

A Formative Experience in a Freinet School During a Pandemic¹

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ABSTRACT

This work intrigues one search about master's degree that it was aimed at analyze the insertion of the pedagogy students in the schools campus and the realization of the curricular internship supervised in pandemic's time. Of approach, this search involved as narrative interviews methodology, campus diary and records marked by the students of the discipline Estágio Curricular Supervisionado on the Elementary School. In this, we will present the situation of the internship experienced by one of the students, we participate in the research, with the objective to analyze the partnership between intern and classroom professor and the tensions experienced for the realization the internship on the COVID-19 pandemic context.

KEYWORDS: Supervised Internship. Pandemic. Freinet Pedagogy.

Uma experiência formativa em uma Escola Freinet em tempos de Pandemia

RESUMO

Este trabalho integrou uma pesquisa de mestrado que buscou investigar a inserção dos alunos de pedagogia de uma instituição de ensino superior do estado de São Paulo nas escolas-campo para a realização do estágio curricular supervisionado em tempos de pandemia. Envolveu como

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metodologia entrevistas narrativas, diário de campo e registros produzidos pelas alunas da disciplina de Estágio Curricular Supervisionado no Ensino Fundamental. Apresenta-se aqui a situação de estágio vivenciada por Rubi, uma das estudantes participantes da pesquisa, com o objetivo de analisar, por meio de suas narrativas, sua experiência formativa em uma escola Freinet, a possibilidade da parceria entre estagiária e professora da sala de aula, e as tensões experienciadas para a realização de estágio no contexto da pandemia da Covid-19.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estágio Supervisionado. Pandemia. Pedagogia Freinet.

Prácticas supervisadas en tiempos de pandemia en un aula de Freinet

RESUMEN

Este trabajo integra una investigación de máster que tuvo como objetivo general analizar la inserción de los alumnos de pedagogía en las escuelas de campo y la realización de las prácticas curriculares supervisadas en tiempos de pandemia. De enfoque, esta investigación involucró como metodología entrevistas narrativas, diario de campo y registros producidos por las alumnas de la disciplina de Prácticas Curriculares Supervisadas en Educación Primaria. En esta, presentaremos la situación de prácticas experimentada por uno de los estudiantes, participantes de la investigación, con el objetivo de analizar la asociación entre pasante y profesora del aula y las tensiones experimentadas para la realización de prácticas en el contexto de la pandemia de Covid-19.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pasantía supervisada. Pandemia. Pedagogía Freinet.

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Introduction

The text presented here is part of a master's research that aimed to investigate the integration of pedagogy students from a higher education institution in the state of São Paulo into field schools for the completion of supervised curricular internships during the Covid-19 pandemic - an acute

respiratory infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, potentially severe, highly transmissible, and globally distributed. It analyzes the relationships between university and school, from the perspective of a group of students taking the Projects and Supervised Internship course in elementary education. Narrative interviews and the formation memoir produced in the course served as the basis for gathering evidence regarding the relationships between university and school and all the protagonists involved in this process, seeking to understand the role of the internship in the initial teacher training, the role of the internship supervisor, and the relationship between them.

Six students from the Projects and Supervised Internship course, which is part of the Pedagogy curriculum, participated in this project, where I conducted teaching internships in the first semester of 2020. Before starting as a teaching intern, I had the opportunity to participate in a roundtable discussion - composed of pedagogy undergraduates, teachers working in the municipal public school system, and some school principals from the public network - organized by the teachers responsible for the Supervised Internship course in the Pedagogy program. Each of the teachers and managers present shared a bit of their professional history and invited the teachers in initial training to intern in the classrooms or school institutions of the professionals present. In this experience as a teaching intern in higher education, I began to assist in finding schools for internships, suggesting readings for the final project, and providing assistance with ethics committee documentation. I didn't feel just like an intern, but also as a collaborator of the teacher, a situation that also brought me closer to the theme in question. After four in-person meetings, the world was engulfed in a pandemic that caused fear, insecurity, and despair. Classes at the university began to take place remotely, and the educational system organized itself with home activities and video lessons.

