



Research Paper

School teachers dare to teach democratically?

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ABSTRACT: Paulo Freire, Brazilian thinker and educator, says that as teachers we come into contact with people, children, adolescents and participate in their development. We can either help our students discover knowledge or hinder them. The teacher, according to Freire, has an educational mission. The aim of liberating education, in particular, is to make the student aware that teaching cannot be specific to a "banking system" of transmission of sterile knowledge. But do today's teachers give their students triggers to "open the wings" of imagination, and critical thinking? This paper triggered by Paulo Freire's reflections on the democratization of education, aims to highlight the democratic elements that teachers use in their teaching. In particular, through a qualitative research design, with the contribution of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, bits of progressive and liberal education, as well as traditional/mechanical perspectives for the teaching of 11 philologists, who teach in schools of Thrace, are highlighted. The research analyses presented through the observation sheets of 59 pre-service teachers of the Department of History and Ethnology, who in the context of their practicum in the academic course "School Pedagogy", during the spring semester 2019, attended the teaching of experienced teachers. The analyses of the research highlight important elements of progressive education, such as teachers' "humility", love of teaching and student, tolerance, justice, encouragement. On the other side, elements of a traditional approach to learning are presented, such as teacher-centered instruction and behavioral perspective. But who wins in this "hide-and-seek" play by the obedience of the traditional school, on the one hand, and the freedom of the progressive school, on the other? Who's going to say "Ready or not, here I come"?

KEYWORDS: Liberating education, Democratic teacher, Dialogue, Ordinary teaching procedures

Received 18 December, 2020; Accepted 02 January, 2021 © The author(s) 2021.

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I. INTRODUCTION

How many of us haven't heard of teaching that gets near to a behavioral approach? In other words, we perceive teachers who transmit knowledge, values and attitudes to their students. In such a context, as Paulo Replus Neves Freire (1921-1997) says, the teacher's "narrative" and the student's silence (culture of silence) dominate [1] [2]. In this -strict, inflexible, lack of creativity, freedom, imagination - behavioral learning model "kills" the teacher-student relationship, neglects the student's sincere interest in education and learning, and circumvents the principles of the self-regulated and critically thought person.

What is being promoted is a hypocritical learning model; a "banking concept of education" model, as Freire points out. With this analogy, it places the teacher in the position of the depositor, who through the process of transferring it, gives this knowledge to the depository, to the student [3]. The student (as a bank employee) saves this knowledge and stores it in his memory and recovers it whenever his teacher/depositor wishes [4].

This one-way course of transmission of "useless" knowledge in "repositories"/ to students, certainly in modern times and educational reality has no substance, but unfortunately it still has a place. It is even dominated and implemented by teachers, who impose their own "power" on the school environment, who consider it isolated and cut off from the usual social practices of their students. Such a school, without taking into account the social context, needs of students and their interests, but which, on the contrary, emphasizes knowledge [5] cannot lead to the constant vigilance of the student, consequently also of society [6].

This school, described above, is rather a school of the "oppressed" [7], if we want to paraphrase the words of the Brazilian educator. The oppressed student lives in a unrealistic/utopian school, in a "prison" school, which deprives him of the right to true knowledge, discovery, learning, questioning and freedom of thought and action. Moreover, the school as a politically part of society "blinds" the student, deprives him and hides the

value of communication, dialogue and equality. In the behavioral, politically demarcated school, the student wanders into a "conspiracy" that gives him the characterization "unlearned" and "ignorant" and the teacher the characterization "omniscient" and "expert" [8].

In this "hide-and-seek" played by the "obedience" of the traditional-oriented school, on the one hand, and the "freedom" of the modern-oriented school, on the other, rather so far wins obedience or, rather, the obedience of the teacher and/or education system to accept the change, and transformation of the school from a "knowledge data-base" to a body of free expression of ideas and perceptions. *"It's time to come out"* for the mechanistic school, which fools the liberating school, resulting in the latter "re-guarding" them and playing again until it "wins" and enters the game of knowledge and learning.

