
From The Relationship to Knowledge: Theoretical Contributions and Epistemological Implications for Education

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ABSTRACT: What pedagogical implications result from the work “On the relationship with knowledge” by Bernard Charlot for the curriculum, evaluation, and teaching practice? It is pursuing this question that this article presents a philosophical essay that aims to identify the contributions of this work to the overcoming of pedagogical obstacles linked to the false understanding of the social problems that cross the school and the pedagogical work. From a theoretical review, we list its main concepts and definitions, reflecting on how they can contribute to a re-elaboration of the epistemological assumptions that guide the elaboration of curricula, the evaluation criteria and the foundations of teaching practice. In this sense, we conclude that Charlot’s great epistemological contribution in the work in question was to shift the school from a model that naturalizes failure and understands it in terms of faults, to a model that analyzes situations, activities and meanings, building the other relationship of knowing with the world.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS. BERNARD CHARLOT. SCHOOL FAILURE.

Introduction

« In memory of Bernard Charlot, whose legacy entered Brazilian pedagogical culture, and whose theory, life, and practice taught us, above all, that the true relationship with knowledge arises from the recognition of humanity in each individual. »

At the current stage of the intensification of capitalism's contradictions, Education has ceased to be seen as a process of emancipation and has become a

territory of market struggle and technological alienation.

Moreover, the post-pandemic scenario, far from representing a “new normal”, laid bare the collapse of a civilizational model that precarizes teaching work and tries to replace the subjective construction of thought with the algorithmic automation of Artificial Intelligence.

In this context of erosion of thought, we understand that the studies and research of Bernard Charlot have always been a resistance to cruel

exploitation and, at the same time, a beacon that illuminates new attitudes and pedagogical possibilities that safeguard the emancipatory character, in the face of the barbarism imposed by the reduction of life to a commodity.

With this, the principles presented in “On the Relationship with Knowledge” (Charlot, 2000) emerge as a conceptual arsenal of critical resistance, supporting insubordination against the logic that reduces students to consumers of fragmented information. Only by recovering the human meaning of pedagogical processes and the subject's capacity for mobilization is it possible to transform education into a line of resistance capable of confronting systemic exclusion and the dehumanization imposed by the collapse of neoliberal promises.

In this way, Bernard Charlot (2000) makes explicit that his writing movement arises from the need to conceptually ground, from another interpretive key, a new understanding of what, until then, was understood as “school failure”, a matter still persistent in official discourses and goals regarding Education.

For this reason, the methodological framework of this article is based on the immanent analysis and the conceptual exegesis of the aforementioned work by Charlot, adopting a qualitative approach of a bibliographic and hermeneutic nature, to carry out a philosophical essay of an epistemological nature.

The central stage consists of identifying, defining, and articulating the key concepts, operating a didactic mediation that translates the theoretical density of the book into an accessible synthesis without relinquishing conceptual precision.

With that, the essay culminates in the synthesis of the central thesis and in the demonstration of the logical unity of the author's thought, offering the non-specialist reader a comprehensive map that connects theory to its pedagogical implications (i) in the curriculum, (ii) in assessment, and (iii) in teaching practice, and organizes this essay as a rigorous and sensitive gateway to the original work.

Thus, the present articulation between these ideas seeks to answer the following question: what pedagogical implications arise from the Theory of the Relation with Knowledge (TRK) for the curriculum,

for assessment, and for teaching practice?

With this, we established as the general objective to identify the contributions of “On the Relationship with Knowledge” for a better understanding of pedagogical obstacles. Following this direction, we listed the following specific objectives: (i) to understand Charlot's proposal regarding “On the Relationship with Knowledge”; (ii) to link his concepts as guiding principles for understanding the curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice; (iii) to reflect on the contributions prompted by these understandings.

We emphasize that the choice to delve deeper into the work in question, instead of a broad literature review, is based on the understanding that theoretical rigor is an indispensable condition for a consistent critical analysis of the present.

We consider that the contemporaneity of a theory is not defined by its chronology, but by its potency in the face of contemporary impasses, making the Theory of the Relationship with Knowledge (Charlot, 2000) a structuring axis for thinking about educational transformations of an emancipatory nature.

Thus, we argue that focusing on a classical work does not represent a mere return to the past, but the recovery of a consolidated epistemological foundation that protects the current educational debate from the dispersion among business feticisms mystified as supposedly “innovative” pedagogical proposals.

In this direction, although this essay takes as its main focus the work “On the Relationship with Knowledge” (Charlot, 2000), it is important to recognize that the author's most recent reflections expand and update this theoretical horizon.

