

Teaching, Experience and Places of Learning

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ABSTRACT – Teaching, Experience and Places of Learning^I. The central aim of this article is to problematize teacher training based on the notions of experience and places of learning. In order to achieve this, three teacher training experiences are presented, which took place in a Pedagogy degree course at a public university and, over the last few years, have focused on the creation and experimentation of learning places. Based on the premise of the urgency of training focused on creation and experimentation, places of learning mediated by experience stand out as a venture into the open, singular and collective dimension of this process.

Keywords: Teacher Training. Experience. Places of Learning. Pedagogy. Cultural Studies in Education.

RESUMO – Docência, Experiência e Lugares de Aprendizagem. O objetivo central deste artigo é problematizar a formação docente a partir de articulações entre as noções de experiência e lugares de aprendizagem. Para a realização de tal intento, são expostas três experiências de formação docente realizadas em um curso de licenciatura em Pedagogia de uma universidade pública e que privilegiaram, no decorrer dos últimos anos, a criação e experimentação de lugares de aprendizagem. Tendo como premissa a urgência de uma formação focada na criação e experimentação, os lugares de aprendizagem mediados pela experiência sobressaem como uma aposta na dimensão aberta, singular e coletiva de tal processo.

Palavras-chave: Formação Docente. Experiência. Lugares de Aprendizagem. Pedagogia. Estudos Culturais em Educação.

Conversation Starter

What is the place of experience in teacher training? In what ways do we move towards the places of learning that already exist in the school environment and, at the same time, compose and reinvent them, in order to provoke an education that is bolstered, reconfigured and transformed by our direct experiences (individual or collective)? These two questions, among many others we could ask, act here as levers to bring into focus the following proposition: to reflect on teaching from the point of view of training mediated by places of learning structured by experience.

It should be noted that, from the theoretical perspective of this article, places of learning are understood as a topos that expands beyond exclusively rational and geographical definitions, providing conditions for the production of countless experiences that bring subjects into interaction with each other and the world. They are places that are not always identified only by their material or architectural characteristics, but as environments that drive knowledge in constant construction, producing learning based on the experiences lived in their spaces and times (Ellsworth, 2005).

In order to develop this path, we focus on three teacher training experiences that have, over the last few years, emphasized the creation and experimentation of places of learning. When referring to the notion of experience, we start from the understanding that it is “an encounter or a relationship with something that is experienced or proven” (Larrosa, 2002, p. 25). The radical *periri* is also found in *periculum*, danger, whereas its Indo-European root is *per*, related to the idea of “traversing”, and, secondly, to the idea of proof (Larrosa, 2002).

In addition, the same author adds that, in German, experience is *Erfahrung*, where *fahren* indicates “to travel”, also pointing out that from the old High German *fara* comes *Gefahr*, ‘danger’, and *gefährden*, “to endanger”. Therefore, for Larrosa (2002, p. 25), “in both the Germanic and Latin languages, the word experience inseparably contains the dimension of traversing and danger”. To traverse territories is to challenge the known or the unknown, to throw oneself into environments that are almost always unpredictable, to make oneself through experiences that enable other ways of living in the spaces-times that we pass through, inhabit and occupy.

The different ways in which we live in the world and with others can be understood as experiences, because they are always “relational”, from the field of social relations. Foucault (2006) approached this question from the point of view of the connection between the knowledge of things and the relationship through which the subject governs him/herself and others as a way of conducting oneself in and with the world. According to Foucault, it is only and always about others, the world and what surrounds us and, for this, “it is only necessary to have a different way of knowing these things” (Foucault, 2006, p. 286). This different way of knowing is relational; it is the relationship

between others, the world and ourselves, because we make “ourselves the recurring and constant term of all these relationships” and it is through them that we must direct our gaze towards the things of the world. Consequently, we can infer that the actions of the subject, constituted in this relationship with the things of the world and with the other, can be understood as a learning experience, a pedagogical way of acting.

We hope that the experiences detailed in this article – among a plethora of others that are part of our collection of teacher training stories – can highlight the open, singular and collective dimension of each moment. On the one hand, because we believe in training that takes place intensively and is mediated between subjects, bodies and relationships. On the other hand, because we believe that through each experience, we contribute so that teachers open to their infinite and incessant re-creations set the tone.

