



The construction of inter/multicultural pedagogical practices in the elementary teaching and the teaching knowledge¹

A construção de práticas pedagógicas inter/multiculturais no ensino fundamental e os saberes docentes

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Abstract

This article discusses the construction of inter/multicultural pedagogical practices in the elementary teaching, as opposed to the conception of the teaching knowledge. For that, it analyzes the results of two researches, from doctorate theses, both of which deal with pedagogical practices by teachers that were willing to work in the inter/multicultural

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perspective. It proposes the idea that in order to develop the inter/multicultural school content it is not enough that the teacher construct and trigger the knowledge, in the rational perspective, but that such knowledge be conjugated with beliefs and values coherent with this kind of acting, which require a more honest self-perception by the teachers. It defends the idea that the discussion of teaching knowledge is very much connected to the ethical dimension — the ethics of human, of being-more — towards the universalization of minimum ethical aiming at the preservation of human dignity. Finally, it shows considerations regarding the consequences of such ideas to teachers' formation as well as to their teachers' formation.

Keywords: Inter/multiculturality. Teaching knowledge. Teacher formation. Curriculum in action.

Resumo

Este artigo problematiza a construção de práticas pedagógicas inter/multiculturais no Ensino Fundamental, em contraponto com a concepção de saberes docentes. Para tanto, analisa resultados de duas pesquisas, oriundas de teses de doutorado, ambas versando sobre práticas pedagógicas de docentes que se propunham a trabalhar na perspectiva inter/multicultural. Propõe que, para desenvolver os conteúdos escolares inter/multiculturalmente, não basta que o docente construa e acione saberes, entendidos na perspectiva racional; é preciso que tais saberes sejam conjugados com crenças e valores coerentes com esse tipo de atuação, o que requer uma autopercepção mais honesta por parte dos professores. Além disso, o artigo defende que a discussão dos saberes docentes muito se relaciona à dimensão ética — a ética do humano, do ser-mais —, na direção da universalização de mínimos éticos visando à preservação da dignidade humana. Finalmente, tece considerações a respeito das consequências de tais ideias para a formação de professores e para a formação de seus formadores.

Palavras-chave: Inter/multiculturalidade. Saberes docentes. Formação de professores. Currículo em ação.

Introduction

This article intends to problematize the construction of inter/multicultural pedagogical practices in elementary education, as opposed to the conception of teaching knowledges which, according to Gauthier et al. (2006), are constructed and triggered by involving the level of rationality.

For that purpose, results were used of two research works conducted by Corsi (2007) and Palomino (2009) for their respective doctoral dissertations, both treating of pedagogical practices of teachers who purposed to work in inter/multicultural perspective. Besides this feature, the two studies have in common both the adoption of ethnographic methodology — the use of observations and in-depth interviews — and the fact that participant teachers be in their initial years of the teaching career by the time data were gathered and organized.

The text below is organized into four sections. The first one presents the concepts of *inter/multiculturality* and of *teaching knowledges*, in the way they are herein understood. In the second section, results of the two studies are presented, commented. In the third one, from such results, relations are established between teaching knowledges and inter/multiculturality. As for conclusions, a fourth section defends the key-ideas of the article, and briefly addresses the discussions outcomes relative to the field of teachers' education as well as to teachers' educators.

Presenting the key concepts of the work

In order to define the expression *inter/multiculturality*, we shall explicit, initially, what is herein understood as *multiculturality*, expression denotative of the evidence that the existing society is multicultural, and that the different cultures cohabiting within it do not occupy equalitarian positions since their relationships are defined by power issues, referred to a pattern McLaren (2000) calls *whiteness*. This concept refers not only

to features related to skin color/ethnicity, but also involves categories such as social class, gender, sexuality, religion, etc. Therefore, people to fit the whiteness pattern would be male, white, heterosexual, middle-class, young, and, as for the Brazilian case, catholic; and so forth. The problem is that the discrepancy relative to such pattern is not usually treated as difference, but rather as inequality, inferiority, thus being a generator of prejudice and discriminations.

