

THE GENEALOGY OF THE SUBLATION IDEA BY BLIND PEOPLE IN BRAZIL: A STUDY BASED ON L. S. VYGOTSKI

GENEALOGIA DA IDEIA DE SUPERAÇÃO POR CEGOS NO BRASIL: UM ESTUDO COM BASE EM L. S. VYGOTSKI

GENEALOGÍA DE LA IDEA DE SUPERACIÓN DE LOS CIEGOS EN BRASIL: UN ESTUDIO CON BASE EN L.S. VYGOTSKY

SELAU, Bento¹

CASTRO, Rafael Fonseca de²

ABSTRACT

This study aims to discuss the concept of sublation. It was originated from the graduation of blind people in higher education in Brazil, based on students' reports and on L. S. Vygotski's work. The qualitative investigation that supported this study was carried out as case studies. Nine blind people who had completed their college education were taken as subjects. Data was collected by interviews and document analysis (essays). This data underwent the procedures of discourse textual analysis. According to the participants, the idea that is shown in media that blind people who have completed higher education are heroes is mistaken. The insights of the research subjects, discussed on the basis of the concept of sublation proposed by Vygotsky, turn to an elevation of the blind through the mediation of cultural instruments.

Keywords: Higher Education. Cultural-Historical Psychology. Defectology. Blind people. Sublation.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste trabalho é discutir o conceito de superação, originário da conclusão da educação superior por cegos, no Brasil, com base no depoimento destes estudantes e no trabalho de L. S. Vygotski. A investigação que embasou este estudo assumiu uma abordagem qualitativa, em forma de estudos de casos. Os sujeitos da pesquisa foram nove cegos, egressos da educação superior. Foram coletados dados por meio de entrevistas e análise documental (redações). Os dados coletados foram trabalhados por meio dos procedimentos de análise textual discursiva. De acordo com os participantes, a noção veiculada pela mídia, de apontar o cego que concluiu a educação superior como herói, está equivocada. As compreensões dos sujeitos de pesquisa, discutidas com base no conceito de superação proposto por Vygotski, voltam-se para a elevação do cego, por intermédio dos instrumentos culturais de mediação.

Palavras-chave: Educação Superior. Psicologia Histórico-Cultural. Defectologia. Cegos. Superação.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es discutir el concepto de superación, que se origina a partir de la conclusión de la educación terciaria por ciegos, en Brasil. Este estudio se fundamenta con base en los testimonios de estos estudiantes y en el trabajo de L. S. Vygotsky. La investigación que respalda este análisis asumió un abordaje cualitativo, en forma de estudios de casos. Los sujetos investigados fueron nueve ciegos egresados de la educación terciaria. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante entrevistas y a través de la observación de documentos (redacciones). Los datos recolectados fueron trabajados por medio de procedimientos de análisis textual y discursivo. De acuerdo con los participantes, la noción vehiculada por la media, de señalar el ciego que concluyó la educación superior como héroe, está equivocada. Las comprensiones de los sujetos de investigación, discutidas con base en el concepto de superación propuesto por Vygotski, se vuelven para la elevación del ciego, por intermedio de los instrumentos culturales de mediación.

Palabras clave: Educación Terciaria. Psicología Histórica Cultural. Defectología. Ciegos. Superación.

¹ Universidade Federal do Pampa – UNIPAMPA – Jaguarão – Rio Grande do Sul – Brasil

² Universidade Federal de Rondônia – UNIR – Porto Velho – Rondônia – Brasil

INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, it is commonly believed that a blind student³ who gets a college degree has carried out a heroic, rather epic, deed. This mythical judgment, which has been widely broadcasted by the media, such as television, printed and electronic means, implies that a blind person that gets a college degree has overcome obstacles.

Representations related to the capacities and/or limitations of the blind are neither new nor limited to connect the deeds they have carried out in college, or out of it, to superpowers. Amiralian (1997) has pointed that four popular ideas are linked to the image that most people have of a blind person: a subject who has supernatural powers and capacities to go beyond appearances as if s/he had a sixth sense; a person who suffers and lives in eternal darkness; someone who is pathetically good; and a prototype of meanness.

