#### **ARTICLE**

# Collective supervision in academic graduate programs: the pioneering work of Dermeval Saviani

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#### ABSTRACT

The collective supervision of dissertations and theses and the organization of researchers in groups and networks are becoming common praxis in graduate programs in education. Based on literature review and interviews, the genesis of collective supervision in the field is examined in this study, which analyzes the history of the pioneering implementation of this supervision strategy by Dermeval Saviani in the Graduate Program in Education at PUC–SP in the late 1970s. The research sought to learn from these groundbreaking experiences in collective supervision and about their contribution to the creation of a culture for research and education for researchers and supervisors in Brazilian graduate studies.

#### **KEYWORDS:**

academic graduate programs; individual and collective supervision; research groups; Dermeval Saviani.

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#### A ORIENTAÇÃO COLETIVA NA PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO STRICTO SENSU: O PIONEIRISMO DE DERMEVAL SAVIANI

#### **RESUMO**

A orientação coletiva de dissertações e teses e a organização dos pesquisadores em grupos/redes de pesquisa estão se tornando *praxis* corriqueira nos programas de pós-graduação em Educação. Com base em revisão de literatura e em entrevistas, recupera-se a gênese da orientação coletiva na área. É analisado o histórico do pioneirismo na implementação dessa estratégia de orientação, que tem em Dermeval Saviani seu protagonista, quando da sua inserção no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da PUC-SP no final da década de 1970. Com isso, busca-se apreender, nas experiências pioneiras de orientação coletiva, a sua contribuição para a criação de uma cultura de pesquisa e formação de pesquisadores e orientadores na/para a pós-graduação brasileira.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

pós-graduação *stricto sensu*; orientação individual e coletiva; grupos de pesquisa; Dermeval Saviani.

#### LA TUTORÍA COLECTIVA EN EL POSGRADO STRICTO SENSU: EL PIONERISMO DE DERMEVAL SAVIANI

#### RESUMEN

La orientación colectiva de tesis de graduación y de doctorado y la organización de los investigadores en grupos/redes de investigación están resultando *praxis* habitual en los programas de posgrado en Educación. Con base en una revisión de literatura y en entrevistas, se recupera la génesis de la tutoría colectiva en el área. Se analiza el histórico del pionerismo en la implementación de esa estrategia de tutoría que tiene en Dermeval Saviani su protagonista, cuando se insertó en el Programa de Posgrado en Educación de la PUC–SP al fin de la década de 1970. Con ello, se busca aprehender de las experiencias pioneras de tutoría colectiva su contribución a la creación de una cultura de investigación y formación de investigadores y orientadores en el/para el posgrado brasileño.

#### PALABRAS-CLAVE:

posgrado *stricto sensu*; tutoría individual y colectiva; grupos de investigación; Dermeval Saviani.

#### INTRODUCTION

Created in 1951, the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - CAPES) legally assumed the responsibility for organizing and evaluating the stricto sensu postgraduate (PG) programs in Brazil in the end of the 1960s, under law no. 4,024/1961. The first milestone in the field of Education was the creation of PG courses in Education by the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC-Rio) in late 1965, which coincided with the publication of the Federal Council of Education (Conselho Federal de Educação - CFE) Report no. 977/1965. Nowadays, in the Education field alone, 190 programs are currently open, 45 of which are academic master's degree programs, one doctoral degree program (PhD), 49 professional master's degree programs, three professional master's and doctorate degree programs, and 93 academic master's and doctoral degree program. The 55 years of the institutionalization of PG in education can be analyzed from different perspectives, including the metamorphoses that the relationship between advisor and mentee has gone through over time.

When comparing the processes of being a graduate student in the early years of PG stricto sensu in Brazil and in more recent years, one can highlight the different types of pressure on students and their advisors, and what this means in terms of guiding and being oriented. Ours comparisons had two objectives: first, we believe it is necessary to characterize the guiding function by increasing responsibilities that have been incorporated into it. In this scenario, the collective — along with the individual — orientation gains ground and starts being discussed. For some advisors, in the face of so many demands, collective guidance is not a choice, but a solution (Bianchetti, 2010, 2019a). In collective guiding, there is room for coorientation, which means that researchers and graduate students, in different stages of training and performance (Halse, 2011; Mussi and Giordani, 2017), help each other in a way that enhances process and results. Although not the only or the main justification for a research group/network, it is, undoubtedly, one of the possible actions in a universe so full of demands. Our second objective was to show that collective orientation is already a routine in PG programs, although it is nor a "created" strategy or action, neither a recent "discovery". This is where Dermeval Saviani's contribution is inserted, with his pioneering experiences in collective orientation in the early years of PG stricto sensu in Education, more precisely in the second half of the 1970s.

When looking for elements to understand the constitution of pioneering experiences on collective guidance in PG stricto sensu, the hints provided by Dermeval Saviani led us to a series of themes and questions about the history of PG and research in Education, as they gain importance and relevance by being rescued and transformed into research projects, once they allow to expand the knowledge about the current situation of PG studies and to better understand the perspectives seen for Education in the beginning of this decade, so full of darkness and attacks.

We believe that the contributions brought to the discussion help fostering knowledge; for example, one gets to understand how the role of the State, initially focused on PG funding matters only, is increasingly standardizing the work and training in this space by defining rules and means of organization, operation and evaluation. The experiences — or, one might say, bold actions — are difficult to implement in this setup. The possibilities of choice in the first PG programs compared to the whole universe available nowadays makes one think. This does not mean that we ignore the problems faced to consolidate the first PG programs in the 1970s and 1980s, but it does point out that time pressures and demands make it difficult to create innovative experiences in postgraduate education, mixing induction and the protagonism of actors involved.

