

The capacity of pedagogical agency developed by pedagogy students in their passage through initial teacher formation: A critical approach to foster social justice.

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Abstract

This conference addresses higher education as an *educational* space -this is, more than *training*- in which students of pedagogy, future teachers, can develop a capacity of pedagogical agency as a requisite to contribute to social justice, and seeks to explore how this pedagogical agency is deployed in initial teaching experiences. For that, some theoretical antecedents are offered to understand *initial teacher formation*, *pedagogical agency*, *pedagogical interactions*, and *social justice* from a critical perspective, and to provide some preliminary reflections about pedagogical agency from the analysis of some critical incidents as a research method.

This discussion is part of my PhD research "The importance of developing the capacity for ethical-political-epistemic agency in novice teachers during initial teacher formation to contribute to social justice", guided by a deep concern of forming teachers for social justice understood from the critical perspective developed by Iris Young, the *lack of institutionalized oppression*. Following this premise, any teacher eager to fight for social justice should be able to recognize and be sensitive to oppression, both as receiver or issuer of it, in the channel through which power passes: *pedagogical interactions*, which shape political, ethical, and epistemic subjectivities.

This talk wants to invite to reflect that prepare teachers for social justice demands learning to deal with oppression, which is particularly difficult in neoliberal times, as we have naturalized domain-based relationship forms. This is especially serious for initial teacher formation: as forms of relation based on control and dominion are naturalized and reinforced, the possibility that students of pedagogy change something once teachers seems more difficult. Then, educating the *gaze* to identify oppression -not only in human relations, but in political devices such as the official curriculum- is something basic for any program that intends to contribute to social justice, as it is to model democratic and dialogical interactions to advance to a fairer and empowered society.

A big gap of knowledge we have, however, is the kind of interactions offered in initial teacher formation programs: what we know about initial teacher formation is generally related to aspects of the visible curriculum but not the hidden one. For this lack of evidence, we can, however, study the result of that formation: novice teachers' capacities, or, from the interest of this talk, *how able are pedagogy students in their first pedagogical experiences to act and make decisions based on autonomous criteria in the school environment to educate children beyond technical criteria imposed by the curriculum*, putting formative purposes above technical or bureaucratic issues.

Keywords

Initial teacher formation, pedagogical agency, social justice, pedagogical interaction, hidden curriculum