Reflective Practice and Frame Theory in Educational History: A Communicative Narrative Research Proposal

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ABSTRACT

This document presents a research proposal on the relationship between media and public perception regarding education. It is proposed, following Foster's tenets on the use of methodological pragmatism, to analyze narratives present in historical media and other educational documentation to comprehend how discourses are constructed through the narrative frames employed by the media and how this might influence the public's perception and understanding of educational issues. The proposed methodology is grounded in reflexive and critical analysis of existing literature, employing mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. Additionally, the use of reflective practice methods and frame theory is suggested to develop a scientific analysis from historical documents. This research aims to gain a more comprehensive insight into educational practices and debates within a specific period, thereby enabling a broader and more objective understanding and evaluation of the predominant educational discourse of the time.

Keywords: narratives; education; media; frames; reflective analysis

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a notable interest in analyzing the discourse surrounding the perception of teaching quality within media channels, employing methodologies intrinsic to this field. Ulmer (2016) and Goldstein (2011) underscore the significance of scrutinizing media discourse concerning teaching quality and educational issues. Ulmer advocates for the application of media analysis techniques within historical educational research, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as grounded theory. Goldstein emphasizes the media's role in shaping public opinion regarding education through discursive frameworks.

Taking into account the significance of this intersection, there is a proposal to conduct research analyzing narratives within historical media sources (archives and specialized educational journals) along with other historical educational documentation. This analysis will be based on the documentation used in the doctoral thesis of one of the authors of this article (Soler, 2023). Such an approach would facilitate an understanding of how discourses are constructed through the narrative frameworks employed by the media, potentially influencing the public's perception and comprehension of educational issues. This endeavor aims to contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between discourse and media within the educational sphere. Furthermore, this proposal could be extended to other research endeavors within the field of educational history.

Objectives

The aim is to formulate analysis proposals for research in the history of education, drawing upon a review of existing literature and methodologies advocated by various authors. Following the concepts of
Britzman (1995) and embracing the methodological pragmatism approach proposed by Foster (Foster, 2023), the goal is to surpass the limitations of qualitative and quantitative methods in educational research. This pragmatic approach enables researchers to employ any method, irrespective of its tradition, to ensure rigorous investigation.

Furthermore, consideration will be given to Bruner’s (1985) concept of narrative mode of knowledge, coupled with Brookfield’s (2017) strategies for critical reflection, Hatton and Smith’s (1995) three levels of reflection, Moon’s (1999) diverse approaches to effective reflection, and Doug Risner’s (2002) three-step process for developing analysis through reflective practice. Additionally, exploration will extend to Scheufele’s (1999) framing theory and the notions of counter-narratives or “petits récits” by Lyotard (1984), which will be further elaborated upon subsequently.

Communication and Education

The study of educational discourse in the media, an expanding field within educational research, analyzes the portrayal and discussion of education in various media such as newspapers, TV, radio, and digital platforms (Buckingham, 2003; Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2013). This study is pivotal as media shapes public opinion and societal perception of education (Gee & Gee, 2007), thereby influencing educational policies, political decisions, and the attitudes of students, parents, and educators (Luke, 2018).

Research in this field encompasses a range of topics: from the critical analysis of language in media to discuss educational issues, including discursive frameworks, narratives, and stereotypes (Fairclough, 2013), to the portrayal of diverse educational actors and emerging educational themes such as teacher evaluation and curriculum reforms (Gee & Gee, 2007; Van Dijk, 1996). Furthermore, investigations delve into the sources of information and factors influencing educational discourse in media, such as economic and political interests (Luke, 2012).

Methodologically, both qualitative and quantitative techniques are employed, including discourse analysis and critical linguistics, with expectations of continuous growth within the field (Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2013; Luke, 2012). Simultaneously, Netolicky & Barnes (Netolicky & Barnes, 2018) emphasize the narrative dialogical partnership, a method facilitating the exploration of complexities in educational research through dialogue, reflection, and the use of “case studies” to elucidate complex phenomena and establish connections.