In “Learning is entering the human world and producing oneself in it as being Human”, Charlot (2024) states that the child is born hominized, but not humanized, and that learning is entering the human world. Thus, education ceases to be understood solely as school mediation, and comes to be situated in its anthropological foundation. In other words, education is a process through which the subject appropriates historically produced symbolic and instrumental mediations, humanizes oneself, and produces oneself within the human world.

In line with this movement, Charlot (2023), in "The Human Being is an Adventure: For a Contemporary Anthropopedagogy", argues that thinking about education today requires facing ecological, technological, and demographic challenges, as well as the current return of old forms of barbarism and the emergence of what he calls "cyberbarbarism".

In the same direction, the author points out that the school and education have been captured by a logic of generalized competition (Charlot, 2023), which repositions, in a contemporary key, the need to critically problematize liberal and competitive perspectives that permeate pedagogical practices.

It is in this context that the counterpoint announced in "Education or Barbarism?" (Charlot, 2020) becomes even more significant, a work to which the author himself refers when developing this broader critique of contemporary forms of dehumanization.

In this way, the reading of "On the Relationship with Knowledge" can be enriched when linked to these more recent texts, since in them, Charlot radicalizes a concern that is always present in his works: understanding education beyond technical, meritocratic, or deficit-based reductions.

If, in "On the Relationship with Knowledge", Charlot (2000) shifts the interpretation of the so-called "school failure" to the relationship of the subject with knowledge, with the world, and with themselves, in his more recent writings, he makes explicit that education concerns the very possibility of humanization and the defense of the human in the face of barbarity.

Not by chance, Charlot (2023) concludes that today, we need a new anthropological utopia to put the human being back at the center of reflection and pedagogical practices, a formulation that reinforces the relevance and critical power of his theory for thinking about Education. It is towards this horizon that we are moving.

The refusal of the reification of school failure

Charlot (2000) claims to have considered it indispensable to explain why he placed, in terms of "Relation to Knowledge" the issues usually treated as school failure, deficiencies stemming from social origin, or the sociocultural context.

This stance, presented by the author as necessary, delineates a theoretical shift, showing that, instead of accepting school failure as an evident object, Charlot (2000) repositions it as a problem to be scientifically constructed. He does so because he understands that the debate is saturated by partial theories and common-sense opinions, requiring conceptual and theoretical deepening.

In the same movement, Charlot (2000, p. 10, our translation) formulates guiding questions that make explicit the status of the problem: "Why study school failure (or success) in terms of its relation to knowledge? What exactly should be understood by 'relation to knowledge'?" Both questions initiate a research strategy which, before responding to immediate social demands regarding causes and solutions, seeks to reconstruct the issue, to "question the question" (Charlot, 2000, p. 15, our translation), and, thereby, produce an analyzable object.

In this direction, Charlot (2000) starts from a methodological warning, which highlights that certain objects of social discourse and the media gain such a degree of prominence that they can mislead the researcher, as happens with expressions such as exclusion, educational crisis, and school failure.

In other words, the author does not deny the existence of young people who do not learn, nor the occurrence of difficult school situations. On the contrary, he acknowledges that they exist and that these situations occur. The risk, however, lies in taking an expression as if it designated a raw reality, directly ascertainable.

Therefore, Charlot (2000) states that school failure is not a fact that experience would allow one to observe. The expression is, rather, a way of verbalizing and organizing what is lived, since it is a certain way of expressing experience, and, therefore, of framing, interpreting, and categorizing the social world. The author insists that the broader the

constructed category, the more it tends to become polysemous and ambiguous, covering distinct phenomena under the same name.

This comprehensive character appears when Charlot (2000, p. 14, our translation) shows that the notion circulates through heterogeneous situations. That is, it can refer to the “non-acquisition of certain knowledge or skills” and to very different trajectories, from the early school years to higher education.

Precisely because it encompasses so many things and refers to so many processes, situations, and problems, this superficial understanding of school failure tends to function as an apparently evident category. In this condition, each manifestation of what is called school failure confirms the obviousness of the expression. That is why Charlot (2000, p. 14, our translation) argues that such objects of discourse do not have a properly analytical function, since they operate as “ideological attractors”.

At the same time, because they are “crossroads-concepts,” they can shift the debate, for example, when the discussion of school failure as social inequality is diverted to pedagogical sterility, and vice versa. Charlot (2000) is emphatic in crucially delimiting that the problem is not just pedagogical. In his understanding, it is also epistemological and methodological because it involves the construction of the object, the choice of categories, and vigilance in the face of socio-media evidence.

