



VOICES AND SENSES OF ADOLESCENTS: NOTES VIGOTSKI'S PSYCHOLOGY

VOZES E SENTIDOS DE ADOLESCENTES SOBRE A ESCOLA: APONTAMENTOS A PARTIR DA PSICOLOGIA DE VIGOTSKI

VOCES Y SENTIDOS DE LOS JÓVENES SOBRE LA ESCUELA: NOTAS A PARTIR DE LA PSICOLOGIA DE VIGOTSKI

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of one of the stages of a mixed methodological research, of the case study type, carried out with adolescents from a vocational high school in the city of Fortaleza-Ceará. It consisted of a qualitative discussion of the results of a questionnaire applied to students about the meanings produced about the school and the relationships established in it. The research was carried out by the Laboratory of Subjectivity and Mental Health Studies at the State University of Ceará and evidenced the relevance of affective elements in the school institution, as constitutive aspects of students' learning relationships and mental health. From this, it is necessary to discuss elements related to teacher education and the organization of the school context to act in the integral development of students.

KEYWORDS: Adolescence. School. Subjectivity.

RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta os resultados de uma das etapas de uma pesquisa de natureza metodológica mista, do tipo estudo de caso, realizada com adolescentes de uma escola de Ensino Médio profissionalizante do município de Fortaleza-Ceará. Ela consistiu na discussão qualitativa dos resultados de questionário aplicado aos estudantes acerca dos sentidos produzidos sobre a escola e das relações estabelecidas nela. A pesquisa foi realizada pelo Laboratório de Estudos da Subjetividade e Saúde Mental da Universidade Estadual do Ceará e evidenciou a relevância dos elementos afetivos na instituição escolar, como aspectos constitutivos das relações de aprendizagem e da saúde mental de estudantes. A partir disso, se faz necessário discutir elementos relacionados à formação de professores e à organização do contexto escolar para atuar no desenvolvimento integral de estudantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Adolescência. Escola. Subjetividade.



RESUMÉN

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una de las etapas de una investigación metodológica mixta, del tipo estudio de caso, realizada con adolescentes de una escuela secundaria vocacional de la ciudad de Fortaleza-Ceará, que consistió en una discusión cualitativa de los resultados de un cuestionario aplicado a los estudiantes sobre los significados que se producen sobre la escuela y las relaciones que se establecen en ella. La investigación fue realizada por el Laboratorio de Estudios de Subjetividad y Salud Mental de la Universidad Estadual de Ceará y evidenció la relevancia de los elementos afectivos en la institución escolar, como aspectos constitutivos de las relaciones de aprendizaje y salud mental de los estudiantes. A partir de esto, es necesario discutir elementos relacionados con la formación docente y la organización del contexto escolar para actuar en el desarrollo integral de los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Adolescência. Colegio. Subjetividade.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the results of a research entitled "the school as a space promoting mental health and quality of life: challenges to contemporary Psychology", carried out by the Laboratory of Subjectivity and Mental Health Studies (LADES) of the Psychology course at State University of Ceará (UECE). The research was supported by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). In order to achieve the intended objective, the research method adopted was qualitative, also as a case study type. In this sense, the investigation took place in a public school which was chosen for having a considerably high Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), for attending only high school and also for being the university's internship center, located right next to its campus in a central region of Fortaleza city.

Given the extent of this investigation, it will be presented an outline whose main objective was to analyze the view of public high school students about their own school. This is an essential theme, since the learning process is crossed by affectionate and interpersonal relationships, as well as the meanings students attribute to the school and the processes which take place there. Also, to support this methodological path, we chose to discuss adolescence and school as central categories of this research, based on Cultural-Historical psychology.

Considered as a transition period by Vigotski (2001), adolescence is strongly marked by the interrelation of biological aspects, which are highlighted in this period, as well as socio-emotional aspects evidenced by society's demands on these young people. Moreover, it is a period often marked by negative social stereotypes – attributing to young people some characteristics, such as emotional tension, conduct disorders, immaturity and interpersonal conflicts. Thus, it is relevant to seek to know and to give voice to the subjects who experience this phase of development. In particular, this should be carried out at school, where teenagers spend a significant part of their time. It is a fundamental space in the subjective constitution of students (TOMIO and FACCI, 2009) and in the production of their mental health.