The traditional approach to learning rather "hides" well from freedom and dominates the classrooms. *But how can the teachers seek 'freedom' and find it?* Rather, this can be achieved if the teachers reflect on their epistemological assumptions, come into "conflict" with the existing, formal-type curriculum, go against the old and anachronistic perceptions of colleagues and parents, which constitute a heavy "curbstone", which stands before them. The question is what the teacher will do: *Will he stop in front of the "curbstone" and obey the stubborn and unrealistic "protections" of official declarations and his earlier assumptions about learning, or will he overcome the obstacle and free up his field of vision?* The point is to build bridges that unite the world with school, to give a social and political orientation to learning, to stand up to change and the "interest" of our students and not to put barriers and walls that isolate the school from society, from empowerment and student liberation [9].

This positivistic-oriented school, which has just been described, has no place in Freire's theory or, better yet, in Freire's reflections. The Brazilian educator is against the positivists and idealists, who propose a school cut off from social action and practice [10]. Freire's school cannot be detached from the political dimension of knowledge and learning. The a-political explanations of human knowledge, as he notes, have no place in the context of liberation or, according to Shor, libertarian education [11]. School for Freire means dialogue, knowledge building and -social, political- action through metacognitive "channels" of activities and teaching techniques. And certainly the democratization of education cannot arise through traditional and "closed" curricula, which strictly obey specific objectives, specific learning content, methods and techniques, as well as in static and traditional forms of evaluation of the students' performance (without possibilities of deviation). With traditional, and cut off from social life, curricula, Freire notes, there is no hope of cultivating critical consciousness skills [12].

For Freire, public education requires both the acquisition of reading, writing and numbering knowledge (literacy skills) related to living conditions (functional literacy skills) and familiarity with techniques of discussion and dialogue, research, communication, expression and art. He proposes dynamic learning models through interdisciplinary approaches and cooperation with society. More specifically, through an interdisciplinary "project", it proposes the curricula reform by participatory action, by linking the school with practice and by continuous training of teachers in the logic of critical reflection and literacy, action research and continuous updating of knowledge [13]. Fundamental concepts in Freire's thoughts are education and democracy, with the aim of bridging these two concepts. Questions that concerned him are: *Can we teach democratically? What does it mean to educate someone about democracy? How do we function as teachers/trainers when our society is democratic or when it is not democratic, but it takes advantage of the principles of progressive education?* These questions raise "power" and "freedom" as important concepts.

Freire, through critical awareness, puts at the "table" of reflection the transformation of the school into an institution that cultivates "tolerance" in a metaphorical sense. Such a virtue, complemented by the Brazilian educator, will help the teacher and the student to perceive the different, to hear the other "voices", to learn from them and to realize that there is no superior and inferior. "Tolerance" for Freire translates as respect for what is said by others, even if I do not agree with them. However, tolerance does not mean obedience [14].

Education can therefore be a lever for social transformation, vigilance of the masses and awareness through a meditative and liberating approach. This Marxist optics to knowledge requires teachers who *"dare to teach"*, based on Freire's book [15]. Schools, therefore, as they are closely linked to the current social and political culture, pass it on to their students respectively. In these schools, the role of the modern teacher cannot and must not be neutral. Perhaps, it is considered not only an error, but also a "crime" that the teacher does not take a position, does not place himself in the formation of the personality and knowledge of his students. This, of course, can also be seen as guidance in the sense of manipulation. It should be noted, however, that the teacher must take a position, direct to a certain extent, not "wash the hands" of his students, nor leave them alone. The teacher cannot therefore be another Pilate who supports the views of the dominant ideology [16].

The qualifications of the democratic teacher, as Freire codifies them, are: 'humility', which is associated with the declining of elements of arrogance and selfishness. The humble teacher is not authoritarian, he is conciliatory, free to express his views, but also to listen to the views of his students. In the logic of this conciliation, he takes down the role of "enlightened teacher" and assumes the role of equal (but without anarchy)

interlocutor with his students. It does not equate the different roles, but accepts that it cannot know everything and that there are different versions and opinions on any topic of discussion [17].