In order to address these aspects, McLaren (2000, p. 123) defends a critical, resistance-based multiculturalism according to which

[...] representations of race, class and gender are understood as the result of larger social struggles over signs and meanings [...] but stresses the central task of transforming the social, cultural and institutional relations in which meanings are generated.

According to this understanding, school knowledge is seen as a social construction, not as a portrait of reality, and the way we deal with it is strongly informed by race, social class, gender, etc.

For the author the objective of a pedagogy that stands against injustices would be that of disturbing, “reconstituting the contingent elements of our identities” (MCLAREN, 2000, p. 48). For that purpose, it is imperative to question the common sense, the whiteness, the naturalized knowledge and “to interrogate the discursive presuppositions that inform curricular practices with respect to race, class, gender and sexual orientation.” (MCLAREN, 2000, p. 144-145).

The other portion of the term employed herein — the prefix *inter* — indicates the direction to which we defend that multiculturalism be treated. Based on Candau (2002), we propose *interculturality*, that is, the dialogue, the exchanges, the inter-relationships between the cultures that integrate the multicultural society. This means that evidencing multiculturalism is not enough if there is no indication of a project, of the intentionality of acting inside it.

In such project inequalities have no place, and the relationships between equality and difference are problematized so that equality is understood as opposed to inequality; and difference, to standardization (CANDAU, 2001).

Considering that, by and large, such relationships do not occur at the level of consciousness, since they are hidden in the submerge portion of the *iceberg of the culture's nature* (CANDAU; SACAVINO, 2004), we propose that teachers' education incorporate, besides contents and methodologies, *sensitivity* (LIMA, 2006, 2009), which is to be understood in the acception of Freire's *loveness* as well as identified with the option of working with and for the minorities, in the same sense indicated by McLaren (2000).

As the research data herein reported will be problematized regarding the concept of *teaching knowledges*, it is deemed important to clarify in what acception it is taken. We assign a positive intention to the teaching knowledges approach, to the extent that they bring in themselves the teachers' views no longer as consumers of exogenous knowledges, created in their absence, but rather as producers of knowledges from/within their professional practice.

Gauthier et al. (2008 , p. 302-303) adopt, with respect to this subject, a position that is neither "scientificist" nor "reflexivistic" [sic] understanding that teachers put in action experienced knowledges as well as "knowledges that come from their professional training, a certainly incomplete luggage the weight of which cannot be disregarded". The pedagogical practice being a complex activity requires that the teacher build a certain order to deal with it, for which purpose he/she must use his/her capacity to judge. And in order to judge, he/she has to mobilize different kinds of knowledges built from both experience and training.

In a similar direction, Tardif, Lessard and Lahaye (1991, p. 221) argue that the standard teacher is someone "who must know his/her subject matter, discipline, and program, who must have certain knowledge about the sciences of education and of pedagogy, without

failing to develop a practical knowledge founded upon his/her quotidian experiences with the students”.

All this knowledge base referred by the authors above mentioned makes sense only to the extent that it serve to set the foundations for teachers' concrete pedagogical choices and actions, since “comprehension alone is not enough. The usefulness of each kind of knowledge lays upon its value for judgment and action [...]”, as stated by Shulman (1987, p. 326), so that teaching is not transformed into a merely technical act, that is, into a “scientific enterprise that has lost its soul” (p. 332).

Reporting the two researches

Corsi's research work (2007) had the objective of understanding how differences relative to the categories race/ethnicity, social class, and gender are present in the curriculum in action. Data were gathered in two classrooms — 1st and 4th grade levels of Elementary Education —, by means of observation and interviews. Observations were made throughout two semesters, one for each teacher. Interviews were conducted in order to understand the meanings assigned to their practices by the two teachers.

