

Visual Arts Teacher Education in Brazil: Mapping the Current State of Research

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Abstract

This study presents a bibliographic analysis of research published in Brazil between 2018 and 2024 on the training of visual arts teachers. We start from the following question: how can visual arts teachers be trained for a type of teaching focused on interpretation aimed at understanding artworks in the school context? The objective, then, was to map the current state of research in the field of visual arts teacher education, and within that body of work, to identify and analyze studies and training proposals that emphasize the dimension of artistic reception. Based on a review of academic articles, a sample of 36 studies was selected, and seven recurring thematic clusters were identified. The main finding of the study is the clear scarcity of theoretical and methodological training proposals that address the reception dimension in visual arts education.

Keywords: teacher education; visual arts teaching; art reception; Basic Education.

Introduction

This article presents a section of the results obtained from the bibliographic review stage of the project entitled: *Teacher education and professional development for visual arts teaching with an emphasis on artistic reception*. The research is being conducted within the Graduate Program in Education at Centro Universitário de Patos de Minas (PPGE-UNIPAM)¹ and is funded by FAPEMIG (Processo APQ-00829-23).

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The general objective of this project is to develop a didactic proposal for the education and professional development of visual arts teachers working in Basic Education, grounded on an epistemological framework based on a theory of reception that articulates knowledge from Aesthetics, Hermeneutics, Semiotics, and Cognitive Psychology (Fernández, 2024). The project continues the results of a postdoctoral research on visual arts teaching in Brazil within Basic Education conducted between 2017 and 2019 (Fernández, 2021).

Both studies constitute stages of a broader investigative program focused on the pedagogical implications of a reception theory of contemporary art, understood as the epistemological foundation of teaching-learning processes through art. In this context, we adopt the notion of “education through art” from a postmodern perspective, that is, as a type of didactic action centered on the interpretation and understanding of artworks within the school and classroom environment.

The theoretical-bibliographic study presented in this article is the result of the first stage of the ongoing project, fulfilling one of its specific objectives: to review the main findings achieved by specialists in the field of visual arts teacher education in Brazil.

This phase of bibliographic review and analysis enabled us to explore more deeply the problem from which we depart: how can visual arts teachers be prepared for teaching centered on interpreting and understanding artworks in the school context? A study we conducted based on the proceedings of the National Congress of the Federation of Art Educators of Brazil (ConFAEB), systematizing and categorizing communications that addressed proposals for visual arts teaching in Basic Education with a focus on reading artworks in the classroom as an essential pedagogical action, allowed us to identify key issues that require further in-depth investigation (Fernández, Santana, Reedijk, 2025). These issues are summarized in the following paragraph as a synthesis of concerns expressed by researchers in the field of visual arts at FAEB congresses.

How can art teaching contribute to the integral development of children and adolescents by promoting systematic contact with relevant artistic works in the school context? Which theories, methods, and methodologies would be most suitable for enabling teaching-learning processes based on the understanding of art? What criteria should guide the selection of artists and artworks, considering students’ age and cognitive development, in order to contribute effectively to the complex process of developing artistic understanding in childhood? How should the teaching process be managed: should students be given full freedom to express their spontaneous reactions to artworks presented and work from that point, or should teachers mediate the process by rigorously following methodological stages, as proposed by formalist approaches? Is it necessary for art teachers, before children and adolescents, to lecture on content such as the artist’s biography, historical context, period style, personal styles or aesthetics, artistic techniques, among others?

In summary: how should teachers be trained to act didactically to expand the interpretive and comprehension capacities of students regarding the complexity of the world's artistic heritage?

Preparing teachers from this perspective requires confronting some of the problems we have identified in our research on visual arts teaching in Brazil (Fernández, 2021). There is a marked tendency to fragment the process of reading and understanding artworks into phases or actions – a legacy of formalist approaches that remains present in the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC). In practice, this often results in an atomized (and sterile) reading of the formal elements of visual language, which does not go beyond what semiotics defines as the “differential levels of the plane of expression.” This type of approach presents another problem: it proves entirely ineffective when dealing with postmodern artistic practices. How can one analyze points, lines, areas, volumes, figure/ground relations, colors and textures when interpreting performances, installations, public interventions, conceptual art, art new media, among others?

Another concerning trend relates to the way the Visual Culture approach has spread within Brazilian art education, with the Spaniard Fernando Hernández being the most cited and used author. Cultural protagonism and the almost ubiquitous presence of images in contemporary global society are undeniable. However, the problem we perceive in applying this approach to visual arts education is that it has ended up reinstating the fundamentalism of the image and of the sense of sight that postmodern art, since the 1960s, had been deconstructing by breaking with the supposed visual purity of abstract art.

What we have observed in numerous articles adopting this framework is that teachers, in an effort to move beyond hegemonic Western Art History narratives – an entirely legitimate and necessary goal – end up bringing into the classroom discourses from advertising or the cultural industry (which are also not strictly visual) without establishing proper semiotic distinctions between, for example, the underlying structure of an advertising visual text and that of a visual text (or an inter-, multi-, or transmedial text) legitimated as artistic. As noted in parentheses, postmodern artistic practices are not limited to the visual field: they are multisensory, multimedial, intermedial, and transmedial, that is, they mix a significant range of languages, techniques, media, materials, and creative resources, from traditional canvas and oil to the most advanced technologies. Like the formalist approach, so-called Visual Culture studies become inoperative in the face of the semiotic complexity of contemporary art, which has theoretical and methodological consequences for art education.