Vygotski (1997b, 1997c) had already called his followers' attention to several myths that influence their perception (even some teachers' and psychologists') of the blind in Russia. He mentions these myths that developed in two different periods: he called the first one, which started in the Ancient Times, went through the Middle Ages and stretched to part of the Modern Ages, *mystic* times. In this period, blindness was considered a huge disgrace and the visually impaired were regarded with superstitious horror or respect. A blind person used to be seen as a defenseless and useless person, who is susceptible to abandonment, even though there was general belief that they developed superiormystic forces – coming from the “soul” – in place of sight. The second period occurred in the 18th century and was called *biological* by Vygotski (1997c). The main thesis about blindness in this phase referred to biological compensation, i. e., it proposed that when a person is deprived of any sense organ, nature endows her/his other organs with higher receptivity.

In studies of the blind's educational process, and with Vygotski's defectology, reflections triggered by these different conceptions of their capacities have raised two questions: Do students who have finished college education agree to be considered superior in relation to other blind and sighted graduates who have achieved the same deed? What is the meaning of the verb *sublate* for blind people, in terms of getting a college degree? This study aimed to answer these questions. It intended to discuss the concept of sublation for blindness, which originated from the graduation of blind people in college education in Brazil, based on these students' reports and on Vygotski's work. The text was based on a 4-year broader investigation which analyzed the factors associated with the college degrees obtained by this group of blind people.

³ The term blind, which has been used in this study, is in agreement with the Brazilian legislation (BRASIL, n. 5.296, 2004).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

It was a qualitative approach research (BOGDAN and BIKLEN, 1994) that used as procedure case studies (LÜDKE and ANDRÉ, 1986). There were nine subjects in this research, all of them blind, graduated in a Brazilian institution of higher education.

Data were fulfilled by semi-structured interviews and document analysis (essays). These two instruments were combined to give more credibility to the research, since the information, through which they were collected, underwent a process of triangulation (OLLAIK and ZILLER, 2012).

The topics of the semi-structured interviews were the following: What were your expectations for higher education before entering university? Was there any meaningful event (or more than one) which in some way influenced you during higher education? Were there obstacles? If so, how were they faced? What would you say to the blind who are starting higher education? Are there any other comments you would like to add? The documentary analysis was applied to essays, requested to the participants, right after the interviews. They were asked to write at least two pages about the “factor (or factors) that influenced them to persist and complete higher education”.

The collected data were worked through the procedures of discursive textual analysis, proposed by Moraes (2003). The author describes this procedure as “a methodology in which, from a set of texts or documents, a meta-text is produced, describing and interpreting senses and meanings that the analyst constructs or elaborates from a referred corpus” (MORAES, 2003, p. 202). The stages of the analysis process were: unitarization, categorization and communication. These stages are presented as a movement that allows the emergence of new understandings. The author understands that the textual analysis starts from a set of assumptions in relation to the reading of texts or information collected to be examined, knowing that the analyzed resources compose a set of signifiers, and the researcher attributes to them meanings from his knowledge and theories. The communication of these senses and meanings from the corpus texts represents the objective of the analysis, resulting in the production of meta-texts. All norms regarding ethics in research with human beings were duly followed during the investigation, being authorized by the institution where the work was developed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sublation, from the perspective of the media, has been a cliché for blind people who have finished college education in Brazil. For journalists (television, newspapers, radios etc.), blind people who graduated “sublated” just because they finished higher education, which puts them in a position of “glory” and overvaluation.

Even Brazilian universities have announced the blind who get their college degrees as “examples of the sublation”. The University of Passo Fundo⁴ and the Federal University of Santa Maria⁵,

⁴ <http://www.upf.br/site/inc/noticias/mostraNoticia.php?codNoticia=23598>

located in Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, have published such news in their sites. Do the participants of this investigation agree that they have superpowers?

