Generational workshops in Brazil: between the socialization of the individual and its stories

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Abstract:

This communication will focus on teaching / research / extension project, developed in the City of Londrina, in the state of Paraná, southern Brazil. In the context of this project, "Generational Workshops" are undertaken with the purpose of promoting the socialization of the narratives of the life experience of the elderly living in Londrina. The content enunciated by the elderly, enrich the historical formation of the local community and assist in the process of deconfining of this social group. The contemporary reality, especially in Latin American countries, has led a group of elderly people to isolation and, in many cases, the silencing of their narratives. In this sense, the creation of institutional devices capable of rescuing these subjects and their narratives, collaborates not only with the rescue of the human condition of these subjects, at the same time, cooperates with the (re) significance of their identities. The promotion of the project mobilized public institutions of the city: the State University of Londrina and the Municipal Secretariats of Education and the Elderly. The partners understood the need to create the institutional device "generational workshops" for the valorization of the history, memory, and narratives of those who built the history of the municipality with its symbolic and material repertoires. It organized from weekly meetings; the device had the participation of a group of 15 elderly people, who, weekly, contributed to the construction of a memorialistic collection. After a year of activity, we can affirm the value of spaces for memory sharing, as well as the importance of the library and librarians in sensitizing the community to the receptivity of memorialistic contents.

Keywords: Generational Workshops, Intergenerational Workshops, Cultural Mediation.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this text, structured as a report, has the propose to share the initial steps of the teaching, research and extension project - Intergenerational Workshops: knowledge and experience - linked to the State University of Londrina, in partnership with the Municipality
of Londrina, by means of The Municipal Department of the Elderly and Education. From the
articulation between the institutions and supported by actions previously developed by the
project coordinator, the Managerial Workshops were implanted with the so-called "Center of
coeexistence of the elderly person.", municipal instances maintained by the Londrina City Hall
and which acted as "place for the encounter "of the elderly, their narratives and others who,
during the year, were there.

The population aging pointed out and discussed by different international bodies demands
affirmative action and is undertaken by national governments, or by nationalities committed
to scientific development and to the well-being of society. In this sense, as Generational
Workshops, they are part of a broader framework, whose purpose is the insertion of the
elderly in the different spaces, believing that as narratives they are stated, are fundamental for
a formation and information of the multiple generations that make up our society.

CHARACTERIZATION OF ACTIONS

The purpose of this report is to inform about the actions taken in the development of the
initial phase of the Teaching / Research and Extension Project - Intergenerational Workshops:
Expertise and Knowledge - developed through collaborative actions between the Department
of Information Science, State University of Londrina and the Municipal Secretariats of
Education and the Elderly, linked to the City Hall of Londrina, a city located in the north of
Paraná and that is among the first in Brazil to establish a secretariat dedicated to the issues of
the aging person.

In this sense, the implementation of a project focused on the narratives of the elderly go to in
line with the social policies in development in the municipality, while offering a new look at
the forms of (re) social insertion of the elderly in the different social contexts to Besides those
formally constituted. The project was structured in stages and the first one concerns the
formation of generational groups for reflection, sharing and promotion of actions, with
emphasis on the narratives of the elderly and their relationship with the socio-cultural context
in which they are inserted. Thus, the partnership between the three local bodies - the
University of Londrina, through the Intergenerational Workshops project, the Municipal
Secretariats of Education and the Elderly - defined the Center for the Coexistence of the
Elderly Person as the place that would receive the weekly meetings.

The meetings were offered for the elderly participants of the Center, with two hours weekly
for the activities and on the day and times defined by the interested parties after consultation
during the registration period. Throughout the year 2016, beginning in March and ending in
December, the meetings mobilized a group of 15 elderly men and women, with an average
age of 70 years and who, in relation thereto, shared their experiences and above all,
experiences about different stages of life, especially those that led them to establish residence
in the city of Londrina. Conducted by the teacher who is responsible for the coordination of
the Project, the meetings were conceived as generational workshops, with a view to their
arrangement of symbolic elements - narratives - and material elements - the productions built
by the elderly at different moments - associated to stimulate Different forms of expression of
the subject, who sometimes chooses nonverbal forms of communication to portray life
experiences.
It given the particularity of the quality of the stories shared there is a challenge for the conductor to follow, listen and stimulate the different forms of expression and in this sense, the mediation of the meeting needs broader guiding principles capable of embracing the subject, their enunciations, their silences, his tears, his smiles, that is, to welcome the subject in his completeness and in his multiple forms of expression of himself and his senses. For this, it is necessary to understand that the enunciations are, for the most part, reports enriched by the knowledge and practices built by the elderly throughout their lives and that at the present time demand spaces and actions committed with the connection of these contents to the different socio-cultural contexts.