METHODS

The method of reflective practice

The method of reflective practice, used in communication and education, emphasizes critical reflection and self-reflection as means for learning and personal development (Schön, 1983). It is grounded in the notion that reflecting on our experiences and communicative practices helps us better understand ourselves, our communication styles, and the impact of our actions on others. It involves constant feedback, critical analysis, and self-reflection on our behaviors and communicative messages, fostering the development of more effective communication skills and increased self-awareness (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Moon, 1999).

This approach integrates concepts from critical pedagogy, communication theory, and learning theory, providing tools to analyze communication, examine social inequalities, and critically reflect on communicative practices (Brookfield, 2017).

In the education of communicators, reflective practice is key to helping students analyze and question their communicative practices, consider the impact of their work on society, and make ethical decisions in their professional careers, as explained by Moon (1999). This practice includes the descriptive reflection model, which focuses on the objective description of experiences, aiding individuals in becoming
aware of their emotions, thoughts, and reactions. It also encompasses the critical reflection model, which urges individuals to challenge their beliefs, assumptions, and judgments, promoting in-depth analysis and exploration of different perspectives. Lastly, the constructive reflection model encourages individuals to use reflection to construct new knowledge and understanding, viewing experiences from various angles, relating them to prior knowledge, and fostering creativity and critical thinking.

Risner (2002) outlines a three-stage process in the reflexive narration of one’s life history: Firstly, the retrieval of the history through words, illustrations, and movement, meticulously reviewing the biographical journey. Secondly, the ‘coming closer,’ as per Watson (1998), involves a close examination of underlying and between-the-lines details in narratives and drawings, paying attention to one’s own words, shapes, qualities, preferences, energies, and images. Thirdly, the ‘stepping back’ or ‘zooming out,’ also from Watson (1998), involves analyzing broader concerns revealed by personal narrative, adopting a distanced perspective for social critique and informed collectivity. This approach allows narrative reflection to transcend the personal and engage in dialogue with critical theories for emancipation and change, advocating for a more humanized social practice.

The “zoom out” and “stepping back” approach in reflective practice encourages narrative reflections to transcend the personal and engage with critical theories. This involves placing personal experiences within broader contexts and linking individual knowledge to more extensive social issues (Risner, 2002; Watson, 1998).

The reflective practice aims to encourage critical and profound reflection on communicative practices and their influence on social, political, and cultural aspects. By focusing on self-reflection, critical analysis, and the application of relevant theories, this method aims to develop more conscious and effective communication skills in professional contexts (Brookfield, 2017; Moon, 1999).

**The Application of Reflective Practice in Education**

Teacher development and reflective practice are crucial in education, focusing on educators’ capacity to reflect on their practice and make informed decisions in the classroom, which is fundamental for enhancing teaching quality. Schön suggests that teachers can enhance their decision-making through reflection in action and on action, effectively and creatively responding to challenges within the educational environment (Schön, 1983).

A three-tier reflection model is proposed: description, analysis, and evaluation. Initially, educators observe and objectively describe their practices in the classroom. Subsequently, they critically examine these practices, considering relevant educational theories and concepts. Finally, they assess and plan for future improvements (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Webster and Mertova (2007) demonstrate how this method effectively applies in various educational contexts, highlighting the utility of narrative as a research tool and its role in the academic discourse on research methods, including its relation to quantitative and qualitative methods.

Day and Kington (2008) highlight the significance of reflective practice in the development of teaching identity, exploring the influence of educators’ emotional well-being on their performance and teaching quality. They delve into how personal experiences, values, and beliefs affect their identity.

Reflective practice is fundamental for the development of a robust teaching identity and emotional well-being, utilizing strategies such as the use of reflection journals. In these journals, educators document their experiences, successes, challenges, emotions, and perceptions, allowing them to delve deeper into their teaching process and identify areas for improvement. Engagement in discussion groups is equally crucial, offering a space to share and debate ideas with other professionals, enriching learning, and providing diverse perspectives. Equally important is formative feedback from mentors and colleagues, providing constructive insights into teaching practices and fostering professional development. These
strategies are complemented by ongoing self-assessment and self-reflection, essential practices that enable educators to take responsibility for their own learning and professional growth.

