

## **Curriculum tendencies on Music Education: uncertainty and permanency in an endless present**

**Tendências curriculares no ensino de música:  
indefinição e permanência de um presente eterno**

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### **Abstract**

These theses about postmodernity and their expressions on social reforms implemented since 1990, have been used and incorporated by the musical education, in the teaching and formation of the docent. The objective in this text is to reflect on this matter seeing it through the practical-reflective teacher and a pedagogy focused on the docent's competences, in learning how to learn and the overvaluation of knowledges of the everyday experience. A search on the musical education literature, above all in articles published in *Journal and Anais of ABEM (Brazilian Association for Music Education)* of the last ten years, suggest a large diffusion, in the music education field, of postmodern/ post-structuralist suppositions about social and cultural life. This dissemination happens parallelly with a bigger embodiment and its conceptions of formation and knowledge. The Marxian reference states that these theses may produce a retreat of the theory, depoliticisation of the debate and impoverishment of the act of knowing.

**Keywords:** Curriculum. Postmodernity. Docent formation. Musical teaching.

### **Resumo**

As teses sobre a pós-modernidade, bem como a sua expressão nas reformas educacionais implementadas a partir da década de 1990, têm sido amplamente incorporadas pelo campo da educação musical, no ensino e na formação docente. Nosso objetivo neste texto é problematizar essa questão analisando os temas do professor prático-reflexivo e de uma pedagogia centrada em competências docentes, no aprender a aprender e na sobrevalorização dos saberes da experiência cotidiana. O levantamento na literatura da área baseado, sobretudo em artigos publicados na Revista e nos Anais da ABEM (Associação Brasileira de Educação Musical) nos últimos dez anos, sugere a larga difusão, no campo da educação musical, dos pressupostos pós-modernos/pós-estruturalistas acerca da vida social e cultural. Tal difusão se daria em paralelo à vasta incorporação das suas correlatas concepções de formação e conhecimento. A partir do referencial marxiano, afirma-se que essas teses podem produzir na educação um recuo da teoria, a despolitização do debate e o empobrecimento do ato de conhecer.

**Palavras-chave:** Currículo. Pós-modernidade. Formação docente. Ensino de música.

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## Introduction

This article contests the aspects of the educational field and the teacher training. Our specific interest is in how the clash of modernity and postmodernity<sup>3</sup> manifests itself in themes such as curriculum, learning, knowledge and teacher training<sup>4</sup>. The starting point is the conclusion that the educational debate was deeply affected by the so called *paradigms crisis* and that its expression, on theoretical conceptions assumed as postmodern, poststructuralist, multiculturalist, postcolonial, feminist and others, have occupied significant space in the debates and productions on the educational field<sup>5</sup>, as much as in the official normative documents.

The literature revision produced on the musical education field shows the presence of this set of assumptions: the *competence pedagogy, from learning to learn, the reflective teacher* and others. The hegemonic presence of these themes is sustained in a theoretical level by a group of authors that have in common the identities with the postmodernity assumptions and the different ways of expression that demonstrate the comprehension. Postcritical<sup>6</sup> is the denomination for this comprehension and its theoretical conceptions.

The post-critical theories occupy a central space today in the academic debate. From the more various expressions, the studies on education have been oriented by multiple questioning. They are studied having reference major categories that come from the poststructuralism, cultural studies - and its most recent expression, the multiculturalism - along with the post colonial studies. Besides that, the incorporation of thematics and demands coming from social movements and their racial, gender, ethnic and sexual concerns along with concepts as culture, decentralization, deconstruction, difference, diversity, hybridity, identity, intertextuality, multiculturalism, relativism, sign and subjectivity. In the same way, the reference to authors like Michael Foucault, Stuart Hall, Ernesto Laclau, Homi Bhabha, Henry Giroux, Peter MacLaren and others is strong.

It is noteworthy that in the musical education debate these presumptions are, in many cases, presented with more legitimacy and consensus than they effectively have. Education, qualification and curriculum refer to questions that are characterized by the absence of a consensus, and in some cases to contradictory ways of understanding what is real. Our understanding is that in the way how some pedagogical premises are incorporated in the debate and manifest in different regulatory marks, and despite its wide acceptance in the contemporary debate and its allegedly progressist and innovative character, may be oriented to the formative impoverish-

3 This is not a simple debate. The definitions for modernity and mainly for postmodernity are not consensual. In order to locate the origin for the term and its different comprehensions the work of Habermas (1983), Harvey (1992), Lyotard (1993), Jameson (1997) and Anderson (1999) was considered. Touraine's (1970) and Bell's (1977) for a closeness on the debate of this *new time*.

4 There is an extensive number of authors that contributed significantly in Education for these concepts to be incorporated. A particular emphasis to the work of Tomas Tadeu da Silva, in both positions, as an editor, translating numerous works, as well as an author. Other important names are Alfredo Veiga-Neto, Alice Casimiro Lopes, Elizabeth Macedo.