Encountering Places of Learning

Experience 1: July 2019. Winter morning. A trip of around 380 kilometers was planned to go from Bagé/RS to Porto Alegre/RS. A pedagogical expedition was about to take place (as part of others that had taken place over the years as part of a Pedagogy degree course). The trip involved attending a peer interaction with the Early Childhood Education interns at the Faculty of Education of UFRGS (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul). Our expectations were huge, given that the trainees carry out impactful work involving multiple experiences and often using art as a remarkable way of working with the children. When we arrived at the gathering, we were faced with a space that had been carefully designed for us to get to know the minutiae of the practices, featuring a display of different materials for us to see, and also an oral presentation by each trainee. It was a unique moment that resonated with each of us over the following years (something that is still echoing today in our conversations, thoughts and actions). We also visited the Vitória Régia Municipal School of Early Childhood Education, located in the city of São Leopoldo/RS. Among other wonders, the school left us amazed with an installation aimed at the kids, who, in the schoolyard, interacted with each other, with the space and even with us. In an outdoor space, with overhead cover, the children were greeted with a variety of leaves on the ground (carefully and aesthetically arranged), with nets to explore the aerial space (and which could be used by moving them around, as well as green leaves falling from the top. Baskets, wood, invitations to creative play, experimentation and lots of movement on the part of little arms that gathered and threw leaves up in the air with admiration. This process was an immersion in the reality of an Early Childhood Education school that we were starting that day. We also slept in Porto Alegre, visited the Iberê Camargo Foundation, the Rio Grande do Sul Museum of Art (MARGS), the Mario Quintana House of Culture (CCMQ), walked through the historic center of Porto Alegre and arrived at the Gasômetro Power Station. It was an intense two days, filled with emotion as we expanded our repertoire, experiences and exchanges. These were days of building up and strengthening links between the students, but also between studies and curiosity, imagination, creation and the recognition that learning means being open to experiences and the adventures of their own transformation. It was a transformative journey, as the group reported, in the sense that we accessed other worlds and were touched by them, experiencing the delights of expanding our fields of possibilities.

Based on the experience report described above, it was noted that the interaction of the subjects with the physical environments was possible through the route taken and the materiality of spaces such as the university, the school, museums and art exhibitions, the streets and buildings along a trail (in the historic center of Porto Alegre/RS). It is important to emphasize that the production of an experience is possible through the relationship between the self and the works, between the self and the disruptive processes experienced, such as the performances seen, the activations in the school and in the sharing of the internship training.

As Ellsworth (2005, p. 2), the author who serves as a reference in this text, states, "we have to look for the learning experience of the self in the times and places of knowledge under construction, which are also the times and places of learning of the self under construction"². The perspective adopted by the author, that it is not only knowledge that is under construction, but also the self that is under permanent construction through relationships, interactions with others and with the world, is a view that permeates this text and facilitates our identification of how experiences and places of learning are analyzed.

It is hoped that the intensification of the experiences described here will highlight the "pedagogical force" at work in different places, referred to by Ellsworth (2005) as "places of learning". These are places that provide some kind of interaction and social relationship for the production of lived experiences through the pedagogical force that continually drives knowledge and learning. After all, imagined, perceived, felt, practiced and lived, spaces-times include places of learning that can connect both "utopias" and "heterotopias" (Foucault, 2001), as they are marked by the juxtaposition of different learning experiences and ways of conducting themselves.

In this discussion, we would also like to point out that places of learning don't simply have to be there for us. On the contrary, we often create (albeit in different and more accessible ways) places of learning through concrete experience. In the pedagogical expedition described above, many spaces were traversed and many places of learning accessed. One of these places of learning was created through an afternoon of experimentation by the schoolchildren. We, strangers in that school space, were touched by a place of learning which, due to its characteristics and the unusual nature of the encounter, put us in a process of contact between the "outside" and the "inside", between the 'exterior' and the "interior", in other words, between the physical materiality of the space and the way our 'self' processed the whole experience. It is this interaction through the place of learning and our condition as subjects participating in the space that provides an intense experience of formation and deconstruction. It is important to emphasize interaction as a process where body, mind and brain³ act together in a lived and learned experience (Ellsworth, 2005). According to the same author (2005), it is a mixture of actions, thoughts and feelings, where the senses are heightened and sensations are produced from these incessant movements between the self and the place.

These are learning experiences in which the body acts as the organic structure of action, the brain functions as the organ that transmits stimuli in the form of thoughts, and the mind, in turn, responds through sensations during the actions thought and carried out (Ellsworth, 2005). All this movement is inseparable and produced simultaneously during a learning experience, because it is “the embodied sensation of making sense, the lived experience of our learnings that make what we call knowledge” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 01).

The integration of body, mind and brain challenges the idea that thinking, acting and feeling occur in isolation. This integrated understanding highlights the importance of sensations in the constitution of learning experiences, since it is through the joint activation of the senses that subjects perceive themselves to be present and involved in the processes provided by places of learning. The fusion of thinking/acting/feeling in a place of learning produces experiences in which the subjects find themselves in a transitional interval between what has already been and what is yet to come (Ellsworth, 2005).