Along with the above virtue ranks 'love', not with the logic of a teacher, who acts as a "mother" who takes care of the student, but with the logic of love towards teaching, despite the difficulties that may arise in his profession. Love, for Freire, relates to militancy at work, to the claim and "elevation" of his voice. In this way teachers, loving their profession, move away from sterile rationality and through their awareness of various social and political issues can act as "political transformers" [18].

Another element, which is considered extremely important and added to the teacher's "toolbox", is 'courage'. Courage relates to the awareness of the fear that the teachers may have in the context of their educational practice and decision, at times, to articulate a word and oppose the status code; to the "power" of the state (the principal, the parents). Democratic teachers are honest and express their fears, without letting them paralyze them and being an obstacle in shaping the cultural identity of their students [19].

Another virtue is the teacher's 'tolerance' towards the different point of view, the different "voice". Of course, it must not be misinterpreted as a polite retreat into something with which the teacher does not agree. In the classroom tolerance must have limits that everyone respects [20]. Sexist, racial and class stereotypes should not have a place in teachers who are tolerant, but also in their students [21].

Those elements that make up the profile of the democratic teacher include 'determination'. A teacher cannot be undecided, nor can he defend his decision. It is noted by Freire that a libertarian style of teacher "authority" can be worse than an authoritarian style of "authority". This is because, indifferent or without determination, the teacher "falls" into the eyes of his students, is burdened and restored. Therefore, it is seen as a moral weakness. Decisions, within the framework of democracy, are taken together with our students, setting rules and setting out all the necessary elements, before a decision is taken. *But is the teacher fair?* 'Justice' is another qualification of the democratic teacher. As the Brazilian educator notes, there may be sympathies in a school environment, but these should not work at the expense of the other students in the class. The teacher must possess the virtue of justice in the context of ensuring equal rights in the classroom [22].

Another element relates to the 'wisdom' of how a teacher acts and how patience and impatience flow. A highly patient teacher can become fatal and forgiving, exceeding the permissible limits and remaining idle. On the contrary, a highly impatient teacher can be characterized by a lack of reason and deeds, becoming entangled in an activist logic (I act because I have to act), without meaning and purpose. Freire, at this point, suggests, if we could define it this way, it's an Aristotelian perspective, as he describes it, as "impatient patience". The above virtue is also related to the 'verbal sparing' of the teacher. Patience can lead the teacher to a perfectly controlled and non-socially colored reason, while, on the other hand, extreme impatience can contribute to unruly reasons, to reasons that have no measure and that can create problems in the educational process [23].

The teacher must also be characterized by 'the joy of living'. *What's that supposed to mean?* To take into account everything related to the lives of himself and his students, to build knowledge with the aim of forming a "happy" school, a school, in which students discuss, think, reflect, act, love, create, imagine. Based on this virtue, the school can also be associated with principles of so-called "emotional learning programs", which take into account the student's feelings and with "vehicle" them, attempt to socialize and adapt to social life [24].

In a healthy social and school environment there cannot be no 'conflict'. Conflict can be cognitive, but also social-political. The teacher conflicts both externally (institutionally) and internally (role-belief conflict). Without conflict, as Freire refers, there is no life, there is no democracy and freedom of thought [25]. The teacher, however, should be aware that conflict is most likely to lead to a rupture, not only with the system, with students, parents, but also with his own cognitive and emotional -internal - world. Creative conflict also leaves room for the student to doubt, question and express his or her views.

Democratic teachers must also 'read their students' in the classroom. In other words, to have the ability to decode them; their language, their values, their speech and interests [26]. Teaching, therefore, can be an interesting evolutionary course for the teachers to "read" their students, to allow them to make mistakes, to hear their voices. In such a process, it may be possible for the student to "freely" now articulate a reason, to take the space to be in the educational process and to self-improvement. The process of decoding can be done in reverse, allowing their teachers to "read" them and express their views on their professional identity. In this logic, fortunately, teacher-centered instruction, the mechanistic approach to learning, "falls into limbo" and an interactive form of education is promoted with the aim, but also important meanings.