Regarding artistic content, due to the very nature of art, such content is less codified and standardized than disciplinary knowledge such as language, mathematics, chemistry, physics, or biology. This makes it significantly more difficult to correlate artistic content with students' cognitive development stages. Therefore, the selection of artworks that meaningfully engage

with students' age, experiences, interests, and motivations largely depends on the teacher's psychological, didactic, and cultural formation. What emerges from the literature is a scenario marked by a certain level of chaos, empiricism, improvisation, and theoretical ambiguity regarding a crucial aspect: which theoretical content and artistic texts will the teacher work with in art classes?

With regard to the teaching process, when addressing interpretation for the understanding of artworks within the spatiotemporal context of the classroom, it is essential that the teacher be able to recognize, observe, and appropriately mediate the intersubjectivity that is structured and manifested in a collective process of understanding. Concerning this hermeneutic, didactic, and psychological phenomenon, we found no reference whatsoever in the extensive reviews of academic articles on visual arts education and teacher training that we have conducted to date. In our view, it is crucial that teachers fully master this complex phenomenon: the movement of intersubjectivity that develops through dialogic participation, in which all students – stimulated and guided by the teacher – contribute to the interpretation of an artwork based on their knowledge and personal experiences. Considering that, within a pedagogical approach grounded in hermeneutics, the interpretation of an artwork should unfold through a horizontal and dialogic dynamic, in which the teacher acts as a mediator of the process of understanding – configured as a circular movement of projection and re-projection of interpretative hypotheses onto the text (the hermeneutic circle).

With regard to the historical mediation through which artistic texts reach us, another widespread phenomenon is the tendency of teachers to rely solely on contextualizing artworks based on already established narratives from Art History. The question that arises is whether such historiographical narratives – often highly complex – are meaningful or comprehensible to children and adolescents. Engaging with the historicity of the artwork is of utmost importance; however, we argue that this historical substratum should be activated from the artwork itself, within its interpretative process, so that it can be experienced by students in fusion with their own historicities as subjects – thus constituting an authentic process of understanding. In the act of understanding an artwork in its historicity, through the experiential appropriation by the viewer, interpretation must emerge from the symbolic and intentional world intrinsic to the work. It is the teacher's role, together with their students, to materialize the hermeneutic and semiotic "miracle" of giving life and voice to the semantic and cognitive potentialities latent in every work of art.

In summary, from our perspective, an art teacher requires a form of education that provides a deep understanding of the singularity of the communicative process established by a work of art. Moreover, teachers must be aware of all that is involved in and mobilized by the sensory, emotional, and intellectual effort that interpretation demands in order to achieve understanding. Thus, knowledge of philosophical Aesthetics, Hermeneutics, Semiotics, Cognitive Psychology,

and Art History is not exhaustive, but is undoubtedly essential to the kind of teacher education and professionalization we advocate.

The results of the bibliographic review presented in this article aimed to map the current state of research specifically in the field of visual arts teacher education and, within this body of work, to identify and analyze studies and training proposals that emphasize the dimension of artistic reception – that is, work involving the reading, interpretation, and understanding of artistic texts. An underlying objective was to contrast the results of the categorization and analysis of this sample of articles with the problematic scenario outlined, in summary form, in the preceding paragraphs.

In the following section, we describe the methodology employed in the bibliographic survey and in the selection of the sample. We then present the results of the categorization of the articles, which provided an overview of the current state of research on visual arts teacher education. In the final discussion, we analyze the only three articles identified that address image and artwork reading practices within teacher education proposals. Finally, in the concluding remarks, we highlight the main findings of the study.

Methodology

This segment of the bibliographic research was limited to a survey of scientific articles published in Brazilian academic journals with open access and double-blind peer review, in Portuguese and Spanish, between 2019 and 2024. We chose to work exclusively with articles because they represent the most standardized and widely used format of scientific communication through which researchers disseminate the results of their investigations. Moreover, the most significant chapters of master's dissertations and doctoral theses are typically published in article form; therefore, through such publications, it is possible to access the majority of research outcomes produced by graduate programs in Brazil.

In 2019, we concluded a postdoctoral study that serves as the foundation for the current research project, which is why this year was initially established as the starting point of the temporal scope. However, three articles published in 2018 were ultimately included, as they present relevant research findings authored by scholars with well-established contributions to the field. Thus, the survey covered the period from 2018 to 2024, considering that seven years of academic production constitute a sufficiently broad and up-to-date interval for mapping the state of knowledge regarding our object of study.

The article survey was conducted using two databases: the CAPES Journal Portal, accessed through CAFE (restricted content), and SciELO – Scientific Electronic Library Online. The search was structured based on the object of study: visual arts teacher education, with an emphasis on the dimension of artistic reception. This object is composed of three dimensions: teacher education / visual arts teaching / art reception. These three dimensions determined

the descriptors used in the database searches. As shown in Table 1, each research dimension was explored through multiple equivalent descriptors in order to minimize omissions, given that not all authors employ the same categories or keywords; additionally, Brazilian academic discourse has its own specificities. For instance, while in Anglophone, Germanic, and Hispanic contexts the categories “art reception” and “reception theory” or “reception aesthetics” are well established, in Brazil notions closer to literacy are more commonly used, such as “image reading,” “visual reading,” among others.