From this follows a consequence for the researcher's work, since socio-media objects tend to impose themselves as if they were already finished scientific objects, and the researcher runs the risk of presenting a socio-media object as a research object. Furthermore, since the topic mobilizes social demand and funding, it is expected that those who research discover “the cause” of school failure.

For this reason, Charlot (2000, p. 15, our translation) warns that, faced with this expectation, the researcher may accept behaving as an “expert”, responding in the language of the one posing the question. The proper movement of research, however, is to “question the question”. This requires deconstructing and reconstructing the object and the question because the object may seem evident, even to the researchers themselves, who may become trapped by ideological challenges that give it apparent

consistency.

In this direction, Charlot (2000, p. 15, our translation) makes explicit the importance of the procedure of description and listening, seeking to minimize as much as possible the initial part of interpretation, while at the same time recognizing that “saying one’s practice” implies interpreting and theorizing it.

From this perspective, the researcher's task also includes questioning the way subjects organize and categorize the world, how they see students, teachers, work, school, and society. Charlot (2000, p. 15) recommends not allowing socio-media objects to impose themselves as research objects. Instead, one should circumscribe the phenomenon as much as possible, maintaining distance and returning to the fundamentals through observation and listening. Then, subsequently, one should conceptualize and theorize of the said categories.

Based on these considerations, Charlot (2000, p. 16) emphasizes that “there is no such thing as 'school failure’”. The author acknowledges that the phenomena designated by this name are real, but insists that there is no “school failure” object that can be analyzed as such. Charlot (2000) concludes that this object is the “students” who are unable to follow the pre-structured teaching. Therefore, school failure is only studied through a critical analysis of the social, school, and pedagogical conditions that produce it.

From this perspective, what really exists are students who are unable to keep up with the teaching under the conditions offered to them, who do not acquire knowledge that is imposed on them, who do not develop certain skills that do not make sense to them, who flounder, and who react with different forms of rebellion that manifest as withdrawal, disorder, or aggression. It is precisely this set of observable phenomena that common sense groups under the name of school failure.

When translating failure into thinkable terms, Charlot (2000, p. 17, our translation) inaugurates two avenues of understanding. The first is to think of it as deviation/difference, since school failure is a difference “between students, between curricula, between establishments”, which is read through grades and indicators of success, and by positions in a hierarchical school system.

The second approach, in turn, shifts the focus to the student's experience, as it understands that school failure is also an experience that the student lives and interprets, capable of becoming the object of research.

Here, situations, activities, behaviors, and discourses are examined. This shift allows for comparing experiences and producing differences "in relation to knowledge and school", and not just differences in positions. With this, Charlot (2000, p. 18, our translation) states that both paths produce knowledge, but "are not equivalent".

The second mode of understanding is the one that organizes the horizon of this article, as it allows us to approach the problem of pedagogical implications, especially when considering curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice as historically situated institutional dimensions in which school interactions are constructed.

"Knowledge", "understanding", and "information"

Charlot (2000, p. 62, our translation) states a thesis that serves as a defining axis of his work: "there is no knowledge in itself, knowledge is a relation". This formulation rejects the idea of knowledge as an autonomous substance and shifts the analysis to the link between the subject and the world, reinforcing this point by noting that statements appear as decontextualized objects, but are substantialized forms of an activity, of relations, and of a relation with the world.

In other words, Charlot (2000) explains that there is no knowledge except for a subject, and there is no knowledge that is not inscribed in collective processes of validation, capitalization, and transmission. In addition, the author indicates that the appropriation of knowledge requires the subject to establish themselves in the relationship with the world that the constitution of this knowledge presupposes, which already anticipates pedagogical implications, since it is not enough to present content; it is necessary to build a specific relationship with the world.

The distinction between information, knowledge, and understanding is presented based on Monteil (1985) and Schlanger (1978). Thus, "information is data

external to the subject", while knowledge is "the result of personal experience", and understanding, in turn, is "under the primacy of objectivity", being information that the subject appropriates (Charlot, 2000, p. 61, our translation).

From this point of view, [knowledge] is also knowledge, but detached from the dogmatic envelope in which subjectivity tends to install it. Knowledge is, therefore, produced by the subject confronted with other subjects; it is built within "methodological frameworks". It can, therefore, "enter the order of the object" and become, then, "a communicable product", "information available to others" (Charlot, 2000, p. 61, our translation).

