

The image is a full-page background featuring a man with a beard and a light blue denim shirt standing in a forest. He has his eyes closed and his hands clasped in front of him in a prayerful or meditative gesture. The forest is filled with trees, and the ground is covered with brown leaves. The lighting is soft, suggesting a calm, natural setting. The text is overlaid on a dark purple semi-transparent band across the middle of the image.

# Biopedagogy as a fundamental characteristic in pedagogical mediation

*La Biopedagogía como característica fundamental  
en la mediación pedagógica*

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## ABSTRACT

The following article shows how the implementation of a didactic workshop, following bio-pedagogical features, could impact and transform teachers' practices. It emphasizes how important it is for us, as teachers, to see our students not only as subjects who attend and understand instruction, but also as people with feelings, emotions, and needs. Taking into account the different steps carried out by the construction of the didactic workshop, some pedagogical proposals are listed in order to change the paradigm of a traditional teacher and move into a facilitator and mediator. Contrary to the idea about the role of the teacher as a simple transmitter of information that students receive passively, this article focuses on biopedagogical mediation, where the teacher-mediator must, on the one hand, act as an intermediary between the content and the student, help him to discover shared meanings; and on the other hand, the mediator teacher must design didactic strategies based on communication, interaction, collaboration, needs and interests of the students, keeping in mind that love is fundamental in the construction of learning.

### KEYWORDS:

bio-pedagogy, mediation, pedagogical practices, workshops, ethics of care, responsibility

## RESUMEN

El siguiente artículo muestra cómo la implementación de un taller didáctico, siguiendo características biopedagógicas, podría impactar y transformar las prácticas de los docentes. Enfatiza lo importante que es para nosotros, como maestros, ver a nuestros estudiantes no solo como sujetos que asisten y comprenden los contenidos de una clase, sino también como personas con sentimientos, emociones y necesidades. Teniendo en cuenta los diferentes pasos llevados a cabo para la construcción del taller, se enumeran algunas propuestas pedagógicas con el fin de cambiar el paradigma de un docente tradicional para pasar a ser un docente facilitador y mediador. Contrario a la idea sobre el rol del docente como simple transmisor de información que los estudiantes reciben de forma pasiva, este artículo se centra en la mediación biopedagógica, donde el docente-mediador debe, por un lado, actuar como intermediario entre el contenido y el aprendiz, ayudándole a descubrir significados compartidos; y por otro lado, el docente mediador debe diseñar estrategias didácticas basadas en la comunicación, interacción, colaboración, necesidades e intereses de los estudiantes, teniendo en cuenta que el amor es fundamental en la construcción del aprendizaje.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

biopedagogía, mediación, practicas pedagógicas, talleres, ética del cuidado, responsabilidad.



As teachers, we encounter many challenges every day. One of these challenges is to go beyond the current paradigm of being a traditional teacher, the one that teaches grammar and vocabulary, and move into a teacher mediator. But, what exactly is a teacher mediator? A teacher mediator is the one that guides, facilitates and constructs learning. This concept was completely new for me, and from now, it is going to conduct my pedagogical practices.

I must confess that before getting to know the concepts of bio-pedagogy and mediation my classes were focused on grammar and content. The school where I am currently working looks for the academic excellence in all the subjects. It is a school that intends to develop in the students different kinds of competences such as: linguistics, mathematics, sciences among others. The school is concerned about external tests, especially ICFES. The ICFES measures the different knowledge of students in subjects such as: mathematics, social sciences, languages and natural sciences. The curriculum in eleventh grade is focused mainly in the test, and the mission of the school is to reach one of the best averages. So, as teachers, we tend to forget that education goes beyond content. My classes first were focused on all the topics that the ICFES test asked. My classes started with an agenda of all the contents that the students had to study. I have forgotten my student's feelings, emotions and needs, just to increase an average that at the end will not educate for life.

Our students are not indicators of a system, they need care and attention. Certainly, it is difficult to experience ethics if pedagogy has not enabled people to grow in understanding of others, if the proposed dynamics promote competitiveness and exclusion; if they justify the violence that ranges from the imposition of content to the assessment by examinations, measurements based on stereotypes

that nullify identity and individuality and through which people's esteem suffers. According to De Souza (2009), "the prevailing identity is then replicated by two separate processes: by the absolute negation of the other and by the conflict with the subaltern identity of the other (...)" (p. 297) Violence is replicated, sustained, and perpetuated because it is a part and result of the current social structure, in which conflicts between forces and social groups are inextricably associated.