Table 1 – Research dimensions and descriptors used

Teacher Education	Visual Arts Teaching	Art Reception
teacher education in-service teacher education continuing teacher education teacher training teacher professional development	art basic education visual arts plastic arts contemporary art	art reception artwork reading image reading visual reading aesthetic education aesthetic development aesthetic training

Source: authors, 2025

After removing duplicate records appearing in both databases, an initial pre-selection of 51 articles was obtained. From this initial corpus, titles, abstracts, and keywords were reviewed; in cases of uncertainty, a selective reading of the introduction, methodology, final considerations, and references was conducted. In more ambiguous situations, when the objectives of the article were not clearly defined, a full reading of the text was carried out.

This refinement process led us to a methodological crossroads: very few studies addressed the third dimension – arguably the most central to our research – namely, art reception as the focus, means, or objective of teacher education. Consequently, we decided to adjust the sample to fully meet the first two dimensions of the object of study (teacher education and visual arts teaching), which allowed us to arrive at a rigorous selection of 22 articles, of which only three encompass all three dimensions of the object of study.

To the categorization of this sample of 22 articles, we added, for the purposes of this study, a dossier published in 2022 by the Observatory of Teacher Education in Art Education: Comparative Studies between Brazil and Argentina (OFPEA/BRARG). The Observatory is a network-based research project that brings together universities from Brazil and Argentina, initiated in 2011 with the aim of investigating visual arts teacher education across diverse contexts. According to a recent publication (Oliveira et al., 2024, p. 108): “It began with three (3) partner universities and currently comprises twenty-two (22) institutions: twenty (20) universities and two (02) federal institutes.”

The Observatory had previously published another important dossier in 2019, in partnership with the Latin American Network of Researchers in Art Teacher Education (LAIFOPA). Its theme was “policies and curriculum in Visual Arts teacher education programs,” and its objective was to analyze curricular proposals for Visual Arts teacher education in Brazil and Latin America (Fonseca Silva & Foerste, 2019). Given the space limitations of a journal article, including both dossiers in the sample would be excessive; therefore, we opted to work with the 2022 publication, as it presents the most up-to-date results of this significant network-based research project.

The dossier *Art Teacher Education in Brazil: Problematizations Based on the Observatory Network Project* was organized by Maria Cristina da Rosa Fonseca da Silva (UDESC) and Vera Lúcia Penzo Fernandes (UFMS) and published in volume 14, issue 32 of the journal *Palíndromo* (Florianópolis). It comprises 15 articles, in addition to the Editorial. However, one of these works was not included in the analysis – *Portugal: The Profile of the Art Teacher*, by Sandra Palhares (University of Minho) – as it focuses on transformations that have occurred over the past four decades in Portugal.

Results

The sample was thus delimited by 22 articles retrieved from the CAPES Journal Portal and the SciELO databases, in addition to 14 works from the dossier, totaling 36 articles on initial and continuing education for visual arts teachers in Brazil. The reading protocol was structured around the following categories: object of study and research problem; objectives; epistemology and methodology; results; and the presence or absence of an emphasis on artistic reception. In order to construct the mapping presented below, a categorization was carried out based on the objects of study and the objectives of the selected works.

It is important to note that, in many cases, authors do not clearly define the research problem or the object of study, or there is limited coherence between the stated objectives and what is actually developed throughout the article. This constitutes a serious and fairly widespread issue, observed even in A1 journals within the CAPES Qualis classification system. Consequently, in several cases, we were compelled to synthesize the object of study based on what could be inferred from the stated objectives.

The first step of the categorization process consisted of reformulating the objects of study as statements or themes. The second step involved grouping the articles according to thematic convergence. The third step consisted of abstracting broader thematic clusters capable of encompassing sets of themes, so that these would become subthemes within the clusters, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Categorization of the sample of 36 articles