Zeichner and Liston (2013) introduce reflective practice into teacher training, emphasizing its role in enhancing teaching and the emotional well-being of educators through reflection on experiences, beliefs, values, and classroom research and action. Hatton and Smith (Hatton, N., & Smith, P., 1995) delve deeper into this subject, highlighting the importance of considering the cultural context in the reflective process.

Van Manen (2016) introduces the concept of pedagogical tact, crucial in educators’ reflective decision-making, relying on a holistic understanding of the situation and educational intuition.

Reflective practice has been implemented in various educational contexts and levels, showcasing its applicability in teacher development, initial training, problem-based learning, and practice supervision.

1. **Teacher development** (Figure 1)

   Reflective practice is a fundamental tool for professional development and improving teaching, enabling educators to identify strengths and weaknesses and explore different pedagogical approaches. Zeichner and Liston (2013) emphasize how this practice allows teachers to critically examine their teaching, explore different approaches, and enhance decision-making in the classroom. They also highlight critical reflection, the role of beliefs and values, and research as support for classroom decisions.

   Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) analyze narrative as a research tool, demonstrating its application in teaching. However, Lyons and Scull (2023) question the validity and reliability of narrative research due to its subjectivity. On the other hand, Webster and Mertova (2007) focus on the critical analysis of narrative events in education, while Otto (2007) highlights literary narratives as valuable data in educational research.


   Bignold & Su (2013) examine the use of a narrative approach in educational research, addressing challenges such as the authenticity of participants’ voices and the complexity of the context. Kim (2015) provides a comprehensive understanding of narrative research and its techniques, while Dwyer et al. (2017) present practical applications of this methodology.

   Chowdhury (2017) defines narrative research in education as an approach that uses personal stories to understand educational phenomena. Brookfield (2017) offers strategies to foster critical reflection in teaching, highlighting self-assessment, peer observation, reflection journals, and active student involvement in the reflective process.

2. **Initial Teacher Education** (Figure 1)

   Reflective practice has been integrated into initial teacher education as an essential pedagogical approach to developing critical and reflective thinking skills, enabling future educators to analyze their learning and practice.

   Tripp (2011) focuses on the use of critical incidents in teaching to develop the professional judgment of trainee educators. He proposes a practical methodology that begins with identifying a critical incident in teaching practice, such as classroom challenges or ethical dilemmas. Subsequently, future educators reflect on the incident, exploring various dimensions and perspectives, including those of the students and the cultural context. Tripp also emphasizes the importance of considering ethical implications and the consequences of decisions made.
This methodology aids trainee educators in developing critical, reflective thinking skills and making informed decisions by integrating the learning from critical incidents into their future teaching practice to enhance their professional judgment.

On another note, Patricia M. King and Karen S. Kitchener (1994) present a model of reflective judgment aimed at improving research and practice in critical thinking, intellectual development, and education. They explore how high school students, undergraduates, and graduates reason about ill-structured problems and whether their reasoning improves with higher education. They offer theories and practical approaches to foster reflective judgment and intellectual development in adolescents and adults, providing tools and strategies to design activities and learning environments that promote critical thinking.

3. Problem-Based Learning (Figure 1)

In educational contexts such as schools and universities, reflective practice has been integrated into Problem-Based Learning (PBL), where students reflect on complex challenges, analyze different perspectives, and develop solutions. PBL, which proposes authentic problems to provide meaningful learning experiences, utilizes reflective practice to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It is implemented in stages, from problem identification to resolution and evaluation, with reflection playing a crucial role both individually and collaboratively (Boud & Feletti, 1997).

This approach presents challenges such as time management and the need for autonomy in learning but offers significant benefits such as the development of critical thinking skills, collaboration, and increased student motivation and engagement (Boud & Feletti, 1997).