An analysis carried out by Bock (2007) studied some books whose content aimed at parents and relatives of adolescent. As a conclusion, high-selling books generally present the stereotyped concept previously commented: they understand adolescence as a phase permeated by negative elements, which are considered typical from this period, and as an intrinsic part of development. At the same time, studies carried out with teachers about the representations these professionals build about adolescence reached very similar results (MONTEZI, 2011; ARALDI, 2012). Interpersonal relationships with adolescents are identified as difficult and full of conflicts, as if rebelliousness and order transgression were inherent in them, as well as mood swings. However, it is argued that these perceptions, in general, do not consider the adolescent's opinion, coming from an adult-focused view.

Thus, it is important to problematize that the different social segments that relate to adolescents can often see them from a predetermined perspective, which involves a culturally naturalized perspective and with a focus on biological characteristics (BOCK, 2004). Biology cannot be denied, but it is not the only determinant when it comes to development, especially in adolescence. This understanding runs the risk of hiding objective and social aspects, also relevant to the school and teaching processes for example, in the youth subjectivation itself.

In contrast, the Cultural-Historical Psychology theorists question this view and seek to discuss adolescence in a contextualized way, considering the historical and social process which points out the different ways of being a teenager (OZELLA and AGUIAR, 2008; TOMIO and FACCI, 2009). Based on this theoretical basis, adolescence is understood not as a natural stage, but as a period of development established through concrete cultural and historical conditions, including the biological aspects which involve puberty and neurological transformations of that period. Consequently, the concrete and symbolic spaces in which the teenager is inserted, including the school, imprint relevant marks in their constitution as subjects.

The mentioned conception is based on Vigotski's ideas about the formation of subjectivity in the dialectical relationship with objective reality: for Cultural-Historical Psychology, the relationship with society and culture is the way by which man becomes human (VIGOTSKI, 2007). The concept of subjectivity for Cultural-Historical Psychology concerns the unique way in which each person relates to and acts in the world, based on their objective conditions of existence and the meanings and senses which make up their life story.

Vigotski overcomes perspectives which describe personality as a natural or purely adaptive aspect of the human being. The author also distances himself from the other extreme of determinism, which understands subjective issues only as a reflection of objective reality. As in the text below:



subjectivity implies intersubjectivity, because it is not a subject isolated and imprisoned in its private world [...] and also because it is not a subject prisoner of the public world, diluted in the collective and reflection of determinations. (MOLON, 2003, p. 120).

By presenting subjectivity as a dynamic and procedural dimension, and highlighting the importance of relationships with other people and with culture, Cultural-Historical Psychology, the approach chosen to support this article, allows us to recognize the relevance of the adolescents' dialogue with the subjects and the institutions that are part of their life, since these factors contribute to their subjective construction. In other words, they participate in the process of their own constitution, and, therefore, are essential in preventing mental illness and promoting mental health. In this sense, discussing this topic may also contribute to the psychologists' procedures at school, as well as to think about the teachers' role and teacher training programs in the construction of new perspectives on adolescents and in the development of education policies which take into account the adolescence period in its complexity and plurality.

Therefore, after these initial considerations, our understanding about adolescence will be discussed in the following section, in order to reach the objective proposed at the beginning of this text. Also, we will highlight the importance of construction of meanings for teenagers' development, especially in the school environment, not only for learning production, but their own mental health.

The following sections will describe the method used in the research, the presentation and discussion of the information obtained from the research instruments, the conclusion, and finally, the references used in this paper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present discussion about the relationship between adolescents and school is based on the concept of "meaning" developed by Vigotski (2001). Therefore, it is essential to understand the concept of "meaning" more clearly and how it was built up by the author and collaborators. The idea initially appears in his research on the genesis of thinking and speech, when he theorized about the meaning and word meaning. For the author, meaning is something stable, a concept shared socially – we can say, for example, that the school is considered in our society as a space for education and cognitive development, *par excellence*.

In turn, word senses are personal and subjective attributes which were constituted from each person's life story. Unlike meaning, it is complex and dynamic, as it comes from constructions that the own subject makes about what he/she lives, his/her personal



experience. In other words, the senses which someone attributes to a situation experienced can be quite different from the socially shared meaning about that experience.