In this article, we organized this discussion in two subitems. In the first one, we sum up and analyze the academic production on the relationship between supervisor and supervising graduate student, with emphasis on the production of the field of Education. In the second subitem, based on an interview conducted with Dermeval Saviani, we revisited his experiences back in the 1970s and 1980s aimed at transforming guidance in a collective space.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVISOR AND SUPERVISING STUDENT: FROM THE FIRST YEARS OF STRICTO SENSU UP TO THE CURRENT SCENARIO

When analyzing the founding legal framework (Cury, 2005) of PG stricto sensu — CFE report no. 977/1965 —, we found three explicit mentions to the function of guiding, centered on the figure of the advisor. In this document, the reviewer summarizes the report in 16 items, and item 11 indicates that the postgraduate student's guidance will be carried out under the responsibility of a director of studies, in these terms: "master and doctorate studies will be characterized by great flexibility, giving ample freedom of initiative to the candidate under the assistance and guidance of a director of studies". From this mention to date, the guiding function gradually moved away from this little seen institutional space to being a rather debated subject, and even an object of research (Mazzilli, 2009; Brandão, 2010; Corrêa, 2012; Baibich, 2016). In this timeframe, there are proposals for transforming guidance into a curricular component in the training of advisors (Viana, 2008; Schnetzler and Oliveira, 2010), including the discussion of their training in short courses or tutorials (Dias, Patrus and Magalhães, 2011), up to the need for organizational/prescriptive frameworks on how to guide (Costa, Souza and Silva, 2014). In English-language academic production, there are more direct mentions, either for debating it or transforming guidance into didactic or pedagogy of guidance (Walker and Thomson, 2010; Halse, 2011) by the systematization of courses to train advisors (Peelo, 2011). There is evidence that, gradually, the guidance starts to appear in the legislation expressed in the National Postgraduate Plans (PNPG) and in the V PNPG (2005–2010), with mentions to the creation of an efficient guidance system as one of the achievements of PG (Brasil, 2010).

However, from whatever angle the guidance in PG is analyzed, it goes from one extreme to the other, that is, how it used to be and how it is today, in general with polarized characteristics (Bianchetti, 2010, 2011). Thus, about the first years of PG, our research shows:

- that students had intellectual maturity and experience in higher education, which, according to them, was a guarantee of autonomy and greater serenity for the students;
- the advisors had a large number of advisees, with different research themes and a reduced number of meetings with them;
- the guidelines were individual, in a "confessional style";
- there was an extended time to complete the graduate program and, in the case of noncompletion, this was exclusively the graduate student's problem;
- there were no requirements for publications or participation in events for both the student and the advisor;
- availability of resources by means of scholarships for students and support for the functioning of the programs;
- the guidance was assumed without "formation" advisors performed their work intuitively —, using their past advisors as a parameter;
- advisors trained abroad, with different traditions in terms of PG and guidance.

On the other hand, when analyzing more recent periods, the list of actions, attitudes and demands that shape and fall on universities on the PG programs is also long, with their coordination, secretariats, advisors and students. We go through a hierarchical spiral, based on which we find subjects involved in PG noting that they increasingly lose material and symbolic advantages by belonging to this training space, given the heteronomy that underlies the management of graduate studies.

In seeking to understand what, how, when and why these changes happened in the organization of PG and guiding, we can list possible explanations. Those of institutional character can be highlighted:

- the paradigm shift in the mid-1990s, from teacher training to researcher-like training (Kuenzer and Moraes, 2005);
- the attribution of organizing PG to CAPES, by means of programs, and, concomitantly, evaluating and financing;
- the expansion in geometrical progression of the number of PG programs and students admitted;
- the need for private higher education institutions (HEI) to invest in PG in order to achieve or maintain university status;
- collection of evaluation and promotion bodies for universities to improve their positions in international rankings;
- inductions for those involved with PG to organize themselves into interinstitutional national and international research groups in order to form research networks.

These changes in the functioning of PG also had a strong impact on the guidance process. In the early years of PG in Brazil, the entry in a program, attendance in the course and success or failure in the final thesis (Report no. 977/1965) was exclusively related to the graduate students themselves. More recently, such aspects started affecting all people involved in the process, with repercussions on the evaluation and promotion of the program. In this scenario, the presentation of the dissertation or the defense of the thesis becomes another step in the escalation of requirements to which both advisor and PG students are subject to (De Meis et al., 2003).

Currently, it is clear that the intention to access PG, to be approved, to attend classes and to finish it or not is a complex process, more than back in the first years, with rituals and steps that the candidate needs to undergo and overtake. After the selection process, the stage that Coulon (2017) calls institutional and intellectual affiliation begins, in which the graduate student learns and understands the student's tasks with regard to each HEI/program and the inclusion or closer articulation with a group's research theme and a line of research they will be part of, aided by their advisors. So, in addition to fulfilling credits, one needs to participate in research group meetings, reorganize their research project, participate in events, publish articles — preferably in coauthorship with colleagues and/or their advisor and research group leader. The greater the internationalization of the research group, the greater the possibilities of resources, funding for travelling, agreements for internships in other institutions, scholarships across the country and abroad. In this context of internationalization, the VI PNPG (2010-2020) refers to guidance when sustaining the "intensification of exchange programs, aiming at sharing the guidance of doctoral students with researchers working abroad in areas of strategic interest for the country, as need be". In the "Recommendations" chapter, the reference to "implementation of double or even triple guidance, according to each case" is highlighted (Brasil, 2010, p. 36).

