



3rd ISCAR Summer University at - Moscow State University of Psychology and Education

Title: Vygotsky, argumentative writing and mental development

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ORIGIN AND OBJECTIVE

The proposed research project sprang from my long-term practice as a Portuguese teacher and the challenge posed by the perception of undergraduate students' poor writing abilities.

The proposal, thus, aims at planning and implementing an educational intervention to improve argumentative academic writing in pedagogy students and at assessing its impact on their writing skills as well as on the development of their higher psychological functions.

The proposal theoretical framework was built on the ideas of Vygotsky and his collaborators and on those of Bakhtin.

HYPOTHESIS

An intervention mediated by interpsychological processes focused on the practice of argumentative writing, can generate student awareness and consequent control over the quality of their written expression, promoting the development of their higher psychological functions.

Data of the research:

- pedagogy students: 17 students (several semester);
- duration : one semester = 17 meetings = 3 hours each;
- elective course.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Intervention characteristics

- **Writing and rewriting argumentative texts.**
- **Review collaborative based in Flower e Hayes (1986).**

In a context of interaction among writer, text and reader, we intend to develop students' ability to recognize and control the problems perceived in their texts.

Intervention evaluation

- It will have a qualitative character using the following instruments to collect data:

- 1) **open ended questionnaire** with the participants to investigate their previous experiences concerning the writing of academic texts throughout their schooling, carried out **before** the intervention.
- 2) **pre and post tests** production of abstract of the same previously read text (used in their courses).

3) **open ended questionnaire** with the participants to investigate their post experiences concerning the writing of academic texts, carried out **after** the intervention.

The data collected will be analyzed through a method of content analysis proposed by Moraes (2003).

We understand that teachers have a vital role in the improvement of the writing of their students: the teacher can promote a dialogic interaction between students and their texts, essential to the development of awareness of writing skills and the ability to control them.

Writing clear, coherent and cohesive texts is a skill necessary to every individual living in a literate society. However, we know that the quality of texts written by Brazilian students in different educational contexts falls short of the desired, as evidenced by the numerous studies conducted on the subject. This points to a sad reality that is revealed through the texts that are written by undergraduate students (CUNHA & SANTOS, 2006; DAMIANI, 2010; MARIN & GIOVANNI, 2007; OLIVEIRA & SANTOS, 2005; SANTOS, 2009).

- The papers mentioned above, show that students, in general, have **great difficulty in developing the micro and macro-structural aspects of the text**. In most cases, they show little knowledge about the textualization criteria, do not reflect on what they read and write.
- **The low quality of our students' texts is alarming and disquieting, even more so when it occurs in Higher Education**, since we expect that, after spending an average of eleven years in school, an undergraduate student should be able to write a text whose quality is compatible with the academic context.

It is important to highlight that although the discussion about the lack of quality in the texts produced by our students is not recent, the situation still persists and "little has changed", in the past years, as stated by Faraco (2009, p.12). We share the ideas of the author when he says we need to make peace with writing, we must learn to write and need to learn how to teach writing.

It is important to clarify that our intervention will not have a diagnostic or a prescriptive nature, but it will have a formative character aiming to enable students to develop control over the practice of argumentative texts. We intend to produce knowledge on possible ways to promote the development of competent writers, or writers who can address micro and macro-structural aspects of the text, satisfactorily.