

## The contributions of crossdressing to reflecting on the training of Science teachers



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### Abstract

This work is an excerpt from a master's research project and aims to demonstrate how the *crossdressing* can contribute to reflections on the teaching of Sciences, from the perspective of body, gender and sexuality, the Pedagogy course and the Pedagogue, as well as training and the teaching of Natural Sciences in the early years of elementary school. This study used the (auto)biographical method to, through the narratives of experiences, carry out reflections anchored in queer studies and based on analogies, with a view to the teaching of Sciences. Based on the analyzes, it was found that the crossdressing practice can contribute to rethinking Science teaching, from the perspective of a movement of (re)creation, (re)constitution, innovation and renewal, in the direction of constant change, (re)inventing and transgressing standards, through overcoming the anatomical binarism of bodies, sexual and gender identities.

### Keywords

body-gender-sexuality; Science teaching; teacher training; crossdressing practice.

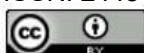
### As contribuições da prática *crossdressing* para a reflexão da formação de professoras/es de Ciências

### Resumo

Este trabalho é um recorte de uma pesquisa de mestrado e tem como objetivo demonstrar e analisar como a prática *crossdressing* pode contribuir para reflexões a respeito do ensino de Ciências, na perspectiva de corpo, gênero e sexualidade, do curso de Pedagogia e da/o Pedagoga/o, bem como da formação desta/e para o ensino de Ciências naturais nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental. Este estudo utilizou o método (auto)biográfico para, por meio das narrativas de experiências, realizar reflexões ancoradas nos estudos *queer* e pautadas em analogias, tendo em vista o ensino de Ciências. Com base nas análises, verificou-se que a prática *crossdressing* pode contribuir para repensar o ensino de Ciências, na perspectiva de um movimento de (re)criação, (re)constituição, inovação e renovação, na direção de uma constante mudança, (re)inventando-se e transgredindo padrões, por meio da superação do binarismo anatômico dos corpos, das identidades sexuais e de gênero.

### Palavras-chave

corpo-gênero-sexualidade; ensino de Ciências; formação de professoras/es; prática *crossdressing*.



## Las aportaciones del travestismo a la reflexión sobre la formación de los profesores de Ciencias

### Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es mostrar y analizar cómo la práctica de travestismo puede contribuir a la reflexión sobre la enseñanza de las Ciencias, desde la perspectiva del cuerpo, el género y la sexualidad, del curso de Pedagogía y del pedagogo, y también de la formación del pedagogo en la enseñanza de las Ciencias naturales en los primeros años de la escuela primaria. Este estudio utilizó el método (auto)biográfico para analizar narrativas de experiencias con el fin de producir reflexiones ancladas en los estudios queer y basadas en analogías con vistas a la enseñanza de las Ciencias. A partir de los análisis, se constató que el travestismo puede contribuir a repensar la enseñanza de las Ciencias desde la perspectiva de un movimiento de (re)creación, (re)constitución, innovación y renovación en la dirección del cambio constante, (re)inventándose y transgrediendo normas, superando el binarismo anatómico de los cuerpos, de las identidades sexuales y de género.

### Palabras clave

cuerpo-género-sexualidad; enseñanza de las Ciencias; formación del profesorado; práctica del travestismo.

## 1 Introduction

During childhood, I interacted with girls and boys through games and play, but my perception and feeling with these interactions were different, especially with girls. I had a greater affinity, I felt more belonging to their group, I wanted to be like them, because we played house and doll and danced to the sound of the singer Gretchen<sup>1</sup>. I have memories of isolating myself in my mother's room to wear her clothes, shoes and lipstick and, finally, using some cloth on my head to compose and bring out another version of me, even unconsciously.

As an adult, from the 2000s, continuing in the crossing of genders, in movement, in mobility, in transience and in the multiple possibilities of expressing myself through these issues, I resumed crossdressing myself<sup>2</sup>, now in a more uniformed way, through the crossdressing practice, in which I named myself Carla Seixas.

It is worth noting that the word “*crossdressing*” is an English term that refers to producing oneself in the feminine. In the literature, there is no consensus on the definition

<sup>1</sup> Singer and dancer who began her career in the late 1970s. She launched great successes that led her to stardom with the help of the sensual and hip-swaying performances she presented when singing and dancing. She became known as the Queen of *Rebolado* and is in action to this day.

