

Contemporary research in Educational Psychology
Pesquisas contemporâneas em Psicologia Educacional
Investigaciones contemporâneas en Psicología Educacional

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to undertake a systematic review of the academic production and theses of a Graduate Program in Educational Psychology in the research area "Educational Processes in the Social and Political Context" of an Educational Center in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. The research was carried out using the databases of the portal of the Program and the portal of Capes - Catalog of Theses and Dissertations, from 2008 to 2016. 143 studies were encountered and 56 were selected for analysis of the proposed research area. In this way, we elaborated an overview of the research carried out with respect to the number of productions, topics, subtopics, keywords and theoretical-methodological contributions. The realization of this systematic review allowed for a panorama that determined that the majority of academic studies in the educational field are anchored in cultural-historical theory and social representations. We observed a hegemony of qualitative research, with references to Educational Psychology and human development, but no discussion of inequalities in education with respect to ethnic-racial issues.

Key words: Educational Psychology, dissertations, educational processes, postgraduate studies, learning

Resumo: Esse estudo objetivou realizar uma revisão de bibliografia sistemática da produção acadêmica, dissertações, de um Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia Educacional, da linha de pesquisa "Processos educacionais no contexto social e político", de um Centro Educacional no Estado de São Paulo, Brasil. A pesquisa foi realizada nas bases do Portal do referido Programa, e Portal da Capes – Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações, no período de 2008 a 2016. Foram encontrados 143 estudos, sendo 56 selecionados para análise da linha de pesquisa proposta. Desse modo, elaboramos um panorama a respeito das pesquisas realizadas no que tange ao número de produções, temas, subtemas, palavras-chave e aportes teórico-metodológicos. A realização dessa revisão sistemática possibilitou a obtenção de um panorama que identificou que a maioria das produções no campo educacional é ancorada pela teoria histórico-cultural e das representações sociais. Verificamos uma hegemonia da pesquisa qualitativa com referências à Psicologia educacional e do desenvolvimento humano, porém sem discussões sobre desigualdades educacionais no que tange à temática étnico-racial.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia Educacional, dissertações, processos educacionais, pós-graduação, aprendizagem

Resumen: Este estudio tuvo como objetivo realizar una revisión de bibliografía sistemática de la producción académica y disertaciones de un Programa de Postgrado en Psicología Educativa, de la línea de investigación "Procesos educativos en el contexto social y político", de un Centro Educativo en el Estado de São Paulo, Brasil. La investigación fue realizada en las bases del Portal de dicho Programa y Portal de la Capes - Catálogo de Tesis y Disertaciones, en el período de 2008 a 2016. Se encontraron 143 estudios, siendo 56 seleccionados para el análisis de la línea de investigación propuesta. De ese modo, elaboramos un panorama sobre las investigaciones realizadas en lo que se refiere al número de producciones, temas, subtemas, palabras clave y aportes teórico-metodológicos. La realización de esa revisión sistemática permitió la obtención de un panorama que identificó que la mayoría de las producciones en el campo educativo están ancladas por la teoría histórico-cultural y las representaciones sociales. Verificamos una hegemonía de la investigación cualitativa con referencias a la Psicología

educativa y del desarrollo humano, pero sin discusiones sobre desigualdades educativas en lo que se refiere a la temática étnico-racial.

Palabras clave: Psicología Educativa, disertaciones, procesos educativos, posgraduación, aprendizaje

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Introduction

Facing an increasingly complex socio-political, scientific and cultural scenario, Brazil needs to train and develop a body of critical and creative researchers and teachers, committed to the social development of the country. In this context, a systematic bibliographical review is ideal for surveying the scientific production available, as well as for reconstructing networks of concepts and ideas, which bring together knowledge from different sources in an attempt to find a path to what one seeks to know (Gomes & Caminha, 2014; Silva et al., 2015; Capes- 2004-2010; CGEE, 2016). This study begins with the *Plano Nacional de Pós-Graduação 2011-2020* [National Graduate Studies Plan 2011-2020] (Capes, 2010), which aims to define guidelines to advance graduate studies and research policy proposals for universities, the principle learning centers. Compared to previous years, the 2011-2020 Plan seeks to promote multidisciplinary, with an emphasis on research linked to different areas of science and the objectives of graduate studies.

