

***Psychodramatic Educational Method as an active method in the context of  
supervised internship***

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**Abstract**

This experience report aims at showing how possible it is to make a wider and deeper reflection exercise on schools, teaching, needs and conflicts of teachers and trainees, based on an experience using the Psychodramatic Educational Method, as active and ludic teaching method, with a group of students of a teacher education course in Chemistry, in the context of supervised internships.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, psychodrama, teacher education

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the context of the training of future teachers with questioning and investigative profile, we consider it fundamental to start discussions about the school and the role of the teacher and its contexts, from the supervised internships. Thus, according to Pimenta and Lima (2013), the internships began to value activities for the development of critical reflection capacity of the contexts in which the teaching takes place, as well as the professionals embedded in them.

This objective of this experiment is to report an example of how it is possible to make a broader and deeper reflection exercise about schools and the teaching that occurs in them, from the survey of the conceptions and perceptions of a group of undergraduates, in a period of supervised internship at a public university in Paulista.

We conducted lived experience using the Psychodramatic Educational Method (MEP) of Romãña (1985, 1992), because we believe that, as an active methodology in the context of teacher education, the proposal helps future teachers to become aware and reflect on their role, without which “the teacher is passive, is minimized, limited to the circumstances imposed on

him, which would lead him to always give the same answers to old problems” (Altarugio & Capecchi, 2016, p. 33).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Maria Alicia Romaña created MEP based on the theory and techniques of psychodrama, also inspired by Paulo Freire and various philosophers, psychologists and educators. Her educational method has the central concern of developing a critical and reflective awareness in its actors to obtain an understanding of the world with autonomy and commitment (Romaña, 2004).

According to psychodramatic theory, conserved practices, *cultural preserves*, if not revised and reevaluated from time to time, can become obstacles to addressing the issues that arise in everyday life. According to Penteadó (2007), we hinder the processes of change and movement when we establish relationships of complete identification with incorporated candid cultural responses, for example, by social mechanisms of family, school and media education.

With dramatization, the center of psychodrama, individuals will have the opportunity to act in imaginary spaces and times, to construct new meanings, to create and collectively experiment with new solutions to lived situations. It is also important to emphasize the playful aspect of the MEP, as it enables the participant to experience the freedom, aesthetics, the sense of risk, of challenge, of transcending personal perspective by playing roles (Romaña, 1985).

Romaña (1985) defends the active methods in learning considering that the student: a) learns in relation to concrete objects, situations or concepts; b) does not learn alone, that is, the whole group must be able to handle the knowledge; c) puts himself personally in the learning process; d) elaborates, besides an idea, an image while learning; and e) broadens his experience of time and space when engaged in a rich and varied activity.

The three steps of his methodology (Romaña, 1985, 1992) are structured according to the levels of approach of the content or theme that will be developed by the teacher in the classroom. In the first step, students are brought closer to knowledge at the level of their intuitive and/or affective experience, performing a *real-world analysis*. In the second step, students leave the realm of reality and move on to abstraction. At this moment, the student performs the *summary* of the rational effort, characterized by a collective and *symbolic* work. Then, in the third step, students test the knowledge mobilized in the previous steps, making them *functional*. It is an application work that occurs at the level of *Fantasy*, the imaginary.

## CONTEXT AND PROCEDURE

This is an account of an experiment conducted with two groups of 4 and 9 students, day and night classes, respectively, attending one of the weekly supervised internship meetings with the mentor teacher, who will also play the role of director of lived experience. In the analyses, we will not distinguish between the groups.

The students are undergraduates in chemistry course at a public university in Paulista and are conducting compulsory supervised internship in public and/ or private schools, in high school. They are of both sexes and are between 20 and 25 years old. Most had already participated in psychodramatic experiences in other subjects taught by the teacher advisor. The lived experience was filmed with the consent of the participants, who are also used to this kind of practice in the undergraduate course.

The procedure consisted of: *first step (Real)*: several colored fabrics were scattered on

the floor. The idea was for each intern to choose and wear the fabrics, “incorporating” their school. The director gave the group some instructions: introduce yourself to the group and say what’s their name; say your good and bad characteristics; tell how many students and teachers you have; where do you stay; how is chemistry teaching. *Step Two (Symbolic)*: From the characteristics of each school, they were asked to come together and build a statue/sculpture to represent/symbolize their common aspects. *Step Three (Fantasy)*: At this stage, the principal asked them to imagine that this group of schools had been given the task of thinking of five measures to improve teaching in these schools, three of them to improve chemistry teaching.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experience in *Real* was started by reactivating and dramatizing the memories about the schools where the students were doing the internships. Light and neutral colored fabrics were associated with a climate of calm, peace between students and teachers; and the warmest and brightest colors were associated with the energy and dynamism of his students. The black color was associated with the side that is not visible to the public.