These subjects think that they do not have: a blind person who got her/his college degree is not a superhero. According to S6,

we reject being seen as impaired heroes, as well as poor ones [the word "we" refers to the participant's group of blind friends; it does not mean that there was contact among the interviewees]. We want to be treated as people and as citizens who have rights and duties, with respect to human differences (interview).

This participant believes that the label of superman attributed to the impaired person who got a college degree has originated from the media. He states that newspaper articles have created this popular would-be stereotype:

I think much "media-jingoism" [emphasis added] is done. As to say, there is superinfluence of the media regarding some behavior by someone who is too proud or takes excessive delight in something. "Media-jingoism" [emphasis added] wouldn't be the right expression but [journalists] treat the impaired person as if s/he were a superhero, someone uncommon, some [idea] I don't agree with (S6, interview).

Likewise, S1 (interview) mentioned that one cannot create a stereotype of a superman for the blind student who finished college education because *"taking a college course is hard for everybody, that's all. For a blind person, it may be a bit harder because materials must be adapted"*. In S4's opinion (essay), *"the blind person who finishes college education doesn't represent an example of the process of sublation because s/he is just living her/his life, carrying out a task, just like any other person would do"*.

Taking into account the participants' ideas, one could regard that the notion shown by the media, i.e., that the blind student who finished college education is a hero, is mistaken. In opposition to the idea the media has exposed, one may think that, in these subjects' views, the blind person who got a college degree is a false hero.

According to the interviewees, the visually impaired person is a false hero because any person, blind or sighted, needs to overcome something at some moment in her/his life. Attributing the title of a hero to blind people because of a college degree represents an unilateral situation in relation to other persons; in this case, they should also be considered heroes, in the subjects' views. S6 (interview) believes that the greatest example of struggle is the *"father who hasn't had formal education and needs to work [a low paying job] to feed his child, rather than a blind person who got a college degree"*. The participant believes that every person, blind or sighted, who attends college needs to overcome several

⁵ <http://www.mundovestibular.com.br/articles/6958/1/UFSM-pode-ter-o-primeiro-cego-a-concluir-graduacao-da-universidade-/Paacutegina1.html>

obstacles, such as time and tiredness. In S4's opinion, the blind person who finished college education has not conquered a different victory from the one that others have achieved, since he did what others had done before:

I don't consider myself a winner for being blind and having not a college degree. When I used to arrive in college, besides me, there were thousands of students who were not blind. So, I wasn't doing anything different from the others. The ones who had a car were lucky. I didn't have a car and, in fact, there were many classmates who didn't have a car, either. On a rainy day, they had to get an umbrella, but they didn't need to get a cane (S4, interview).

S6 (interview) believes that, if the blind have the resources they need to carry out a task, they are like any other person who has to carry out the same task. He also mentions that *"there are many hardworking impaired people, and many lazy ones, as well"* (S6, interview). Therefore, the participants agree that getting a college degree should be considered a victory not only for the blind but also for all people who have completed this schooling level.

The ideas of the study participants, contrary to the idea of attaching superhero labels to the blind who get a college degree, may be discussed in the light of Vygotski's concept of sublation on blindness (1997e). The context of the development of Vygotski's ideas regarding the term sublation, from the perspective of his Cultural-Historical Psychology, is dialectical philosophy of Hegel (1770-1831). Firstly, Vygotski (1997e) calls the attention to the mistakes regarding the translation of the term sublation in some texts by discussing the dual sense that used to be attributed to it (VYGOTSKI, 2006b), as a result of the German word *aufheben*: the verb not only means suspend, deny, but also preserve, used in the sense of something that maintains itself, that keeps existing. Vygotski (1997e) states that such duality shows the subjacent relation in the developmental process of higher mental functions, in which each high stage denies the lower one, without destroying, but, on the contrary, including it as a category that was sublated (dialectic process):

When one says <sjoronit> [author's emphasis] concerning some organic regularity, it does not mean that has ceased to exist; rather, it means it is preserved somewhere, that it is in a second plan, that it is inside something, that it is back to some previous plan, by comparison with regularities that came up in later stages. (VYGOTSKI, 1997e, p. 133-134).