Graduate degrees are the last stage of formal education and are directly linked to the

other levels of education. This includes academic and/or professional master's and doctoral programs (subject to the requirements of authorization, recognition and recognition renewal provided for in the current legislation). With respect to the scientific and technological base, it is worth mentioning the *Sistema Nacional da Pós-Graduação (SNPG)* [National Graduate Studies System], overseen by the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES)* [Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel], in partnership with the *Conselho Nacional do Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq)* [National Council for Scientific and Technological Development] and other research development agencies.

We note, on the one hand, that the PNPG 2011-2020 presents policies directed towards research and education. Since the beginning of the Brazilian development process, economic growth has generated social inequalities (regional, gender, race, age and class), as noted by Dedecca, Trovão & Souza (2014). On the other hand, we can highlight the growing number of graduate programs in the country. "In 1996, there were 1,187 master's programs in Brazil, while, by 2014, the

number of programs reached 3,620 [...] . This means there was a growth of 205% over these 19 years" (CCGE, 2016, p. 21-22).

At the end of the twentieth century, the process of expansion and consolidation of doctoral programs, associated with the growing requirement for this level of education to carry out university teaching and research activities, reduced the relative importance of master's degrees as sufficient training for these professions. This reflected a growing demand from private and public institutions for professionals with master's degrees (CCGE, 2016). This stimulated the creation of specialized master's degree programs in 1999 and, subsequently, the professional doctorate, as we can observe in Ministerial Decree No. 389/2017 of the Ministry of Education (Brasil, 2017). These specialized degrees seek to train professionals for professional activities, aimed at meeting social, organizational or professional needs and those of the labor market; to transfer knowledge to society, satisfying specific needs and those of production to foster national, regional or local development; as well as to contribute to improving the competitiveness and productivity of companies and public and private organizations (Brasil, 2017).

Returning to the CGEE document (2016) (Viotti, Carrijo & Santos, 2016), and focusing on the area of Psychology, we observed that, in 2014, Psychology ranked 11th and had 73 master's programs, reflecting a 170.37% growth rate in the period between 1999 and 2014. With respect to the number and percentage of master's degrees granted in Brazil in 2014 and the growth rate by area of knowledge between 1996 and 2014, Viotti et al. (2016) observe that 1,238 master's degrees were granted in Psychology in 2014, reflecting a 314.05% growth rate between 1996 and 2014, ranking it in 10th place.

Although the CCGE study (2016) provides a number of indicators (number of programs, employability and salaries), we observed that the study does not present a discussion concerning the color/race of master's and doctoral graduates. The known

inequalities in Brazil that lead to social exclusion also interfere directly with access to education and learning performance in educational institutions (Brito, 2017). This implies that we have to make significant progress in terms of equal access to graduate studies in Brazilian society. In addition, issues of equal access, permanence and progression to higher levels of education and graduate studies must be understood, measured and monitored by Brazilian society. We should also point out that a number of studies, especially since 2000, have shown that the profile of students in higher education in Brazil has become more diverse, especially with regard to racial and social aspects. We believe that the growth in the numbers of Afro-Brazilians in higher education is largely due to the implementation of affirmative action policies in the Brazilian educational system (Artes & Ricoldi, 2016).

The Psychology Program used in our study was created in 2006 and has the objective, among others, to foster conditions for the application of knowledge from Educational Psychology in education and society and to develop research projects in two areas: "Evaluation of human development and learning: educational implications" and "Educational processes in the social and political context." Regarding the area of "Educational Processes in the Social and Political Context," our focus is on research in the contexts of formal and non-formal education and the associations with educational policies and processes of social inclusion and exclusion, evaluation processes, school performance and failure rates and literacy.

