

The curse of knowledge as a problem in teaching practice: from invisibility to visibility

Stefani Skodowski

Anselmo Lima

Federal Technological University of Paraná - UTFPR (Brazil)

Abstract

This article analyzes the curse of knowledge as a problem in teaching practice, discussing its invisibility in everyday school life and the process of visibility triggered by the Activity Clinic (AC). The theoretical basis has a dialogical-developmental perspective, integrating principles of AC, Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology, and Bakhtin's Philosophy of Language. The *corpus* consists of transcripts of cross-self-confrontation conducted in 2023 at a school in southwestern Paraná, analyzed linguistically and discursively. The analysis shows that the curse of knowledge manifests itself as a structural cognitive bias, characterized by the teaching assumption that students share their conceptual repertoire. The results demonstrate that awareness, mediated by the clinical approach and dialogue with professional peers, promotes a transition from automatism to conscious reflection, enabling more accessible pedagogical strategies. It is concluded that overcoming this problem requires articulation between individual recognition and collective construction, highlighting the power of the AC as a transformative formation device.

Keywords: Curse of knowledge. Activity Clinic. Cross-Self-confrontation. Teaching practice.

A maldição do conhecimento como problemática da prática docente: da invisibilidade à visibilidade

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a maldição do conhecimento como problemática da prática docente, discutindo sua invisibilidade no cotidiano escolar e o processo de visibilização desencadeado pela Clínica da Atividade (CA). A fundamentação

teórica tem perspectiva dialógico-desenvolvimental, integrando princípios da CA, da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural de Vigotski e da Filosofia da Linguagem de Bakhtin. O *corpus* constitui-se por transcrições de autoconfrontação cruzada realizada em 2023 em um colégio do sudoeste do Paraná, analisadas linguístico-discursivamente. A análise evidencia que a maldição do conhecimento se manifesta como viés cognitivo estrutural, caracterizado pela pressuposição docente de que os alunos compartilham seu repertório conceitual. Os resultados demonstram que a tomada de consciência, mediada pelo dispositivo clínico e pelo diálogo com o par profissional, promove deslocamento do automatismo para reflexão consciente, possibilitando estratégias pedagógicas mais acessíveis. Conclui-se que superar tal problemática demanda articulação entre reconhecimento individual e construção coletiva, evidenciando a potência da CA como dispositivo formativo transformador.

Palavras-chave: Maldição do conhecimento. Clínica da Atividade. Autoconfrontação cruzada. Prática docente.

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La maldición del conocimiento como problema en la práctica docente: de la invisibilidad a la visibilidad

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la maldición del conocimiento como problemática de la práctica docente, discutiendo su invisibilidad en el día a día escolar y el proceso de visibilización desencadenado por la Clínica de la Actividad (CA). La fundamentación teórica tiene una perspectiva dialógica-desarrollista, integrando principios de la CA, de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural de Vigotski y de la Filosofía del Lenguaje de Bakhtin. El *corpus* está constituido por transcripciones de auto-confrontación cruzada realizadas en 2023 en un colegio del sudoeste de Paraná, analizadas desde el punto de vista lingüístico-discursivo. El análisis evidencia que la maldición del conocimiento se manifiesta como un sesgo cognitivo estructural, caracterizado por la presuposición docente de que los alumnos comparten su repertorio conceptual. Los resultados demuestran que la toma de conciencia, mediada por el dispositivo clínico y el diálogo con el compañero profesional, promueve el desplazamiento del automatismo hacia la reflexión consciente, lo que permite estrategias pedagógicas más

accesibles. Se concluye que superar esta problemática exige la articulación entre el reconocimiento individual y la construcción colectiva, lo que pone de manifiesto el potencial de la CA como dispositivo formativo transformador.

Palabras clave: Maldición del conocimiento. Clínica de la Actividad. Autoconfrontación cruzada. Práctica docente.

Introduction

Teaching is full of blind spots. Among the aspects that directly influence student learning but go unnoticed in everyday school life, one that stands out is the curse of knowledge, a phenomenon in which the teacher's familiarity and mastery of certain content, concepts, or skills make it difficult for them to perceive gaps in their students' knowledge. This frequent and often invisible difficulty can create distance in communication between teachers and students, as well as conceptual misunderstandings and limitations that interfere with teaching, compromising the teaching-learning process to a greater or lesser extent.

