LUMEN ET VIRTUS

Reading and academic writing in initial teacher training: What literacies?

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ABSTRACT

From a historical perspective on the initial training of teachers in Brazil, a survey of research developed was carried out, locating in articles published in the last two decades the modes of functioning of the school institution, in the continuous movement of learning-teaching-learning reading and academic writing. Historically, Brazil has presented many difficulties in universalizing the learning of reading and writing in a socially significant way. In the direction of the formation of the critical citizen, we discuss the difficulties to make academic reading and writing effective as processes of forming and transforming the condition of citizenship of the Brazilian population. Proceeding with a qualitative approach, the articulation between the lines of investigation of the selected studies, which focused on teacher training, teaching work and the construction of a teacher's professional identity, were analyzed in the defense that being a teacher is to develop a work based on a solid specific training and that initial training courses should also be concerned with teacher professionalization (Nóvoa, 2017). In the case of initial training, it should allow students to go through teaching and learning experiences that are based on the use and reflection of the characteristics of academic writing, so that future teachers know how to deal with the prescriptions inherent to their work context and document their experiences, as the written record becomes part of a routine developed since initial training when the triad reading is adopted, analysis and production of academic texts as a formative and evaluative principle. In this sense, the analyses carried out reveal that academic literacy should permeate the entire initial training of teachers, with objective prescriptions, considering the autonomy of the trainer to plan and replan his classes coherently with his didactic-methodological choices (Mizukami, 2005-2006; 2000), in a political and pedagogical

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project committed to an education linked to more assertive teaching practices (Gatti, 2014; André et. al., 2010), with academic writing as one of the constitutive elements of a socially referenced quality education.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Academic Literacy, Initial Training, Teaching Theories.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of literacy was created, according to Kleiman (2005, p. 5), "to refer to the uses of the written language not only in school, but everywhere". The phenomenon of literacy is directed to social practices that are beyond the school environment, since this conception is related to the uses that each subject makes of writing and reading during social situations that demand their use.

From this perspective, it is a fact that the term has been widely disseminated in the Brazilian research scenario and in the pedagogical sphere during the last decades. As a result, relationships with different dimensions were built, which generated ramifications such as: academic literacy, school literacy, digital literacy, literary literacy, scientific literacy, among many others (Silva; Gonçalves, 2021).

The complexity of the relationships that involve everyday literacy practices and those that are promoted in the school context suggests the need to turn to the situations in which the tensions of these relationships are expressed, seeking subsidies in literacy studies to understand and dialogue with the ways in which undergraduate students act in the face of academic texts and scientific writing activities. It is with this intention that we are willing to reflect on some academic situations that call on undergraduates to assume positions that constitute them as readers and writers. It is interesting to observe that, on the one hand, there is the mobilization of academic literacy practices and, on the other hand, as a result of reflection, there are everyday literacy practices.

The entry of students into the university, in particular, is the moment that is characterized by the constitution of a new social, cultural and historical cycle, responsible for the process of training professionals in a certain area of knowledge. The specificities of the area, including jargon, are presented to university students through texts[6], classes (expository and/or dialogued), seminars, various teaching strategies used by professors, congresses, scientific articles, books, etc.

Academic writing is a social activity, in which the production of scientific knowledge takes the form of texts that circulate in the academic environment. The designation of '*academic'* is not limited to the physical space of undergraduate courses and graduate programs – such as, for example, classrooms – but goes beyond characterizing research activities, linked to events, scientific journals, research groups, teaching/research laboratories.

In this way, the next topic will address literacy practices in the classroom and, subsequently, the importance of school literacy in social practices. When we refer to one of the various types of literacy that exist, more specifically to school literacy, we are referring to the act of reading and writing that manifests itself within this context, since it is not possible for those who study, in this perspective, to alienate themselves from the text, thus renouncing their critical attitude towards it.

[6] The word text should not be reduced to a synonym for writing, because text is a production of an author subject that focuses on a receiving subject and, thus, involves other semiosis of language, such as orality and image (such as drawings).

LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL LITERACY IN SOCIAL PRACTICES

School literacy consists of practices that have as central elements not only the act of teaching and learning, but also those of reading and writing in the school environment. Such practices, which vary historically and socially, are related to the formal processes of learning to read and write, which are carried out through the transmission of knowledge and the (re)appropriation of discourses (Bunzen, 2010). At the same time, they work as a bridge for the development of coexistence and interaction between students.

