

The legacy of Paulo Freire for curriculum policies and teaching in Brazil

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First words

[...] when Paulo published *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he did more than simply offer a disturbing book about education because we can find an education epistemology, pedagogy and sociology that are bound by a convocation in behalf of society and school democratization; an ambitious program that connects the classroom and the society power policy; it has been moving educators and students to change themselves in the history and the way they teach, giving rise to an international movement of educators who want to transform the societies they teach...[...]

Ira Shor

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was born in Recife, a city located in Brazilian Northeast region. He is recognized worldwide as one of the most important thinkers in the pedagogy's history, since he is an author of a critical pedagogy that is compromised to set the oppressed classes free through a conscientization work. Although he is known as a creator of an 'adult literacy method', his work contributes to all education field. When the military dictatorship took place in Brazil, Paulo was chased and forced to be in exile during 16 years because of his adult literacy work, regarded as subversive.

The current thinking of Paulo Freire has been attested by multiple developing experiences, and his thinking is taken as a reference in different areas of knowledge all over the world. The greatest vitality of his thinking is indicated by the growing publication of his works in various languages and the expansion of forums, cathedras and research centers created to research and discuss the legacy of Freire. Such projection confers the character of a universal work on his productions as a whole.

In literature, the contribution of Freire's work has been stood out in the testimonials of important authors in different countries. The contribution of Freire's work has also been stood out in the growing number of researches that used Freire as a reference.

Michael W. Apple³ stands out that various generations of critical educational work took a number of Freire's works as a reference. Freire is important to all these people all



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over many countries, and they recognize that our mission is to “give a name to the world” and build together an education that is simultaneously anti-hegemonic and part of the greatest battleground about what literacy means (education should control literacy) and how the critical literacy (Freire named it as conscientization) is connected to real fights by real people in real communities.

For Antônio Nóvoa⁴, Freire’s work and life are inscribed on the pedagogical imagination of XX century, representing a compulsory reference for various generations of educators. Freire’s proposals have been used by different groups that relocated them in a number of social and political contexts. From a specific educative concept that crosses the social theory, moral commitment and political participation, Paulo Freire is an incontestable inheritance of the current pedagogical reflection. His work acts as a kind of critical consciousness that protects us from the depoliticization of both educative thinking and pedagogical reflection.

Paulo Freire’s works – that comprise more than 20 books of his authorship, including books and articles of other authors on Freire’s work and co-authored books – have already surpassed the mark of seven thousand publications. His most important work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, has already been translated into more than 20 languages, and over 500 thousand issues of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* have already been published only in English language.

It is relevant to restate that Freire – and more specifically *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, [1968] 1988) – is the recurrent reference for the practice of critical education, especially when adult education⁵ is concerned.

In the work “*Paulo Freire: uma bibliografia, organizada por Moacir Gadotti (1995)*”, there is a large and significant group of studiers of Freire’s work in Brazil, America and the other continents worldwide. They deliver analysis on Paulo Freire’s life and work, and stand out the value of his contributions.

In a recent search to subsidize his dissertation for master’s degree, Maurício Carrara⁶ found 31 titles of dissertations and theses from 1987 to 2003 in *Portal da Capes*⁷. These dissertations and theses were defended in different areas of knowledge, and Freire was used as a reference. From such areas of knowledge, 90 titles are concentrated on education area.

1. Confronted curriculum policies

In the curriculum tome, the Brazilian educational tradition is presided by the logic of technical control. The curriculum has been inspired in the technical, linear paradigm of Ralph Tyler (1949) as a decision question on goals to be achieved – “curricula” that define the subject matters, content topics, number of hours, teaching methods and techniques and evaluation of pre-established goals.

From that understanding, curricula elaboration and reformulation have been restricted to a set of supposedly “neutral” decisions that the state and municipal secretariat of Education made, especially regarding junior high school and high school, according to the legislation in force, as provided by the regulations of state and federal councils for Education. These decisions start to constitute the “Pedagogy of Official Gazettes” and the respective complementary publications, such as “Curricular Guides”, “Curricular Proposals”, “Subsidies for Curriculum Implementation” and others, and teachers receive them as a series of measures that they should apply in their classrooms.

In fact, this prescriptive level of curriculum is too far from how it is named by John Goodlad (1977) as operational curriculum, which means what is “really” happening in a



classroom.

Because of a set of multiple explanations that concern the conditions of an Education worker – that are getting worse and worse by the technical and superficial qualification of teachers, by the poor, confusing and damageable conditions of school organization, by the centered, authoritarian and elite character of Brazilian education, among others – the “curriculum” starts to be the knowledge transmission that the editorial market produces, advertises and sells.

In his study on curricular paradigms, José Luiz Domingues (1988) concludes, beside a number of international and national authors, that the “old and eroded technical, linear paradigm” reaches its maximum point of exhaustion. According to Thomas Kuhn, the crises indicate a situation of paradigmatic renovation.

Under the management of Paulo Freire as the Secretary of Education, the Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo worked in the perspective of elaborating and using a new curricular paradigm. This involved in thinking about a curriculum, reading a curriculum, doing a curriculum and feeling a curriculum. There was a search for a curricular reorientation presided by the emancipatory rationality, based on the “critical theory” of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas.

The emancipatory rationality is focused on the principles of criticism and action. It aims at criticizing what is restrictive and oppressive, emphasizing both questions of freedom and well-being. Such rationality stands out the ability to think critically and reflect on its historical genesis, that is, to think about its own thinking. When defining this important category “critical reflection” in the body of emancipatory rationality, Henry Giroux (1983) says:

More specifically, the ability to think about the thinking points to a way of reasoning that aims at breaking a ‘frozen’ ideology that avoids a criticism about the world and life, on which the rationalizations of dominant society are based. Similarly, the emancipatory rationality increases its interest in the self-reflection with social action that aims at creating the material and ideological conditions in which there are relations not explored and not alienating. This suggests a view of education to citizenship.

In this context of reference, the category “totality” is stood out in a fundamentally important way. Such category is the core for the curricular organization, since it ensures that schools don’t work as if they are in a “social and political emptiness”. Rather, it historically and sociologically allows and stimulates the school relationships with the other political and economic institutions. To review the curriculum in this perspective involves situating it in the social context that emphasizes the interconnections among culture, power and transformation.

To work with the emancipatory rationality means to establish a dialectic relation between the cultural and political-social-historical context and the curriculum, as a whole. To elaborate/reformulate/reorientate the curriculum in the emancipatory perspective requires, above all, a new curriculum understanding, a more necessarily broadening consideration of the own concept. It involves making clear concepts of world, society, man, education, school before thinking about a curriculum. These concepts interpenetrate the curriculum and allow expressing a frequently hidden dimension of curricular question concerning ideology.

Consequently, to conceive a curriculum under the emancipatory rationality involves



understanding it not only as a ready, finished product to be consumed, but also as a constantly elaborating process that is done and redone. Fundamentally, as a way in which the participation of actors who interact in the educative process is a condition for its construction.

1.1 The curricular reorientation in the context of educational policy of the Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo

Paulo Freire took over the Secretariat of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo in 1989⁸. His administration assumed the commitment to create a popular public education whose main characteristic was “Education as a freedom practice”. As a main task, it meant the democratization of education, and this involved the effort of Brazil democratization. Improving the quality of municipal public education also presupposed a change in the school internal relation and school/population relation. The school should be turned to the critical and social formation in search of a democratic society; a serious school that appropriates and recreates knowledge, and is both happy and stimulator of solidarity and curiosity.

The school should be open so that the population could recreate it, give it animation and other life, and mainly rebuild critically the learning, an emancipation instrument, always considering its needs. The popular participation in creating the culture and education breaks the tradition that only the elite is competent and knows the needs and interests of all society.

The school should also be a spreading center of popular culture to recreate it – not to consume it; a space for political organization of popular classes and, as a space for teaching-learning process, it would be a center for discussing ideas, solutions and reflections in which the popular organization would systematize its own experience. In this school, the worker’s child should find the means of intellectual self-emancipation, and critically appropriate the knowledge of dominant class.

As the new proposal is democratic because it is responsible and education is really seen as a practice of freedom, it would not be imposed in an authoritarian way; it would respect the worthy educational work, even divergent, that was being conducted. The critical education would be gradually built from experiences evaluated in pilot schools and from a major adhesion of school chain.

Among other aspects, the pedagogical proposal under construction presupposed the incorporation of cultural and social experience lived by the school community as an object of school reflection and elaboration. For this, it was necessary to democratize the school management with the participation of parents, students, teachers and other education workers in discussing and deciding its directions; this involved autonomy, that is, freedom for schools to make jointly decisions with the other instances of Secretariat of Education.

Besides, municipal schools elected boards in the beginning of the year. Parents, students, employees and educators composed groups that held periodical meetings to discuss the school problems and show alternatives for their solution.

The development process of school boards as school management bodies required a work of systematic and permanent formation in the political, pedagogical dimension.

To concretize the democratic popular public school of good quality — a priority of Paulo Freire administration — under the direction of a transforming and critical education, it was necessary to reconsider the pedagogical proposal of Municipal Schools and this necessarily required the re-elaboration of the basic instrument of school organization — the

curriculum — understood in an emancipatory, progressive and broadening perspective.