The analysis of the curse of knowledge as a problem in teaching practice therefore requires a perspective that brings it from invisibility to visibility. In this context, the Activity Clinic (AC) emerges as a device to promote reflection and transformation of teaching work, allowing teachers to confront their own classroom actions, identifying the issues of their reality and outlining ways to face and overcome them through concrete strategies. Based on the perspective of Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology and Bakhtin's Philosophy of Language, the AC enables a deep investigation of the real activity of work collectives, highlighting elements that, until now, have remained unnoticed.

This article is derived from academic research (Skodowski, 2026) developed in the Graduate Program in Letters (PPGL) at the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UTFPR) - Pato Branco *Campus*. The theme of the curse of knowledge emerged during an action in the Teaching Activity Clinic (TAC), based on an intervention carried out in 2023 in a state school in southwestern Paraná (Brazil) using the method of cross-self-confrontation, studied from audio and video recordings transcribed and analyzed linguistically and discursively.

The development of the work is structured around two main topics. In the theoretical and methodological foundation, the main references that support the research are detailed: the Teaching Activity Clinic, the self-confrontation method, and the notion of “curse of knowledge”. The second part presents and analyzes the data, highlighting the teachers’ reflective and formative journey, including the identification of the problem, its confrontation together with the collective, and the possibilities for overcoming it.

The relevance of the research lies in addressing a real problem, often invisible, that directly impacts teaching practice, highlighting common difficulties in adapting speech to students’ level of understanding. In addition, the study contributes to research and interventions in education by offering a replicable model, standing out due to the scarcity of studies on the curse of knowledge in Portuguese in the field of teaching, which opens the way for future investigations.

Preliminary considerations

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Before delving into the theoretical and methodological basis, it is essential to explain a central premise of the Activity Clinic. As this approach differs from conventional approaches in the academic-scientific field, understanding this starting point provides an important overview for interpreting its principles and foundations, which will be presented shortly.

The AC has a different view from the “classical” view of knowledge production. Moving away from positivist conventions - which predict, then act, and only then know - the Clinic understands that knowledge production is not achieved through a process developed unilaterally and only from the point of view of scientific concepts, but rather through the encounter of scientific concepts with spontaneous ones (Vigotski, 2005). The basic premise given by Clot (2010), the author of the Activity Clinic, points out that it is necessary to act, without being able to predict everything, in order to know something. This is what distinguishes the AC from the positivist paradigm: instead of seeking universally applicable general laws, the AC suggests the opposite approach – first acting, then understanding and learning from the consequences of this

non-predefined action, without the researcher imposing a complete prediction of results.

Thus, when entering the field of study or work, the researcher or clinical practitioner does not have a strictly defined hypothesis. They are willing to learn, experiment, face uncertainties, and, as the work itself unfolds, understand what the problems of the group being studied are and, together with the subjects, seek to build knowledge, which is an unforeseen result of the investigative process itself. That is why the theme of this study emerges from clinical intervention: it was not chosen in advance, but is the result of contact with the research subjects (teachers) and their work practices (teaching). Therefore, in this article, we will revisit the process of the emergence of the problem in the teachers' statements during observation, analysis, and discussion of their actual activity in the classroom.

For this reason, we chose not to dissociate theoretical foundations and methodology, since, in clinical practice, these elements are intertwined and interdependent. Theory is not only an external explanatory basis, but something that guides and is updated in the methodological process itself. Similarly, the method is not reduced to mechanically applied techniques but is a device for analysis and development supported by theoretical principles. We also emphasize that data production – not collection – is not an isolated stage of the investigative process, as it is directly linked to the clinical process as a whole. Ferrazzo (2023) points out the need to overcome established practices in educational research that attempt to explain, interpret, or reveal a preexisting reality, with data waiting to be collected. It is in the dynamics of intervention that data emerges, gains meaning for the subjects, and becomes shared knowledge. Investigating, therefore, means simultaneously producing knowledge and promoting reflection, transformation, and development.