In parallel, a graduate student needs to shrink their research framework, even though it must be still organically linked to that of the research group/network, then forward their project for qualification and conclude the research, aiming at public presentation (dissertation) or defense (thesis). In turn, the graduate student's trajectory includes events that are not part of the initially planned schedule. Then, certain issues arise: pregnancy, parenting, the need to reconcile employment/work and course attendance, somatic (psychic) illnesses and a series of other events that interfere with studies. Each of the listed situations can be illustrated in references from the most diverse areas of knowledge. In the example of pregnancy/parenting, for example, we can cite the empirical research carried out by Bitencourt (2011) on how doctoral students from the field of Social Sciences experience motherhood in the doctorate period. This is so present in the PG programs that CAPES, due to legal coercion, foresees a period of extension of the scholarship of four months in case of pregnancy/maternity — without prejudice to the graduate student and the program. When it comes to illnesses, there are increasing records of stress, depression (Faro, 2013) and even suicide attempts among graduate students that have been linked to the pressure of deadlines and demands involving what is conventionally called "academic productivism". These aspects, in the area of Education, are still little researched (Bianchetti, 2019b), even though they appear in the news with increasing frequency (Moraes, 2017a, 2017b; Orsi, 2018).

Once the thesis is presented, the ex-graduate student starts thinking about presenting the results at conferences and publishing articles resulting from the dissertation/thesis, or even the full work in a book, in case they want to pursue an academic career. Full theses and dissertations, adapted or not, are rarely accepted for publication. Because of pressure to publish, there are publishers that publish these works for a fee; not to mention the dissemination in geometric progression of options for publication in e-book format. There are many studies that discuss the need and the difficulty of publishing the results of academic research, and they can all be summarized in the motto or mantra "publish or perish" (Waters, 2006). Germano (2008) created a true self-help manual — very useful, fun and qualified — for the "new PhD" to publish their thesis.

This is rather a script that, little by little, becomes routine and is naturally followed. The clashes, however, do not end with the delivery of the thesis, since the new PhD needs to face the struggle to settle as a professor/researcher when not employed in the academic world. In this spiral that knows no point of arrival, the next and possible step, always within the research group/network, is the post-doctoral internship; acting as a new PhD or a "junior" visiting professor in an institution, who is in constant preparation for the race for a spot in HEIs or other teaching/research systems.

On this trajectory, common to graduate students from different programs, we have developed a research aimed at the relationship between advisor and student, with emphasis on the training of the advisor, the process of writing the thesis, research groups and networks as support for the development of dissertations and theses, and strategies triggered by doctoral students of the Education field in their journey of being admitted, attending and completing the course (Bianchetti, 2010, 2011, 2019a, 2019b; Bianchetti and Machado, 2012)1. We had a constant dialogue with several authors of research converging to these themes. In addition to the aforementioned authors, we highlight the contributions of Delamont, Parry and Atkinson (1998) when dealing with the "dilemmas" of the advisor-student relationship, an ever delicate "balance". Walker and Thomson's research (2010) on the importance of the activities of research groups and their collaborative networks for the constitution of a "pedagogy or didactic of guidance" was decisive for studies on the training of advisors. On this matter, Massi and Giordan (2017) conducted a research to identify themes associated with the training of advisors in a wide national and international bibliographic survey. In more

Since the early 2000s, we have been developing research, funded by CNPq, and added new references and theoretical and empirical knowledge based on Bahia Horta (2012, p. 13), who pointed out, in the preface of *A bússola do escrever* (Bianchetti and Machado, 2012): "By valuing and putting in place the noble activity of guidance, in a way rowing against the current, this publication can help break this vicious cycle, thus providing an invaluable contribution to graduate studies in our country."

recent studies, the training and performance of advisors who work in the area of Education, from CAPES (Massi, Carvalho and Giordan, 2020), are assessed. Finally, the empirical research carried out by Halse (2011) is worth mentioning; it was based on the following question: the doctorate is an educational process for the student, but what is its impact on the advisor's learning and practice? The results led him to conclude that the advisor's learning experiences shape their subjectivities and identities: guidance is rather a continuous ontological process of "becoming an advisor".

## DERMEVAL SAVIANI ON COLLECTIVE GUIDANCE IN POSTGRADUATION

In the *Perfis da Educação*<sup>2</sup> (Profiles of Education) collection, Diana Vidal is the organizer of the book *Dermeval Saviani: pesquisador, professor e educador* (Dermeval Saviani: researcher, professor and educator). In the introduction, she expresses herself as follows: "To learn Dermeval Saviani's academic trajectory is, in a way, to watch the very establishment of the history of education in Brazil in the last four decades", emphasizing that, in 43 years dedicated to teaching in higher education, "Saviani was at the forefront of movements that allowed to configure the community of Brazilian historians of education and to rearticulate research interests in the educational arena" (Vidal, 2011, p. 17).