Boud and Walker (2013) examine the process of reflection and its application in various learning contexts, providing practical tools to foster and support reflection in students. Savin-Baden (2016) discusses how PBL can be effectively implemented in virtual and online environments, highlighting how reflective practice can enrich this approach.

4. Practice Supervision (Figure 1)

Reflective practice has been integrated into teacher practice supervision and field learning experiences, enabling educators to reflect on their performance and receive constructive feedback to enhance their practice. Zeichner (2012) highlights that in practice supervision, trainee teachers can observe and analyze their classroom performance, identify key aspects of their teaching, and evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies and methods. Feedback from supervisors, mentors, and colleagues provides diverse perspectives that broaden their understanding and improve their practice.

Guerra (2009) reviewed reflection in initial teacher training, highlighting three main traditions: reflective teaching, reflective practice, and critical inquiry, and a classification of three levels of reflection: descriptive, comparative, and critical. Andreucci (2013) analyzed conceptualizations and models of teacher practice supervision, demonstrating diversity in conceptualizations and challenges in articulating the roles of supervisors and supervisees.

Anta and de Barrón (2018) examined the development of critical thinking in initial teacher training, emphasizing academic debates as a pedagogical strategy to foster critical thinking and communicative and pedagogical competencies. Kang and Windschitl (2018) explored how teaching practices introduced during training impact teachers’ learning in their first year.

Karr (2020) emphasizes the necessity of rethinking structures and pedagogies in teacher training, addressing criticisms regarding simplification and the lack of focus on equity and social justice. Cacha (2021) examined reflective practice in initial teacher training in Ibero-America, highlighting its use as a critical examination of teaching action and emphasizing individual and collective strategies to foster reflection and collaborative learning.
Frame theory for educational history research

Frame theory (Scheufele, 1999) provides a useful perspective for understanding how media, including historical ones, structure and present educational information in ways that influence interpretation and impact on the audience. This theory examines how educational topics, involved actors, and related situations are framed and presented, encompassing news selection, language, imagery, and adopted perspectives.

Frame analysis in educational discourse reveals how media emphasize certain aspects and downplay others, influencing the formation of opinions and attitudes in society (Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). For instance, they may prioritize controversial debates or educational scandals, impacting the public perception of important educational topics.

Frame theory also indicates how certain themes and perspectives become prominent in the media agenda, affecting educational policies and practices (Scheufele, 1999). This approach provides a critical and reflective insight into the media processes that shape our perception and understanding of education.

The application of this theory to historical newspaper archives, both general and specialized in education, remains equally relevant. Ulmer (2016) highlights that historically, media outlets employed thematic and episodic frames to address educational aspects and pedagogical trends (Iyengar, 1994). Thematic frames relate to broader contexts, while episodic frames arise from specific events. These frames offer simplified interpretations that influence public understanding of educational events and topics (Entman, 1991; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

In the historical context, discussions about educational policies in the press were often framed around specific episodes rooted in conflicts. Conflict, a well-established media frame (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996; Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Scheufele, 1999; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), not only highlights antagonistic relationships but also dramatizes events, perpetuating thematic discourses of crisis or controversy in education (Figure 2).
The Emergence of Counter-Narratives and Their Use in the Research in the History of Education

Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard, prominent postmodern philosophers, have reflected on the role of narratives in society. Foucault points out the omnipresence of narratives in all institutions and social practices, emphasizing their power to shape our reality and knowledge (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). Lyotard, on the other hand, critiques meta-narratives or grand narratives such as progress and science, arguing that in postmodernity, they have lost their value, and we should focus on “petits récits” or localized stories that allow diversity and skepticism (Lyotard, 1984).

Lyotard advocates for multiple perspectives and stories influenced by individual interests and experiences, considering narratives as a form of resistance to singular truths and homogeneity (Lyotard, 1984). This postmodern view underscores the importance of different voices, turning narratives into resistance against homogeneity and singular truth.