Thematic clusters	Subthemes	Articles
<p>1. Curriculum and initial teacher education in Visual Arts.</p>	<p>The place of artistic experience throughout the teacher-education trajectory in Visual Arts. The specificities of Ledoc-LGN as an interdisciplinary proposal for educating Art teachers. Initial teacher education in Visual Arts and its impact on ways of teaching contemporary art in Early Childhood Education. Curricular arrangements in the education of Visual Arts teachers. The impact of technologies on Visual Arts teacher education. Programs such as PIBID Art and their relevance in shaping future teachers as organic intellectuals. The concept of “learning to learn” in the curriculum of a Visual Arts teacher education program.</p>	<p>Nogueira (2020) Camargo and Schutz-Foerste (2022) Gondim (2022) Moreira (2022) Soares and Barros (2022) Gondim (2022) Luge Oliveira (2024)</p>
<p>2. Theories, methodologies, and pedagogical approaches in teacher education and Visual Arts teaching.</p>	<p>The importance of Vygotsky’s theory for the aesthetic education of the Visual Arts teacher and for Art teaching in schools. Art teaching and the process of producing didactic and para-didactic materials conceived from the French semiotic tradition. Potentialities of the semiotic-pedagogical approach in teacher education in arts. The space and importance of studying the classics in Art education. The role and importance of studying the classics in art education. The role of theoretical frameworks in the professional practice of Visual Arts and Music pre-service teachers and in-service art teachers. Pedagogical trends and teacher education models and their impact on school practices in art education in Brazil.</p>	<p>Fonseca da Silva (2018) Buoro (2021) Buján (2022) Romanelli and Schlichta (2022) Silva and Bussolotti (2023) Silva and Nunes (2023)</p>
<p>3. Teaching Practices and Supervised Internship</p>	<p>Experiences in supervised internships in Visual Arts teacher education programs. The importance of Laboratory Schools in the education of future Visual Arts teachers. The creation of pedagogical practices during internships as a form of resistance to official curricula. Internship experiences in non-formal spaces and their multiple modes of learning, teaching, and producing art and culture. The impact of supervised internships on the construction of teacher identity. Curricular internship in Visual Arts teacher education through shared experiences, dialogue, and self-narration.</p>	<p>Ferreira and Caixeta (2019) Carvalho (2021) Mossi and De Oliveira (2021) Pizza (2022) Rodrigues and Silva (2023) Monteiro and Silva (2024)</p>

<p>4. Professional practice, working conditions, and teaching precarization.</p>	<p>Trends in teacher education, working conditions, and legal requirements for Visual Arts teachers in Brazil and Argentina. The impact of educational reforms and neoliberal policies on the devaluation of schools, teachers, content, and pedagogical approaches. Dimensions of art teachers' working conditions: age group, didactic aspects, pedagogical practices, and school knowledge. Challenges faced by Visual Arts educators, including the lack of qualified teachers and inadequate teaching conditions. Academic background of in-service art teachers and their main areas of professional activity. Issues emerging in graduate studies in Visual Arts from a teacher education perspective.</p>	<p>Alvarenga (2022) Perini (2022) Silva and Fernandes (2022) Soares (2022) Sosnowski and Ribeiro (2022) Muller (2022)</p>
<p>5. Teacher identity and narratives.</p>	<p>The implications of nomadic teaching in contemporary Visual Arts teacher education. Identity formation processes through photo-essays. Research practices involving biographical narratives in teacher education contexts. The implications of patriarchy and visual culture in the education of female Visual Arts teachers.</p>	<p>Nunes (2020) Alves and Santos (2020) Alves and Oliveira (2022) Pontes and Zamperetti (2022)</p>
<p>6. Teacher education and sociocultural aspects.</p>	<p>Teacher education for working with art and movement through playful activities in Basic Education. Aspects of visuality related to consumer imaginaries in the discourse of Pedagogy students. Art teacher education in Brazil from a decolonial perspective, focusing on creative processes. The relationship between art, aesthetics, and the market and its impact on teaching and professional practice.</p>	<p>Cordeiro <i>et al.</i> (2021) Zamperetti and Torres (2022) Galvão Coutinho (2022) Anversa and Hillesheim (2022)</p>
<p>7. Educational policies and regulatory frameworks.</p>	<p>Points of intersection among Visual Arts teacher education programs in light of public policies and higher education expansion. Changes in art teacher education over the past 45 years, with a turning point in Law No. 13,278 (May 2, 2016). Historical development of legislation regulating Visual Arts teacher education in Brazil since 1971.</p>	<p>Silva, Alvarenga and Bellan (2018) Alvarenga and Silva (2018) Bourguignon de Lima (2021)</p>

Source: authors, 2025

The first thematic cluster is composed predominantly of articles from the dossier, whereas the second consists mainly of articles retrieved from the databases. Initial teacher

education in Visual Arts degree programs remains the primary focus of research, as do theories, methodologies, and pedagogical approaches, given that teacher education requires the continuous revision and adaptation of methodologies for art teaching, considering diverse theoretical perspectives and pedagogical practices.

None of the works included in the dossier addressed the topic of the supervised teaching practicum; however, six articles from the sample of 22 fully converged on this theme, thus constituting the third cluster. This cluster emerged as a highly researched area, encompassing reflections on training experiences, the identity of the art teacher, creativity, and professional practice in plural contexts. In turn, the fourth thematic cluster, which addresses professional practice, working conditions, and the precarization of art teachers in Brazil, is composed entirely of articles from the dossier, whose editorial orientation reflects a more explicitly political perspective, with historical-dialectical materialism serving as the epistemological framework that brings together researchers within the Observatory.

The fifth cluster was constituted by four articles from the sample of 22, which explore processes of teacher identity formation through narrative and autobiographical methodologies, emphasizing subjectivity, personal experiences, and the challenges faced in teacher education contexts. The sixth cluster is mixed, though predominantly composed of articles from the databases, and proved to be the most difficult to define, as these four studies did not fully align with any of the previously established clusters. Consequently, we created a broader category – “teacher education and sociocultural aspects” – since the relationship between teacher education and sociocultural dimensions is clearly evident in these works.