She highlights Saviani's contribution to the structuring of the history of Brazilian education, as an educator, researcher and activist. Based on Ory and Sirinelli (1992 apud Vidal, 2011, p. 18), she explains that "it is necessary to explain him based on his social status and individual will, since individuals do not exist outside the political-ideological pressures of their time". Then, she opens a subitem entitled "From individual work to collective exercise: changes in research practices and in the craft of an Education historian" (Vidal, 2011, p. 21), which connects with our aim. In an interview with Vidal, Saviani explains that, when organizing the History, Society and Education in Brazil group (Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas História, Sociedade e Educação no Brasil — HISTEDBR) group at Campinas State University (Universidade Estadual de Campinas — UNICAMP), he used as a parameter his "previous and very successful experience at PUC–SP. This was where I inaugurated the collective orientation process" (Vidal, 2011, p. 38).

Having these previous aspects inserted in the context of academic guidance and the performance of Professor Dermeval, we can begin to address the issues "guided" by the highlights of his interview.

To our knowledge, of the six professors whose "profiles" were published, in addition to Saviani, three are senior professors — Antôio Flávio B. Moreira, Bernardete A. Gatti and Miguel G. Arroyo — and two were Saviani's advisors — Carlos R. Jamil Cury and Gaudêncio Frigotto —, who participated in the initial "laboratory" of collective guidance in the PG Program of PUC–SP.

### PROFESSOR SAVIANI IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE "BEGINNING" OF COLLECTIVE GUIDANCE

This item was built from excerpts from Saviani's interview, given in December 2016, at his office at the School of Education of UNICAMP. The interview, which lasted two hours, was based on the questions and objectives of the research that we developed on the training and performance of academic advisors (Bianchetti, 2019a). In the end of 2018, the interview was carefully reviewed by Professor Saviani.

We tried to build this subitem within the discursive logic of the interviewee, with comments that aim to stitch together the manifestations focusing on the genesis and the development of collective guidance. The interview began with an explanation of his background and the process of changing from being a student to being a professor. When approaching the subject, through the guiding thread of his education, the professor presented aspects of the history of Brazilian Education and the functioning of the Psychology, Philosophy and Pedagogy courses at PUC–SP, back in the 1960s and 1970s.

Speaking specifically about his graduate training, Saviani explains that it occurred when PG *stricto sensu* was being organized at PUC–SP, under the coordination of Professor Joel Martins (1920–1993): "Professor Joel took over a large number of students, because every university professor without a title — since there was no such requirement then — started to enroll in the institution itself". According to Saviani, this took place via "the regulation that allowed registration, with indication of a PhD advisor, to elaborate a thesis that, once completed, would be submitted to a defense before an examining board constituted by the University". Once the thesis was approved by the Examining Committee, the title of PhD would be awarded. According to him, this was then the current system in Europe, "whose universities also did not have institutionalized graduate programs".

Regarding his admission in the doctorate program and the guidance process in the beginning of the history of PG in Brazil, the interviewee reports how his first meetings with the advisor were, from the first formulation of his doctoral project, entitled *The fundamentals of an education system*: "I presented it to him [advisor], we had a debate and, from the questions he asked me, I realized that there was not much to discuss with him while still having embryonic, emerging ideas". This made Saviani schedule another meeting, when he managed to better delimit the object of his research, exchanging some ideas with his advisor: "but I did not present anything in writing. Afterwards, when I was already working on the writing of the thesis, I felt that I needed to present something more concrete". After writing the introduction to the topic as the first chapter, he managed to start the second chapter (the literature review), and, with about half of the third chapter ready — a more comprehensive, broader piece, since it dealt with the theoretical foundation —, he decided to present the material to his advisor. He describes the meeting as follows:

After I typed it on my typewriter, I took it to Professor Joel, with an unfinished third chapter. He was reading in front of me. At some points, he would say: "people stray from the subject so easily!". He was in the second chapter, in which, referring to the literature review, I cited several manifestations about the concept of system, quoting Anísio Teixeira himself: "I consider the word 'system' equivocal". Then, Professor Joel went into the theoretical foundation, kept reading and, suddenly, turned the page and asked me: "where is the rest?". I said: "I don't have it yet, professor! I got there and I will continue, but the rest has not yet been systematized in a way I can put on paper. I will work on it and bring it to our next meeting". Then he asked, "But how do you plan to continue?". I explained, and he said: "It's good, then, go ahead". It was August 1970 and we scheduled the upcoming appointment to the first week of September 1971, when I would show him the rest of the thesis.

In September 1971, while reconciling his work as a professor with the tasks of a graduate student, he had his third guidance meeting. He delivered the complete thesis, which was read in one night by the advisor. The next day, he was instructed to proceed with the legal procedures and the defense was scheduled. The richness of detail with which he describes this process is important because it allows us to compare the process of guidance in the constitution of PG in Education in Brazil, in the 1970s, with today's. Certainly, the main point is that it is an individual process, marked by the intellectual autonomy of the student. Saviani continues his report, saying that the thesis was defended and, after that, he started to act in post-graduation as both a professor and an advisor. In 1972, along with four colleagues, he organized and put into practice an Education master's degree program at Piracicabano Educational Institute (*Instituto Educacional Piracicabano*). In 1977, he became a member of two programs: PUC–SP and Federal University of São Carlos (*Universidade Federal de São Carlos* — UFSCar).

