Leisure and Professional Training: Knowledge Necessary to Guide Training

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The objective of this paper is to discuss the issue of professional training in leisure, and has been divided into three parts. The first part presents a discussion about the model of leisure considered, the second part deals with to an understanding of the meaning of training. The final part highlights some knowledge considered indispensable for the professional interested in qualifying in the field of leisure studies to experience more critical training, consistent with contemporary needs.

Leisure as a human need and dimension of culture

Leisure is a fundamental human need which is being met in various ways by each person and social group, in each social and cultural context (Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn, 1986). Leisure is constituted in accordance with the peculiarities of historical and sociocultural context in which it is developed – and that is why it needs to be treated as a social, political, cultural and historically situated phenomena.

As pointed out by Gomes and Faria (2005), leisure must be considered in the field of human practice as a tangle of meanings and shared significance dialectically shared in subjective and objective constructions of subjects, and in different cultural, social and educational contexts. Leisure is part of the complex historical and social plot that characterizes life in society and represents one of the threads woven, culturally, in the human network of meanings, symbols and significance.

Culture is a polysemical word, since it is understood from different perspectives, especially in recent years. There are many approaches and theoretical currents that develop the fundamentals of the subject, but in this text it is interpreted as human production, and as a symbolic dimension in which meaning is central (Geertz 2001, Sahlins 2003, Hall 2003).

Intended as human cultural production, leisure has a dialogical relationship with education, work, politics, economics, language, health, science and nature, among other dimensions of life, being an integral and formative part of each society (Gomes, 2008).

In this sense, leisure is permeated with conflicts, tensions, contradictions and complexities,

enabling the coexistence of different logic. Its cultural web shows that it is a time / space expression of tradition and novelty, conformity and resistance. Its ambiguity indicates that it can be a mere reproduction of social order, or a producer of novelty (Gomes and Faria, 2005).

Thus, leisure is constructed according to the peculiarities of the context in which it is developed and involves the production of culture – in the sense of reproduction, construction and transformation of cultural practices experienced by individuals, groups, societies and institutions. These actions are built in a social time / space, and are subject to dialogue and suffer interference from other spheres of social life and allow us to reframe culture, symbolically and continuously.

Through these initial considerations, I express my conception of leisure as a human need and a dimension of culture characterized by a ludic experience of cultural events in a social time / space (Gomes, 2010). So from my point of view leisure is the articulation of three fundamental elements: ludicity, cultural events, and social time / space.

Ludicity in the usual sense of the word, is associated with childhood and treated as synonymous with certain expressions of culture, especially games. This interpretation can be extended to an understanding of ludicity as human language, since cultural practices are not play in themselves: they are constructed on the subject's interaction with experience. Ludicity refers to the ability of *homo ludens* – in his cultural essence – to develop, learn and express meanings. According to Debortoli (2002) language goes beyond speech: it is expression. In this sense, ludicity is the possibility of expression from a creative person, who is able to give meaning to their existence, to reframe and transform the world.

In the context of constitutive activity and utterance[1], ludicity is culturally constructed and constrained by several factors such as political and social norms, moral principles, rules of education, and concrete conditions of existence. Reflecting traditions, values, customs and contradictions present in every society. While narrative, it can manifest itself in various forms (gestural, verbal, printed, visual, artistic, etc.) and occurs in every moment of life. Thus, ludicity stimulates the senses, exercises symbolism and exalts the emotions, blending joy and anguish, tension and relaxation, pleasure and conflict, joy and frustration, freedom, surrender, and granting resignation and delight.

These aspects end up traversing experiences of leisure throughout our lives. Thus, as the driver of leisure, ludicity presupposes aesthetic appreciation and the expressive appropriation of the process experienced, not just the product achieved. Even when you do not get the desired result (eg, joining the losing team), the prevailing idea is that the experience was worth it, and resulting in the desire to repeat it, to overcome new challenges and to enhance

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1 Bakhtin (1992) interprets language as constitutive activity and utterance. Utterance is the product of interaction between individuals who are socially organized, that is, between the speaker / listener, assuming the dialogue as one of its main elements. Language is related to a stance with respect to what is said and understood, so that the sense of the word is completely determined by its context. So language is also a constitutive activity.

opportunities for leisure (Gomes, 2004).

The cultural practices that embody leisure are social practices experienced as enjoyment and are the fruition of culture, for example a party, a game, messing about, a walk, traveling, diverse physical exercise, dance, a spectacle, theater, music, cinema, painting, drawing, sculpture, crafts, literature and poetry, virtual electronic entertainment, are among countless possibilities. These and other practices hold special significance for the subjects who experience play in social time / space.