Although it refers to word sense and word meaning, the concept developed by Vigotski does not seek to concentrate only the language, but rather to point out a new understanding of the social formation of mind. That is why the author speaks about word sense as “the sum of all psychological facts that it awakens in our consciousness” (VIGOTSKI, 2001, p. 465). By taking this position, Cultural-Historical Psychology doesn’t understand sense as a cognitive concept, but as an integrated one. In other words, it plays a fundamental role in the integration of thinking, emotions and motivations. As stated by González-Rey (2007), this category plays a central role in the connection between intellect and affection that Vigotski built in his studies.

Based on this understanding, it can be said that the school will not be experienced by all students only according to its social meaning. On the contrary, each teenager builds senses about education from the affective, cognitive and relational processes they live in those institutions every day. Understanding this issue, we realize that for the students, school goes beyond being a place where they study. Depending on the concrete conditions and subjective experience of each teenager, the senses can be linked, for example, to success or failure, pleasure, stress, friendships, violence, fear, motivation or lack of it. Especially when we consider the social aspects which permeate the experience of education and school in a context of inequality, due to the capitalist mode of production (SILVA, 2018).

Another relevant aspect is the perspective that Cultural-Historical Psychology brings on the processes of human development. By thinking of adolescence as a period of psychological development which incorporates biological and cultural aspects, which are converted into cognitive and affective psychic functions, the Cultural-Historical Psychology promoted a debate on how social contexts and ways of organizing life - including the school itself and the practice of School Psychology – can be producers of health and disease processes. After all, it is not possible to think about adolescents’ development without looking at the crossings produced at school, which, consequently, will impact their quality and way of life. This also constitutes the psychic resources for mental health. Therefore, understanding the development in adolescence in a more detailed way is necessary to comprehend the senses these subjects produce about themselves and about the school.

Anjos and Duarte (2017) present the activities which guide this period, called as transition by Vigotski (2001), referring to changes in interests and needs in relation to childhood as “a long, difficult and painful process” (ANJOS and DUARTE, 2017, p. 197). In other words, there is no linearity in human development processes, as this is marked by crises, ruptures and qualitative transformations. In adolescence, such crises provide new ways of organizing thought and personality, based on guiding activities.



The authors point to personal communication and study/professional activities as two sides of the guiding activity in adolescence. They call “companionship code” the relationships among adolescents, whose objective is to reproduce the norms and contents found in the relationships among adults and in society as well. In this way, such relationships participate in the formation of self-awareness, transforming concrete experiences into symbolic ones and providing self-regulation of behavior – being “the other of oneself”.

All of this can be linked to the study activity, the work field and the role of the school in human formation. Anjos and Duarte (2017) also state that the great challenge of educating teenagers is to carry out a training which should not be focused only on the contents necessary for a future profession, where some subjects are more appreciated than others. However, we cannot deny the existence of a capitalist system in which everyone needs to sell their labor power to survive.

Even within a system full of inequalities and individual alienation, education can still act in the creation of possible spaces. Since human education is not limited to reproducing the content of disciplines, but involves a multiplicity of elements which are part of the historical humanity - arts, culture, science, rituals and traditions, philosophy - the school can become a space of potential and creative activity, imagination and human relationships. As stated by Vigotski (2018) it is such anonymous creations, from everyday life, that set history in motion and constitute social and cultural processes.

As previously mentioned, this means that the school is one of the spaces with great potential in the processes of mental health production, including the development of emotional resources and relationships bonding, helping them to deal with typical critical crisis present in everyday routine - not just in adolescence, but throughout life. We corroborate, then, with the concept used by the World Health Organization since 2006, which determines health not only as the absence of illnesses, but as physical, psychological and social well-being in an integrated manner.

This way, explanations based on a medicalization perspective of education need to be debated under a critical perspective urgently. Especially because this perspective keeps considering mental health as a diagnosis production in schools. Santos and Sant'ana (2016) explain that the phenomenon of medicalization spread quickly in Brazilian education, as it served well the needs of a capitalist society, deepening in the neoliberal context. According to the authors, this process consists in individualizing and biologizing social and cultural phenomena which involve the processes of learning and education.