5 It is worth mentioning the pioneer work of Silva (1994) and Veiga-Neto (1995) as important references for the thought of Education under a poststructuralist perspective. Also the studies of Silva (1999, 2000, 2007) and Silva Moreira (1995).

6 The conceptual form defined by Tomas Tadeu da Silva is assumed in the text. Which says the diffusion of postcritical ideals (in its various aspects: postmodern, poststructuralist, multiculturalist) happened intensively and widely in the curriculum studies - yet not always clearly noticed and assumed by education characters.

ment and maintenance of utter imbalance in the access to knowledge. Part of this debate has been mapped and its main line of argument is presented here. For that, were considered, mainly, articles published from the Music Education Journal and the Annals from events held by Brazilian Association for Music Education from the last decade.

This is how the text is displayed: at first the origin context of the debate about the *competence pedagogy*, the *learning to learn* and other correlating theses; followed by the appropriation of this debate on the academic production in the music education field; and last the critic by means of authors with marxian tradition.

### Considering the Educational Debate Context

The debate about Education and Educational reforms have been guided by theories of *the knowledge society*, the *competence pedagogy* and the enhancement of the proposals that emphasize cognitive procedures aimed at *learning to learn*. Such theses represent relevance and centrality of the modern debate in Education. Its origin is broad, referring to criticism of modernism by different theoretical concepts as postmodernism, post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism and cultural studies. In common, these are skeptical on the basic foundations of modernity, such as the ideas of *rightness subject*, *universality*, *completeness* and *knowledge*.

A criticism of this size necessarily implies impacts on education and training processes. There are several issues that help us locate the problem: being the education product of modernity, what is the meaning and significance that it would assume in a now postmodern society? If the historical conditions that have structured modernity were overcome, what are the consequences for the processes of education and qualifications created from it? In this line of argument we can go further, questioning also: how to express, in research on education, the different historical temporality - or, as defined by others, the *rupture of paradigms*? How to place education in a context in which culture and its relationship with power production is announced as a central element to mediate the construction of meanings? How to think school curricula from a post-structuralist reading, which advocates that the existence of the real world only acquires meaning in the construction and circulation of meanings? How to understand categories like social class, ideology, politics, identity and subject in social contexts defined by transience, the elusive and ephemeral?

Three questions call attention in official documents and the proposed curriculum and teacher training. They are: the competence and learning to learn pedagogy, the centrality of education from the knowledge of the student and the theses on teacher training gleaned from the premise of the reflective teacher. Following, there will be a brief explanation of these main issues.

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7 This set of wide questions are not just expressions of different theoretical-methodological concepts that are seen in the educational field. Although the postmodern critic to metanarratives is wide, it is undeniable that the debate with marxism has constituted to one of the central elements. See Lyotard (1993).

## The Competence and the Learning Pedagogy

One of the most illuminating ways of understanding the social processes it is with the spread of the concept of *competences*. In 1990, the *World Conference on Education for All* (UNDP / UNESCO / UNICEF / World Bank, 1990), promoted by UNESCO in Jomtien, Thailand, became central reference in educational debates. In the document entitled *Prioridades y la estrategia para la Educación - Examen del World Bank*, the World Bank (1996) reassures the address of Jomtien and puts education as the foundation of any policy aimed at poverty reduction and economic development. In the same year, the *International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* publishes its report. The report called Delors (1996) emphasizes the importance of basic education and teacher training, advocating the need for a *more effective education*, one that enables the *adaptation of individuals* autonomously, in contexts that change profoundly. Its proposal to education is stipulated in the four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. In addressing the teaching professionalization the report advocates the qualification based on competences.

One of the best known authors who defends the competences training is Perrenoud (1993, 1999). The incorporation of his reference is wide in the official documents of educational reform in the 1990s. Competence is defined “(...) as a capacity to act effectively in a particular type of situation, supported by knowledge, but not limited by it” (Perrenoud, 1999, p. 7). The secondary character attributed to knowledge is latent in this definition.

The huge capacity of disclosure of the documents produced by multilateral agencies – whose central cores are now guiding the education policies – associated with the widespread acceptance of Perrenoud theses, created the conditions for the speech on competences to be widely incorporated in the educational debate. Its presence in documents and laws in Brazil is widespread.

### Student Centricity

The argument that educational processes should be tamped fundamentally on the *cultural experience* of students, in their *knowledge* and in their *everyday experiences* is very present in the contemporary debate about schooling. The origins of these theses are known, specifically those that are grouped on general and large denominations as *constructivism and not directives pedagogies*. César Cool is one of the references of this debate. MEC consultant in the process of national curriculum guidelines in the 1990s, his work was widely publicized and his ideas incorporated.

In a classic text, Cool (1999) presents a series of considerations on the relationship between curriculum, knowledge and learning. He advocates an open model curriculum that is flexible, adaptable to students, valuing constructivism, learning procedures and multiple intelligences. Two central assumptions underlie this curriculum design: the first is the reference in which the student is able to learn alone and in need of help from the teacher. The second is the understanding of what is meaningful and effective in teaching, and what is meaningful to the student.