Leisure also includes cultural practices that focus more on the introspective possibilities – such as meditation, contemplation and relaxation – because they can provide outstanding recreational experiences because of their interesting potential for reflection. Certainly, many possibilities such as these are the target of prejudice because they confront the productive ethic that prevails in our society since the advent of what is known as Western modernity, when they came to be classified as unproductive and therefore a waste of time (Gomes, 2011).

Cultural events experienced playfully, are therefore practices that integrate the culture of each group and that can take on multiple meanings: to be implemented in a determined social time / space to engage with a given context, and also to assume a special role for individuals, social groups, institutions and society representing historical, social and cultural experience.

These considerations underscore the relevance of the problems in the abstract representations of space and time categories. Santos (1980) notes that it is possible to define historical and social space events "outside their own determinations or without taking into account the totality from where they emanate, and they reproduce" (p. 206). The author concludes that social space cannot be explained without social time, and vice versa, because these dimensions are inseparable.

This perspective shows the bias present in understanding leisure that neglects the issue of space and emphasizes the aspect of time, focusing primarily on the residual time after productive work or school. It also points to the partiality of the understanding of leisure located in a time of "no obligation", as if life were made of watertight moments and situations. The different fields that make up our social life have blurred boundaries, as pointed out by Morin (2000). Thus, from my point of view there are no absolute boundaries between work and leisure, or between this and other spheres of our social life (Gomes, 2004).

Social time / space is produced, as a condition of possibility of social relations and of nature, through which society, while it produces itself, it also transforms nature that it appropriates (Lefebvre, 2008) or rather, interacts with it. Therefore, the time / space is a product of social relations and nature and is constituted of objective, subjective, symbolic, concrete and material aspects, highlighting conflicts, contradictions and power relations – which inevitably affect not only leisure, but also the training of professionals to work within this framework.

English

Professional training: Some considerations

Training is a word that can take on multiple meanings. Viewed from its systemic perspective, training does not only happen in formal institutions of education, but also influences exerted by family, friends, work, politics, and the media, are instrumental. Although the formal institutions of education have an important role to play in the process of training, it is performed and enriched with the experiences of people in diverse fields and contexts.

In addition, social, political, pedagogical and technological transformations are changing the strategies of production and appropriation of knowledge. These changes, of course, affect the field of professional training, revealing paradoxes and contradictions. On the one hand, extending the choices of those interested in different training possibilities, which is further extended by the possibilities of distance education. But on the other hand, training is often difficult to evaluate as a market product. This is problematic because the quality criterion can be subsumed to excessive concern with making a profit, regardless of the consistency of the training process.

In recent decades, extensive marketing and commercialization can be seen in courses and workshops, updating and recycling, in recreation and leisure. These training opportunities in general, focus on traditional technocratic models, which aim to reproduce content and use standardized recreation methodologies to be developed in schools, clubs, condominiums, and public sector bodies of sport and leisure, private businesses, parks, churches, hospitals, nursing homes, community associations, hotels and other institutions (Gomes, 2008).

It is noteworthy that the choice of methods and techniques does not necessarily arise from objective, neutral, disinterested and entirely practical knowledge. In this regard, it is essential to emphasize that theory rooted in the experiences of life and in current practice is crucial, and in the numerous aspects that give meaning to our everyday lives must be analyzed. This is not simply to emphasize the pragmatic over the theoretical, since daily action is guided by theoretical considerations and reflection, which in turn transforms theory. Therefore, it is essential that training is committed to the search for fundamentals that can support the development of leisure, preparing professionals to critically review simplistic positions and received wisdom. Instead of teaching answers and solutions, training needs to be viewed as a chance to create new ideas and thoughts, generating new views of reality itself. It is a path where we can challenge established certainties with curiosity and a desire for knowledge.

From this perspective, we need to collaborate with the training of professionals who question reality, who analyze their professional practice and face up to the complexity of social processes and contradictions of our environment, making leisure not merely an alienating product to be consumed, but a ludic possibility for analyzed critically, creatively

and to be experienced with significant autonomy and responsibility. It is noteworthy, in this process, the importance of a thorough knowledge of reality, which requires a solid foundation and a consistent political and pedagogical foundation in professional training, enabling the undertaking of actions, on leisure, consistent with the context in question (Gomes, 2008).

These issues stress the need to enhance the training of professionals who are critically engaged with leisure in every context. Therefore, professionals need to experience the possibility of playing with the rules and the broader socio-cultural constraints, focusing on leisure, while trying not to lose sight of their interfaces with the other dimensions that make up our social dynamics. In this sense, it is not sufficient to train professionals as mere reproducers of standardized practices intended for mass consumption. It requires each professional to recognize themselves as an agent of change and in the process, it is essential to choose which knowledge will be prioritized.