Teachers, as 'animators', encourage their students to stand forward courageously in their choices and to defend their cultural identity. The "free" teachers give another perspective on teaching and talks about the rights of students in school, society and life. The aim of the modern and democratic teachers is also to give their students, as Freire notes, "creative wings in their imagination". We can therefore mobilize our students as teachers so that they can 'free their imaginations', become creative and "fly", having dreams, with their wings in a context of liberal and highly "revealing" education [27].

Also, the 'interactive-dialogue type of education' as a means of 'discipline' and boundaries in the classroom can be another positive element, added to the 'baggage' of the effective teacher. Avoiding authoritarianism or libertarian leadership in the classroom are goals of the liberal teacher, which can be achieved through critical dialogue with his students. A dialogue, therefore, which does not obey the "hypocrisy" of the current curriculum and the declarations of those responsible, but the sincere interest and professionalism of teachers, can give a new perspective on the teacher-student relationship [28]. Freire, on the other hand, is not against all forms of lecture and is not only in favor of meditating education. For him, even the lecture can be creative and critically trouble the apprentice. The content and dynamics, he adds, of the lecture can be usable "tools" in the hands of democratic teachers, who will not say any more "lullabies" to their students.

Another virtue of the teachers is linked to their 'accountability' towards their students. Referring to accountability, we mean consistency of reasons and actions. A progressive teacher must be consistent in what he says and what he ultimately does in the context of the educational process. Freire notes that a teacher cannot, on the one hand, blame and criticize an authoritarian educational system, while, on the other hand, exercise his own authoritarian "power" at his micro-level, in his classroom. Of course, in order to achieve a democratic education we should cultivate in our teachers the skill 'to talk with the students' and not 'to talk to the students' [29]. The first perspective is more holistic, more pedagogical and liberal, while the second embraces us in a traditional approach, which as teachers "sell" knowledge to the logic of the ideology of capitalism, without taking into account the social context in teaching. So we talk with our students, we make them part of the educational process, we talk about everything without having in mind only the evaluation, performance and the conformity with the current social and political system.

Let us add the concept of the 'artist teacher', who regards teaching as an ongoing process of formation. Through the knowledge discussed in the classroom, comes the revelation, the beautiful, and the life that, according to the Brazilian educator, shapes and evolves the student and gives him an "artistic" result. In the name of liberating pedagogy, the teacher as an "artist", through the coloring of his voice, his gestures, his non-verbal communication, his attitude, can create an "aesthetic" relationship with his students [30].

Progressive teachers also know and make it clear to their students that 'they are all together' in the classroom, discuss, doubt, question, learn, interact, but are not equal. The teachers are not equal to their students. Clearly, there are distinct roles. The difference, of course, between the styles of each teacher relates to the perspective towards equality. Democratic teachers consult with their students, but their diversity is neither "competitive" nor selfish. Therefore, in a healthy and democratic educational environment "I am next to the student", we act together, but both parties know that we are not equal. In such a process, the teacher not only teaches, but also learns. The progressive teacher clearly does not separate teaching from learning [31]. It is also understood that the democratic teacher listens to his students and learns from them. His daily interaction with students and his subject, "teaching" him many things and entering the school space ready to learn and learn from his students, from their behavior and attitude, from their points of view. Thus, the teacher, in this sense, is characterized as a "teacher trainer" in a context of informal learning [32].

Certainly, for some teachers the above theoretical framework is a dream situation, a state of utopia. Many teachers argue, perhaps 'cynically', as Freire rightly notes, that it does not matter what they do in their teaching or what they try to change, because everything is set above. They therefore remain at one end of 'patience', idle and passively accept what the formal education system provides them. In such a context, teachers tend to "serve" this ready-to-eat food, in turn, to their students, without having tried it or even if they tried it, they do not want to admit whether they liked it or not [33].

What is a teacher? Does he "deliver" knowledge, methods and practices in his teaching? Does he obey the existing educational and political ideology and reproduce it in school? Is he disciplined in a system of hypocritical approach to knowledge and truth? For Freire, a teacher needs spiritual "discipline", not to obey the orders of society and the system, but to be able to come forward, express his views, challenge, inspire, "free" his students and not be a "bureaucrat of the mind" [34]. Only then, of course, will his students trust him and listen to him. To do this you need discipline in the practice of teaching and learning [35]. We also need discipline in our relationships with others, with our students, with different and mutual respect.