## Reflective Teacher

The idea that teacher training should aim at the establishment of a *practical-reflective teacher* is also greatly accepted. It defends that teacher training should be shaped from *individual paths* that meet *practical demands* perceived daily in their profession practices. The dissemination of this perspective gained dimension in Brazil in the early 1990s, from the wide spread of Schön's work (2000). In general Schön proposes to enhance the experience and reflection, emphasizing the importance of professional practice. For him, the reflective process is an active job, depending on certain working conditions, conscience, effort and will. Criticizing the *technical rationality* that prevails, Schön does not ignore the importance of theoretical teacher training. However, the spread of their ideas strengthened prospects in the search for value activism in teacher education, eventually pave the way for criticism of intellectualism and academicism training.

## The Educational Field and Musical Educational Training

Our intention is to show elements present in the debate on music education that enable its trends and provide a better understanding of its theoretical foundations. In this path, finding how different authors express their understanding of the school's role, the transmission of knowledge, the debate about teaching and learning and their perspective of the training for music teacher. These are broad questions that incorporate in different ways and through various readings, the ideology called postmodern.

What draws attention in our analysis is the way certain texts have readings that, in our view, naturalize and thus obscure the story. Thus postmodernity is presented in a context in which truth and reason are incompatible before such transience, uncertainty and vagueness. Rationality, predictability and uniformity posed by *Fordist capitalism* has overcome the fragmentation of consumption, social relations and identity destruction. These *new times* express the fluidity of relationships in which the way is random, not permanent. These new times imply the need for new training processes and education. Given the general fragmentation and the impossibility of an universal reason, centralizing the training processes in daily life and in daily experiences become the new rationality. Given the limitations of this article, we will limit the discussion onto some of the issues present in this debate.

## The Debate on Unexpectedness and Indefinition

The acceptance that we would be experiencing the advent of radically new times, with such complexity and uniqueness require *new ways of understanding, new paradigms of thought*, is what direct the proposals offered by Fonterrada (2005). The *plots and title strings* relate to a *networked* approach to attempt to mobilize and interconnect the knowledge taking into account factors such as the non-causality, the multidirectionality and unpredictability inherent in contemporary life. According to the author, it is perceived movements in broader areas of the current



sociability, and for which would fit the musical education seek to upgrade itself, corresponding to the imminent challenges:

(...) it is the changes taking place in today's world and the need for education in general, and music education in particular, to adapt to them, seeking alternative modes of action in place to the traditionally employed (FONTERRADA, 2005, p. 15-16).

The work explains the purpose of relating the history of music to different forms of historically existing perception, the different ways of understanding the world to be found in different times, in different cultures and civilizations. This leads, in relation to the current world, the necessary incorporation of *new paradigms of thought*.

(...) It appears that the present world has unique requirements, which impose the search for alternatives, making it clear that one is facing the emergence of a new paradigm, nonlinear, acausal and multidirectional, determining procedures and human actions, that are perhaps the only way to meet the demands of contemporary society in all fields (FONTERRADA, 2015, p. 16).

The *temporariness* of knowledge, the *instability* of any *certainty* about reality, are essential components of the displayed perspective. In this sense, it would be recognized the essentially *transitory* nature of any alleged *truths* about man, the world of education (ibid, p.262-63).<sup>8</sup>

Santos (2003) mentions right in the beginning some of the central questions that guide her: *how* to steer the curriculum debate in the context of music education in the face of intense changes and reforms in higher education? *How* to strive towards the implementation of the, then, recent Curriculum Guidelines as well as the *new paradigms* and the *reform of thoughts* that orientate it? *How* to, at last, take responsibility for putting in progress *flexible* and *updated models* of curricula and educational projects? Models connected to the *new times*, the *everyday demands*, the topical needs, singular and licentiate localized? According to the author, the idea of *flexibility* would be an element of coordination between the reforms implemented in the various levels of education: basic education, vocational education, higher education. Thus, the challenge for the field of music education, "how to proceed with changes?" (Ibid, p. 64). The author suggests some paths to follow, which are based on a fundamental premise: "The debate on postmodernity affects thinking about curriculum to bring to the center the questions of unpredictability, uncertainty, and paradox inherent in everyday teaching" (Ibid, p. 66).

Following are listed several of the authors whose theoretical/educational/philosophical foundation should guide appropriate musical proposals to the contemporary context. Among these, are set P. Perrenoud and *skills as ability to act in a given situation*. Edgar Morin and the *Complexity Theory* for whom "the reform that we need basic education and higher education is a paradigmatic reform (...): is a thought reform" and Donald Schön, whose *practical-reflective* teacher - has,

<sup>8</sup> In our understanding this reading places down any perspective of History. We share of Harvey's thesis when he states that "(...) the transience of things difficult the preservation of any sense of historical continuity" (1992, p. 22).

among others, the responsibility to *know how to act* in the face of sudden difficulties - should be adopted as the central axis of teacher education (Ibid, p. 66-67).

