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LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' CULTURAL PEDAGOGIES[1]

Aprendendo com as pedagogias culturais dos povos indígenas

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ABSTRACT

The work presented in this article is part of my PhD at University of Bristol (2009). This particular study has explored the nature of Brazilian Gaucho Deaf communities' ethos in relation to Deaf education based on a comparison to South Brazilian Guarani indigenous communities' ethos. I worked with a group of twelve Deaf professionals from Rio Grande do Sul; all informants had a teaching degree, four of them were researchers too. This work involved examining the group's

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[1] These days I prefer the term indigenous people to native people, as my fellow Brazilian researchers Lori Altmann and Rogerio Rosa have kindly taught me it was the adequate term to name the groups involved. I used *native* people in my PhD thesis (GONÇALVES, 2009). Altmann and Rosa have welcomed me to N.E.T.A. (Núcleo de Etnologia Ameríndia) the research group linked to Instituto de Ciências Humanas at Universidade Federal de Pelotas. I learnt a great deal from their long experience, vast knowledge and work in the field of Brazilian Indigenous Studies.

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teaching practices and views compared to a selection of literature on indigenous cultural pedagogies. I call these Deaf teachers 'educators', for this is the term they use to define their job and their work as leaders in the communities; they have a critical pedagogy understanding of this term and role (FREIRE, 1982b). I used critical ethnography with the deaf communities as a methodology. I did observations in the field with Deaf people and interviews. I gathered information from literature on indigenous people to draw this first comparison between the two groups, deaf and indigenous communities. The study results support the premise that Deaf pedagogies are effectively cultural pedagogies and share common aspects with indigenous pedagogies. The work also includes reflections on the methodological implications of intercultural research. Deaf studies research linking culture and education have only just started. This preliminary study has indicated that there is a great need for further research with Deaf communities and Deaf people working in Deaf education, in order to increase our understanding of Deaf epistemologies and Deaf pedagogical practices. Deaf pedagogies need to be acknowledged, valued and supported if Sign Languages and Deaf Cultures are to be preserved; the promotion of Deaf pedagogies and deaf-centered approaches in Deaf learning spaces is vital to the quality of community life and the successful socio, cultural and professional integration of Deaf people in both hearing and Deaf worlds.

Keywords: Deaf pedagogies. Indigenous pedagogies. Deaf education. Minority education.

RESUMO

O trabalho apresentado neste artigo é parte do meu doutorado na Universidade de Bristol (2009). Este estudo em particular explorou a natureza do ethos das comunidades Surdas gaúchas em relação à educação de surdos, com base em uma comparação com o ethos das comunidades indígenas do sul do Brasil. Trabalhei com um grupo de doze profissionais Surdos do Rio Grande do Sul, todos os informantes com diplomação em alguma licenciatura, quatro deles também atuantes como pesquisadores. Esse trabalho examinou as práticas de ensino de grupos com base em uma seleção de literatura sobre pedagogias culturais indígenas. Chamo esses professores surdos de "educadores", pois esse é o termo que eles usam para definir tanto seus fazeres profissionais como suas atividades como líderes nas comunidades, apresentando uma pedagogia crítica de quem entende esse termo e

seu papel (FREIRE, 1982b). Usei a etnografia crítica no olhar para as comunidades surdas como metodologia. Fiz observações de campo e entrevistas com pessoas surdas. Reuni informações da literatura sobre povos indígenas para fazer essa primeira comparação entre esses dois grupos, comunidades surdas e indígenas. Os resultados do estudo apoiam a premissa de que as pedagogias surdas são efetivamente pedagogias culturais e compartilham aspectos comuns com as pedagogias indígenas. O trabalho também inclui reflexões sobre as implicações metodológicas da pesquisa intercultural. Pesquisas em Estudos Surdos que ligam Cultura e Educação demonstram estar apenas começando. Este estudo preliminar indicou que há uma grande necessidade de novas pesquisas com as comunidades e pessoas Surdas que trabalham na educação de Surdos, a fim de aperfeiçoar nossa compreensão das epistemologias Surdas e práticas pedagógicas Surdas. Pedagogias Surdas precisam ser reconhecidas, valorizadas e apoiadas pela preservação das línguas de sinais e das Culturas Surdas; a promoção de pedagogias Surdas e abordagens centradas nas pessoas Surdas e em espaços de aprendizagem surdos é vital para a qualidade de vida da comunidade e para a bem-sucedida integração social, cultural e profissional das pessoas Surdas em ambos os mundos, ouvinte e Surdo.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogias Surdas. Pedagogias indígenas. Educação de surdos. Educação de minorias.