Therefore, in the constitution of his psychology, Vygotski (1997e) uses the concept of the sublation, based on Hegel, in the following way: the incomplete development of higher mental functions is a secondary derivation⁶ which is not directly related to a disability (primary derivation), even though it is conditioned by this disability.

⁶ Vygotski (1997a) explains that the root of a certain disability (primary derivation) makes the impaired have several particularities that create obstacles to the "normal" development of collective communication, collaboration and interaction with people who surround them. Separating the impaired from a group not only characterizes exile but also determines the incomplete development of higher mental functions, which is conditioned by the disability in its secondary mode, rather than in its primary one.

Based on the first sense of the dialectic process of sublation used by Vygotski, blindness (primary derivation) is *denied* by the blind student so that the lack of sight should not become the trigger of a psychological barrier which could prevent her/him from studying, working, carrying out several everyday tasks. However, when Vygotski (1997e) states that the sublation of blindness implies, firstly, its denial, he does not mean that it ceases to exist: according to the author, denying the disability means not using it as an anchor, it represents a metaphor that indicates that blindness should not be used by the subject as an excuse to prevent her/him from carrying out complex intellectual activities (such as taking a college course).

None of the subjects of this study ignored the fact that blindness imposed certain limitations, mainly regarding how fast they answered to the perception of the environment. For instance, since an object cannot be immediately recognized, it must first be touched, listened to, making the recognition process, in some cases, become a little slower than the one that occurs with the help of sight. Likewise, they pointed out different factors that make a blind student's pathway in college difficult. Caiado (2003), Delpino (2004), Masini and Bazon (2005), Mazzoni and Torres (2005)⁷ have also discussed these factors. S4 (interview) mentioned that blindness will always exist for the blind; however, this disability cannot become a barrier between the person and her/his actions in the society as if it were a barrier to carry out any activity s/he desires, such as getting a college degree, for instance. In his interview, S4 emphasized that

a blind person's job is to impose her/himself as a person, rather than as a "person with a disability" [emphasis added]. To do so, s/he needs to impose her/himself by acknowledging her/himself as a person and by giving much value to her/his identity. S/he needs to have her/his identity – it is very important – and forget, I mean, use the issue of the disability at the right moment, when s/he has some rights, without using it as the most important thing, without putting rights in the first place, without letting people call her/him "person with a disability" [emphasis added], because the disability exists, it is a fact, but, so what? (interview).

According to Vygotski (1997e), concomitantly to denial, sublation implies its *preservation*⁸. The second sense of the dialectic process of sublation used by Vygotski, related to preservation, implies the assumption of a new form of understanding one's capacities. Rivière (1993) points out that, even with no sight, it is absolutely possible to reach a high level of cognitive development of movement autonomy and also to carry out activities which, apparently, could depend entirely on this sense. The sense of preservation of blindness implies the need of the blind person has to abandon old metaphors, which characterize blindness as night, loneliness, and face this disability as a new adventure; it is about insisting on what one has got, rather than on what one has lost, as highlighted by Rivière (1993).

Preservation of blindness, in the context of this investigation, means that the impaired who used to deny their disability in the past now are aware of the fact that they have all conditions to reach high academic levels. S2 (interview) thinks that, in studies of a blind person's psychological aspects or of pedagogical strategies used in the college education of this group, it is important to understand that the

⁷ Just to mention some studies.

⁸ Lift something; keep it lifted to protect it (KONDER, 1985).

visually impaired person has intellectual capacities to get a college degree; therefore, there is no need to identify her/him as a superman or a superwoman. He also emphasizes that the person her/himself must understand that s/he has conditions to take a college course and that s/he does not need to think that s/he is better than others because of it. This participant believes that the impaired person gains nothing from this kind of stigmatization, such as being considered a hero. S4 agrees with this statement when he argues that:

The blind person must use this potential, s/he cannot let people "cut off" [emphasis added] her/his cognitive potential, as some of them do (or even as some blind people would like to be seen). So, a person who gets a college degree must be aware of her/his conditions and capacities, if not, there's no use. S/he must be aware of the fact that s/he is in that pattern, that level. Then, the person (and the blind person) who reaches this phase, s/he must often give up little things, s/he must think like others who are in this level. The blind person who gets a college degree must be aware of her/his capacities and know that s/he has cognitive conditions to get a job as a result of her/his academic competence, not of pity or charity (interview).

