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# Educating to resist: creative insubordination as a Formative attitude

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes the theoretical foundations and contexts that support the concept of creative insubordination as a formative and ethico-political attitude in contemporary Education. Based on a theoretical-conceptual approach, contributions from Sociology, Education, and School Management are mobilized, aiming to map and articulate perspectives that engage with counter-hegemonic educational practices committed to social justice. The analysis problematizes established ways of teaching and learning, highlighting that creative insubordination materializes in daily school life through listening, care, and the reinvention of pedagogical practices. It concludes that this attitude goes beyond sporadic opposition to institutional norms, asserting itself as a guiding principle for teacher education by challenging logics that reinforce inequalities and reaffirming Education as a practice of freedom, human dignity, and critical hope.

Keywords: Teacher education. Critical education. Resistance. Creative insubordination.

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## Educar para resistir: a insubordinação criativa como atitude formativa

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## Resumo

Este artigo analisa os fundamentos teóricos e os contextos que sustentam o conceito de insubordinação criativa como atitude formativa e ético-política na Educação contemporânea. A partir de uma abordagem teórico-conceitual,

mobilizam-se contribuições da Sociologia, da Educação e da Gestão Escolar, com o objetivo de mapear e articular perspectivas que dialogam com práticas educativas contra-hegemônicas e comprometidas com a justiça social. A análise problematiza os modos instituídos de ensinar e aprender, evidenciando que a insubordinação criativa se materializa no cotidiano escolar por meio da escuta, do cuidado e da reinvenção das práticas pedagógicas. Conclui-se que essa atitude ultrapassa a oposição pontual às normativas institucionais, afirmando-se como princípio orientador da formação docente, ao tensionar lógicas que reforçam desigualdades e ao reafirmar a Educação como prática de liberdade, dignidade humana e esperança crítica.

Palavras-chave: Formação docente. Educação crítica. Resistência. Insubordinação criativa.

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## **Educar para resistir: la insubordinación creativa como actitud formativa**

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#### **Resumen**

Este artículo analiza los fundamentos teóricos y los contextos que sustentan el concepto de insubordinación creativa como actitud formativa y ético-política en la Educación contemporánea. A partir de un enfoque teórico-conceptual, se movilizan contribuciones de la Sociología, la Educación y la Gestión Escolar, con el objetivo de mapear y articular perspectivas que dialogan con prácticas educativas contra hegemónicas y comprometidas con la justicia social. El análisis problematiza los modos instituidos de enseñar y aprender, evidenciando que la insubordinación creativa se materializa en la cotidianidad escolar mediante la escucha, el cuidado y la reinención de las prácticas pedagógicas. Se concluye que esta actitud trasciende la oposición puntual a las normativas institucionales, afirmándose como principio orientador de la formación docente, al tensionar lógicas que refuerzan desigualdades y al reafirmar la Educación como práctica de libertad, dignidad humana y esperanza crítica.

Palabras clave: Formación docente. Educación crítica. Resistencia. Insubordinación creativa.

## Introduction

Contemporary Education<sup>1</sup> faces growing challenges in the face of the multiple crises that traverse the social, political, and cultural fabric. In a context marked by inequalities, processes of dehumanization, and the intensification of technocratic and utilitarian logics, the construction of pedagogical practices that break with traditional models and favor the integral formation of subjects has become urgent. Within this framework, creative insubordination presents itself as a formative and ethico-political attitude, capable of tensioning crystallized structures and provoking significant shifts in the ways of teaching, learning, and living in school.

Creative insubordination calls upon educators and students to take an active role in social transformation. Its relevance lies in its capacity to tension the prevailing civilizational project by promoting the appreciation of diversity, equity, and resistance to forms of oppression naturalized within educational processes.

More than a gesture of negation, it is a proactive attitude that advocates for the reinvention of the educational space as a territory of freedom, justice, and dignity. Its relevance lies in its ability to respond critically to the demands of the present time, promoting the appreciation of diversity, the collective construction of knowledge, and resistance to forms of oppression naturalized in formative processes.

By stimulating autonomous thinking and the questioning of established norms, the concept of creative insubordination, when mobilized, becomes a potent instrument for confronting social and educational inequalities, contributing to the constitution of conscious, ethical subjects engaged with the transformation of reality. Thus, teaching ceases to be a mere transmission of content to become a social practice committed to human emancipation and the construction of a fairer world.