Finally, the seventh cluster is the smallest in number but presents undeniable internal coherence. These three significant studies examine educational policies and regulatory frameworks over a period spanning the past fifty years, with the aim of understanding their effects on teacher education and art teaching. Public policies and curricular guidelines directly influence the structure and quality of teacher education and professional practice, and this topic is also tangentially addressed in other articles within the sample.

The three articles analyzed in the following section belong to the group of 22 works retrieved from the databases and did not constitute a separate thematic cluster. Although they incorporate the dimension of art reception as a formative practice, the way in which their authors formulated the objects of study and research objectives made it more coherent for each of them to be included within the broader thematic clusters already defined. None of the 14 articles from the dossier fulfilled all three dimensions of our object of study, which indicates that teacher education for visual arts teaching with a focus on the process of artistic reception has not yet been explored within the scope of the Observatory of Teacher Education in Art Education network project.

Art Teaching: Semiotic Contributions, by Anamelia Buoro (2021), was classified within cluster two—Theories, Methodologies, and Pedagogical Approaches in Visual Arts Education and Teacher Training. *The Education of Female Visual Arts Teachers: Narrative Pathways for Understanding the Implications of Patriarchy*, by Alessandra Gurgel Pontes and Maristani Polidori Zamperetti (2022), was included in cluster five – Teacher Identity and Narratives. The third article, by Zamperetti and Laura Sacco dos Anjos Torres (2022), entitled *Visuality and Visibility in Educational Practices: Pathways toward the Critical Understanding of Images*, was classified within cluster six – Teacher Education and Sociocultural Aspects.

Discussion

SEMIOTICS APPLIED TO VISUAL ARTS TEACHING

Art Teaching: Semiotic Contributions is an article that systematizes the author's previous research. In it, Anamelia Buoro presents reflections on visual arts education, focusing on the development of didactic and supplementary materials grounded in the theoretical and methodological framework of French semiotics, particularly that of Algirdas Julien Greimas. In this sense, the importance of image reading guided by semiotic principles is emphasized, aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to provide teachers with support for improving their pedagogical practices.

The researcher has developed a proposal that applies semiotics to visual arts education, with a focus on artwork reading. Her main theoretical reference is the French semiotician Algirdas Julien Greimas. From this perspective, and following Greimas, the image is treated as a visual text and, therefore, art is conceived as language. Greimasian textual semiotics posits that every discourse possesses narrativity, that is, a series of transformations of prior states of matter carried out by a subject in order to create an intentional object – o the artistic text. One clarification made by the author is that, within this semiotic framework, the concept of “text” refers to the plane of expression, constituted by elements of language; whereas the category of “discourse” refers to the content conveyed by a textual expression.

In the methodology outlined by the author, visual arts teaching through image reading requires understanding the meaning of an artwork as the result of the relationship between the plane of expression—namely, the elements of visual language that constitute the work – and the plane of content, that is, the meanings articulated through the reading of the visual text. The elements of visual language mentioned by the author and considered essential for image reading comprise four dimensions: eidetic (form), chromatic (color), topological (space), and material (matter/texture). These semiotic dimensions of the plane of expression should be introduced to students as the starting point for reading an artwork.

Individually, each element “signifies,” but the meaning of a particular work is constructed through the process of relating these elements to one another (colors, texture effects, spatial organization, material characteristics, etc.) and, moreover, to the content (what is initially understood by students as “meaning,” since they do not yet grasp that meaning or signification arises precisely from the articulation between expression and content). (Buoro, 2021, p. 162)

At first glance, such a semiotic approach may appear limited to image reading, with a certain formalist bias. How can these semiotic dimensions be applied to contemporary art? How can one begin the reading of a performance, an installation, or a conceptual artwork by focusing on textures, colors, lines, and volumes? Our research indicates that many art teachers in Basic Education experience considerable insecurity when working with contemporary art. A semiotic approach should be sufficiently comprehensive to provide theoretical support for teachers dealing pedagogically with non-conventional artistic texts.

The author emphasizes that art teaching requires theoretical mediation; however, this complexity should not be directly transferred to students. Instead, teachers should adapt their approach according to students’ age, employing didactic strategies to make concepts accessible without oversimplifying them.

[...] a child in the early years of Basic Education (Ensino Fundamental I), for example, does not yet have the intellectual maturity to understand all the nuances of semiotic theory – and, in that case, the educator will act as a mediator between a complex object of meaning, as some works of art are, and its reader; that is, strategies of didactic mediation are devised so that the child can grasp the multiple meanings of the work presented, without necessarily vulgarizing its interpretive potential. (Buoro, 2021, p. 163)

Another important aspect highlighted by the author is the teacher’s responsibility in selecting the images to be studied. This should be a research-based and creative process that considers not only students’ interests but also the pedagogical suitability of the content for their age group. We would add that, for this, the teacher must possess artistic literacy, a solid grounding in Art History, and remain updated on local, national, and international artistic processes – implying an ongoing process of professional development that informs teaching practice.

