

## Media in education in the freirian perspective: Challenges and possibilities



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### ABSTRACT

The presence of the media in Education is not exactly new, as is the need to educate oneself through dialogue. Paulo Freire understood that Education and media are related, although there are numerous challenges for each one to assume their role in the task of forming human beings, drawing possibilities for critical and politicized teaching. In this sense, the objective of this investigation was to

identify the challenges and possibilities of the insertion of the media in Education from the Freirean perspective to the constitution of the critical/political practice of teaching. The practice of problematizing education, in this sense, is pointed out as an important way to sustain the relationship between the media and Education. This is a qualitative and bibliographical research in which the works of Freire (1980, 1982, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, and 2011) were particularly analyzed. Some challenges are pointed out, among which are: the concentration of media power, the recognition of the supremacy of the human over the instrumental, indispensability of the use of media in Education. As for the possibilities, it is worth mentioning: the dynamization of the pedagogical process; the perception of the importance of the teaching figure; the politicization of teachers; the indispensability of the figure of the teacher in human formation. Thus, it establishes an important role of the media for the Education of the future to be conceived as something to be built.

**Keywords:** Media in Education, Dialogue, Paul Freire, Do critical/political, Problematizing Education.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Dialogical Education, as a legacy of Paulo Freire, spreads over multiple themes that cannot have their discussion limited to one text. This also happens with the insertion of the media in dialogical Education and its implications of a critical and political nature of teaching. After all, contrary to what some official (state) movements establish, the insertion of the media, in a Freirian perspective, must be dispensed with a discussion about teaching based on a defined critical and political posture.

Thus, the question posed for this writing is: what are the challenges and possibilities of the insertion of the media in Education from the Freirean perspective? Based on this, the objective is to understand the challenges and possibilities of the insertion of the media in dialogical Education, from the Freirian perspective to the constitution of the critical/political practice of teaching.



The research is outlined in the qualitative approach, which according to Chizzotti (1998, p. 104), "[...] aims, in general, to provoke the clarification of a situation for an awareness by the researched themselves of their problems and the conditions that generate them, to elaborate the means and strategies to solve them". Data were collected from the bibliographic analysis especially directed to the works of Paulo Freire (1980, 1982, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, and 2011) since the focus is his contribution to this discussion.

Initially, the text reveals that dialogue is always a fundamental protagonist, even in the face of the presence of the media in the educational process. The text goes on to point out the meaning of critical thinking constructed by dialogical relations, which can be enhanced by the media. Next, it proposes a critical reflection of ethical-political Education on the role of the media in dialogical Education, considering the need to understand the intentions that sustain it. At the end of the text, it points out developments and contributions on the theme, evidencing the irreversible insertion of the media in Education in a dialogical perspective, a Freirean legacy, and its possibilities and challenges to the constitution of the critical/political practice of teaching. They are relevant contributions to education for the twenty-first century for all people.

## **2 THE MEDIA APPLIED TO DIALOGICAL EDUCATION: FROM CHALLENGES TO POSSIBILITIES**

The discussion around the challenges and possibilities of the use of media in dialogical educational practice is worthy of a broad discussion that is not exhausted in this writing. Considering the work of Paulo Freire, in addition to discussing the social, political, and economic implications of the use of media in Education, Freire was noted for its use as an auxiliary instrument in the materialization of his practice, essentially dialogical. In *Angicos*, in his universally recognized proposal of adult literacy in 40 hours of activities, projection devices were used.

According to Fernandes and Terra (1994, p. 158), "The first stage of each class is the projection of the card. This projection will be the motivation of the class." Note that the use of projection is only one of the moments of the class and in no way occupies the centrality of doing that is always taken by dialogue as the most significant means of promoting human learning. In this sense, Freire (2001, p. 57) points out that "the technique is always secondary and is only important when at the service of something broader. To consider the technique primordial is to miss the goal of Education." It points to the challenge of highlighting the importance of the technique in a dialogical context, preserving its centrality in the educational process.

The technique, as a product of human culture, is a great influencer of the possible paths of this culture, with a deep presence and influence in the learning process, especially in those of a dialogical nature, which nods to a great possibility. As such, in the dialogical perspective of learning, in which



the existence of at least two interlocutors is elementary, the presence of the media is highly beneficial. For this reason, Freire (1980, p. 82) affirms that "dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, to designate it." To this end, one cannot fail to use all possible instruments of encounter, touch, and insertion in the world, among which the media.

Dialogical Education, enhanced by the media, broadens and strengthens the pedagogical practice with a critical/political perspective by the possibility of speeding up the process of unveiling the student's reality. That is why Freire (2000a, p. 82) teaches that

The prioritization of the "dialogical relationship" in teaching that allows respect for the culture of the student, the valorization of the Knowledge that the student brings, in short, work from the vision of the world of the learner is undoubtedly one of the fundamental axes on which the pedagogical practice of teachers must be supported.

It is noted that teaching, from a dialogical perspective, is a complex reflective practice that considers its impact on the development of students. This practice assumes dialogue as a strategy so that the personal, academic, and political effects of Education are widely (re)recognized.