<sup>2</sup> Dressing in clothes, props and makeup socioculturally assigned to women.

of the term. On this issue, Vencato (2024, p. 221) asserts that *crossdressing* “[...] is the practice of dressing in clothes that are socially attributed to the opposite gender of the wearer, to bring here a quick and inaccurate definition [...]”. While for Lopes (2015, p. 325-326):

The *crossdresser* category seeks to break, therefore, with the association between ‘dressing as a woman’ and desire for ‘people of the same sex’. Being a *crossdresser* and relating sexually only to men would dissolve an important border between this identity and that of transvestites and transsexual women, who, in addition to being associated with a desire for men, are also conceived in their regular updating of the feminine, as opposed to *CDs*, which would only eventually ‘assemble’.

On the other hand, Jesus (2012) brings the definition that the category *crossdressers* generally refer to heterosexual and married men who feel pleasure in *performing* the feminine. They experience different gender roles, however, they do not consider themselves transvestites, as they feel they belong to the gender “[...] assigned to them at birth”. According to Jesus (2012, p. 10), “The experience of the *crossdresser* is usually domestic, with or without the support of their partners, they have momentary emotional or sexual satisfaction in dressing as women [...]”.

My version Carla Seixas emerges exclusively at private LGBTTQIAPN + parties in the city where I live, in the interior of Bahia-Brazil. This woman appears in the social events of this group, destabilizing all social structures, sparking the imagination of many sexual and gender identities present: cis and trans people, with multiple sexual identities, seek to relate to their object of desire through looks, touches and, invariably, with approaches. Her appearance, through her costumes, makeup, sandals, wigs, striking personality, sensuality, originality, creativity and daring, contributes to the enchantment of all. Personally, *to perform*, through the assembly process, is to inhabit and cross a new territory, is to be on the border, is to leave the standardized, the standardized, making the exercise of creativity, originality and boldness.

I emphasize that, throughout this article, I will make some analogies using Carla Seixas as a metaphor to try to place greater emphasis on science teaching (from the perspective of the body, gender and sexuality), the Pedagogy course and the pedagogue.

This work is an excerpt from a master's research and aims to demonstrate and analyze how *crossdressing* can contribute to reflections on science teaching in the early

years of elementary school. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee, through the Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation (CAAE) No. 45486521.1.0000.0055.

## 2 Methodological procedures

This research has a qualitative approach, as it seeks to discuss social relations based on the “[...] pluralization of spheres of life”, considering the multiple individualizations of ways of living and “biographical patterns”, as well as the decomposition of “[...] old social inequalities within the new diversity of environments [...]” (Flick, 2009, p. 20).

This study used the (auto)biographical method to, through the narratives of experiences, carry out reflections anchored in queer theory and based on analogies, *with* a view to the teaching of Sciences. Thus, (auto)biographical research:

[...] it is born from the individual, in his social insertion, through his own modes of biographization and his social and singular domains. Likewise, biographical temporality is configured as another structuring aspect of human experience and narratives in a biographical time, by explaining territories of individual and social life, through the experiences lived and narrated by the subjects, implying hermeneutic and phenomenological principles that characterize life, the human and its different forms of expression and manifestation (Souza, 2014, p. 41).

Queer theory, according to Louro (2004), is irreverent, presupposes an anti-normalizing disposition, is subversive, is unthinkable, is destabilizing, blurs certainties and seeks to overcome injustices and inequalities (Miskolci, 2021). For the author, “Queer is all of this: it's strange, rare, off. Queer is also the subject of deviant sexuality – homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, draggers. It is the eccentric who does not want to be ‘integrated’, much less ‘tolerated’” (Louro, 2004, p. 7).

Considering the structuring and reflection of the information in this study, we chose to carry out the exercise of touching the theoretical discussions in the course of the analyzes, which resulted in theoretical-analytical sections.

## 3 Crossdressing and Science Teaching

Discussions about the body in the area of Natural Sciences in the early years of elementary school are usually still worked out based on anatomical-physiological perspectives, which reflects a reductionist and essentialist approach, escaping from a

constructionist perspective on bodies. Authors such as Louro (2000), Santos (2007), Silva (2008) and Trivelato (2005) state that discussions about the body are limited and present it in a fragmented way, disregarding its completeness and scope.

These statements can be corroborated based on the studies carried out by Carvalho and Cassiani (2024), Maronn and Rigo (2022), Silva and Sá-Silva (2024), as well as by Bitencourt and Souza (2021, p. 9), who showed that the body is represented in textbooks in a sliced and sequenced way by the systems “[...] digestive, circulatory, respiratory, genitals, goes through a process of concealment of cultural aspects and assumes a biological aspect anchored in the discourses of nature and psychology, being removed from the cultural spaces it occupies”.