Kleber (2003) mentions that dissatisfaction about the pedagogical and institutional framework of the Brazilian university, makes it identifiable in postmodern theses as possible overcoming alternatives. For the author, all the “fragmentation” and “diversity” that mark the cultural and contemporary social landscapes would become more understandable, more comprehensive, by incorporating *other categories of analysis*, more updated. Categories which exceeded ancient belief in the objectivity, the possibility of understanding the real by more objective, logical, predictable knowledge.

Thus, against the *spread* and *complexity* of the current relationships - social, economic, geo-political, educational, cultural, etc. - it is critical that they are absorbed by the pedagogical and curricular discussions, the contributions of postmodern thought. Backed by Hall (1997), stated that “(..) the curriculum is seen as a phenomenon historically situated and culturally determined, immersed in the complexity of a social context marked by diversity, by fragmentation of cultural landscapes” (KLEBER, 2003, p. 58).

What would bring great contributions to the field of music education, contributing to the *renewal*:

This sociocultural view shows is important to guide innovative curricular proposals in undergraduate courses in music, since it brings out key issues for the analysis of the teaching and music learning process in its political and social dimensions. (Idem, 2003, p. 58).

From this diagnosis comes the defense of a *pedagogy* whose features would be: a relativizing learning, antagonistic to absolute parameters, acceptance of unpredictability as intrinsic to social life; a conception of *knowledge*, grounded also in disbelief that the world can be fully understood: all knowledge/theory/explanation would be, without fail, inaccurate, volatile, uncertain, insecure<sup>9</sup>. The effectiveness of such education, to face the “complex and changing this scenario in the web of contemporary society” (Ibid, p.59) also imply the necessary *reframing* of said *content*. Thus, the inclusion of students in the globalized world require “the expansion of the concept of content beyond the knowledge of specific facts, theories, concepts, “covering a broader list of ‘skills’, ‘attitudes’ and ‘abilities’ - for example, those linked to the skills of ‘problem solving’ and ‘decision-making’ (Idem, 2003, p. 60).

Castro (2013) investigates new possibilities for research and pedagogical practice in music, taking as inspiration sources including Eastern philosophies and the theory of chaos. One aspect strongly problematized in the article will be the progress of philosophy and Western civilization: the notions linked to modern rational individual, their ways of *thinking/knowing* and its hypothetical ability to act intentionally and controlled about reality. Such an *individual* notion of a *self* supposedly autonomous and unitary, it is understood, it seems, as the result of a historical building and linguistic occurred in the West. That way, and in view of the renewal of research in musicology and music education, there are in the text images linked to the *impermanence* of

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9 The incorporation of Lyotard's premises is total here.

being and the *impersonality* of his actions, the intuitive character and *essentially random* of human actions and cultural arrangements. For him:

Although admirable as ‘superior form of literary fiction’, Western philosophy fosters the illusion of self, starting with the very subject-object structure of language in which it was settled. (...) A reading of Buddhism can also lead to the conclusion that there is not a subject, but a succession of mental states. ‘I think’ would be a mistake because it assumes a constant subject (...). (CASTRO, 2013, p. 929).

In different ways and from different references, the *reason* or the *modern rational thinking* has been also in the field of music education, strongly disputed in favor of “new thinking” of “new headquarters of understanding” - a deep epistemological turn which derivations, according to certain critical literature, would not be so despised.

### Reflective Teacher and Epistemological Practice

The incorporation of theses on the unspeakable *dynamics* of the contemporary world and the temporariness of any knowledge produced is structured, very often, as the defense of a teacher training proposal that withstand it. This *isn't about forming a prepared professional*, but rather a teacher fit to permanent *adaptability* forward to immediate and unexpected challenges may come to you. It is therefore to form a teacher returned to *reflective practice*.

In general, this argument is shown in this Mateiro (2003) and Bellochio (2003). Both authors emphasize the importance of which excessive *disciplining* of training models was overcome, particularly centered on music and carefree content with what would be its primary task: *to train teachers for basic education*. It is in this sense that Bellochio draws attention to the advancement of character of Brazilian curriculum for Teacher Training, as they “(...) underline the need for a course project itself to the training of teachers of basic education, which overcomes historical fragmentation” (BELLOCHIO, 2003, p.19). In the same perspective, Mateiro defends the complementariness of musical knowledge and other knowledge - pedagogical, psychological, cultural, and sociological - which “(...) contribute directly to the personal teacher education” (MATEIRO, 2003, p. 35-36).

Faced with such threats, therefore, how the music education area should proceed? What guidelines should support their efforts? Here, images of an extremely *complex* society and *permanent change* lead to diagnoses on the *fluidity* of knowledge and *elusiveness* of teaching processes. About this supposed knowledge society, we have to

(...) we face the speed of information and the constant need to be learning new knowledge and acquiring new skills, given the huge proliferation of knowledge that is beyond human control. (...) a society in constant movement, where the spaces, the knowledge, the identities seem to be temporary (Idem, p. 36-37).