The Municipal Secretariat of Education developed actions that aimed at jointly building this new pedagogical proposal in the perspective to assure:

- respect for the student cultural identity;
- appropriation and production of relevant and significant knowledge for the student in a critical way in the perspective to understand and transform the social reality;
- an understanding change concerning what is to teach and learn;
- stimulation of student creativity and curiosity;
- democratization of school relations;
- development of collective work in school;
- rescue of educator identity;
- community/school integration as a space for valuing and recreating the popular culture.

For this political, educational project to be feasible, the Secretariat defined as actions the Curricular Reorientation Movement and the Permanent Qualification of Educators.

The emancipatory, progressive and broadening curricular reorientation, proposed for Municipal Schools in 1989, comprised all the teaching modules and required a procedure that denied the “pedagogical measures” that are generally imposed to schools.

There were four bases for the Curricular Reorientation Proposal of the Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo:

- a) the collective elaboration, characterized by a broadening participation in the decisions and actions on the curriculum;
- b) the respect for the autonomy principle of school, allowing the worthy practices to be rescued and, at the same time, creating and recreating curricular experiences that favor the unit diversity;
- c) the value of practical, theoretical unit reflected in the movement of “action-reflection-action” about curricular experiences; there was an understanding that the elaboration of new practices could initially take place in accurate situations, anticipating the gradual expansion of the new curricular elaboration process for all municipal schools;
- d) the permanent qualification of teaching professionals, necessarily developed from a critical analysis of the current curriculum, that is, a view of what is really happening in the school. By the right and wrong aspects, there was a search for determining the critical points requiring foundation, review and overcoming of practices.

The curricular reorientation was a process of collective elaboration in which different groups participated in a constant dialogue: the school, community and experts of different knowledge areas.

The first two moments of this movement were the problematization and systematization involving all municipal schools.

The reorientation also ensured the stimulation and support to develop the projects proposed by the schools, reaching their own autonomy. Simultaneously, the pedagogical project for interdisciplinarity was developed.

The document that showed a “real situation” of the current curriculum elaborated from the view of teachers of municipal schools of São Paulo was discussed in all schools,

subsidizing the plan elaboration of 1990.

There was also other conclusion of the “real situation” of municipal school, according to the testimonial of students, that subsidized the school planning of 1991. The “School Problematization” made by the community was carried out as a result of events such as pedagogical plenary meetings, gatherings and meetings of school boards and regional boards of school representatives.

The curricular reorientation⁹ that was defined as the curriculum problematization involved describing and expressing the expectations of the process interlocutors, comprising teachers, students, experts and school boards. The popular participation in problematization took place in pedagogical plenary meetings in which parents and representatives of social movements also participated.

The second moment of curricular reorientation process was defined as the systematization of reports derived from the first moment of problematization, rendering a critical confront of knowledge areas with the content of reports. As a curriculum policy, this confront involved the knowledge theory that bases areas and subject matters and that presiding the epistemological practices of a democratic school.

The third moment was defined as the retaking of pedagogical work possibilities created in the previous moments.

The three above-mentioned moments were a simultaneous process that involved two practice types: on one side, all school team working together to build and apply the new curricular proposal, through initiative and coordination of bodies of Secretariat of Education, in ten schools that were gradually expanded and, on the other side, the Secretariat of Education providing material and human resources for specific proposals (proposals of teachers or group of teachers) derived from the interest in elaborating a new curriculum under the perspective of the educational policy that was proposed.

It is necessary to stand out that the “school situation” that was also described by educatees rendered a school analysis categorized in three focuses:

- *Educatees have many things to say about school*

All educatees, children, teenagers and adults give their opinion about the school. Clearly, their expressions are different, showing, on one side, the inherent differences concerning the development stage of students and, on the other side, the nature of school experience they live.

In this evidence that is obvious for many people, there is a prominent fact that the opinions of educatees are real and accurate, especially when they say about “what is not going well in the school” and about the view of “how the school should be”.

”Their conceptions are not homogeneous, and it wouldn’t be expected because the diversity is healthy. The mosaic formed by the different analyses allows working the contradictions and dimensions that haven’t been deeply studied yet. And, when breaking the “silence culture”, listening to educatees, discussing their views with them and being receptive to reflection and action, it is possible to be under the perspective to build a democratic public school”.

- *Educatees want to improve school*

In their expectations, children, teenagers and adults demonstrate clear aspirations concerning the school improvement. These expectations are located in the most visible

aspects, as the school physical space, and in the most hidden aspects that are not usually declared in the plans and deliberated actions of educators.

These two dimensions are important when a new teaching quality is sought.

For many times, the unpredictable aspects that define the “hidden curriculum” give fundamental clues to educators when they want to do a daring and serious work for improving the school quality.

A fact that is a highlight and deserves attention refers to the own school conception. Children that study in the first school grades have the broadest and most creative understanding of how the school should be. They clearly express that the valuing knowledge is not restricted to what is happening in the classroom and to what the teacher is transmitting. They also express the need for a non-fragmented work organization. They are paying attention to a school that incorporates nature elements and to the technology that characterizes the society of our time. At the same time, they value information and the social aspects of education, and want a school that interacts beyond their walls.

Throughout the schooling of students, it seems that most of these aspects disappear, lose their meaning or are minimized. This evidence may reveal the inculcation of a school model that reinforces the transmitting information aspect, the fragmentation, in which the knowledge is recognized as being worthy only when the teacher knows it very well.

It is a school that reproduces the social stratification and power relations of our society.

To deepen this discussion when entering into each one of the characteristics mentioned by educatees in each analysis category allowed educators to have an advance in the quality of pedagogical practice in all instances of the Secretariat of Education of São Paulo.

- *Educatees want to participate in the educative process*

All educatees – from children to adults – demonstrated a critical sense concerning the school analysis and, including their desire of a better school, they showed a set of suggestions for their desire to come true. This indicated that educatees, when required, have something to say, make good analysis and show proposals for school improvement. This diagnosis showed that the participation of educatees in the educative process needed to be worked and deepened by aiming at concretizing it as one of the marks of this “new teaching quality”, pointed as one of the bases of curricular reorientation. To deepen the work of educatee participation in the teaching-learning process involved reviewing the nature of this participation, understanding it beyond the sense of “listening to the student” in order to talk to the student. Here it is emphasized the Freire’s meaning of “dialogue” as a knowledge elaboration method and as a perspective to make it participate more and more in deciding the directions of pedagogical action.

To assume the commitment and develop a practice that revealed the legitimate participation of educatees was a fundamental condition to “change the *school face*” (a colloquial expression used by Paulo Freire to refer to the school change when he was Secretary of Education).

Maybe the reader curiosity will put the following question: how was it possible to elaborate the curriculum from the problematization texts?



The answer for this question gave various directions. The first one showed a work that was done in the teacher's daily life from the critical reflection of problematizations when the teachers started to reflect on "their pedagogical act" according to the analyses made. It could be recognized or not in the "real situations" of Municipal Schools, considering the reorientation of their action before the existing problems.

The school problematization made by the teachers was an important indication to organize the Program for Permanent Qualification of Educators, since it pointed the needs for qualification¹⁰.

The school problematization elaborated by educatees was an important document to be analyzed by the school teams in the sense that they could include it to study the local reality. After all, the view of educatees about school is a fundamental evaluation of how the pedagogical practice is being carried out, and it is an indication of expectations that need to be analyzed and considered.

The "view of educatees" about school showed fundamental points that surpass the act "to like or dislike school" and indicated significant aspects – such as learning conception, evaluation, school-job relation, "school-life" – that made the school teams reflect on the existing practices. There was someone who found out the importance to "listen to the students" from a wealth of data contained in the text.

Information on the "view" of parents or persons-in-charge of educatees about school was included in the data of school problematization that educators and educatees made.

The need for new actions — or redo the curriculum — and the elaboration of registration and statement documents appeared as a result of the work from this problematization.

Among the different actions, the work of schools in elaborating their own pedagogical projects was a highlight, concretizing the school autonomy principle. In Municipal Schools, over 1500 projects were registered, based on the reality of each school. It was the same regarding schools that had night courses.

The problematization also identified the need for elaborating and discussing the conception of knowledge areas underlying the work of different schools. These documents were discussed with all municipal school teachers. After a critical analysis, this material started to subsidize the planning and/or deepening of the work. In this moment, a publication of notebooks was made containing the reports on the practices built in this process.

Through a new pedagogical practice in the Brazilian reality, the Municipal Schools of São Paulo showed the possibility to elaborate the curriculum in progress. This daring educational practice was experienced even with difficulties and apprehensions. In spite of that, it was highly positive because of the results from the so-called school performance and indicators that broaden the social quality concept of education: school democratization and appropriation of school communities of the right and duty to say when elaborating the curriculum. Using all the possibilities, the Municipal Schools of São Paulo gave a testimonial of how to do a curriculum in progress in a critical, transforming perspective, searching for a new education quality. With this, the continuation of this work was proposed to educators, since it is always needed because education is made and remade. At the same time, it bet on the possibility that other teaching networks could create their own curricular reorientation processes inspired in this experience that was not over.

