
La problematización de la enseñanza del marxismo: una necesidad de la universidad cubana hoy

The problematization of the teaching of the Marxism: A necessity of the Cuban university today

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Resumen: Entre los problemas presentes en la universidad hoy, encontramos la no problematización de los contenidos. Es objetivo de este trabajo fundamentar la necesidad de problematizar la enseñanza del marxismo para perfeccionarla. Métodos: Dialéctico Materialista en todo el trabajo; analítico-sintético, a lo largo de la investigación y en la elaboración de conclusiones; histórico- lógico, para determinar antecedentes históricos del proceso de aprendizaje, su complejidad e interdisciplinariedad; análisis de resultados de encuestas y entrevistas. La implementación de los criterios generalizadores aportados contribuye a mejorar la impartición del marxismo. Se comprueba a partir de los resultados docentes y la satisfacción de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Problematicación de contenidos; Marxismo; Dialéctica; Universidad cubana.

Abstract: Among the problems present in the university today, we find the non-problematization of the contents. It is the objective of this work to base the need to problematize the teaching of Marxism to perfect it. Methods: Materialist Dialectic in all work; analytical-synthetic, throughout the investigation and in the elaboration of conclusions; historical-logical, to determine historical background of the learning process, its complexity and interdisciplinarity; Analysis of survey and interview results. The implementation of the general criteria provided contributes to improving the teaching of Marxism. It is checked from the teaching results and student satisfaction.

Keywords: Problematization of contents; Marxism; Dialectics; University Cuban.

Introduction

The University of the Present Century has the mission of preserving, developing and promoting the culture of humanity through the processes of education and training that take place in this area. In this sense, it must become the main agent of change to respond

to the problems and challenges of sustainable development. For this reason, Higher Education requires changes that guarantee a more essential dynamic in its link with society, since a series of problems emerge not only in its profession but also in the context itself that must be solved through teaching, research and university extension, being the responsibility of the university to prepare professionals to solve these problems.

Cuban education is developing in a context characterized by the transformations taking place in the Cuban economy and society, the unjust and prolonged economic blockade by the U.S. government, aggravated by the Trump administration's decision to apply Title III of the genocidal Helms-Burton Act, and the growing activity of ideological subversion by the United States and its allies, with emphasis on the academic sector.

They also describe the aging population and the demographic contraction of the country derived from multiple socioeconomic factors, the expansion of the non-state sector of the economy, the dizzying development of technologies and the growing process of informatization of society, among other factors.

In view of this scenario, new alternatives are necessary in the teaching process in general, of the Social Sciences, and of Marxism in particular, with emphasis on the problematization of the contents, which affects the quality of teaching by stimulating the development of logical, critical and reflective thinking in students, so that they can provide solutions to professional problems and socioeconomic development.

Among the problems present in the teaching of Marxism today, we find non-problematization. This paper presents a study focused on complexity and interdisciplinarity. Its objective is to support, through two generalizing criteria, the need to problematize the teaching of Marxism in order to improve it. It offers a synthesis of the work on this subject.

Development

The study of Marxism-Leninism is today a necessity for the performance of the university professional. Without the knowledge of Marxism it is not possible to understand with a sense of the historical moment, the complexity of the system of

contradictions of today's world, and much less to consider its transformation in search of a better world.

The vitality of its content confers theoretical-methodological validity to face the new challenges facing humanity, to save the system of values that sustain the human condition and to confront the imperialist reactionary offensive with the weapons of the dialectical materialist conception of the world. It is from this perspective that it is necessary to read and analyze from critical and scientific positions the works of thinkers who contribute to the formation of the philosophical, economic and political culture needed by university students as future professionals.

Cuba has a rich tradition in teaching, materialized in the work of distinguished educators who have been engaged in achieving the stimulation of cognitive activity not only for the heritage of the individual but as an irreplaceable means for the development of his personality and for the transformation of his reality. In this regard, it is worth mentioning Father José Agustín Caballero, the patriotic defender of independence and who first taught us to think, Félix Varela, José de la Luz y Caballero, who was the protagonist of the philosophical polemic, and possessor of advanced criteria on teaching methods and work.

