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**PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL
ASSESSMENT IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION:
CONTRIBUTIONS OF
HISTORICAL-CULTURAL
THEORY**

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Abstract: With the recognition of Early Childhood Education institutions as part of School Education, these contexts become responsible for the intentional and planned transmission of the production of historically and socially systematized knowledge by humanity. In addition to questions regarding what to teach in Early Childhood Education, there is also a demand for children who are referred for psychoeducational assessment and/or other health services, with school complaints, usually related to aggressive behavior, agitated children and with extreme difficulties in paying attention. To have Historical-Cultural Psychology as a theoretical framework, it is necessary to understand human development as a historical process and a product of social life, especially when referring to the evaluation of behavioral complaints in preschool children. This study aims to discuss and analyze the processes of child development in the face of referrals for psychoeducational assessment in Early Childhood Education, for that, reflections are carried out that intend to build a relationship between practical action and theoretical knowledge, in a movement that seeks greater awareness of the school team about its transforming role of reality and about the development and learning processes.

Keywords: Psychoeducational assessment, cultural-historical theory, child development.

INTRODUCTION

Concerns regarding school complaints reach Kindergarten, teachers, with difficulty in dealing with the behavior of some children, often combined with precarious working conditions and lack of continuing education, resort to the request for psychoeducational assessment and referrals of these children to health sectors, in an attempt to find solutions along with their pedagogical practice.

The complaint that children do not learn at school is widely discussed on the national scene, and when considered in the light of the Historical-Cultural theory, it aims to understand the human being within its historicity, as a product of its social life, therefore it is contrary to educational practices based on a theoretical framework that naturalizes child development, understanding it as universal and biological.

It is in the conception of an organicist human being, guided by formal logic, and out of context that many diagnoses of children carried out by the health team are concentrated and which is based on the treatment of learning problems and/or child behavior, "evidencing their commitment to the project". bourgeois social and with the rules of capitalism (Facci, Eidt and Tuleski, 2006, p. 102).

When the result of this fragmented assessment reaches education, teachers often "feel confused, since they do not have any information and do not know how to assess how health professionals are dealing with the situation" (Eidt; Ferrácioli, 2013, p. .98). This corroborates the reproduction of discourses that place the child as being responsible for the behavior problem and does not allow the reflection of educational practices and child development, historically and culturally constructed.

In Early Childhood Education, school complaints are related to behaviors seen as inappropriate. It is understood here as a behavior complaint, the childish behaviors that teachers consider aggressive, children who are too agitated and with extreme difficulty in paying attention to the proposed activities.

With the implementation of the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education - LDBEN/96, early childhood education is incorporated as the first stage of Basic Education and thus, day care centers and preschools are

recognized as educational institutions. That said, Early Childhood Education begins to “integrate school education and, as such, is responsible for the planned transmission of historically systematized knowledge” (Arce, Martins, 2013, p.7).

Educational work must involve the socialization of systematized knowledge, being, therefore, an intentional act, not fragmented. In this perspective Saviani (2013, p.85) reinforces that the production of knowledge is social and historical, but as education is situated in a society of classes with opposing interests, there is a

“tendency to make the school secondary, emptying it of its specific function, which is linked to the socialization of elaborated knowledge, converting it into a social assistance agency, destined to attenuate the contradictions of capitalist society”.

It is in this scenario that a demand of children of preschool age emerges with behavioral complaints and are referred for psychoeducational evaluation. These children, and in general, their families, are blamed either for having ‘inadequate psychological’ characteristics or for not corresponding to ‘functional family models’, among other justifications with reductionist and linear tendencies, which confirms the words of Moysés (2014), p.99) that “we live in a society divided into social classes and that will, for that very reason, need artifices to justify its inequalities”.

Psychoeducational assessment in this sense needs to encourage reflection on stereotypes that label children and blame them for their schooling. Thus, their contributions need to be based on the real possibilities of development of typically human psychic functions, therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the conditions that allow the non-development of these functions. (Facci, Eidt, Tuleski, 2006).

It is in the search for the common good, for the awareness of the human being, for believing that there are other possibilities of psychoeducational evaluation that this study aims, understanding that it is from the theoretical and methodological framework of Historical-Cultural Psychology, the best way to disseminate concrete actions that aim to transform not only the child who is faced with a school complaint, but everyone around them, the whole of society.