In this context, the concept of “petits récits” or counter-narratives in postmodern theory emphasizes an alternative approach to dominant narratives, questioning and challenging these established narratives (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Peters & Lankshear, 2013; Ulmer, 2016). These counter-narratives can address a variety of themes and contexts, and their analysis and study in historical documentation, especially in the educational field, are relevant.

Counter-narratives act as resistance and subversion, challenging narratives that perpetuate inequalities and oppression. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) expand this idea with the concept of “rhizome,” suggesting social and discursive relations as multiplicities of connections. In education, this implies that teachers’ counter-narratives intertwine in a fabric of connections with other experiences and perspectives.

The reconceptualization of teacher voices as counter-narratives in historical educational discourse can reveal a significant impact by challenging dominant narratives and opening space for a more diverse and enriching dialogue (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Analyzing these counter-narratives in the historical newspaper archive and other documents can challenge standardized views of education and highlight unique teacher experiences, leading to a more contextualized and personalized education.

Promoting the analysis of counter-narratives fosters inclusion and diversity, integrating various perspectives and experiences for a more inclusive and equitable analysis of educational history (Peters & Lankshear, 2013). This allows for challenging narratives that marginalize subaltern and minority voices, such
as those of women teachers in specific historical contexts, thus paving the way for a more inclusive educational system and historical analysis (Figure 3).

![Mindmap diagram illustrating the emergence of counter-narratives and their use in the research in the history of education](https://ejournal.papanda.org/index.php/ijess)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Analysis Proposals**

1. Proposal for analysis using newspaper articles from the late 19th and early 20th centuries

   The proposed analysis employs reflective practice and framing theory, along with the concept of counter-narratives, to investigate the representation of the active method in the press from the late 19th to the early 20th century (Soler, 2023). This analytical approach, informed by Brookfield’s strategies and techniques, Hatton and Smith’s levels of reflection (1995), and the approaches of Moon (2013) and Doug Risner (2002), aims to delve into the educational discourse of the time, exploring social tensions, conflicting ideas, and the intentions behind the promotion or resistance to pedagogical innovations.

   The process would unfold in four main steps (Figure 4):

   **Step 1: Source Compilation**

   A comprehensive search for newspaper articles and specialized journals from that era discussing the active method in education would be conducted, compiling those providing an overview of the educational discourse of the time.

   **Step 2: Frame Analysis**

   Applying Scheufele’s (1999) framing theory, the predominant frames in the selected articles will be identified, and their influence on the perception of the active method will be analyzed. Different frames, such as educational improvement, controversy, historical-cultural context, and active and participatory learning, would be studied to understand the construction and presentation of the active method in that period.

   **Step 3: Counter-narrative Analysis**

   Following Lyotard’s concept of “petits récits”, alternative narratives challenging predominant frames would be sought in the articles. Subaltern voices and perspectives questioning or confronting dominant narratives about the active method would be identified.

   **Step 4: Critical Analysis and Reflection**
Critical reflection approaches would be employed to analyze and reflect on the discourses and narratives found. The levels of reflection present in the articles and how critical analysis can provide a deeper understanding of the educational discourse of that era will be examined.

This proposed analysis would enable a critical and nuanced evaluation of past educational discourse, providing a richer insight into the social and educational dynamics of the time. It could potentially reveal the complexity of pedagogical practices and their repercussions in contemporary society.

Figure 4. Mindmap diagram illustrating the proposal for analysis using newspaper articles from the late 19th and early 20th centuries

2. Proposal for analysis regarding technical reports from the late 19th and early 20th centuries written by teachers about their educational experiences in the classrooms, to examine the prevailing educational discourse of the time.

The proposed analysis combines reflective practice and framing theory with the analysis of counter-narratives to study the technical reports and documents submitted by teachers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Soler, 2023). This approach will investigate how the tensions and challenges of implementing the active method in teaching were reflected in these reports, including issues of applicability and lack of resources.

