

ARTICLE

**COLLECTIVE CREATIVE ACTIVITY: RESISTANCE UNIT OF TEACHING WORK**

**MARIA NIZETE DE AZEVEDO<sup>1</sup>**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6827-9963>

<maria.nizete@unfiesp.br>

**ANA LUIZA BUSTAMANTE SMOLKA<sup>2</sup>**

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2064-3391>

<asmolka@unicamp.br>

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal de São Paulo (Unifesp). Diadema, SP, Brasil.

<sup>2</sup> Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp). Campinas, SP, Brasil.

**ABSTRACT:** In this work, we analyze teachers' imaginative and creative processes in the initial years of schooling based on the Historical-Cultural Theory, mainly grounded in the social work concepts of Marx and the reproductive and creative activities of Vygotsky and his interlocutors. We attempted to answer the question: what evidences the imaginative and creative processes in the teaching activity? The research context encompassed the teachers' work from a school involved in a collaborative university/school project. The analysis of the teaching activities, mediated by the analytical unit "collective creative activity", showed the coexistence of reproductive and creative activities in teaching work. The creative processes emanate from and between prescribed reproductive activities, constituting and constituted by collective

resistance practices. We also point out that an essentially collective creative act, interwoven by elements from the relationship between imagination and reality, emerges from the interrelationship between personal, professional, foreign, and historical experiences, with strong emotional bonds. The collective dimension stands out as a unit of resistance, in which the imagination of each subject is simultaneously sustained by him/her and a source of collective creation. These results advocate for collaborative actions between teachers, inviting them to imagine and create, as the richness of the experience would not be reached through solo teaching work. After all, collective work and teaching authorship, mediated by imagination, are pillars to construct teaching as a human activity, as praxis.

**Keywords:** Imagination and Creation, Teaching Work, Early School Years, Collective Creative Activity, Teaching Relationships.

## **ATIVIDADE CRIADORA COLETIVA: UNIDADE DE RESISTÊNCIA DO TRABALHO DOCENTE<sup>1</sup>**

**RESUMO:** Os processos imaginativos e criadores de professoras dos anos iniciais de escolarização são aqui analisados à luz da Teoria Histórico-Cultural, ancorados, sobretudo, nos conceitos de trabalho social, de Marx, e de atividades reprodutiva e criadora, de Vigotski e interlocutores. Intentou-se responder à pergunta: na atividade docente, o que evidencia os processos imaginativos e criadores? O contexto desta pesquisa abrangeu o trabalho docente de professoras de uma escola envolvida em um projeto de parceria colaborativa entre universidade e escola. A análise das atividades de ensino, mediada pela unidade de análise “atividade criadora coletiva”, mostrou a coexistência das atividades reprodutiva e criadora no trabalho docente, indicando que os processos de criação emanam das e entre as atividades reprodutivas prescritas, constituindo-se e sendo constituidores de práticas coletivas de resistência; apontou também que um ato criativo, essencialmente coletivo, entretido por elementos oriundos da relação entre imaginação e realidade, emerge da inter-relação das experiências pessoais, profissionais, alheias e históricas, com fortes enlaces emocionais. Evidenciou-se ainda o coletivo como unidade de resistência, no qual a imaginação de cada sujeito é, ao mesmo tempo, por ele sustentada e fonte de criação coletiva. Esses resultados levam-nos à defesa de que as ações colaborativas entre as docentes convidam estas para a atividade de imaginação e criação, pois a riqueza do vivenciado não seria promovida por trabalhos docentes isolados. Afinal, o trabalho coletivo e a autoria docente sobre tal trabalho, mediados pela imaginação, são pilares para a construção da docência como atividade humana e *práxis*.

**Palavras-chave:** Imaginação e Criação, Trabalho Docente, Anos Iniciais da Escolarização, Atividade Criadora Coletiva, Relações de Ensino.

## **ACTIVIDAD CREADORA COLECTIVA: UNIDAD DE RESISTENCIA DEL TRABAJO DOCENTE**

**RESUMEN:** En este trabajo se analizan los procesos imaginativos y creadores de los docentes de los años iniciales de educación, basada en la Teoría Histórico-Cultural, anclados, sobretudo, en los conceptos de trabajo social (Marx) y de actividades reproductivas y creativas en Vygotsky e interlocutores. Se intentó responder: en la actividad docente, ¿qué evidencia los procesos imaginativos y creadores? El contexto de la investigación abarca el trabajo de docente de una escuela que participan en un proyecto de colaboración

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con la universidad. La observación de la unidad de análisis “actividad creadora colectiva”, mostró, por un lado, la coexistencia de actividades reproductivas y creadoras en el trabajo docente: procesos creativos que emanan de y entre actividades reproductivas prescritas, constituyéndose y siendo constituidores de prácticas colectivas de resistencia; por otro lado, un acto creativo esencialmente colectivo, entrelazado por elementos provenientes de la relación entre imaginación y realidad, emerge de la interrelación entre experiencias personales, profesionales, ajenas e históricas, con fuertes lazos afectivos. El colectivo se evidenció como una unidad de resistencia, en la que el imaginario de cada sujeto es, al mismo tiempo, sostenido por él y fuente de creación colectiva. Estos resultados llevan a defender que las acciones colaborativas entre docentes invitan a la actividad de imaginación y creación, ya que la riqueza de la experiencia no sería promovida por trabajos docentes aislados. Después de todo, el trabajo colectivo y la autoría docente sobre esta obra, mediada por la imaginación, son pilares para la construcción de la docencia como actividad humana y como praxis.

**Palabras clave:** Imaginación y Creación, Trabajo Docente, Años Iniciales de Escolarización, Actividad Creadora Colectiva, Relaciones de Enseñanza.

## INTRODUCTION

"Have you figured out who I am? [...]  
In the depth I am everyone and everyone is me.  
In the world of science, we will meet!"  
(Excerpt from the "Secret Friend Letter",  
database of the Projeto de Parceria Colaborativa Universidade  
e Escola)

The teachers<sup>2</sup> of the initial years of schooling are impelled to plan an event to welcome a secret friend, a mysterious character. For that, they imagined and created didactic actions with enigmas to be solved by the children, like those described in the epigraph. In the light of Vygotsky and his interlocutors, we analysed these didactic actions to uncover the elements that speak of the imaginative and creative processes of these teachers.

Two underpinnings of this study show its relevance: the theoretical anchor, highlighting the concept of social work, by Marx, and the concepts of reproductive and creative activities, by Vygotsky; and the link of the research with a broad collaborative partnership project between university and school, with actions that involved management and pedagogical work in the search for improvements in education. The relationships built with the teachers at the partner school, interlocutors of this research, date back three years (2019-2022) and, marked by bonds of trust and collaboration, opened the doors of the classroom, place par excellence of their experiences, hence, of their affections and the (im)possibilities of teaching and learning.

To address imagination and creation in the context of the teaching work, in the current situation, sound paradoxical, in our point of view, with emancipatory and liberating potential, due to the serious project of dismantling public education, increasingly explicit, referring to various issues, such as: wages, work conditions, alignment and standardize curricula. To conceive that imagination is at the base of the educational act is to show the essence of humanization in the social being that is the teacher, in view of the dynamics of control over his work. Educating and creating make up a path of resistance to the conditions of alienating work. These concrete conditions of the experience of the teaching work shelter the discussions proposed here, woven in the core of interpersonal relationships, telling us the collective as a unit resistance in the tensions of the creative activity.