In contrast to this perspective, it is understood that the production of mental health at school consists of understanding the social reality, the relationships established there and how the teaching and learning processes take place within these relationships. As stated by Lima (2020), school education is one of the main forms of mediation between the person and the



social reality, promoting the complexity of psychological functions. Biological and cultural aspects are dialectically related, requiring an understanding that integrates these dimensions.

So, it is essential to investigate the students' perception about the school environment and their educational paths. After all, the school is one of the potential environments for the development of new forms of subjectivation, in addition to being the space where many Brazilian teenagers are most time of their days, establish relationships with each other and develop new learning about scientific content and about life. Also, according to Lima (2020), an alternative to avoid the medicalization of education would be in the teacher's role as a mediator during the teaching and learning process, since the relationship between teachers and students is full possibilities for human development and formation. Thus, it is valid to include in the discussion aspects related to training and teaching practice in high school.

The analysis of the information obtained in this research provide important elements for understanding the sense that adolescents attribute to the school. These senses are connected to the interpersonal relationships formed in this space, intervening in the construction of the individuals' subjectivity. In order to understand this dynamic more deeply, it is important to give voice to students, whereas understanding the position the school fills in their lives and the senses and meanings attributed to it (LEITE et al, 2016). With these reflections, it is possible to think of paths and possibilities – for example, the training of teachers at this stage can include better knowledge about young students' development and points of view. In order to contribute to this scenario, the data obtained about the senses students produce about their school will be discussed below.

METHOD

The investigation reported on this paper consisted of a study of mixed methods, and also the case study type. This methodological approach according to Bogdan and Biklen (2008) is necessary to explore themes, deepen others and support investigations. It allows a closer look at a case and notice its singularities and aspects which can emerge and be observed in other similar contexts. The use of mixed methods has been an important tendency to break the dichotomy between both methods with value judgments about either their higher or lower relevance. Thus, they can contribute to improve investigations with greater quality and scientific accuracy.

The research was carried out in a high school which is open in the morning and afternoon, with regular classes in one shift and vocational courses in another. The place was chosen because it was one of the first institutions in the city to adopt this system, located in a central neighborhood and attending students from different areas. In addition, it is close to a State University of Ceará (UECE) campus. Then, the school principal made contact with the



Psychology course coordination, looking for a partnership between the two institutions, and also presenting the school needs and difficulties to handle interpersonal relationships between students and teachers.

With this partnership, we consider important to study the case of this school, carrying out an investigation with the entire student population – a total of 120 students. Initially, we used systematic free observation and the questionnaire as instruments to obtain information about how adolescents recognize their school. It should be noted that, although the questionnaire is mostly used in quantitative studies, in this case study it was an appropriate instrument for the first stage of the research, which aimed to collect data on the entire student population. The application was carried out with 98 participants, about 80% of the population, so that the number of non-participants was due to absences on the days of application in those classes.

Regarding the ethical aspects, all participants accepted the involvement in the research and their parents signed an informed consent form, authorizing their participation. This form was signed during a parent / teacher meeting held at the school gymnasium, the same moment the study proposal was explained to everybody. In addition to the questionnaire, which is the focus of this article, the research continued with workshops held in all class groups – based on themes chosen by the teenagers, along this first stage meeting them. Then, meetings were also held with teachers in another moment of the research. Therefore, this article presents an excerpt from longer research, aimed at understanding the senses of adolescents about school – based on their responses to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was composed by seventy-eight questions, both objective and subjective ones and divided into the following categories: 1) me and my school; 2) me, my family and my neighborhood; 3) me with myself. In this article, we present the analyzes only of the items referring to the first category: me and my school. It allowed us to investigate the relationships adolescents establish with the school institution and with the subjects present in it (such as their classmates and teachers). For the elaboration of the instruments, we used the theoretical framework of Cultural-Historical Psychology.

The analysis was performed using basic statistics via the SPSS program. Also, after proper frequent information, we tried to carry out a qualitative analysis, articulating it with the main theoretical references of a cultural-historical basis. Although there was only one school and that is why the study was statistically general only to that reality, it was possible to guide this study as a generator of new reflections on the theme, and intending to elicit discussions about adolescents and schools and on the relevance of studies which come from their voices.