The process is structured into four steps (Figure 5):

Step 1: Compilation and Reading of Technical Report
A comprehensive search and collection of technical reports and documents written by educators about their experiences in classrooms during the specified period will be conducted. A thorough reading will facilitate an understanding of the educational context and pedagogical practices.

Step 2: Frame Analysis
Applying Scheufele’s frame theory, the structure and presentation of information in the technical reports will be analyzed. This involves identifying predominant frames and understanding how they contribute to a particular view of the active method and education during that period.

Step 3: Identification of Counter-Narratives
The concept of counter-narratives by Lyotard will be employed to identify alternative narratives within the technical reports that challenge established frames. This will provide subaltern perspectives offering a critical insight into the active method and its associated practices.

Step 4: Analysis and Critical Reflection
Using critical reflection strategies from Brookfield, Hatton Smith, Moon, and Risner, the levels of reflection in the technical reports will be assessed. Assumptions and values will be interrogated, reflecting on their impact on the educational discourse. Consideration will be given to how counter-narratives challenge and enrich the predominant understanding of the period.

This analysis will allow for a more nuanced and critical evaluation of the educational discourse, providing a richer insight into the educational dynamics of the time and potentially revealing the complexity of pedagogical practices and their repercussions in contemporary society.

Figure 5. Mindmap diagram illustrating the proposal for analysis regarding technical reports from the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Discussion

The proposed research employs a hybrid approach that integrates reflective practice and framing theory (Scheufele, 1999) to scrutinize educational narratives from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, relying on historical documents created by teachers of the time. It focuses on deciphering the predominant discourses and resistances in the adoption of active methods in education, addressing issues of applicability and the lack of resources. The method proposes an analysis of the frames used in technical reports to shape the perception of active pedagogy and counter-narratives (Lyotard, 1984) that emerge as challenging voices to the mainstream, enriching the understanding of the educational landscape. This methodological approach aligns with the social history of education, interpreting education within a broader social and cultural context, and acknowledging its role in perpetuating and challenging existing structures (Cuban, 1993).

The method proposes an analysis of the frames used in technical reports to structure the perception of active pedagogy and counter-narratives (Lyotard, 1984) that emerge as challenging voices to the mainstream, enriching the understanding of the educational landscape. This methodological approach aligns with the social history of education, interpreting education within a broader social and cultural context, and acknowledging its role in perpetuating and challenging existing structures (Cuban, 1993).

The historical review of teaching practices is enriched by studying factors such as teachers’ socialization and professional trajectories (Goodison, 2013) and how these have influenced their
pedagogical approaches. Popkewitz (1991) and Simpson & Dervin (2020) explore the implications of reformist and critical discourses in educational research.

The proposal extends to examine how educational practices are informed by and respond to broader social tensions, considering the impact of technologies, the economy, and social movements on education (Barton & Hayhoe, 2022). Furthermore, it reflects on the role of education in the reproduction or transformation of social inequalities and how different historical periods and contexts have shaped educational paradigms (Gadotti, 2011; Gordon & Lawton, 2019; Karier, 1986).

This multidimensional approach allows for a more nuanced and contextual assessment of educational discourse and its reception, providing insights into the contemporary analysis of education and its relationship with the media and public perception (Ulmert, 2016). The study of these historical dynamics provides a foundation for understanding and addressing current challenges in the educational field and beyond, recognizing education as an intrinsically interconnected phenomenon with society and culture.

CONCLUSION

The research focuses on the interaction between the media and public perception of education, crucial for understanding how educational discourses are shaped and received, and their impact on public perceptions. A reflective practice and framing theory-based analysis (Scheufele, 1999) is proposed, employing a mixed-methods approach to assess both existing literature and historical documents.

This methodological framework aims not only to decipher the dominant educational discourse but also to identify counter-narratives (Lyotard, 1984), thereby revealing a more comprehensive and nuanced view of the educational landscape of a specific period. The implementation of critical reflections, following the guidelines of Brookfield and others, promotes detailed scrutiny of narratives, enhancing rigor and self-critique in educational research.

REFERENCES