Special attention deserves the pedagogical ideology of José Martí, who always defended by conviction the interdependence between culture, education and freedom. It is worth remembering his principle that "a people of educated men will always be a people of free men". (Martí, 1963, p. 376)

Also present are the ideas of the eternal Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, in one of his most brilliant speeches during the first years of the triumph of the revolution: "when man's ability to think and reason is truncated, he turns from a human being into a domesticated animal" (Castro, 1961, p.25). (Castro, 1961, p.25)

The "E" curriculum reiterates the need for the Marxism discipline to contribute to the deep analysis of contemporary reality, to the development of values in accordance with the ethics and ideology of the Cuban Revolution, to the transformation of Cuban society, to value social relations and the role of Science and Technology in current conditions,

from the vision of the third world and Cuba. To fulfill this task, it is necessary to study the contexts and to problematize teaching.

Today there are not few educators, in general, and those dedicated to the teaching of Marxism in particular, who recognize the need to problematize it, and even try to do so, sometimes without a clear knowledge of the scope of this process. For this reason, the authors take up the conceptual question, in order to contribute to the clarification of theory as a necessary condition for the improvement of pedagogical practice.

The issue of the problematization of the teaching of Marxism-Leninism has been addressed by different authors: González, A. (2001), Vásquez Alape, (2012), among others. For the analysis of complexity we have relied on studies by Morín, E. (2001), Lipman, M. (1998), Maldonado, C. (1999), Delgado, C. J. (1999). The look at the studies around the teaching of Marxism in general and philosophy in particular has been given from the authors Delgado, C. J. (2016) and Santoyo, M. (2017). In Fiallo, J. P. (2012), we find arguments for a greater approach to the issue of transdisciplinarity.

América González Valdés, a researcher at the Center for Pedagogical and Sociological Research, refers in her studies how important it is to formulate problems not only in science, or in teaching, but in any aspect of life; it encompasses the identification and formulation of problems as part of a single and unique process, which also includes the ways of action to reach the solution, as well as the solution itself. He refers that as early as 1938, Einstein and Infeld, discussing the evolution of physics, emphasized the importance of the adequate formulation of a problem:

The formulation of a problem is often much more important than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skills. Constructing new questions, new possibilities, looking at old problems from a new angle, requires imagination and establishes real advances in science. (González, 2001, p. 5)

The above takes on great importance and significance as far as the teaching of Marxism is concerned. Teaching Marxism from a linear methodology, focused on the mere acquisition of knowledge, as it has traditionally been done, does not lead to the successful achievement of the purposes and needs of society, since knowledge is essential for the development of thought, but it is not a guarantee of critical thinking.

Problematize: what is it about?

It is about realizing that we are facing a complex world and consequently our notions of that world are also complex, therefore, our interpretations and the way of bringing philosophical categories and concepts to the students; it is about opening the space for dialogue, polemic, criticism and self-criticism, contradictions.

This process that implies focusing, questioning, thinking and re-thinking reality cannot be ignored in the training of the future university professional; it is about placing the student in a position of questioning, of learning to think for himself, as the patriot Felix Varela taught us, of being able to argue a decision or position; it is about leading the student to develop a dialectical and creative thought; it is about contributing as Lipman points out, to the development of a "critical,... conceptually rich, ...coherently organized and persistently exploratory,...resourceful and flexible." (Lipman, 1998, p. 62)

The authors of this article synthesize that problematizing implies questioning, learning to formulate questions, going beyond the learning of contents assimilated as absolute truths in the most rigorous sense of the term.

These ideas constitute pillars in the foundation of the need to problematize the teaching of Marxism on which our proposal is based.

Proposal of generalizing criteria for the teaching-methodological work towards the problematization of the teaching of Marxism.

- Transitioning from simplicity to complexity.