2. The influence of Freire's pedagogy in the Brazilian state and municipal curricular policies from the 90's

From 1992, various Brazilian states and municipalities that were committed to popular management decided to elaborate curricular policies with Freire's presuppositions of Curricular Reorientation Movement that took place in São Paulo (1989-1992 administration). Among them, there are¹¹: Angra dos Reis-RJ (1994-2000), Porto Alegre-RS (1995-2000), Chapecó-SC (1998-2003), Caxias do Sul-RS (1998-2003), Gravataí-RS (1997-1999), Vitória da Conquista-BA (1998-2000), São Paulo-SP (2001-2003), Belém-PA (2000-2002), Maceió-AL (2000-2003), Dourados-MS (2001-2003), Goiânia-GO (2001-2003), Criciúma-SC (2001-2003), State of Rio Grande do Sul (1998-2001) and Alagoas (2001-2003). These curricular policies implemented in these administrations have presuppositions that are under the freedom educational perspective (Freire, [1968] 1988) and the leading principles of these curricular policies are generally the implementation of curricular reorientation proposals that are committed to a popular education and based in the educational policy of Paulo Freire in São Paulo-SP (1989-1992). The perspective is the feasibility of social quality teaching in public school, assuring the school access and permanence of all social classes and the school management democratization.¹² It is worth standing out that the popular education conception to which we referred is that as follows:

“(...) it recognizes the presence of popular classes as a *sine qua non* for the real democratic practice of progressive public school as it provides the necessary learning for this practice. In this aspect, it centrally contradicts itself one more time with the right and left ideological, authoritarian conceptions that refuse this participation by different reasons” (FREIRE, [1993] 1995d, p. 103).

Under this perspective, the administrations committed to these principles and presuppositions are called “Popular Administrations”. The most remarkable common characteristic for the processes of these popular administrations is the effective participation of community – “active participation” for Lima (2001, p. 77) –through the constant dialogue among the school segments, integrating the elaboration of these policies.¹³

The first aspect to be considered in implementing these educational policies is the public investment in Education area. As it is a priority to meet the demand and assure the full access to school, investments are promoted to build schools, repair buildings and equipments, buy and replace pedagogical, didactic material, value educators and employees professionally, and so on, so that public schools can work properly.

Regarding the teaching social quality, the democratic management and curricular reorientation movements are characterized by the value of: the existing emancipatory pedagogical practices in municipal schools, the collective work of schools involving all school segments and the permanent qualification of educators. In praxis, there is the process of critical deconstruction / reconstruction of school autonomy.

The privilege to follow these processes in different municipalities described ways to overcome the difficulties and contradictions of teaching educational conception and practice. The Secretariats of Education mentioned try to change this educative act, conceiving school as a space for permanent action and formation. The school is effectively dedicated to social transformation under a dialectical perspective of teaching-learning

process and of its commitment to the popular classes. The goal is to elaborate oppositional curricular policies deriving from the current negativity in public school and contemporary society for the dialogical transformation of these experienced realities.

Although there are principles, guidelines and common methods, it is important to stand out the diversity of practices and movements observed in each administration, given the contexts and local specificities that we will characterize from now on, in a historical and resumed way.

Angra dos Reis-RJ, Porto Alegre-RS, Chapecó-SC, Caxias do Sul-RS, Gravataí-RS, Belém do Pará-PA, Vitória da Conquista-BA, Maceió-AL and the State of Alagoas had at least two popular administrations consecutively. In general, it is observed that, in the first administrations, there was a priority to repair the public equipments and recover the salary of education professionals who were historically damaged by the authoritarian governments in order to invest more in the curricular reorientation movements and qualification of pedagogical practices.

However, the administrations in Criciúma-SC, Dourados-MS, Vitória da Conquista-BA and the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1998-2001) decided to adopt educational policies to simultaneously work in the bases of: access and permanence in public school, democratic management and social quality of education. In this way, although they initially prioritized a general survey to work in the existing poor structural conditions, they interspersed these actions with pedagogical activities in order to firstly try to divulge and legitimate advanced educational practices that have been already observed in municipal schools.

In Goiânia-GO, although the popular management only started in 2001, there was already a work under the perspective of a generating issue. The problematization, deepening and critical curricular reorganization that are defended here took this initial experience as a reference for pedagogical reorientation.

In this sense, a relevant aspect of the implemented educational policies concerns the priorities established by the different Secretariats of Education to transform the current educational practices and the way they performed this process. In this way, we can observe movements that started discussions involving the whole school network in the collective elaboration of school statutes from analyzing different curricular topics concerning school practice, so that a reflection is specifically made on the collective elaboration of alternative curricular proposals for the traditional curricular proposal. These alternative curricular proposals contain the collective and critical rethinking of teaching-learning process in the different knowledge areas.

As an example, we can observe that the popular administrations of São Paulo, Angra dos Reis, Chapecó, Criciúma, Vitória da Conquista, Belém and Caxias do Sul chose the critical rescue of pedagogical practices, lectures, municipal congresses and school constituent processes in which they systematized presuppositions, principles, conceptions, methods and statutory rules compatible with the elaboration of democratic popular school, although they made movements that showed significant differences.

In Chapecó, Caxias do Sul-RS, Dourados-MS, Belém, Vitória da Conquista and Criciúma, the rescue of practices was inaugurated with the dialogue between the Secretariats and municipal schools from an initial problematization. The school network was asked concerning what school we have today and what school the different school segments considered suitable. From the conflicts, tensions and contradictions observed, the dialogical curricular reorientation movements occurred through the analysis of specific local problems, searching for the elaboration of transforming interdisciplinary curricular practices.

Taking Angra dos Reis as a reference from 1994¹⁴, we can state that, similarly to what happened in São Paulo, Caxias do Sul and Chapecó, the curricular reorientation movement started through the rescue of pedagogical practices that have already showed levels of innovation and democratic involvement of all school segments. The project *Plano Global* (Global Plan) that has been already developed in four schools was taken as a starting point. The movement began through the collective elaboration of a project – named as *Projeto Interdisciplinar* (Interdisciplinary Project) – that sought to stop the dissociation between the school knowledge and citizenship observed in the educational tradition. The following was considered: school contents, the local reality (a reflection of its respective and broad social, historical construction context) and the own teaching-learning process (proposed from the dialogue between the popular and systematized knowledge in which the knowledge assimilation occurs collectively from analyzing the contradictions experienced in the local reality). In this way, the pedagogical act starts to be the own critical, contextualized, processing, consistent and emancipatory citizenship exercise.

In general, it is worth standing out that changing frequently the main administrative instances, the pedagogical teams of the Secretariats and the school network educators, choosing a huge of events involving the most part of school network, losing reporting procedures, administrative and political questions, administrative and political indecision prejudicial to the pedagogical options, etc are negative factors for the pedagogical policies in school networks to be feasible.

Throughout the years, different contexts indicated a huge diversity of ways. Let's focus the movements that were followed.

In Caxias do Sul-RS, in the end of 2001, we observed a most consistent retaking when the SMED pedagogical team made the follow-up of schools, providing more quality for the work that has been developed.

In Chapecó-SC (1998-2004), the pedagogical policy and the curricular proposals have rendered the possibility to implement and deepen the curricular reorientation movement with qualitative advances in the different teaching levels and modules, which made the Secretariat of Education of the Municipality receive a better evaluation of its municipalities and be considered as the best one in the State of Santa Catarina in 2002.

In Porto Alegre-RS, the School Constituent Congress (October/1994 to August/1995) discussed with all the segments of school community to elaborate the school statutes for the proposal of a citizen school to municipal public school network to be feasible. Based on a democratic conception of management, this proposal seeks to subsidize and give real conditions to a collective movement of curricular reorientation. The curriculum and knowledge conception is discussed and expressed in the political-pedagogical-administrative project that is intended to be implemented, and there were no doubts about the intentions and commitment to the freedom popular education. In this sense, the School Constituent Congress (1995)¹⁵ and *Curso Verão* (Summer Course) (1996) showed the possibility to overcome crystallized educative practices, indicating new conceptions and pedagogical actions compatible with the assumed political commitment. From the dialogue between SMED/POA and school network, the group of educators that attended *Curso Verão* (Summer Course) (1996) identified parameters and systematized actions for the curricular reorientation movement, based on the Constituent Congress discussion. With this, it came up proposals for implementing the new curriculum in the municipal schools of Porto Alegre. After successive discussions in regional meetings and schools involving parents, students, employees and educators, the participative curriculum profile was being defined and the statute should give support to it. Then the curriculum

would be conceived and elaborated in an interdisciplinary way, that is, from successive summaries and analyses. The group of educators would seek the contribution of different subject matters in order to reveal the study objects. The objects and the own analysis process were regarded as contemporary historical totalizations, thus being submitted to different points-of-view according to the interests and intentions of the persons involved.¹⁶

In this way, under the perspective to concretize a pedagogical work involving the school community in elaborating a dynamic curriculum, the process of SMED of Porto Alegre can be compared to the movements of other Secretariats of Education of Popular Administration that were also adorned by Freire's pedagogy. The social, constructivist reference bases the conception of teaching-learning process. We can shortly state that these proposals are characterized to be constituted from a pedagogical policy committed to the popular education that takes effect through a problematizing dialogue, mediating historical subjects and knowledge on relevant social aspects of reality to overcome the contradictions experienced by the community and transform actions of the social context in which this reality is placed.

Until 2001, the advances observed in municipal schools of Porto Alegre were a reference for all public schools interested in implementing a curriculum organized by formation cycles.