The idea of comparing Brazilian indigenous communities and Deaf communities had an intriguing start in my life as a researcher. Brazilian Deaf researcher Marianne Stumpf was in the United Kingdom collaborating with my research and doing her own PhD field work back in 2003. We were travelling for her research and doing common conferences between Germany, the United Kingdom and France. This gave me plenty of time to have informal interviews with her for my ethnographic study (GONÇALVES, 2009). My PhD has profited a lot from the exchange with the Deaf researchers' validation group in it. The topic we were talking about that day had nothing to do with indigenous people to start with, I was asking

her how Brazilian Gaucho Deaf communities had got to the concept of *pedagogia da diferença* as one of their central concepts back in the late nineties. I wanted to know how Deaf Pedagogy concept had been constructed in Rio Grande do Sul at that stage of my research. Her answer to that question has opened a door and a whole new perspective through which I still look into Deaf pedagogies today.

> We were talking to some American Deaf friends and they asked us how Deaf people in Brazil had come up with this idea of *pedagogia da diferença*. It started with this group of twenty Deaf people who were doing their teaching degrees in Rio Grande do Sul. This group would get together and discuss ways to teach Deaf people, as they all believed hearing pedagogy did not work with Deaf children. At the same time there was another group of Sign Language instructors meeting regularly who would discuss similar things whenever they had the chance. As the Deaf movement became stronger and more meetings took place, the more these ideas got spread. In the Congress on Bilingualism in 1999 we did not have the concept of *pedagogia da diferença* yet…but it was not long before Gladis Perlin had this idea of comparing Deaf people to native people. They had their own pedagogy that followed their culture and it became accepted, we are like them and we need ours too. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p. 185)

As a result of watching this statement in Sign Language by Stumpf, I decided to direct my efforts to search for similarities between Deaf and indigenous pedagogies both in epistemological and in teaching practices of the two groups. Brazilian Deaf Studies profits greatly from having the work of Vilhalva (2009) to illuminate us in this area. A few more studies looking into the situation of Deaf children born within indigenous hearing communities have appeared in the latest years but the analysis has not been focusing on the community ethos, but on the reaction of family and tribe to the child condition and or nature (LIMA, J. M. S & BRUNO, M., 2017). It is also important to note that Brazilian Sign Language studies have started from the comparison of an urban Brazilian Sign Language, Libras, and an indigenous Sign Language, Urubu-Kaapor

(FERREIRA-BRITO, 1984, 1993). These interesting facts make even more relevant the anthropological approximation between Deaf people and Indigenous people for a comparative analysis from a pedagogical point of view. I am going to summarise below the extent to which my preliminary comparison came to be concluded by the end of my own study back in 2009 and indicate how this original study has been expanded and aims to continue.

1. A COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND DEAF PEOPLE

Batterbury, Ladd and Gulliver (2007) introduced the term Sign Language Peoples (SLP´s) to describe Deaf communities and made the first approximation between Deaf people and 'native' people in literature. Their paper stemmed from several discussions and reflections about Brazilian indigenous communities in our seminars, research meetings and informal discussions at the University of Bristol as research colleagues and PhD candidates then. Those were the days we still had the Centre for the Deaf Studies at Bristol University. Sarah Batterbury was a lecturer at CDS, Gulliver and I were doing our PhD under the supervision of Dr. Paddy Ladd.