Furthermore, mere exposure of students to artworks – whether in schools, museums, galleries, or other cultural institutions – does not in itself guarantee learning or knowledge construction. According to the author, this is a widespread misconception among both parents and teachers, who often lack awareness of the importance of mediating the encounter with artworks in order to activate meaning-making through interpretation, reflection, dialogue, and connections between the work and the student’s context. From a semiotic perspective, the researcher states: “it is necessary to articulate the plane of expression and the plane of content in order to grasp the construction of meaning proposed by the artwork, as readers and interpreters” (Buoro, 2021, p. 164).

We would add that understanding art requires more than “grasping what the work proposes.” The plane of content is not pre-given or established prior to the interpretative process; rather, the meaning of an artwork is always a latent phenomenon that must be activated by the viewer. Teacher and students, in dialogue with the artistic text, must create and produce a plane of content for that artistic expression; it is in this process that semiotic codification materializes (Fernández, 2024).

Undoubtedly, semiotics offers highly valuable tools for art education, particularly in visual arts. Training teachers to understand art as language, the artwork as text, and the complexity of the communicative and meaning-making processes it entails is essential for developing teaching methodologies that genuinely contribute to interpretative understanding in the classroom or in any context where children encounter art under pedagogical mediation.

DESIGNING A SHORT COURSE AS A CONTINUING EDUCATION PROJECT

In *The Education of Female Visual Arts Teachers: Narrative Pathways for Understanding the Implications of Patriarchy*, Pontes and Zamperetti discuss the predominance of patriarchal discourses within academic content in visual arts education, highlighting the invisibility of women’s artistic production in teacher education programs. The authors emphasize the need to analyze how such narratives affect teacher training and the representation of women in the arts, seeking to challenge the conservative hegemony that perpetuates these issues in educational contexts.

In this article, the authors reflect on the organization of a short course designed to create a space that would facilitate dialogue between researchers and participating teachers, as well as to foster the production of teachers’ personal narratives. Through these narratives, it was possible to clarify how patriarchal influences shape the practices and experiences of visual arts educators both within and beyond the academic environment, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of their pedagogical practices and professional development. The short course included the analysis and appreciation of artworks by both women and men, with a focus on the representation of women in art.

The proposal for the short course was conceived based on the relationship between visual culture and visual arts education. As theoretical references, the authors cite Belidson Dias (2011), Ana Mae Barbosa (2012), and Fernando Hernández (2007), who conceptualize visual arts education as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge in dialogue with everyday visual culture. From this perspective, the skills and training developed for interpreting artworks contribute to a critical understanding of the visualities that shape contemporary society.

One of the objectives of the short course was precisely to analyze Renaissance artworks alongside works by contemporary women artists that focused on the representation of women,

in order to understand how patriarchal culture is expressed and the impact it has on teacher education.

The short course was conducted in two in-person modules between July and September 2019 and involved the participation of 28 teachers from a Basic Education school network, the majority of whom were women. The authors' stated objective was that the participating teachers would develop alternative understandings of art education through image analysis, dialogue, artistic production, formative narratives, and discussions on school dynamics. In this study, we limit ourselves to examining how the reading of artworks was implemented as a formative practice in visual arts teacher education.

The first activity consisted of a theoretical presentation of themes and concepts such as "Women in Art History," "Visual Culture," "Image Reading," and "Patriarchy." Following this theoretical introduction, six "images from art" and visual culture were analyzed. Teachers were asked to write down their perceptions of each image. In the article, the authors present two of these works: *Susanna and the Elders*, by Artemisia Gentileschi (1610–1611), and *Susanna and the Elders*, by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1617). The authors report:

[...] that the discussions and analyses by the teachers (who handed in their written materials) agreed that, in Gentileschi's representation, the focus was harassment and rape of women, whereas in Barbieri's work the theme was softened as a normalized condition of female appreciation. Either way, the teachers noted that they had never had contact with the artist's work and that in their education programs they did not learn to analyze any image critically, but rather to appreciate them aesthetically. (Pontes e Zamperetti, 2022, p. 12)

However, with regard to the processes of reading, interpretation, and analysis of the artworks, the authors do not provide further information on how the process of understanding was developed. They do not specify the methodology employed, the underlying interpretative framework, or whether teachers were allowed or encouraged to analyze the works using their own theoretical and methodological references. Based on the written accounts cited and discussed by the authors, it can be inferred that these were more empirical and eclectic readings, lacking a clearly defined methodology and epistemological grounding. The teachers limited themselves to writing statements such as: "I see a woman in a defensive position – two men verbally attacking her"; "I see a woman being exposed and criticized or placed in a position of submission or vulnerability"; "I feel that she is being disturbed or judged"; "I see a woman oppressed by older men who 'perhaps' whisper questionable 'truths'; I feel sorry for her! I would use the image to relate to current social issues – sexist attitudes."

As can be observed, these are rather basic comments, indicative of a type of reading limited to meanings that are explicit in the works and easily inferred – especially considering that the analysis was guided by the theme of patriarchy. At no point do the authors indicate that a deeper or more structural reading of the visual text was attempted, which would entail

an interpretation opening up multiple levels of understanding – historical, mythological, stylistic, pictorial, iconological, dramatic, anthropological, among others – before ultimately addressing the ideological problem of patriarchy. This type of interpretative exercise, which is both superficial and biased toward a single thematic focus, is concerning, particularly in the context of a teacher education course in visual arts. It introduces an instrumental perspective that limits or fragments the dialogue with artworks, which are invariably far more complex than what can be inferred from their denotative surface.