Need to modify the process of professional training in leisure: Notes

In a previous work (Gomes, 2007), the issue of professional training in leisure was developed focusing on skills. But currently, I consider a focus on knowledge more appropriate to understand the wider assumptions concerning formal and informal knowledge concerning the subject, taking into consideration: the context, socio-cultural space and time, political and economic processes; technical and organizational transformations; environmental impact, the contradictions of society, the collective ties and solidarity and, also it is meaningful to analyze the influences of social group, gender, creed, ethnic and generational groups, among others. This text does not purport to address all these aspects, but to contribute to the rethinking of some of them based on knowledge that is relevant to professional training in the area of leisure.

I believe that the processes of identification, definition and construction of knowledge need not be directed to the narrowest demands of the world of work, because they are dynamic, subject to constant change, and usually only serve hegemonic interests. When considering professional training in leisure, it is essential to seek knowledge for autonomy by encouraging critical thinking and creativity, combining social, political, cultural, educational, ethical, epistemological and environmental aspects of work in a systemic way.

According to the concepts of leisure and training outlined above, the desired knowledge does not simply include only a single dimension of cognitive nature, nor emphasize technical knowledge as the only valid parameter. Knowledge must involve other aspects that are the result of collective experiences and, therefore, which are influenced by multiple factors, as will be explained below.

English

Leisure, complexity and transdisciplinarity

As stressed by Morin (2004), we must learn to reconnect knowledge, to consider mutual relations and understand the reciprocal influences between parts and the whole. This is one of the most important challenges of complexity thinking. Of course, various disciplines are needed and collaborate with the advance of knowledge in different ways. This is visible even in leisure studies, because there are frequent contributions generated from specific approaches, and from the numerous disciplines that focus on this issue. However, a simple aggregation of knowledge produced from different disciplines does not necessarily mean overcoming a fragmented approach to leisure.

Complexity thinking aims to integrate as much as possible, simplistic ways of thinking, but rejects the crippling consequences, reducing, and dazzling one-dimensional simplification of what is considered a reflection of what is real in reality. Thus, complexity thinking is animated by an ongoing tension between an aversion for fragmented, compartmentalized, and reducing knowledge, and recognition of the unfinished and incompleteness of any knowledge, recognizing the uncertainty principle (Morin, 2007).

With respect to this, it is important to note that often, leisure is treated like an entertainment disconnected from the wider reality. This vision is the result of simplistic and disjunctive thinking, highlighting the need to undertake deeper analysis, more articulated and more integrated with the context. If leisure were an isolated sphere it would not be widely used as an opportunity to escape from reality, an escape valve that provides a break from routine and escape from problems - not to mention its potential to enhance alienated consumption.

Moreover, it is known that studies undertaken about leisure, whether in Brazil or other countries reveal a disciplinary tradition in which the emphasis is clearly attributed to sociology. Any subject can be relevant to deepen an issue, but alone is unable to systematize articulated knowledge when the context is considered multidimensional. This is only possible when the various disciplinary fields are broken up by disjunctive / simplifier thought, and are articulated with a view to transdisciplinarity.

Disciplinary focus may limit understanding that exists between the various disciplines, and can render invisible the connections between them, therefore, it is essential to have a systemic view, that is, a view that is capable of locating the group. Thus, it is not the amount of information, nor the sophistication of a particular discipline that allows, in isolation, the creation of relevant knowledge (Morin, 2004).

As Santos (2004) describes, we need to promote a radical transformation of the educational system. We need to think and rethink knowledge considering the current state of dispersion, proliferation and fragmentation of knowledge (Morin, 2007). Thus, understanding and

studying leisure from the perspective of complexity and transdisciplinarity is a challenging exercise. However, it is increasingly essential when considering the training of professionals to work in the context of leisure.

A contextualized approach to leisure

Expertise is a social attitude which requires the contextualization of the elements that make up our societies and cultures. This understanding shows that leisure should not be treated as an isolated fact in a globalized world, but as a dimension of culture that is historically situated in close dialogue with the context. So the question is relevant: What approaches should be taken as a starting point to contextualize leisure in Latin America? The influences of Greco-Roman antiquity, which marked the establishment of the Western world, as proposed by De Grazia (1966), or processes that defined the beginning of modernity in Europe, such as industrialization and urbanization – as is stressed, for example, in publications by Dumazedier (1979) and other authors who endorse this view?