One of the teachers exhibited characteristics rather monocultural; the other one expressed her concern with acting in inter/multicultural way. Due to the focus of this article, we took the latter as our object of analysis — named Silvia, for the research purposes — at the time, she taught 4th graders in a municipal public school. She had a degree in Pedagogy, and a Masters degree in Education, having conducted for the latter a self-study in which she analyzed the construction of the early years of her teaching career, and for which she was oriented by the author of this article. She evidenced a strong concern with the development of pedagogical practices appropriate to the work with students from the lower social classes, from different ethnicities and regions of the country.

These data were also taken into account in Corsi's doctoral dissertation (2007).

With respect to personal experiences she considered to be related to her performance as a teacher, Miss Silvia analyzed them in one of her written productions:

I am a grand-daughter and a daughter of immigrant peasants. I believe that being born in a family of immigrants makes us "nonconformist" by nature. During my graduate studies I could elaborate and clearly understand who I was and what history turned me into the person I am. In one of my academic papers I wrote that to be an immigrant is to refuse to accept one's destiny of misery to which one would be condemned, should one not to choose 'the 'hard departure from the bosom of the culture that had formed one. I spent my childhood in a working class district in the outskirts of São Paulo city. Today, I am quite aware of how important and determinant this was for the teacher I am. The life experience within the working classes allowed me to experience scarceness. Therefore, I grew up sensing the difficulties of those people who work too much and have too little.

As for her academic training, she discriminates such influences as having occurred in three stages:

[...] at a first moment, through the various fields of knowledge I could understand our reality, and in that way I acquired a political awareness of the role played by school; the commitment to working for the literacy of the socially disadvantaged segments was inspired by a course with professor [...] and in my graduate studies I obtained the theoretical foundations for the deepening of those knowledges that take one to the understanding of the educational process as multidimensional.

It is necessary to make it clear that we chose not to reference the source of the above excerpts so that the teacher is not identified.

Corsi's analysis (2007) of miss Silvia's pedagogical practices evidences that as this teacher addressed curricular contents, she sought to include aspects related to social and cultural issues, such as sexuality, gender, prejudice, and racism, in a perspective toward social emancipation

which approximated those practices to the inter-/multicultural perspective. As for indicators of such approximations we cite:

- a) The manifestation of conceptions regarding: the learning capability of all the students, not only of the most gifted (which she had revealed also in her Master's thesis); knowledge as something susceptible of questioning, and not something fixed, unchangeable; family as an element of support to the pedagogical work, rather than as a "nuisance"; society as marked by inequalities and conflicts.
- b) The approach of subjects related to the construction of students' positive identities; concern with the strengthening of self-esteem; valuation of different cultural expressions; encouragement to the participation and learning of each student.
- c) The effort to instigate in the students the understanding of the necessity of knowledge.
- a) The inclusion in curricular contents of issues related to differences, prejudices, stereotypes etc., addressed in a way such that, as a rule, the participation of students in these discussions is furthered.
- d) The effort to demonstrate to students the relationships between contents studied and social reality, by attempting to create counter-discourses that generate changes in the school environment through the understanding of the movement of construction of identities and the critique of dominant identities (MOREIRA apud CORSI, 2007).

Nonetheless, during the process of observations, Corsi (2007) verified the existence of those difficulties Miss Silvia had to face among which she lays stress upon both the feeling of isolation she felt in school, and the way she dealt with contents relative to gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, whenever she tried to develop them as curricular contents.

In these cases, Corsi's research (2007) evidenced that Miss Silvia's pedagogical practices oscillated between a naive and a rather critical view regarding the work with differences.

Palomino's study (2009, p. 12) was conducted around the following question: *"how does the process of construction of pedagogical practices occur, taking the inter/multiculturality as guidelines, by a teacher of the initial grades of elementary education in her freshman year in the teaching profession?"*.