Gradually, schools began to reorganize to meet the demand, albeit not in person. Some adapted with remote classes, while others opted for home-

based activities provided by the Education Department, along with parent and student groups on WhatsApp. The challenge of completing the internship persisted. Alongside university professors, I participated in actively seeking schools willing to host these students remotely, where each participating student would present their internship experience.

Monitoring Internships through Narratives

Throughout the first semester of 2020, I supervised a group of students enrolled in the Projects and Supervised Internship course, as they worked with elementary education within the Pedagogy program at a private university in the interior of São Paulo. Supervision meetings were audio-recorded, and the researcher kept a field diary, documenting the main discussions and impressions of each session. Additionally, the students' written productions throughout the semester were analyzed, and autobiographical research was conducted, aiming to reflect with the students on their experiences as interns, considering that they had already had the opportunity to engage in internships on other occasions. According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2015), narrative interviews are understood as storytelling, present in various human experiences, enabling the recounting and sharing of experiences while preserving particularities, thus making it something familiar.

Some authors have been advocating for the use of narratives in the process of initial education. Among them, we can mention Moura (1998), Passeggi (2010), Prado, and Soligo, among others.

The students were invited to document their experiences in the Supervised Internship course through narrative texts, recording and reflecting on their classroom experiences. They were also requested to revisit their training portfolio, already initiated in other courses, to include their internship experience in it.

Developing a training portfolio enables aspiring educators to share experiences, presenting to the reader passions, emotions, and feelings stored in memory. The one who narrates their story always does so for someone, and therefore, it is relevant to consider the portfolio not merely as a recounting of events, but as an opportunity for reflection on the individual and social lives of the subjects, as well as a chance to revisit and redefine their educational journey.

According to Prado and Soligo, in a memorial, there is no obligation to chronicle one's entire life. It can be a literary or scientific work in which the author, or one of the characters, recalls events they have witnessed or taken part in. It is a text that recounts significant events for the producer, taking into account their memories. It serves as a mark, a sign, a record of what the author considers essential for themselves and what they suppose is also essential for their listeners or readers.

In addition to the portfolio, the students were requested to document their experiences through pedagogical narratives. According to Prado (2015), pedagogical experiences, so common in the daily life of teaching and often shared orally, are opportunities for teachers to express their views on their school life, disseminating their wisdom and knowledge. When these experiences are transformed into written narratives, they are also referred to as pedagogical narratives. They represent the everyday experiences of schooling narrated by education professionals.

In addition to the materials developed by each of them, the research also included individual interviews regarding the topic under consideration and reflections on their respective experiences. We will present the internship situation of Rubi, a pedagogy student at a university located in a town in the countryside, as well as the municipal public school where she is conducting her paid internship.

For Pimenta and Lima (2017, p. 26),

Internship has always been identified as the practical component of professional training courses, contrasting with theory. In the case of teacher training, however, the course neither theoretically grounds the future professional's practice nor takes practice as a reference for theoretical foundation. In other words, it lacks both theory and practice.

Understanding the internship as the first contact of these professionals in training with the school context, it is observed that it is necessary for it to be carried out effectively, in order to enable the intern to perceive the challenges of the teaching profession, as well as the field of knowledge of the future professional.

In the narrative interview granted to the researcher, Rubi expressed her belief that learning occurs through face-to-face interaction. However, she is part of the group of students who, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, did not have the opportunity to carry out the internship during the period when she was taking the Projects and Teaching Internship in Elementary Education course as part of the Pedagogy curriculum in the year 2020.