Despite the fact that Freire when he wrote *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* (1972) was booted from a specific social and political context, in our society too, the interpretation we give to the "oppressor" and the "oppressed" in the wider educational environment is of considerable value. So let's consider who's oppressing who. *Is the teacher oppressing the modern student? Is the student oppressed by an authoritarian education system? Is the teacher manipulated and oppressed by the educational leadership and the proclamations of "closed" curricula?*

Freire adds that the teacher must be a politician (political dimension), knowledgeable about the process of teaching and learning (scientific dimension) and an artist (aesthetic dimension), rushing to add that the combination of the above is by no means an easy task [36]. Having this information, the teacher will be prepared, responsible and competent and will not disappoint his students, who have questions, doubts,

expectations and want to learn [37]. Clearly, the progressive teacher must be a very good connoisseur of the subject he teaches, but, above all, he must know how to help his students learn. The "how", for Freire, has to do not only with the methodological dimension in learning, but also with the aesthetic approach adopted, as teaching about him is also considered "art".

II. THE RESEARCH

The research conducted during the spring semester 2018-2019, attempts to answer the question: *What democratic and traditional/conventional elements do teachers show in their classrooms?* With the trigger of Paulo Freire's reflections, which focus on the democratization of education and how teachers respond accordingly, this research aims to highlight and discuss the qualifications of modern teachers, who teach either democratically or traditionally. Units of analysis [38] were the observation sheets, or, otherwise, the reflective diaries, of 59 pre-service teachers (19 student groups), who attended the course "School Pedagogy", in the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, during their pedagogical practicum. The pre-service teachers' quotes who observed the teaching of eleven in-service philologists, were analyzed through the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. The research is characterized by a purely qualitative research design, utilizing a productive model (starts from the theory of anti-authoritarian education) [39].

Taking into account, therefore, the subjective look and perspective of the candidate teachers, are recorded and presented on the basis of the "virtues" of democratic teachers according to Freire, the characteristics of the philologists of Thrace who either approach the logic of liberal education or are closer to the traditional and behavioral perspective on teaching. Of course, such research cannot lead to generalizations, as it does not focus on a representative sample, nor on quantitative measurements with weighted research tools. On the contrary, the data presented and interpreted are subject to the bias of both the students who attended the specific teachings and the researcher, based on his theories, ethics and values. The study therefore concerns a small sample, which is not randomly representative (but is a convenient sample). These limitations can be overcome by future research that takes these issues into account.

III. RESEARCH ANALYSES

3.1 HUMILITY

According to the reflections of the Brazilian democratic educator, teachers must be close to their students, give space and allow them to express themselves in a context of respect and mutual understanding. The teacher is "humble", but not a coward and with a lack of self-respect [40]. And according to the quotes of the pre-service teachers of this research there are clear elements of humility, which presuppose on the part of teachers' courage, self-confidence, and respect towards students. Teachers, therefore, have as their basic principle that they are not "enlightened" and "bathed" with divine charisma, clearly and are not experts.

Through the observation sheets, in particular, we have the following reports: *"It seemed not to be the teacher the authority, but it helped the critical ability of its students (...) (2¹)". "They were given (students) the opportunity to express their own opinions and ideas according to their experiences, without receiving any critical comments (6)". "The focus of the lesson was the students, because they attended, commented, exported, gave conclusions on their own with a little help from the teacher (11)".*

A humble teacher listens to all students, even if he considers some less competent or knowledgeable of a subject. This is a very important example of a democratic approach to teaching, with a prerequisite as teachers to take off the garment of arrogance and absolute authority.

3.2 LOVE

The power of love in the educational process is heard from very early on Pestalozzi, for example, as the educator of love, refers to a selfless approach of his students, aiming at their spiritual and emotional alertness [41]. I love my student, I love teaching and these elements come to "arm" me with patience, courage and mobilize me as a teacher, in the face of any difficulties of my profession and the associated adversity. As Freire notes, the teacher without "equipped love" cannot withstand the humiliation, which is often driven by any government through low wages and shameful reactions towards his profession [42]. Similarly, the teachers of this research seem to be "equipped" with love and passion for both teaching and their students.