Therefore, teaching focused on the concept of literacy must go beyond the walls of the school, as learning comes to be understood as a social practice of the student that involves a series of social, technological and cultural factors, factors that encompass various skills and knowledge acquired individually. In this way, it is considered a practice that manifests itself in the most different situations, in different spaces and in the different activities of people's lives.

School literacy offers the student a broad view of the social reality and enables him to adapt to the various communicative situations of reading and writing through the real use of language, even in situations of simulation of this use. The work in the face of the concept of literacy makes the subject develop his critical sense through knowledge that brings significant changes to his life.

All this discussion concerns the improvement of reading and writing practices that are developed internally in the school, but which go beyond the walls and gain different directions, sectors, spaces and individuals. Therefore, developing different literacy practices promotes in the subject the ability to act in the most diverse social spaces. For this to happen, it is necessary that he has attended or developed skills that are usually built in the school environment.

There are thousands of subjects in the world who use the social practices of reading and writing from the most varied media, whether they are images, audios or even through other individuals who have a higher degree of literacy, which refers to the understanding that literacy is found among schooled and unschooled subjects.

The construction of reading and writing practices in the school environment improves, develops and facilitates the articulation of the subject in the various spaces, movements and social attitudes. In this sense, Soares (2002, p. 145) points out that literacy should be considered "the state or condition of those who exercise the practices of reading and writing, of those who participate in events in which writing is an integral part of the interaction between people and of the process of interpreting this interaction". Therefore, it is understood that literacy is constantly developed in different contexts. Thus, the individual who contemplates high levels of this literacy demonstrates skill, competence and active participation in different literacy events in which writing and reading are considered fundamental elements.

It is important to emphasize that the work in the face of the concept of literacy makes the subject develop his critical sense through knowledge that brings significant changes to his life. The improvement of reading and writing practices encouraged in the educational context can promote citizenship, good levels of different literacies and more possibility of social ascension, since literacies are phenomena strictly related to the voice expressed by education.

Living with school literacy over the several years of schooling allows the experience with different reading and writing practices that, to some extent, should prepare students to live in other contexts and with other types of literacy demanded. Therefore, living with different forms of literacy promotes in the subject the ability to act in the most diverse social spaces.

ACADEMIC LITERACY: READING AND WRITING TEXTS

Upon entering Higher Education, the student is faced with specific uses of language, which include particular textual genres and other modes of knowledge organization. For this reason, academic literacy refers to "fluency in particular ways of thinking, being, acting, doing, reading and writing" (Fischer, 2007, p. 46), which are specific to the academic context.

The university student, as well as any other literate person, can decode the letters of the written record, but reading as a synonym for the appropriation of the meaning of the text, which makes it possible to "[...] the global formation of the individual, to his capacity for social, political, economic and cultural coexistence and actions" (Martins, 1988, p. 22), depends on a process of academic literacy, which refers to the production and systematization of knowledge through formal education.

Therefore, academic literacy is also inserted in the process of appropriating techniques that help the reading and comprehension of the text read, which includes recognizing and knowing how to deal with the textual genres used in the university context and analyzing the texts that are accessed. Lakatos and Marconi (2017) point out that texts are inexhaustible sources of information, ideas and knowledge and should not be seen as compiled of words.

Reading must make sense to the reader, as it is not only the deciphering of signs of the alphabet, since it provokes in the individual the understanding of meanings (Kleiman, 1995) and therefore must be put into practice. The practice of reading is fundamental in the formation of the individual and, as part of his life, it provides an interpretation and questioning of the world in which he is inserted.

Vieira (2004) highlights the importance of learning to read, stating that, by providing conditions for other readings of the context around them, the reader's thinking develops and is articulated with other knowledge and information, because it is closely related to the process of general formation of an individual and to his training for social practices, such as: political, economic

and cultural action, in addition to living in society, whether in the family, in work relations among other spaces linked to the life of the citizen (Vieira, 2004, p. 02).

The teacher also plays an important role in this process by encouraging reading inside and outside the classroom, promoting awareness that reading is a continuous process that, once started, whether in formal or informal education, should be prolonged throughout life. Therefore, it is up to academic literacy to provide interaction between the individual's internal processes and social processes in order to produce new forms of language.

In the academic culture, reading during teacher training has a prominent place, but it should not only be important to value what is prescribed as reading to study, even though, due to the numerous demands of the university experience process, there is a need to reconcile the dynamics of various curricular components with work, evaluations, activities outside the university, among others; However, it cannot be denied that the issue raised above occurs: the student focuses exclusively on the prescription, that is, does not enter into other theoretical currents, does not access other views on the themes and, above all, does not build a critical sense through the first action of articulating ideas.