In this section, based on my *crossdressing* practice – assembly process –, I will discuss in an attempt to relate it to the teaching of Science/Biology. The assembly process suggests reinventing oneself as another subject, it requires an exercise of populating a new place, breaking the standardized and the standardized; it is to use creativity, boldness and originality. For Neves (2017), *crossdressers* seek to explore other ways of constituting masculinities and femininities that exist in addition to those put to us.

In this sense, we can make an analogy to think about the “assembly” of the planning of a curricular component for the teaching of Sciences/Biology, a proposal for an innovative, transgressive curriculum that (re)invents itself, learns singular forms of bodies, genders and sexualities, recognizes the difference and subverts the dichotomy and binarity (im)posed by binary discourse. Corroborating this assertion, Silva (2005, p. 150, emphasis added) states that:

Through our curricula thought of as cultural productions, as events, we can ‘lay bare’ the human being’, the human being who fits in the teaching of biology in order to make it possible to produce an oblique view of things, breaking with a linear view that has constituted the world and the human being, their corporeality in a mechanical way, fragmented and displaced from their production spaces – from cultural contexts. Therefore, the human being who is responsible for teaching Science should respond to its corporeality, to its culture that defines it as a being of response, ‘being of the word’, under the sign of the difference that constitutes us as plural men and women.

Modern society emerges at a time when explanations about the world ceased to be based on divine beliefs and began to use science. It was at this moment that scientific knowledge was constituted as a regime of truth and presented itself, considerably, in a disciplinary and fragmented way. In the meantime, the modern subject was born, with the

school curriculum as a powerful instrument to contribute to the formation of this subject. According to Barros and Ribeiro (2012, p. 175):

[...] it can be said that the disciplinary model of schools is the heritage of modern science, because it was from the creation of the scientific method and the search for true 'so-called' knowledge that the compartmentalization of the areas of knowledge began. The specialization of modern science in different areas occurred due to the amount of knowledge produced as well as their complexity, which made it impossible to have a unified knowledge of all areas and, for this reason, the disciplines – physics, mathematics, biology, etc. – emerged in order to make it possible to study, in a more complex and in-depth way, certain areas. This whole division of knowledge also had repercussions on pedagogy, producing effects on the way schools discussed their contents.

Given the above and considering queer theory, we can ask from the perspective of education, a field admittedly focused on norms, rules and discipline: “What is the space for transgression and contestation? How to break with binaries and think about sexuality, genders and bodies in a plural, multiple and changing way? How to translate queer theory into pedagogical practice?” (Louro, 2004, p. 47).

The teaching work with a view to teaching Science must be articulated to a curriculum that contemplates all people, considering their particularities and differences, calling into question what is standardized, naturalized through a hegemonic standard. We emphasize that one of the obstacles that make it impossible to approach the body, gender and sexuality is the absence of discussion of these issues in the teacher education of the Science teacher. According to Souza (2016, p. 982), school and university have generally denied and silenced discussions about gender and sexuality and that, among other issues, this is due to “[...] teacher training does not contemplate discussions about gender and sexuality and, when it does, reduces them to a biologizing and normative approach”.

Corroborating this assertion, Oliveira and Nóbrega (2025, p. 4) argue that “The approach to sexuality in the school environment must go beyond merely biological aspects, incorporating its emotional, social and cultural dimensions”. In this sense, it is of fundamental importance to structure a science teaching curriculum in view of its role in the formation of the subject, since its elaboration can contribute both to the formation of “[...] an easy subject to handle/lead, automated (body and mind) and docile – stable and long-lasting (modern solidity), and to the formation of a tactical and flexible subject – adaptive and sly (postmodern liquidity)” (Veiga-Neto, 2008, p. 147).

A well-structured curriculum in undergraduate courses in Pedagogy/Biology, for example, can contribute to the success of the Science discipline, in order to expand and

deepen the multiple and diverse possibilities of being, expressing oneself and living, deconstructing the idea of the fixed and gendered body. Especially in relation to the body, the author Louro (2004, p. 75) asserts that: “[...] over time, subjects have been indicted, classified, ordered, hierarchized and defined by the appearance of their bodies; from the standards and references, norms, values and ideas [*sic*] of culture”.

Thinking about the body in a plural dimension is to contemplate, consider and recognize the various bodies that present themselves in the classroom: the tall/short, black/white, fat/thin body, people with disabilities (PwD), among others. In the same direction, we can expand the various possibilities of existence that also present themselves in school daily life both in terms of gender (male, female, male and female trans people, non-binary, intersex, among others), as well as sexuality (heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality, among others).