According to Batterbury and the other two colleagues, SLPs communities can be considered indigenous groups in need of legal protection regarding educational, linguistic and cultural rights in a similar way to other *First Nation indigenous communities* (BATTERBURY et al., 2007:1). The authors analysed the similarities between these two groups regarding life experiences, patterns of oppression and world views to make this comparison[4].

1.1. A common life of oppression under colonialism

Over the past 350 years or so, SLP's have been described by professionals as primitive, savage, retarded, subhuman, incapable of abstract thought, lacking in language, and animal-like (BRANSON & MILLER 2002; VAN CLEVE & CROUCH, 1989b). Native Peoples´

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[4] I will reproduce here the initials NP's – *Native Peoples* and SLP's – *Sign Language Peoples* the authors use in their article, but will refer to indigenous people in my own text.

(NP's) have gone through a similar process since they have always been seen as less than human and lacking in intellectual abilities judged by white male standards[5]. Both of them have suffered the conflict between the natural self and the colonised, *civilised* self expected from them.

Ladd and the other researchers in the group also point out that SLP's narratives share the same vocabulary as native peoples' discourses do speaking on issues such as nativeness, genocide, Deaf First Nations, cultural holism, linguistic and cultural ownership (LADD, 2003; BATTERBURY et al., 2007). Both groups also suffered neo-colonialist waves of mainstreaming in education and the violence of having their children stolen (ibid, 2007:12). Interestingly, Rio Grande do Sul researchers have already referred to the idea that Deaf communities have had their children *stolen* from them by oralism and invasive medical interventions (PERLIN, 2003). Religious charity and welfare organisations were also common colonialist practices for Deaf people and native people.

1.2. Similar concepts of space–territory and language

Another strong argument the authors use to compare SLP's and NP's are their relationships with the concepts of space, territory and ownership which both groups have. According to the authors of the article analysed (2007), both groups, Deaf and indigenous ones, believe they have an ontological relationship to the 'space' they share. Native Peoples have land as their territory, whereas Sign Language Peoples see Sign Languages as their space or territory. Their language is an explicitly non-physical, inherently diasporic (WRIGLEY, 1996; BATTERBURY et al., 2007:10) and linguistically embodied Deafspace (GULLIVER, 2005; BATTERBURY et al., 2007:10). The spatial-environmental characteristics resonate with other indigenous

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[5] Brazilian and other South American indigenous people have been described that way through centuries by colonialists who have been using that excuse to take away from them the protected land they live in according to their native way of life. However, abuse and killing of indigenous people have persisted to these days. MISSIONARY COUNCIL (CIMI) REPORT. *Violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.* Retrieved from: https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwCgLsXdJCjqfnRNvMnPxgfDrhR?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1
MISSIONARY COUNCIL (CIMI), FIAN BRAZIL, JUSTIÇA GLOBAL and ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES FOR DEMOCRACY. Report about the human rights situation of indigenous peoples in Brazil. Retrieved from: http://ajd.org.br/report-about-the-human-rights-situation-of-indigenous-peoples-in-brazil/

groups. They also view land, nature and language as agents with their own independent existence which help Native peoples to sustain their culture.

1.3. Similar world views and oral traditional cultures

This (2007) groundbreaking article presents situations or aspects like community-centred collectivist ethos and reciprocity, differences in conception and use of time, and high priority to sharing information as some of the examples of common cultural characteristics between Deaf people and indigenous people's cultures.

Both SLP's and NP's share oral traditional cultures and share problems with print-dominated majority cultures. Maintenance of an oral unwritten tradition including features such as folklore and storytelling are common in both cultures and a way to preserve culture.