In Gravataí, the SMEC discussed with municipal schools under the perspective to "provide a horizon for school relations" from a dialogue conceived as a collective effort to overcome the difficulties regarding the traditional school exclusion. When prioritizing the participation, integration, inclusion and freedom of everyone, the institutionalization of participative spaces – School Boards, Municipal Board of Education, democratization of Act for Director Election – was aimed together with the participation of school community through I Municipal Congress (November/1998).¹⁷ The 1999 year was dedicated for the schools to elaborate the school statutes from the annals approved in I Municipal Congress.

In the municipalities of Vitória da Conquista-BA and Belém-PA, there was a more accurate follow-up. The construction of *Cabana* school in Belém do Pará – followed in 2001 and 2002 – and the curricular reorientation in Vitória da Conquista – under assessorship from 1999 and 2000 – had posterior changes. Later, in Belém and Vitória da Conquista, there was an option for continuing the curricular reorientation process via generating issue with the moments proposed herein for curriculum elaboration.

In Maceió and Goiânia, the process took place only in Youth and Adult Education. In Maceió, the movement involved some school units of school network from 2001 and qualified curricular practices could be observed from the accuracy of pedagogical team of schools.

In Goiânia-GO, the option for reorientation via generating issue was made in the end of 2002 and the process was followed sporadically. In 2003, the municipal schools of EJA analyzed researches made and sought to select significant talks of community.

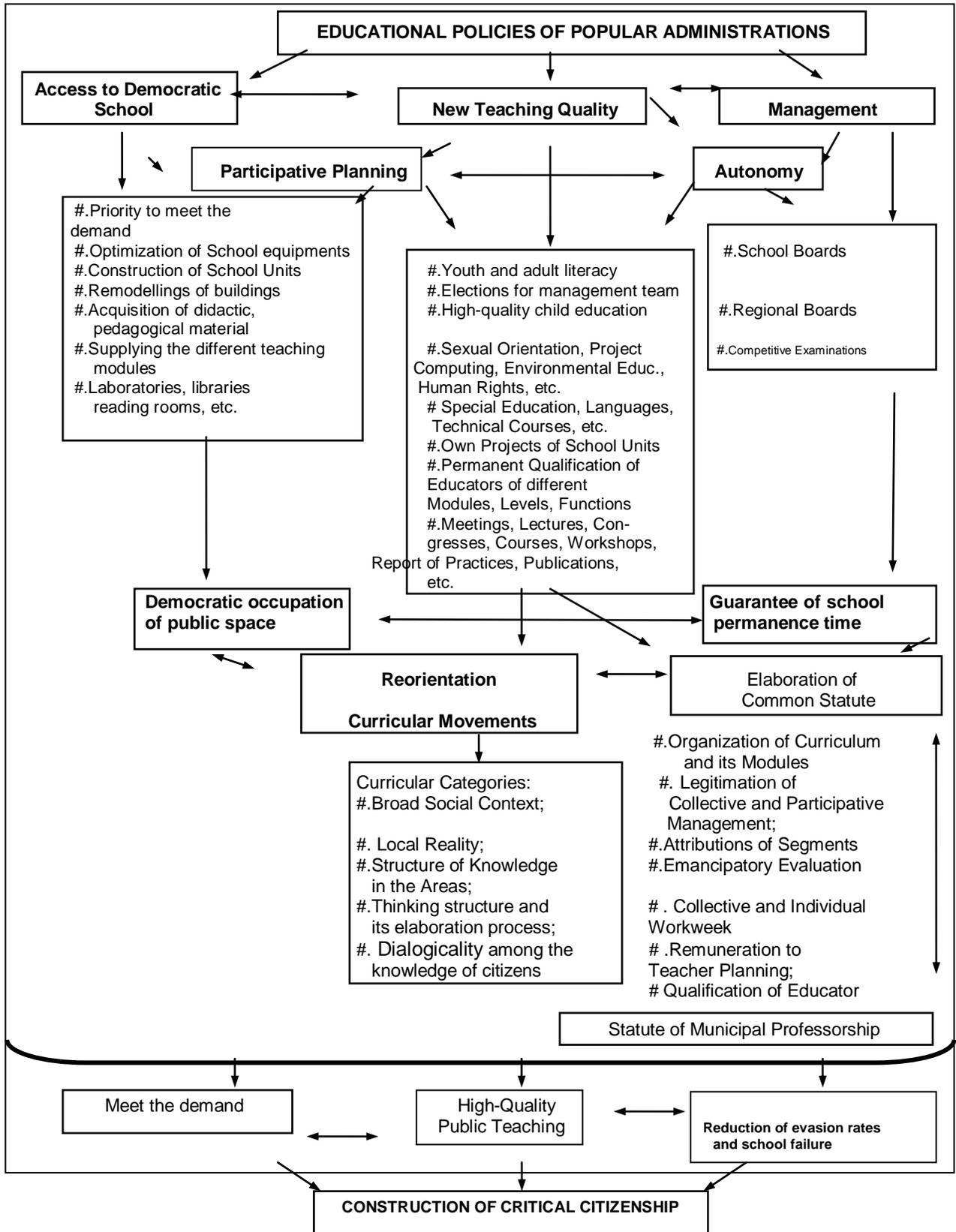
In the municipality of Criciúma, the option for curricular reorientation via generating issue in the Program for Youth and Adult Education (PROEJA) took place in 2001, which allowed significant advances that are currently observed in some school units. In Junior High School, the movement was chosen only in the beginning of 2003 after the elaboration of Political, Pedagogical Project of municipal schools (October 2002).

In Dourados-MS, the option started in 2001 – the first year of management – with the School Constituent process. Around 2003, we observed schools that were making researches in the community and beginning the process for thematic reduction.

In the State of Rio Grande do Sul (1998-2001), the option was to assume the curricular reorientation only after the end of School Constituent process that took place in July 2000. In Alagoas, the curricular policy started with the movement in some schools of state school network from implementing formation cycles via thematic complex. From 2001, the process was accurately followed by visiting two schools. Pedagogical practices were implemented from the principles and guidelines of a critical curriculum and there was the perspective to broaden the curricular proposals.

Regarding these curricular reorientation movements, we will generally start to approach some common aspects of these educational practices that are summarized in the following pictures.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF POPULAR ADMINISTRATIONS



Conceived in a social, constructivist and interactive way, the dialogue goes beyond a democratic posture to an epistemological requirement. Under this perspective, the methodological organization of dialogue starts to be fundamental to elaborating the program and preparing the classroom activities in the perspective to articulate knowledges. A knowledge consensus is not the thing that is being sought. What is being sought concerns the collective construction and reconstruction of critical knowledges (McLaren, 2000, p. 196). It is to go beyond the hermeneutical focus, contextualizing the community practices and world and man conceptions that are based on the history of social, cultural and epistemological macro organization. There is a constant search for overcoming the analytical references and characterizing the limits and possibilities of different conceptions.

It is a fundamental role of teaching-learning process to search for successive changes and seek to overcome analysis references, conceiving the reality as a historical totality apprehended from different perceptions and intentions that are relativized when relating them mutually. It can be shortly said that this pedagogical proposal is methodologically based on the dialogue systematized among individuals that have different conceptions and knowledges on significant and contradictory objects of the experienced local reality. When providing community with formal knowledges and formal analytical resources, the epistemological dialogue offers new interpretations of this reality, notion and articulation of possible differential actions on their real needs. Freire stands out ([1993] 1998b, p. 97),

“The starting point for this understanding practice is to know, be convinced that education is a political practice. We then repeat that the educator is political. Consequently, it is masterful that the educator is coherent with his/her political option. With this, the educator is scientifically more and more competent, which made him/her know how it is important to know the real world where their students live. The culture in which is found their language, their syntax, their semantics, their prosody. All of which is creating certain habits, certain preferences, certain beliefs, certain fears, certain desires that are not necessarily accepted in an easy way in the real world of teacher”.

Shortly, it can be stated that the cognoscibility is in the inseparable relation between reciprocally changeable objects and subjects. Citizenship is not a future, idealistic perspective for some “ready” citizens that the educational system selected. They are able to define an exclusive list of relations between the school knowledges and the social complex as the traditional school wants, so that there is a constant praxis that makes sense and brings meaning to the educative activity of public school committed to set the social excluded people free. For this, the praxis of this critical curricular reorientation necessarily involves moments when there are:

- Problematizing analyses for the pedagogical difficulties of school daily life from a broad conception of curriculum –school/community as a reference for curricular practices committed to building humanization and effecting the right to citizenship;
- Qualitative researches as a participative educational practice, involving all the community as researching agents for the needs and conflicts that the community experiences;
- Selection of local issues that, when contextualized in the broadest social, cultural and economic reality, express and denounce the conflicts experienced as

current contradictions in the community relations and social macro relations, seeking to critically theorize their reasons and articulate local knowledges and universal knowledges concerning the analyzed problem;

- Systematization of school contents and interdisciplinary study plans that comprise universal knowledges conflicting with the local knowledges. Both knowledges are conceived as human political, epistemological constructions, social, cultural constructions and historically restricted constructions;
- Methodological organization of curricular and pedagogical practice from the dialogue conceived as a critical, ethical presupposition for planning the programs and systematizing the teaching/learning process committed to the social quality of a transforming education;
- Organic and pedagogical relations for mobilizing and sharing actions among the school community, local popular movements and social, cultural movements;
- Constant internal evaluation of the implemented curricular practices and policies, counting on the active participation of all the agents involved in the curricular elaboration. From the faced difficulties, external evaluations are sought so that it can be promoted a distant problematization to the school community, helping in the collective construction of school autonomy.