Characterized as a pandemic in March 2020, the main recommendation from the World Health Organization (WHO) to contain the spread of the disease was the so-called "distancing" or "social isolation," aimed at inhibiting the disease's propagation and local transmission by infected individuals. Such measures were considered effective because the primary mode of coronavirus transmission occurs through contact with infected individuals. Greetings, kissing, sharing cups and utensils are some of the behaviors that should be avoided, as transmission can occur through saliva droplets, sneezing, coughing, or mucus, which can be passed on by touch or handshake, as well as through contaminated objects or surfaces.

In the city where the university was located, the period of quarantine was established by Decree No. 7,356, dated March 18, 2020 (Itatiba, 2020), which, among its considerations, included the closure of schools:

Article 7 - As of March 23, 2020, and indefinitely, classes in municipal public schools are suspended. March 23 to 27 will replace the first week of the school break.

Institutions of Higher Education, through Ordinance No. 544, dated June 16, 2020, were granted autonomy to organize the academic calendar, extending the offering of remote teaching until July 31, 2020. However, it was not possible to schedule the internship for the course within this period. Rubi, like many other students, was unable to complete her internship. She reports as follows:

[...] the school director has not yet authorized my internship under these conditions. However, as soon as school activities resume, I will return to fulfill my hours and be able to experience pedagogical practices in elementary education. Nevertheless, as proposed by the university, we continue to attend internship supervisions, where we had the participation of educators who, through video calls, shared their experiences regarding the current situation. We also produced a learning portfolio addressing this issue. [...]

The following week began, and the situation persisted, worsening day by day worldwide, particularly in Brazil, specifically in the state of São Paulo, causing repercussions in the city. Based on the official decrees of the state, schools remain closed. This prompted the Education Department to mobilize on the issue of classes and the situation of all involved. It was established, in general, for the entire municipal network, blocks of activities that students can perform at home. So far, there are already four blocks, which include activities from early childhood education to elementary school. For students from the 6th to the 9th grade, a recently implemented app is also being used to facilitate the completion of these activities (Excerpts from Rubi's portfolio).

In light of this new scenario, Rubi had the opportunity to conduct her internship remotely in the first semester of 2021, observing the classes of a third-grade class in a different city from where she lives and studies. This opportunity arose through Resolution SME/FUMEC No. 002, dated March 26, 2020 (Campinas, 2020), which provided online classes to students through the Google Classroom platform.

To follow this process with the teacher of the classroom, we created a WhatsApp group. In the conversations and shared exchanges, Rubi's involvement and interaction with the classroom teacher were noticeable, enabling the pedagogy student and the teacher to work together, articulate knowledge, and also identify the weaknesses in practice.

The school works with techniques from Freinet Pedagogy, which Rubi became acquainted with at the beginning of her undergraduate studies and which were responsible for her choice of the Pedagogy course. This also directed her perspective regarding interactions with children. It is important now to understand Freinet:

Célestin Baptistin Freinet was born on October 15, 1896, in the town of Gars, southern France. His parents were peasants, and from a very young age, Célestin began working in the fields. The concrete conditions experienced by him, in a way, influenced his conception of childhood and child labor and also resonated in his practice as a teacher. He advocated that schools enable students to engage in meaningful work, considering work as human production (Buscariolo; Anjos, 2022, p.127).

Cooperation is one of the foundational pillars of Freinet Pedagogy. It was through dialogue among peers, initially through correspondence, that a movement was born that exists today in more than 30 countries, including Brazil. Kanamaru (2014, p.770) asserts: "We hypothesize cooperativism and self-management as the original contribution in Freinet's work,

characterizing it in a renewed aspect: that of a solidarity-based pedagogy with an international character".

The principles of Freinet align with a democratic and cooperative school, emphasizing the importance of collective decision-making (Barros; Ferreira, 2022). Among these principles, Freinet (1975, p. 21) always understood the importance of dialogue among peers:

The teachers' class counted only with a few pioneers... while I was already establishing a cooperative with circulars, bulletins, and a magazine of children's texts... We had already broken the circle of sterile individualism. We had laid the foundations of our cooperative pedagogical movement.