1.4. Similar de-colonisation practices

Both sets of peoples, Deaf and indigenous, have developed a revival of their cultures and languages from the 1960s on. Brazilian native peoples have shown a very strong movement in the last sixty years to try and make this revival become a reconstruction on social and political levels, so they could see their land, languages and cultures protected. They have been a source of inspiration to many other social movements in Brazil and abroad, including Deaf peoples. These days Brazilian indigenous people face a cruel battle against them from land owners and abusive government who support Brazilian landowners. See the reports, referred to in this paper, on the increasing numbers of crimes indigenous people have suffering in Brazil in the latest years.

1.5. Geographical proximity

Unlike most European cultures, new world cultures, such as the ones found in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia, can share physical space with ancient native cultures up to the present

day. Among other things, this proximity helps create more opportunities to bring native peoples and local Deaf communities closer. This situation creates more communication and exchange between the two minority groups. This has been happening in Brazil to a great extent, as Deaf and native leaders frequently share the same table for discussions on minority groups in congresses and other political spaces within the social arena. This has also helped Deaf communities in Rio Grande do Sul identify themselves with native communities in the past (GONÇALVES, 2009).

Many of the features of Batterbury, Ladd and Gulliver's (2007) groundbreaking paper were actually independently presented by the informants of this research somewhat earlier between 2001 and 2007, not only that, Rio Grande do Sul leaders referred to similarities between Deaf and native people in the first contacts I had with their Deaf communities as early as 1999. The discussions that Deaf researchers and educators had in their study groups and seminars have always been quickly spread to the Deaf communities as the educators and researchers would work closely to their communities. According to our informants, the history of oppression of Brazilian native people is a strong parallel point for bringing native and Deaf people closer. Deaf informants in this research often reiterated the fact that they also had suffered similar levels of oppression to the ones native peoples had suffered. Thus, in their attempts to disseminate their culture through education practices and systems for their peoples, a good number of Deaf people in Rio Grande do Sul have mirrored themselves and their movement on native peoples' since late twentieth century.

When I first visited a Deaf school in the inner part of the state, I was told an interesting story related to local native peoples. A year earlier the native people's movement in that part of the state had invaded the Deaf school building to make it their headquarters in the city as they knew it was a state government building. Back then very few people knew that the building had been built to be a Deaf school. When it became public that the native peoples' movement were using the building, Deaf community leaders came to sit and talk to the native leaders. As Pedro, one of our Deaf research participants, explains,

They did not know it had been chosen to be a school, nor that it was a Deaf school. We sat and talked between our leaders and it was very easy to find an agreement. Both groups pressured the government to find a place and sort out the problems the indigenous people group was having. The situation of Deaf people is very similar to Indigenous People's movement here in Brazil. We owe a lot of respect to their movement. They are aware that the school is essential for the preservation of their community and culture. So they fight to make sure they keep their culture and community together just like us, they have been doing it much longer than we have, we need to learn from them. It took ages for us to be granted this building by the government to open our school. When we came here we realised it had been taken by the Indian movement as a headquarters to their movement. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p.188)

2. *REKO ETE*: GUARANI PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

The Guarani philosophy in education is called *Reko Ete* and it helps them bring up their children and educate them within their culture. An essential thing to Guaranis and Reko Ete is that the people involved in education are closely in tune with the community and take part in the community life fully.

According to Guaranis and their leaders education is *a branch from Guarani culture*. This branch has its roots linked to opy guasu, Guarany traditions and knowledge. This is where reko ete, or their teaching philosophy, comes from. This is why the Elder's council is essential to the good pedagogy and administration of Guaranis schools. The pedagogy is rooted in Guarani language and the culture oral tradition (LOPES, 1981).

According to Reko Ete, good communication and use of orality, to join community activities actively and respect the elder and their advice, as well as the sacred guarani words and beliefs and one's family are essential (MELIA, 1992).

The Guarani school promotes the vision of a collectivist society, where decisions are made based on the opinion of the

majority. This school also needs to establish a dialogue with non-native cultures and their knowledges so that children can live between the different worlds and learn from them through the perspective of their own culture.