RESULTS: VOICES OF ADOLESCENTS

In order to understand this investigation objectives, we will present the analysis of the questionnaires in different approached dimensions. As previously mentioned, 98 students participated by answering the questionnaire. The age group of the participants was from 15 to 19 years old, with the majority (57%) between 16 and 17 years old. The sample had an equivalent number of males and females. In addition, most (98%) were single and had no children, and 57% lived with their mother and siblings. Regarding family income, for 71% of students, it was between five hundred and one thousand reais per person, with most students (69%) sharing a house with four or five people. Data were collected about their parents' education: 67% of the mothers finished high school, whereas 53% of the fathers had also reached this education level.

Assessing the answers in “me and my school” section in the questionnaire, their information shows a resistance to the cognitive primacy regarding school processes, by showing the undeniable presence of the affective dimension of students and teachers. A question which indicates this result is the one about which are most frequent behaviors at school: the elements mentioned include the dimension of affection and interaction – playing among students (76%), friendship relationships (53%), conflicts between teachers and students (42%), dating (35%), sports and cultural practices (34%). The reference to cognitive processes came up in some of the least mentioned categories, and one of them was due to learning difficulties (35%), and the other referred to study situations (25%).

Another issue which reinforced this result was the one we asked which is their favorite space at school. Most responses (79%) indicated environments outside the classroom, such as the outdoor patio, computer lab, library and gym. These data are in line with similar studies which address daily school life, such as the one done by Leite et al (2016): in this case, the participating adolescents also mentioned as their favorite places those which promote meetings and recreational activities.

The results are also consistent with the area theoretical contributions. For Tanamachi and Meira (2003):

learning depends on socialization. Knowledge is built, transmitted and appropriated necessarily in relation to others. It is essential that the school provides as many opportunities as possible to experience meaningful social relationships. [...] although the relationship among students is seen as secondary and even as a disturbing element in classes development, Vigotski's theoretical elaborations indicate that the student-student interaction is fundamental in the process of socialization and cognitive development. (TANAMACHI and MEIRA, 2003, p. 50)

We know that the different relationships established at school can influence the way students deal with tasks and school routine. Therefore, knowing the relationships they have with



teachers and classmates, as well as with the institution in general, is essential for us to understand the context of the adolescent – and the production of mental health in the school environment.

On this point, 56% of students reported feeling good at school. On the one hand, this fact reveals that most subjects have positive aspects to report about well-being and mental health in the school environment. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that more than 40% of students experience aspects of difficulty and discomfort at the institution. Furthermore, the survey obtained results which indicate the existence of conflicts among students' peers and also between students and teachers: when they were asked if there is something in the school that causes stress, most adolescents (76%) said yes. Among these ones, 37% cited problems with peers, such as prejudice, bullying and other misunderstandings. 30% also mentioned the workload considered excessive and little time reserved for sports, arts and cultural activities. This information points to the relevance of the articulation between health and education. After all, these issues affect students' mental health and, consequently, their learning processes – which should be discussed beyond the individualization and medicalization of learning difficulties (SANTOS, SANT'ANA, 2016).

It is also important to consider the voices of these adolescents, in order to understand the subjective senses which they produce about the teaching and learning experiences lived in the classroom. In this sense, problems with teachers, strict methodologies or unattractive subjects were highlighted by 27% of students as a cause of stress. In another question about faculty, 45% of students said they did not trust their teachers. In addition, 28% think they do not believe in their ability and 16% believe that teachers do not treat them well. These data expose a context of difficulties in the relationship with teachers that can be detrimental to the learning and development processes, affecting the mental health of the school community.

The presented data promote a greater understanding about how adolescents relate to school. In addition, studies such as the one by Leite et al (2016) also showed data about the relationship between adolescents and teachers. Students stated that they do not like some professionals because they do not encourage active participation in the class and do not have a good relationship with the class. In contrast, students praised the teachers who develop a close relationship with them and explain the contents linking them to their own experiences. These school subjects were considered easier and more interesting, as well as the teachers' welcoming was identified as a stimulating factor in the school.