On the one hand, the proposal of the Program in question is aligned with the provisions of Brazil's National Graduate Studies Plans: PNPG 2005-2010 and PNPG 2011-2020. Firstly, because the training of graduate students is relevant for the organizations of society and, secondly, because these plans also seek to support basic education (primary and secondary school) and higher education, as well as different modes (such as distance education, professional

degrees and adult education) in the country. However, as we observed in our systematic bibliographical review, addressing the issue of ethnic-racial relations is not present. "The perception of this absence does not happen by chance. Questioning it may be an interesting way to change the focus of research [...] especially in the educational field" (Gomes, 2017, p. 40-41). "The realization of studies aimed at problematizing this process of absence and the search for alternatives for it can be seen as an attempt to construct a 'sociology of absences and emergencies' [...] The objective of the sociology of absences is to transform absences into presences" (Santos, 2004).

Data and Methods

Qualitative approaches are very useful in detailed studies, in that they provide indicators or manifest variables for subsequent quantitative studies. On the other hand, quantitative methods, in a more objective manner, can measure and reveal the degree of intensity of relations between variables, something difficult to explain with the semantic resources of qualitative approaches (Trindade & Costa, 2009). To this end, this study was elaborated with the following stages: (1) delimitation of the problem to be investigated; (2) selection of data sources; (3) selection of descriptors for the search, classification and interpretation of results; (4) selection of theses using abstracts, in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria; (5) extraction of data from the selected theses; (6) evaluation of the theses; and (7) synthesis and interpretation of the data (Fonseca, Portela, Freire & Negreiros, 2018).

The research was carried out using the database of the Educational Psychology Program thesis bank in the research area "Educational processes in the social and political context" of the Educational Center, the portal of Capes - Catalog of Theses and Dissertations, as well as the *Plataforma Sucupira* platform, which is a new and important tool for data collection, analysis and evaluation, being the reference base for the

SNPG. These sources were accessed in 2016. The three databases were consulted at the Osasco Campus of the Centro Universitário FIEO in São Paulo, Brazil, and access to their contents allowed for the inclusion of a larger number of theses in the present study. In our search strategy, we initially identified the theses by the year in which they were defended between 2008 and 2016, which included the two Program research areas: "Educational processes in the social and political context" and "Evaluation of human development and learning: educational implications." Thus, our descriptors were the research areas mentioned above. The data collected was compiled in a database for categorization, using content analysis (Bardin, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Initially, we identified 143 theses defended between 2008 and 2016 that included the two research areas of the Program: Educational processes in the social and political context and Evaluation of human development and learning: educational implications (table 1).

Table 1
Recovery of theses (2008-2016)

Year	Recovered	Not recovered
2008	15	3
2009	7	3
2010	14	3
2011	8	2
2012	6	1
2013	11	-
2014	23	3
2015	17	1
2016	23	3
Total	124	19

Source: Research database compiled by the authors.

Of the total theses defended (143), we were unable to recover and use 19. The theses were indexed in a digital database containing descriptive data about the text, specifically: year of defense, research area, title, abstract and keywords. Given the number of theses to analyze, the diversity of topics, the time constraints and the number of researchers involved, some limits were imposed on the dataset, and it was not possible to fully analyze all the empirical data collected. Thus, for this paper, we will examine only the theses identified as being within the research area "Educational processes in the social and political context," which totaled 56 theses. Table 2 provides more details of the theses.

Table 2
Thesis topics (2008-2016)

Topic	Quantity	%
Adoption	1	1.78
Adolescence	4	7.15
Learning	21	37.5
Early childhood education	2	3.57
Primary school education	1	1.78
Secondary school education	2	3.57
Higher education	9	16.1
Family	1	1.78
Social inclusion	1	1.78
Youth	1	1.78
Social Pedagogy	1	1.78
Public policy	1	1.78
Teacher	2	3.57
Psychopedagogy	1	1.78
Religion	1	1.78
Work	7	12.7
Total	56	100

Source: Research database compiled by the authors.

The topic of learning appears the most frequently in table 2 (37.5%), followed by the topic of higher education (16.1%), the work environment (12.7%) and adolescence (7.15%). This range of topics suggests possibilities for diverse and fruitful investigations of the current political, social and educational situation. It is understood that the interest in the topic of learning, in connection with the other topics, can be explained by the fact that the vast majority of graduate students (graduating with master's degrees) are in Pedagogy (teachers, school and education managers) and Psychopedagogy, an area dedicated to the specificities of the learning processes of children, adolescents and adults that seeks to diagnose the causes of learning difficulties.