The concept of dialectic process of sublation, then, aims to the *elevation*⁹ through cultural tools of mediation. According to Rosa and Ochaíta (1993), despite technological tools which favor their communication in social environments, the blind are able to use the main tool of mediation created by humankind: language. These authors believe that language is the mediation tool which enables the blind to create a psychological system which is functionally equivalent to the one of fortune tellers. Vygotski (1997e) calls attention to the fact that the teaching offered in educational environments, when it does not overvalue memorization, when it aims at the student's zone of proximal development (ZPD), is a process that helps to sublimate the causes that generate secondary derivations of the disability, i. e., the incomplete development of higher mental functions. Therefore, it means that the sublation of blindness dialectically involves the participation in academic environments which favor the blind person's mental development, i. e., the ones that focus on her/his ZPD, thus promoting the internalization of scientific concepts¹⁰.

Qualitative changes in the organization of conscious thinking, which result in better intellectual possibilities to elaborate higher synthesis, arise from the use of language as a driver of thought and from the introduction of scientific concepts into the student's life (VYGOTSKI, 1993b, 2006a). It means that forms of thinking are closely related to schooling levels, provided that teaching is not structured as mere knowledge transmission but as conceptual organization, as working with a flexible set of meanings. The dialectical relation among spontaneous concepts and scientific ones, through teaching,

⁹ Konder (1985) explains that the third sense of the dialectic process of sublation, according to Hegel, is to "elevate the quality, promote something to go to a higher level, suspend the level" (p. 26).

¹⁰ Spontaneous concepts are the ones a child acquires everyday in concrete experiences. Vygotski (1993a) highlights that spontaneous concepts are not conscious: children know how to operate these concepts spontaneously but are not aware of them because their attention focuses on the objects they represent, rather than on the act of thinking which involves them. Scientific concepts represent systematic knowledge acquired as a result of interaction in the schooling process. They are related to formal instruction and involve notions that arise in the schooling process with the help of a more capable adult in the process of assimilation of the knowledge system which is introduced to the students in the schooling process.

triggers the evolution of word meanings, which change the relation between thought and language: when teaching occurs in this way, it promotes students' mental development.

Basically, for elevation, teaching that occurs in schooling environments is very important, since, according to the author, it may lead a blind person to sublimate the causes which generate the secondary derivations of the disability. Elevation, as the third sense of the dialectic process of sublation of blindness, proposed by Vygotski, involves the lecturer and the blind student. In this case, the lecturer needs to understand that the blind student has all conditions to learn scientific concepts in higher education and must create teaching strategies which take into account the student's conditions in a collaborative process. Sublation presupposes the adaptation of the tools involved in the process of college education (and in all phases of basic education) with the adoption of the deviation strategy¹¹. Blind subjects are involved when they are committed to the learning process. According to S4 (interview), the blind person who intends to sublimate blindness must study hard. This participant mentioned that the process of sublation, through study, is not something that is easily conquered, since studying requires effort, is tiring, demands dedication and will to learn day by day. He added that it is often necessary to give up fun and the company of friends and relatives in order to study. With the use of a metaphor applied to his life, the interviewee commented that his educational process in college was slow, but that he had many gains after he got his degree:

I feel like a boat. A plane covers long distances fast but I am not like that. A boat goes slowly, faces waves, storms, high tides but it gets to its destiny. A boat goes slowly, faces all difficulties that show up but gets to its destiny (S4, interview).