In this context, the search for solutions and pedagogical alternatives will start from a foundation that corresponds to the most contemporary debate about teacher knowledge, which includes authors such as K. Zeichner, D. Schön, A. Perez Gomez



and E. Morin. For the authors mentioned above, the overcoming of that old state of rigidness that have the undergraduate courses; the surpassing of his acknowledged aloofness from the changes of the profession and the social dynamics is largely related to the adoption of the *reflective teacher* and the *epistemology of practice*. To this longed-for transformation of the university is also associated, often, the inadequacy of a teaching based on the *transmission of content*, as well as the valuation of the different *training* courses, of the *personal paths* experienced by each licentiate.

Hentschke (2003), held by Perrenoud's conceptions of teacher education, outline central points to be highlighted in this "*new educational paradigm*": we should *talk more about learning than about teaching*; we should take care of valuing the student's role and ideas, distancing from a teacher-centered culture; we should aim at a *reflective* and *flexible* teacher, able to adapt to different demands, contexts and situations; we should, finally, *give voice to the students*, adapting their training to the future professional challenges, the needs lived and the demands of the labor market.

The defense of a *practical-reflective* formation is presented in the most recent discussions about teacher education in music. In a study carried out by Cunha and Sales (2010) the theoretical basis falls on authors such as Perez Gomez and Donald Schön. The justification is that these authors argue about the importance of reflective practice in the process of teacher training and the possibilities that open up for critical formation.

Broock-Schultz (2010) also affirms the identity with these authors. By highlighting the experience and importance of practice in teacher training processes, it affirms the limit of theory. It defends the need for the teacher to reflect critically onto his pedagogical practice, considering the reality in which he is inserted and acting in order to give solution to the problems of daily life.

This analytical perspective, that places on the action of the teacher and the knowledge that it produces the *solution of questions* of daily life is also shared and presented by Souza et al. (2013). For her the formation of the teacher is enriched when its constitution is given from its practice. He argues that the practice allows the teacher to develop elements such as creativity, improvisation and intuition. With this, the knowledge that emerges from this experience makes it possible to better direct the solution of the problems that arise in the daily life and to allow, in view of certain situations, the solutions are transformed into pedagogical procedures of learning.

In summary, these are some of the works in the area of musical education that, starting from the search for a *practical-reflective teacher*, follow more or less the same argumentative script: the defense of new theoretical references, more current, more connected to the paradigms of society and their renewed demands; the acceptance that approaching *teacher training* and *professional performance* is an objective to be achieved through the primacy of practice, of *learning by doing*, of the focus on the singular, immediate and daily experiences; the investigation, therefore, of the *teacher competences* effectively required and activated by the music teacher in his daily life.

## The Teaching Competence and the Individual and Daily Experiences

In the field of the debate on teacher competences attention is drawn to the importance attributed to *individual and everyday experiences* in training processes. Cereser (2004), situating the context in which the debate occurs, states at the outset that, “due to the social transformations taken place in the last decades, there have been educational reforms that sought to follow and respond to the new demands of the industrialized society” (Idem, p. 28).

Therefore, this association between new *social configurations* and *new conceptions of education*, given as necessary for the formation of individuals adaptable to this new reality, would be immediate. Supported by Kincheloe (1997), the author recognizes the necessary implementation of a new education that produces “...a new type of citizen, with new habits, ways of thinking, feeling and acting...”: a citizen, in short, more compatible to “(...) a society with this new configuration” (CERESER, 2004, p. 28). This demand, indubitably, makes the constitution of a *new teacher* the central pillar of this educational debate. With this, *new teachers* are impermanent because they are the ones who will be forming the individuals, within the *most current conceptions* of education, school, curriculum and knowledge.

The search to establish which competences are necessary to face this context marked by provisional knowledge is very present in several studies in the area of music education. The premise that an indefinite and provisional daily life prevents the universalization of training processes, flows into these theses that defend the importance of giving a centrality to the singularity of the cases and giving the reports and personal testimony a great relevance. Thus, the formation of the *reflective teacher*, defend in several researches in music education, would be for the appropriation of a set of *competences* that allows him to face these *new times*. Therefore, what is useful to this teacher becomes a central question and the answer to this question, in many cases, is in the know-how.

Louro (2008), points out a research slope that seeks to *narrate* what has been lived, to *tell* it and *retell* it, “within a perspective that values the subjectivity of teacher” (Idem, p.64). The research focuses on letters transmitted electronically from one student-teacher to the other, that is, narrative writings of some licentiate in music about the pedagogical experiences that they lived in a certain discipline of the university course. This sharing on the impressions of each one is pointed out as a useful methodological resource for both basic education and teacher training: the exchange of personal perceptions, the telling and retelling of what has been lived, as an instigating way of reflection to be adopted and disseminated both among the student-teachers and among their future students. At this point, intimate affinities can be perceived with the premises linked to the *reflective teacher*, based on the reflections of its own practice, on the daily decisions, on the ongoing re-signification of the knowledge and experiences of each one.