What is striking is the absence of studies on the issues of social, educational and ethnic-racial inequalities. Social and racial inequalities are among the leading causes of students dropping out of school. This is underscored in the reflections of Conceição & Zamora (2015) when they note that we must "understand the logic of the institution as well as reaffirm the importance of thinking based on the reality and the daily life of students to formulate institutional policies for support that truly promote public education and quality services for all" (p. 705). In Brazil, the problems associated with inequalities (child labor, violence suffered by young Afro-Brazilians, unemployment and obstacles to insertion in the labor market) that foster social exclusion interfere directly with access to education and learning performance in educational institutions. Thus, there is an ethical and political commitment to reflect on the origins and persistence of educational inequalities, as well as the need for precision in the study of the different types of inequalities, since gender, race/ethnicity and age inequalities are articulated in a complex manner and are not mutually reducible (Rosemberg, 2001).

Table 3
Thesis topics and subtopics (2008-2016)

Topic	Subtopics
Adoption	Legislation
Adolescence	Socio-educational measures Social vulnerability Protection of children and adolescents
Learning	The body and learning Learning difficulties Games as a facilitator of the learning process New technologies and learning Art and culture
Early childhood education	Gender and education Music and education
Primary school education	Literacy (reading and writing) financial education Indiscipline
Secondary school education	Educational system Success and failure at school
Higher education	Leveling courses Technological courses Distance education Higher education in Angola Teaching mathematics in higher education
Family	Family and the learning process
Social inclusion	Inclusion of children with disabilities
Youth	Youth and work Life project
Social Pedagogy	Pedagogical theories
Public policy	Child and Adolescent Statute
Teacher	Educational material Teacher-student interaction The good teacher
Psychopedagogy	Professional career in Psychopedagogy Teaching Psychopedagogy
Religion	Socialization through religion
Work	Gender at work Professional career Organizational leadership School and the link to the world of work

Source: Research database compiled by the authors.

With regard to the subtopics in the theses, for the most part, they address diverse issues, such as adoption and public policy, especially addressing the current legislation. Taking as a starting point the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Brasil, 1990) and Law no. 12.010, of August 3, 2009 (Brasil, 2009), which addresses adoption, we observe that all these modifications represent an evolution of the issue of adoption in Brazil, giving the practice a new format, that is, adoption as a means to "de-institutionalize" the child, ensuring the conditions to exercise the right to education and adequate care. When the subtopic refers to adolescence, the subtopics are related to socio-educational measures, social vulnerability and protection. On the one hand, rights are the result of the struggles of disadvantaged groups

and classes (Afro-Brazilian and youth, for example) and, on the other hand, the market, dominant groups, politicians and the State appropriate these rights in their favor and to the detriment of the population that needs them (Souza Neto, 2016). This reality becomes clear when analyzing data on the situation of children and adolescents, especially among the Afro-Brazilian population. The notion of adolescence is consolidated and disseminated in Brazilian society, with greater institutionality (of which the legal framework, ECA and the existence of child protection and defense councils at all levels of government are its greatest expression), with a greater number of actions and stakeholders committed to support its application.

When the focus is on learning, the subtopics address the different levels of education: early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education. The theses seek to understand various topics and approaches in the context of Brazilian education. The researchers emphasize, among other issues, questions concerning the body and learning; learning difficulties; techniques to facilitate the learning process; new technologies; and art, culture and learning. The emphasis is on learning difficulties and they suggest meticulous attention in this area in order to improve the quality of education in Brazil. These topics appear in a number of the theses, as we observe in the works of Wulf (2016) and Miranda (2014).