At this juncture, places of learning subvert their fixed function and positioning established by rational thought, acting as interstices that promote openings to other spaces-times. They are movements through which subjects experience mutant learning experiences (Ellsworth, 2005), because they are processed in non-linear ways, where rhythms and speeds are never static: they accompany the performances, events and cultures that move in the spaces-times experienced.

Ellsworth (2005) warns that in order to find and identify certain places of learning, it is necessary to locate their “pivot points”. This “precision” can be verified, according to the author (2005), through the fluids, the movements that are identified through certain crucial points in the architecture or other physical aspects of a place of learning and which bring binarisms such as public/private, inside/outside, self/other, personal/political into play.

Places of learning, bearing in mind their size and physical, material and architectural characteristics, can be excellent laboratories where learning experiences are lived and analyzed as an aesthetic and also ethical experience, as expressed in specific moments of *experience 1*. For Ellsworth (2005), the emphasis on aesthetic experiences in learning processes qualitatively transforms the ‘self’ and the ‘self’ of the other through movements and sensations, as paths that lead to knowledge. This aesthetic learning experience, according to the author, is immersed in networks of cultural and social codes that produce and are produced by the pedagogies. In this circulatory process of production and creation of thinking/feeling in certain places, Architecture, as an aesthetic dimension, involves Pedagogy and Pedagogy involves Architecture (Ellsworth, 2005).

In places of learning, the movements of thought and the senses triggered by the joint action of the body/mind/brain act as vehicles of connection in this interaction with the components “exterior” to the

subject. In this sense, learning places can be interpreted as environments that create “topologies” of relationships between the self and the other, which set the “inside” and the ‘outside’ in motion, since “they invite us to inhabit these topologies in such a way as to release potentialities for launching thoughts, feelings and (inter)actions that in other old configurations are captured and are not free to emerge” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 117). This is an invitation that allows us to go through this *topos* in search of learning experiences from new perspectives, which broaden the possibilities of operating with the uses and understandings of the concept of pedagogy in space-time.

In this sense, “Architecting a space is already part of what we can do to make connections happen”, insofar as “Producing encounters is a significant part of our formative work with art and culture [and we would add: with education and teaching] and in order for them to happen, they need [...] to be effectively and affectively provoked” (Belinaso, 2019, p. 44). In *experience 1*, we can see how multiple the encounters were in a pedagogical expedition that involved different journeys based on contact with a new city (Porto Alegre/RS), with historical, cultural and artistic spaces (Porto Alegre Public Market, Rio Grande do Sul Art Museum (MARGS), Mario Quintana Culture House (CCMQ), Iberê Camargo Foundation), along with a peer interaction focusing on the practices of an internship in Early Childhood Education at Universidade Federal de Rio Grande do Sul (with a carefully planned space for sharing, causing an impact on each person present due to the atmosphere created and the powerful and uplifting speeches) and, finally, through the experience at the school, thanks to the installation and direct contact with people and a different school reality. In view of this, it makes sense to think that “Formative processes can be thought of as openings to new encounters” (Belinaso, 2019, p. 44).

Pedagogy and Teaching as Creation: building places of learning

Ellsworth (2005) encourages us to think about and problematize the pedagogical nature of our experiences in contemporary times, bearing in mind that there are pedagogies at work in plural contexts. As such, the author contributes to discussions around what Cultural Studies in Education⁴ has been calling “cultural pedagogies⁵”, precisely to address pedagogies beyond school spaces. In other words, pedagogies not linked to more formal educational institutions. In short, the author highlights the extent to which learning experiences take place through the interaction of subjects in places of learning and between each other. Above all, these are productive interactions, insofar as the places call for constant interaction, with relationships emerging between the subjects' bodies, their minds and the concrete experiences lived in these places, provoking mediations between the “outside” and the “inside” and, at the same time, calling these distinctions into question.

Let's take a break here or rather introduce an addendum in the form of the notion of emotion based on Didi-Huberman (2016), who in

a brief essay proposes that we consider how emotions mobilize us. This includes a critique of rationalism, insofar as it has created, throughout history, the opposition between *logos* and *pathos*, implying a disavowal of emotion in the West. However, Didi-Huberman (2016) outlines elements that situate it both from a social condition of emotions and from the recognition of its potential for social mobilization. The author asks: “Wouldn't an *emotion* be an *e-motion*, that is, a *motion*, a movement that consists of displacing us (*e-*, *ex*) from ourselves?” (Didi-Huberman, 2016, p. 25-26, emphasis added). And furthermore, “if emotion is a movement, it is therefore an action: something like a gesture that is both exterior and interior”, since “when emotion passes through us, our soul moves, trembles, agitates, and our body does a series of things that we can't even imagine” (Didi-Huberman, 2016, p. 26).