The research work went along with the teacher throughout the second semesters of her two initial years in teaching, in a rural school and in a urban, central school, both state-run and located in São Carlos, an interior city in the state of São Paulo. Besides the observation of the classes, both the teacher and the researcher talked about the difficulties of the former, about her practices and relationships with the students. Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted and questionnaires were applied, taking both the teacher and the children as subjects.

Palomino (2009, p. 181) so describes the teacher, Miss Vera:

Coming from an upper middle-class family, from an inner-city with a population of 60 thousand, Vera denotes, in her speeches and attitudes, a conception of success and of individual permeated by both cultural and material goods valued by that class (valuation of things urban, of material goods, of socially valued knowledge etc.).

The teacher hints at such values when she enthusiastically cites the access [of her students] to clubs of high social status, to art exhibitions, the personal endeavor (in those cases which the "self-fulfilling prophecy" allows for) and, on the other hand, when she faces parents' work in the poorest families as a hindrance to learning, when she admits to "expect less" from the children in the rural school than from the ones in the urban school.

With relation to work within poor families, it must be underlined that, during Vera's school years, her mother did work as a cook at home, something that allowed her to stay near her children and to follow up their school progress.

Miss Vera came to know the theme inter/multiculturalism as she was pursuing her degree in Pedagogy, in a discipline entitled School and Curriculum. She was enthusiastic about its contents so as to volunteer to act as the professor's aide for the forthcoming class, which actually happened. Right away, she became a member of the study group coordinated by the same professor, and to participate in the *Curricular Activity Integrating Teaching, Research, and University Extension (ACIEPE)* about the theme mentioned above. As a further demonstration of her interest in the theme Vera got registered as an auditor in a specific, related course of the graduate program in Education.

In the very beginning of her work as a teacher in a state-run rural school, Miss Vera stated to be very displeased both with her performance and with the teaching profession itself. She complained about the reality shock.

With respect to inter/multiculturalism, Palomino (2009) found out that some questions relative to curricular contents as well as a special attention assigned to the methodology approximated Miss Vera's work to the practices grounded on inter/multiculturalism.

As for the methodology, some aspects must be highlighted which took Miss Vera to construct practices that took into consideration some concerns present in the inter-/multiculturalism, as follows:

- a) the concern and care regarding group work;
- b) the preparation of activities for the different groups of children at various levels of learning;
- c) the certainty that all the children could learn;
- d) the conception of learning as an active, relational process, therefore not based on repetition.

Regarding the development of curricular contents by Miss Vera, Palomino (2009, p. 183) presents the following analysis:

Her class work with Math, in the two schools, and with some topics in Sciences and Social Studies, in the urban school, presented a variety of situations in which the children were invited to participate actively of the construction of knowledge; such knowledge was put forward as something lively, related to the lives of the children, as the cases in which she worked with paper money as well as with the hours.

Nonetheless, whenever she tried to incorporate some categories of multiculturalism into the curricular content, her deeply rooted convictions emerged strongly. This happened more frequently in Social Studies and Sciences, subject matters which she attempted to discuss issues related to diversity and differences, and to poverty.

Palomino (2009, p. 127) refers to that aspect as she analyses, for example, the discussion Miss Vera conducted with the children, in the rural school, about the different streets, the different houses, and the relationship between these differences and the purchasing power of the people.

In the urban school, Vera worked out upon the good things there could exist in being a boy and in being a girl.

Although it be necessary to work out upon such contents with the children (that is, the differences mainly related to social class, gender, skin color, etc.) the fact that Vera's approach be near to incidental seemed to put at risk the result of her work, seeing that the [the student] Glauber kept insisting that there was nothing but thieves in the slum. In the case of the central urban school, it was not effective as desired solely to discuss with the children the patterns of "what is it to be" and "what may do" a boy and a girl, since some boys exhibited sexist, 'machista' behaviors; [...] the teacher's attitudes and statements taught more than any curricular activity or component.