Then, he makes a long explanation on the duration of the master's and doctoral courses in Education at PUC–SP, which nowadays sounds strange considering all the requirements of Average Training Time, mainly for the master's degree, and the rules for evaluation and funding:

When we created the doctorate program at PUC-SP, we set a four-year deadline for completion, with an extension of up to one year. But we did not reduce the time of the master's degree, which five years was kept; it was clear that the master's degree required more time. The master's is the initiation to the process of training of a researcher. The students admitted came from an undergraduate course, where "research" was not the focus and, even when it was, for example, in scientific initiation grants, they participated in projects conducted by a professor, performing only certain activities and, thus, being limited to one small portion of an overall project. Thus, the master's dissertation would be essentially their first research work. So, a larger number of disciplines was needed to ensure a sound theoretical foundation; it takes a

long time to define the project and explore the empirical or documentary sources, to finally gather the information required. Obviously, attending eight disciplines requires more time than attending just three. When the doctorate program was being implemented, although the master's degree was never required as a precondition by legislation, there was an understanding that students who had done the master's degree were welcome to the doctorate program. That is, in the selection process, the candidate was supposed to present a doctoral project and a copy of their master's dissertation, in order to prove that the master's degree had been achieved. Although a candidate could be admitted without a master's degree, in practice, this was not possible. If it were, the competition would make it very difficult. Having a master's degree would put the candidate in advantage in relation to the others. So, we understand that four years for the doctorate was good enough, since the student attends classes for three subjects in one year — at most, one year and a half. They come in with a thesis project, and already have the master's background, which means previous training, the experience of preparing a paper. [...] The doctoral student's project must be original and they must have the autonomy to carry out their research. With all these requirements, it is feasible to define the maximum time for the completion of the doctorate as four years. In fact, we could show this in the way we worked at the doctorate in Philosophy of Education at PUC-SP, from its conception to its launch, in the second semester of 1977, when the average time for completion of a doctorate was three years to three years and a half.

It interests us in Professor Saviani's narrative the dynamics of guidance that he proposed back then, from the perspective of transforming an individual process — between advisor and student — into a collective process, with the involvement of other advisors and, eventually, other mentoring professors. According to him, the decision to carry out a collective guidance was imposed by the large number of graduate students who wanted to be mentored by him. So, it became a necessity, at the same time as it presented a different-nature problem: the diversity of students when it comes to maturity and intellectual autonomy.

He then ponders that guiding a university professor, with a good background in reading and autonomy, is one thing, but taking on a recent graduate or students with different rhythms of dedication to PG is very different. The "condition" of the graduate student defines the time they will take to complete the master's degree: three or four years. That being said, he points out that "the students progressed in their master's studies at different paces, which made collective work more difficult". One strategy used was the practice of requesting written papers in the middle and at the end of each discipline term, in which the advisor would comment on. Handing those to the group created a balance between collective and individual settings, so he would "provide them with an assessment by writing down the most important remarks on each work. In the following meeting, I would book some

time to comment collectively, with all the students, on the problems found in the works". After this collective action, he would hand back the paper to each student and make himself available to assist them individually. By mentioning that this was his work "signature" with master's students, he highlights that the collective discussion was necessary to pose the common problems that would be of interest to all: "This was an opportunity to draw everyone's attention to certain problems that were not evident in all works, but could be interesting to all". He notes that, although a student did not make certain mistakes that were not seen in all their works, this probably "happened because each written text follows a different path. And it does not mean that if he had followed the same path every time, he would not make the same mistakes". Hence the importance of commenting on problems openly, with all graduate students, showing them what they would need to take into account in their dissertations.

He goes to emphasize that the strategy of collective work has taken on a more systematic character with doctoral students. He explains his statement with a detailed presentation on the organization of the three master's and doctoral programs in Education at PUC–SP: Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, and Supervision and Curriculum. According to Saviani, after the creation of the doctorate program, a curricular component called Programmed Activities was introduced, with a greater number of credits than that attributed to the other subjects: "As a rule, they had three credits each, while 'Programmed Activities' had 12". The professor states that this choice was actually a strategy to value activities other than the conventional disciplines, considering that, in the doctorate, students who were university professors and, thus, had to perform other activities, could organize themselves and attend seminars and congresses or publish papers.

The professor explains that the Programmed Activities were intended to contemplate the production of doctoral students considering the more developed level of their intellectual autonomy, stating that, thus, it converted them "into spaces of collective guidance of thesis projects". This new system was consolidated from the first class of the Doctorate in Philosophy of Education at PUC–SP, which 11 students joined in the second semester of 1977, the year in which Saviani coordinated the PPGE of UFSCar, while continuing with his collaboration at PUC–SP.

When describing the activities carried out at the PG, he explains how it was possible to work at PPGE at UFSCar and, at the same time, dedicate himself to PUC–SP, where he developed teaching and mentoring activities. It can be said that it was in 1977 that the pioneering experience of collective guidance was effectively configured. In the professor's testimony, we can identify his role in the adhesion of graduate students to the proposal, when he reports how the curriculum proposal for the doctoral program at PUC–SP was organized and the possibilities it opened up for the implementation of collective guidance: "the doctoral program was organized with two mandatory subjects: Philosophy of

Education I and Philosophy of Education II". However, Saviani pointed out that students had to necessarily take a third optional discipline. The program offered at least one. As for the others, students could eventually choose an alternative offered by a different program. In the second semester of 1977, two mandatory courses were offered: "Philosophy of Education I and Philosophy of Education II. [...]. The third optional discipline was scheduled for the first semester of 1978 under the name of Theory of Education".