We can discuss the topic of *e-motion*, *motion*, and *movement*. In this context, the group connects via the links between emotion and the self, but also to others and to the ethical-aesthetic experiences provoked by engaging with undergraduate Pedagogy students. The experiences presented in this article are intended, above all, to provide an understanding of how teacher training built around places of learning can create a gap, a sensitive and active opening so that one can be even more present on a unique training journey.

On the one hand, as Didi-Huberman (2016) invites us to problematize, Western society has linked emotions to a notion of primitivism and, as a result, individuals who get emotional as being supposedly “less rational” – in this case, children, animals, women, the elderly, etc. –, but on the other hand, we believe that we could reflect on the extent to which the humanities and training processes also bear traces of this Western history throughout this stage. From this perspective, what does the layout of the classroom with the class facing the blackboard, the teacher positioned at the front, the pupils in rows one behind the other ask us about the place of emotion in this type of space? In fact, what about our educational histories, located in different spaces and times? What do they tell us? How has emotion been perceived as an element to be sought out and valued? How much sensitive life soaks into our formative processes? And how much sensitive life do we create and mobilize as teachers training future teachers?

Interestingly, with Didi-Huberman (2016) we are led to subvert our understanding of emotion, insofar as it is displaced from a form of immobility and seen, above all, as a promoter of action. Therefore, through emotion something comes out of us, something is expelled. Furthermore, we are in a state of active presence in this movement of emotion. In a nutshell, there is an enormous complexity to emotion, because it often challenges us, escapes us and subverts our rational attempts at control. When externalized, emotion begins to dwell in us beyond the merely individual, perhaps. In light of this, we have in mind the affirmative power of teacher training that considers emotion as a first-rate element.

Didi-Huberman (2016) reiterates about emotion-action, and the non-passivity of emotions. By using emotions and their urgency (through shouting, crying, surprise, amazement, etc.) we have a highly mobilizing element. Let's look at what the author says: "If we can't do effective politics with feelings alone, neither can we do good politics by disqualifying our emotions, that is, the emotions of each and every person, the emotions *of all in anyone*" (Didi-Huberman, 2016, p. 38, italics added). What if we replaced the word politics with teacher training? Perhaps it's a question of an effective teacher training policy that reaffirms a place for (and with) emotions, in order to actually shift the ways in which we experience teaching in our trajectories.

In our opinion, these discussions are related to experience 2, which we'll explain below:

Experience 2: The scenario is a music workshop created intensively in a teacher training experience in Pedagogy. With research as the motto, different groups were invited to focus on the principle of creation based on the connection between different languages and the creative process of teachers and children. The teacher-proposer of the action believes that it is up to teachers to experiment with different positions and places of experience. For this reason, the training of Pedagogy students is based on the irremediable connection between theory and practice. During the process of researching, creating and executing the workshop, the three student-creators initiated numerous stimulating ideas, such as: music and the need for experimentation, the creation of a purposeful space in which the subjects directly experienced sounds, senses, colors and sensations, the invitation to combine body, mind and movements through a certain "cavity" that opened up in us, through experience in the space and with others. After all, you weren't alone in the studio, but in tune with other people who were experimenters and open to creation. The studio had drums, guitars, percussion, music of different styles to help expand the subjects' repertoire, black light to set the scene, fabrics and costumes, make-up and neon paints to contrast with the light, etc. The synchronization of actions and the openness to experimentation meant that no one wanted to end the night of experimentation. University life was stretched to the limit that night.

The above description meant learning experiences in which mind and body were active. There was no room for the fragmentation of subjects, nor for "slicing" in the way of learning with the brain, with the hand that records, with the ears that listen or with the eyes that read a text. Rather, it was with a thinking body that, in unison with other thinking bodies, was experiencing a unique and singular experience: sharing a moment that had been researched, planned and intensely lived collectively. A shift in focus, therefore, from learning through the acquisition of knowledge or even direct oral transmission to, more specifically, shared and effectively experienced experiences in a constant symbiosis between thought, action and emotion. Here, there is an intense and lively exteriority that reverberates in the subjective processes, installing experiences that show us how experimenting is a condition for learning.

Camozzato and Costa (2013) analyze the extent to which pedagogy has undergone a pivotal shift, namely: from a centrality in the master to a pedagogy seen much more as the action of the self on the self – a form of self-modeling. In this way, from pedagogy as art – and

therefore dependent on the figure of an educator-artist who would shape the subjects, like a master who sculpted them, molding them according to his intention – we move on to the arts of pedagogy. This conceptual shift expresses the extent to which contemporary cultural conditions lead us to consider that each subject is, to some extent, master of themselves, without depending on (but also without excluding) someone else for their sculpture, since acting on oneself is a condition for continually creating new ways of existing (Camozzato; Costa, 2013).