In particular, it is noted: *"It is characteristic of the (teacher) that she wants to help her partner, her fellow man, her student. From the very first moment, her passion for her job was noticed in the classroom (2)". "We were really happy to meet a teacher with love for the teaching subject (16)".*

¹ Related to the coding of the responses given by the 19 groups of pre-service teachers.

3.3 TOLERANCE

Humility seems to be accompanied by the tolerance of the teacher in the modern school [43]. If I put up with Freire, it doesn't mean I bow my head, I'm a coward and I disguise my student's indifference or insolence. The tolerant teacher listens patiently and critically to his students, accepts their opinion, and lets them express their views, even if they are not the ones he embraces. Also, "tolerate" my teaching means that I include the different in my class, as I also include it in my society. This virtue is evident from some teachers, especially in intercultural and minority schools.

In particular, the following are noted: *"In minority schools, as Mrs ... says, children speak neither good Greek nor good Turkish. That is why Mrs ... has learned 100 Turkish words so that she can communicate more easily with students and facilitate the lesson flow (2)". "And children respect it without fear of it, on the contrary they freely express any concerns they have in it (8)".*

Some teachers therefore adapt their teaching, "tolerate" the different and creatively include it in their teaching and pedagogical practices. They also interact with their students with linguistic and non-linguistic means and symbols, aiming at a smoother course, improved classroom cohesion and fruitful discussion.

3.4 JUSTICE

The classroom is a political field of action and interaction of subjects, expression of desires and different visuals. The teacher is in an ongoing effort to "enforce" justice [44]. *But how can teachers do it? How can teachers be fair to their students?* There are quotes in this study that some teachers were attempting to give the floor to all students, to offer equal opportunities for everyone to express themselves and to speak their mind or to answer the questions raised.

For example, the following references are recorded: *"The lecture was made by dialogue and question-and-answer and it was not enough simply (for the teacher) to teach and spend all the time in it, which gave everyone the opportunity to participate and express themselves (8)". "So, we noticed that everyone was given equal opportunities to participate (10)".*

3.5 PATIENCE

The "wise" teacher is at a borderline stage; between patience and impatience. This process, based on "impatient patience" [45] makes the teacher reflect on teaching, how his students work and think about how he will act in his educational practice, without being idle, but also without the elements of impulse and extreme impatience. How many times, for example, have we not seen -or heard of- teachers who scold their students, who create a hostile school climate, who impose classroom by disciplinary means or on the contrary who, as they cannot meet the challenges of their classroom, either ignore or "quit" and with a tendency to fatalism, self-destruct, while destroying their classroom.

A relevant reference of a group of university students, who characterizes the teacher by the virtue of patience, is as follows: *"As he also told us, there is no shortage of moments when tension prevails in the classroom. In these cases he tries to calm the students who are diverted and attract them interest. It does not marginalize them, on the contrary, it tries to identify the cause of this behavior (8)".*

3.6 COURAGE

I am convinced that we are very precious to our students and we can mobilize them, trust them and, at the same time, respect them. Our students can open their own "wings" and "fly" in society, if we believe in them, treat them seriously and stand by them, honestly.

Some teachers seemed through this research to encourage their students: *"We found that there was an honest relationship between the teacher and her students and this was due to the trust she showed them. There was cooperation between them and the students treated her with respect and strongly expressed their sympathy towards her. Finally, the students, because of the intimacy they had developed, did not hesitate to express their opinion (5)".*

3.7 IMAGINATION

We do not have as teachers only the role of the knowledge transfer, we do not transfer the information to empty bottles, and we do not open the heads of our students and accumulate the knowledge. These perspectives take us away from the liberal school. The modern school must be creative and, at the same time, the role of the teacher, a teacher who will not lack imagination and surprise, will contribute to this. As Freire notes the teacher always in a disciplined way must creatively give "wings" to the imagination of his students [46]. This can be done in many ways. The liveliness of the teacher, the passion for teaching and interaction, the creative approach, the element of humor, and much more, lead in this direction.