This article aims to analyze creative insubordination as a formative practice and an ethico-political attitude in contemporary Education, reclaiming its historical and theoretical foundations and examining its implications in the educational field. Through a theoretical-conceptual approach, it seeks to understand how this perspective consolidates itself as a guiding principle

for counter-hegemonic educational practices, operating as a form of active resistance to normative logics and as a possibility for pedagogical reinvention, offering critical insights for teacher education committed to justice and social transformation.

The research is supported by authors who problematize established educational models and propose counter-hegemonic and emancipatory paths. Productions addressing practices of contestation and shifts in relation to dominant normativity were analyzed to map the meanings that traverse and sustain the concept of creative insubordination. Although this trajectory is developed in greater depth in the thesis by Melz (2024), this text presents an introductory excerpt of the historical, conceptual, and epistemological milestones involved, articulating critical reflection and educational action. By articulating critical reflection and educational action, the intention is to demonstrate how creative insubordination can be understood as a transformative practice, capable of renewing meanings in teacher education and expanding ethico-political horizons in contemporary Education.

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The structure of the article comprises two main sections. The first, *Creative Insubordination in dialogue with history: conceptual traces and insurgent practices*, describes the methodological procedures adopted and proposes an analysis of the concept's trajectory based on the systematization by Melz (2024), highlighting its multiple appropriations in different fields of knowledge. The second, *Creative insubordination as a formative and ethico-political practice in contemporary Education*, analyzes the implications of the concept in everyday school life, understanding it as a gesture of listening, care, resistance, and reinvention – in opposition to the normative logics that permeate teacher education and pedagogical practices.

## **Creative insubordination in dialogue with history: conceptual traces and insurgent practices**

This section presents the methodological procedures adopted to systematize and analyze historical and conceptual data, focusing on the identification, contextualization, and interpretation of terms linked to creative insubordination, considering their meanings, definitions, and uses over time

and across different fields of knowledge. The methodology follows a historical-conceptual analysis guided by a critical perspective of Education, which investigates the construction, transformation, and appropriation of concepts by considering historical, social, political, and cultural contexts. The aim, therefore, is to understand the trajectory of these concepts and reveal how they reflect and influence the social conditions and power relations of each era.

The historical-conceptual analysis demonstrates that concepts are dynamic and laden with ideologies, interests, and social disputes, allowing for the exploration of their origins, resignifications, and impacts in different sociocultural and institutional contexts. In this study, creative insubordination is understood as an ethical, political, and educational attitude, historically constructed and linked to practices that tension norms by articulating with notions such as resistance, subversion, transgression, critical innovation, and productive disobedience – thus configuring a semantic field committed to social transformation.

In this horizon, it is worth noting that, as stated by D'Ambrosio and D'Ambrosio (2013, p. 21), "[...] the essence of the ethics of diversity is respect, solidarity, and cooperation with the other (the different). This leads to quality of life and dignity for all [...]" – which reinforces the ethical and humanizing character that guides the construction of the concept at hand.

Bibliographical sources from different fields of knowledge were analyzed – such as Sociology, Education, Nursing, Nutrition, and Administration – which address, directly or indirectly, expressions and attitudes in consonance with creative insubordination. The selection of these sources prioritized both theoretical density and the diversity of contexts in which the terms emerge, thus allowing for a broad understanding of their significations over time.

Such mapping made it possible to construct a comprehensive conceptual cartography, highlighting how distinct fields name and recognize practices that break with established patterns and operate as movements of creation, resistance, and social and institutional transformation. Table 1, presented below, synthesizes some of the core ideas (*ideias-força*) that compose the notion of creative insubordination and its implications in the educational context:

Table 1: Creative insubordination in historical perspective

Author/Year	Term	Context
Robert K. Merton (1938)	Deviant behavior	One of the most influential and widely recognized approaches to deviant behavior is found in the work of Robert K. Merton, specifically in his concept of anomie. Merton reformulated and expanded upon the ideas of Émile Durkheim, linking the concept of anomie to the discrepancy between the cultural goals valued by a society and the legitimate means available to achieve them. "The technically most feasible procedure, whether legitimate or not, is preferred to the institutionally prescribed conduct. As this process continues, the integration of the society becomes tenuous and anomie sets in" (1938, p. 674).
Émile Durkheim (1964)	Positive deviance	Renowned sociologists, such as Émile Durkheim and Robert Merton, argue that positive deviant behaviors can play a role in maintaining social order and control by promoting beneficial social or organizational transformations (Herington; Van de Fliert, 2017; Merton, 1938; Durkheim, 1964).
Orlando Fals Borda (1967)	Subversion	"There is one formal definition of subversion as 'that condition which reflects the internal incongruities of a social order discovered by its members in a given historical period, in light of new valued goals that a society wishes to achieve'— a definition quite distinct from that of 'socioeconomic development' taught by tradition" (Fals Borda, 2008, p. 269).
Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1978)	Subversive Education	Postman and Weingartner (1978) have already highlighted this theme as a distinct attitude within the scope of educational practices, regarding it as subversive Education.
Paulo Freire (1986)	Liberatory Education	In this context, Freire and Shor (1986, p. 25) assert that "liberatory Education is not limited to technical skills; it is a critique of school and society, a teaching oriented toward social transformation." The authors thus explain that "transformation is feasible because consciousness does not simply reflect reality like a mirror, but interprets and transforms it" (Freire; Shor, 1986, p. 25).
Hutchinson, S. A. (1990)	Responsible subversion	In the field of Nursing, a study conducted by Hutchinson (1990) in the late 1980s identified the application of these ideas, leading to the adoption of the term "responsible subversion." This concept refers to the transgression of professional rules whenever necessary to ensure better conditions and greater protection for patients.

Source: Adapted from Melz (2024).

Table 1: Creative insubordination in historical perspective (Continuation)

Author/Year	Term	Context
Bell Hooks (1994)	To transgress	Transgressing, in the author's conception, is not a gesture of negation, but an affirmative movement that allows for the creation of spaces where creativity, listening, dialogue, and the active participation of students are central to the educational process. By advocating for an engaged Education, hooks calls upon educators to abandon authoritarian and neutralizing practices, assuming an ethical and political attitude of resistance and the re-enchantment of the classroom. Her pedagogical proposal radicalizes the idea that teaching is an act of love and freedom, which must mobilize the desire for transformation, both individual and collective.
Haynes, E. A. & Licata, J. W. (1995)	Creative disobedience	Unlike student boldness, which challenges the legitimacy of superiors through acts of improvisation aimed at disrupting or evading responsibility, creative insubordination is rarely disruptive or responsibility-avoiding. More often than not, it is a conscientious effort on the part of principals to mitigate any negative consequences of a decision, policy, or program developed at a higher level and adapt it in the most constructive way to the school environment (Haynes; Licata, 1995, p. 22-23).
Rochelle Gutiérrez (2013)	Creative insubordination	"Given the current context of high-stakes education, I seek to help teachers build the knowledge and attitudes necessary to creatively resist a definition of the profession that unnecessarily limits the relationship between mathematics and historically underserved and/or marginalized youth. In other work, I have described the process of creative insubordination, by which teachers find loopholes in policies or interpret rules and/or procedures in ways that advocate for historically underserved and/or marginalized students (Gutiérrez, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Gutiérrez & Gregson, 2013)" (Gutiérrez, 2013, p. 14).
Beatriz D'Ambrosio and Celi Espasandin Lopes (2014)	Creative insubordination	In that same year, D'Ambrosio and Lopes began to engage with the concept when they wrote the first article published in the Boletim de Educação Matemática (Bolema) in April 2015, titled Responsible Subversion of a Teacher, Enabled by Her Professional Development Process; in other words, the theme began to be discussed in Brazil.
Walter Antonio Bazzo (2016)	Disobedient Education	In the field of Education, Bazzo (2016, p. 88) considers the civilizing equation to be "the antidote to taming Education, which remains the priority of hegemonic power: a 'disobedient' and less well-behaved Education".

Source: Adapted from Melz (2024).

The synthesis highlights a historical path since the 1930s, in which dissident practices, labeled as "deviations," have been reinterpreted as legitimate forms of critique and social reconstruction. The authors share a common ethical and political perspective: the valuation of autonomy, critique, and creativity as the foundations of a transformative Education. Creative insubordination emerges as a formative and ethico-political practice that transcends gestures of opposition and creates new possibilities in the educational and social fields, grounded in justice, equity, and human dignity.

The concept reframes historical ideas such as deviant behavior, positive deviance, responsible subversion, and creative disobedience (Melz, 2024). Chronologically, Merton (1938) inaugurates the perspective on deviant behavior; Durkheim (1964) introduces positive deviance; Fals Borda (1967; 1979) proposes a subversion oriented by new social goals and collective emancipation. In fields such as Nursing and Nutrition, responsible subversion (Hutchinson, 1990) shifts deviation away from pathological or moralistic interpretations (Barbosa; Lopes, 2020), understanding it as a social construct and a coping strategy.