By referring to the “arts of pedagogy”, we are able to connect to places of learning, insofar as the productions of self that take place there increasingly depend on a multiplicity of possibilities. In other words, the teacher, but not only the teacher. The spaces we pass through, the films, the exhibitions we go to, the journeys between institutions, the book we read, the music we listen to over a hundred times – among others – make up our experiences and learning. In this openness to being formed in relation to processes, materials and spaces, we believe that this link can be intensified when it provokes us to think of teacher training as something that benefits from planning and designing places of learning in which experience is regarded as a primary condition, as we have argued throughout this discussion. In the meantime, experience can have a transversing of emotion, of a “movement out of oneself” (Didi-Huberman, 2016, p. 28).

In *experience 2*, we also have art. And art, as Deleuze and Guattari (1992) emphasize, is the only thing in the world that is preserved. The gestures, works or artistic experiments no longer depend on those who created them, because what preserves art are the blocks of sensations, as composites of affects and percepts. For the authors (1992)

[...] the percepts are no longer perceptions, they are independent of the state of those who experience them; affects are no longer feelings or affections, they overflow the force of those who are traversed by them. Sensations, percepts and affects are beings that are worthwhile in their own right and exceed anything experienced. They exist in the absence of man, we can say, because man, as he is fixed in stone, on canvas or throughout words, is himself a composite of percepts and affects. (Deleuze; Guattari, 1992, p. 212)

In this compound of sensations, the act of creation carried out in a place of learning – such as an art studio – functions as an opening: as an experience that goes through us and expands our ways of living. We paint, sculpt, compose and write with sensations, as Deleuze and Guattari (1992) say. And if with art we have the chance to create fractures, question our daily lives and interrupt mechanical processes, it is above all because there is a traversing of the creative act, precisely to the extent that “when we create, there is a movement of our feelings, which are confronted, brought together, fused, to later be symbolized, transformed into forms that offer themselves to reason, to thought” (Duarte Júnior, 1994, p. 53). This means that “the act of creation is much more the product of feelings and intuitions, than of purely logical operations” (Duarte Júnior, 1994, p. 53).

“Still with regard to the creative attitude, it can be said that it is also an *act of rebellion*” (Duarte Júnior, 1994, p. 53):

[...] that the creator must *deny* the established, the existing, in order to propose another way, another form, in short, to propose the new. The new arises from a discontent with the established. In these terms, any creative act is always *subversive*, because it aims to *change*, to *modify* the existing (Duarte Júnior, 1994, p. 54, author's italics).

What we hope to emphasize here is how teaching is its own creative space. For this reason, reflecting on teacher training may involve fostering, designing and creating places of learning that contribute, above all, to unsettling, subverting and constituting training processes that convey the understanding that teaching is a place of incessant transformation, which is promoted to the extent that there is openness. Better still, that there are many and plural openings. And, as Deleuze and Guattari (1992, p. 166) point out, “no creation exists without experience”, and the composition between teaching and creative processes produces learning experiences as indeterminate zones where life happens, pulses and reinvents itself. Access to these zones often comes through art.

This can be done through pedagogical expeditions, invitations to look and perceive, or even through the promotion and creation of places of learning, as well as moving back and forth between them. From this perspective, perhaps we can think about teaching from the point of view of places of learning and the extent to which such places need not depend solely on art as an area of knowledge. On the contrary, there seems to be an urgent need to transcend disciplinary boundaries and connect them.

It should be emphasized that places of learning open up space for experiences that go beyond the transmission of knowledge. Art, understood as a relational and procedural practice, in turn, enhances the creation of educational environments in which learning takes place through experimentation, sensitivity and co-creation. With this in mind, educational spaces become “territories of invention”, where knowledge is (re)constructed through interactions and lived experiences. This concept is in line with the notion that art is not reduced to an end product: it is, above all, an event in movement. As an incessant process of becoming, art is constituted as a field of forces that is (re)actualized and (re)configured in the interweaving of gestures, materials and affects. It is, however, an experience that destabilizes pre-established orders and systems, calling us to create other ways of perceiving, feeling and interacting with the world (Manning, 2018; 2019).

This is why the discussions concerning “pedagogical force”, the transitional space, the fractures concerning an “interior” and an “exterior”, a “there” and a “here”, etc., make sense given that we strive for quality teacher training that understands how much teaching implies a direct, experiential relationship with the creation of senses and

meanings about teaching. It is not enough, therefore, to desensitize the teacher training process by dumbing it down through the excessive manifestation of the senses of hearing and speech alone. It is not enough to just master reading and writing (although these are essential and necessary in daily academic and professional life), but also to engender different senses, languages and, likewise, experiences that mobilize the students in training as a whole, exploding binarisms such as reason and emotion, theory and practice, among others. As teacher trainers, we advocate revisiting our own practices so that they open up space for the creation of unusual everyday life and learning places that help train professionals who make sense of the (always productive) connection between doing and thinking, between knowing and being affected.