## IMAGINATIVE CREATIVE ACTIVITY: MAINSTAY OF THE CREATION OF THE HUMAN WORLD

The labour understood as human productive activity holds in its essence the creative imaginative function, which accounts for the humanization process. According to Pino (2006, p. 49-50), the creative activity, in the historical movement of humanity, gave the direction of evolution of the human species, allowing "human beings to act on nature and transform it according to their own goals and, by the same act, transform themselves".

Such premises call to mind a statement by Karl Marx (1985, p. 149):

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. [...] He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature.

Marx refers to the teleological, productive and transformative character of work as a mediated activity, performed by man in his exchange relationship with nature. In the relations intrinsic to work, signs and instruments are interposed between man and the object in transformation, whose product has in itself materialized the human essence. This materialization is the process by which the totality of the instruments produced bears the human mark; it contains within itself, at one and the same

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<sup>2</sup> We refer to female teachers, as there are no male teachers in the teaching staff of the school where the research took place.

time, the immediate objectification of the work of those who produced it and the cumulative objectification of so many preceding generations.

Any object produced in any period of human history carries human marks, as fruit of the imagination of the one who planned it, which is transferred to future generations. This production justifies the understanding of creation as "a process of historical inheritance in which each succeeding form is determined by the previous ones" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 42). Imagination, production and objectivity constitute the process of creation of the human world.

So far we have referred to labour as human, intentional, collective activity, which sustains the historical and cultural development of humanity. However, the negative side of labour is also situated in this history - the alienation. Angel Pino (2006, p. 51) reminds us that Marx (1985) referred to alienated labour as "the work and creation of men themselves, or rather, of those who historically hold the power to decide the relationship structures of societies". This negativity is not inherent to labour, but to a historical condition. This means that, in the historical and material conditions themselves, both alienation and the conditions for its overcoming are generated. Pino (2006, p. 51) says that it is the dialectic vision, bequeathed by Marx, which enables us to see this reversibility, that there is "behind the negative side of historical events the positive side which hides within it [...] as a dynamic happening, and not as a static event previously determined". We see, in the hidden face of alienating work, labour as human activity - creative work.

This dialectics dimension includes the teaching work, without exempting it from the condition of creative human activity and the condition of historically and culturally alienated work. On the one hand, we admit its potential as "teaching work", as it is called by Smolka (2021, p. 7), moved by a field of mediated relationships, established with and for people, therefore of interpersonal character and, as such, performed in a relationship of approximation to the quality of human activity, or *praxis*.

However, we recognize, on the other hand, in the social and economic dynamics of the current society, the absence of public policies favourable to the viability of a systemic and respected education that is up to its social importance. We consider the constant imminence of the dichotomy conception and implementation, so pressing in the tensions "between the intentions and the possibilities of action of the subjects/teachers and what, being a result of historically established social relations, is interposed - is imposed and at the same time hidden" (SMOLKA, 2021, p. 12). The core of this discussion is nothing but the dissociation between theory and practice, translated into the "experience of this work by teachers", showing, according to Smolka (2021, p. 10), "the difficulties, the inequalities, the contradictions, pointing to the realization of the work inside out".

The possibility of doing this "work inside out" encourages us to persist in defending teaching as a field of potentialities that sometimes hides the historical conditions of creation and alienation, sometimes exposes one or the other, thus composing its daily texture, in its eagerness to occupy school spaces, particularly the classroom, as places of social practices, therefore, as places of production of meanings.

## **IMAGINATION AS A COMPLEX ACTIVITY - THE MAINSTAY OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

Based on Vygotsky (1998; 2009), we assume imagination not only as a psychic function, among others, but also as a complex activity, considering its inter-functional character. Vygotsky (1998, p. 127) says about the possibility of raising the imagination to the condition of "psychological system", considering it as the "real union of several functions in their peculiar relations". In the same work, the author emphasizes the inter-functionality between imagination and language, by saying that

"Speech frees the child from the immediate impression of an object. It gives the child the power to represent and think about an object that he has not seen. The child can also express in words that which does not coincide with the exact combination of real objects or the corresponding ideas. This gives him the possibility to develop with extraordinary freedom in the sphere of the impressions designated by words. (VIGOTSKI, 1998, p. 122).

To free oneself from reality in order to penetrate it more deeply: here is an essential dialectical movement for the imaginative processes, considering that a "deeper comprehension of reality requires a freer attitude of consciousness towards the elements of this reality" (VIGOTSKI, 1998, p. 129). The creation of the new, from the existing, requires the release of the immediately perceived and apprehended, requires that thought exceeds the limits of the surrounding reality, mobilizing new images, new words, created through new connections.

Vygotsky (1998, p. 122-123) also refers to the links between imagination and concept formation at the beginning of the transitional age (adolescence), whose importance is extraordinary in the development of "the most diverse, the most complex combinations, connections and relations", that is, "not only the appearance in itself of language, but the most important crucial moments of development are at the same time crucial moments in the development of child imagination".

Based on these assumptions, Cruz (2011, p. 103) establishes relationships between imagination, language and cognition and concludes that conceiving imagination in such a degree of complexity enhances studies on meaning processes and, thus, converges to the possibility of placing it in a special place in "social and educational practices". These relations are established by Barbosa and Batista (2018, p. 49), when discussing about creativity in the teaching of physical knowledge, in High School. Analyses of student responses led the authors to conclude that "students' creative expression results from the combination of at least two mental functions, imagination and thinking in concepts". Vygotsky (2009, p. 14) emphasizes that imagination

[...] as the basis of all creative activity, is an important component of absolutely all aspects of cultural life, enabling artistic, scientific, and technical creation alike. In this sense, absolutely everything around us that was created by the hand of man, the entire world of human culture, as distinct from the world of nature, all this is the product of human imagination and of creation based on this imagination.

According to this author, in the human behaviour sphere, there are two forms of activity: the reconstitutive, or reproductive, and the creative, or combinatory. The first establishes a tight connection with memory, since it essentially consists in repeating previously created behaviours and reliving situations previously experienced, in his words: "[...] when I make observation drawings, when I write or do something following a certain model, I reproduce only what is in front of me or what I have assimilated and elaborated before" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 12). The brain's plasticity constitutes the organic basis of this activity, explaining why certain experiences are marked or preserved in our memory, which we use to adapt to new situations and solve problems, whose solutions require the reproduction of previously lived experiences and procedures adopted before. Although important, reproductive activity does not meet all human needs, because if human beings were limited only to reproducing past experiences and preserved in memory, they would live in the past, merely repeating what has already been done, without creating anything.

Fortunately, the marks of this experience in the brain do not remain stagnant, but are re-signified and expanded, becoming a source for the realization of another activity, the creative or combinatory activity, "one that combines and reworks, in a creative way, elements of previous experience, erecting new situations and new behaviours" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 14). It is precisely the creative activity that frees us from the past and allows us to move in time and space, to an unknown past, either to a projection of the future.

Vygotsky (2009, p. 15-16) criticizes the belief that creativity is in the lives of only a few geniuses and not all:

We readily acknowledge and easily recognize the role of creativity in the accomplishments of [Leo] Tolstoy, [Thomas] Edison, and [Charles] Darwin, but we typically believe that such creativity is completely lacking in the life of the ordinary person [...] creativity is present, in actuality, not only when great historical works are born but also whenever a person imagines, combines, alters, and creates something new, no matter how small a drop in the bucket this new thing appears compared to the works of geniuses.