With respect to basic education, it is understood that Brazil faces many diverse challenges. In order to meet the targets established under the National Education Plan - PNE 2014-2024 (Brasil, 2014), it is necessary to increase the provision of services, improve quality and reduce inequalities between individual schools and public education networks. The PNE addresses, through its targets, the need to universalize education, provide school for children of 4 and 5 years of age and expand the provision of early childhood education to include 50% of the population up to 3 years of age (Brasil, 2014). It must be emphasized that social inequalities are significant, which makes

meeting these targets even more challenging. Access of children from 0 to 3 years of age to schools and day-care centers is even more restricted, but our attention to education can not be limited to the provision of services without also looking at the quality of education. With respect to higher education, we note that the PNE 2014-2024 (Brasil, 2014) proposes to increase gross enrollment, improve quality, increase the number of masters and doctors in institutions, increase enrollment numbers for *stricto sensu* graduate diplomas and train basic education teachers (with specific undergraduate and graduate programs). These targets demonstrate that the challenges for higher education are significant and will require a comprehensive action plan, coordinated between governments and teaching institutions, so that these targets may be effectively met.

Other subtopics in the context of schools, such as family and learning processes, inclusion of children with disabilities, educational material, student-teacher interaction, pedagogical theories, as well as the connection between school and the world of work, were addressed in the theses we investigated. We learn from Salvari and Dias (2006) that knowledge about the ways in which the contemporary family functions, at each stage of its life cycle, can contribute to the monitoring of development at school.

With respect to inclusion in school, Bezerra (2017) observes that, on the one hand, "it is argued for the inclusion of students with disabilities in, and by, regular schools, and though it presents itself as democratic, on the other hand, it proves to be selective, classificatory and stigmatizing, contributing to the reproduction of the established order and legitimizing inequalities among school agents, which constitutes the process of exclusion within the school system" (Bezerra, p. 475).

On the subject of teacher-student interaction, we learn from Oliveira and Alves (2005) that, among teachers, there is job satisfaction, but complaints concerning the low remuneration and value given teachers in the educational system are common. The authors also emphasize that "there is a need to

instrumentalize these teachers to act as mediators in the teaching-learning process, aimed at consistency in the conceptions of teachers and students, preventing disinterest, failure processes and dropping out" (Oliveira & Alves, 2005, p. 227). This also pervades educational material (textbooks). For Ribeiro (2013), textbooks participate in the socialization of children and adults and adopt a conception of socialization. In this sense, there are examples such as the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture, the struggles of Afro-Brazilians and indigenous peoples in Brazil (law No. 10.639/03 and 11.645/08), their cultures and their contributions to the formation of Brazilian society (social, economic and political) (Brasil, 2003, 2008).

The subtopics we analyzed also present the theoretical contributions of diverse theoretical currents related to human development and learning. A number of theorists cited, such as Piaget and Vygotsky, have studied the relationship between human development and learning. In their theses, the authors worked with different development theories from the areas of Psychology (especially Educational Psychology), Social Pedagogy, Social Representation theory and administration theories (in the transition from school to the labor force), among others. As far as Social Pedagogy is concerned, we see that the reflections and historical perspectives are timely. Social Pedagogy is based on the principle of education as a human right, in its entirety, and its requirements and needs are expressed in the school environment and not the school" (Machado, 2009, p. 379). It is worth highlighting the contributions of researchers with the express intention of affirming the fields of action, training and research in Social Pedagogy in Brazil (Souza Neto, Silva & Moura, 2009).

We note that social representation theory was also used in the theses we analyzed. According to Moscovici's (2012) conception, in any type of interaction, whether between two individuals or between two groups, the construction of representations is implied. It is understood that it is in this

context that the need arises for the development of educational interventions with innovative proposals that respect the unique characteristics of the population and which promote a new culture of learning (Fernandes et al., 2015).

Some subtopics also contributed to a deepening of the discussion on youth and the labor market in connection with schools. That is, the school is a place that welcomes youth, where they can learn, and it must be an environment where young people can benefit from experience and interactions. It is in this environment of coexistence and learning where encounters and relationships are experienced and where young people question values and begin to develop their life project.