As for the relationship teacher–student–knowledge, the researcher identifies it as the *critical point* of Miss Vera's practices. The reason for that was the idealized perception of the students she used to manifest,

as the ones who: know how to do everything, have a family who helps them with the homework, have access to middle-class ‘cultural goods’, make visible efforts, and exhibit other knowledges acquired in a variety of spaces, would take her to interact with the children on the basis of that idealization (PALOMINO, 2009, p. 183-184).

Besides, the relationships the teacher established with the students were influenced by the categories gender, race/ethnicity, and social class. She expressed fixed convictions concerning what it meant to be a boy, to be a girl, as well as about poverty. She used to say that the boys, more than the girls, would respond to her expectations, as to see the former as perfect. Regarding her interaction with the girls, it presented difficulties, and her expectations toward them were always rather limited. She did not realize the strong relation existing between expectation and performance — the well known self-fulfilling prophecy — and that, most likely, it would explain “the fact that the boys responded to her expectations because she strengthened them by means of an affectionate, friendly, dialogue-based relationship” (PALOMINO, 2009, p. 184).

The possibilities of changing such conceptions and consequently changing the way of dealing with the children, according to the author above mentioned, depended upon a revision of the ways the teacher perceived them and herself and her work. At that point, she did not know whether she was willing to invest in all these changes. This is quite clear in her statement concerning the willingness to change: “*I don’t know whether I want to work for this cause. [...] I know [the theory] and I think this is worth doing, but as of now I don’t believe in it enough to get involved*” (p. 184).

Discussing researches results: weaving relationships between inter/multicultural pedagogical practices and teaching knowledges

We are before two teachers who presented rather differentiated characteristics in their pedagogical practices, even though they had in

common the fact that they both wanted to work within the framework of the inter/multicultural perspective.

Miss Silvia was successful as far as relationships with students went; however, she showed some difficulties with respect to the mastery of contents about gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, whenever she tried to include them in the curriculum. The very fact of her attempting to work with such contents is important in itself, and denotes the teacher's worry about the categories encompassed by inter/multiculturality.

In her turn Miss Vera denoted difficulties concerning relationships with the students to the extent that Palomino (2009) would identify this aspect as the *critical point* in this teacher's practices. And this would interfere on the ways contents referent to the inter/multicultural categories were dealt with, such contents being marked by stereotyped, monoculturally biased values and beliefs which she expressed to the researcher in the interviews and informal talks.

In short, Miss Silvia used to manifest, in her relationships with students, beliefs and values consistent with the inter/multicultural perspective although, as she conducted class work with these contents, she would do it in a rather naïve way in a number of situations. Meanwhile, Miss Vera wanted to work in the inter/multicultural fashion — which she used to express not only orally but also through her participation in various academic activities addressing the theme; nonetheless, her beliefs and values would rather approximate a monocultural view. Thus, she felt like a prisoner of the many difficulties both regarding relationships with students — mainly those attending the rural school — and, as a consequence, concerning the treatment she adopted for inter/multicultural contents. She was aware of her difficulties, and she suffered because of this to the extent that she fell in tears at some moments, as she participated in the research.

Whereas Miss Silvia seemed identified with students from the popular classes, maybe Miss Vera's experience would have been less suffering had she worked with students more similar to her own social

standards. Gauthier et al. (2006) referred to researches that reveal the differences existing between behavioral patterns of teachers who work efficiently with students from deprived and from wealthy socioeconomic environments. In the first case — concerning students both teachers worked with —, “the teachers who, in general, present themselves as stimulant, encouraging, warm, tolerant, well-mannered and polite, confident, flexible, and democratic people seem to produce effects rather favorable to the performance and the well-being of [these] students” (CRUICKSHANK apud GAUTHIER, 2006, p. 254). Such profile seems to be quite close to Miss Silvia’s. In this case, the construction of her experiential knowledges appeared to express coherence to her personal experiences in life translated into her beliefs and values. On the other hand, the research carried out by Corsi (2007) revealed the existence of some gaps in that teacher’s professional training relative to curricular knowledges concerning the inter/multicultural categories.