In summary, Charlot's (2000) analysis in the light of Monteil (1985) and Schlanger (1978) is relevant in highlighting that there is no knowledge except for a subject, there is no knowledge except organized according to internal relations, and there is no knowledge except constructed in an "interpersonal confrontation".

In other words, the idea of knowledge implies that of subject, of the activity of the subject, of the relationship of the subject with itself, breaking away from subjective dogmatism, of the relationship of this subject with others, who co-construct, control, validate, share this knowledge, thus becoming "a communicable product", "information available to others".

Therefore, when knowledge is defined, a subject and a "broader relationship with the world" (Charlot, 2000, p. 59, our translation) are brought into this definition, which prevents dissociating curriculum, evaluation, and teaching practice from the relationships that the student establishes with learning.

Relationship with knowledge, subject, and activity

Charlot states that studying the relationship with knowledge implies considering the student as a subject. In this context, we consider it important to revisit the definition of this concept proposed by the author. Thus, the subject, from the Charlotian perspective (Charlot, 2000, p. 33, our translation), is:

- (i) a human being, open to a world that is not reduced to the here and now, bearer of desires driven by these desires, in relation with other human beings, who are also subjects;
- (ii) a social being, who is born and grows up in a family (or a substitute for the family), who occupies a position in a social space, who is inscribed in social relations;
- (iii) a singular being, unique exemplar of the human species, who has a history, interprets the world, gives meaning to this world, to the position he or she occupies in it, to his or her relations with others, to his or her own history, to his or her singularity (our translation).

The definition of the subject proposed by Charlot (2000) articulates a relational and processual conception of the human person, moving it from a static notion to a being open to the world and to others. By emphasizing that the subject is a bearer of desires and driven by them, the author highlights the motivational and intentional dimension of human action, which implies recognizing agency as always guided by projects and affects. This temporal and spatial openness, which transcends the here and now, points to the need to consider historical and cultural contexts in the analysis of practices and learning, since the desires and relationships that guide the subject are mediated by socially produced meanings.

At the same time, Charlot (2000) highlights the dual condition of the subject: social and singular. As a social being, the individual is inscribed in positions and relationships that structure opportunities, resources, and limitations; this perspective requires attention to the institutional and familial dimensions that shape trajectories and identities. As a singular being, however, the subject is not reduced to social determinations: their personal history, their interpretations, and the attribution of meaning give

them uniqueness and the ability to reinterpret given conditions. It is in this condition that the subject, according to Charlot (2000, p. 33, our translation):

- (i) acts in and on the world;
- (ii) finds the question of knowledge as a need to learn, and as a presence in the world of objects, people, and places that carry knowledge;
- (iii) produces himself, and is produced, through education.

By stating that the subject produces himself, and is produced, through education, Charlot (2000) proposes a dialectical reading of human formation, in which education appears both as a space for the reproduction of social dispositions and as an occasion for subjectivation and transformation.

This framework is linked to the methodological shift that Charlot (2000, p. 38, our translation) makes when criticizing a sociology that does not allow for thinking about the school experience, since he defends the position that “The school experience is that of a subject, and a sociology of the school experience must be a sociology of the subject”, indicating as a path the perspective of François Dubet (1994; Dubet; Martuccelli, 1996).

From an anthropological perspective, Charlot (2000, p. 53, our translation) states that “to be born means to find oneself subjected to the obligation to learn”. From this, the author (Charlot, 2000, p. 54, our translation) clarifies that education is understood as the constitution of self, since it is “a production of oneself by oneself”, that only occurs “through the mediation of the other and with their help”, insisting on the analysis of the relationship as a process and defining “relationship functions as a process that develops over time and involves activities”.

Based on these understandings, the author offers direct definitions of three operational notions: mobilization, activity, and meaning. Charlot (2000, p. 55, our translation) prefers the idea of mobilizing to that of motivating, because “Mobilization implies mobilizing oneself ('from within'), while motivation emphasizes the fact that one is motivated by someone or something ('from outside')”.

From this perspective, the idea of movement

brings to light two other concepts, that of resources and that of motive, “understood as reason to act” (Charlot, 2000, p. 55, our translation). Thus, the idea of mobilizing encompasses putting resources into motion. To mobilize oneself, therefore, is to set oneself in motion from the gathering of forces and of oneself as a resource; it is also to engage in an activity originated by motives that provide reasons to do something.

Activity, in turn, is defined as an oriented structure, understood as “a set of actions driven by a motive and aimed at a goal” (Charlot, 2000, p. 55, our translation). In this understanding,

The child becomes engaged in an activity when they invest in it, when they make use of themselves as a resource, and when they are set in motion by motives that refer to a desire, meaning, or value. The activity then has an internal dynamic. One must not forget, however, that this dynamic presupposes an exchange with the world, where the child finds desirable goals, means of action, and other resources besides themselves. (Charlot, 2000, p. 55, our translation).