The teaching of Marxism demands in its dynamics the transition from the simplicity to the complexity of reality and the process of knowledge.

The world is not something smooth, simple, ordered as something perfect and immovable, but on the contrary, change, interactions, emergence, complexity, non-linearity prevail. The changes are given by the emergencies themselves and by human activity.

Ignoring this reality leads to an inadequate treatment, omissions and/or simplification of reality and of the possible alternative solutions to the problems that emanate from it. Consequently, the teacher who teaches Marxism should not construct knowledge to

students, as often happens; on the contrary, he/she should guide them towards self-management of knowledge and the search for alternatives for the solution of problems. The teacher must have this conviction and use it as a method to help students move towards a new worldview.

- **There is a triad necessary to problematize teaching: Dialectics-complexity-interdisciplinarity.**

Assuming the method of materialist dialectics and the complexity of the world allows understanding that its knowledge and transformation are not achieved from a fragmented approach of science but in its interdisciplinary conception.

The teaching of Marxism requires the analysis, contents, the formation of skills and values, based on the dialectical materialist method, its didactics is not conceived but in interactive dynamics of the subjects involved in the educational teaching process among themselves and with the advances of science and technology.

This is part of the scientific-technological task itself, for whose understanding and action a dialectical, complex and interdisciplinary treatment is required.

In this sense, Edgar Morin supports the need for a new method of thought, since the complexity of the objects studied by the particular sciences calls for the knowledge of several disciplines, i.e., it is evident that the disciplinary style of thought has already exhausted its possibilities of development. Sharing the criteria of the Colombian philosopher Carlos Maldonado, and in the opinion of the authors, complexity has a three-dimensional character in that it is a science, a method and a worldview.

Complexity implies and demands a different approach to reality and to the world than that which had predominated in the Western tradition. This new attitude consists essentially in the openness of each science and/or discipline to other sciences and to philosophy itself in its effort to understand the problems and in the search for solutions to them. But reciprocally it means for philosophy an openness to serious and in-depth dialogue with other scientific and disciplinary domains. Simultaneously, this opening or permeabilization to knowledge, concepts, categories and instruments other than its own

in each case meant the recognition that problems do not generally have only one solution or answer, but that there is more than one possible solution. (Maldonado, 1999, p. 6-7).

This assessment is significant because of the delimitation of complexity itself, reflecting the dynamic, changing reality, which is infinitely constructed and reconstructed from within, with the emergence of new circumstances, new phenomena and new interactions.

This way of understanding reality leads us to fully agree with the reflections of the Cuban philosopher Carlos Delgado.

What then is complex?

In order to answer this question, we make our own, because they coincide fully, the essential ideas of this notion of complexity, which are summarized below.

Complexity is given by the fact that the systems of Nature are not only not "given" beforehand, but that they become in the very course of interaction. The properties of the world and its objects are emergent.

Nature has a systemic, integrative character, not reducible to the field of any special scientific discipline. From the methodological point of view, holism takes precedence over reductionism.

The relations of determination are characterized by the emergence of order from disorder, and the superposition of "chaos" and "anti-chaos". In the knowledge of the order of the world, the patterns that are configured in the becoming of systems are more important than rigid determinations. Prediction is possible, but within the frameworks of indeterminacy that the system itself carries as an unmade entity, becoming. (Delgado, 2016, p.239).

Harmonizing with Delgado, we see dialectics in a different way, where the dialectic of interrelation predominates over the dialectic of contradiction. Understanding and assuming the dialectic and the complexity of the world implies that the teacher who teaches the discipline Marxism-Leninism, conceives, organizes and develops the teaching-learning process based not in a smooth way, but in a paradoxical, non-linear, controversial way, which leads to problematize the contents and contexts. It must be assembled and proceed according to a new rationality, according to complex rationality, which does not mean difficult but dynamic and contradictory.