Painting and humor, for example, were perceived by the participants in the study: *"In addition, it used humor to make the lesson more interesting in order to better interact with the students (12)". "At the end of*

reading he used the painting on the board, as a teaching method, for some concepts-words that were difficult for students to perceive (6)".

3.8 DIALOGUE

I act democratically at school, it means that I also discuss democratically, opening corresponding "channels" of communication between me and my students. I am discussing as a teacher with in mind that the measure should not be lost, so that there are no phenomena of laxity and anarchy, but at the same time to seek a democratic dialogue on spiritual development and critical attitude of my students on various issues. The Brazilian educator highlights the value of dialogue as an integral, vital element in people's communication. The Freire dialogue is not only a verbal/formal communication, but contributes significantly to the development of knowledge [47].

However, the first thing a teacher will think about concerns the limitations of curricula, especially secondary education. He will ask himself: *How can I teach democratically and creatively integrate dialogue into my subjects when the curriculum does not allow me?* Having, however, developed his epistemological assumptions, the teacher can find "security" and adapt his lesson to the principles of dialogue. Teachers, however, must be aware that dialogue has a specific organization and liberating education aimed at dialogue has principles that must be respected [48].

In this research, the comforting point was that the dialogue was mentioned by several students: *"The dialogue was used in the form of a discussion. The teacher very often gave the floor to the students by asking apt questions. Dialogue was a key element of the lesson and the student could freely express his opinion (19)". "The process had the interactive form of teaching. The teacher recognized the correct answers and acted as an enhancer of the process (...)(13)".*

3.9 TEACHER AS ARTIST

Teaching is also seen as a form of continuous process and mutual formation. Teachers are assistants and advisors to their students in the process of seeking their own "truth". We could therefore describe teaching as an artistic act. This helps with both verbal signals and extra-lingual elements, such as gestures, voice coloring, the way we move in the classroom, the posture of our bodies. These elements, whether used by teachers knowingly or not, play a major role in shaping the climate and establishing a democratic perspective in our teaching [49]. The "curtain opens" from the moment we enter the school hall. The way we're going to talk, the way we're going to look, it's about winning the bet and discovering liberating education in this "hide-and-seek".

Some teachers take these elements into account and apply them in their teaching: *"The teacher's best efforts to understand the lesson to as many students as possible using simpler language and through non-verbal communication, with symbols and gestures, seem to have paid off (4)". "There were elements of theatricality thus making the lesson more lively (6)". "For example, depending on what she wanted to point out, the tone of her voice was different, more intense. She also used her hands quite a bit (8)".*

3.10 TOGETHER, BUT NOT EQUAL

Clearly, the theory of social constructionism is also crucial in the context of the democratization of education. I teach empathic, I teach humanitarians and I "paint" my teaching socially and politically. However, the teacher cannot and must not be equated with his students [50]. Freire highlights that the teacher's authority must be present but also changed, adapted according to circumstances. But we can't all be equal. Such a teaching and learning model cannot work. We make this clear to our students through the educational contract at the beginning of our relationship. So I am near to my students, I listen to their "voices", I give them "the floor" and I respect their personality and opinions, but I am aware of my role.

A group of pre-service teachers refers: *"Of course the generation gap due to age difference was obvious, but the teacher was trying to be friendly and adapt to the data of their time, without clearly deviating from her role (...)(10)".*

3.11 ORDINARY TEACHING PROCEDURES

Freire opposes the so-called ordinary procedures in teaching and learning. These processes are directly related to the dominant culture of a society, which leaves the student no room for critical thinking. On the contrary, such a process of education "dehumanizes" and leads to passive attitudes and to stubborn students who are oppressed [51].

This conventional perspective on teaching leads us to inevitable "contact" with the theory of behaviorism, on the basis of which the teacher - as an authority - teaches and educates, reproducing the values of the dominant culture. So, a truth, a single knowledge that is transferred or, better, transmitted from the "lighter" to the "hetero-luminous" student. Bits of behavioral and passive approach to teaching were perceived through

the university students' observation sheets. Without being interested, of course, in the quantification of qualitative data (it does not fall under the principles of phenomenology), these references are minimal.