In our analysis of the theses we also noted that authors used administration theories (leadership, career etc.), in conjunction with gender theories, to discuss their respective objects of study. According to Guimarães (2004, p. 145), gender studies and labor studies "are two thematic fields that, in the history of the social sciences in Brazil, are united in a permanent reciprocal fertilization, to play with the terms of the metaphor without calling into question their relevance." For Oliveira (2015), despite the history of gender inequalities in the labor market, women have been struggling to overcome imposed barriers. "Although most leadership positions are still held by men, there is a growing trend not only in the increased participation of women, but also in the greater appreciation of female leadership" (Oliveira, 2015, p. 8). However, "there are many difficulties encountered by women during their career, particularly reconciling careers and families, demonstrating that it is still a significant challenge, especially for those who hold leadership positions in organizations" (Oliveira, 2015, p. 71). For Luna (2017) "The inequality between genders within companies is more conspicuous when you combine two variables: being a woman and being black."

The objective of using keywords is to delimit the topics addressed in the research, in addition to guiding searches in bibliographical surveys (Cintra da Silva et al., 2014, p. 287).

The keywords in the theses allowed for the identification of the central topics of the research carried out in the Psychology Program. Initially, we identified 113 keywords, with the most cited being "social representations" (11.5%), "learning" (10.6%), "teacher" (8.8%), "subjectivity" (6.2%) and "school" "adolescents" and "family" totaling 4.4%. Another relevant factor is that 70% of the keywords were cited only once, which may indicate the variety of topics in the research carried out in the Psychology Program.

In order to strengthen our analysis of the keywords and facilitate the interpretation of table 4, the keywords were grouped into categories of similar topics. Thus, the following categories were created: school environment (32.8%), organizational environment (11.6%), institutional environment (9.7%), adjectives (6.2%), theoretical and methodological assumptions (2%), gender (0.8%), age (4.4%), therapeutic environment (7.3%), social environment (5.1%) and "other" (due to their specificity), totaling 7.9 %. It is worth mentioning that the most cited keywords were in the school environment category, consistent with the line of research and the Psychology Program in question.

Although the keywords suggest coherence with the line of research "Educational processes in the social and political context," we did not find descriptors related to social and educational inequalities; in particular, ethnic-racial inequalities. We also observed that only two descriptors make reference to Psychology (Educational Psychology and historical-cultural Psychology), which is the emphasis of the Program. This may indicate, to a certain extent, a divergence between the scope of the line of research and the theses.

Table 4
Keywords cited in the theses (2008-2016)

Category	keywords	%
School environment	Early childhood education. Primary school education. Secondary school education. Higher education. Educational action. Literacy. Learning. Self knowledge. Play. Cycles. Undergraduate degree. Technological degree. Development. Difficulty in learning. Financial education. Inclusive education. Social education. Education. Teaching and learning. Teaching. Teaching mathematics. School. Mediation. Writing. Teacher training. School failure. Groups. Skills. Indiscipline. Computing. Interaction. Reading. Learning to write. Literature. Educational material. Community pedagogy. Pedagogy. Teaching process. Production of meanings. Teacher. Teacher-student interaction. School success.	32.8
Organizational environment	Work environment. Organizational learning. Career. Documents. Employee. Company. People management. Leadership. Motivation. World of work. Organization. Command posts. Technologies.	11.6
Institutional environment	Shelter. Welcoming. Adoption. Integrative agent. Social assistance. Social education. Child and Adolescent Statute. Fundação Casa [State correctional facility for minors]. Mediation. Socio-educational measures. Institutional reordering.	9.7
Adjectives	Good teacher. Social educator. Facilitator. Flexible. Reader. Street situation. Situation of venerability.	6.2
Theoretical-methodological assumptions	Systemic approach. Content analysis. Phenomenology. Oral history. Identity. Montessori. Perception. Praxis. Psychoanalysis. Educational psychology. Historical-cultural psychology. Psychopedagogy. Social representation. Subjectivity. Sense zones.	14.2
Gender	Women	0.8
Age	Adolescent. Child. Early childhood. Youth. New generations.	4.4
Therapeutic environment	Conversational space. Intervention. Life project. Senses. Life dream.	5.3
Social environment	Social exclusion. Religious experience. Family. Hip hop. Media. World of music. Interpersonal relations. Social transformation.	7.1
Other	Angola. Non-formal education. Violence. Memories. Significance. Success. Techniques. Transition. Triangulation.	7.9
Total	113	100

Source: Research database compiled by the authors.