So, we are all capable of creating!? Even if we consider favourable and unfavourable material and subjective conditions, as well as the greater or lesser amplitude and richness of imaginative activity throughout development, "creativity is the destiny of all" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 16). This comprehension holds the essence of social equality - it demarcates the humanist perspective on the construction of a new society and on the directions of psychology and its research on human development - that all, without exception, should be seen from their potentialities. As Gonçalves (2019, p. 79) says, this perspective announced by Vygotsky "ends up countering and scientifically invalidating any theory that pretends to defend the dualized and idealized existence of those who are and those who are not able to create".

Pequeno, Barros and Pederiva (2019, p. 210) state that understanding creation as a privilege invalidates "the relational character of existence, in which creation is an attribute of the human being", with radical consequences for the educational sphere, because if "a person believes that he does not create, he cannot believe that he has an active role and responsibility over something that characterises the emergence of the new, which can manifest itself both externally to the world, and internally to himself".

The character of complexity of imagination and the creative activity linked to it is highlighted by Vygotsky (2009) when emphasizing its psychological process, the way it happens and its slow and gradual character. Like every higher mental function, imagination develops from "more elementary and simple forms to more complex ones" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 19). The comprehension of this psychological process goes through the clarification of the four main modes of relationship between imagination and reality.

The first form demonstrates the inexorable relationship between imagination and reality, since reality and previous experience are inexhaustible sources of elements raised, combined, modified, and re-elaborated by the psychological mechanism of imagination, resulting in the composition of the imagined work. This implies considering that there is a relationship of dependence between the imaginative/creative activity and the quantity and quality of previous experience, because it is this experience that constitutes a source of materials for constructions of fantasy.

The second way of imagination's relation with reality, although it reaffirms the existence of the dependency relation between imagination and experience, it is configured as more complex, by dealing with other experiences qualitatively different - the experience of others and the historical experience. Vygotsky (2004, p. 65) distinguishes both experiences:

All our life, work, behaviour is based on the very extensive use of the experience of previous generations, that is, of an experience that is not transmitted from parents to children through birth. We call it historical experience. Next to that must be placed the social experience, that of other people [...]. I have not only the connections that were closed in my particular experience [...], but also the numerous connections that were established in other people's experience.

The third mode of relationship between imagination and reality encompasses the mutual relationship between imagination and emotion, manifested in two ways: in the influence of one's feelings and state of mind on the selection of images to be combined in his imagination process; and in the influence of these images on the expression of those feelings. According to Vygotsky (2004a), emotion composes the psychological system as a higher psychic function and, as such, plays its role in the immanent inter-functional relations of imaginative activity, in its dynamic ways of relations with reality.

The last mode of relationship between imagination and reality amplifies the complexity of this system by articulating the three previous modes in a movement that expresses the "complete circle of creation", translated by the set of actions that make up, so to speak, the human "duplicate experience", as explained by Vygotsky (2004, p. 66):

In the movement of the hands and the modifications of the material, the work repeats what had already been done in the mind of the worker, as similar models of the same movements to the same material. [...] We conventionally know this new behaviour as a duplicate experience.

In this full circle, the imagination, initially in the mental level, "needs to be completed, realized in an artifact, in a work; it must take a form, become a product that can integrate, objectively,

the human production" (SMOLKA, 2009, p. 30). This new artifact, material or symbolic, soon begins to be part of reality, starts to exert influence on all things of this real world, for being endowed with "a new active force" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 30) to modify this reality.

In the "complete circle of the creative activity of the imagination", the various interrelated functions are made evident, whether it is the thought realized in the words, or the emotion emanated in the affections and emotional effects aroused by the aesthetics of creation, or in the mediated attention and in the implicit intellectual and emotional factors that made up the imaginary production of its author(s), from its (their) perceptions and combinations of images until it returns to reality, when it takes shape in a real artifact.

Vygotsky (2009, p. 35) renders the imaginative activity complex when referring to its "intense history" and when saying that the creative act "is usually only the catastrophic act that occurs as a result of a long period of gestation and development the unborn child".

Imaginative activity is conditioned to reality, to certain concrete conditions, in which needs, challenges, longings and desires are generated that drive the imaginative and creative process. At its base, there is a motive force that, for some reason, worries and mobilizes us; behind every creative act there are implicit and explicit intentions that create this motive force, which promotes the search for indispensable conditions, capable of transforming the needs and desires in the psychological movement of imagination itself.

As in a full circle, the process circumscribed by imagination and creation has its beginning in the material and concrete conditions of reality and gains body in the process of human production, taking place in some physical or conceptual product, as Vygotsky (2009, p. 58) emphasizes: "Every product that stems from reality attempts to complete a full circle and to be embodied in reality".

With this proviso, it is intended to reaffirm Vygotsky's (2009; 2018; 2021) postulate in its coherence with historical and dialectical materialism - the social nature of the formation of higher psychic functions, resulting from the conversion of social practices into cultural ones. In short, there is no imagination and creation that are not fruits of social, cultural, and historical processes.

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES: APPROACHES TO HISTORICAL AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM**

For the study of imaginative and creative processes in teaching activity, we approach the three methodological principles proposed by Vygotsky (2021, p. 129): (1) replacement of the "analysis of facts by the analysis of processes", whose "basic problem to be considered becomes naturally the genetic restoration of all occurrences in the development of a given process"; (2) opposition between "the descriptive and explanatory problems of the analysis", so that the challenge of "specifically revealing the true dynamic-causal relations and connections that are the basis of any phenomenon" is fulfilled; (3) need to historically study a phenomenon from its genesis, apprehending it in movement, in the middle of the process of changes.

In line with these principles, we were faced with the challenge of framing the imaginative and creative processes not as isolated facts, but as processes embedded in the dynamics of the constituent relationships of teaching and constituted in it. Although we refer to the creative act as a fact, it became necessary to take it in its movement of production and creative imagination. To do so, some questions inspired us: what is the genesis of certain imaginative and creative processes?; what are their historical and procedural elements?; of these processes, what in fact is perceptible and apprehensible to be taken as a starting point?; and how to overcome the immediately apparent so that we can approach the essence of the phenomenon, in order to "capture its internal logic of operation that corresponds to the essential structure and dynamics"? (MARTINS; LAVOURA, 2018, p. 226). Here is the complexity of this scientific activity.

Another methodological challenge is found in the analysis by units, advocated by Vygotsky (2009a), in contrast to the method of decomposition of the totality in isolated elements, proposed by traditional psychology. But what Vygotsky (2009a, p. 8) and his interlocutors define as unit?

By unity we mean a product of analysis which, unlike the elements, possesses all the properties that are inherent to the whole and, concomitantly, are living and indecomposable parts of that



unity. [...] the living cell, which conserves all the fundamental properties of life, proper of the living organism, is the true unit of biological analysis.

In the methodological and analytical effort undertaken in this investigative process, we propose the collective creative activity as a unit of analysis - the smallest part that possesses the characteristics of the totality of the relationships established among the teachers under analysis in their imaginative and creative processes. As a unit, the collective creative activity contemplates, in an irreducible and indecomposable way, the relations between the activity of each teacher and her personal and professional, external (from others) and historical experiences, besides the emotional links. We pay attention not to the imaginative and creative processes of one or another teacher, but to the dynamics immanent to the countless semiotic relations from which collective production results.