"Teaching was lecturing and had a teacher-centric form. The teaching model was behavioral (...). The teacher was the source of the knowledge and the students, as an unwritten book, drew knowledge from the authority of the teacher (9)". "The educational-pedagogical process presents elements from the principles of the traditional-behavioral school, as most of the lessons was carried out by the teacher, without collaborative tasks. Mostly, she taught and, whenever she had to, asked specific questions (...) (7)". "The way she was taught was teacher-centered with elements of behaviorism. This was reflected in the fact that she had the students read from the school book and then proceeded to ask some questions. In order to answer these questions, the students were in the guideline of the scheme given to them and the textbook (1)".

IV. DISCUSSION

I firmly believe that as teachers we are in a process of 'hypocrisy' and 'hiding'. I'm thinking the "hide-and-peek," the game we used to play when we were kids. The whole process of this game, in my opinion, is reminiscent of educational practice and its ideologies. *Who's playing hide-and-peek?* Maybe, the traditional approach, on the one hand, and the liberal perspective, on the other. *Who has started this game?* Maybe, the society, the state, the governments. In this politically defined game, the teacher either seeks the traditional perspective or the more progressive perspective on teaching. *But does the teacher know all the 'hiding places'? Does he know the pitfalls of the game? Can he understand how close or far away the above visuals are to him? If he finds them how to use them (more pedagogically) in his teaching?*

Usually, the teachers more easily find the "hiding place" of traditional teaching, and with the joy of this (small) discovery begin their lesson. Traditional teaching, as a more "lazy" and "passive" player, does not hide, rather, very well. As a result, the teachers discover it and use it in their classroom. On the other hand, the progressive, constructivist perspective on teaching is more skillfully played, is more active, and has to look more methodically to find it, making it difficult for the teacher to find it in this "game" or tired of looking for where he might be "hiding". He'll find her, discover her, and use her, but maybe not for long or forever. *But how will this game continue?* Then, perhaps the teacher will hide from both perspectives in teaching and either accidentally find him or he will be "lost" or "hidden" behind a barrier, in his "hiding place", in his own assumptions about teaching and learning.

We may therefore criticize the existing school, outdated, anachronistic perspectives and seek a new lease of life in teaching, but the "player" is neither the state nor the approaches in teaching. The dominant "player" is the teacher in each classroom. The teacher is the one who "carries" knowledge, experience, learned or non-teaching and pedagogical practices and all this in the "bag" of his epistemological assumptions; which either motivate him for something innovative and creative in his teaching and give him the role of "orchestrator" or will stand in the way of learning.

So, how can I understand the teaching that works on the foundations of the democratic approach? How can I understand the role of the modern teacher, who attempts to add elements of both the liberal school and the traditional perspective to his teaching? How can I confidently characterize a teacher as liberal or conservative/traditional? Of course I cannot do it for sure. The important thing is to be able to see those signs that will help me to discuss or interpret the elements of teachers that may be of benefit to themselves, to the student and to teaching. So, regardless of whether these elements are democratic or traditional, I have to go through them from a scientific and critical point of view. It is not highly effective to label teachers or place them in an epistemological side.

This paper highlighted in particular the democratic "virtues" of modern teachers, who teach in schools of Thrace, giving us hope through their approaches. The non-experienced eyes of the university students have given us important data, in my view, on how a teacher acts, by alternating methods and techniques and with sufficient awareness of humanitarian approaches to learning. Even the most traditional and behavioral approaches are not labeled, but give the baton for reflection and not, of course, for complacency. It probably doesn't matter who "guards" them, who "hides" and where, but that teachers "play" along with their epistemological assumptions, knowledge, opinions and beliefs and put their students in this dynamic game.

Who's going, during the "hide-and-peek", to say "Ready or not, here I come"? Perhaps, the teacher who can evaluate in every teaching and pedagogical circumstance his "tools" and uses them -cognitively, emotionally, socially, culturally- with the aim of promoting his educational process. So let's continue to observe this "game" to understand even better the "players" and their techniques.

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