All subjects mentioned that their participation in college education was intense, and that their interest was to learn scientific concepts, as may be noticed in some reports: *"it was necessary to study hard to finish this schooling phase in order to learn and be a competent professional" (S5, interview); "the evaluations [conducted by the lectures] were the same they applied to the sighted students. I think it was important, since they [the evaluations] should show whether I had learned the contents or not" (S3, interview); "I studied hard with my classmates, as a group. Our study group met after school hours. I wanted to learn the contents, that was what I really wanted. I think groupwork helped me" (S2, essay).*

The participants emphasized that their wish to finish college education favored the development of an attitude (based on the analysis procedure, it was called *sublation behavior*) which led to actions that enabled planned objectives to be achieved. The sublation behavior was related to the execution of certain actions that made the subjects learn how to deal with different situations – which were considered difficult – they had to go through in college. According to S7 (essay), these actions, planned

¹¹ Vygotski (1997d) states that the cultural form of behavior is independent of any psycho-physiological apparatus. The cultural development of behavior is not connected to one or another specific function: thus, writing may be transferred from its visual form to the tactile one (in the case of the blind). According to Vygotski (1997d), the most important notion is the idea that cultural forms of behavior constitute the only way in the education of the blind. This way operates by creating development deviations, when direct ways are impossible (e. g., learning the written language through the Braille System, in the case of the blind).

and implemented by the blind person to be able to face difficult situations which often arise in college, *“refer to the planning of conscious acts which, in practice, can be used for sublation obstacles in order to finish college education”*. As an example of an action resulting from the so-called attitude of sublation, this participant reported that she needed to teach Braille to one of her professors so that her individual learning process could somehow get easier when her professor understood this system better: *“at the beginning of the course, when it was an on-line course, I even taught Braille to my professor”* (S7, essay).

In S9's opinion (interview), the sublation behavior meant to surmount the difficulties that arose in the way to reach a certain objective which had been consciously chosen; in his case, getting his college degree. He defends this idea when he reports a situation he experienced in college:

Since my professor prevented me from getting a classmate's help (he would chaperon me) and I couldn't ask the hospital employees for help (while I was carrying out my internship in Physiotherapy), the only thing I could do was to go to the patient's room, conduct the anamnesis and assist him/her. At that moment, I felt like leaving, crying, giving up. I thought I wouldn't be allowed to graduate. But then I got my cane and walked through the corridor, dressed in white, in search for the room where the patient was. (S9, interview).

According to S2 (interview), the attitude of sublation inevitably makes the subject overcome obstacles. In his opinion, one of the actions that showed the attitude of sublation was not paying attention to college classmates' biased talks:

Because if we listen to people who often say: “it will be difficult, you'll find difficulties, you won't meet people to help you, there are many subjects, you won't be able to study everything”, if we listen to it all and get discouraged, we won't be able to overcome the barriers (S2, interview).

This participant shows that the blind person must ignore these remarks and, at the same time, must use other people's positive disbeliefs in relation to her/him to feed their wish to get a college degree. He explains his thinking by telling the following story:

There is a story I cannot recall well; it is about a frog that fell in the milk and couldn't get out. But, one day, the frog made it because it was deaf so it could overcome the obstacles. I think my pathway is a little like that, too, somebody who was able not to listen to things, not to listen to somebody who said: “it won't be easy”. I was able to pretend to be deaf, besides being blind! (S2, interview).

S9 (interview) also pointed out that the attitude of sublation, throughout and after college, is fundamental so that existing prejudice does not dishearten you: *“the blind person is charged twice as much as her/his classmates, s/he has to prove everyday that s/he is capable and that getting a college degree is not something casual”*. In his opinion, everybody, regardless of her/his visual condition, faces much criticism of her/his work. However, he highlights that criticism and problems in personal

relationships must be assimilated as learning of what should not be done, as a trigger for the formation of a human being, and that it may also be the representation of the sublation behavior, as he explains:

There is this sentence I taught my students, I read it when I was 10 or 11, and it says: "use the stones you find in your way to make the steps of the stairs of your ideal". I read it when I was a child and I have stick to it all my life (S9, interview).