Since the twentieth century, these two distinct references generate controversy when trying to historically contextualize the subject of leisure studies. They are widely circulated in the elaborate theories about leisure in several countries, including Latin American countries. Although adopting different views, both interpretations relate to specific realities and, therefore, should not be generalized as universal (Gomes, 2011). In addition, they take a more focused, and narrower point of view, since they treat leisure as if it were constituted of only a ball, contrasted to productive work.

Both interpretations are inadequate and insufficient to contextualize leisure in our reality, which has its own historical, cultural, social, educational, political, economic, ethnic and environmental specificities. This instigates the development of new interpretations, approaches, reflections and systematization of knowledge to be able to engage critically with leisure in our Latin American context.

In this sense, it is urgent to question and review the interpretations that exclude the decisive participation of other realities beyond that of northern hemisphere countries in a power play that involves, in an unequal manner, various elements, which include the peoples and cultures of other continents such as Latin America, Africa and Asia. Obviously, the theoretical and conceptual assumptions elaborated by authors from other backgrounds, and historical times, can be interesting when they represent a starting point for new readings, interpretations, and reappraisals. However, as pointed out by Elizalde and Gomes (2010), the systematic knowledge both in Latin America, and abroad, need deeper and more critical dialogue taking into account social, political, historical, economic and environmental challenges, among others, present in every culture and every society.

English

Leisure and different languages

The cultural manifestation which are expressed by every social group as leisure options are conceived as languages to be learned and deciphered as a continuous process of education of the sensibilities. Human language is a possibility of expression of the individual creator who gives meaning to existence, gives a new meaning by transforming the world which can reveal itself in various forms: oral, written, gestural, visual, and artistic, among others. So it goes beyond speech: it is a means of expression, communication and information, and it is the ability of the subject to become the narrator (Gomes, 2004).

We cannot deny that experience of leisure from different languages is one of the important elements in developing the abilities to see, hear, feel, think and act in each person. If each person does not learn this knowledge, how will they be able to collaborate to educate the sensibilities of those with whom they interact or will interact, expanding the horizons of aesthetic experience?

Tardif (quoted by Caldeira, 2001) notes that the educator is not only someone who applies knowledge produced by others, but also an agent determined by social mechanisms. Teachers take their practice from the meanings that they attribute to them, a person who has a knowledge and tacit know-how, or in other words, from their own professional actions, and from which they guide the structure, select content, and prioritize activities. This explains why many professionals emphasize, in their daily practice, the experiences of leisure they subjectivity most enjoy being part of and is part of their life story.

Therefore it is important to grasp and decipher several languages, covering different human motivations and diversifying them, extending the range of aesthetic experiences and expanding the scope of training and professional experience in leisure. Through different languages – such as music, poetry, graffiti, virtual reality, painting, sculpture, dance, experiences and bodily expressions, photography and theater, among many others – you can develop values towards the process of construction of our society through the prism of culture. Leisure, one dimension of culture, can sharpen our sensitivities (sensitivity that is related to the sensory plane, but must also be social, political, ecological, etc.), and help us connect with ourselves, between us and in context in stimulating thinking about our society to transform it and reflect on broader issues, as it is closely linked to other planes of social life.

According to Santos (2000), many cultural practices can be authentic forms of popular entertainment, representative of the people *making culture*, and especially *doing politics*. Thus, leisure is also political, and it may be a revolutionary tool for mobilizing social change.

Making policy in this direction means addressing the root causes of the problems that plague our society, and many of them are related to Eurocentric thinking, the ideology of progress and the alleged dichotomies that limit our conceptions of being human, and

of the world, among other limitations. The bases of these structural problems need to be not only understood, but, above all, deconstructed in a dialogue and interaction with the requirements of the present.

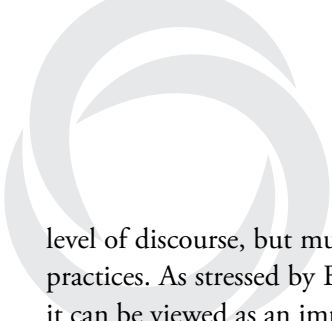### Leisure as a tool for problem-based, critical and transformative education

The globalized world, in the framework of the capitalist system has shown signs of acute human crisis of catastrophic proportions: social inequalities, with the realities of extreme poverty in the peripheral countries, accompanied by associated problems arising (unemployment, hunger, disease, low levels of education, extremely poor housing conditions, violence of all kinds, drug abuse, etc.) and environmental degradation with serious risk of ecological collapse. In contrast, technology has advancing to sophisticated levels, the rich get richer and rampant consumerism grows, creating a worrying situation (Grangeiro, 2009).