To rescue the community identity cannot mean a contemplative position concerning the reality. Rather, it requires a rigorous aspect to be a community that analyzes, elaborates and proposes alternatives and innovations for the real dehumanization conditions. From the identity to innovation, there is a way through non-identity and differentiation and criticism to real life denial, as Torres (2003, p. 194) observes on Freire's epistemological position for the construction of new knowledge:

When studying this relation between the subject and object, Freire reaches to the following conclusion: 1. Knowledge is possible and simultaneously part of a huge process for human freedom. For Freire, it is possible to know the own thing, thus overcoming the simple empirical and neopositivist conceptions of experience and the relations for kantian categories. 2. The conscience – from the subject who knows – and the world – the object to be known – are mutually constituted; one involves the other, but, at the same time, they involve a difference. There is a certain distance between the subject who knows and the objective reality. 3. To overcome this distance, it is necessary to make an effort under the sense of mutual reconciliation. This effort involves an action, a sense and a result. The action is to elaborate lines of reasoning based on certain laws of logic. Sense is not a mere contemplative knowledge, but it contributes to transform that objective reality, a transformation that can be only made through its humanization – that is, the identity for human beings in the world through a commitment, by means of its praxis in this world, and a result that can be a creation for new knowledge and, at the same time, be a new social practice.

Retaking the principles and general presuppositions for a problematizing rationality, we can understand that it is necessary the following things to concretize the dialogue as a pedagogical praxis that forms critical citizens:



- To assume the real subjects as agents for curricular praxis;
- To have the naive curiosity on issues, situations and significant needs experienced as a starting point for the pedagogical construction of critical knowledge that is committed to socially excluded popular strata;
- The problematization of this naive curiosity starts to be a political, epistemological reference beginning in the different plans of the real and in the different dimensions of human existence, both in the axiological and social, cultural function of knowledge and the identity limits of the own gnoseological practice of conceptual construction for methodological systematization of pedagogical dialogue;
- The problematization requires distance, an epistemological encirclement (Freire, [1995c) that requires contents for the critical contextualization of this reality, providing challenges and overcomings when apprehending the contradictory reality;
- There must be a pertinence and criticism when selecting the school contents concerning the desumanization situations and issues for life production, reproduction and development in the concrete reality that it is problematized;
- To continue the dialogical reconstruction of knowledge on the real in teaching-learning process, that is, in Freire's perspective (1995c), to pass from the naive curiosity to epistemological curiosity;
- To have the consciousness as a curricular planning of transforming actions on the concrete reality, not only having a consciousness retaking on the real difficulties that the society faces.

In this way, the curricular reorientation proposed by the interdisciplinary curricular projects involves reorganizing the school time and place, requiring a collective work of educators in constant researches of local reality in community and public bodies to search for information on the analyzed objects. Besides these sources, it is necessary to look for a deepening of the specific knowledges in different Areas that do not appear in the traditional didactic books – a “thematic range” is required (Freire, [1968] 1988, p. 109). Therefore, the action-research and the permanent qualification of educators characterize the routine of this praxis in the elaboration of their didactic, pedagogical material.

Sine qua non conditions are the democratic management and statute of educational process in which community and educators, when talking permanently, successively reevaluate and define the pedagogical course of school unit.

Evidently, the Secretariats have been facing many difficulties in implementing the proposal, but the perspective to collectively seek their overcoming from the evaluative categories that guide new decision-makings allows us to believe in the irreversibility of collective process for curricular elaboration.

Compatible with the curricular conception, the “emancipatory evaluation” (Saul, [1988] 1995, p. 61) is regarded as a reference for the constant process to make and remake the practice. As she stands out,

The emancipatory evaluation is characterized as a description process and critical analysis of a given reality, aiming at transforming it. It is destined to the evaluation of social or educational programs. It is situated in a political, pedagogical assessment whose primordial interest is emancipatory, that is, freedom, aiming at provoking the criticism so that the subject is set free from the deterministic conditions. The main commitment of this evaluation is to

make people who are directly or indirectly involved in an educational action write their 'own history' and create their own action alternatives.

As the emancipatory evaluation is regarded as investigative, diagnostic and processing, the emancipatory evaluation would correspond to the interface moment between the critical analysis of the experienced person and the coming planning, seeking to overcome the difficulties.

Therefore, in the curricular elaboration movement, the overcoming of teaching traditional structure is sought in the methodological dimensions and selection of school knowledges to be taught. When conceiving the knowledge construction as the social and historical activity of individuals on significant and problematic aspects of reality, the learning process takes place from an effective cognitive demand to understand the experienced situations. Admitting that a new form to conceive and act on a certain object only occurs when we overcome the previous form used to analyze it, the differentiated social action would be a summary of a new form to think about its reality. In this way, the dialogue would be a propulsive aspect of a continuous political, epistemological and cognitive movement in its critical pedagogical assessment, arousing needs for apprehending knowledges concerning the approached issues of reality, which motivates the elaboration of new analytical references.

As the local reality is regarded as historical, organic, systemic and reflection of a broad social context, this interdisciplinary political, epistemological approach proposes to broaden the analytical horizons when passing by the plot of social relations, giving rise to practicable solutions for the local problem that the community has not noted yet and contributing to form participative and critical citizens. As Freire stands out ([1993] 1995d, p. 108, 109),

“(...) I would like to stand out a mistake: A mistake that one considers that the good popular education today – carefree to reveal the phenomena because of the fact reasons – restricts the educative practices to the real teaching of contents, understood as the act to hide the cognoscibility of educatees. This mistake is as lack of dialectic as its opposite side: it restricts the educative practice to a pure ideological exercise. (...) It is typical from a certain neoliberal speech that is also sometimes named as post-modern. Such speech is a reactionary post-modernity that is cared about the purely technical teaching and is a transmission of an x set of knowledges needed for the popular classes to survive. More than a politically conservative posture, this is an epistemologically unsustainable position that hurts the own nature of human being who is ‘programmed to learn’. It is deeper and more serious than teaching oneself.”

Therefore, the dichotomized view between curricular conception and practice is overcome by the action that gains the accuracy of collective praxis. The new teaching social quality is the consequence of this movement, stimulating the educational networks to advance under the direction of an interdisciplinary curricular reorientation in which the social, historical context and the knowledge dialogue provide a collective construction of a popular education destined to the citizenship formation.

Evidently, for all this process in schools to be possible, the Secretariats of Education need an internal organization of their practices that are compatible with the freedom and democratic dialogue guiding their emancipatory and critical pedagogical actions.



To render possible and follow the curricular reorientation process is fundamental to form multidisciplinary pedagogical teams. These teams are composed by educators who derive from schools that are able to act as organic intellectuals committed to the humanizing transformation, as they know the reality of educational networks. They are stimulators that pertinently problematize the practices and difficulties faced by the different school communities. The perspective is that, by means of a little-by-little development of critical self-consciousness, the own school community creates local leaderships (Gramsci, [1999] 2001, v. 1, p. 104) and the school-group becomes the “collective stimulator” of its practices (Faundez, 1993, p. 85).

These pedagogical teams should seek to meet all the innovative initiatives of school network, following the different projects that are committed to the principles of Popular Education.

In this way, in the beginning of the educational management for popular administrations, it is generally observed the formation of pedagogical teams with educators who follow different educational projects, meeting different teaching levels and modules: formation groups for specific grades; follow-up of practices for reading rooms; projects against the violence in schools; sexual orientation projects; organization of practices for learning progression classes; implementation of proposals that meet the specificities for adult and youth education, literacy movements and child education; pedagogical workshops and meetings that discuss and meet the specificities for the knowledge areas, the ethnic, gender questions and environment preservation questions, and the specific follow-up for the formation of school boards and student clubs to implement the democratic management.

It is important to stand out that everybody tends to be turned to the Interdisciplinary Project via Generating Issue during the particularized projects, assuring their specificities in totalizing the educative practice that this project represents. In this way, there is a passage from the diversity of different pedagogical practices to the unit that is represented by the collective project of Popular Education from school.

The follow-up of pedagogical fronts demands the collective organization – for multidisciplinary teams; dialogical lists for the school meetings; lectures, congresses and other events of theoretical deepening and scientific divulgation; regional meetings to define reports of experiences, exchange of information and practices – and the frequent movement evaluations in municipal schools. The collegiate management has been the most adequate way to make decisions and manage.

Thus, we can establish some relations between this implementation process for the curricular reorientation movement of Interdisciplinary Project via Generating Issue and the curricular practice proclaimed by it. In this way, both in the school curriculum elaboration and the practices of project implementation movement in the school units, derived from the five proposed organizational moments, the real social, cultural and historical subjects are the agents of dialectic process for elaborating the dialogical practice. We can say the same concerning the organization for classroom practices in which the three pedagogical moments seek to systematize the dialogue in the knowledge construction (Delizoicov, 1991).

So, in the different curricular instances, the movement is sought to be organized when always using the problematization for needs immanent in the practices, expressing social, cultural conflicts that, as epistemological tensions, show contradictions subjected to be overcome from conscientization and collective action plans that implement transformations in the initial developed practices. This internal political, pedagogical coherence of the proposal in its different organizational levels of action provides the real



experience of freedom and emancipatory collective praxis from the creative time of non-identity, collective autonomy hope and newness.