Let us revisit Rubi's enthusiasm for the Freinet Pedagogy during her internship. In her narrative interview, the student highlights that the principles of Freinet pedagogy - free expression, cooperation, education for work, individual and collective reflection, sociability, autonomy, communication, and experimentation - sparked her interest at the beginning of her pedagogy degree. She mentions that experiencing Freinet techniques, even remotely, allowed for significant learning opportunities.

Rubi's reception into the discipline's work was facilitated by the classroom teacher, who also invited her to participate in the weekly teachers' meetings and provided access to the school's developed planning.

I had the privilege of having the internship supervisor with several contacts, and I was invited to complete the hours at the school in Campinas remotely, in a 3rd-grade classroom with the wonderful teacher who welcomed me with such warmth and was very helpful, meeting all my needs and assisting me throughout this process. Every Monday, I participated in the HTPC meetings with the teachers, coordinator, and school principal, always including me in everything. I took full advantage of the training sessions with

guests that the institution provided for the teachers; without a doubt, it was a very enriching experience. (Excerpt from the memorial produced by Rubi in the supervised internship discipline)

The relationship experienced by Rubi demonstrates the sensitivity of the teacher in feeling responsible for the formation of this pedagogy student who would be future working in the classroom: she provided her with contact with the students, pedagogical aspects, and the content to be worked on, even in an adverse situation of remote teaching, proposing the experience of human formation and reviewing her pedagogical practice.

The narrative presented by Rubi highlights the importance of the partnership between the teacher and the intern in building a collective of cooperation and dialogue among peers, contributing increasingly to the formation of education professionals in initial and ongoing training.

Considerations

Following Rubi's journey in the completion of her supervised internship, we observe the exchange of experiences and roles, demonstrating that the internship can benefit not only the interns themselves:

Everyone was always welcoming, counting on my participation, and whenever possible, they questioned my ideas, making me feel included in lesson preparation and able to express myself actively. I confess it seemed like I was also the teacher, and that made me very happy.

Regarding the classes, my participation was also very significant. They occurred every two weeks, and unfortunately, few students joined due to the challenges of being online; most needed to wait for a guardian to assist with access. However, every time I participated, it was very special. The teacher had shared the Google Classroom with me, so like the students, I also had access to the

planned activities. Additionally, I had the opportunity to record some videos to contribute to the classes. The students showed interest and always provided feedback.

Amidst the chaos that the internship represented in my education, I can affirm that the saying "God writes straight with crooked lines" has never made more sense, as I learned a lot in a way that perhaps wouldn't have been possible in a face-to-face setting. Ultimately, I felt very fulfilled with the completion of another stage of my pedagogy journey, and I am certain that when I can, I will visit the school, the teacher, and all the professionals involved who made a difference in this very difficult time we are facing.

Therefore, the feeling is one of gratitude for teachers who are striving so much to support these students in every way, both psychologically and pedagogically. I feel very happy to have been part, even if for a short time, of each one's life. (Narrative interview conducted with Rubi).

The pandemic caused by the Covid-19 vector will certainly be one of those stories shared not only as potential case study indicators or simple recounts of events. All the necessary changes in response to the new scenario it presented will be part of our history, shared as a life experience, an opportunity for reflection on the individual, social, and cultural lives of individuals.

From the narrative presented, we can discern some of the movement within the supervised internship. The encounters and disenchantments that occurred even before the pandemic, the school changes, aspirations, and fears are related and interact with many other situations faced by numerous other pedagogy students in training. Just like the pedagogical practices of different institutions, the internship does not happen in isolation. Theory and practice are present in both schools and universities, and perhaps the greatest challenge lies in promoting dialogue between them during the formation of the pedagogue.

With the aim of transformative education and considering the education professional as someone who is in constant development, reflection in action needs to be understood as essential. A curriculum that integrates educational policies aiming at human formation is crucial so that the internship can provide teachers in their initial training, in addition to addressing issues related to the profession, with experiences of a social nature.

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