On the teaching of Chemistry appeared different reports, such as the following examples:

*“My chemistry teaching is done by very traditional teachers. . . It has a laboratory structure, it has a technician, but it cannot be used, because it has to comply with content.”* (EC)

*“My chemistry teaching has had its golden days, but now it has no more. My students miss me. We are in need of change. . . I’m a little sad about the current chemistry teaching.”* (ER)

*“My students are active, they like to do different things. My chemistry teacher is one of those teachers who accepts the creativity of the students. She works chemistry using plays, using art. . . I’m so proud.”* (EF)

In the speeches of the trainees, one can perceive the capacity to analyze the real in a broader context, which goes beyond the usual observation of what happens in the classrooms and the teachers who accompany them. Graduates emphasize the use of varied teaching resources (facilities, classes, plays, exhibitions, seminars) and associate these aspects with the characteristics of the environment (whether or not there is a laboratory, a technician), a teaching approach (traditional, content) and its professionals (creative).

Affective expressions, not highly valued in the school environment, were used by trainees who already had longstanding ties with schools, cases of ER and EF. The development of affective relationships with the internship environment, especially with the supervising teachers, is the result of establishing a climate of trust and security necessary for the intern’s work (Correa Molina, 2008). However, the trainees also addressed certain conflicting aspects within these:

*“I have a teacher who is very hardworking, very engaged and has knowledge and tries to put it into practice. And I have teachers who do the basics.”* (ET)

*“There’s a part that wants to do a good job and there’s a part that just exists. It’s a battle in there and the winner isn’t the one who wants to make it happen, unfortunately.”* (ED)

Students recognize that the school is a genuine place of contrasts, whether in the field of ideologies, postures, pedagogical actions, corroborating the ideas of Libiliar, Oliveira and Toschi (2003), who state that the practices of teachers in different schools cannot be the same.

In the second step of the MEP, the trainees join the *Symbolic*, which represents the summary of the knowledge involved in the theme. In one of the groups, we had to construct a sculpture with the interwoven colored fabrics, representing the diversity, which is a striking feature of the schools. Diversity forms the identity of the school, or rather the identities that, according to Oliveira, Silva, Cardoso and Augusto (2006), need to be understood within relationships that are charged with power, subordination, cooperation or competition.

In *Fantasy*, MEP's third step launched the challenge of imagining a hypothetical situation in which schools would come together to think of measures to improve their teaching. Although it's a make-believe, this moment involves serious thinking.

For teaching, in general, the following measures were pointed out: continuing education for teachers; collaborative management; appreciation of the teacher; interaction with the community. For chemistry teaching: use of the laboratory as a didactic resource; transversality; teacher-student relationship; innovation in strategies; group work among teachers; focus on citizen education.

It was interesting to note that the trainees' proposals did not deal with idealizations, or merely a reflection of the theoretical references of their academic background. But they try to bring to the university, a knowledge of experience to be debated in the light of theoretically constructed knowledge (Tardif, 2010).

According to the students, these measures point to the essence of the problems of schools and highlight the need and capacity for them to unite, empathize with each other around common difficulties. This perception of trainees clearly illustrates one of the principles of Drama Pedagogy (Romaña, 2004), in which the collective exercise of thinking about school space, as part of a social reality, is incorporated individually and reverts to the collective once again, but in a committed way to oneself, to one's neighbor and to the society.

Finally, we had the sharing about the dynamics performed, in which the following statements stood out:

*"The part of dressing like school was a surprise. Because we have a habit of judging from the outside. When you get into trouble, how will you point your finger at yourself? It was more complicated."* (ET)

*"It's very easy to criticize, the hard thing is to think about the good things. When we do this exercise. . . it's to get out of the common sense that there's only one bad thing to criticize."* (ED)

It is very common, in the context of internship meetings, for students to report a mood of discouragement, frustration and indignation at the reality experienced. In this case, we interpreted that, according to Moreno (2013), *a new response was given to an old situation*, thus characterizing a preservation break in relation to a routine pattern found in the trainees' speeches.

## CONCLUSIONS

The proposal of working with the MEP in the context of supervised internships eventually revealed nuances of the school physical space, the teaching that takes place in these spaces, the professionals who work in them, as well as the possibilities, needs and conflicts, in

a way that it is only achieved when the learner is active and protagonist of his learning, as supported by Romaña (1985).

The experience with MEP, in which the student is invited to be emotionally and ludically involved with the contents, contributed to the group to put out what they already knew through “action”, breaking the most traditional structure of working knowledge. The answers surprised even the participants themselves, who realized the good things that were highlighted in the schools.

Even though this was a punctual moment, it deserves an even greater reflexive deepening, as it has brought pressing questions about what needs to be valued, questioned and researched, not only in supervised internships, but also in initial teacher education and teacher professionalization.

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