## The Day-to-day Knowledge

The last point of *tension* with which we are concerned is the role of everyday cultural knowledge. The post-structuralist critique of the curriculum has in its ex-

treme *cultural relativization* one of its essential manifestations. Inserting itself in this context, Santos (2005) addresses some aspects of this debate. The text begins proposing the image of *training networks*. It is, according to the author, to *open the boundaries* between the academic (formal school) and other spaces of formation and sociability, other cultural and educational instances. In this way, it is necessary to go beyond academic formation, which implies opening up the (...) frontiers between the academic (the official formal school) and other circles of sociability and formation, other educational and cultural instances. This puts under suspicion practices that we learn to naturalize.” (Idem, 2005, p.49-50)

The reading of the text elucidates that such suspicions fall, especially, on an education/training model given as old, retrograde. Based on post-structuralist philosophical conceptions, the author states that:

Opening cracks in the guidelines of higher education (instituted), work in the breach, undermine spaces, offer resistance, insist on other possibilities of curriculum and pedagogy of music, in training projects. One becoming-another. That is because the university class may be setting up a model that is already weary, addicted, and ends up being repeated by teachers in elementary school... (SANTOS, 2005, p. 51, emphasis added by author).

Concerning the teaching of music, the necessary care is emphasized so that certain misconceptions that characterize the teaching of conservatory are not repeated. One of these would reside in the establishment of boundaries between *everyday* and *academic knowledge*, between *school* and *non-school knowledge* (SANTOS, 2005, p. 51). Another misconception would be the very notion of a *culture selection*, “taken as property patrimony to be transmitted, preserved, distributed” by the school experience (Idem, p. 51). Such “selection” is already immediately associated with the election of European culture as superior culture. There does not seem to be, then, as legitimately speaking in “selection of culture” of knowledge: In “great works” to be organized and presented by the school; in order to establish valid criteria for such a “selection” since it would always represent “elitist” cultural imposition, “hierarchization of power” (Idem, p. 51).

In this same perspective, it is criticized what would be the main frame of traditional school culture. The university classroom is denounced as a place of expository, propositional classes that intentionally transmit certain objective knowledge - procedures that are pejoratively identified to the “mere transfer of information”, to “encyclopedism” (SANTOS, 2005, p. 54). Another authoritarian and traditional trait would be the intention to *open* the student’s listening to quality music, that is, to repertoires selected, valued and criticized positively. Again, this attitude already seems to imply in the disqualification of the previous knowledge, in the delegitimation of the cultural marks brought by the student. This school culture based on the exhibition, on the “transmission”, is also finally identified as a space that mechanically separates the “doing” of “knowing”, the “performing” of “understanding”, fostering nothing more than a training instruction, without any sense for the student, based on the passive memorization of facts, dates, historical styles, etc. (Ibid, p. 53-54).

Thus characterized, *school culture* is deeply questioned about its capacity to “respond more closely to the needs of the present life and the crisis of the subjects in the contemporary world” (SANTOS, 2005, p. 55). Therefore, from the contributions of P. Perrenoud and Tomaz Tadeu da Silva, among others – this is the point we are facing: a sociocultural context marked by crisis, by uncertainty, by the “provisional knowledge” (Idem, p. 55), only a profound re-signification of the school and of the teaching processes would be capable of updating it in relation to the needs of everyday school life and contemporary society.

Relatively close paths are indicated by Souza (2013). The author also seeks to reflect on the educational processes that permeate the musical formation of individuals. To that end, it discusses the main *instances of socialization* – *school, family, and media* - whose performances “define many of our musical tastes, our aesthetic preferences and our relationship with the culture that surround us” (Idem, p. 53).

The perspective adopted will be that of the *escape of prejudices*. Discussing the role of school, family and media interactions in the constitution of subjects, it is clear from the outset that the educational-musical processes will be approached in a *broader and more interactive way*, “expanding their understanding” (ibid. P. 51). Musical education in this expanded perspective, will encompass actions that take place in the school environment and the practices and cultural interactions experienced informally. In the search for musical practices that are *most significant* to the subjects, such an approach would be justified, according to the author,

(...) by allowing a more transparent understanding of the formative interactions, avoiding some prejudices traditionally incorporated in the teaching and learning of music, such as those involving the informal transmission of this knowledge, as well as the role of music in today’s society (SOUZA, 2013, p. 54).

So, in relation to the *prejudices* opposed by this expanded conception of education, two questions arise: how do they manifest themselves? And how can we fight them?

The author begins by highlighting two fundamental aspects of the amplification experienced by musical education in the last decades: the understanding and respect for the musical plurality of the diverse peoples – to the many songs of the world -, and the recognition of the multiple spaces of action in the area today. These are, in our opinion, two very important points, which have been widely discussed in recent times in literature. We would like to draw attention, however, to the paths taken by the argument, to the way in which the article proposes to carry out “contemporary reflections on teacher education, methodological innovations and cultural diversity” (Idem, p. 54) ends up characterizing the performance of school, teacher and mass culture in the socialization and training of individuals.