Experience 3: What if the most hoped-for space is a dark room? What happens there? What is it made of? What stories comprise it? One of them refers to a period in which it was recreated as follows: there was a considerable amount of shredded paper on the floor, bags of voile fabric with various scents falling from the ceiling and intertwined pieces of toilet paper that were almost transparent they were so thin, also falling from above to the floor, extending into the space. In the corners of the room, there were rolls of the same paper for experimentation and creation. This room received different groups who, depending on the experiences and openness of those present, reinvented its uses in many ways. For one group, the dark room with the black light became a great sea. They swam intensely, from one corner of the room to the other, suddenly a shark appeared and chased some of the swimmers, while others invented stories of parties, weddings, ruins, etc. The people in attendance fabulated and fictionalized existence by creating unique events. For another group, the room became a large dance stage, where the contrast between the long pieces of paper helped to compose choreographies that brought together bodies, roles, music and movements. In short, to enter that space was to come across an unreproducible production, since it was made by those who were there, at that moment, with a precise group driven by an unrepeatable experience. Other groups entered the ever-replicated and reorganized room, but no experience was ever the same. Each time, there were new stories, new creative acts and the constant reinvention of the same place of learning.

“Dark room”, “black light”, “experimentation and creation”, “experiences”, “openings”, were just some of the terms described in *experience 3*, which highlight and show the intense provocation of the custom-built learning place. By providing movement, not only through the place, the subjects present at the experience were invited to inhabit and also create another place, one that is not easily accessible in our daily lives.

The creation of another place through events, actions and inventions based on *experience 3* brings us back to Certeau's considerations (1998) when he states that a “practice of space is inseparable from the dreamed place”; it is the “indefinite process of being absent and looking for one's own” (p. 183). In this sense, Silva (2018) points out that organizing a space for experimentation establishes a “desired topology”, a dreamed and imagined place that can be experienced through the active living of possibilities and knowledge that can happen in every encounter, every approach and invention with others in a place.

Places that provide and produce countless different learning experiences.

Designing and preparing such a place of learning, in *experience 3*, was allied, above all, to a set of intentions that we consider vital, namely:

(a) creating a place from an inhabited space. In this sense, it's worth mentioning that creating a meaning means establishing a more unique relationship, so it's about moving from a space to a place that, when experienced in different and unique ways, subverts the simple room that, like the others in a university building, now stands out from the rest due to the other-place that opens up the possibility for multiple experimentations;

(b) the understanding that each place deals with heterotopia, as we pointed out earlier. The training space – in this case, the university space – seems to us to be too serious, too stern. It's a space that is often sanctified by such a mark. In *Of Other Spaces*, Foucault (2001) mentions how heterotopia refers to places that are real, but which in our societies are considered to be outside the socially established places. In this way, heterotopia means a certain space of the other. We know how much Western society has invested throughout history in the “one”, the “same” and the seat of the universal. As such, an incessant space of the same is superimposed and education, which as the fruit of the legacies of Western rationality, does not completely escape this logic. However, this is not a judgment, but a critique that can enable us to recreate this condition;

(c) *experience 3* also exposes the fabulations and fictionalizations that the produced place of learning incited. The four-walled space – a classroom that was subverted in its uses and meanings – invited new oral and bodily experimentation. This led to a suspension of the “real”, which has so precariously been the driving force behind education, extracting the power to imagine and reinvent and, consequently, to fabulate and fictionalize. Designing this place of learning was intended, among other things, to engender an act of rebellion (Duarte Júnior, 1994) in teacher training, promoting experiences that could generate intense displacements.

Based on Ellsworth (2005), we consider how one of the most vital teaching gestures to be discussed revolves around a certain curation of places of learning, insofar as this implies a shift from a notion of corporealities fixed to school walls to, above all, a movement between places and bodies. In the interaction between subjects and places of learning, according to Ellsworth (2005), it should be noted that the different places can be named and identified, because they trigger senses and enable sensations between thinking and feeling, since we are traversed through time and space between knowing and not knowing, in the space and time of learning as a lived experience, as an opening and interval of change for an unpredictable future.

Ellsworth (2005) proposes a change of perspective in the understanding of education and pedagogy, and therefore of learning. By emphasizing, for example, that she does not want to teach and learn in the absence of emotion, pleasure, cultural artifacts, events and experiences that provide interaction between the body/mind/brain of individuals and the world around them, the author makes it possible to explore pedagogical learning experiences that challenge views accustomed to seeing learning from rigid points of view.