As for Miss Vera, just the opposite took place: she showed some mastery on those knowledges to the extent that she could assess her own practice, as well as suffer as she realized she was not conducting it on the basis of the former, as she would like; she realized that/when she fell in certain *ideological traps* — this expression being used by Paulo Freire in various pieces of his written production.

Perhaps there resides one of the differences between the two teachers’ performances with respect to the ways the inter/multicultural aspects were dealt with: whereas Miss Silvia’s pedagogical practice seems to be mostly guided by beliefs, Miss Vera’s appears to be marked by rationality.

At this point an important discussion is required: are academic knowledges really capable of promoting changes in the practices? Connelly and Clandinin (1988) would answer affirmatively by way of their notion of *personal practical knowledge*, identified as the knowledge within which we live, and that lives within us. Therefore, a new theory one learns becomes practice when it is transformed into one’s personal knowledge; from this, it is incorporated into a way such that one no longer needs to think about

it for acting — the same way we don't need to see the sugar present in the tea in order to identify its presence therein.

These are cases in which acquired knowledges provoke discomforts capable of causing transformations also in beliefs and values. Thus, it would be possible that Miss Vera might still be elaborating on that knowledge potentially able to transform her practices, which evidently would depend upon other factors both situational and personal.

In the event of her being successful, would it be solved the complexity involved in pedagogical practices assumed to be inter-/multicultural? Not necessarily, since other subtleties are present in this discussion, such as the ones examined by Barreiros (2005). This author analyses two situations she experienced as a teacher which illustrate such complexity.

One of the situations took place when she taught in a literacy class, and the colleague she shared the class with — who happened to have a black phenotype — decided to do some work with the children using the book *Pretty Girl with a Ribbon Bowknot*, written by Ana Maria Machado. Before actually showing the book, she introduced it as a story about a very beautiful girl. And she reports that the children did not hide their disappointment when, right away, they saw the cover of the book: the girl was black, and she hugged a white rabbit. From that point on, there was a debate during which the children stated their stereotypes of beauty, and during which the black children in the class kind of disheartened. Confessing to being lost, and pitiful on those children, she narrates that, at a certain point, she couldn't help, and started some "preaching" through which she emphasized that the standard of beauty valued by some of the children was absurd. In doing so, she analyses, she silenced any discordant voice. And she adds: "That was my way of getting out of that situation which was for sure far beneath what I have looked for as I deepen into studies about a critical multicultural education" (BARREIROS, 2005, p. 110).

She was confronted with the other situation when working as a teacher in a private university, teaching night classes. On her first working

journey, a black student, a woman around 40 years of age, declared she was using her full salary as a daycare aid to pay the tuition, but that she preferred to face that rather than to enter a public university through racial quota. The teacher evaluates to have been too harsh to the student “as she [the teacher] said that the student reproduced the speech of her oppressor.” (BARREIROS, 2005, p. 110). She analyses, thus, that from the peak of her authority, at the age of 35, having a white look, pursuing a doctoral degree, she silenced that woman who, by the way, had been applauded by the class after her statement. The teacher adds:

I have the impression that my attitude was one more way to wipe out her right to speak out and to develop her own ideas. I believe I oppressed once more. Again, I went out of that experience with the certainty that I am not ready yet to face it (BARREIROS, 2005 p. 111).

Through these two examples the author calls the attention to the danger that the classroom be transformed into a place of preaching rather than of dialoguing. For that matter she resumes the writings of McLaren’s in order to propose the need to listening to what the students have lived and heard about the inter-/multicultural contents developed in class. Teacher’s role thereby moves from that of a “preacher” to that of a “problematizer” or “instigator” of the debate. She warns:

This does not mean that the teacher misses his/her objective, it rather means that his/her classes are not so predictable. It is necessary to be ready to deal with the conflicts the will come from that, and to dominate his/her own passions (BARREIROS, 2005, p. 111).