Professor Saviani also mentions the composition of the group of doctoral students and reports how they came to the proposition of what was called collective guidance: "it was a remarkable experience, recognized as such unanimously by all who undertook the postgraduate studies in Education or Progressive Educational Thinking in Brazil". He considers this experience to be the first institutional space opened up to the systematic study of Gramsci's work, and notes that it was not actually his choice to have it placed at the center of this experience, that is, it happened casually. He clarifies: "I had a meeting with them in the second semester of 1977, before the end of the term, to verify the content of the optional discipline for the first semester of 1978". At that meeting, the students made him the proposal to organize a discipline centered around Gramsci, a monographic study of the author, and he thus positioned himself: "If you intend to study Gramsci by yourself, that is, motivated exclusively by the exegesis of his work, do not count on me, for two reasons. First, I don't feel ready to conduct a study of this nature". And, second, he explained to the graduate students that there were more qualified professors out there to work on that discipline in such terms: Carlos N. Coutinho (1943–2012), Leandro Konder (1936–2014), Francisco Weffort and Alfredo Bosi. He made the following consideration on this: "our analytical-reflective effort must focus on the problems we face more than on the authors". And then he proposed what he considered most interesting: "If you intend to study Gramsci to find out to what extent his reflections can help us to better understand the problems we are facing in Brazilian education, then I am ready to do it with you".

Once the students chose the second option, he claims to have accepted the challenge. He took advantage of the vacation period of late 1977 and early 1978 to travel to Europe and "equip" herself with references from and about Gramsci. Then, Saviani complements his narrative by saying that, in March 1978, the Theory of Education subject was launched and had at its basis several works by Gramsci translated into Portuguese and some in the original language, Italian. The graduate students made the commitment to read all the references and write papers, which should be delivered, read, commented on, and then discussed collectively.

At the end of that semester, Professor Saviani returned to PUC–SP full time and took on the coordination of the PPGE. Among the 11 doctoral students who participated in the experience of collective exchanges in his discipline, eight applied to have him advise them. With the group of advisors defined, "within the programmed activities, the guidance meetings were organized weekly at first, then became biweekly, then monthly", he explains. In effect, the planning changed according to specific conditions of each group. Then, a work strategy involving

all doctoral students was defined, with focus on collective work: "the system we adopted envisioned the participation of 11 doctoral students, all working together. Even the three of them who had their own advisors remained with me in the collective guidance process". He points out that each student's thesis was done individually, but discussed collectively with the entire group. The work involved the following dynamic:

We distributed the projects on the scheduled dates and each student should send a paper addressing the stage of their thesis to everyone one week in advance. This text would be read by everyone and, on the day of the meeting, the debate was intense, greatly contributing to the enrichment of each thesis. And it was so dynamic that a sense of responsibility and solidarity arose, which made even those who managed to finish their thesis ahead of time continue to participate in the discussions of their colleagues' works that were still in progress.

We asked Professor Saviani how much he felt he was a "guidance activist", among other aspects, because of: his pioneering initiatives bearing such characteristics, according to his experience in the PG at PUC–SP and UNICAMP; and his writings on the subject, such as the text in which he considers guidance to be a key point of graduate studies (Saviani, 2012). He clarifies the role of research, of the elaboration of the dissertation or thesis, and of the disciplines in the qualification process of a graduate student when revisiting the question and answering why guidance is key: "Because the purpose of being a graduate student is the training of researchers; and by exercising research, one learns to research; then, by producing the dissertation and the thesis, one becomes a researcher". Then, he adds: "One becomes a researcher as one learns to research, but that does not take place only by acquiring the theoretical knowledge about the research process, but by the act of researching". His idea is further developed in a long testimony:

The dissertation must be carried out and, although it does not imply originality, the student must conduct the entire research process, from the formulation of a problem to the communication of results, which is the writing of the dissertation. For most students, it is, in fact, the first research work they perform, covering all the steps involved in the type of investigation initiated. It is up to them, with the help of their advisor and based on alternatives outlined according to the stage of knowledge of the corresponding area, to choose the theme, to formulate the problem, to delimit the object, and to establish the methodology and respective analysis procedures. Upon concluding the investigation, they must write a paper with a logical structure that is adequate to a full understanding, by the readers, of the subject addressed. This conclusive work is what is conventionally called a master's dissertation. As it is an oriented work, both in the master's and in the doctorate programs, it is central. The disciplines subsidize the students, but they are taught by different professors. Master's and doctoral students take courses as they assess — and it

is expected that the advisor also participates in this activity — to what degree they can support their research. But the professor of the discipline has several students, each with a different interest and each with their advisor. The professor will try to teach the groups in the best possible way, so that everyone assimilates the programmed content, but they will not get involved and have no commitment to each student, because each one has their advisor and it would be impossible for the professor to follow up on everyone individually. In addition, the choice of disciplines interferes with other practical or institutional problems. Sometimes students do not have much of a choice; the available offer does not cover the specific requirement of their project; sometimes they make a choice because of the number of credits they need to fulfill in that semester, not being sure that in the next semester something more interesting will appear. But the dissertation or thesis project has to account for it, and, according to the PG system, it is a guided work. Ultimately, they count on the advisor to complete the research project and, thus, to graduate as a researcher. The main teaching work at a PG is, therefore, to orient. That's why I claimed that "guidance is key in graduate studies".