These are, in our understanding, some of the lines of verifiable argumentation in the field of musical education whose main thread denotes the significant presence of postmodern and poststructuralist conception in its definition.

## A possible Marxian Critique

In our understanding, the set of authors and perspectives for the above-mentioned music curriculum are theoretically linked to what we have termed at the beginning of this article in post-critical theories. They present a solid definition and defense of a conception of education and training that has been incorporated in a broad and significant way by the field of education. For these authors, the critique of education and curriculum, fostered by authors of the Marxian tradition, was important, specially for revealing the ideological character and power relations in education. However, they understand that it is limited in the current context, because it derives from a historical context marked off by modernity and its metanarratives, the identity being defined and understood through class relations and work. The premise that guides them is that the foundations of modernity no longer support themselves, as well as their certainties, definitions, expectations and subjects. Their use of concepts such as unpredictability and indefiniteness is the way to announce and situate the educational debate in a new perspective of teacher training, to plead new relationships between practice and knowledge, to value the experiences, expectations and knowledge that come from the everyday life. We do not tend to deny that significant changes occurred in the processes of representations and knowledge in the last decades and that these processes have impacted education, training, teachers, and their practices. Our purpose in this text was to problematize how these processes have been appropriated in the educational debate and criticize them.

The understanding that we have of this debate, as well as the questions that we make, are based on authors who have made the critical confrontation of the postmodern, theoretical conceptions from the Marxian field.. Duarte (1998, 2001, 2003, 2011) has become an important reference to our analysis. The criticism he presents situates the problems that the advance of the postmodern conceptions produces in the educational debate. Among these, the presence in the educational discourse of critical conceptions of the paradigms of modernity, embodying as unveiled truth, contribute to the consolidation of a discourse that has in essence the relativization of knowledge and criticism to the protagonism of the teacher in the school processes.

It is common among the authors we analyzed the critique to what they call a traditional school and the way a teacher assume the centrality in the learning processes. They defend that the school should establish links between the student's daily life, since the student is the center of the process and what should be taught. The argument to question the directivity of the teacher is defined from expressions as *no one knows everything* or that *collective knowledge is greater than the sum of individual knowledge*. The decentralization of the teacher and the relativization of what is *knowledge* make explicit post-critical education, in which what will be taught is not and cannot be defined *a priori*, because there is no objective knowledge. In the poststructuralist perspective they incorporate, objectivity manifests itself as discursive expression, whose validity depends on *relations of power that attribute meanings to things*. This does not mean that things do not exist outside discourses, but that they acquire meaning and understanding through discourses. As a result, post-critical theories emphasize the deconstruction of the teacher's role



in the learning process, criticize objectivity, the idea of universality and the totality of knowledge (CARVALHO, 2014). Therefore, the criticism to the protagonism of the teacher and the understanding that knowledge is a relation of meanings takes us to a perspective of school, teacher and learning as contingent symbolic systems, products of different discourses and political agents. An apparently undefined situation, which denies the objectivity of any power relations or hierarchy. Power, in this case, can only be caught in the processes of meaning construction by the subjects, that is, only through relationships.

We understand that the protagonism of the teacher is of fundamental importance in the processes of mediation between the historically accumulated knowledge and the school, as well as in the definition of which knowledge should be taught. We agree with Apple (2006) that the debate must be held in order to understand how the school chooses and defines what is the most important knowledge and also with Willians (1961) for whom the selective tradition has, over time, established that the most important knowledge was to be always identified with the interest of the ruling classes. With this we do not want to disregard the importance of the student, but rather affirm the importance of school and knowledge in the training processes.

Recognizing the centrality of the teacher implies recognizing the importance of his/her education, trajectory, and career. It implies recognizing his importance in the transmission of the culture and knowledge produced and, thus, its political condition. The relativization of teaching knowledge and its insertion in a myriad of meanings marked by fragmentation weakens teacher training and diminishes the capacity for action. If knowledge assumed a center spot in modern production processes, its possession has not changed, on the contrary really. The alleged thesis that the new communication technologies have created the knowledge and information society, that in this society the knowledge is disseminated in a general way of learning to learn and no longer with the transmission of knowledge, ought to be questioned. If knowledge presents itself in different ways and through distinct codes, some forms are more accessible than others. Then, the importance and centrality of the teacher in the processes of transmission of the more complex forms of this knowledge cannot be disregarded.

The mention and defense that we would be living in the context of a knowledge society, that this knowledge is available and accessible by the diffusion of communication technologies, that the context of everyday life provides conditions for the development of learning processes of teacher training are not necessarily theoretical, but rather refer to the conditions of their practice. As a synthesis of these premises we have the proliferation of theses that defend practical-reflective experiences as the most significant means of formation in Education. In the texts that we analyze several authors also defend the perspective of the teacher-reflective. The critique they elaborate questions the processes of teacher training that they call traditional, *very theoretical and prescriptive*. The training model would be outdated and would be one of the reasons for the lack of interest of the student, the discomfort of the teacher and one of the most important causes of the problems that school education experiences.