This is an impactful rupture since most of the teachers are remnants of teaching marked by the absence of dialogue, which induces them to authoritarian, oppressive, and exclusionary practices. This form of teaching to be overcome has a deep relationship with the so-called "banking education," in which, according to Freire (1980, p. 79), "[...] Knowledge is a gift conceived by those who regard themselves as its possessors to those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting absolute ignorance onto others is characteristic of an ideology of oppression." Through it, the tendency to produce subjects that replicate and deepen the gulf between those who supposedly teach and those who supposedly learn is consolidated. Moreover, Freire (1982, p. 38) points out that "the banking conscience 'thinks that the more one gives, the more one knows.' But experience reveals that with this same system, only mediocre individuals are formed because there is no stimulus for creation." The loss of creative capacity makes the subjects even more submissive and convinced of their incapacity, generating the formation of a large mass willing to only consume.

The use of media in a context dominated by the practice of banking education can serve to adorn or even strengthen it. To Freire (2001, p. 36), "Neoliberal doctrines seek to limit Education to technological practice. Currently, Education is no longer understood as training, but only training." Thus it is possible to say that the use of the media can simply represent a migration from banking education of oppression and silence to that of subservience and (re)production. Already, educational scenarios that want dialogical can contribute to overcoming this reality, starting with a problematizing education. If the challenge is to break with an education of banking character, the possibility is to make present in the educational process the dialogical reflection of the problems and daily obstacles of the students. Freire (2000a) writes that problematizing Education is anchored in the promotion of actions



based on reflections about reality. This Education, derived from dialogical practice, uses critical thinking so that reflections on reality ground actions of profound transformation of context, which also reveals its political character.

### **3 CRITICAL THINKING CONSTRUCTED BY DIALOGICAL RELATIONS ENHANCED BY THE MEDIA**

The school has a challenge concerning the children and young people who seek it: to offer them conditions to read the world according to their senses. It is about instigating each subject to look at the world and feel it and then discredit it. In this sense, the media will not be the interpreter of the world but the possibility that will potentiate the dialogical relations between the world and the subject. This is opposed to the elitist models, which according to Freire (1999b), use the political immaturity of the masses to dominate them. This idea serves as a denunciation so that we remember that it is those who hold the economic power who hold the resources that sustain the techniques, including the media. That is why Freire (2001, p. 57) proposes a different discussion suggesting that.

The issue is not the techniques themselves – not that they are not important – but the real issue is the understanding of the substantivity of the process, which, in turn, requires multiple techniques to achieve a particular goal. It is the process that leads to the need for the techniques that need to be understood.

With this statement, it signals that the media are an instrument and not the purpose of Education; that is, it is not up to it to train subjects to use technological resources, but the challenge of freeing them from educational practices that are confused with training. To illustrate this concern, Freire (2000b), when dealing with TV as an instrument of formation, defends that progressive educators should use them and especially discuss them, emphasizing their critical and political character. Critical for the need for discussion and politics for dealing with the understanding of the ideologies that permeate the protagonism of the media.

Criticality and politics become even closer when they refute subalternizing, silencing, and oppressive models of Education, making use of dialogue to promote a necessary and just transformation. For Freire (2011), the dialogical practice, when pronouncing the world, transforms it into a great challenge in its humanization. When inserting the media in this conception of Education, it is necessary that they be reflected and thought of not only as a strategic instrument but as a concept. In this conceptual discussion, according to Freire (1999a), people must develop their critical spirit in such a way that when reading and listening to the news, they do so consciously of the need for liberation. To make the reading of the world a possible path to liberation is to assume the political character of the practice of a dialogical education based on the critical making of teaching. The political perspective is based on the decision of the use and desired results of the media.



#### 4 A POLITICAL REFLECTION ON THE MEDIA IN DIALOGICAL EDUCATION

One of Paulo Freire's most expressive legacies to Education and humanity is his clear choice for the ragged, for the excluded whom he called oppressed. The use of this term shows that if, on the one hand, there is someone suffering the effects of oppression, on the other hand, there are those who practice it to defend and enhance their interests. The perception of oppression on the part of the oppressed occurs not by imposition or concession but by dialogue with and for them, which classifies Education as a reflective harvest which it will deepen its politics.

That is why it is worth mentioning that it is necessary to assume the politics of Education as stated by Freire (2000b, p. 33) when stating that "if mine is not a neutral presence in history, I must critically assume when possible its politics." Thus, if the path of the oppressor is through the imposition of forms and forms, rebelling will always be a political act based on a reflective and critical dialogue about the power relations present in Education. Therefore, a critical pedagogy of a liberating character is fundamental as a challenge to teaching that will break with the imposing authoritarianism and with the naivety characteristic of waiting for some concession. About this pedagogy and teaching Freire (2000b) emphasizes that his greatest commitment is to the legitimacy of the political dream of overcoming injustices. It also emphasizes that political transformation, as opposed to unviable neutrality, is the fruit of the brotherhood of loving hearts. That is why Freire (1996b, p. 18) asserts that "the scientific preparation of the teacher must coincide with his or her ethical rectitude." This association is not so simple to make and has profound repercussions in the political debate on the role of the media in Education, not to derail it but to define it as a possibility.