Furthermore, using the concept of transitional space as a basis for discussion, based on the contributions of psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, Ellsworth (2005) points out that this concept is productive insofar as it contributes to a suspension of divisions around “inside” and “outside”, inside oneself and outside oneself, etc., as we have argued. This is because the transition does not refer to the order of content, but to new uses. In other words, beyond dichotomous thinking, what stands out is precisely the fact that the contents are relocated and placed in new contexts, with added “novelty”. Transitional space, therefore, implies a productive suspension between divisions: “both real and imagined physical limits... are put into play” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 32). Transitional space happens to the degree that subjects find the chance for experimentation, gaining entrance to unthought, intense and more open relationships.

With this in mind, we now turn to the discussions provided by philosopher and educator John Dewey (2010), since he can help us approach the concept of experience. In his work *Art and Experience*, originally published in 1934, Dewey is concerned with the qualities of aesthetic experience in the field of art. However, we believe that it is possible to find in the idea of experience developed by the author some affinities regarding the conditions and learning that are provided through the relationship between the individual and the environment. For Dewey (2010), although philosophy, even empirical philosophy, has always spoken of experience in general, the author refers to a continuous experience that he calls “singular”,

[...] because the interaction of the living being with environmental conditions is involved in the very process of living. In situations of resistance and conflict, the aspects and elements of the self and the world involved in this interaction modify the experience through emotions and ideas, in such a way that conscious intention emerges (Dewey, 2010, p. 109).

For Dewey (2010), the understanding of this singular experience implied by the interaction between the self and the world is integral, since

[...] Life is not a uniform and uninterrupted march or flow. It is made up of stories, each with its own plot, its beginning and movement toward its end, each with its own particular rhythmic movement, each with its own unrepeatable quality that runs through it entirely (Dewey, 2010, p. 110).

Therefore, it is feasible to infer that through the different movements and interruptions, an experience is lived in its entirety. To become “singular”, according to Dewey (2010), the experience needs a unity that constitutes it and permeates it wholly, despite the variations in the parts that make it up. This unity, continues the philosopher (Dewey, 2010, p. 112), “is not affective, practical or intellectual, for these terms name distinctions that reflection can make within it”. Even the existence of pauses and resting places in an experience of continuous fusion such as the “singular” serve to punctuate and define the quality of the movement, summarizing what has passed and preventing it from dissipating (Dewey, 2010).

This is why this type of experience will have an intellectual meaning, where the movement of thinking takes place through a flow of ideas as phases that are “Affectively and practically distinct from an underlying evolving quality; shifting variations, not separate and independent [...], but subtle shades of a penetrating and developing tone” (Dewey, 2010, p. 113). This is why this type of experience will have an intellectual meaning, where the movement of thinking takes place through a flow of ideas as phases that are “affectively and practically distinct from an evolving underlying quality; mobile variations, not separate and independent [...], but subtle shades of a penetrating and developing tonality” (Dewey, 2010, p. 113). The “subtle shades” that form the ‘tonality’ will make up what Dewey (2010) calls the “intimate connection” between doing and feeling.

This connection is indispensable for an experience to be integral and singular, because if “when we manipulate, we touch and feel; when we look, we see; when we listen, we hear”; it is this gaze that accompanies what is done (Dewey, 2010, p. 130). This intimate connection, according to Dewey (2010, p. 130), in which “subsequent doing is cumulative, and not a matter of whim or routine” is what will distinguish a singular experience from a dominantly practical action, because “an activity may be too automatic to allow a sense of what it refers to and where it is going” (Dewey, 2010, p. 114).

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1971) highlights “differentiation” as the first criterion that marks the continuity of an experience, because “every experience is a moving force. Its value can only be judged on the basis of the direction in which it moves” (p. 44). The “interaction” and the “situation”, together with the ‘environment’, are other indispensable criteria for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force, which indicate the equality of factors of objective and subjective conditions, since every experience is a “reciprocal game” of these conditions, which taken together, constitute what the author calls a “situation” (p. 48). The conceptions of “situation” and ‘interaction’ are inseparable, because an experience is always what it is because it has a place, a “transition between an individual and what, at the moment, constitutes his or her environment, and if the latter consists of people they are talking to, the object being talked about forms part of the situation” (Dewey, 1971, p. 51). The environment, according

to the author, is any condition in which the individual interacts with personal needs, purposes and capacities to create an experience.

Terms such as “interaction”, “transition”, “situation” and “environment” become important in an article that focuses on teaching, considering that no experience takes place in a vacuum, as Dewey (1971, p. 44, italics added) points out: “there are sources *outside* the individual that give rise to experience, and experience is constantly fed by these sources”. Formulated by Dewey between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, this idea postulates that the subject does not acquire experience, but is constituted and also produced through constant, continuous, albeit non-repetitive movements of experiences between other individuals and their surroundings.