The tribe activities are part of school curriculum. Children join community meetings, assemblies. Indigenous people's pedagogy respects and makes good use of community life as pedagogical tool or resource. Here are some of the basic strategies they follow which are very similar to the ones Gaucho Deaf communities use:

> i) Indigenous communities should choose their educators, think ahead and discuss how to train new ones;
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> ii) It is necessary to get the elders, teachers and parents to discuss about education and the system we are going to use in the school;
>
> iii) It is essential to explain what *pedagogia da diferença* is all about to the community and its leaders;
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> iv) The native leaders and the communities need to support and give incentive to educators;
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> v) Educators need to work hard and make an effort and show interest for students who fail to attend the lessons, for instance;
>
> vi) We need a group of educators to think of curricula and teaching materials that follow our ways.
>
> vii) Universities and other supporting agencies need to help with the discussions within the community and help us convince authorities to respect and support indigenous people education (Adapted and translated from Guarani *Reko Ete* apud Nemboaty Guasu Guarani, 1993).

3. A PARALLEL BETWEEN NATIVE PEDAGOGIES AND DEAF PEDAGOGIES

Through my research (GONÇALVES, 2009), I tried to identify any possible parallels between the two sets of pedagogies,

I discussed all the data with my Deaf informants in the study and present below my findings.

3.1. Pedagogies of Happiness

Native people see life in a holistic perspective. For instance, the *Wheel of Life* (Manitoba Ministry of Education, 2003), a common concept/philosophy across several native cultures, sees life as an integration of all perspectives, spiritual, physical, ethical, emotional and others. The Native perspective advises that only through union the principle of wholeness can lead to happiness and fulfilment.

In a similar way, indigenous people tend to see work and education as roads that should lead to contentment more than achieving material aims (KAA, 1994). Although, some native values can change significantly from group to group, and white man's values have interfered in original native cultural ones in most places, the worship of simplicity and the pursue of happiness as a first aim has remained strong for most indigenous groups along the centuries. They believe education should help students achieve these goals in the first place, above any other aim. Native people study and work for different cultural reasons and motivations than the ones white people tend to do (GRUPPIONI, 2006).

I found a similar perspective among the Deaf participants of this research. For instance, Deaf adults interviewed believe Deaf education should focus in Deaf children's life skills. Informants gave the example emotional skills for students to understand their life between hearing and Deaf worlds are not considered as part of the curriculum or frequently dealt in other spheres. Antonio summarises what seems to be a genuine Deaf aspiration in the group I studied.

> Ultimately, our primary aim is that children be happy. That's where we start from and where we want to get to. We want them to grow confident in who they are first to find their space in the world. So one of the first skills we need to teach them is to learn how to live between hearing and Deaf worlds. Of course succeeding professionally and getting equipped with the information and skills they need to do so is essential too, but the latter

cannot come without the former. So human de-
velopment and finding happiness within oneself
and the world are essential to us whilst we teach
our children. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p.190)

3.2. Pedagogies which are people focused, not only knowledge focused

In a similar fashion to Native pedagogies, Deaf pedago-
gies also tend to be natural and informal. They are more needs
focused and people focused in the first place, instead of knowl-
edge focused (GRUPIONI, 1997; BISHOP and GLYNN, 2000). Ac-
cording to an informant, Deaf people find it hard to understand
why formal hearing education seems to be so different from real
life most of the time (Nara). Nowadays, schools and curricula in
general can easily become more knowledge focused than actually
cater for the whole development of students and their real needs.
Education, professionals and students all become slaves to infor-
mation per se. The question of whether that piece of information
is valid or relevant to that group of students is not usually asked,
for instance. According to observations in both pedagogies, Deaf
and native, teaching and curriculum design when they are left to
the native or Deaf educators usually tend to be more influenced
by experiences that relate to students' lives and focus on their
everyday needs more than anything else (GRUPIONI, 1997,2006;
BISHOP and GLYNN, 1999; QUADROS & PERLIN, 2007). A good ex-
ample is the difficulty that some mainstream schools teachers and
systems have in understanding native approach to harvest times
and the cultural and practical necessity these people have of inte-
grating their children in such activities (Manitoba Ministry of Ed-
ucation, 2003). Non-native pedagogies usually judge this practice
from their own perspectives and experiences.