So, it is important to understand the purposes of bio-pedagogical mediation in order to change the previous paradigms. Bio-pedagogical mediation aims to raise consciousness, engagement, and relational behaviors that respect and restore involvement, partnership, and co-aspiration from a history of tenderness, corporeity, and caring. Each learner needs to be loved and cared for from the start. According to Boff (2004), "(...) care reflects the value of cordial reason, which acknowledges and venerates the mystery that is shrouded and unveiled in every being in the world (...) care induces concern and awakens the feeling of responsibility" (p. 67).

This feeling of responsibility is an important feature of the ethics of care. But, what does it entail to mediate from the ethics of care? It entails comprehending the students as a whole, comprehending the triad of intellect, body, and spirit. As a result, it is understood that everybody has a voice and that it is essential to be heard; the strength of a kind expression, a smile, appreciation, and a look in the eyes is cherished. Caring for our students' feelings and emotions are not ignored in the Masters in Pedagogical Mediation in Language Learning (UNAD) especially in the course of Biopedagogical characteristics of education. One of the challenges proposed in this course, was to construct a meaningful and didactic workshop based on the documents and the different theories studied. I must confess that it was difficult at the beginning be-

cause the idea at this time was thinking about our students. We have to think about fun activities that involve their motivations, interests and needs. As teachers, we tend to focus our classes in the activities that we want our students learn and practice. However, most of the times these activities are focused in content and do not go beyond of that. So, finding appealing activities, thinking about them, and put them into practice was challenging. Nevertheless, I took the marvelous risk. I love when we can express ourselves by using our bodies. Non-verbal language sometimes can say many things about the people we are and about our tastes and feelings. As an entry strategy, I bet for dressing like someone living in Santa Martha since it is the place where I was on vacations. The idea of showing the students the clothes I am wearing, pretends that they feel my enthusiasm and my motivation to teach the class. I consider that if we want that our students enjoy and learn in our classes, we must transmit joy, we need to transmit our energy to them.

In my view, this didactic workshop involves many features of bio-pedagogy because it looks for transition and improvement. It reflects on students' emotions and forms of life, rather than only offering them material and processes, while still teaching with motives in mind. Bio-pedagogy entails passion. When citing Maturana, Devia (2017) says that it is essential to discover dreams in them with the goal of achieving freedom and autonomy, where human relationships are based on "the emotion that is fundamentally mutual acceptance, acceptance of the other and the other in coexistence, and for that emotion we have a word: love". As a result, educating part of the feeling, a crucial ingredient to teach, since the body and mind are involved as a vital niche in the interweaving that transforms the learner and his surroundings for the creation of the life he desires for himself and others. Bio-pedagogy, on the other side, would bind us with the basic nature of learning, which

appears as a phenomenon linked to life itself in a network of structure patterns that turn and self-organize to sustain life.

Following this Idea I tried to implement in my workshop funny and meaningful activities such as puppets. I enjoy them and I think that they can transmit emotions by taking the role of human beings. They are creative and also they are accurate no matter, the people since adults also enjoy them, this is my case. Promoting reflection and awareness between the students was difficult for me at the beginning. We tend to ask our students about the content that did they learn. As mediator teachers, not only asking could promote reflection. We must create spaces where students could self-evaluate and peer-evaluate and also spaces where they can interpret their reality and could contribute with ideas about what they like, what they need and what they feel.

The topic that I chose for my workshop was vacations. I pretend with this topic, to get to know my students better and that they share their experiences with their classmates and me. The idea is to get to know their contexts, their preferences and their lives. Bloch, S., and Maturana, H. R. (1999) propose that when you can see a living being's emotions in the field of life, you will be able to recognize how it exists, and if it understands how it lives, you will be able to participate in its emotions. The preceding fragment encourages one to argue that it is critical to define the learners' cultural, social, and family origins in order to understand their lives and, as a result, be able to captivate, inspire, dialogue, and alter the configuration of their internal structural processes, as well as turn the reach of their future behavior. In this way, educational institutions should transcend the transmission role of information for learners; not treating individuals as artifacts, but rather creating communications and dialogues that imagine the essence of daily existence and

the perceptions that each being has. This effort would allow the institutions to mend a social fabric that accounts for the particularities of the learners, enhancing the individual's sensitivity while also benefiting the collective.

Planning this didactic workshop was challenging but, in my opinion, helped me a lot to transcend the concept of teaching the content to go beyond and transform reality. When I read the activities and strategies proposed to carry out the workshop, I came to the conclusion that it is more meaningful when we, as teachers, involve our lives, our tastes and our motivations in the classes, that the content we want our students to learn. It does not mean that the content is not important. It means that the content is meaningful when we involve our bodies, our feelings and our emotions when we want to share it with our students.