It is perceived, therefore, that the politicization of Education implies the challenge of instilling in the educational process the ideal of transformation, which is par excellence nourished by nonconformity and denial of the naturalization of exclusion and oppression. It is a break from silencer, formal Education that does not tolerate restlessness and is, therefore, authoritarian.

For this reason, Freire (1996b, p. 104) considers that "the coherently democratic authority is convinced that true discipline does not exist in stagnation, in silence, but in the uproar of the restless, in the doubt that instigates, in the hope that awakens." It is, therefore, an authority that understands Education as a possible source of mobilization, with the media having an important role to play. It would not make sense, no matter how well-intentioned the teacher was, to give speeches or propose practices that did not dare to penetrate the universe of the student, who is moving towards digitization.

The essential adherence to techniques cannot reduce Education to a mere choice of which is best for the moment but be based on the intentionality of the results it expects. In this sense, Freire (2000a, p.98) states that "[...] education is not reducible to technique, but education cannot be done without it." When a school or even a school network adheres to a certain "methodology" with its handouts and applications, it is waving to this reductionism. It is transferring to those who supply and



produce the technology the right to decide what pedagogically to do. When this happens, it is essential to have a teaching that takes responsibility for the challenge of rupture.

Therefore, Freire (1997a, p. 28) emphasizes that "educational practice, recognizing itself as a political practice, refuses to allow itself to be imprisoned in the bureaucratic narrowness of schooling procedures." By these procedures is understood the traditional banking practice, sometimes profoundly detached from values and principles that point to humanization as a great possibility of Education.

In the context of the twenty-first century, in which the use of the media in the context of the school is essential, it is essential to point out another challenge of a political nature: the universalization of access to technological resources. This is because if only a privileged portion of the population accesses them, there will flagrantly be a contingent of excluded that will accentuate the asymmetries already historically constituted.

The discussion of these asymmetries, as a profound political ingredient, is an indispensable part of the daily life of the public school and, consequently, of the teaching practice. In the words of Freire (1997a, p. 53), "There is another task to be fulfilled in the school despite the dominant power and because of it – that of *deopacizing* the reality *clouded* by the dominant ideology [...] This is a struggle that requires political clarity and scientific competence." The de-capacitation of reality is the primary task of dialogical Education, which will be possible by politicized teachers, therefore also critics, and holders of necessary scientific knowledge.

Therefore, to assume his politics, the teacher needs to point out his identity from the relationships he establishes. Your discourse should aim at your practice and merge with it in such a way that, at a given moment, your discourse is the coherent description of your practice and vice versa. It is not enough to denounce the unjust condition of non-access; it is necessary to mobilize so that everyone accesses so that they do not become immobilized in the face of discourses that oppress, repress, humiliate, and silence.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The teacher's doing will inexorably always be a political act, even when he or someone else intends a certain neutrality. It will always be a movement born of challenges and that point to countless possibilities. In a temporal context in which the media become not only an option, but a necessary path to access to information, it was perceived indispensable to discuss the theme in the light of Paulo Freire's theory. More than that, it is necessary to state uncompromisingly that Paulo Freire has built an immense legacy in this debate, both for the clarity with which he identifies the challenges and for the hope with which he points out the possibilities.

Among the challenges are:



- debate about the concentration of media power around a restricted group, which makes the media of information mechanisms of radicalization of oppression;
- elaboration of concepts from information communicated so that the supremacy of the human being is evidenced, to the detriment of the instrumental character of the media;
- a perception that the school cannot appeal to the existence and presence of the media in its structure.

With the possibilities, it is possible to perceive:

- dynamization of the school and the pedagogical process of learning, resolving fragmentation between what is learned and known in school and what is outside it;
- consolidation of the figure of the teacher as one of the central characters (the other is the learner) in the learning process;
- politicization of the teacher so that, when faced with machines, he recognizes and contests, if necessary, the intentions of those who program his machine;
- be careful that the ideas of the programs by those who hold power over the media do not replace those of the teachers, replicating the authoritarianism and oppression practiced in the historical times that have led humanity to the present;
- concern to demonstrate to students the testimony of struggle, mobilization, and hope born of the cultural plurality common to the teaching context.

Thus, the school of the twenty-first century cannot do without the media, but it cannot retreat, nor can it omit the duty to propose dialogue as the most significant mechanism of formation. On the contrary, even counting on the presence of the media in this dialogue, it can and must be deepened, also to understand more deeply the reason for this presence. To this end, the teacher's work will have to be permanent and radically critical, not in the sectarian sense, but in the understanding of the historical root that produced the present.

In this sense, the text established a strong relationship with Paulo Freire to the extent that he, throughout his life, demonstrated the deep relationship between what he said and what he did. His speech is born of his practice and all that he has experienced. As it was possible to perceive, Freire's great concern is in the critical posture, in opposition to fatalism, conformism, and magnitude. In proposing this posture, it reveals that the future is not set but, on the contrary, awaits its construction by many hands and for many faces.



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