THE HISTORICAL-CULTURAL THEORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHE

Theorists of cultural-historical psychology, in particular, Vygotsky (1896-1934), Luria (1903-1979) and Leontiev (1902-1977) were concerned with developing a scientific psychology, in which the main objective was the study of social development of the human psyche (Martins, 2013). To do so, they took Marxist praxis as a principle, in particular, historical and dialectical materialism, claiming that it is from them that one could explain the psyche of the concrete man, and relate the real/material world with psychic phenomena.

In this perspective, historical and dialectical materialism comprises the movement of concrete reality and its need for social transformations, as well as the development of human consciousness.

When these authors place the psyche as a material/ideal unit, they are referring precisely to the principle of the dialectical materialist method. Matter appears twice, first as the founding starting point of humanity, since the brain is matter, but only the material part does not make us human, we need ideas, which come with the concrete object and with the formation of language/ word / concept.

“psychism exists in a dual form. The first manifests itself in activity, the primary and objective form of its existence. The second form, subjective, manifests itself in the construction of the idea, the image, in short, as consciousness. Human activity is a manifestation in acts by which man establishes himself in objective reality while transforming it into subjective reality” (Martins 2013, p.29).

Thus, the human psyche, as a material and ideal unit, develops from social relationships and meets three principles: totality, movement and contradiction.

Totality emerges with the importance of analyzing the psyche, where the image will never contain the total object, but degrees of objectivity and reliability. The contradiction is related to the alternations between natural and social, product and process, objective and subjective, which characterizes human development as a continuous process of formation and transformation, of becoming, “everything is and is not at the same time!” (Martins 2013, p.5).

Therefore, dialectical logic overcomes formal logic by incorporating it into its movement, which points to the overcoming of logical-causal analyzes of concrete reality.

For Leontiev (1978) human development is related to the activity that man performs in his collective environment, which is guided by a social and not biological purpose.

Each period of development is marked by a specific activity, which is what Leontiev (1978) calls a guiding activity, or main activity. This activity is what drives development during each period of a human being’s life, it is not related to the amount of time that a human being spends performing it, but to the qualitative processes that it evokes.

The activity changes throughout human development, in each period there are dominant activities, important in the constitution of personality. It is of fundamental

importance that the teacher has knowledge about the periodization of development, about the main activity in each stage, and thus plan actions that can leverage the child’s development process and consequently review school complaints and evaluation processes.

It must be noted that the periodization of development in Historical-Cultural Psychology is only possible from the analysis of external and internal changes in development itself and, thus, in addition to delimiting biological age, periodization is determined by the historical and objective conditions of social organizations that the child is inserted (Pasqualini, 2016).

Human development is not linear, from simple to complex, and it is in the contradiction between nature and culture that elementary behavior is transformed into complex.

The complexification of human behaviors derives from the appropriation/objectifications of the human race, and the basis of all behavior lies in psychic functions, that is, psychic functions permeate complex, typically human behaviors.

The psyche is an interfunctional system, since one cannot think of a particular function separately from the others, therefore, the development of the psyche has as its central characteristic the achievement of consciousness as a psychic property.

Higher psychic functions are more complex mental processes that differentiate human beings from other animals and come from elementary functions, which are characterized by reflex actions, automated reactions, simple association processes, and it is in the interaction between biological and cultural factors that such functions are constituted (Vygotsky, 2006).

One of the main points of cultural-historical psychology was when Vygotsky postulated that the use of signs is what distinguishes natural behaviors, resulting

from evolution and common to men and animals, from social behaviors.

Signs operate as second-order stimuli that, retroacting on psychic functions, transform their spontaneous expressions into volitional expressions. superior and freed from both biological determinism and the immediate context of action (Martins, 2013, p.44).

As signs are auxiliary means for solving problems and/or psychological tasks, it will carry out a mediating activity, “a type of activity that allows the objects that participate in it to exercise among themselves, based on their nature (of their essential properties) a reciprocal influence” (Martins, 2013, p.45).

This means that the elementary functions need to be transformed, to acquire another form, to conquer other properties by overcoming limits, which will occur through mediation.

Therefore, the internalization of signs in the process of psychic development is rooted in the social nature of man, it is through the use of signs and tools, which enables the development of complex behaviors, that is, planned and controlled by the individual's conscience.