We understand that the proclaimed *reflective practice* must be problematized. The teacher education policies based on these premises are contradictory,

since they have emptied the theoretical dimension and the critical reflection of teacher education, although they announce that their objective is the incorporation of knowledge that allow teachers to *reflect and understand the practice* that involves teachers. How to know and reflect on your practice devoid of conceptual and theoretical references? How to make sense of reality and its contradictions? The result of this process is the teacher's estrangement from knowledge, a fragmented conception of his practice, and the understanding of social processes in a partial and abstract way. The effects on teacher education debate and make it difficult to elaborate critical approaches to our historical inequalities in the distribution of knowledge. It can produce the impoverishment of the act of knowing, lowering – at all levels of education - the training offered to the widest groups of the population.

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The works of Moraes (2003) and Moraes and Torriglia (2003) also critically analyze important aspects of this issue. The authors start from the premise that, in the educational field, the incorporation of theses about the relativity of knowledge, the reflective teacher and the epistemology of practice, the predominance of daily life in the processes of formation and, in a general way, the wise criticism to the theses of modernity, would be organically articulated to a broad retreat from theory. They, then, identify the limits of the theoretical debate in the advancement of these conceptions in the area of education. For them, the idealization of concepts such as practice and experience can, in the processes of teacher training, contribute to the impoverishment of the act of knowing and to the intellectual reversal.

In the set of analyzed texts the educational debate assumes new sides and features in which epistemological skepticism and the questioning of concepts such as knowledge, truth, subject, universality and totality are common. Knowledge, situated in the context of fragmentation and ephemerality, can only be understood, accepted and valued in its singular, local and everyday expression. The negation of concepts as totality and universality contributes to the installation of a logic that only perceives the real in its *indefinite* and *unstable* expression, with the consequent understanding that what differentiates knowledge is the mere expression of different *discourses*, of *singular narratives* to *expressing* diversity in the apprehension of the real.

What then is the role of the school, the teacher, and what perspectives does knowledge assume in the current context? What if the logic that this reasoning affirms transforms the act of knowing and the known in discursive processes?

We argue that knowledge and its dissemination in school education implies understanding the processes of production and reproduction of social life, to understand how praxis manifests, in a singular way, the genericity of the human. It implies questioning the perspective that we live in the impossibility of minimally finding traces of truth and certainty in relations with the world, and to understand it as a synthesis of multiple determinations. It involves understanding and questioning the theses that claim to be the *unpredictable* and *uncontrollable* world. Theses that produce and ground the postmodern field in a constant way.

### Final Considerations

We began this text by affirming the centrality in the debate of musical education in the so-called *pedagogy of competences*, and mottos such as *learning to learn*, of theses about the formation of the teacher under the perspective of the *reflective teacher* and of the exaltation of the daily life and of the *student's practice* as the central elements to guide learning processes. We pointed out these issues in the broader context of official documents and how academic output has appropriated the debate. The analysis of a wide group of authors allows us to affirm that in music education, conceptions of knowledge and formation predominate, identified with the post-critical theories of the curriculum, as well as with the forms of expression that have been taking on the so-called postmodern and theses about *relativity* and *indefinition of knowledge*.

The contribution of post-critical theories to curricular debate is significant and dense. Issues that involve the questioning of the hegemony of academic culture in curricular content, class, gender and ethnic discrimination present in both official curricula, teaching materials and school practices, criticism of the ideas of center and margins, cultural superiority and Eurocentrism are important.

However, we understand that the presence in the educational debate of perspectives marked by indefiniteness and contingent are attractive and easy for some. At that moment the processes that capital produces accentuate individualism, alienation and uniqueness, and express, in a contradictory way, a totality marked by fragmentation, ephemerality and everyday emphasis. We understand that daily life is the privileged place and time of alienation. Because of its heterogeneity and fragmentation, there is a need for immediate answers and no mediations on the daily life, leading to the reification and superficiality of our practices, which prevents us from seeing beyond the immediate and leads us to live in the world of superficiality. These processes do not allow to understand the reasons that materialize inequalities and exclusions. They are seduced by speech that does not know this world.<sup>10</sup>

In our perspective, the social processes that generated capitalist modernization continue to demarcate the historical conditions in which the production of aesthet-

10 In Jameson's expression (1997, p.32) a speech that is constituted by "a new lack of depth, which is prolonged both in contemporary 'theory' and in the whole culture of image and simulacrum".

ics, culture and ways of thinking take place. This does not imply that the forms of expression of aesthetics, culture and thinking have undergone changes, but what we have said is that the social condition in which these processes operate has not changed. As Harvey (1992), in his analysis of the postmodern condition, we understand that the authors analyzed by us express a departure from the form of understanding and confrontation of the social condition that capitalism produces or, more specifically, ideologically express the form As the changes in the processes that capitalism generates manifest in the singularity of being.

Unveiling the school space, the processes of learning and teacher training implies understanding the social forces and concrete conditions that ideologically express in everyday life the appearance of a world marked by essence and naturalization, transforming dehumanization into mere speech.

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