Although the important legacy left by the educator Paulo Freire may require re-reading and reinterpreting for the 21st century, many of his considerations remain key parameters to guide training in leisure that intends to be problem-solving, critical and capable of transforming the situation. So the notion that I defend and believe is that leisure can be one, but not the only important tool to mobilize revolutionary experiences, thus contributing to an education committed to social and cultural transformation, making society more humane and sustainable through music, poetry, dance, etc. (Gomes, 2010a)

Paulo Freire (1978) pointed out that all social and educational practice involves conceptions of human beings and of the world, which is the energy that motivates us and drives us in any direction. Therefore, the author draws attention to the implications of beliefs and values that determine human action, highlighting the importance of having a critical perception of reality, with a view to transforming action. The author expresses, as a starting point, the analysis and critical understanding of people about themselves and about their context, as "existing in the world and with the world," leaving recorded hallmarks, in thinking, in creating , in our actions – in short, in our values.

In addition, the author stresses that we need to question the fragmentations that we have incorporated without reflection, because they all bring with them an implicit hierarchical relationship. By thinking in mind / body, reason / emotion, male / female, white / black, written / oral, north / south, west / east and work / leisure relations, for example, automatically finds the situation of privilege and supremacy to the first term, at the expense of the second.

We all need to incorporate the condition of historical subject in our own daily lives, which can only be achieved through problem-solving, critical and transformative education. This paradigm shift was identified long ago and is already widely incorporated into the

level of discourse, but must reach the field of concrete actions in our everyday educational practices. As stressed by Elizalde (2010), leisure has much to contribute to this process, so it can be viewed as an important educational tool.

We must therefore commit ourselves to the creation of leisure practices linked in relationships of mutuality, not hierarchy. In general, education is understood as a process of forming concepts, values and attitudes from a one-way relationship, driven by one-dimensional and unifocal procedures and linear hierarchies. Within this process, are continuously produced differences of gender, class, ethnicity, generation, and many others. Understanding these differences is not given or natural, but is crucial because they are subject to redefinition. (Freire and Faundez, 1985)

Freire (1997) invites us to take our status as subjects of search, decision, of breakdown, and of option, as historical and transforming subjects from the moment we incorporate our role as ethical subjects. Ethics as the author points out is subject to racial, class, and gender discrimination. We must fight for this ethic which is inseparable from reflective educational practice. The best way to fight for this is to live it and ground it in our everyday educational practice, witnessing it, live in our everyday relationships.

The professional who seeks to qualify for the field of leisure is a key element in the organization of learning situations, and therefore, committed to the development of leisure as a tool of social education. After all, leisure is a field through which we can reflect on society and its groups, its organizational forms in temporal / spatial, sociability and its conflicts. Being in support of multiple meanings can provide a gateway to knowledge of impasses and possibilities that open up our reality (Magnani, 2000). So, as a human need and a dimension of culture based on playful experience of culture, leisure may be an important tool for critical and transformative problem-based education.

Final considerations

The knowledge defined in this paper does not exhaust the topic, as various other topics need to be systematized and deepened, to make more consistent and critical the training of professionals to work in the area of leisure. In any case, the knowledge outlined here shares the assumption that the acquisition of knowledge or technical discipline is not enough. By prioritizing the relationship between knowledge, values and attitudes, professional training here highlights a concern to overcome actions and behaviors that are limited to standardization and repetition that deplete themselves, characteristics inherent to many recreation programs that reduce leisure to content, techniques and methodologies.

Professional training committed to the assumptions outlined in this text needs to acquire the character of a network of organization with a cross-disciplinary, dynamic, innovative,

flexible and procedural approach, always open to new perspectives, highlighting the cognitive, cultural, social and emotional potential of those involved. It must be committed to overcoming the fragmented and partial understanding of the diverse aspects that make up our social life, which requires creativity, curiosity, a capacity for abstraction and a search for alternatives to solve the problems identified. Therefore, collective projects are essential, exchanging ideas, exploring the experience of diversity in its many interfaces with culture, the environment and society, respecting differences, through dialogue with the plurality, defending human rights and rediscovering the meanings of knowledge considered here, which are seen as necessary training to qualify as a professional in the area of leisure.

The knowledge outlined here provide a glimpse of differentiated possibilities for training as a professional in leisure, seeking critical and creative alternatives to traditional proposals, though still limited to the formal acquisition of content and technical dimension of professional action. These elements, although important in the field of leisure studies, are not sufficient to allow a contextualized training, consistent, reflective, dynamic, multifaceted and innovative, committed to the training of professionals capable of dealing with local and global challenges present and future.

Translation: Paul Shafee

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