In this sense, Louro (2004) alludes to the body of a *drag queen*. According to the author:

*Drag* explicitly assumes that it manufactures its body; it intervenes, hides, aggregates, exposes. She deliberately performs all these acts not because she pretends to be a woman. That is not her purpose; she does not want to be confused or taken by a woman. *Drag* purposely exaggerates the conventional traits of the feminine, exaggerates and accentuates body marks, behaviors, attitudes, clothing culturally identified as feminine (Louro, 2004, p. 85).

Finally, science teaching, in addition to contemplating discussions about genders and sexualities in a multiple and plural way, must also hold debates about the body in an expanded, holistic, integrated way, with a view to subverting a universalized and fragmented body. In this sense, the teaching of Science will also contribute to the exercise of respect for others, differences and the fight against discrimination and prejudice.

#### 4 The crossdressing practice, the pedagogy course and the pedagogue

We cannot disassociate education from the political-cultural, historical and even economic context in which it is inserted, as it is the reflection of society. It is organized, reorganized and reformulated according to the interests of the community. In Brazil, with regard to the Pedagogy course, we can highlight several movements and disputes, progress and setbacks, always influenced by political and social demands.

The Pedagogy course was instituted in 1939, with the aim of training both bachelor's degree holders and licensed teachers. Since its creation and throughout Brazilian history, it has presented problems regarding its formation and also related to its field of work (Silva, 2003). The history of the Pedagogy course is intertwined with the formation of its identity, as it is fragile and shaken in all phases of its development and consolidation (Pimenta; Pinto; Severo, 2022). Numerous discussions have already been held by government and social institutions, questioning and questioning the relevance of the functions that are attributed to the Pedagogy course, as well as several conflicts have already been instituted in an attempt to reframe them.

According to Silva (2003), the history of the Pedagogy course was marked by periods of regulations, opinions, decrees and proposals, such as those related to curricular guidelines. Over the decades, thinking about the genesis and development of the Pedagogy course is to analyze a field of tensions and disputes involving, on the one hand, the State and, on the other, scientific and professional entities, such as the National Association of Graduate Studies in Education (Anped), the National Forum of Directors of Colleges of Education (Forumdir), the National Association of Education Policy and Administration (Anpae), the Commission of Experts, among others.

We can again bring Carla Seixas' metaphor to think about the Pedagogy course and the pedagogues. At first, we refer to the Pedagogy course, which, over time, has undergone several transformations through disputes in the educational arena, namely: moments in which it brings a bachelor's and/or degree course bias; responsible for the development of educational management activities and the organization of teaching work, as well as responsible for specific knowledge for performance in early childhood education and early years. Over the years, several qualifications have been established and removed (Supervision, Guidance, Pedagogical Coordination, etc.). Carla Seixas, in its assembly, disassembly and reassembly process, keeps reinventing, recreating, and re-signifying itself over time, lives in constant transformation, in an attempt to meet what it considers to be the best for it. Based on their processes, new women, new Carlas are produced, so is the Pedagogy course, which, through decrees, opinions and guidelines, is built, deconstructed and rebuilt, undergoes incessant changes in order to define a course that meets the wishes of the government and scientific community and that ensures effective training for education professionals.

In the second moment, we refer to the pedagogue. Even after numerous and exhaustive discussions between government and social agents, the Resolution of the National Council of Education (CNE) /Full Commission (CP) No. 1, of May 15, 2006, which establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) for undergraduate courses in Pedagogy, in the form of a degree, has been approved, but still does not satisfactorily meet the claims of the entities in this field of disputes.

According to Libâneo (2006), the Resolution presents conceptual inaccuracies based on controversial operational definitions for the professional activity of the pedagogue. We present below some criticisms made by the author in the preparation of the resolution, especially those related to the formation of the pedagogue and her field of action:

The vacillation in the text of the Resolution, regarding the explanation of the nature and objective of the course and the type of professional to be trained, stems from conceptual imprecision in relation to central terms in pedagogical theory: education, pedagogy, teaching; indicates an understanding that replaces the concept of pedagogy with that of teaching; the conceptual imprecision regarding the object of study of Pedagogy leads to a generic understanding of teaching activities; describes the skills necessary for graduates of the Pedagogy course in 16 teaching assignments, establishing expectations of the formation of a super professional; the descriptions in which objectives, contents, moral recommendations are mixed, generate overlaps and inaccuracies regarding the profile of the graduate; the expected competencies are disconnected, distinct or overlapping; some articles destine the Pedagogy course to train graduates for five modalities of teaching practice; it defines the curricular structure in three blocks: nucleus of basic studies, nucleus of deepening and diversification of studies, nucleus of integrative studies, which supposedly include disciplines and curricular activities, but this is not enough clear due to the repetitive, confusing and inaccurate wording; it excludes any and all types of initial training other than those established in the Resolution, leaving doubts as to compliance with other legal provisions in force, such as CNE/CP Opinion No. 9/2001 and CNE Resolution No. 1/2002, which establishes the Curricular Guidelines for Teacher Training for Basic Education; it determines the extinction of all existing qualifications resulting from previous legislation, but the text does not clarify how the 'deepening and diversification of studies focused on the areas of professional activity' is, that is, what these areas of professional activity are (Libâneo, 2006, p. 846-848).