Saviani also states that, when assuming the teaching duties and organizing the orientation activities at UNICAMP in 1980, he was also able to implement the collective character he first implemented at PUC–SP: "I created a research group based on the doctorate students I was advising. Just like at PUC, the group was open to the participation of students of other advisors". And he recalls that, just as in his other group of doctoral students, the students regretted that they would have to return to their institutions of origin upon conclusion, moving away from the group. Thus, they began to pressure him to create "a permanent research group, in addition to the activities of preparing the theses, so that they could continue participating even after completing the course and returning to their institutions".

After he applied for habilitation at UNICAMP, in 1986, Saviani dedicated himself exclusively to working on this HEI, and, in this new function, he was pressured to run for the Coordination of the PPGE. Aware that, at some point, he would have to make his contribution in this role, he accepted running for office, taking into account the advice given by Machiavelli to the Prince: "the good should be done little by little; the evil, at once". And he justifies: "as, in those circumstances, I considered it an 'evil' for me to take on an administrative function, and, sooner or later, I would have to give my share of sacrifice, I decided to accept it once and for all". He was elected to coordinate the program from 1989 to 1992. If, on the one hand, he overburdened himself with administrative activities — having even assumed the coordination in a second term, together with the Associate Directorate of the School of Education —, on the other, he made it a condition not to be prevented from undertaking a research internship that he "was planning in Italy". "In fact, the only scholarship I was ever granted in my entire career". His involvement in administrative activities extended until 1996. He speaks of his willingness and the

opportunity to bring his collective experience to the PPGE of UNICAMP, since he had to prepare a new regiment. Thus, he reveals: "I reorganized the program and introduced the curricular component Oriented Activities, with the duration of three semesters, for the master's degree, and four semesters for the doctorate degree". His proposal was to extend to the entire Program the successful experience that he had at PUC. As he says, the expectation was that this curricular component — which had a greater weight than that of the other disciplines — would allow "teachers to take on a more collective guidance process".

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, research groups were emerging. When talking about the importance of research groups and the need for advisors to also conduct research in order to be able to teach research, Saviani makes a reflection that points to an aspect related to the beginnings of PG in Brazil, a time when the advisor oriented towards research; however, he himself was not a researcher, and did not even see the point in a research group. He states that "when PG was instituted to train researchers and there was a demand for research in the master's and the doctoral programs, the professors themselves did not do research". And he complements this statement: "they took on the subjects and also the guiding task. But on what basis did they guide the research of students? Based on what they had conducted in their own graduate studies". He also states that professors would lead the classes, read, recommend readings, comment on the students' work and talk to them about the progress of their research, which should result in the dissertations and, later on, also in their theses. But, as professors, they did not produce research. In his understanding, this was a complicating factor because the work was individualized: each student was going to address a subject, the professor would guide more than one student — but it was the work of the others, each one developing their respective research, in isolation, with periodic individual sessions with their advisor. Professor Saviani then explains how he faced this problem:

When I took over the coordination of PPGE at UNICAMP, I was particularly concerned with this problem in the case of the master's degree, which, at the time, was already under pressure to have the time with funding agencies reduced, signaling for a maximum period of 24 to 30 months. When reorganizing the program, I reduced the number of master's disciplines from eight to five, corresponding to 15 credits, and introduced the "Oriented Activities" to be developed over three semesters, totaling 9 credits. And, to implement this new system, I set up a seminar on the matter of elaborating the master's dissertation. This seminar was initially thought of as an internal activity at the School of Education at UNICAMP. However, the ANPEd Annual Meeting made us a proposal to open the seminar for all PG programs in Education and the event took place in April 1991, in partnership with them.

At the 1991 ANPEd annual meeting, Saviani presented a document for discussion with the title: *Concepção de mestrado centrada na ideia de monografia de base* (Conception of a master's dissertation centered on the idea of a basic paper) (Saviani, 1991). It was a guiding document of what he calls the role of the master's

degree in the training process of the researcher, having the master's dissertation as his material and objective expression, and dealing with basic papers as a regulation for the dissertation. The proposal was that the master's period was used by the school to identify themes that are not sufficiently explored, "by establishing a broad program for the production of basic papers in which the master's students would be engaged in the purposes of preparing their dissertations". According to him, this presupposes research, since the teaching staff would be researching — within defined frameworks being developed by permanent research groups —, which allows to map and identify, when conducting the state of the art of a theme, the gaps that require specific investigations.

As Professor Saviani explains, when receiving new graduate students, the program previously has object themes ready to incorporate graduate students into ongoing projects. For programs in process of organization, the student could be welcomed in a line of research and work on themes that were still little explored. He states that, by having the professors involved in research groups that work in specific areas of pedagogical knowledge, as potential advisors, they would have prior knowledge by conducting first-step activities such as literature review, and be aware of what was already available and what required further investigation. In this condition, the professor, who is the future advisor, could orient the student: "please go and check the open matters in our line of research; do you plan to study this issue, for example, raising the material to fill this gap in your master's dissertation?".

With these remarks, Professor Saviani addresses another issue that has concerned researchers when it comes to the organization of research groups: is this practice an induction of the evaluation and financing bodies or is it something with assumed academic-pedagogical-scientific value, which places the professors of PG programs as protagonists? He replies by stating that, "with the emergence of research groups and the encouragement of teaching research through productivity grants, this proposal would become more viable". However, he points out that the groups were sometimes constituted by relationships or by demands, under the widespread perception that the absence of groups would reveal a deficiency in programs. And for professors, not belonging to a research group could have a negative impact in their careers. So, according to him, joining an existing group or organizing a new one became imperative and gave rise to the "myself and I" groups, created by professors, which would, later on, be joined by some students, but, as he states, "the turnover of students was big and the group would not succeed".