Setting the collective creative activity as a unit of analysis was not a trivial task. Initially, we questioned the possibility of taking the mediated imagination and then the imaginative activity as units. However, despite not disregarding the nature and the social character of the individual activity, we reached the conclusion that the collective creative activity embodies the weaving and the re-elaboration of the countless threads and signs shared by each person involved in the process. The movement created among the teachers, besides sustaining the individual weaving, made possible the interweaving of these threads, that is, the peculiar relationships of the collective creative activity, in an indissoluble dynamic.

The essence of the collective creative activity is condensed in the core of the question that guided this research: in the scope of the teaching activity of early years' teachers, what highlights their imaginative and creative processes?

## **THE CONCRETE CONDITIONS FOR CARRYING OUT THE TEACHING ACTIVITY AND THE COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS OF PROJETO DE PARCERIA UNIVERSIDADE E ESCOLA**

The investigation, the basis of this work, was linked to a collaborative partnership project between a public school, which serves the early years of schooling, and two public universities (Universidade de São Paulo and Universidade Federal de São Paulo), whose intention was to seek improvements for the teaching in these three institutions, from the action in the initial and continuing training of teachers, the relations of teaching in science and mathematics and democratic management.

Over the three years of the project (2019-2022), the actions were focused on and with the school, mediated by collaborative experiences and continuous monitoring of teaching practices, both during presential and remote classes (Covid-19 pandemic). The researchers' actions were focused primarily on the teaching of science and mathematics, areas of training for undergraduate courses at both universities.

In the general context, the teaching of science and mathematics, more specifically in the education network in which the partner school is located, takes place under different conditions. There was a virtual absence of guidelines and incentives for science teaching, unlike teaching in the areas of Portuguese and Mathematics, marked by control and intense pressure for these subjects to be developed according to what is prescribed in the teaching materials provided by the Education Department.

With the strengthening of the ties of collaboration, we became aware of the place that the teaching of science occupied in the pedagogical practices of that school, not only in relation to the processes of literacy in the mother tongue but also about its discredit in relation to the teaching of Maths and Portuguese. There was always a question that mobilized the group: how to articulate literacy in the mother tongue with the other areas; how to make teaching in the various areas a tool with potential to mobilize and support the processes of literacy and production of meaning? These questions led to the constitution of collaborative processes that favoured the planning and implementation of integrative teaching activities - the areas of knowledge were articulated from a particular thematic axis or a triggering situation, with content from a particular area.

The study and reflection forums, held periodically at school and at one of the universities, were places to meet and share knowledge and experiences. The detailed study of the content of the teaching materials, coordinated by the school teachers, enabled us to understand the contradiction that reigned in the teaching process: blindly follow these materials, or take them as teaching support and

create based on their content. Throughout the forums, the complaint most frequently heard was the difficulty in breaking with the limits that these materials imposed and impose on the planning of teaching actions. In these concrete conditions, the impression of authorship/creation marks configured an incessant arena of struggles.

Despite these conditions imposed on the teaching work, many integrative teaching activities were planned and developed in collaboration with partners from universities. For analysis, in this work, we selected the activity entitled "The arrival of the skeleton at school", developed to receive an anatomical model of a human skeleton, acquired with the budget of the funding agency, to which the partnership project was linked.

This choice is justified for showing an event that involved all subjects of the school and for concentrating numerous actions conceived by the teaching collective, which means that all teachers of the school are interlocutors of this research. This event, recorded in conversations, videos and images sent by the teachers, through the WhatsApp platform, occurred during a week, in the period from October 21 to 25, 2019, with actions in the schoolyard, which occurred concomitantly with the actions performed in the classrooms, extending until the end of November.

### **ORGANISATION OF THE ANALYSIS: THE DUPLICATED EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING ACTIVITY "THE ARRIVAL OF THE SKELETON"**

The analysis, allegedly interpretative, procedural and historical, was organized from the articulation of the two plans of the "duplicated experience" of the teachers, in their collective creative activity: the "Roadmap for the arrival of the skeleton" and its realization with the children. Here is its structure: (1) Preamble for the analysis: the planning of the event - the arrival of the skeleton at school; (2) The collective creative activity - the creative act comes to life in the children's joy; (3) About the collective creative activity. For the analysis of the collective creative activity development, we organized it in scenes, for representing representative clippings of the creative act in execution: Scene 1: A giant envelope with a secret friend letter for the children; Scene 2: The secret friend dispatched his suitcase "And where's our friend? He missed the train!"; Scene 3: The secret friend sends an e-mail message; Scene 4: "Just a note from our secret friend arrived!"; Scene 5: "I've arrived!!!! Read the poetry I made for you and guess who I am!". In this article, we analysed only scenes 1 and 5, chosen for containing, with wealth of information, representative elements of the imaginary processes of the teachers.

This analysis was collated with statements contained in videotaped meetings: Meeting\_ATPC (Collective Pedagogical Work Class) (11/19/2019), and with a conversation with two of the teachers (11/1/2021). To preserve their identities, the teachers mentioned in the body of the analysis were given fictitious names.

### **PREAMBLE TO THE ANALYSIS: THE PLANNING OF THE TEACHING ACTIVITY "THE ARRIVAL OF THE SKELETON AT SCHOOL"**

After the anatomic model of the skeleton was acquired, the teachers decided to promote an event to receive it. Teacher Ane reported the following at one of the project meetings at school (ATPC - 19/11/2019):

I [teacher Ane] and Iraí were responsible for planning the reception actions together with the teachers from the two school terms; Iraí developed the themes together with teacher Mira [... Based on the initial idea, Mira developed the script, exploring elements of the mysterious character who would arrive at school, with the desire to meet the students; a mood of suspense was created through clues and tasks to be completed by the classes throughout the week, in order to arouse desires, to stir the emotions of the students; the coordinator Tetê, promptly got involved in the preparation of the resources and was responsible for, every day, bringing the clues and tasks for students; teachers should record, by photographs, videos and supplements, the actions in the classroom, reading, exhibition of videos and discussions.

Ane's described movement already gives us clues for the analysis of the creative activity - the collective nature of creation and its varied intentions. The teacher speaks on behalf of the group. The teachers were committed to the realization of the event, not only great but also imbued with surprise, mystery, desire and powerful emotions. This already tells us about the imaginative capacity of the teachers, the countless signs mobilized for each act of inner language and thought, materialized, at first, in written language, in the "A roadmap for the arrival of the skeleton". In this script, there is the plan of action and division of labour in detail - a didactic action for each day of the week, whose basis of communication and mediation was a particular genre of writing (letter, note, email and poem). The coordinator took on the role of spokesperson for the "secret friend", presenting and animating, giving life and movement to the imaginative and creative activities of the group to which she belonged. These didactic actions come alive when given new meaning by the children. Let's follow the scenes and talk about their contents.

## THE ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTIVE CREATIVE ACTIVITY: THE CREATIVE ACT COMES ALIVE IN THE JOY OF CHILDREN

→ Scenes 1: A giant envelope with a secret friend's letter written on parchment.

On the first day, when the children arrived at the courtyard, where recreation and meals occurred, they were surprised by a giant envelope posted at the top of one of the columns in the enclosure (Figure 1). The children, before sitting down on the floor, stood around the envelope, trying to read what was written on it. Some children read aloud and told the others that the letter was addressed "To the students at the school...", as written on the front of the envelope, in the addressee field; and, on the back, there was the name of the sender: "Secret friend". They also noticed that on the top of the envelope, in the right-hand corner, there was a big question mark.