The importance of the concept of experience presented by Dewey (2010; 1971) brings to light components that help understand the transition that the individual establishes in their relationship with the environment. In this way, they are connected to Ellsworth's (2005) investigations, which concern those experiences of the body, mind and brain that jointly produce an affective response to constitute and relate to each other in time and space through different places of learning. In order to grasp the pedagogical possibilities of these places, we need to change our angle of vision. In other words, we don't have to look at them from the “center” of dominant educational discourses and practices, because there are many provocative and promising places for investigation, peculiar places where it is difficult to classify pedagogy and learning. It also includes the places we create. The concept of “places of learning” thus highlights the sensations made by the body, mind and brain, as we hope to have shown from the three different experiences with places of learning.

A Pause in the Conversation (Final Considerations)

In this article, we look at three teacher training experiences – *experience 1*, which focused on a pedagogical expedition with multiple unique experiences, *experience 2*, which featured a music workshop, and *experience 3*, which centered on experimentation in a blacklight room – with the aim of linking them together to show the extent to which the intertwining of teaching, experience and places of learning is an imperative to improve training processes. We wanted to put a special emphasis on the open, dynamic and experimental processes that are possible and necessary in our teacher training courses. After all, how can we reinvent teaching if not through direct, untranslatable and unique experience?

The concept of places of learning, presented by Ellsworth (2005), was central to our discussions, since it represents a vital shift away from dichotomies such as inside/outside, reason/emotion, etc., helping us to rethink teacher training, with the guiding thread being how the experience is something that happens to us (Larrosa, 2002). Because of this, we wanted to highlight the extent to which it can be provoked by

places of learning produced in a specific way, or even by places we pass through/traverse, as in *experience 1*, when we went on a pedagogical expedition to experiment with processes. Traversing places, experimenting with all the senses, living an experience that is both individual and collective, among other movements, implies opening cracks in the rigid teacher training that is based on the senses of sight and hearing, which are so typical of much of Brazilian university training.

More specifically, we are trying to invite our readers to add the concepts of experience and places of learning to their daily actions in teacher training. In our view, this implies considering that training is enhanced when students are confronted with the need to directly experience specific processes that take them out of a certain passivity, provoking intellectual and bodily movement. Between places, materialities and other bodies-subjects, displacements, tremors, emotions and anything else of the order of the untranslatable and inexplicable can occur. By linking teaching, experience and places of learning, we wanted to draw attention to the productive configuration of this intertwining, insofar as it opens up training to “how much creation emerges as a substratum for any possibility of reaffirming the university (and other educational settings, why not?) as a time-space of creation” (Costa; Camozzato, 2021, p. 421).

Received on March 05, 2023

Approved on April 11, 2025

Notes

¹ The authors would like to thank Professor Rodrigo Saballa de Carvalho and his Early Childhood Education interns who took the Pedagogy degree course at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), class of 2019/1, as well as Professors Marisete Schmidt, Adriana Aparecida Souza, Carolina Severo and Ozi Oliveira – along with the whole team and the children from EMEI Vitória Régia, in São Leopoldo/RS – for their generous welcome to the teachers and students from the Pedagogy degree course at Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul (Uergs), in Bagé/RS. The pedagogical expedition was deeply mobilizing and transformative, resulting in fruitful twists and turns in the training process.

² We are responsible for the English and Spanish translations in this article.

³ The expression “body, mind and brain”, widely used by Ellsworth (2005), is used here as a reference to a critique of the separation between reason and emotion, which structures modern rationality. This separation sustains the empire of the dichotomies – still present today – that comprise, in particular, the Western rationalist tradition. Anchored in Cultural Studies in Education, focusing on its post-structuralist strand, we also reject the concept of a mind that is supposedly autonomous, universal and detached from the body and its materialities. On the contrary, we affirm the inseparability between body, mind and brain as co-implicated dimensions in socio-cultural and historical practices. Therefore, it is a question of displacing the centrality of abstract reason in order to reinscribe the incessant permeabilities between these dimensions, understanding knowledge as a situated, affective, embodied practice permeated by relations of power and knowledge, produced in and by discourse.

⁴ To find out more, we suggest reading the book *O que são estudos culturais hoje?* (What are cultural studies today?) (Santos; Karnopp; Wortmann, 2022) and also viewing the videos from *Jornadas de Estudos Culturais em Educação* (JECE), which have been

consolidated since 2022 as a continuous space for debate, the exchange of ideas and the sharing between researchers and practitioners of Cultural Studies in Education in Brazil and, more recently, in other countries. The videos are available at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBSRW-iyAelrgQ1sSNBlPsw>.

- ⁵ We recommend the following materials for those who want to delve deeper into this discussion: Camozzato (2014), Camozzato, Carvalho and Andrade (2016), Andrade and Costa (2017), Camozzato and Ignácio (2023), among others that we could list.

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Availability of research data: the data set supporting the results of this study is published in the article itself.

Editor in charge: Fabiana de Amorim Marcello