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Fals Borda (1979; 2015, p. 391) highlights the need to consider the context and motivations of subversive actions, reframing them as a legitimate expression of emancipatory social struggles. He incorporates categories such as "marginal change," "significant change," "anti-elite," and "guerrilla," thereby establishing a critical agency in the face of oppressive structures.

In the educational field, creative insubordination manifests as a formative and ethico-political attitude that challenges conformism and affirms a commitment to social transformation. Freire (1975, 1986, 1996) proposes consciousness as the capacity for intervention in the world, articulating action and reflection to break away from the logic of banking education, while simultaneously promoting autonomy and the active participation of historical subjects. Postman (1994, 2002, 2012) and Weingartner (1978) advocate for a subversive education that stimulates doubt as an epistemological principle and encourages the systematic questioning of the world. hooks (2017), by proposing a pedagogy of transgression, reinforces the commitment to social justice, valuing difference and lived experience as legitimate sources of knowledge, transforming the classroom into a space for empowerment and critical intervention.

Creative insubordination, as outlined by these authors, is not restricted to an isolated or merely oppositional gesture: it is a formative practice based on ethics, listening, and the collective construction of alternatives, constituting a radical pedagogical act that reconfigures teaching as a space for emancipation. By challenging technical-instrumental educational models, this practice reinvents the school's daily routine as a territory of creation, resistance, and hope.

In *Mathematics Education*, Gutiérrez (2013) highlights teaching practices that challenge bureaucratic norms and standardized policies, advocating for the rights and learning of historically excluded students, thus framing creative insubordination as ethical and epistemological resistance. In the Brazilian context, D'Ambrosio and Lopes (2014) further explore the idea of responsible subversion, showing how educators construct critical knowledge committed to social transformation. Complementing this, Bazzo (2016) proposes the concept of disobedient education, opposing technical-instrumental rationality and reinforcing the importance of pedagogical practices that are ethical, creative, and committed to human dignity.

As Melz (2024, p. 31) underlines, "[...] insubordination sustains the discussions of the civilizing equation by challenging established paradigms and promoting a critical reassessment of the principles that guide educational practice." Far from being a mere negation, it is a proactive attitude that drives "[...] new ways of thinking and acting that challenge and renew conventional educational practices" (Melz, 2024, p. 157).

The conceptual trajectory outlined here demonstrates that the consolidation of creative insubordination is intertwined with a complex historical, cultural, and epistemological web, shaped by different authors, contexts, and fields of knowledge. Although they express their ideas through distinct paths, they all converge in the conviction that Education must take an active role in social transformation and in the unconditional affirmation of human dignity.

Based on this perception, creative insubordination establishes itself as an essential attitude for rethinking Education in its ethical, political, and epistemic dimensions. In dialogue with Freirean pedagogy, it constitutes an indispensable formative attitude in a time that demands profound ruptures with oppressive logics and the cultivation of educational practices committed to

justice, plurality, and sensitive listening. More than an opposition to established norms, it is a proactive affirmation of other possibilities of existence and coexistence – a pedagogy of creation, linked to hope and the collective reinvention of the world.

## **Formative and ethico-political practice in contemporary education in light of creative insubordination**

By shifting creative insubordination from the conceptual field to the daily routine of educational practices, this section analyzes its concrete implications for teacher training and school pedagogical work. More than a theoretical construct, creative insubordination manifests in everyday school life as an ethico-political gesture of listening, care, resistance, and reinvention, especially in contexts marked by excessive regulation, technical-instrumental rationalities, and formative processes oriented by the logic of standardization and control.

10 Understood from this perspective, creative insubordination is not expressed solely through exceptional acts or explicit ruptures, but in the small daily displacements that permeate teaching practice: in the sensitive listening to students' experiences, in the refusal of dehumanizing pedagogies, in the problematization of prescribed curriculums, and in the creation of formative spaces that recognize subjects in their entirety. It is an attitude that tensions the normative logics of teacher training by affirming teaching as a relational, situated practice, ethically committed to human dignity.