Figure 1– Giant envelope



Source: Projeto de Parceria Colaborativa Universidade e Escola. data base.

Envelopes symbolize the human experience cultivated by the need to communicate by means of letters kept and conveyed in them. This culture tells us that there is a writing pattern to be followed for the filling of the envelope - on the front, the addressee and, on the back, the sender. Moreover, it is not just any envelope, given the standard format and colours: green and yellow, like the one from the Brazilian Post Office. The teachers thought of another detail: the envelope has a stamp, which cannot be missing when addressing a letter. What did the teachers want to tell us with this additional element of their creation? First, that in human experience, the stamp represents not only the amount to be paid for the mail but also the imprint of a mark on the right-hand corner of the envelope. Second and more important, the mark printed by the teachers - the stamp they created - is the question mark (?), which leads us to imagine and question; But what imagination is embodied in this symbol? We

suppose that it is representative of elements extracted from their personal experiences and from the social experience inscribed in the sign system of the formal Portuguese language.

Question mark is the symbol of curiosity, whether spontaneous or epistemic (FREIRE, 2001); it is the symbol of questioning and search for answers - path par excellence that leads, at the same time, to scientific production within the scope of human history and the production of meanings in the sphere of teaching practices. This symbol may contain its intentions to encourage imagination, to constitute a place for this psychic function in school, because, as Cruz (2011, p. 103) says, in our schools, there is no place for imagination, and, with no place, it "ends up contained, disciplined, which perhaps produces, among other things, knowledges (knowledges?) that go beyond the motivations, desires and needs of children".

And the size of the envelope? Is it the exaggeration "passion" that Vygotsky talks about? This author tells us that the passion for exaggeration, characteristic of the imagination of the child, but also of the adult, has "a very profound internal basis—the influence of our internal feelings on external impressions" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 37). The teachers, in their combinatory processes, lifted the real image of the envelope, in its natural dimensions, and, under the influence of internal factors, distorted these dimensions and re-elaborated them in new dimensions, returning the envelope to reality, in a giant size. They made the new envelope with their own hands, just as they had mentally imagined it. Some internal feeling led the teachers to exaggerate, since "We exaggerate because we want to see things in an exacerbated form, because this exaggeration corresponds to our needs, to our internal state". (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 37).

We also have the letter in this scene. The letter, besides being a writing genre, a curricula content, is also a way to communicate with someone, to say something to someone, to transmit news, experience that makes up the human history and the life story of these teachers. The image of the letter may have been drawn by the impulse of some feeling, which may have awakened from memory some remarkable experience, some emotion arising from good or bad news communicated through a letter. We cannot forget the mutual influence that exists between imagination and emotion.

Well, let's open the envelope and take out the letter! What is our surprise? Instead of finding a letter written on white paper, there was a huge roll of brown paper, or rather a "parchment", the name given by the teachers to the object, the materialization of written language, through which the secret friend communicated with the children. When making this writing support, the teachers tried to produce it based on an imagined model, taken from the historical experience of humanity, more precisely from the history of paper, and from their personal experiences, in turn resulting from their cultural incorporations, from social or other experiences.

How did the teachers know of the parchment's existence if they never handled it? How did its image appeared in their memories to the point of being chosen to compose the collective movement of creative imagination? There is no other place for answers but the previous experience of each one of them, in turn coming from the experiences of others and history. The previous experience and the experience of others enabled them to access the historical experience, recorded and preserved in books or in reference. More than that, it was their imaginative capacities, mediated by their own and others' experiences and by the historical experience that transcended a very distant past and not lived by them, to then not only imagine a new object from an existing one but also to make it real, giving it a role in a didactic action. The parchment, produced by the teachers, is now part of the culture of that school, it is now an object of its history.

Therefore, the new parchment has crystallized not only the teachers' imaginative processes, their combinations and re-combinations of the materials apprehended from reality, but also the imaginative processes and cumulative knowledge of all those who, mobilized by the need to create a support to register and preserve their thoughts and memories, perceived in the young animals' leather the raw material and its transformation process into a writing support; has in itself both the historical image of this new object and the cumulative force of men and women who toiled and suffered in the production of ancient parchments, without forgetting the sacrifice of the animals and the act of sacrificing them. After all, parchment is part of our imaginary, which should be remembered as an object that makes up the memory of human history and, above all, as a product of human labour, which has within it the corporeal force of those who produced and produce it (MARX, 1985).



→ Continuation of Scene 1 - Reading the "secret friend" letter

Finally, we will follow the scene developed in the courtyard, between the pedagogical coordinator (PC) Tetê and the children. As we see in the picture (Figure 2), Tetê is on an improvised stage, with the "parchment" in one hand. The children, seated on the floor, are ready to hear what the pedagogical coordinator must tell them.

Figure 2 - Reading the letter



Source: Projeto de Parceria Colaborativa Universidade e Escola data base.

Here is the dialogue between the PC and the children:

PC: "Good morning, children! We will receive a visit from a friend here at school ... have you seen an envelope hanging? Well, our friend got into the mailing habit and sent us a little letter! Only he wrote the letter on parchment [shows the scroll in one of his hands]."

Child: "What is parchment?"

PC: "Parchment was a letter written on a scroll. Look how big he is! Come on [she opens the parchment, unrolling it over the children. A lot of laughter is heard]."

PC: "Wow, huge. You were inspired, eh!"

PC: "Let's go, 'Dear students, I can't wait to meet you. I'm full of news, I'm excited to share everything with you. My bones are shaking with so much emotion just thinking that soon we will meet. But I need your help. In every school I visit, I get a nice, pretty and nice name. I need you to choose a name for me. Talk to your teacher, coordinator, headmaster and start thinking. Think of a funny name."

PC interrupts reading the parchment and asks:

PC: "Is he funny? I wonder if he's a clown. He wants a funny name. I wonder if he's a clown? Ouch... [children scream euphorically]. Look what happened?" [pause]: "But I missed the train" [raises the pitch of voice and speaks with regret]."

Children: "Ahhhhhhhh... [they speak in chorus]"

PC: "Poor guy, he missed the train [a lot of laughter and shouting is heard from the children]. [Continues reading:] 'I'm going to be a little bit late and I won't be able to introduce

myself as I wanted to, but to make it easier for you to work with choosing my name, I'm going to propose riddles about me'."

PC: "What is riddle, people?" Children: "Charades."

PC: "Short charades, okay? - All week long, I'll be leaving clues as to what I look like. I want to see who is good at guessing. Take care, have fun, and see you later. Signed: Secret Friend'."

PC: "I wonder who this secret friend is. Well, then, we'll wait for the clues he'll send us throughout the week, choose a name for him and try to find out who this secret friend is."

Agreed?

Children: "Yes, yes, yes..."