In the second module of the short course, the researchers introduced, as proposals for analysis, works by Brazilian and Latin American artists from the second half of the twentieth century. The objective was to provide teachers with access to the production of women artists who were largely unfamiliar to them, as these artists are not part of the canonical content of academic training and, therefore, are not included in the repertoire used in their everyday pedagogical practices. The selected works encompassed artistic practices such as performance, photography, sculpture, printmaking, collage, and graffiti, with the particularity of addressing issues related to gender, race, violence against women, among others connected to the theme of patriarchy. The authors conclude as follows:

Thus, in this final module, the two blocks were organized in order to foster group reflection on ways of learning and teaching through women's artistic production, as well as to open possibilities for generating new themes in Visual Arts Education and for resisting the predominance of patriarchy. At the end of the meeting, the proposal was to promote a collective pedagogical reflection on the relationships between visual culture, the teaching profession, and the future of practice in Visual Arts, indicating paths against the oppression produced by patriarchal hegemony. (Pontes & Zamperetti, 2022, p. 18)

With regard to our research interest, in this account of the second module the authors also do not deepen, describe, or explain the type of reading carried out by the teachers in relation to these contemporary artistic practices, which, as is well known, employ aesthetic resources that differ substantially from traditional modes of visual representation. How did the teacher-educators mediate this interpretative process? What was the theoretical-methodological approach? Were difficulties, resistances, insecurities, or, conversely, competencies and interpretative skills in engaging with contemporary art documented? The reading of the article leaves us with these questions regarding aspects that we consider of central importance for teacher education focused on the process of artistic reception.

Despite our critical observations, it is undeniable that training initiatives such as the one developed by Pontes and Zamperetti are both highly important and necessary. It is precisely through the systematization of this experience in the analyzed article that such discussion becomes possible – both to learn from it and to rethink how this type of action research can be more effectively designed within the field of teacher education.

ART/EDUCATIONAL TRAINING PROPOSAL

Zamperetti and Torres, in *Visuality and Visibility in Educational Practices: Pathways toward the Critical Understanding of Images*, systematize a formative experience conducted with students from the Pedagogy program at the Federal University of Pelotas during the second semester of 2018, within the course “Educational Practices VI – Arts.” The art/educational proposal was part of the research project *Art/Educational Propositions and the Education of Sensibility: Dialogues on Consumption*, and its objectives were to promote activities that would generate dialogue about the ways in which Pedagogy students interpret advertising visual texts, as well as to investigate the types of consumer imaginaries expressed in their discourse.

The theoretical framework declared by the authors is grounded in scholars of Visual Culture, such as Hernández (2006), Walker and Chaplin (2002), Crimp (1999), Foster (1988), and Buoro (2002). Within this Visual Studies perspective, as synthesized by the researchers, the relations of meaning attributed to images by diverse social groups are shaped by constraints imposed by culture. Visual culture is understood as a multidisciplinary field that articulates contextual, ideological, and political visual experiences. Based on the concept of “regimes of visibility,” the aim was “to reflect on issues related to art, experience, and teacher education, grounded in the interactions and artistic productions developed by the subjects involved in the research” (Zamperetti & Torres, 2022, p. 166).

Another important conceptual axis systematized in the study concerns the categories of dialogue, dialogism, and dialogicity, drawing on and discussing canonical authors such as Bakhtin (2014) and Freire (2018). The authors emphasize the importance of establishing dialogical spaces as a condition for knowledge construction, enabling the flexibilization of thought, the deconstruction of prejudices, the sharing of experiences, and openness to new forms of engagement – whether aesthetic or of another nature.

Based on these theoretical approaches, the art/educational proposal was grounded in methodological principles such as the interaction between researcher and object of study, the collection of “descriptive data,” and the self-perception of experiences expressed by the research participants. In the following excerpt, the authors summarize the stages through which the training process was structured:

[...] activity based on the poem *Eu, etiqueta* by Carlos Drummond de Andrade (reading through a dynamic exercise); vocabulary exercise using words from the poem; analysis of advertising images; production of labels; reading of artworks; presentation of experiences from the school context through the development of art/educational proposals, followed by the presentation of the theoretical frameworks that supported the pedagogical practice, as well as reports of experiences derived from the researchers’ own teacher education and school contexts. (Zamperetti & Torres, 2022, p. 170)

In this article, the authors analyze the development of the art/educational proposal only up to the activity involving the production of labels. It would have been relevant to know how the activity of reading artworks was conceived and implemented, and whether it was possible to establish any kind of critical-reflexive counterpoint (semiotic, hermeneutic, aesthetic, sociological, etc.) with the second block centered on the aesthetic and ideological rhetoric of advertising. We will therefore limit ourselves to a brief examination of the activity related to the analysis of advertising images, since it involves image interpretation, even though these images possess structural—and thus communicative – characteristics that differ from the visual or multimedia texts typically experienced as artistic.

