriculum to situate the importance of conceiving a plural curriculum in the teaching-learning process.

Gender: a materialized barrier in school spaces

In general, the school space classifies, shapes and orders individuals according to pre-defined patterns and this ends up strengthening the barriers that divide subjects by gender, race and color. It is valid to consider that the relationship between curriculum and society expresses the relevance of reviewing and rethinking the ways in which relationships involving gender cross this path. It is essential that the curriculum be understood as a set of learning, considered socially existing in a given scenario and that it is the role of the school to organize this set in a meaningful way. It is relevant to perceive the curriculum as a cultural artifact, composed of subjects in their various social and political forms. Generally, what happens is that the curriculum still selects, classifies and limits learning, which directly reflects on the subjects.

The concept of gender, therefore, is based on the differentiation between sex and gender: gender is delineated by the social, historical and cultural construction of differences based on sex. This concept brings the definition that biology is not destiny and no one is naturally male or female, female or male and that such concepts are socially constructed (Carvalho, 2010).

In addition to understanding that gender is constructed as a relational structure between female and male, it is pertinent to consider that this polarized construction represents matrices that categorize subjects in various aspects: attitude, intelligence, etc. This categorization ends up limiting the various possibilities just because they are framed and shaped by the genre. And this ends up causing structuring limitations that go beyond being a boy or being a girl. Gender equality

issues, for example, cannot be scored specifically as a curriculum topic to work on. These issues need to go beyond the formal curriculum, and enter into practices, discourse, looks, and the routine between students and teachers. The issue of gender equality needs to be addressed in a transversal way.

Curriculum and Gender: the problematization of a sexist education

Considering a dialogue between curriculum and gender is an attempt to rethink and deconstruct the naturalization of spaces still divided by gender. Louro (2002) points out the way in which the curriculum participates in the construction of ways of being a boy and a girl, and how they end up being naturalized in different fields.

In order to deconstruct the molds that are culturally and socially established as male or female, teaching practices need to be rethought and recognized as participants in this process of resignification. Issues involving gender cross the construction of a crystallized curriculum, they still see the subjects without considering their experiences and identity.

The curriculum is a place for symbolic representation, transgression, a multicultural power game, a place for choices, inclusions and exclusions, the product of an explicit logic many times, and other times, the result of a 'clandestine logic', which is not always the expression of the will. of a subject, but imposition of the discursive act itself. (Berticelli, 2001, p. 160)

Education, understood as a right for all, should work in a way that is committed to the global development of the subject: social, critical and cognitive. However, what happens in the teaching-learning process, sometimes, is that it is stimulated in a fragmented way, without considering the different social markers and different cultures inserted in the same space.

The characteristics constructed for men and women are developed in the process of socialization and begin even before the subject is born. This socialization process is included in the teaching-learning process where rules on how to behave according to their gender are taught. Meyer (2001) indicates that we learn to be men and women from birth and this learning is processed in different social institutions.

Considering that the sexist education present in the family and school environment ends up leading women to behaviours that refer to the care of the other and of the house, while the boys are stimulated to independence and competitive activities, ends up causing different interests for the choice of the course higher. Nascimento (2014) points to sexist education as one that not only differentiates men from women, but also transforms these differences into inequalities, which are justified by the biological factor.

The school space needs to be recognized and legitimized as an agent of socialization and its role in the construction of values, together with the family. The school needs to seek to promote education based on equality, on inclusion, allowing students to be free in their choices and identities, thus helping to deconstruct pre-established molds. The use of language itself is still predominantly male and still seen as something cultural and unquestionable. Inclusive language is still something that is far from being naturalized in spaces and needs an engagement on the part of teachers to make it possible.

CONCLUSION

It was possible to perceive that sexist education ends up naturalizing and reproducing inequalities in the school space. In this way, it is valid to seek to build an education that aims to develop the human being in a critical and global way, beyond the barriers built by gender. An education based on respect for the most diverse ways of being is a significant step towards making it possible to have a less unequal society.

The social problems that involve gender come from a social construction of femininity and masculinity that has the ways of being configured in it and so rooted, it has an impact on opinions, actions and judgments in the lives of men and women.

Therefore, it is necessary to rethink the dimension given to the curriculum and its impact on society, untying the neutrality of the curriculum is a key point in the search for inequality. It is therefore necessary to re-signify the curriculum and teaching practices so that it is possible to deconstruct the characteristics characterized by the gender factor.

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