The letter content, another imaginative and creative act of the teachers, comes to life when interpreted by the coordinator, in her communication with the children. Paraphrasing Vygotsky (2009), thought and imagination marched together in the imaginative and creative activity of each teacher and, together, were performed in the written language that transmitted us the storyline, created collectively. As said by Vygotsky (2009a, p. 409), the "thought is not expressed in the word, but it is realized in it". The elements raised in the imaginative processes of these teachers were combined and recombined by their acts of thought, which means that thought is action, it is movement and, as such, it is an act of production:

Every thought seeks to unify something, to establish a relationship between things. Every thought has a movement, a flow, an unfolding, in short, thought fulfils some function, performs some work, resolves some tasks. This flow of thought takes place as an internal movement, through a series of planes, as a transition from thought to word and from word to thought. (VIGOTSKI, 2009a, p. 409-410).

The written and spoken language fulfills its mediating function in this scene, by telling us about the plot of the story created to announce to the children the arrival of a visitor: the secret friend communicates, in writing, to the children that he is on his way to school, but that he missed the train and, therefore, he will be late, and that, during the time of his trip, he will send riddles so that they, by deciphering them, will gather clues and, with these, they will compose, in their imaginary, the character that will arrive.

The role of spokesperson attributed by the teachers to the secret friend is another aspect that stands out, as the one who speaks on behalf of someone. And he really speaks on behalf of the collective, translated in the inter-relation between the teachers' thoughts and imagination, crystallized in the signs written in the letter and in those signs that mediate the conversation between the coordinator and the children.

It is not necessary to say that there is no element of this plot, of this imaginative construction, that has not been taken from the previous experience of the teachers, mobilized by subjective elements coming from their (good) emotional states, which, besides combining among themselves, combined with the emotional state of the coordinator, apparent in her jokes, during the dramatized reading of the letter. In fact, the emotion entangles the written words of the teachers, which is reflected in the intonation of the coordinator's voice. We can say that language does not perform the thought by itself, but brings out the emotion contained in it, because "the activity of thinking is precisely coloured by emotion and even deeply affected" (CLOT, 2006, p. 26). In this perspective, we identify traces of the interplay between imagination, emotion and thought in several passages of the scene, such as: in the visitor's anxiety for meeting the children; in the tremor of emotion of his bones; in his sadness for the loss of the train; in his desire to have a name "affectionate, very nice and very cool", chosen by the children; in being "nutty" to tell their news to children; in the mood of suspense and mystery created by the riddles, among others.

This emotion intensely colours the thought realized in the voice of the coordinator, in her dramatized reading, by incorporating elements of the teachers' creative activity and appropriating them to compose her imaginative activity, realized, above all, by printing joy not only in the interpretation of the teachers' words but mainly in those created by herself. Moreover, during the reading, in a humorous way, PC invites the children to euphoria and easy laughter: "He wants a funny name. I wonder if he's a clown. Ouch...". The invitation to laughter stood out mainly when she emphasized the expressions "Ouch!" and "poor guy, he missed the train". The first time she says: "But I missed the train", her intonation generated a feeling of regret, transmitted by the children, as they expressed, in chorus, an



"Ahhhhhhhhh...". The collective laughter was aroused with more force when the coordinator, in a mocking tone, tinted with emotion the expression "poor guy, he lost the train". At that moment, there was no one who did not laugh, stimulated both by the intonation of the expression and by the children's response. Laughter was easy for everyone present. But the coordinator did not lose her concentration and immediately resumed reading the letter, to talk about the riddles that would be sent daily by the secret friend.

Another hilarious moment was when the coordinator unrolled the giant parchment over the children: after the fright, the laughter. Could it be that this unfolding of the parchment wanted to highlight the exaggerated size typical of imaginative processes, as mentioned above? Could it have been all agreed between teachers and coordinator? Could it be that, in their imaginative and creative processes, they thought in the following way: "let's make a giant parchment unroll over the children's heads, not only because in children's imagination there is 'passion for exaggeration' but also because we want to attract their attention, stir their emotions, make them smile? It is quite possible! It seems that the collaborative work between the teachers stimulates them to the point of making them think and imagine the smallest details and their effects on the children. The collaboration between them, besides making possible the heterogeneity in the inter-personal relationships, makes possible the combination of singularities inherent to the previous experience of each one, mobilizing them to combine the lived elements with the new ones, ascribing life to the new, even if this new is an image transposed from the past, as is the case of the historical object "parchment".

And the "short charades", as the children say, what is the essence of this element in the teachers' creative activity? What does it represent? Does it express the same as the symbolic representation of the question printed on the envelope? For this last question, we can say yes, of course. The riddles are responsible for the realisation of the teaching objective concerning the construction of a "mood of suspense, of mystery". However, it is a consensus among many studies on imagination, supported by Vygotsky, that the fundamental importance of this psychic function in child development has been relegated in the schooling process (CRUZ, 2011; MENDONÇA, 2018; among others). Thus, it is quite encouraging to interpret that one of the teachers' intentions, with the collective creative activity, is to promote situations that activate the children's imagination. The riddles are implied in the letter: "My bones are shaking with so much emotion just thinking that soon we will meet". This riddle tells children that the secret friend, besides having bones, can get emotional, of thinking and having anxiety, even though the main hint is "My bones".

This was continued for another four days of activities in the school courtyard, all guided by a particular storyline, conveyed by a genre of writing (letter, note, email message, and a poem). On the second day, the children found a suitcase with a note, informing them that the secret friend, although he had missed his train, had managed to dispatch his suitcase. The note also conveyed the riddle of the day, implicit in the song 'Vem dançar com a gente' (Let's dance with us), by the Brazilian group Palavra Cantada. The children sang and danced along to the videoclip projected on a big screen. On the third day, the message arrived via e-mail with more tips and, along with it, a short story by Ricardo Azevedo, entitled 'Se eu fosse esqueleto' (If I were a skeleton). On the fourth day, a note arrived with "icy kisses", with the indication of the animated fantasy film 'Coco' and with the task of writing a note to a colleague, saying what he expected from the Secret Santa. On the fifth day, it was the arrival of the skeleton.

→ Scene 5: I have arrived!!! Read the poem I made for you and guess who I am!

The schoolyard was celebrating! In an atmosphere of euphoria, the children shouted excitedly. The coordinator asked for silence, read a verse from the poem, and continued:

PC: "Have you figured out who I am yet?"

Children: "Nooo..."

Coordinator continues reading:

PC: "You don't have to be afraid!"

I am everyone and everyone is me.  
 I have much to teach and many journeys to prepare.  
 In the world of science, we will meet!  
 Who will come with me?  
 It may seem strange, a skeleton to guide,  
 but for those who are not afraid to ask, you can start!"

Figure 3 - The arrival of the skeleton



Source: Projeto de Parceria Colaborativa Universidade e Escola database.

When the coordinator appears with the skeleton wrapped in a kind of navy-blue cloth called TNT (Fiberbond Trisoft), the children get very excited. They scream even more while the fabric is being removed and the skeleton unveiled. When the children calm down, the coordinator says: "Now that you know our secret friend, don't forget to choose a name for him! In the classroom, you will think of a name for him. We don't know if it's a girl or a boy", at this moment a child shouts: "boy".

In this scene, we are facing more constituent elements of collective creation, this time performed in the language in verses of a poem. As can be seen, there is a mixture of poetry with pedagogical action, a mixture of intention to affect the sensitivity of children, to transcend "the pure materiality of things" (PINO, 2006, p. 68). The sensitive elements are those entangled by emotional aspects that were transposed from the imaginary of the teachers to the imaginary of the children, perhaps aroused by the possibility of fear: "no need to be afraid". Thus, the following questions remain: in the teachers' imagination, which element gave origin to the production of the feeling of fear; what would the children be afraid of: the skull, the ghost? Maybe, because it is common to attribute to the skull and the ghost, associated with the skeleton, the symbolism of this feeling, which is culturally produced and incorporated by children (and adults too) from their cultural experiences, when watching movies or listening to "haunted" stories. The capacity inherent to the human cultural constitution "to symbolize, that is, to create symbols and mean things" (PINO, 2006, p. 67) and to rely on pre-existent meanings and produce new ones makes up the imaginative and creative activity of these teachers and children as well.