As Devia (2017) states the current mediator in their educational settings and/or everyday niches must possess the following characteristics: utopian trafficker, mass agitator, conductor and transmitter of certainties, visionary, judge of other people's lives, and transformer of behaviors where processes of learning occur for dialogue, enthusiasm, communication, love with the other, and the ability to feel the other.

For that reason, working with this workshop made me realize that it is necessary to implement some proposals to my pedagogical mediation practices. I should establish expectations and learning objectives and direct them to completion. The time of the course should be organized and guided by me, instilling accountability and discipline. To ensure that all students engage in this phase, I can plan the training process around collective learning methods that emphasize engagement and collaboration. I should act as a link between the material and the student, assisting him/

her in discovering common concepts through interaction. It is also important to plan the assessment of both learning and teaching. The learning assessment identifies the degree of success of the proposed targets and priorities, while the teaching evaluation identifies areas that may be improved in the teaching and learning phase.

Some other proposals are:

- Promote spaces for collaboration so that both teachers and students actively participate in the didactic processes, work as a team, exchange experiences and knowledge in a dialoguing relationship between peers where everyone has something to contribute.
- Encourage the development of students' autonomy with actions aimed at discovering efficient study methods that allow them to learn how to learn
- Facilitate meaningful learning with guided strategies aimed at developing skills and solving real-life problems.
- Encourage imagination by providing spaces for students to confront and overcome dilemma problems, as well as to venture to present original solutions in an atmosphere that values divergent thinking.
- Encourage the development of human values such as responsibility and discipline, solidarity, respect, tolerance, humility in the face of knowledge, all in order to train subjects useful to society.
- Develop communication skills that allow, on the one hand, to make the symbolic representation of the contents and on the other to interact with the students in a close and affectionate way to know the difficulties and demands of each student in particular and to be able to offer them personalized advice that generates security, motivation and confidence.

- Promote, through learning assessment processes, metacognitive skills in the students in order for them to reflect on the effectiveness of their learning methods, to self-assess their achievements, to seek to improve their internal schemes for understanding meanings and attribution of meaning, and to build self-regulated knowledge, according to their capacities and learning abilities.
- Find the best times and words to encourage students to respect the earth, use energy wisely, and participate in constructive activities to become aware of the ecological footprint that each individual leaves.
- We must take advantage of any opportunity for pedagogical sharing to demonstrate, by example, the power that each person has to positively affect others. Every work session, each “class” moment should serve as a reminder of the miracle of creation and the burden it bears to future generations. It entails looking through the literal material to identify the connections between it and what is achieved, and making use of any pedagogical opportunity to appeal to ethics. It is not a simple job to teach from the mediation of duty and unity because it requires leaving the safety of the condition of comfort that routine creates.

For several decades, we have been taught that the world is only for the bravest and most competitive; that power, submission, and discipline are synonymous with excellent educational pedagogy; certainties that are still well established in educational settings and in the imaginations of teachers who see their students as collections of knowledge, ignoring the fact that they are human beings with many capacities. Considering what Maturana (1997) said, it is only by the

nature of affection and tenderness that the authority of the other is recognized, giving preference to the creation of the being and directing greater attention to their doing. As a result, educational processes can correct doing more and not directly being, inviting the learner to think wherever necessary, so that he can grow his individuality, imagination, and analytical spirit.

In conclusion, the bio-pedagogy of learning is accessible to error and creativity, and it does not dread imagination; it causes one to think, be analytical, and critical of our certainties; and it encourages a state of reverence for the welfare of all who learn. As a result, learning facilitators must take on the challenge of bio-pedagogy, which entails unleashing new learning in the subject that allows us to respond to the understanding of reality, deepening a sense of life that responds to a change of mentality and the way we relate to the planet, leading the growth of the human being from inside, and the search for a new language that guides a reflective process.

Through the construction of my didactic workshop, I realized that mastering the information is not enough to be a successful instructor. Our function as a mediator extends beyond content transmission; instead of providing material such as “finished knowledge,” we must include didactic techniques that enable students to take on the knowledge creation phase themselves.

Our work must involve actions aimed at assisting and guiding our students in their quest, on the one side, so that they develop the ability to create sense and attribute value to the learning material, and on the other hand, so that they can revisit, change, and establish information schemes that will enable them to learn to learn during their lives.

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