By problematizing traditional modes of teaching and learning, creative insubordination thus emerges as a formative and ethico-political practice rooted in the demands of contemporary Education. Its exercise implies understanding teaching as a daily political action, guided by collective responsibility and the construction of a counter-hegemonic educational project, committed to social transformation and the permanent reinvention of the meanings of school.

The theoretical foundation that sustains this attitude finds support in the propositions of Freire and hooks. For Freire (1975), liberatory Education requires the development of critical consciousness committed to reading the world as a stage prior to reading the word. Teaching, considering this approach,

demands the courage to denounce injustices and to announce the possibility of another world. His notion of praxis – understood as the unity between action and reflection – constitutes the core of a pedagogy of freedom: "[...] one of the purposes of praxis is the action and reflection of men upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1975, p. 52).

In the same vein, hooks (2017, 2020) understands Education as a space of loving transgression, where thinking is a deeply political action. For the author, the school must be a territory where the desire for knowledge can be cultivated rather than repressed: "[...] the perception of school as a place where the desire for knowledge could be nurtured and grow" (hooks, 2020, p. 23). Her transgressive pedagogy proposes a learning process that connects students' personal experiences to a broader critical analysis of the intersections of race, class, gender, and power. In this process, "thinking is an action" (hooks, 2020), and educating is, above all, an act of engagement and hope.

Creative insubordination, inspired by these references, thus becomes a formative practice that challenges technical-instrumental logic and the homogenization of subjectivities, affirming the plurality of voices, knowledge, and existences. It constitutes an insurgent educational response to the commodification of Education, the bureaucratization of teaching, and control policies that disregard territories and school communities.

By articulating critique and creation, rupture and care, creative insubordination promotes an educational space guided by the ethics of listening, the power of the collective, and the affirmation of other possible ways of being and existing in the world. It is, therefore, a civilizing attitude – because it is committed to human dignity, to the untested feasibility, and to the transformative dream that inhabits every genuinely liberatory educational practice.

From an ethical and political perspective, creative insubordination is not reduced to an isolated or merely reactive contestation; instead, it expresses itself as an intentional and collective praxis of reinventing the educational space. It is a perspective inscribed in the gesture of disobeying that which dehumanizes and of rising up against normative apparatuses that would silence autonomous thought and the creative potential of individuals. In this sense, creative insubordination is a perspective in motion: a way of resisting and simultaneously announcing.

Thought, understood as action, involves the critical analysis of information, the questioning of prejudices, conscious decision-making, and the formulation of creative solutions to contemporary challenges. In the perspective of Education as the practice of freedom, the act of thinking is recognized as a fundamental tool for individual and collective transformation. In this conception, both the teacher and the student are urged to assume an investigative attitude, sustained by persistent curiosity and the problematization of the world. As Freire and Shor (1986, p. 25) state, "[...] the liberatory classroom is demanding, not permissive. It demands that you think about issues, write about them, discuss them seriously."

By repositioning subjects as protagonists of their own training and co-authors of the knowledge produced within school walls, this perspective challenges teaching models based on technical reproduction and the banking logic of Education (Freire, 1996). It claims the right to doubt, to critique, and to the untested feasibility, operating a rupture with the mechanisms that reduce teaching to mere execution protocols. As Melz (2024) states, this gesture does not deny the institutional organization of the school, but permeates it with political intentionality, proposing the creation of educational practices based on listening, lovingness, and human dignity.

From a very early age, children demonstrate a spontaneous curiosity and an intense desire to explore the world and find answers to their inquiries. However, as they enter the traditional educational system, they are often led toward conformity, being discouraged from exercising critical thinking in favor of obedience. As hooks (2020, p. 33) warns, "[...] most are taught early on that thinking is dangerous. [...] it is better to choose obedience over self-awareness and self-determination." This reproductive logic, by silencing the reflective and creative potential of subjects, proves to be incompatible with a pedagogy that aims for emancipation and social justice.

One of the primary goals of Postman and Weingartner's (1978) proposal regarding the "new Education" is to assist individuals in developing strategies to survive and act critically in a society undergoing constant transformation. For the authors, essential attitudes and skills for dealing with complex situations must be prioritized and incorporated into the school curriculum, while respecting the limits and formative possibilities of the school. From this

perspective, the new Education should help subjects produce new meanings and broaden their readings of the world, understanding the civilizing process in its complexity and historicity.