For the creation of the aforementioned poem and all other actions of the collective creative activity, it seems that the teachers considered the peculiar characteristics of the imagination of the child at school stage, such as their "taste for tales and fantastic stories", besides the "exaggeration and inaccuracies and changes of real experiences" (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 44), all of them drawn from their professional knowledge and experience. As Vygotsky (2009, p. 44) explains, "childhood is considered the time when fantasy is most developed", which does not mean that children are able to imagine more than adults or that their imagination is richer, although they trust "more in the products of their imagination" and do it with more freedom. Children's imaginative capacity develops throughout the process of their general development, reaching maturity in adulthood. This maturation is linked to the advance of the formation of their psychic functions, equally fundamental, such as perception, memory and, above all, language. But do adults have fantasy? Yes!!! We take the teachers' creative imagination as an example, whose products came from their matured fantasies. This fantasy, materialized in the verses of the poem, tells us the social and personal nature of the imaginative combinations of the teachers, impregnated, for example, in the following verses: "I am everyone and everyone is me"; "I have much to teach and many

journeys to prepare"; "In the world of Science we will meet! It is gathered, in these verses, the rationality of knowledge about the skeleton, as being a set of bones that inhabit the body of all human beings, learned, or taught through this anatomical model in science classes. The first verse presents a dialectical dimension between the totality and the part, between the universal and the particular, by inserting the skeleton in this relation between the vertebral constitution of all human beings and that of an individual. This philosophical character comes from his cultural and scientific contributions, which tells us the complexity of his thoughts and how much this knowledge is a rich source for his imaginative and creative processes. Imagination, perception, thought and conceptual formation march together and are realized with and through the language of verses, whether written, spoken or gestured.

Although short and simple, the poem declaimed keeps the specificities of literary language, unlike the prose language that composed the speech of the letter. According to Vygotsky (2016, p. 336), the common prose speech does not draw attention to the phonetic aspect as it does the speech of the poem, either by the arrangement of words in the poem, either by its decomposition into verses, with its own rhythm and sound, besides arousing our attention "a permanent tension before the elements that manifest here for the first time and are entirely outside the common speech". The teachers, by opting for speech in verse, showed the degree of complexity of their perceptions, making even more complex the collective creative activity - product of their imaginations.

Finally, the secret friend invites the children to a question, to a conversation, and reminds them of their wish to have a name, an identity. Through an electoral contest, organised by the teachers, the secret friend is given a name: "Fox". Only one of the classrooms chose a feminine name, a fact probably explained using masculine gender in all articles and pronouns that referred to the anatomical model: he and etc. It is known of the predominance of the use of "masculine generic" in the Portuguese language, defined by Mader and Moura (2015, p. 33) as "the use of the masculine grammatical gender to denote both genders (men and women)".

In addition to the didactic actions developed in the schoolyard, others occurred in the classrooms. Each action created by a teacher was shared with another, accumulating an infinity of creative acts with content from different areas, especially science and arts. In the end, the anatomical model of the skeleton became a friend of the children, and they started to greet it with hugs and kisses; it started to inhabit the classrooms as a dear visitor and as content for games, research, writing, among other study actions.

## ON COLLECTIVE CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Given the dimension reached by the collective creative activity explained, considering the concrete conditions of implementation of the teaching activity presented, it is worth asking: what mobilised the teachers to create this activity? Vygotsky (2009) asserts that the creation arises when we are faced with a new situation, facing challenges that urge us to create something new to overcome them:

If life around him does not present him with challenges, if his common and hereditary reactions are in balance with the surrounding world, then there will be no basis at all for the emergence of creation. [...] At the basis of creation there is always maladaptation from which arise needs, longings and desires. (VIGOTSKI, 2009, p. 40).

The situation created by the *Parceria Colaborativa Universidade e Escola*, with the acquisition of the anatomical model of the skeleton and the suggestion of holding a big event to receive it, may be one of the elements that provoked collective imagination. However, although this situation has generated needs and longings, assumed by the teachers as challenges to be overcome, these challenges, by themselves, do not answer for all the provocations. The imagination of the teachers was set in motion, which leads us to suppose the existence of other elements, besides these needs and longings, which favoured the collective process of creation. This way, we were instigated to ask: what meanings and senses are condensed in the skeleton, in a way to put it in prominence among so many other materials and resources made available for the accomplishment of the pedagogical work at school; if the skeleton had been taken as a "mere" didactic material, for example, to teach how to name and locate the bones, what would have been the children's reaction: fear, curiosity, both together or a mixture

of feelings? Here it is worth a parenthesis for a recurring memory in our school memories: the skeleton that used to hang in the school cupboard, which would not come out, static, meaningless, without function...; or the common inexistence of the skeleton among the pedagogical materials.

The anatomical model of the skeleton is an artifact built to be didactic, but it transcends the pedagogical instrumentality as it "becomes a character", acquires life, becomes the "secret friend", gains an identity, its own name - "Fox". Other meanings permeate and dynamize the collective creative activity: the fiction becomes real, locus of sharing the imaginary, the imagination collectively experienced; the signs and meanings are produced and interweave artifacts and technical-semiotic resources - the skeleton, the envelope, the letter, the parchment, the poem, the riddles, the multiple forms of language -, which re-dimension the teaching work itself, which gains new meanings in the gestures and art of teaching.

This (re)dimensioning of the gestures of teaching happens in the face of the many adversities facing the forms of institutional control of the teaching work, it is anchored in the shared activity, in the shared goals, which involve and guide the individual actions in the collective work. The power to act of each person, each teacher nourishes this collective and vice versa.

The strength of the collective in the activity analysed, caused the creation of imaginative processes of each teacher, and enabled the "duplicated experience" in the given concrete conditions - planning and its implementation. The individual imaginative and creative processes are not in the appearance of the totality of the creative process, although we know that this dimension of the whole is in the singularity, as well as the singularity is in the whole. The genesis of the imaginary processes of creation, therefore, originated in the imaginary processes of each teacher, anchored in the imaginary processes of another teacher, thus constituting a social network of imaginative activities.

The imaginative activity is social, despite being in the psychic plane of an individual; remembering what is said by Clot (2006, p, 23), from his interpretations of what is social for Vygotsky: "For him, the social was not a collection of individuals. The social is there, present, even when we are alone; it is not outside ourselves, nor only among ourselves, it is in us, in the spirit and body of each one of us". Imagination is social because it is multi-vocal, for gathering the many social and foreign voices that travel through the teachers' experiences, hovering in their memories and thoughts, to meet in the imaginative activity and to glide in the product of creation.

Hence, the provocative genesis of collective creative activity is located, at the same time, in interpersonal relationships and in the social singularity of each teacher's imaginative activity, this activity being driven by external and internal factors. The collective creative activity responds for the combination of heterogeneity of the multiple forms of incorporation of culture and multiple experiences, which supports the collective process of production of meanings, inherent to the emergence of the new. In materializing, the production and the product bring "a new force, which is distinguished by its transforming power in relation to the reality from which it departed" (ZANELLA; ROS; REIS; FRANÇA, 2003, p. 144).

