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Pedagogical mediation in first person

“Technique is what teachers use until the real teacher arrives, and we need to find as many ways as possible to help that teacher show up”.

Parker Palmer

As teachers, we are trained to communicate knowledge and master it, in our daily work we explore new techniques and new teaching tools. This constant effort to mediate learning in the best way, sometimes makes us focus on the technique or the tool, leaving aside the person who uses it. We easily forget that in pedagogical mediation not only our brain participates, but also our person in its fullness.

Teachers have a dual role, on the one hand, there is the specific responsibility of guiding the teaching and learning processes; and on the other hand, we are also learners in search of our own liberation and purpose. This double role as facilitator and learner implies for us to assume a different way of learning. Given this, the following is stated:

When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process (Hooks, 1994, p. 21).

In other words, the educator is not only the one who educates, but the one who, educating, is educated in dialogue with the learner. Although as teachers we are the ones who design the lesson plan, we must be humble and learn from the diversity of backgrounds and differences in points of view. In that context of humility, we must recognize that we do not have all the answers and that it is in the relationship between students and facilitators that we learn together.

This idea of pedagogical mediation contrasts with the traditional academic culture in which objective facts are considered pure, while subjective facts are viewed with suspicion and received as unreliable. The use of the first person in pedagogical mediation is seen as a bias, a danger that weakens academic certainty and must be overcome. In our investigations we are forced to write in the third person, we are forced to separate ourselves from what we are passionate about and not to appropriate our thoughts or not take responsibility for them, which is considered a virtue.

Contrary to what happens widely in traditional academic culture, this more relational approach to pedagogical mediation places great importance on the aspect of self-knowledge. In this paradigm, teacher and apprentice are simultaneously "I" and "you"; their subjective experiences are located on each

side of a spectrum and in the "we" they come together filling the space between them. Since blind objectivity is not possible, self-knowledge helps me as a teacher to recognize prejudices or ideas, which can affect the relationship with learners for better or worse. I believe that the best we can bring to the classroom is ourselves. However, there is a price to pay for practicing this type of approach in our pedagogical mediation; it is imperative that we know what we bring with us. There must be a commitment on my part to continual self-exploration, to bring the best of me to my classroom.

In conclusion, we need to practice a pedagogical mediation that privileges that point where life becomes history, or as I have popularly heard, the point where life as biology becomes life as biography. We must overcome the state of things to reach the state of humans in the relationship with our learners, it is urgent to stop hiding behind the technique and mediate learning in the first person.

References

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