It is important to emphasize that reading is an activity interrelated to writing, after all, reading also collaborates with the improvement of mastery of writing itself. Reading, on the one hand, provides the student with resources to expand his repertoire of knowledge; on the other hand, it enables access to examples of written practices that are current in the context in question. From the act of reading, the student becomes familiar with the characteristics of the academic text and the textual genres of which they are representative (Vieira; Faraco, 2019).

An essential factor, in relation to academic writing, is "to know what one is doing and to make intelligent choices" (Bazerman, 2006, p. 63). This thought presupposes the knowledge of what shapes the written text and which is related to: topic, that is, the subject to be discussed; audience, the target audience that will possibly read the text; presentation strategies, that is, the means adopted to express reliability in the text; organization, related to the contemplation of the textual structure of a certain genre; style corresponding to the context, which, in most cases, requires a greater degree of formality; development of information, with regard to the clarity used in the development of the text; and final presentation, which presupposes that the text must undergo revisions until it reaches the necessary quality (Motta-Roth; Hendges, 2010).

Thus, writing in the academic context involves much more than formal linguistic knowledge – although it is also required. The aim is to fulfill pre-established communicative purposes with a view to the demands presented by the community, according to the ideological and identity implications present. It is observed that Higher Education is based on certain rules and value

judgments, which implies the demand for appropriation of a set of characteristic textual genres, with adaptation to prototypical configurations, for acceptance by the group (Vieira; Faraco, 2019).

Based on these considerations, namely of an epistemological and methodological nature, the present essay seeks to problematize the contexts, influences, texts and their uses in the initial training of teachers in defense of the act of studying, replicating and following Paulo Freire's reflections on what it is to study. Initial training seeks to apply them using as resources the critical demands proposed by this author throughout his extensive work.

Another relevant aspect is the institutional context in which teachers work, as it constitutes, in most cases, "more of an obstacle than a fostering of the transformation of training practices" (André et al., 2010, p. 140). "The challenges call for new postures and methodologies of teaching work, but also for the institutional responsibility of taking on a project for the new type of students who have access to it" (Gatti, 2014, p. 49). The authors' studies revealed that undergraduate students have changed, a fact that should reflect in the reconstitution of the practice of teacher trainers and also incorporated into institutional pedagogical projects.

Freire (2001, p. 10) calls our attention to several specificities of education that is intended to be qualified, among them it is worth illustrating the unavoidable issue: "To seriously study a text is to study the study of those who, by studying, wrote it." It is to perceive the conditioning of historical, social, logical, ethical and cultural aspects of knowledge. It is also "to seek the relations between the content under study and other related dimensions of knowledge. Studying is a way of reinventing, of recreating, of rewriting – a task of the subject and not of the object" (Freire, 2001, p. 11).

The president of the Latin American Association of Writing Studies in Higher Education and Professional Contexts (ALES) Frederico Navarro argues that the role of academic writing goes beyond the dissemination of what scientists do, since it reverberates the social impacts of knowledge production; hence the urgency of its teaching, with criticality, to provide the training of questioning students.

Knowing teaching learning processes implies recognizing and exploring personal conceptions/theories of teachers/future teachers, either to reaffirm such conceptions or to change them; because teaching, as a profession, is learned. Regarding learning their profession, Ponte (2014) states that the teacher should not be limited to systematized knowledge, but should also consider an articulation between pedagogy and humanization for this teaching.

In the educational literature on teaching, various proposals and models of instructional planning are presented aimed at situations of teaching practice, a practice that is configured in the realization of the conditions that ensure the realization of the teaching work. These conditions are not reduced to the strictly pedagogical, since there are socio-political and cultural conditions that configure different conceptions of man and society and, consequently, different assumptions about

the role of the school, learning, teacher-student relationship, resources, didactics, pedagogical techniques, etc. However, teaching theories have pedagogical concepts and principles that guarantee them organicity and coherence.

In view of these observations, it is concluded that writing, in the university context, is to build professional knowledge of a specific area and to appropriate new knowledge, thought and produced by students of Higher Education and Graduate Studies. Hence the need for a perspective focused on studying, so that the acts of reading and text production can be materialized with propriety both of the linguistic resources available and characteristic of the academic context, as well as of the epistemological, ideological and identity demands of scientific practice.