The commitment to the critical curricular practice that is derived from the anti-hegemonic negativities demands a methodological strictness; the knowledge that the scientific communities historically systematized should not be conceived as a base and identity instrumental rationality, a technique that legitimates power relations that are entangled in the conventional school practices. The problematizing rationality arising from the negativities of system victims inverts this situation, making available the scientific collection of humanity to the critical elucidation required for the emancipation of subjects. For this, including the commitment to transforming the unfair reality, the indispensable methodological principles are as follows: the political, epistemological dialogicality, “the authenticity, the anti-dogmatism and a modest scientific practice”,¹⁸ that ends the arrogance of traditional curriculum that seeks to dichotomize and establish power relations between theory and practice. Consequently, when a critical pedagogy is chosen, the intention is to find answers – concerning the faced difficulties and conflicts – in the own school curricular praxis. In the epistemological distance, the apprehension of collective curricular praxis is sought, embodying as a principle the legitimation of speeches, the emancipatory rationality, the dialogical and participative organization of practices that create knowledges, senses and meanings capable of basing political, educational movements opposed to the different modules of current domination.

Without trying to deepen the issue because it is not the object for the present curricular discussion, it is still possible to stand out the differences that were observed in the cycle curriculum organization conceptions. For SME/SP (1992, p. 22), the cycle conception involves an education understood

(...) as a social, humanistic, scientific, critical and freedom practice; a curriculum conception on progress that needs the participation of all people involved in the educative process; a learning conception that respects the cognitive, social and affective development of educatee, considering him/her as a agent who builds knowledge when interacting with the other and the knowledge object; a democratic management proposal in which the decisions should be made by the school community and emphasized in the collective work.

While having common bases with other cycle curricular organization proposals¹⁹, we would say that the presented perspective is not restricted to a strictly cognitivist approach that is turned to the technical and didactic improvement of learning process, but it goes beyond it in the sense that it is contextualized in the critical, ethical plan of pedagogical and political, epistemological practice to indicate the parameters that guide the process for building and selecting the knowledges involved in the systematization of school contents.

From common presuppositions that SME/SP adopted, SMED/POA (1996) made a curricular restructure movement in which the perspective was to implement little by little a political, pedagogical proposal in schools from Cycle Formation. By focusing aspects concerning the social-anthropological, epistemological, social- pedagogical and philosophical sources, the dialogue was sought to be deepened with the approach of Human Development Cycle (Escola Plural, SME/BH, 1996, apud Padilha, 2001, p. 124), consubstantiating the pedagogical practice from the curriculum organization by Thematic

Complexes.²⁰

From the followed policies, although the curriculum organization by Thematic Complex was a reference for the curricular proposals of Criciúma – only for Junior High School from 2002 – and for the implementation proposals of Formation Cycles by SEE/AL – an experience that involves four schools of state school network –, the vertical restructure of curriculum by Formation Cycles implemented by SMED/POA was a reference for the practices in Caxias do Sul-RS, Chapecó-SC and Criciúma (EJA). In these cities, as in Belém-PA, Vitória da Conquista-BA, Goiânia-GO (EJA), Maceió-AL (EJA) and Dourados (MS), the curricular organization takes place from the Interdisciplinary proposal via Generating Issue.

Among the difficulties observed in implementing the curricular proposals by Learning Cycle, Formation Cycle and Human Development Cycle, there is the tendency to emphasize cognitive and psychological aspects on one side and to emphasize humanistic values for a generic and “future citizenship” on other side in non-contextualized pedagogical practices and attempts to take out the political implications of curricular practice (as if it could be possible), relegating economic and social-cultural questions, compromising the criticism of curricular act and thus assuming a supposed neutrality of education and its knowledge.

In this way, the cycle curricular organization cannot be lost in proposals that are only restricted to an innovative speech but are limited in practice to select contents and study objects from the conventional reference through a motivational view or exclusively cognitivist view of educators. Evidently, it is necessary to recognize the advances that, in some cases, this option may bring, but it is not enough to elaborate an effectively critical curriculum.

The ethical-critical and political-epistemological principles and presuppositions, even having a lot of difficulties as organizing bases for the pedagogical practice of schools organized by cycles, need to be the base for a popular and dialogical education committed to transforming the unfair reality.

Therefore, it is fundamental that the educational policies are not dichotomized. It is fundamental that the educational policies are articulated, that is, the most consistent option is to provide school constituent processes and elaboration of education plans concomitantly with the development of curricular reorientation movements – inclusively seeking to make possible to implement the pedagogical practices developed by them, even before establishing a educational plan that defines principles and guidelines for all schools – under the perspective of reciprocal influences that the simultaneity of the two policies may exert in order to collectively create and build the new school act. This act comes up as a conscientization practice, and the school appears as a philosophical, political and reflective instance of democratic praxis (Gramsci, apud Barbier, [1985] 1996, p. 53).

3. The curricular reorientation and development of educators: on Freire’s administration, “two sides of the same coin”

The analysis of Paulo Freire’s works allows us to realize he keeps coming back to the theme of teaching, according to different points of view, emphasizing the importance of building knowledge, political education, denial of authoritarianism, democracy, dialogue, communication, theoretical and practical relationship, amongst others. But it is in the published works: “Medo e ousadia - o cotidiano do professor” (in a literal translation “Fear and boldness – the teacher’s everyday”, 1987), “Professora sim, tia não - cartas a quem

ousa ensinar” (“Teacher yes, ma’am no – letters for those who dare to teach”, 1993), “A educação na cidade” (“Education in the city” -1991) and, specially, in his last book published while he was still alive, “Pedagogia da autonomia- saberes necessários à prática docente” (“Autonomy Pedagogy – necessary expertise for the practice of teaching” - 1997), Paulo Freire deepens the systematization of his ideas, about education, based on the reflection on his experiences.

The development of a teacher or educator, subject matter of Paulo Freire, is, in his works, deliberately qualified with an adjective. The adjective is permanent, and differs from the concept of continued education, of recycling and training.

What does Paulo Freire mean when he is referring to an educator’s permanent education?

Permanent Education, for Paulo Freire, implies the comprehension that the human being is an inconclusive being, and this being has always in mind the perspective of “being more”.

Permanent Education, therefore, is not only for students in the position of school students or for young and adults who had no access to school education, but to each human being, in any stage of his/her existence.

The Permanent Education is connected to the understanding that it happens with/on the concrete reality, on the practical reality.

Thus, we find the idea that a permanent education program for educators requires working on the practices the teachers have. As of the analysis of these “to-do” items, one can find which is the “theory inserted”, as says Paulo Freire, or which are the pieces of theory which are present on the practice of each one of the teachers or educators – even if they do not know which theory it is!

It is essential to observe that the matter here is not purely an exposition of the teaching experience which the educators have, but overall, it is a reflection over such experience. According to Paulo Freire (1997), “the knowledge that the spontaneous teaching practice, or almost spontaneous, ‘unarmed’, undoubtedly produces, is a simple knowledge, one achieved from experience, to which lacks the methodical rigidity which is characteristic of the subject’s epistemological curiosity. (...) What we need is to enable that, back to itself, through reflection about the practice, the simple curiosity, realizing itself as it is, starts becoming critical”.

In the Secretary of Education of São Paulo, the permanent education program for educators has been improved, during Paulo Freire Administration, overall on the modality of “education groups”, which consisted of grouping teachers for debating their practices and finding out the theory present on them, in order to, from then on, compare their theories and practices, in a constant movement of action-reflection-action, with the perspective of re-creating theory and practice.

One may note that what already took place on the Municipal Schools of São Paulo, at the field of educators development, in accordance to Paulo Freire’s comprehension, has begun to be present in the speech and texts of national and international writers, as an innovation in the area, as a new paradigm on educators development, which thrives over the 90’s.

According to Antonio Nóvoa (1996), the traditional development practices have been built under the logic of technical reasoning, which emphasizes the dialogue between the knowledge of disciplines and the knowledge specialized in education. The author points out to the need of adding to these types of knowledge a third one, the teacher’s experience knowledge, so forming what he called the “triangle of knowledge”. The triangle presents in

its corners the three foregoing knowledge, as points of dialogue. This new point – the teacher’s voice – implies acknowledging the experience knowledge, considered as a legitimate potential of education.

Thus, the permanent education of teachers, by the critical-transforming perspective, continues to be a great challenge for the educational reality in Brazil and in the world.

A strong action was taken in the public schools of São Paulo, during the administration of Paulo Freire. Other education public systems, since then, have been getting inspiration from the thinking of Paulo Freire and are re-creating the practices for educators’ development, along with the work of curricular reorientation/formation of education systems. Such practices, however, have been oscillating in what concerns approval and implementation of the same, at the discretion of educational policies by public managers.

4. An academic space for studying and researching Freire’s legacy: the Paulo Freire Cathedra of PUC/SP

Paulo Freire was a professor in PUC/SP (Pontiff Catholic University of São Paulo), at the Education Program: Curriculum, since his return from exile, for the period of 17 years (1980-1997). After his passing, on his honor, PUC/SP created the Paulo Freire Cathedra, in the 2nd semester of 1998, under direction of the Education Program (Curriculum). The Cathedra has been deemed not only as homage to a personality. At PUC/SP, particularly on the Education Program: Curriculum, we have considered the Cathedra as a special space for development of studies and research about/and as of Paulo Freire’s work, focusing their theoretical and practical repercussion on education and its potential to develop new thoughts. In other words, we pay homage to Paulo Freire in a way we understand he would like it to be, studying his thoughts strictly, to understand them and re-create them.