With this, based on Francis Jacques (1987), the author explains that meaning is introduced with a definition of signify, “to signify something regarding the world, for someone or with someone”, that is, “meaning is produced by establishing a relationship, within a system, or in relation with the world and with others” (Charlot, 2000, p. 56). Thus, relying on Leontiev’s Activity Theory (1975; Rochex, 1995), Charlot (2000, p. 56-57, our translation) concludes:

For Leontiev, the meaning of an activity is the reaction between its goal and its motive, between what prompts action and what guides the action, as an immediately sought result. [...] It can be said that an act, an event, a situation makes sense if it fits into this knot of desires that the subject is.

These definitions are decisive for the question of this article because they shift the focus to new understandings. Curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice are no longer analyzed merely as a distribution of content, but come to be read as conditions for mobilization, activity, and the

production of meaning in relation to learning.

From school failure to positive reading: implications of displacement

The investigative stance advocated by Charlot (2000) requires the educator willing to understand the subject to have an understanding of reality that not only reaffirms what is evident and defended by the dominant logic of common sense. It is, therefore, necessary to go beyond the empirical of perception, beyond appearance. Thus, from this perspective, the author establishes the fundamental distinction between two approaches to interpreting reality: the negative reading and the positive reading.

In simple terms, negative reading is made up of the lens of the dominant over the dominated, who, when they look at them, only notice the absences, what is “missing”. Positive reading, in turn, strives to highlight and understand what the dominated build despite the absences.

For Charlot (2000, p. 30, our translation), the shift from negative reading to positive reading is not a mere adjustment of tone, since it is “above all an epistemological and methodological stance”.

From this perspective, the negative reading, by representing the understanding of the dominated through the lens of the dominant, interprets reality in terms of deficiencies and, in this movement, “school failure is not attributable to teaching practices, but rather to the students and their families” (Charlot, 2000, p. 29, our translation).

This understanding reifies relationships, reducing them to things, annihilating them to transform them into absent things, thus explaining the world by displacing the lacks, by postulating “a causality of lack”, fabricating, in this process, things like “school failure” and “sociocultural deficiency”. In simpler terms, lack is presented as the cause of something, instead of investigating what/where the activity did not work.

For Charlot (2000, p. 30), positive reading, on the contrary, is connected to the students’ experience, their interpretation of the world, and their activity. In the face of a student who fails, it does not look for “what is missing” for them to succeed. It asks “what is happening”, seeking to understand “how the situation

of a student who fails in learning is constructed". In the words of the author:

Practicing a positive reading means also paying attention to what people do, achieve, have, and are, and not only to what they fail at and their shortcomings. It is, for example, asking oneself what students in situations of failure know (despite everything) – what they know about life, but also what they have acquired from the knowledge that school seeks to provide them. In this sense, it is indeed an “optimistic” reading, for those who insist on using that word. (Charlot, 2000, p. 30, our translation).

This understanding has an impact on different school dimensions of the curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice, because it requires shifting the emphasis from the deficiencies attributed to the student to the analysis of the processes through which different school situations are produced.

Charlot (2000, p. 24, our translation) reinforces this refusal to simplify causality by criticizing the transformation of statistical correlation into cause, stating that, when one starts from a statistical correlation between social origin and school success and goes on to say that social origin causes failure, an interpretation that is “entirely abusive” is made.

Practicing a positive reading is to refuse to think of the dominated as a passive object, “reproduced” by the dominant, and completely manipulated, even including in their most intimate psychic dispositions. But without falling into naivety and without forgetting that the dominated is, certainly, a subject, but a dominated subject. (Charlot, 2000, p. 31, our translation).

In pedagogical terms, this refusal means that the question cannot be limited to capital or origin; it needs to inquire into what happens in the activity and in the practices. For Charlot (2000, p. 22, our translation), “Success at school is not a matter of capital, but of work; more precisely: activities, practices”.

This shift of the deficit to the activity also appears when Charlot (2000, p. 25, our translation) criticizes the notion of sociocultural deficiency, stating that deficiency is not a fact, but “a theoretical construction, a certain way of interpreting what is

happening (or not happening) in the classrooms”.

Thus, what can be observed is only that certain students fail in learning and often belong to working-class families, “nothing more” (Charlot, 2000, p. 25, our translation).