There resides an indicator of what Bartolomé et al. (2002) identifies as a more honest self-perception which is a fundamental requisite, according to this author, in the sense of the reconstruction of teachers so that they adopt practices founded on the inter/multiculturality.

By way of concluding remarks

We attempted to support, along this article, the Idea that, in order to develop school contents in inter/multicultural fashion, it is not enough to have teachers building knowledges and setting them in motion, the latter understood by Gauthier et al. (2006) as a rational construction, since the teacher would be a cautious agent. It is necessary that knowledges be correlated to beliefs and values consistent with such performance, on which we agree with Bartolomé et al. (2002) as for the necessity of a more honest self-perception on the part of teachers.

Therefore, the discussion of the relationships between inter-/multicultural teaching practices and teaching knowledges encompasses directly the relationship between being a teacher and being a person. This notion was plentifully conveyed in Brazil, from the 1990's on, when literature on education was penetrated by the thoughts of authors who inspired educational reforms in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world, like Nóvoa for example. From this author we selected the following quotation that has appeared in a number of Brazilian scholarly works ever since: "To be a teacher forces us into constant options, which cross our way of being with our way of teaching, and unveil, in our way of teaching, our way of being." (NÓVOA, 1992, p. 9).

Although we agree with this thesis, what we herein problematize is the direction into which one must consider this relationship between the person and the professional. One interpretation possible posits that one has to respect idiosyncrasies since a teacher's performance would be conditioned to his/her manner of being a person.

Nonetheless, in the case of contents involving inter-/multicultural categories, we deem unacceptable the respect to monocultural beliefs and values, considering that such acceptance would imply to respect teachers and to disrespect students, because of what such teachers' actions would be capable to cause in the latter. We cannot accept the manifestation of any type of prejudice and discrimination,

be it concerning race/skin color, social class, sexuality, gender, religion, physical appearance, or any other.

The discussion of the teaching knowledges is, therefore, overpassed by the ethical dimension – the ethics of what is human, of the being-more, proclaimed by Paulo Freire in his vast scholarly work. In that direction, we do echo the following thought by Andrade (2006, p. 254):

I do not believe in intercultural education that is not worried with the ethical minima to be universalized, that is, required from all those who are not willing to be beneath the moral stature which human dignity deserves and current times claim for.

In the sight of the line of thought worked out herein, it is important to draw some comments about teachers' education. In the recent years, we have manifested ourselves about the relationships between this theme and that of inter/multiculturalism (LIMA, 2006, 2009), considering that the basic issue at hand is how to commit teachers' education – both initial and continuing – to the difficult task of helping “graduates” to exercise a more honest self-perception in the same sense used by Bartolomé et al. (2002).

We have argued (LIMA, 2006, 2009) that such education of teachers must contemplate at least three domains: the one of *contents*, understood as intellectual tools – to use the construct of Ladson-Billings's (apud GANDIN; DINIZ-PEREIRA; HYPOLITO, 2002); the one of *methodologies*, advocating here an inextricable relationship between form and content; and the one of *sensitivity*, of a transversal character, passing by and encompassing the two former dimensions. We understand sensitivity in a political dimension, resembling more the notion of lovingness, in Paulo Freire's sense, identifying it to the ensemble of attitudes of someone who chooses to work for / with the minorities; who indeed cares about all of his/her students and who believes that all of them can and need to learn the contents conveyed by school; who sets

him/herself in a permanent state of awareness in order to denaturalize contents and expressions deemed obvious and which, nonetheless, operate against the ethics of the being-more.

Last but not least, a word to the educators of teachers, responsible for the incorporation of these three domains into the process of teachers' formation. We consider such incorporation should be effective not only due to the consistency between thinking and acting, but rather to the intentional attitude of considering beliefs and values of students about to graduate as objects of their formation, bringing them into the level of rationality, that is, helping these students to transform them into knowledges.

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