It is possible to see that ignoring the importance of interpersonal relationships brings negative consequences – such as an increase in the stress level of students, the experience of learning difficulties and lack of motivation. Thus, it is relevant that discussions in the educational area realize the integrality of the human being, understanding that the intellectual state does not exist disconnected from emotions, imagination and creative processes (VIGOTSKI, 2018).



This is a fundamental discussion not only when talking about teenagers, but also regarding initial and continuing teacher education.

For that, it is essential to provide dialogue and develop strategies to meet the school demands. As we have seen, a common obstacle to this challenge is the stereotyped and crystallized view of adolescence. By understanding the period of development based on Cultural-Historical Psychology, adolescents can be seen as active subjects of their own history – which is built on the relationships they establish with their peers, family and people they meet at school, as well as the various social and cultural elements which are part of its development. Therefore, it is necessary to think about how the results of research such as this one can be used to support teachers who work with adolescents.

In order to train teachers who can relate to adolescents, learn about the senses they build about education and mediate processes which go beyond the cognitive aspect, it is necessary to rethink the training processes for teaching. After all, if the teacher should be able to understand the students' subjectivity, their subjective dynamics should also be welcomed in the training process. However, we know that this need comes up against concrete obstacles in the training and teaching activity, noticed by lack of good work conditions (SOUSA and MOURA, 2016).

From an essential perspective, the Cultural-Historical Psychology understands that the way teachers think and what they do are related to who they are and what they feel. From this, teaching practice can bring teachers and students closer together in living and integrating relationships. For Martins (2015, p. 133), it is based on more conscious relationships that “bring the possibilities for deconstruction of existence or for the overcoming of spontaneous relationships that generate countless forms of resignation or passive (non)conformity”. For the author, this conception assumes new possibilities in teacher education, beyond the technical aspect, towards the construction of an emancipatory teaching praxis.

In this sense, a formative experience was carried out by research group from Paulista State University (UNESP), in a project called “ECA and Education: Training of social agents and teachers in child and adolescent care policies” (GOETHEL et al, 2015). The proposal came from the need to offer training to guide teachers and social agents in the defense and promotion of the children and adolescents' rights. For this, the project meetings were in workshop formats that discussed issues related to the main theme every month.

The research indicated that the participants' practices were mediated by prejudices about adolescence – partly due to their life story and common-sense understandings on the subject, partly due to the lack of preparation on the topic in their training paths. As a result of the action research, it was found that the experience of the workshops provided reflection and deconstruction of some crystallized and prejudiced conceptions about adolescence, favoring



discussion among professionals and the study of relevant themes for a more contextualized work (GOETHEL et al, 2015).

In addition to the technical aspects of the systematization of knowledge, it is necessary to discuss among education professionals the understanding of adolescents' development in a comprehensive view - considering cognition and affection as related elements in the learning process (VIGOTSKI, 2007). By assuming this, training can be used not only to equip the teachers with technical knowledge about their subject, but also with important tools to deal with the relational demands of adolescence. After all, adolescents have countless experiences beyond the moments of study - and they permeate learning and are relevant in their subjectivation process, as well as in the relationship they establish with teachers, peers and the entire community school. The way relationships are established at school influence the senses produced about the environment and about learning. Thus, they can promote mental health and motivation to learn, or the opposite effects.

By analyzing aspects of the relationship between adolescents and school, our research pointed to the integration between affection and cognition in the high school dynamics. Therefore, it is necessary to assess how this aspect has been discussed in relation to teachers' practice. In Ceará there has been a project working on this aspect since 2008: the Class Director Teacher Project. According to Ceará Department of Education (SEDUC) website, this initiative proposes that the teacher:

[...] regardless of your knowledge area, be responsible for a certain class, and it is up to you to know the students individually, to meet their needs. In addition, the class director teacher (PDT) is responsible for mediating the relationships between the class and other segments of the school community, as well as their citizenship education and development of socio-emotional skills, with the students (SEDUC, 2019).