According to S3 (interview), an action resulting from the attitude of sublation is also connected to self-control when facing conflictive situations. In such situations, she thinks that the blind person must calm down, be aware of everything that is involved in the process to reach previously planned objectives and try not to feel discouraged when facing problems, while rethinking goals and carrying out new plans to get what s/he wants. She believes these are important steps to overcome possible obstacles and used the following metaphor to express her thought:

When there are moments in which it seems everybody is against you, when it seems that you are swimming against the tide, I think it is the moment you may stop, sit, cry, renew your energies and think of your concepts. Don't you think it's about time to change the direction of your efforts? Or get more strength because soon you may find a bigger thing, a better one, as if you were going from the river to the sea... (S3, interview).

FINAL REMARKS

Findings reported in this paper regarding the discussion of the concept of sublation, represented by the graduation of blind people in higher education in Brazil based on these students' reports and on Vygotski's defectology, have instigated the proposal of some remarks as conclusions of this study.

Firstly, teaching provided to blind students, when correctly planned, may lead to a compensatory process that helps sublate the causes that generate (or could generate) the secondary derivations of the disability. But what, in this statement, represents the expression "correctly planned" regarding "teaching"?

The dialectic process of sublation that involves a blind person's education must be based on collective pedagogical work. The author believes that group activities are the ones that have greater potential to succeed, since higher mental functions arise along the person's social development, through forms of collaboration in social interaction.

Therefore, the expression "correctly planned" – considered the dialectic process of sublation, proposed by Vygotski, which involves negation, preservation and elevation, besides the fundamental role teaching plays in this process – refers to pedagogical actions that aim to social organization based on collaborative work among students in higher education. Why is this kind of statement made? The cause is simple: lectures who separate impaired students from their classmates can still be found in college education nowadays. In their interviews, participants S3 and S5 reported that they were

separated from their classmates several times throughout their courses in order to carry out some activities individually. These participants disagreed with such situation and emphasized that the blind student must be in the same classroom where her/his classmates are, even though s/he may be using specific equipment (such as a computer with a special reader) to help her/him in the learning process.

Secondly, it may be added that the origin of the notion of sublation by blind people who got a college degree spread by the media – which comes from some misunderstanding, according to the subjects of this study – may also be fought against. S4 showed his concern towards this notion and believes that it does not help the blind; on the contrary, it harms them because *“it may create the false idea that they must gain things without studying” (interview)*. Fighting against the misunderstanding of the process of sublation – and against popular ideas or myths, mentioned at the beginning of the text when Amiralian (1997) and Vygotski (1997b, 1997c) were mentioned – implies strategy planning, implementation and evaluation carried out by lectures who can spread the potentialities blind people have to groups of parents and to the whole community. It also implies careful teacher education processes so that educators become able to work on tasks that involve students collectively. Such education, besides the study of theories that can ground teaching, may begin by proposing an open debate about the conceptions of each educator about blindness: it is believed that what some teachers think about their blind students may often interfere negatively in their class, even though the teachers may not realize it (MOSQUERA and STOBĂUS, 2003). Awareness of these concepts may help the teacher think over prejudiced attitudes or super protective ones.

In S4's opinion (interview), which is the same idea defended in this study, besides the fact that the teaching proposal should be planned as collaborative work, the blind person's attitude of sublation implies her/his need to be aware of the effort s/he must make to take a college course that is meaningful for her/his life and professional practice. S7 (essay) stated, and this study agrees with her opinion, that the best strategy to sublimate a disability is to invest in education.

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Bento Selau

Possui graduação em Educação Física pelo Centro Universitário Metodista IPA, mestrado em Educação pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul e doutorado em Educação pela Universidade Federal de Pelotas. Atualmente é professor da Universidade Federal do Pampa.

Rafael Fonseca de Castro

Professor do Departamento de Ciências da Educação da Universidade Federal de Rondônia (UNIR), desenvolve estudos sobre ensino e aprendizagem, formação de professores, Psicologia da Educação, metodologia de pesquisa, Tecnologias Emergentes e EaD, Gestão Escolar, Linguística Textual e Educação na Saúde.

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