At the end of his speech in this interview, Professor Saviani exemplifies the organization of a research group based on the process of creation and officialization of the study and research group he acts on, named HISTEDBR:

In these circumstances, I keep in mind my own example. In 1986, I gathered with my doctoral students and two other professors and their respective students. However, I did not want to formalize the group immediately, based on the following reasoning: first, we are going to put it in operation and, once the prospect of consolidation is outlined, we will forward the formalization

to the instances of the School of Education. And I only came to make the group official by submitting a form to the approval of the Department, the Graduate Commission and the Faculty Congregation, in 1991. At that point, we formulated a national project named "Survey and Cataloging of Primary and Secondary Sources of Brazilian Education", which involved researchers from different institutions across the country. Then, the group was established with the constitution of Working Groups (WGs) in different universities, in different states. This group operates to date and is known by the acronym HISTEDBR.

This is Saviani's trajectory that precedes and blends with the initiatives related to research groups/networks and lines in associations such as ANPEd, and evaluation and promotion bodies such as CAPES and National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* — CNPq).

#### FINAL REMARKS

In recent years, "research groups" are more and more referred to, as well as "collaborative research networks", as the *loci* for excellence of training and performance of an advisor. Historically, we were successively moving from intuitive, individual, private guidance to collective guidance, with everything that it represents, the publicization of a process that moved into the organization of research groups as an expansion of this strategy, for the organization and participation in collaborative research networks.

One of the key aspects of the training of advisors relates to the object of research or whether he is necessarily a researcher, although this does not make him *ipso facto* an advisor. At the same time, we found manifestations and evidence of the lack of culture of research practice, as well as weak insertion of PhDs in individual and group research, especially until the 1990s; on the other hand, we have the gradual reaffirmation of a collaborative culture formed by collective guidance and research groups aimed at investigative collaboration networks as the new reality in the training and conduction of dissertations and thesis advisors. In this perspective, we face confronting matters of organization, but they converge in terms of turning research into a precondition for the formation of groups. In this context, the reorganization of PG programs in lines of research favored the organization and activities of research groups, with consequent emergence of a space for training and performance of advisors.

Corroborated by Saviani's testimony, we state that a privileged space for the training of advisors in the area of Education in Brazil is the praxis of research groups. However, an issue emerges concerning the need to investigate whether moving to the collectivity, for the formation of research groups and the establishment of collaborative networks, is an initiative of the researchers or the result of pressure by evaluation and funding bodies, aiming at more and better results from those involved with PG and PG itself. In summary: is this new ambience in PG

the result of the area's leading role or the result of external injunctions? We believe that there is not only one right answer and position. The experiences of collective guidance have very positive and authoritative aspects. They are strategies for a more contemporary orientation in perspective, aiming to qualify and publicize an activity considered so important in the process of forming new advisors. But, in addition, they are strategies to resolve issues of formal nature that hinder more in-depth training, such as helping graduate students complete their theses and dissertations, as well as coping with an increasing massification of PG.

Regarding these reflections, we consider important to bring about the considerations that Santos and Maffei (2010, p. 71) built from readings, empirical research and discussions about learning to guide through experience with "others" or, as they claim, through a "process populated by others". The "others" make up a group they belong to: "former-students", "fellow students and doctoral students", "current students" and "colleagues". They add that learning in the process with "others" is not always intentional or conscious: "Perhaps this analysis suggests a learning process in which the one who guides and the one who is guided only realizes the need of this learning or the importance of the debate when assuming the responsibility for guidance" (Santos and Maffei, 2010, p. 62). They also state that, based on the results of their interviews, it is evident that "learning from experience is cited by mentors as essential for training" (Santos and Maffei, 2010, p. 68). And conclude: "Thus, we can indicate that yesterday's advisors live in their own way in today's advisor's ways of being" (Santos and Maffei, 2010, p. 69). Learning by doing is a necessary but not sufficient condition, though. Greater protagonism would be necessary to develop teaching and learning processes in guidance for PG programs, as well as increasing the understanding of a more appropriate dosage between individual and collective activities.

And speaking of others — students of advisors who used to be students —, we conclude our thoughts with an excerpt from an interview conducted with a former student of Professor Saviani, Gaudêncio Frigotto, who had the opportunity to take part in this inaugural experience of collective guidance:

I started guiding dissertations as a doctoral student in 1978. Over my doctoral course, I experienced both situations: guiding and being guided. The transition from being advised to advising was, then, marked by the experience of team research work and, later, by Dermeval Saviani and his collective guidance strategy. These two experiences, especially the second, played a fundamental theoretical and methodological role in my journey. I think it was the "polished" experience that marked my way of guiding [...]. The construction of the thesis took place in a double movement: the writing of chapters or part of chapters and collective meetings where everyone debated what they had read in advance. The requirement of writing and reading in advance was very pedagogical. [...] It was a matter of producing a crucial thesis that allowed for collective debate. Individual guidance was very rare. I believe that, in all, I have been in meetings with my advisor about four or five times.

Here are some of the lines that we believe provide conditions for understanding strategies and the protagonism that make PG *stricto sensu* in Education what it is today. There are elements, however, that allow us to analyze and propose strategies for the advisor-student relationship, as well as for the training of researchers, thus supporting the praxis of research groups/networks.

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