The authors describe this educational subject as someone endowed with a sharp critical capacity – a true “[...] crap detector specialist” (Postman; Weingartner, 1978, p. 43). This expression refers to the ability to resist the arbitrary abstractions imposed by the dominant culture and to perceive trends and patterns beyond the limits of one's own social upbringing. In other words, it describes someone capable of questioning internalized cultural and ideological assumptions, which can often make them appear subversive to those who naturalize such constructions. According to the authors, one of the most dangerous prejudices is that which prevents the recognition of one's own cultural limitations; therefore, the individual who develops this awareness tends to deviate from ideological seductions and build more autonomous positions.

As this context unfolds, the student becomes the agent of their own learning, guided by genuine interests and needs rather than merely by imposed normative standards. However, as Postman and Weingartner (1978) warn, the ability to question – fundamental to meaningful learning – is rarely taught in schools and, not so rarely, is even discouraged. There is often a prevailing school dynamic centered on a model in which the teacher asks questions and the student responds, limiting the educational process to a game of “right answers” and external validations, thereby impoverishing the possibilities for critical thought.

This restrictive school logic contrasts with the understanding that Education is, above all, “[...] a continuous process, interwoven into a social, cultural, technical and, above all, human whole”, as Bazzo (2020, p. 54) emphasizes. In this sense, teaching is not limited to the transmission of content but implies the integral and critical formation of subjects. For educators to commit to this new conception of Education, it is essential that their own training be grounded in a critical, investigative, and ethical perspective.

In this scenario, it becomes imperative to rethink school environments as spaces for research, dialogue, and collective creation. When teachers implement practices that value questioning and autonomy, students become active subjects in the learning process and begin to meaningfully challenge

established forms of authority. As Postman and Weingartner (1978, p. 159) emphasize, "[...] the teachers of the future must unleash this revolution, or it will never happen".

However, this transformation still faces significant resistance. The educational reality remains largely marked by a functionalist and reproductive logic that restricts teaching action to the preparation of a workforce for the market, disregarding the ethical, political, and human aspects of the educational process. This formative reductionism ends up neglecting the complexity of the contemporary world and the demands of a critical and integral formation.

This critique is reinforced by Bazzo (2019, p. 195), who states that "[...] aptitudes and attitudes required to deal appropriately with the rapid and often unexpected changes in contemporary life are highly prioritized." This means recognizing that teacher training cannot be limited to the technical-instrumental dimension but must articulate knowledge, values, and practices aimed at a critical reading of reality and a commitment to social transformation. Training educators, in this context, means preparing them to act in a society crossed by uncertainties, conflicts, and ethical urgencies – a task that calls for sensitivity, discernment, and politico-pedagogical engagement.

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It is in light of this understanding that Melz (2024) introduces the notion of creative insubordination as a civilizing attitude, as it allows for the reconstruction of the educational space as a territory of humanization, solidarity, and justice. More than a reactive resistance, it is an inventive gesture that reinvents the school's daily routine in dialogue with its territories, local knowledge, and the subjects who inhabit them. Creative insubordination, thus understood, operates as a praxis that unveils mechanisms of exclusion and announces other possibilities of educational existence, grounded in collectivity, autonomy, and the desire for transformation.

Complementing this perspective, D'Ambrosio and Lopes (2014) understand creative insubordination as a peculiar attitude in which the act of opposition is guided by an ethical commitment to the common good, challenging established authority whenever it proves to be incoherent, exclusionary, or dehumanizing. It is not about negation for negation's sake, but about passively refusing that which hinders human flourishing. In this sense, being subversively responsible implies recognizing oneself as an unfinished subject, who

transforms curiosity into the engine of knowledge and assumes this incompleteness as a constant impulse for reinvention. As the authors state, "To be subversively responsible requires assuming oneself as an unfinished being, who takes curiosity as the foundation of knowledge production and turns their incompleteness into a permanent movement of search" (D'Ambrosio; Lopes, 2014, p. 29).

This understanding broadens the meaning of creative insubordination by bringing it closer to the conceptions of Freire and hooks, for whom Education must be conceived as a practice of freedom and as a space for ethical and political engagement. Based on this understanding, insubordination does not merely resist oppressive forms of teaching; it proposes the construction of a formative space in which knowledge is produced in a dialogical, situated, and critical manner. It is a matter of shifting the axis of traditional authority – centered on control and imposition – toward an authority built on relationship, listening, and co-responsibility.