The material and symbolic repertoire built throughout the project is in the analysis and synthesis phase for the constitution of different informational products, while at the same time, they offer indications that allow us to speak of the need to broaden the reflections on the action of librarians and professionals in the creation and maintenance of actions aimed at the elderly in relation to the different informational spaces - libraries, archives, museums, information centers, among others - since the work of professionals and institutions associated with them broaden the network of significance necessary to the insertion and (re)insertion of the elderly in their different sociocultural contexts.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Brazil, as different nations around the world, observes the increase in the number of elderly in their population profile. The data from 2015 (IBGE) indicate that 14.3% of the Brazilian population is over 60 years old, revealing a marked trend of demographic aging. Although official data offer different perspectives on aging and on the person aging in Brazil, the affirmative actions aimed at the human aging and undertaken by the different institutional actors are shy and for the most part they turn to care policies, taking into account in view of the vulnerability experienced by a significant part of the elderly in Brazil.

We understand in article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we understand that every human being, understood as a member of society, "has the right to social security, to the realization by national effort, by international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable to its dignity and the free development of its personality. [...]"

The Brazilian institutional actors, even though they partially respect economic and social rights, fail to offer actions in the field of culture, which damages the dignity and development of the personality of the different generational groups in Brazil. In view of this, the creation of the generational workshops and their offer in the municipality of Londrina, in the north of Paraná, has been involved in the mobilization of elements not widely contemplated by national and municipal policies, but remain as the driving force for individual and collective development. It is necessary to reflect on the mediator responsible for conducting the meeting, and in collaboration with the participants, build the necessary conditions to insert the narratives of the past, now in the generational workshops. For this, resorts to the life course of the participants, inquiring kindly, about aspects related to birth places and possible migratory processes, common in Brazil.

The dynamics established between the participants allows the entry of all into a territory that involves not only the elderly but the family as a whole, since in their narratives they were identified as men and women belonging to different families who together, were traveling around the country in labor. It reports of the labor routines that made reference to experiences
in the field, in the magisterium, in the craftsmanship and to the domestic tasks. They lingered in the small details of the simple house, the favorite dress, and the wedding rites. They were taken by the memory of the loved ones who today accompany them only in the memory, they amused themselves with the misunderstandings of doing learned in the ‘doing do’ of the daily deal. They were amazed at how much they had conquered in the new place and claimed to be the work of sun to sun be the responsible for the reported conquest. They finished the account of an odyssey built on the outskirts of the city, away from the official books and newspapers, confessing some embarrassment with the recognition of a 'greater value' in what he humbly related.

The mediation undertaken during the meetings sought to reaffirm the importance of the 'generational workshop' in its commitment to the participants. It is important to emphasize the value of the narrative and the mediator's movement to remove it from the extraordinary of everyday life and to insert it into a broader cultural historical framework, in which the narratives enunciated by the elderly include themselves as founders, promoters, organizers of family arrangements, community and social, necessary therefore, for the understanding of the past and for the reassessment of the present and the future. The mediator, in his action, encourages the participants to perceive themselves as subjects, as citizens, necessary perception in contexts located at the margin of society, lacking in human and sociocultural formations, found in contexts of formal education, and not offered to the elderly of the project that, for the most part, they built their lives away from educational contexts.

In everyday life of the generational workshops, the participants were initially invited to reflect on their first moments, the formation of their identity, translated in their narratives. There, in the individual of their experience, they could recognize the similarity they harbor among themselves, despite their differences. With the maturing of relationships, the talk turned to the enunciation of experiences in the new place. Londrina, in this scenario, is a place of promise, of a better life, which proves possible thanks to work, family, renunciations and losses. The two movements are sewn together by the action of the mediator who, aware of the value of the elderly to the symbolic and material formation of the generations, attentively listens to what is said to, in a first moment, to approach the elderly, highlighting their similarities and recognizing their differences, and in a second moment, to present to the elderly their belonging to broader contexts, emphasizing their collaboration for the city, the community, and their families.

In view of the foregoing, we can affirm that the narratives enunciated throughout the meetings, rich in symbolic and material elements, revealed the different experiences built by the elderly throughout their lives and that lack actions, in view of their stimulation and socialization between different groups Generations. We understand that the circulation and appropriation of these enunciations between equal and different generational groups is fundamental, since it assists in the identity formation of subjects and social groups, offering the basis for reorganizing the present, re-reading the past and orienting the future. For this, the action of librarians and different informational institutions is fundamental, considering the important role they play in the sociocultural context, especially in Brazil, a country with rich oral tradition and still timid in valuing the multiple forms of expression of the subject and of the importance of the same in the construction of the different local arrangements that form the great nation that we call Brazil.
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The present work is linked to a research network developed in the context of COLABORI - Collaboration of Infoeducation, nucleus of research, linked to the Department of Information and Culture - CBD, School of Communication and Arts - ECA / USP. It is guided by the premises of the orientation or the creation of the "Memory Station", developed by Prof. Dr. Edgar Perrotti, as a result of a research project, in 1997, at the University of São Paulo. This device can be accessed (http://estacaomemoria.wixsite.com/home), as a cultural device, at the University, with weekly workshops, coordinated by the teacher and researcher Ivete Pieruccini. It is also linked the PhD thesis of the author of this communication, denominated: Intergenerational Workshops: knowledge and experience, cultural mediation and signification.