Studying and researching the theories of Paulo Freire on PUC/SP today places the Education Program: Curriculum side by side a great number of academics and centers which elect Paulo Freire ideas as the object of their theoretical investigations and/or as inspiration for their practice²¹.

4.1 The “plans” assumed by Paulo Freire Cathedra

The first “plan” proposed by the Program, for the Cathedra well functioning, consisted of creating an academic space for discussion of important themes on Freire’s ideas, during 15 school weeks, with legitimacy to grant credits equivalent to an optional discipline, for regular students of Post-Graduation studies. The Cathedra was not bond, specifically, to any Program Nucleus, which qualified it as a space that trans-versed the Nucleus and disciplines of the Program, being able to offer contributions to researchers in different research lines.

In order to coordinate this work, professors outside the Program were invited, each semester, whose production was in tune with Freire’s ideas. For the first two semesters were invited respectively Professor Ana Maria Araújo Freire and Professor Miguel Arroyo²². The Program Collegiate defined the following themes for each semester: “Paulo Freire: 30 years of Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, and “Paulo Freire: the contemporary pedagogic origins, history and process”²³.

In the evaluation of this “plan” and its functioning, during the second semester of 1999, the Collegiate recognized the important contribution of the work developed by the



professors invited, however, resented a more permanent presence of the academicians which conducted the Cathedra work, in the sense that this work should have been more connected to what was being developed on the Program. Upon such evaluation, a new “plan” for the Cathedra was sought, to enable a more effective integration of the work with the Program’s research lines. The Collegiate decided the Cathedra should be coordinated by a professor who belonged to the permanent teaching faculty of the Program and that he/she should have some knowledge of Freire’s theories. Professor Ana Maria Saul was appointed to coordinate the works, as of the 1st semester of 2000, with the collaboration of Professor Yvonne Khoury, also a permanent teacher of the Program. Since then, the Cathedra has been programmed, each year, during the two school semesters.

At the beginning of this new functioning phase, the main difference in relation to the previous “plan” lied on the fact that the teacher responsible for conducting the Cathedra should belong to the permanent teaching faculty of the Program and, in such conditions, a tighter link was established with the Program proposal and routine. As a result, the theme to be developed in each semester became the Cathedra coordinator’s responsibility. It was also established that Special Seminars would be performed, which had later turned into the form of “Paulo Freire Cathedra Dialogues”, to which teachers from outside PUC/SP were invited. These events were open to all students of the Program and the University, with the intention to extend the debate on Paulo Freire’s ideas²⁴.

The first theme developed was “Paulo Freire and the development of the Educator: theory and practice”. Although with a headline specifically aimed to the educator’s development, students of both nucleus of the Program participated in the Cathedra. The Paulo Freire Cathedra, then, starts to be understood as a space where:

- a) building knowledge is done in a collective and cumulative way, so that it is not only a “space you pass by” for students, a place where one builds/seeks knowledge taking with them what is considered important, but a place where at the same time “one takes” and “one leaves” the knowledge produced, for future constructions. In order to do so, it was necessary to think about records, systematization and divulgation of experiences and productions;
- b) the teaching, the research and some forms of service are linked to build knowledge;
- c) the group of teachers are coherent with the principles of building knowledge that are characteristic of Freire’s pedagogy
 - Respect towards the students’ knowledge;
 - Existence of dialogue;
 - Collective construction of knowledge;
 - Building critical-transforming knowledge;
- d) the teaching and research are improved, with the participation of guest professors, from outside the Program, once it is not turned into a “mere space”, by where the lecturers pass, in other words, taking care to not transform it into a “display”;
- e) there is serious engagement to make the produced knowledge known, also considering the forms of organization to attend the intervention demands, next to educators on public schools.

4.2 The work methodology on Paulo Freire Cathedra

It is developed, in the Cathedra, a work methodology which observes “multiple routes”, that is, different work points are developed simultaneously, in accordance to the



interests and demands from the students' investigation subjects, referred to by Freire's pedagogy.

The first moment of the methodology is the "theme investigation", when we get to understand the research interest from the participants, what they develop/intend to develop (subjects of their dissertations and thesis), and the reasons why they attend the Cathedra.

The second moment constitutes the first immersion into Freire's thinking. We propose to the students a first approach to Freire's works. At this point, the students may select a work from the bibliography indicated by the teacher, or may read again some work he/she might be familiar with. The first challenge put upon them is to find the concepts of his/her interest in the reading of one of Paulo Freire's texts, having as criteria the theme/problem of research of each participant.

The third moment consists of sharing and debating, in the class group, the concepts gathered by the participants of the Cathedra. Here is already the beginning of analysis on the understandings acquired from the readings, at the same time each participant justifies his/her choice of concepts, relating it to their investigation.

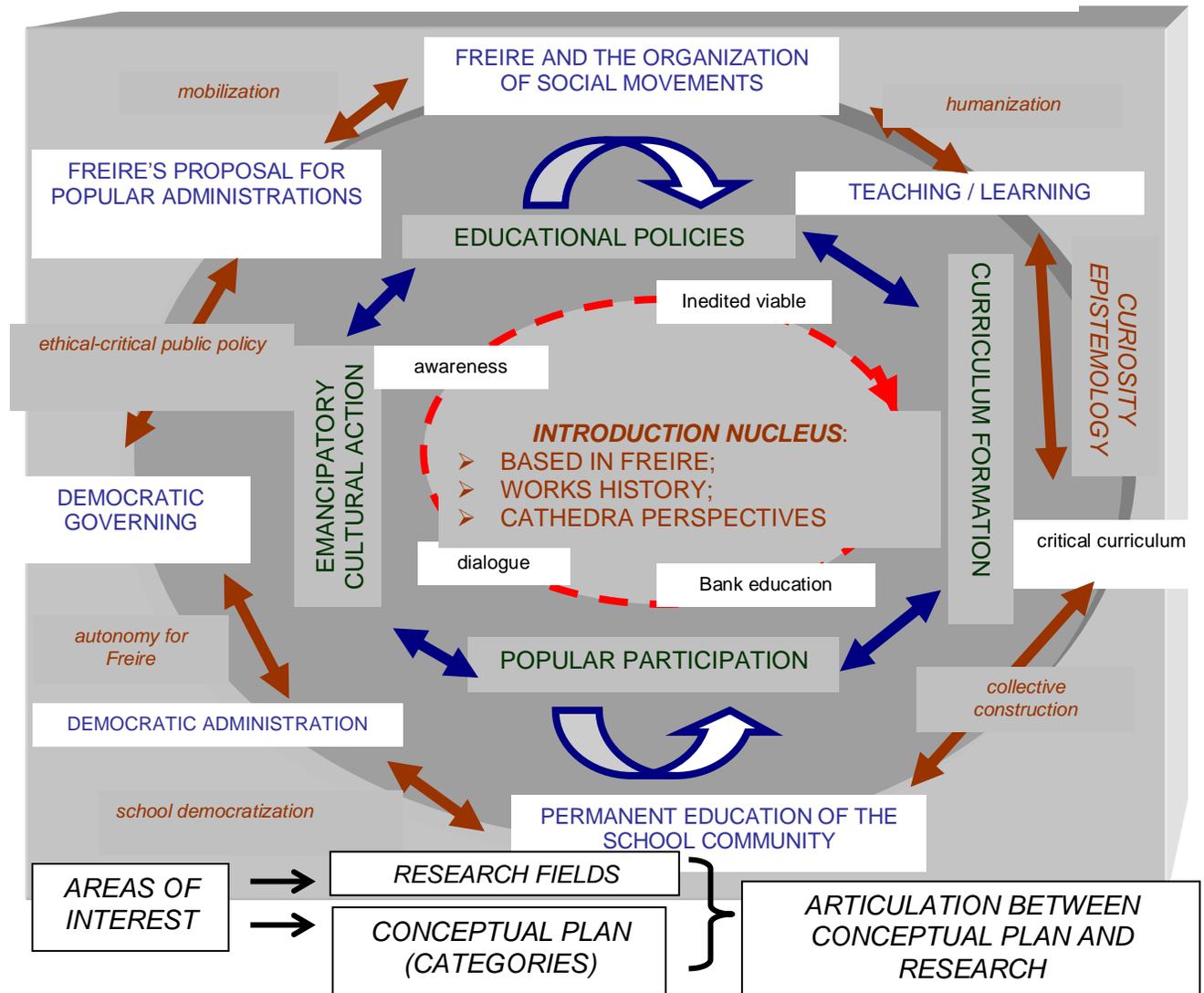
The fourth moment consists of mapping the class group's concepts, in a collective work, according to the criteria of choice, collective interest, possible approximations between the theme and concepts, aiming at defining the "research itinerary" of the group's participants in the current semester.

The fifth moment is characterized by deepening the concepts by each sub-group formed in the class, combining concepts and the major theme. At this moment, specific works from Paulo Freire are appointed, for each one of the class sub-groups, in order to have the concepts selected better analyzed.

At this stage of the work, the goal is to prepare a written production which is shared and debated in the class. This production has presented many other destinations. One of such is the research by the post-graduate student who attends the Cathedra (dissertation or thesis). Another one has been the inscription/presentation of the text, produced and discussed in the Cathedra, on national and/or international events. A third possibility for divulgation of this production has been its publishing in books, organized by the Cathedra. In this case, the texts are submitted to a new analysis instance (also of pedagogic nature), and may be back to the author's hands for review/complementation.