READING AND TEXTUAL PRODUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF THEORY AND INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES

In the collective work entitled "Researcher Training: reflections around writing/research/authorship and orientation" (2014), some important syntheses about concepts, such as authorship, academic writing, freedom, recognition and solidarity in the elaboration of academic texts, were developed by the Brazilian and Portuguese co-authors who make up the collection with their studies. We highlight for the readers of this essay the following chapters: "For university students to write: Principles of Support, Freedom and Mutual Recognition", by Jesus and Machado (2014); "Contours of writing/research/authorship and supervision of master's and doctoral students in the current academic context", by *Araújo and Oliveira* (2014); and "Alchemy of academic writing: the master's degree as a scenario for the initiation of researchers in education" by Soares and Luchese (2014).

The production of a text, which requires authorship, is a great challenge. One way to overcome it is to "write and rewrite, reconstructing and resignifying the text, which is polished and woven in reflection, attentive reading and dialogue with the authors of the theoretical framework" (Oliveira; Araújo; Bianchetti, 2014, p. 38). Thus, it is up to the author to experience an internal process of self-organization based on readings and dialogues with the authors in a recursive process of reading, reflection and writing.

The confrontation of the difficulties mentioned is carried out by a planning that requires the organization of a personal agenda of studies, changes in beliefs, values, and pre-established concepts, because the time dedicated to the writing of the text is imbricated with dedication to readings, analysis of sources and, consequently, the writing and rewriting of the text, taking into account that the experiences lived in this process and the interference of readers collaborate in this production.

What enables the teacher to exercise his profession, guided by ethics, is the reflection (in/about/of and for his profession) that allows him to advance in personal, professional and

institutional development, coming to develop and consolidate academic, socio-emotional, professional and ethical skills. It is, therefore, in the constant reflection on the teaching practice that it assumes its real importance.

Paraphrasing a poem by Fernando Pessoa to better express the processes of transformation that the research provides, it is concluded that "There is a time...", the time of crossing and change that leads to forgetting trodden paths that always lead to the same places. Therefore, it is appropriate here to reflect on Mia Couto, who said: "what a writer gives us [...], through writing, is a world" (Couto, 2005, p. 110). The aforementioned crossing has a sense of drawing inner borders, an exercise in decentralization to, when leaving oneself, visit oneself – a crossing of our own identities; because it is in the crossing that life is filled with meaning. Face the crossing or stay on the sidelines. Here is our choice: to remain on the crossing like his father and grandfather, respectively characters of Guimarães Rosa and Mia Couto, who by crossing the waters destabilized the known shores and promoted a reflection on being and being in the world. The journey undertaken by the characters is a metaphor for life and human destiny, through which they reach their portions of transcendence.

As Benedito Nunes described: "For Guimarães Rosa, there is no world on one side and the man who crosses it on the other. In addition to being a traveler, man is the journey – object and subject of the crossing, one whose process the world is made" (Nunes, 2013, p. 85).

> *"The flow of life wraps everything up, life is like this: it heats up and cools down, tightens and then loosens, calms down and then becomes restless. What she wants from us is courage"* (João Guimarães Rosa, 2021, p. 283).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

What characterizes an academic text is, above all, its object: it conveys the fruit of some scientific, philosophical or artistic investigation. It should, therefore, reflect the rigor, the critical perspective, the constant concern with objectivity and clarity that are an inherent part of academic research.

The conception of having the academy as the center of knowledge production, as long as the schools of basic education are articulated, through an integrative curricular project that qualifies its potential as a source of knowledge construction, also establishes a relationship of continuity of initial training and the process of insertion in the profession.

When considering that teacher training should train professionals for basic education, it is urgent to take the field of teaching practice as a reference and add to it the necessary knowledge listed in line with the underlying didactic mediations.

Considering individual and collective dimensions of learning, the professional community of teachers requires its participants to engage in intellectual and social activities, aiming at new ways of thinking and reasoning collectively as well as new ways of interacting with people. This includes the

practices of reading and writing texts demanded by the academic community, ensuring dialogue between peers in the process of construction and dissemination of knowledge resulting from teacher reflection.

In conclusion, emphasis should be given to the teacher who, aware of his role, must assume it so that his posture corresponds to the needs of each student in the educational processes, creating a relationship of respect for opinions, criticism and knowledge, since the exercise of teaching requires professional ethics.

It is hoped that the theme addressed in this article can also enhance the construction of pedagogical practices based on the cultural universes of students, mixing the school/academic discourse with others from different fields founded on multiculturalism and a perspective of differences, in an interrelation to different types of literacy. A multiculturally oriented pedagogical practice, one that is built discursively in the challenge of recognizing differences and prejudices related to it, provides a continuous training of critical, creative, autonomous, questioning teachers committed to the cultural plurality of the broader society and also to the plurality of identities present in the specific context in which the teaching action is developed.

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