The shift from what happens in the activity to a fault attributed to the student is described by the author as retroprojection; that is, the fault observed at the end is “projected, retroprojected, to the beginning of the activity” (Charlot, 2000, p. 27, our translation). Instead of asking what happened, where the activity did not work, reasoning is done in terms of deficiencies (Charlot, 2000, p. 27, our translation).

It is precisely this causal chain of lack that Charlot (2000) deconstructs as a theory. In other words, not to reduce the analysis to absences or mere reproductivism, but to situate curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice as dimensions that can favor or hinder mobilization, activity, and meaning.

Figures of learning and school: where experience is built

Charlot (2000) makes it clear that learning is broader than merely acquiring content or knowledge (understood as intellectual content), since there are many things to learn. Therefore, defining knowledge implies bringing in a subject and its relationship with the world. Defining knowledge involves bringing a subject into the definition, in a broader way than the subject of knowledge, establishing a broader relationship with the world. From this perspective, the pedagogical issue becomes inseparable from the way the school establishes the figures of learning.

Charlot (2000) explains that a student who does not do well in school often resorts to marginal strategies, such as cheating, to achieve apparent results, deviating from the true meaning of learning, and building another form of relationship with the world. As a consequence, their relationship with school ceases to be guided by learning and instead becomes focused on avoiding failure through tricks aimed solely at immediate success in this system that is imposed on them.

Hence, the explicitly pedagogical consequence: if knowledge is a relationship, then the educational

process must have as its object “the process that leads to adopting a relationship of knowledge with the world”, and “not the accumulation of intellectual content”, which generates these deviations.

This understanding directly connects the notion of the relationship with knowledge to curricular and evaluative decisions, reaffirming that pedagogical problems are not solved by merely adding content, but by building a relationship that articulates meaning and the world.

With this, Charlot (2000, p. 66, our translation) shows that learning does not always have the same meaning for teachers and students, and that this is a key issue for understanding the school experience, and, particularly, the experience of school failure. The example of the student who says “I had learned this...” and the teacher who tells him to go back to his seat for not having learned it shows that often both do not give the same meaning to the same term, highlighting the discrepancy between the student's and the teacher's perception regarding a learning situation.

In this understanding, there are students who are led to settle into a form of learning “that is not relevant for the acquisition of knowledge and, therefore, for succeeding in school” (Charlot, 2000, p. 66, our translation). With a repetitive class, for example, the student may even memorize content and believe that they are learning. This mindset can appear in a “binary relationship with knowledge”, in which one can only learn what is already known, and when one does not know, “one cannot learn”. In other words, the student is dealing with a curriculum that only pays attention to a single sequence of content, in a linearity that empties the meaning of the class for the student.

The pedagogical implication here is that curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice cannot presuppose a single and transparent figure of learning. They need to consider the meaning that the student attributes to what they do and to what is expected of them, since failure can be constructed precisely by the mismatch of figures and meanings.

Charlot (2000, p. 67, our translation) also emphasizes that learning is always learning “in situation”, since school is a place of instruction, but at the same time, “a space of life”. Thus, the teacher instructs and educates, but also represents

institutional determinations, discipline, and their own singular person. Therefore, the student's relationships with the teachers are overdetermined: “they are relationships with their knowledge, with their professionalism, with their institutional status, with their person”.

Charlot (2000, p. 68, our translation) adds that learning is inscribed in the history of the subject and “at a moment of other histories”. That is, from this perspective, the formulation becomes decisive for pedagogical practice, since “the pedagogical relationship is a moment”, a set of perceptions, representations, and current projects that are inscribed in the appropriation of pasts and projections of the future.

Thus, this definition guides a reading of the curriculum and evaluation as devices that affect histories, expectations, and relationships, not just content.

The relationship with knowledge and its pedagogical implications

This article addresses the guiding question, “what pedagogical implications stem from the relationship with knowledge for the curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice?”. The answer lies in the articulation of four contributions by Charlot (2000) explained throughout this work: (i) the refusal of the reification of school failure and the causality of deficiency; (ii) the centrality of activity, work, and practices; (iii) the relational nature of knowledge (“there is no knowledge in itself”); (iv) the analysis of the school experience as the experience of a subject, crossed by epistemic, identity, and social dimensions.

The first curricular implication stems directly from the thesis “there is no knowledge in itself, knowledge is a relationship” (Charlot, 2000, p. 62, our translation). If knowledge is a relationship, it cannot be treated merely as a list of objects to be transmitted. This becomes even more explicit when the author states that decontextualized statements are “substantialized forms” of an activity and a relationship with the world.