It is precisely in this displacement that the very idea of teaching authority is reconfigured: no longer linked to hierarchy or the reproduction of established knowledge, but understood as an expression of care, critical mediation, and ethical coherence between discourse and practice. Such authority emerges from a commitment to the subjects and the contexts in which they are embedded, requiring the sensitivity to provoke thought in its most radical dimension – which destabilizes certainties, broadens horizons, and affirms the transformative power of Education. As D'Ambrosio and Lopes (2014) emphasize, creative insubordination demands a reflexive awareness of the historical determinants of educational practice and calls upon educators to act with a commitment to the collective, moving beyond individual or corporate interests.

Within this horizon of ethical and collective commitment, the subversive attitude that sustains creative insubordination reveals itself to be a risky move, deeply implicated in the common good. Postman and Weingartner (1978, p. 211) warn that "[...] subversion is a risky business – as risky for its agent as for its target [...]" highlighting the tension inherent in those who propose to challenge consolidated structures. It is not, therefore, an inconsequential gesture, but a deliberate act, in which the subverter engages in a

profound critique of hegemonic logics, assuming the risks and discomforts of confrontation.

In the same vein, Fals Borda (2015, p. 389) reinforces the altruistic and collective dimension of subversion by stating that "[...] the subverter sacrifices himself for the group and becomes a great altruist [...]" because his consciousness is, essentially, a consciousness of the collective that awakens and "[...] leads everyone to an unusual existential adventure." In this sense, the subverter acts as a catalyst for formative processes that displace passivity and call for critical engagement.

Subversion in Education, therefore, cannot be reduced to an individual gesture of opposition: it constitutes a collective process of conscientization, in which the predominant foundations of pedagogical practices are questioned and the structures of power and knowledge that naturalize exclusion are problematized. It is about provoking transformations that go beyond the surface of reforms and touch the essence of the educational project, reclaiming its ethical, political, and liberatory dimensions. Based on this conception, creative insubordination establishes itself as a formative practice that articulates criticality, responsibility, and a commitment to social justice – a path that, although arduous, points toward the reinvention of Education as a space for emancipation.

For such reinvention to materialize, the involvement of all subjects within the school context is fundamental, as well as those willing to experiment with counter-hegemonic pedagogical forms. Megid (2015, p. 39) points out that "[...] it is not enough for the teacher to appropriate and use these practices in their daily actions" without spaces for collective reflection that strengthen pedagogical work. Educational transformation requires shared construction, aligned with dialogue and mutual listening.

This requirement for collaboration finds resonance in hooks' (2020, p. 33) proposal when she claims an engaged pedagogy that aims "[...] to recover students' will to think and the will to achieve full realization." Such a proposal is structured around the development of critical thinking as the axis of formation, enabling students to respond in an expanded manner to the fundamental questions that emerge from the exercise of curiosity: "[...] the 'who,' 'what,' 'when,' 'where,' and 'how' of things – discovering answers to

the endless questions of the curious child – then utilizing knowledge so as to be able to determine what is most important" (hooks, 2020, p. 33). Cultivating this investigative attitude implies nurturing the desire for knowledge and strengthening the autonomy of subjects in training.

In this direction, D'Ambrosio and Lopes (2014) point out that adopting practices of creative insubordination requires the teacher to have clarity regarding the social, political, and cultural context that historically conditions the modes of production and circulation of knowledge. The authors warn that, in order to

[...] carry out acts of creative insubordination, they must have clarity regarding the social, political, and cultural context that historically influences the processes of human knowledge production and that, at times, promotes individualism instead of joint work, isolation instead of interaction, the reproduction of knowledge instead of creation, the concealment instead of the socialization of ideas, and competition instead of collaboration (D'Ambrosio; Lopes, 2014, p. 29).

This understanding reinforces that creative insubordination is not carried out as an isolated or spontaneous gesture, but as a situated practice, permeated by historical contradictions and marked by disputes over knowledge and power. The structural limits that inhibit the emergence of inventive attitudes – such as individualism, epistemological isolation, and the uncritical reproduction of content – compromise the construction of collaborative, solidary, and transformative practices.

Overcoming such barriers requires more than just intentions: it requires an ethical attitude open to dialogue and, above all, a political positioning that confronts the meritocratic and competitive logic still predominant in many school environments. Creative insubordination, in this context, becomes a pedagogy that denaturalizes hierarchies, challenges silencings, and reinvents ways of teaching and learning, promoting a formation centered on autonomy, belonging, and the collective creation of meaning.