Conclusions

From our review of the production of graduate students, we can see that the majority

of the theses address topics explicitly in the area of learning, associated with Educational Psychology. However, there are also theses related to the labor market (insertion of young

people in the labor force, leadership and jobs, among other topics) and others addressing institutions such as the *Fundação Casa* state correctional and educational facility for minors, shelters etc. In contemporary Brazilian society, the separation between school and work is very tenuous, since both maintain a relationship of reciprocity. In particular, when the focus is on youth, on the one hand, the author looks to Vygotsky to understand young people, focusing on certain fundamental aspects, their insertion in a global model of society and its ideologies, that is, in its culture that is also part of their psychosocial constitution.

On the other hand, when analyzing the limits and potentials of the *Garantia de Direitos (SGD)* [Guarantee of Rights] system, which is based on the doctrine of comprehensive protection, recommended by the ECA, which defines the policy for the protection and care of children and adolescents in Brazil, Souza Neto (2016) points out that, despite some progress and pedagogical proposals for human rights policies, "the situation of Afro-descendant children and adolescents reveals the operational fragility of the system for this population, according to official statistical data" (Souza Neto, 2016, p. 123).

Despite being part of a society that is experiencing a crisis in the labor market, with high unemployment and inadequate training, young people value work, whether for personal fulfillment, income, a means of achieving independence or a way to contribute to society. With respect to insertion in the labor market, young people cite difficulties such as lack of experience and inadequate training in the context of the new dynamics of employment.

We understand that schools need to provide a space for young people to discuss their life projects (and there is no life project without work), where their concerns, fears and expectations can be addressed, where they can perceive work as a means to personal fulfillment, participation, cooperation and survival. This gives rise to a school that shares

its role as a means of transforming the social environment of youth in contemporary society.

Developmental Psychology and the Psychology of Learning are also present in the theses we analyzed. We noted that fundamental authors in the area were cited, such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Paulo Freire. These authors contributed to the construction of knowledge and discussed how this construction occurs. The authors discuss the role of the teacher, the student and families, as well as the role of the state in this process. In the theses we also encounter reflections on traditional teaching, constructivist teaching and critical thinking, as well as reflections that focus on some counterpoints between critical and constructivist learning, besides exploring the meaning of a critical construction of knowledge. The research methodology is developed with the theoretical references in a qualitative orientation.

The search by keywords led to the organization of categories for the descriptors. Most of the research focuses on the school environment, followed by an emphasis on the theoretical and methodological assumptions and the organizational environment, but with a focus on learning at different levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education.

There is a prevalence of historical-cultural theory and the theory of representations in the theoretical bases of the theses. This theoretical basis allowed for an understanding of the cultural, social and subjective aspects and social representations that are part of the complexity of the educational phenomenon investigated. We also noted a coherence of authors cited in the theses with respect to the theoretical framework and the focus of the Educational Psychology Program. The use of Psychopedagogy in some theses amply addressed the educational area, considering the work of the psychopedagogue in this area and the necessary knowledge for the training and effective performance of these professionals.

However, it is necessary to point out that we are far from having resolved the tensions in the daily practice of research and training of

the researcher, since the models of interpretation of the relations of domination are varied and the components of the political agenda are diverse and divergent. Hence the insistence on policies that recognize the diverse social groups and their specificities: women, Afro-Brazilians, indigenous people, the elderly, immigrants and children, among others.

Finally, it is understood that Psychology, as a science that produces knowledge and as a profession, is in a unique moment to rethink its practices in an unequal and exclusionary society. Thus, an ethical and political commitment emerges: to reflect on the production and perpetuation of inequalities in education.

Authors' participation:

a) Conception and design of the work; b) Data acquisition; c) Analysis and interpretation of data; d) Writing of the manuscript; e) Critical review of the manuscript.

M.A.B.S has contributed in a,b,c,d; C.A. in b,c,d,e; A.C.P. in a,b,c,d,e; V.L.S. in b,c,d,e.

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