From what can be inferred, the students themselves selected the advertisements analyzed; however, it is not clear from the text whether they brought them independently or chose them from a set curated by the instructors. The researchers note that the students were participatory and inquisitive, identifying issues present in everyday social dynamics and expressing feelings of “discomfort” in response to the rather aggressive messages conveyed by advertising. The authors state that the objective of this activity was the “need to educate young people for a critical reading of the visualities to which they are exposed, particularly through electronic screens” (Zamperetti & Torres, 2022, p. 171).

For example, in the case of an advertisement for a Tagheuer watch, students expressed their opinions, which were mostly descriptive of what was shown in the image, such as: “very beautiful,” “a consumer dream,” “the kind of man I would like to have,” “someone well-dressed, well-groomed.” Only one student offered a somewhat deeper observation, referring to possible connotative meanings in the image, such as the aggressive posture of the male figure, which could be associated with a particular model of masculinity, such as machismo.

From that point onward, the authors report that a formal reading of the image was conducted and that the students’ opinions were problematized. In this process, the instructors raised a crucial question that guided the exercise toward the domain of intertextuality: could this image of the male model in the advertisement refer to another visual text? The students were unable to identify any reference, which reveals a limited visual culture and a lack of ability to establish relationships between visual texts operating at a more structural level. The instructors then proposed a comparison between the watch advertisement and the well-known Uncle Sam poster (1917) by James Flagg. Through this intertextual dialogue, it became possible to open up more substantial levels of interpretation: symbolic violence, political manipulation of patriotic and nationalist sentiments, war culture, coercion, submission, among others. The authors conclude the following regarding this specific exercise:

Resuming the discussion concerning images, Figure 2 brings into play the issue of desire, since, beyond the acquisition of the product, advertising refers to standards of the body, social class, and consumption. In this sense, it is possible to draw on the

Foucauldian concept of discursive formation, which encompasses understanding, regularities, beliefs, and the regulation of bodies that delimit such formations, wherein structural factors operate within relations of power – and, consequently, of desire. Therefore, both images are directed toward a male audience and function in ways that reinforce stereotypes related to masculinity, whiteness, and consumerism, operating at the level of subjectivity and the construction of identities. (Zamperetti & Torres, 2022, p. 174)

In the case of the other four advertisements presented and discussed in the article, the analytical dynamics were largely similar, with the exception that no further intertextual comparative exercises were conducted. In these examples, the authors cite some of the students' comments but do not elaborate on how the interpretation of the images was structured. From the brief statements provided by the students, it can be inferred that the discussion of advertising visual texts was centered on personal reactions to the ideological content latent in the images.

Although this teacher-education proposal was implemented with Pedagogy students, and the focus of our research is the education of visual arts teachers, we consider it important to include it in the sample, since graduates in Pedagogy are qualified to teach Art at the elementary school level (Ensino Fundamental I). Therefore, formative initiatives such as the one developed and systematized in this article by Zamperetti and Torres are of vital importance and should have a broader presence in the curricula of both Pedagogy programs and Visual Arts teacher education programs.

Final considerations

The central research problem – how to train visual arts teachers for teaching centered on the interpretation and understanding of artworks in school contexts – was addressed in only three articles, representing 8.33% of a corpus of 36. For this reason, we consider the main result of this bibliographic study is the finding that this is a major investigative gap and, therefore, a theme that urgently demands development in the field of teacher education for visual arts teaching in Basic Education.

Only one work deepens the analysis of a continuing education proposal for visual arts teachers with actions centered on reading artworks. However, the proposal aimed to deconstruct a sociocultural and ideological phenomenon such as patriarchy, and not to educate teachers – at theoretical and methodological levels – for the pragmatic (semiotic and hermeneutic) phenomenon of art reception. The dominant approach is that of Visual Culture studies, although it is not clear, in the two articles that work within this perspective, what exactly is the methodology for interpretive analysis of visual texts.

With regard to the French semiotic approach, we are left with the impression that it operates more in the formal dimension of the plane of expression. In the analyzed article, the

author does not develop any example of artwork analysis that allows one to see how, from the reading of colors, texture effects, spatial distribution, characteristics of materials, and so forth, the plane of content is articulated to reach connoted meanings (historical, political, ideological, philosophical, etc.). We understand that the work systematizes an investigative trajectory and the production of several didactic books for visual arts teaching; thus, studying this didactic material remains for future readings.

The limited number of articles that fulfilled the third dimension of our object of study does not provide many elements for a contrasted analysis with the results of previous research synthesized in the introduction. This allows us to venture a conclusion: there is a much broader academic production on the topic of reading artworks and images as a fundamental action in visual arts teaching in Basic Education than on the education of teachers for this didactic purpose.

Another conclusion is the confirmation of the scarce presence, in research on visual arts teacher education, of disciplines such as hermeneutics, reception theory, semiotics applied to contemporary art, and cognitive psychology applied to art education. This finding suggests that expanding interdisciplinary dialogue can enrich not only pedagogical practices but also the formative frameworks of art educators.

In this context, the need is reaffirmed to develop teacher-education proposals – both initial and continuing – that include the interpretive dimension of artistic experience in schools, promoting a teacher education coherent with the communicative, semiotic, and hermeneutic specificities of art. By pointing to gaps and possibilities, this research seeks to contribute to the debate and to open new horizons for future investigations in the field.

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