These issues are of great value for the development of logical, critical and innovative thinking that the Cuban education system aspires to form in professionals so that they can materialize their social task, for which they must have science seen not as a fiefdom but from an interdisciplinary vision. Not only the teacher who teaches Marxism must keep in mind the evolution of other spheres of science and professionalize the contents, but teachers of other subjects must also use the tools provided by Marxism in the teaching of their disciplines and subjects.

Interrelationships must also take place with technology, taking into account the abrupt changes that occur in them and their consequences.

Take, for example, information and communication technologies, which impact modern life to the point of modifying the ways of seeing and learning the world, enable a more active and participatory learning process by facilitating interaction, can produce knowledge in a shared way by promoting interaction between subjects, even from different geographies, cultures and ideologies. This means that the nature of knowledge is changing, becoming less and less individual and more and more a product of social construction.

Technologies help to widen the tuning fork for knowledge, but at the same time it is a new challenge; they facilitate, but do not solve how to develop the teaching-educational process. This is one of the issues we have in mind to implement the generalizing criteria that guide the teaching-methodological work to improve the teaching of Marxism.

The practical experience

Through methodological activities, class controls, application of surveys to students and other control mechanisms, it has been possible to verify that sometimes teachers express the need to use terms such as complexity and problematization, in fact, they use them, however, in their practices, they do not always transcend from the statement to the facts, from theory to practice because they do not always have mastery and skills to put theory into practice, but in the best of cases, attempts are made to apply it based on knowing that it exists and understanding that it is necessary, although this is not enough.

In this connection, it is worth recalling Frederick Engels, in his letter to Bloch of September 21-22, 1890: "Unfortunately, it happens all too often that one thinks that one

has fully understood and can handle a new theory simply because one has assimilated, and not always exactly, its fundamental theses" (Engels, 1890, p. 717).

It is regrettable that sometimes the philosophical, economic or socio-political discourse is overly politicized, offering arguments of problems, especially those of social reality, as a linear process, which is detrimental to the rigor, scientificity, creativity and therefore the credibility and relevance of Marxism in the search for solutions to the problems that future professionals have before them and those that will be presented to them in the future. The worst case is, in our opinion, the one in which the teacher, armed with this vision of complexity, polemicizes, presents other possible solutions, adopts critical positions in the face of certain phenomena, facts or decisions taken at the level of the country or the locality, and is branded as having ideo-political weakness.

Our efforts on the road to the future

The Marxism department of the Julio Antonio Mella branch of the Universidad de Oriente is on the way to provoke essential transformations in the teaching of Marxism.

The results of class controls, surveys and other instruments applied to students to know their satisfaction with the teaching of this discipline, the tasks of the Methodological Work Plan, the indications of the institutional evaluation carried out by the National Accreditation Board in 2016, as well as the results of the inspections of the Vice-Rectorcy of Professional Formation constitute referents for such changes.

The actions that are being developed are based on the generalizing and pertinent criteria mentioned above.

A national project is currently underway, the result of which is the development of a problematizing strategy for the teaching of this discipline. It integrates professionals trained in Philosophy, Political Economy, History, Agronomy, as well as students from different branches of engineering and pedagogical sciences. Its work includes several actions that include the elaboration of scientific articles, scientific events, defense of master's and doctoral theses. All this synthesizes our visions of the subject we are dealing with here, but the most enriching thing, in our opinion, is the fruitful exchange and debate that takes place every day in relation to the theory and how to introduce it to improve our way of doing, that is, to the method.

Conclusions

The criteria offered here are oriented to the teaching-learning process of Marxism in the university, which requires to be carried out in a dynamic where the student can systematically incorporate throughout the whole process of their training, which in the new curriculum "E" is continuous, the idea that there is no single alternative solution to the problems, the notion of development not only from the contradictions but above all from the interactions, therefore they must also incorporate the notion of interdisciplinarity. This is of vital importance in the modes of professional action.

The implementation of the generalizing criteria provided helps to improve the teaching of Marxism. This is proven by the teaching results and student satisfaction.

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