The following image presents some aspects of the methodology which is developed in the Cathedra, showing the theme/concepts course, which took place in one of the semesters of work.

PAULO FREIRE CATHEDRA (2001): ITINERARY SCHEME



4.3 The Research on Paulo Freire Cathedra

The Cathedra has been developing a cumulative research about the influence of Paulo Freire thinking and works on the public educational systems in Brazil, aiming at contributing for re-creation of policies and educational practices in an emancipatory-critical perspective.

The objectives of this research are the following:

- ✓ Assist the “political-pedagogical” performance of public schools committed to education democratization;
- ✓ Identify and analyze the influence of Paulo Freire on public educational systems in Brazil;
- ✓ Build a database about the different administrations of educational public chains in Brazil, under the influence of Paulo Freire’s ideas;

- ✓ Register and publish the research results and divulge them on the web site of Paulo Freire Cathedra, so as to enable permanent consultation and constant interaction between educators interested on the matter;
- ✓ Connect researchers and post-graduate students from several regions of the country and abroad, who investigate the influence of Freire in education, and specially, in the public educational systems;
- ✓ Divulge the research results in national and international events.

4.4 The productions of Paulo Freire Cathedra

During the last 8 years, the Cathedra production includes books and texts prepared for presentation in national and international conferences.

Three books already are a result from the Cathedra work, gathering texts produced by the participants. The book “Paulo Freire e a formação dos educadores - múltiplos olhares” (in a literal translation, “Paulo Freire and the development of educators – multiple looks”), organized by Professor Ana Maria Saul, was released in September 2000, at Evora, Portugal, during the International Congress “Um olhar sobre Paulo Freire” (“A Look at Paulo Freire”) and later on, in important locations in Brazil. This book was published on Mexico and Spain, in Catalanian. “A pedagogia da libertação em Paulo Freire” (“The pedagogy of emancipation in Paulo Freire”), book organized by Professor Ana Maria Araújo Freire, was released in March 2001, at the Paulo Freire Cathedra space, in PUC/SP. The third book, “Paulo Freire: um pensamento atual para compreender e pesquisar questões do nosso tempo” (“Paulo Freire: a modern thinking to understand and research matters of our time”), organized by Professor Ana Maria Saul, was released in November 2005.

During the second semester of 2000, there was a collective creation of a website – informative and interactive space about Paulo Freire Cathedra, which is updated each semester and is part of the subject matter of studies in researches and dissertations²⁵.

The works elaborated in the Cathedra were presented by their participants in national and/or international meetings. As highlights, with great number of works presented (8), there are the International Meeting “Um olhar sobre Paulo Freire” (“A Look at Paulo Freire”), held in September 2000, Evora – Portugal; the Paulo Freire International Colloquies, promoted by Paulo Freire Center, in Recife, each two years, (1997-2005); the performance of the Cathedra in organizing the Paulo Freire Colloquy (Santo Amaro Educational Coordination – Municipal Secretary of Education of São Paulo – 2004).

The preparation of new publications, with registration of the work by the Cathedra participants, is a proposal which has been originated from the actions in the class room.

Paulo Freire thinking, therefore, continues to constitute, in this new millennium, an important matrix which shall keep inspiring the theory and practice of all those who engage in the commitment to a democratic education, and more than that, to all those who claim the right and duty to change the world, towards a social project founded in principles of social justice and of human being ethics.

9. We participate in the institutionalization for the fair and fraternal Latin-American unit and we know that the unit of "Great Homeland" needs to be born again and be consolidated in men and women of our Region.

10. We, undersigned of this Declaration, pay homage to Paulo Freire whose thinking remains alive and inspires the greatest educative proposals in the current globalized world. We are committed to following the Master's way, recreating his discoveries from our own social practice.

Notes

¹ Full professor and coordinator of *Cátedra Paulo Freire* (Paulo Freire Cathedra) of *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo), Brazil. She worked with Paulo Freire during two decades in Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo. anasaul@uol.com.br

² Professor of *Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (Federal University of São Carlos), São Paulo, Brazil. He was a member of the Paulo Freire's team in Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo. gova@uol.com.br

³ He is professor of University of Wisconsin-Madison and one of the most well-known international experts in the curriculum field and analysis of educational policies. He is regarded as one of the main persons who diffused Paulo Freire's work in the United States.

⁴ He is professor of *Universidade de Lisboa* (Lisboa University), Portugal, and author of various scientific works in Education area.

⁵ When he defends the critical theory contributions to the curriculum analysis – and not to the "program" analysis – on adult education, Clair (2001) uses *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a central reference. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is regarded as the theoretical basis for popular education in the introduction page of Popular Education in Action website (Pop Ed, <http://www.flora.org/mike/>).

⁶ Under supervision of Prof. Ana Maria Saul in his dissertation for master's degree, Maurício Carrara built a technological tool to register searches about the influence of Freire's thinking on Education public policies.

⁷ Office of the Coordinator of Graduated Personnel Qualification / Ministry of Education / Brazil

⁸ In November 1988, Luiza Erundina de Sousa, a candidate for *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party), was elected as the mayor of the city of São Paulo. Her election was a fruit of a fight from a young party (13-year-old existence) that consolidated itself as an opposition party in its trajectory. This fact created expectations, reactions and tensions in the different sectors of society, since her government program privileged the least favorable classes of population, inverting priorities.

⁹ The first moment of curricular reorientation process, the problematization, which took place in August 1989, was carried out from a video containing a recording in which Paulo Freire talked to educators about questions of daily education in Municipal Schools of São Paulo.

¹⁰ The school problematization text made by the teachers reached schools in the end of 1989 and was a subsidy for 1990 planning. It was the object for discussion and analysis of school teams.

¹¹ The authors followed the above-mentioned states and municipalities.

¹² Among others, we can mention the following documents of the respective popular administrations that demonstrate these principles: PMSP-SP/SME, São Paulo (1992, p. 13-23), PMPOA-RS/SMED, Porto Alegre (1996, p. 35 and 36), PM AR-RJ/SME, Angra dos Reis (1996, p. 13 and 14), PMG-RS/SMEC, Gravataí (1998),



PMC-SC/SMEC, Chapecó (1998, 2001 and 2002), and PMCS-RS/SMED, Caxias do Sul (1999), PMC-SC/SME, Criciúma (2003), PMM-AL/SMED, Maceió (2001).

¹³ It is relevant to stand out that only the influences observed in these educational policies in the studied curricular reorientation movements will be analyzed, although the School Constituent processes were followed – moments of a full democratic participation of all social classes in elaborating, systematizing and implementing public policies in educational scope and moments of Strategic Planning of some Secretariats of Education.

¹⁴ See Antonio F. G. da SILVA (1996, p. 204-236).

¹⁵ See PMPOA-RS/SMED, Porto Alegre (1995).

¹⁶ In the same pedagogical tendency of other municipal secretariats, the SMED of Porto Alegre implemented the proposal in Junior High School from working with Thematic Complexes, involving a program reorganization and vertical distribution of school curriculum with the redistribution of study years in cycles. Taking the cognitive development as a reference, the permanence and continuation of learning process are prioritized. The school practices and guidelines of School Constituent Congress provided the elaboration of a political, educational proposal as an option for the teaching organization in the other schools of the Municipality, subsidizing the elaboration of a School Statute which is a reference for implementing the Citizen School. See PMPOA-RS/SMED, Porto Alegre (1996, p. 22-29) and Carlos R. BRANDÃO (2003, p.111 and the following ones).

¹⁷ SMEC/Gravataí-RS/ (1998).

¹⁸ See Orlando Fals BORDA ([1981] 1990, p. 49-56).

¹⁹ See José Augusto PACHECO (1996, p. 40 and 41).

²⁰ See José C. de AZEVEDO (2000), Andréa KRUG, (2001), Paulo R. PADILHA (2001), M. PISTRÁK ([1924] 1981).

²¹ Together with the professor Paulo Freire, Ana Maria Saul took part of the teaching staff to conduct classes on Education Nucleus for School Excluded People.

²² Attended the Special Seminars and Debates on Paulo Freire Cathedra, among others, the following professors: Almerindo Janela Afonso (University of Minho - Portugal), Carlos Núñez Hurtado (Cathedra Paulo Freire of Guadalajara - Mexico), Licínio Lima (University of Minho - Portugal), Lisete Regina Arelaro (USP), Maria Eliete Santiago (UFPE), Pedro Pontual (CEAAL), Pillar Ubilla (Master in Popular Education - Uruguay).

²³ On the following semesters, other themes guided the development of the Cathedra: 'Paulo Freire and the social movements'; 'The influence of Paulo Freire on public education systems in Brazil'; 'Paulo Freire thinking on the Brazilian public education set: politics, theory and practice'; 'Paulo Freire: a reference for analysis and construction of educational policies'.

²⁴ In these events we have also noted the presence of teachers from the Education Program (Curriculum), who attended as lecturers or as part of the round table: Alípio Casalli, Ana Maria Saul, Antonio Chizzotti, Ivani Fazenda, Mário Sérgio Cortella and Mere Abramowicz.

²⁵ The website may be accessed by clicking on www.pucsp.br/paulofreire

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