In this process in which the development of the psyche occurs as the formation of the subjective image of objective reality, “the construction of the psychic image, as a conscious phenomenon denoting the real, is determined by a combination, built by human activity, of material and psychological processes” (Martins, 2013, p.120).

Understanding psychic functions and their development is of fundamental importance for Early Childhood Education, to reflect on possible referrals of young children to psychoeducational assessment, to understand the development and learning processes, and the role of the educational context in the construction of the psyche.

Since the development of the psyche will

strictly depend on mediating elements, which in turn, have a condition in teaching for the learning processes to take place.

DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

For Vygotsky (2006), all good teaching must advance development, the teacher, in addition to understanding the characteristics of human development, also needs to master the mediation instruments that can be used in the teaching and learning process.

Saviani (2013) argues that mediation is the instrumental character of education, it is through systematized teaching that the child will develop intellectually, and appropriate knowledge historically accumulated by society.

From birth, the child is inserted in a culturally constructed context, and internalizes instruments and ways of being in the world, through the other.

When introducing the concept of mediation, Vygotsky, as we have tried to show, did not take it simply as a ‘bridge, ‘link’ or ‘means’ between things, as often referred to by his non-Marxist readers. For him, mediation is an interposition that causes transformations, contains socially constructed intentionality and promotes development, in short, an external condition that, internalized, enhances the act of work, whether practical or theoretical (Martins, 2013, p. 46).

It is through the mediation of social relations that the development of the psyche ceases to be governed by elementary processes, of a natural order, and becomes cultural, superior. Under this discussion, Eidt and Tuleski (2007, p.532) state that “the higher psychological functions exist concretely in the form of interpsychic activities, in social relationships before taking the form of intrapsychic activity”.

Learning is the trigger for development, and in turn, development is what causes new

learning possibilities, in this perspective, human development is the product of a broad and complex system of social connections based on biological and social conditions, and it must not be reduced to natural, innate processes or just to social determinants. (Martins, 2013).

By understanding that the development of higher psychological functions is only capable of taking place through cultural mediations, the focus of behavioral complaints in Early Childhood Education must be shifted from the individual to the social plane. And, in this sense, it is necessary to reflect on the psychoeducational assessment, modify it, investigate aspects that cover cultural development, the (re) productions of behaviors present in the environment in which the child is, and mainly understand them within a process dynamic, dialectical and historical.

Therefore, through referrals of children for psychoeducational assessment in Early Childhood Education, it is necessary to reflect on the complexity of human development and the social phenomenon, so it is not possible to attribute the complaint of behavior or possible child difficulties to a single factor.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

It is necessary to think about the psychoeducational assessment in Early Childhood Education beyond the real development and what the child demonstrates in its concreteness, it is necessary to consider the school context, teaching methodologies, mediations with the child and thus contribute to reflections on pedagogical practice. Therefore, this work contributes to the growing need to study Historical-Cultural Psychology, in the construction of social practices that make it possible to understand the human being in its concreteness, as part of a dialectical and historical movement, in a constant coming into being.

The educational evaluation must contemplate the social reality of the Early Childhood Education context, in a movement that seeks to increase the school team's awareness of its transforming role in reality, as well as on the processes of human development.

It is already known that the school must provide the student with a space that stimulates systematized knowledge, transmitted in a non-spontaneous way, that is, in a direct and intentional way. Saviani (2013) highlights aspects that present themselves as challenges to be overcome together with educational work and critical historical pedagogy, which are: absence of a national education system, the organizational issue and the problem of discontinuity.

Overcoming the difficulties of educational work comes with good teaching, but it is necessary to think of an education that is aimed at praxis, at the material, concrete conditions of life.

For Pasqualini (2016) it is necessary to understand child development as a dialectical and revolutionary process, in this perspective evolution and revolution, quantitative and qualitative change of development, assumes a real movement, dialectical movement of social reality. It is necessary to understand this movement when it is assumed to carry out an analysis of the referrals of the complaint of school behavior in early childhood education institutions.

Finally, the relationship between school education and psychic development, understood through the historical-cultural theory, encompasses the need to discuss the relationship between practical action and theoretical knowledge, in a movement that seeks to increase the school team's awareness of its transforming role in reality, as well as on human development processes.

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