In view of the above, we found that, according to Libâneo (2006), the resolution presents an insufficient and inconsistent theoretical foundation; in addition, the document is based on a "simplistic and reductionist" conception of Pedagogy and the professional practice of the pedagogue, which may reflect negatively on her training. For the author, there is a difficulty in understanding, building and consolidating the identity of this/and professional.

The figure of Carla Seixas is not fixed, she is fluid, lives on the border; she presents herself at each event/day according to her needs and goals, with multiple costumes, makeup, sandals, accessories, wigs of different colors and formats. This movement of (re)creation, (re)constitution, innovation and renewal allows it to be in constant change and improvement with a view to effectively achieving its goals. We also understand that, in the pedagogue's activity, this same movement is necessary. We realize how complex your training is if we consider the nature of the course, its field of action and the skills required. To act, for example, in your classroom in the early years is to be on the frontier, it is to be a multifaceted professional, as the pedagogue will access knowledge of several, different foundations and methodologies, such as those in the area of Science itself (which are part of our object of study), Mathematics, the Portuguese Language, History, Geography, among others.

I want to say goodbye to this text, returning once again to Carla Seixas, who, in her process of assembly, disassembly and reassembly, (re)invents herself, “people a new place”, transgresses, innovates, blurs binarism, sexual and gender identities, lives on the border, experiences other modes of corporeality, is not fixed, is fluid, presents herself with various accessories, costumes, sandals, wigs of different colors and formats. Based on it, I want to make an analogy with the Biology teacher. We agree with Silva (2008, p. 253) in stating that:

Being a Biology teacher means being called to live at the frontier. A life that presupposes ruptures. Breaks with a certain Biology that produces, for example, in the dichotomy between nature and culture. Thus, breaking with the dichotomy and thinking about the border may be a possibility to break with the established. In the case of the body, deconstruct the rupture between the biological and the cultural in which it has been based.

In this sense, the author also states about the “concern about the biological-culture-social transit”. “To live in this transit is to be at the frontier. I understand that when we are at the border we deal with traffic, with spaces of interpenetration, intermediate spaces that can be crossed. As a space that has no control on either side” (Silva, 2008, p. 253).

Finally, we understand that disciplines, such as Science, have a challenge of dismantling the *modus* of how questions about body, gender and sexuality are approached in the school and university space, with a view to subverting models of standardization of life and subjectivities.

## 5 Some Considerations

In this article, we set out to demonstrate and analyze how the *crossdressing* practice (by Carla Seixas) can contribute to reflections on the teaching of Science from the perspective of body, gender and sexuality, of the Pedagogy program and its teachers. Considering that the assembly process suggests reinventing itself, breaking the standardized and standardized, using creativity, boldness and originality, the *crossdressing* practice can contribute to provoke reflections on an innovative, transgressive curriculum proposal for the teaching of Science/Biology, which (re)invents itself, learns singular forms of bodies, genders and sexualities, recognizes difference and subverts the dichotomy and binarity (im)posed by binary discourse.

Considering that the *crossdressing* practice is characterized by assembly, disassembly and reassembly, by reinvention, recreation and resignification, seeking constant improvement, we can reflect that the Pedagogy course, through official curriculum documents, can be deconstructed and rebuilt in order to define a course that overcomes the weaknesses presented regarding the conception and training of future teachers.

On the other hand, the practice of the pedagogue, as well as Carla Seixas, can and should be (re)created, (re)constituted, innovated and renewed. We understand the complexity of your training given the nature of the course, your field of expertise and the skills required. To act, for example, in your classroom in the early years is to be on the frontier, it is to be a multifaceted professional, as the pedagogue will access knowledge of several, different foundations and methodologies, such as those in the area of Science itself (which are part of our object of study), Mathematics, the Portuguese Language, History, Geography, among others.

Finally, in the same way that Carla Seixas, with her *crossdressing* practice, lives in the border space, transgressive and innovative through the experience of other modes of corporeality, we can reflect, based on what Silva (2008) states, that the Science/Biology teacher needs to overcome the dichotomy between nature and culture and deconstruct the rupture between the biological and the cultural from the perspective of the body.

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