From the curriculum perspective, Charlot (2000) shifts the focus from the product to the process, since what matters is not only what is taught, but also how the student is led to construct themselves in the

relationship with the world that knowledge presupposes. In this regard, the educational process should have as its object "the process that leads to adopting a relationship of knowledge with the world", and "not the accumulation of intellectual content" (Charlot, 2000, p. 64). Thus, the curriculum, if consistent with this principle, cannot be reduced to a summation; it needs to be thought of as the organization of conditions that favor the adoption of a specific relationship with the world.

The second curricular implication derives from the "figures of learning". Charlot (2000) states that learning is broader than acquiring knowledge-object, and that there are several "things" to learn. This point prevents the curriculum from assuming a single form of learning as evident. In other words, if there are different figures and different processes, the curriculum needs to consider the diversity of objects, activities, devices, and relational forms that students face, and consider that "learning will be practicing what kind of activity?" (Charlot, 2000, p. 67, our translation).

A curricular consequence, therefore, is not to treat the contents as isolated ends, since meaning implies signifying something "about the world, for someone or with someone" (Charlot, 2000, p. 56, our translation, author's emphasis). The curriculum, in this perspective, needs to be understood as the choice and organization of experiences that allow mobilization and meaning, because knowledge is constituted for an individual.

The third curricular implication arises from the fact that the student can invest the statement in another system of meaning, such as grades, punishment, passing the year, pleasing the teacher, which makes appropriation "fragile" (Charlot, 2000, p. 64, our translation). This means that a curriculum organized solely as a performance requirement can encourage other relationships with the world that are not relationships of knowledge. In the author's terms, when the statement is invested in another system of meaning, the specific relationship with the world is not established, and there is almost no formative effect. In other words, if the curriculum is reduced to meeting requirements, then it can reinforce fragile investments. Therefore, the centrality of the relationship with knowledge shifts the curriculum towards constructing a relationship of knowledge, rather than towards producing results as an end in

itself.

In the same direction, assessment is directly affected by criticism of the translation of school failure as a reified object and by criticism of the negative reading. If school failure is not a verifiable fact, and if it is not a thing in itself, then, according to Charlot's (2000) perspective, assessment cannot operate as a mere device for naming failure as an entity.

Charlot (2000, p. 17, our translation) shows that one of the translations of school failure as difference is precisely the reading by "grades, indicators of success, years of delay". This is not denied, since the author states that this path produces knowledge and was central in sociologies of difference.

However, it becomes problematic when the difference is converted into a lack, and when the correlation between origin and failure is transformed into causality. Thus, from an evaluative point of view, a first implication of the Charlotian understanding is to recognize that grades and indicators are relative positions in the system, and that they do not, by themselves, authorize the production of causalities and deficit identities.

The second evaluative implication derives from the critique of the "negative reading". Charlot (2000, p. 30, our translation) describes how this reading interprets reality in terms of deficiencies and shifts the attribution of failure to students and families. It postulates "a causality of lack". Thus, as we have already explained, evaluation, when guided by this reading, tends to convert results into personal marks, and to retroactively project the lack to the beginning of the activity.

In this scenario, Charlot (2000, p. 27, our translation) makes clear that, instead of asking what happened, "where the activity did not work", one reasons "in terms of deficiencies". Therefore, a direct pedagogical implication is that assessment needs to shift its questions: not only "what was lacking?", but "what is happening?" (Charlot, 2000, p. 30, our translation); that is, what is the student's activity, what meaning does it have for them, how is the situation of failure constructed.

The third evaluative implication is related to the rejection of abusive causality. Charlot (2000, p. 24, our

translation) insists that taking social origin as the cause of failure is "entirely abusive", arguing that "social origin is not the cause of school failure" (Charlot, 2000, p. 25, our translation).

For the evaluation, this implies caution with interpretations that turn data into determinisms. Charlot (2000, p. 22, our translation) shows that the explanation needs to question "work, activity, practices". Thus, an evaluation coherent with this approach needs to look for evidence related to work and practices in context, because success is not a matter of capital, but of "activities, practices":

The position of children is not "inherited" in the way an asset passes from one generation to another through a class-based will; it is produced by a set of family practices: those of the parents (who supervise homework, take the children to museums, concerts, on trips, take them to dance class, tennis, etc.) and those of the children (the "heirs" know very well that it is not enough to be a "child of" to succeed at school, but that it is necessary to work, to exert a lot of effort). Success at school is not a matter of capital, but of work; more precisely: activities, practices. (Charlot, 2000, p. 22, our translation).