In light of the discussions presented, creative insubordination can be understood as a formative practice that materializes in daily school life through intentional pedagogical gestures – often silent, yet deeply political. It is expressed in the listening to historically silenced voices, in the care for formative

processes, and in the continuous reinvention of ways of teaching and learning, in opposition to the normative logics that reduce teaching to technical protocols.

From this perspective, creative insubordination is not configured as an isolated act of rupture, nor as a simple negation of institutional regulations. It is a situated and relational praxis, built from the tensions experienced within the school and from the articulation between critical reflection and pedagogical action. By assuming this attitude, the teacher moves from the position of an executor of curricular prescriptions to that of an ethico-political subject who interprets and re-signifies institutional guidelines in light of concrete contexts.

This practice reconfigures the notion of teaching authority, shifting it from the logic of control toward an ethics of care, co-responsibility, and collective commitment. Authority begins to be built through the coherence between discourse and practice, the provocation of critical thinking, and the valuation of doubt, curiosity, and unfinishedness as the engines of learning.

By operating as a gesture of resistance and creation, creative insubordination establishes itself as an educational response to the commodification of Education, the precarization of teaching, and the standardization of formative processes. It calls upon educators to assume an ethical and investigative stance in the face of the contradictions of the present time, recognizing that teaching is always a political act.

In this way, creative insubordination is consolidated as an essential ethico-political practice for the construction of an Education committed to human dignity, social justice, and critical hope. Rooted in everyday school life, it reaffirms teaching as a collective, insurgent, and sensitive practice, capable of transforming the school into a space of listening, dialogue, and permanent reinvention.

## **Final considerations: creative insubordination as an ethical horizon for training and transformation**

By gathering contributions from different fields of knowledge – such as Sociology, Education, and School Management – the analysis demonstrated

that the concept of creative insubordination operates as an ethical and epistemological displacement from traditional models of teaching and teacher training. It is configured, therefore, as an essential theoretical and practical foundation for understanding contemporary Education, especially regarding educational practices committed to social justice and counter-hegemonic perspectives.

As the primary analytical result, it is highlighted that creative insubordination is not limited to an isolated gesture of opposition but asserts itself as a formative and ethico-political attitude that permeates everyday school life. This attitude sustains practices based on sensitive listening, the valuation of diversity, equity, and the recognition of subjects as historical agents capable of critically intervening in reality. By challenging the normative logics that frequently reinforce inequalities, creative insubordination broadens the meaning of the school as a space for human and social formation.

The theoretical discussion mobilized throughout the text evidenced that assuming creative insubordination implies rethinking teaching beyond the technical reproduction of content, affirming it as a praxis committed to social transformation. In this movement, educators and students are invited to engage in formative processes that privilege dialogue, critical problematization, and the collective construction of knowledge, tensioning curriculums, authoritarian epistemologies, and exclusionary pedagogical practices.

Another relevant finding of the study concerns the reconfiguration of the school as an educational space. In light of creative insubordination, the school is no longer understood merely as an instance of standardization; instead, it is recognized as a territory for creation, resistance, and the reinvention of educational processes. Such a perspective contributes to shifting the focus away from performance and standardization, favoring practices guided by human dignity, intellectual autonomy, and critical hope.

In the face of the challenges imposed by the contemporary scenario – marked by structural inequalities, the precarization of teaching work, and the hollowed-out formative meaning of Education – it is concluded that creative insubordination asserts itself as an indispensable ethical horizon for teacher training. By articulating resistance and reinvention, this attitude reaffirms Education as a practice of freedom and as a space for the production of

meanings committed to human dignity, diversity, and social justice. Its power lies not only in the denunciation of oppressive structures but, above all, in the capacity to announce other ways of existing educationally, in which educating is configured as an act of critical hope, care, and collective responsibility.

In this sense, advocating for creative insubordination as a formative and civilizing horizon means affirming teacher training as an ethical, political, and situated experience. Woven through critique, affection, and listening, this attitude points toward educational processes committed to the dignification of life and the construction of more just and solidary societies, reaffirming teaching as a practice that dares to transgress in order to create, resist, and continuously reinvent its own meanings.

## Note

1. In this article, the term Education with a capitalized first letter is used whenever it refers to a politico-pedagogical conception aimed at human emancipation, social justice, and the formation of critical and historical subjects. In contrast, the term education with a lowercase first letter is understood here as an instructional or schooling practice aligned with the logic of reproduction, control, and the maintenance of hegemonic knowledge.

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