Another interesting aspect is that topics in both Deaf edu-
cators and indigenous teachers' curricula tend to relate to survival
in the hearing and in the white worlds or to the preservation of
the minority culture involved. Most common topics found within
the curricula deal with the whole development of the person and

life in the community. The tendency is that most information taught needs to serve these aims in the first place. A concern with knowledge development in general, curiosity for the world and information in general is usually present. As Nara puts it,

> Deaf children need to be equipped for life emotionally and information-wise at the end of the day. Most Deaf students cannot get any support from their families due to the language barrier, so we need to do it all ourselves at school and in the community. We cannot frustrate students again at school, we need to give them what they need in the first place; this is why we focus so much on the life skills and knowledge they can apply in their lives. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p.191)

3.3. Pedagogies in which individual and collective aims blend together

One could explain the overall aims of Deaf pedagogies from a Deaf perspective as having a threefold perspective. As a primary aim, Deaf educators focus on helping children find balance and happiness within themselves between hearing and Deaf worlds. Along with that, comes the collective aim, to develop the students' responsibility to keep native Deaf culture and language strong and alive. On a third level, Deaf educators aim for their students to access information and knowledge that can help them become professionals, get skilled and enter the job market to become socially and financially independent. As Fidel puts it,

> Children need to understand who they are and find their identity first, whatever way they construct it; they need to be happy with it so they can move freely between the hearing and the Deaf worlds. They need to be introduced to community life and hopefully find their role in it. They need to know they are responsible for it too, and that they need to do their bit for their community to survive. By feeling safe and happy within themselves and relating to their community, they will

> be able to develop the skills they need to interact
> and survive in society. They need knowledge and
> as much new information as they can get to do so,
> and that is the school's task, we have not forgot-
> ten that. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p. 162-163)

3.4. Pedagogies favouring the construction of learning spaces and a *Carpe Diem* effect

As linguistic oppression and lack of accessibility to educa-
tion have always been in native people and Deaf people way, native
and Deaf communities have created alternative spaces to learn. It
is a feature of their cultures that they make learning a daily expe-
rience, and education is seen as a natural part of daily life, rather
than a formal process separate from it. They make use of all oppor-
tunities they have to learn about things whenever they are together
with other Deaf people and can exchange information. There is a
sense of urgency – they want to use all the time they have at hand
and all their chances to be together and learn.

However, in the native case there is much more space and
time available than there is in most Deaf people's lives. Indigenous
communities usually live together and share the same space as in
a reserve with their own school, their sense of urgency is not as
visible and acute as it is in the Deaf one. As Batterbury et al. (2007)
put it, there is a sense of urgency in sharing as much as they can
whenever and wherever they meet because there are many more
time and space restrictions in Deaf lives than are found in other
minorities.

Notwithstanding, similarly to native pedagogies, the con-
cepts of time and space in relation to teaching are peculiar. In the
Deaf way, learning and teaching can and, quite often need to hap-
pen anywhere e.g. in the bus, outdoors, while they are practising
sports, and in the Deaf association environment. There is no time to
waste and all that is learnt should have its clear purpose.