From this perspective, this guidance does not eliminate notes and indicators, but changes their status, because, instead of being an end and a cause, they become signs that require analysis of situations and activities.

Teaching practice, in turn, is directly challenged by the methodological movement of "questioning the question", interrogating the terms in which it is formulated (Charlot, 2000, p. 15, our translation), and by the stance of "positive reading".

If positive reading is "above all an epistemological and methodological stance" (Charlot, 2000, p. 30, our translation), then teaching is called upon to shift its gaze, so that, in the face of the student who fails, it does not seek "what is missing", but asks "what is happening, that is, what activity the student is performing, what meaning they assign to the situation, what relationships are established?".

This is linked to the procedure indicated for research, but in the work, it has a clear pedagogical value, that of "describing and listening," reducing

initial interpretation, without giving up on "conceptualizing and theorizing" (Charlot, 2000, p. 15, our translation). Thus, teaching is called to observe, listen, and reconstruct, not to automatically apply evident categories.

Teaching practice is also crossed by the thesis of the subject. Charlot (2000) defines the subject as a being open to the world, bearer of desires, in relation with others, a social and singular being, with history and the ability to make sense of the world, implying that teaching cannot treat the student as a passive object.

Charlot (2000, p. 31, our translation) makes this refusal explicit by stating that practicing a positive reading is "refusing to think of the dominated as a passive object, "reproduced by the dominant", and by asserting that "every individual is a subject, no matter how dominated they are". Thus, for teaching practice, the implication is to recognize the student as a subject of activity and meaning, even in situations of supposed failure.

Furthermore, Charlot (2000) offers operational concepts for practice: mobilization, activity, and meaning. "To mobilize is to put into motion; to mobilize oneself is to set oneself in motion" (Charlot, 2000, p. 54, our translation). Following this reasoning, "activity is a set of actions propelled by a motive and aimed at a goal" (Charlot, 2000, p. 55), our translation. And "to give meaning is always to mean something about the world 'for someone or with someone'" (Charlot, 2000, p. 56, our translation).

These statements guide a teaching practice that is not limited to "delivering content", since teachers' work is not just the application of technique; it is mediation in a relationship with the world, with oneself, and with others.

Charlot (2000) also offers a decisive practical implication by showing that teachers and students may not give the same meaning to the word learn. This means that the teaching work needs to make expectations about "learning" explicit, as failure may result from the mismatch of concepts of learning.

If there are students who settle into a figure of learning that is not relevant for acquiring school knowledge, teaching practice needs to recognize this mismatch as an object of work, understand the

student's figure of learning, and create conditions for them to adopt a relationship of knowledge with the world.

Therefore, teaching practice, in accordance with the postulates of Charlot (2000), needs to guide its actions toward the construction of this relationship and not just for the achievement of immediate results.

Conclusion

We concluded that the question of this article was answered, based on the arguments presented throughout the work, shown through the following three statements.

First, the relationship with knowledge shifts the treatment of school failure from an evident object to the analysis of situations and stories. Since school failure is not a fact and "school failure" does not "exist" as a thing, the school cannot organize curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice as if dealing with a natural entity. Therefore, the fundamental pedagogical implication is to reconstruct the object, treating what happens in the school experience as a constructed situation, analyzing activities, meanings, and relationships at play, rather than automatically attributing faults to students and families.

Second, the relationship with knowledge, by rejecting negative readings and the causality of lack, requires a methodological stance, the positive reading. This shift directly impacts evaluation, making it necessary to analyze what occurs in practices and activities. It also affects the curriculum, since, if the educational process aims to foster a relationship of knowledge with the world, rather than the accumulation of content, the curriculum cannot be just a listing of content; it needs to be an organization of experiences and activities that enable engagement and meaning.

Third, the relationship with knowledge implies thinking of knowledge as a relationship and the subject as the center of the school experience. If "there is no knowledge in itself, knowledge is a relationship", and if "there is no knowledge except for a subject", then curriculum, assessment, and teaching practice must be read as dimensions that shape the

relationships of the subject with the world, with oneself, and with others.

Therefore, teaching practice needs to operate on mobilization, activities, and meanings, to mobilize itself, organize actions, and consider that to mean is always to mean something from the world for someone or with someone.

In summary, the main pedagogical implication arising from Charlot's work (2000) that is understood in this study is to shift the school from a model that naturalizes failure to another that analyzes situations, activities, and meanings, building the relationship of knowledge with the world.

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Declaration of Ethics

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