The boosting and transforming character of the collective creative activity under analysis is shown in the conversation held with teachers Ane and Irai. Irai said: "Ane worked on more things, besides that script. Other teachers worked on more things, beyond what Tetê [pedagogical coordinator] was leading, other actions were happening in the classrooms. We lost the dimension.

Following this conversation, we discussed the place that this movement occupied in relation to the tensions between the mechanism of control over the teaching work and the liberation through and for the imagination. For those who watched the various didactic actions unfold and witnessed the dynamism of their execution, there was the apparent impression that, during that week, the compulsory didactic material had been left aside. However, this was not what the teachers said had happened:

Researcher: "Faced with so many external and internal pressures, how did you make space to carry out this movement? [...] How was the use of the didactic material?"

Ane: "We worked together. [...] If we had programmed maths for before break time, we had a normal class. The actions we did, related to the skeleton, happened after recess.

Irai: "So we could do what we had to do. The part of didactic materials was done before recess.

Ane: "Everything went well, because all the teachers were engaged."



Once again, one perceives the power of collaborative work as an invitation to overcome the restrictions imposed by and in the concrete conditions. As Clot (2006, p. 25) says

[...] social world, for Vygotsky, is not a world of restrictions. It is firstly a possible world of subversion of meanings and artifacts and, secondly, a world of unfinished conflicts, in which we can take our place. And precisely because it is unfinished, we can put something of our own into it.

We interpret that this is what happened. The teachers, when they got together, mobilized by a clear intentionality, took their place and were able to create new meanings for the teaching work, performing new forms of joint action. They abandoned complaints that sounded as "common place" (SMOLKA, 2006, p. 101) in their daily pedagogical practices: "there is no time to do something different"; "until such and such day we have to have done until such and such page". At least that week, they made possible, if not the overcoming of the contradictions between reproducing/following the didactic material or embracing the creation, the coexistence between the activities of reproduction and creation. Of course, the reproductive and creative activities coexist in the educational practices of these teachers, sometimes as complements, sometimes as opposites, when the tensions between the authorship over their own work and the obligation to follow the prescriptions hide and even hinder the creative activity, which often emerges in the gaps that open in the reproductive activity.

It is not too much to reiterate that the collective dimension enables the displacement of wishes, needs and achievements from the field of alienation to the field of resistance to alienation, because daring to give wings to imagination and creation is nothing but a thread of hope to weave the lines of the future - the lines of emancipation. After all, the collective work and the teachers' authorship on such work, especially when loaded with imagination, are mainstays for the construction of teaching as a human activity, as *praxis*.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the analysis of scenes 1 and 5 of the teaching activity analysed here - "The arrival of the skeleton at school" -, mediated by the unit of analysis "collective creative activity", we conclude that the imaginative and creative processes of the teachers are evidenced in the language that composed the script planned for the reception of the anatomical model of the human skeleton, at school, and in the several dialogues built among the pairs and with the children, during the event, especially in the communication established between the secret friend and the children; these dialogues are also evidenced in the teaching intentionality, in the objects chosen to compose each didactic action, as well as in the new forms and roles attributed to these objects, when materializing in the reality created by the collective creative activity.

Furthermore, talking about the elements that highlighted the imaginary and creative processes of the teachers goes through the recognition of the imbricated forms of relationship that the imagination establishes, inexorably, with reality, visualized in the scope of the "duplicated experience" of the teachers - the planning and implementation of the collective creative activity. In these two actions, it is visible the materialization of collective imagination in the product of creation in and through language, because, in both, language not only informs and communicates but also "names, identifies, designates; cutsout, configures, establishes relations". (SMOLKA, 1995, p. 19-20).

Through these various forms and functions of language, the historically produced artifacts, the teachers lead us to imagine the amplitude of the many signs that mediated their imaginative and creative processes, the collective authorship, and how much the teachers dared to try to overcome the contradictions imposed on them. Vygotsky (2009, p. 117) clarifies that freedom is the "indispensable condition of any creation". He reiterates this argument by stating that "the basic law of art requires this free combination of the elements of reality" (VIGOTSKI, 2016, p. 358). That said, we reinforce what has already been said about the free flights of thoughts of the teachers in the processes of creative imagination, planned in their collective creation.

The teaching creation was marked by a strong pedagogical intentionality, composed of elements drawn from their professional experiences, which, in turn, were tinged by the experiences of

others, entangled by emotions. Pedagogical intentions mobilize the teaching creation, even if limited to the objectives of teaching the contents of certain areas. It is noteworthy the implicit desire to incite the children's imagination, which encourages us to suppose that, in the school under analysis, a prominent place was forged for the imagination, amidst the tension's characteristic of social and school relationships.

Possibly, this experience is preserved in the memory of each teacher and in the collective work as an important source to project the future, which implies that the collective product has fulfilled its function of humanization and, as such, it may have provided each subject to "overcome their situation, a movement of overcoming their history, a transformation in their feelings and emotions, towards a more emancipatory posture" (MAHEIRIE *et al.*, 2015, p. 60).

Taking this assumption implies saying that the interpersonal relations, inherent to the experiences constituted in the movement created to receive the skeleton, led to the production of meanings that constitute the psychic functions at the personal and social levels. To consider the collective creative activity as a process of significations refers to what was said by Vygotsky (2021) about the reversibility property of the sign. This leads us to suggest that the teachers, by creating a creative movement to enhance the children's imagination, enhanced their own imaginative and creative processes. It is this property of reversibility of the sign that explains why "the word addressed to the other also produces an effect on the one who uses it" (PINO, 2000, p. 59). This is the transforming and self-transforming character of human work, vehemently reiterated by Marx (1985).

Finally, we establish relationships between the teachers' imagination, as an expression of the domain over their own work, and the arena of tensions and contradictions inherent to the concrete conditions of realization of their pedagogical practices. The product of creation obtained by the teachers tells us that there is a path of resistance to alienation being followed, which emerges from the very condition of alienation imposed on them, because, as Pino (2006) said, the condition of alienation is not innate, but historically created, and, as such, it has within itself the ways of overcoming it. This path of overcoming becomes the path of emancipation, without which it will not be possible to break the chains that hinder the course of their own development.

However, we know that this is not only a problem of the teachers of a particular school, that is, it has its place in the political amplitude of the problems of education in Brazil and in the world, whose solution is not in the hands of an isolated group of teachers and researchers. As Vygotsky states (2016, p. 462):

The problems of education will be solved when the problems of life will be resolved. Hence, man's life will become a constant creation, an aesthetic ritual when it arises not from the tendency to satisfy some small needs but from a creative, luminous and conscious outburst. Eating and sleeping, love and play, labour and politics, feelings and thoughts will become objects of creation. What now takes place in the narrow fields of art, later will penetrate all of life and this [life] will become creative work.

Vygotsky spoke of a place, about a revolutionary process that held the banner of hope for the construction of an equal world, with equal possibilities of life and creation for all. Although we are in a place, in a time of hardship and incitement to hopelessness, his words inspire us to see in the collective and collaborative movements established by the teachers, interlocutors of this research, and by many other teachers in other schools, the power of hope and resistance. Create is to resist!

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More information: E-mail: cep@unifesp.br