> Deaf students, children or adults, they always
> have questions and they ask me them wherever
> we are. Quite a few of these relate to lessons with
> the hearing educators that they could not fully

understand, but some of them are family issues, like dating, sex, life in the hearing world and other things. They feel comfortable to ask and I feel happy to help them. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p.163)

3.5. Pedagogies which provide mobility between knowledge roles

The role of the educator in Deaf pedagogy is that of a sharer; students act as collaborators in the learning process. Learning and teaching tends to be more reciprocal between educator and students and between students themselves. In Rio Grande do Sul's Deaf education practice, for instance, there is the common figure of the student-leader who is a particular student who will help others learn and support the educator in the teaching task. This does not mean that he is necessarily the most intelligent or multi-talented student in the room. His or her abilities could vary, as well as which student in the group will perform that task at a given time. So, the teaching mobility and their roles is visible in this practice.

Regarding native cultural teaching practices, one can find mobility in the importance given to the roles of the extended family, educators and elders in the education of their children and people. The community view is that they help you become who you are, as education of the children is not only the parents' responsibility (BISHOP and GLYNN, 1999; Manitoba Ministry of Education). In a similar way Deaf communities and Deaf children themselves rely on similar wider cultural educational mechanisms. Deaf children of hearing parents will need the support of Deaf community adults for their education and the elders of the community also need that contact to pass on the culture and knowledge to the new Deaf generations.

The role of the educator tends not to be authoritative, but that of a sharer in both cultures analysed. That can be seen in the fact that Deaf and native Educators are more like guides and are able to move between the positions of 'knower' or 'not-knower' more easily than in traditional hearing/white centred teaching environments. Learning tends to be more informal and in a more sharing atmosphere, since most educators do not tend to

place themselves as knowledge experts. I commonly find the student-leader that supports the teacher in his task acting in a teaching collaborative positive way to help all students achieve learning within the group, not in a superior position. This practice also agrees with the Freirean concept of being an educator. An educator should always know that no one knows everything and that you always learn while you teach (FREIRE, 1982). As Fidel explains,

> My students know they owe me respect because I am an educator, but I am one of them. In the past it was strange for Deaf students to get used to the idea of one of them being their educator. But we overcame these things. I know them inside and I do not need them to believe I am superior to them or anything. I need them to be eager to learn and share what they have learned with me and others. So I do not need to pretend I know everything. I am just honest to share what I have and show them I am open to learn with them too. (GONÇALVES, 2009, p.164)

3.6. Pedagogies in which the educator-learner relationship matters a lot

Cultural Pedagogies tend to be more relationship-based than most non-culturally centred pedagogies or mainstream pedagogies. Teaching relies on a good relationship and a relation of trust between educator and student, as a holistic perspective to education will need that to effectively take place. Educators and learners tend to become more committed to the learning process and to people involved in the learning situations. Deaf educators believe it is important to know each other, be friends and participate in the students' lives. That commitment seems to help and support students' learning and achievements, since they feel they owe themselves and their educator the extra effort to do better. As Pedro explains,

> I am not here only for the money I get. And I am not here just to do a job either. It matters to me what is going to be made of these children beyond their school and professional lives. I care for them

and I see this as part of my job, if you think of it as a profession. The task of an educator goes beyond that of an educator. (GONÇALVES, 2009 p. 194)

4. LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER AND THE NEXT STEP AHEAD

I have suggested a comparison between Deaf and native pedagogies as cultural pedagogies based on a brief review of literature on indigenous education and evidence of discussion on the topics with my research participants (GONÇALVES, 2009). I have searched for similarities between Deaf and indigenous pedagogies both in epistemological views and in the teaching practices of the two groups involved. I came to the conclusion that there seems to be a great deal of similarity between the two groups' pedagogies beyond what this preliminary study has revealed. The extent to which this preliminary comparison will reflect upon future studies will be revealed in the years to come. The study has been expanded and aims to continue the revision by Deaf professionals on the education of their children and peers exploring also the aspects in which the practices seem to blend with other indigenous minorities. Finally, I reiterate that there is Deaf pedagogy as a production of culture, along with the other cultural pedagogies which have already been identified. I also insist that there is a need of acknowledging it and giving incentive to these practices for the future of Deaf education.

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