Machado and Therrien (2017) explain that this project came to Ceará based on a similar experience carried out in Portugal. In this country, the attributions of the class director teacher have undergone historical transformations, but among the main objectives are the support to the students and their families' problems and the organization of the practices of the different teachers who work in the same class, in order to bring more integration between disciplines and professionals. In Ceará, the class director teacher pilot project began in 2007 in schools located in Eusébio, Madalena and Canindé. In 2008, SEDUC adopted the project in other 25 vocational schools. And in 2010, the project was expanded to all schools in the state (MACHADO and THERRIEN, 2017).



Lima (2014) indicates the importance of this project for the articulation between school and community and also for the student's high attendance, as well as related to teenagers' subjective issues. However, its practice faces a series of important challenges, such as the overload of tasks for the class director teacher and the lack of specific training for the teacher to deal with the new functions (LEITE, MARTINS and LIMA, 2017).

This sort of strategies can represent advances in understanding education as an integral process, and not just focused on teaching technical knowledge. So, we highlight the need for future studies to expand the research on this topic, in order to build possibilities for caring for the teacher-student relationship and for mental health at school. The Cultural-Historical Psychology is believed to highlight the view of mental health not as something individual and static, but as a product of objective and subjective relationships established. Thus, the data researched here, from aspects of the students' family and financial context to the various elements linked to their relationship with the school, all of these are aspects related to mental health. Therefore, it is an important practice to understand health articulated with education, giving voice to adolescents and knowing the senses they produce about school – discussing these data offers us elements to articulate problematizations and proposals which are relevant for the school community.

CONCLUSION

The present paper showed that it was possible to give voice to teenagers from a vocational high school in Fortaleza-Ceará and reinforce how important this action is in the educational context. Based on this article, the later stages of this research were helpful to organize some workshops too. This was possible due to the information given by the researched subjects. Investigations, such as the one we developed, work to increasingly show that the educational environment is the *locus* of important subjective relationships and that learning is intrinsically linked to the affective aspect. In Brazil, it is necessary to reinforce the practice of listening to students, carrying out effective actions in this context (CARVALHO, MEIRELES and GUZZO, 2018).

For Cultural-Historical Psychology, the constant production of new senses encourages human beings to build up their subjectivity, based on their relationships. Therefore, we conclude that school is not only a space for the expression of subjectivities, as are the different contexts we go through throughout life. It has an impact on the production of new senses about oneself, the world and mainly about the production of new senses related to school learning processes. Nevertheless, it is necessary to open up to new understandings and relationships with adolescents at school, overcoming the stereotyped view and encouraging them to occupy spaces for reflection and action in the training process itself.



The research results and theoretical contributions reinforces the need of not seeing learning processes limited to technical memorization tasks. It is necessary to consider the study activity as a broad and dynamic process, from which cognitive development takes place in integration with affective development. Subjectivity, therefore, is a dialectical process in relation to the objective and concrete context. By knowing the subjective meanings that adolescents build about school and their own learning, it becomes feasible to have more elements to streamline and implement the teaching and learning process. In this scenario, the relationship with the teacher is a central aspect in the integration between affect and cognition. After all, Vigotski's theory draws attention to the fact that development takes place through mediation and is first interpersonal and then goes through a process of internalization – a process in which emotional aspects are central (VIGOTSKI, 2018).

It is necessary to discuss the teaching training processes from a deeper knowledge about the development in adolescence and the relationship between education and mental health production. It is important to build new training paths which highlight the relevance of affective and relational aspects at school. As a result, we understand that the process of learning is not dissociated from the development of the individual as a whole. These issues cannot be absent not only from training, but from teaching practice in the daily school routine (IMBERNÓN, 2010).

In this discussion, we identified the Class Director Teacher Project, developed by SEDUC, as a potential to indicate possibilities for better articulation between the students' subjective and the school processes developed by teachers and administrators. We draw attention to the relevance of investigating more deeply the experience of teachers and students who participate in this project.

Finally, we also believe that the field of teacher training for secondary education needs to be better explored, especially with research which supports the development of new theories and practices for this education level. And also, it should always consider that affection and cognition cannot be dichotomized in the educational scenario. Likewise, it is necessary to expand research which explores the relationship between adolescents and school, from the student's perspective, aiming to empower them and enabling the creation of senses beyond the usual stereotypes for those who are going through this period of development.

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