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Theoretical and methodological basis

Understanding its difference in relation to other scientific research proposals, we can move on to the definition of Activity Clinic (AC), which, when applied to school contexts, can be called Teaching Activity Clinic (TAC) (Lima, 2021). The AC was developed by Yves Clot, a work psychologist and

researcher at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM)*, and, according to him (2010), its purpose is to drive real and meaningful changes in work contexts, based on the analysis of concrete situations. Its goal is to increase the protagonism of workers, strengthening their ability to intervene and find ways to face and solve their own problems.

To this end, in the AC, external experts do not anticipate workers' conflicts or dilemmas, nor do they offer prior hypotheses or diagnoses. The aim is for issues to emerge from the practice itself, revealing themselves in the subjects' statements and reflections on the activity performed (Clot, 2017). Consequently, what was previously naturalized or made invisible by the automatism of routine becomes perceptible, creating conditions for transformation.

In this way, changes in working conditions are not the result of ready-made recommendations, developed out of context and by people who are not part of the work collective, but of a movement mobilized within the activity, in which the subjects themselves identify their issues and jointly outline ways to address and overcome them. Therefore, this is a practice that places workers at the center and, above all, recognizes them as individuals capable of analyzing and reframing their experience and creating alternatives to mediate the impasses of everyday work.

With this in mind, we understand what Lima (2008) points out regarding the convergence of theories in the field of TAC: verbal actions constitute the main gateway to the complexity of the activity and its development, since it is precisely through language that one can formulate a specific point of view about one's own nonverbal actions, with the aim of deepening one's knowledge about them. This understanding is based on the articulation that Clot establishes between Vigotski's instrumental theory and Bakhtin's dialogical theory (Lima, 2008).

From this perspective, language does not only serve the function of communication, but constitutes the privileged means of access to activity. It is through verbal reflection that subjects can objectify their verbal and nonverbal actions, making visible aspects that were previously implicit and allowing for a more in-depth analysis of practice. Thus, work activity comes to be understood as a historical, social, and mediated phenomenon, in which language plays a central role both in raising awareness and in the development and transformation of the activity itself.

Therefore, the clinic seeks to empower workers so that they can critically examine their own performance. Karazek (2025) points out that this empowerment is achieved as spaces are created to stimulate self-perception and critical reflection on professional practices in dialogue with the work collective. These environments are what we call clinical intervention.

In them, a professional from the activity clinic, called intervener, conducts and mediates a situation that favors the aforementioned process within the workers' collectives (Clot, 2010). To this end, the AC has different methods of intervention that enable subjects to confront what Yves Clot (2010) calls the "real of activity," a concept that goes beyond prescribed work (norms and rules) and the activity performed (what is actually done): it also includes what was not done, what was attempted unsuccessfully, what one would like or could have done, and even what one imagines doing under different conditions. The worker's actions are not limited to what he or she performs, but also to choices of non-action, revealing alternative possibilities. This is where the AC seeks to act: by accessing this "reality," it stimulates the production of knowledge oriented toward work activity, critical reflection on practice, and the construction of new ways of acting, favoring development (Clot, 2010).

In the context of this study, the intervention method used was cross-self-confrontation, which can be understood as a variant of the interview genre (Clot; Faita, 2000; 2016). Ferrazo (2023) observes that research that aims to represent reality shares a discursive genre that seeks to give coherence and linearity to the experiences of everyday school life, which are discontinuous, fragmented, multiple, and diffuse. Lima (2017) presents self-confrontation as a new discursive genre for workers, through which teachers are encouraged to experience a new situation of self-observation and self-description (Godoy, 2025). More specifically, self-confrontation is a set of theoretical and methodological procedures that uses audiovisual recordings of subjects in real work contexts, with the aim of promoting professional development, occupational health, and new knowledge about professional practice (Lima, 2021).

During self-confrontation sessions, workers are invited to observe their own practice and, based on this self-observation (Godoy, 2025), are encouraged to reflect on it, identify aspects that can be transformed, and, with the support of a mediating intervener and of a colleague from the same

profession, analyze how these changes can be implemented (Muniz-Oliveira; Lima; Althaus, 2021).

Clot (2010) defines the methodological procedures of cross-self-confrontation in three distinct phases. To provide a clearer understanding, the description will be based on the data produced in this qualitative and descriptive research, approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of UTFPR, decision No. 64679722.7.0000.0177.

The first phase precedes the self-confrontation in proper and relates to the systematization of the demand by the work collective. Lima et al. (2023) point out that, in the case of education, the collective is made up of teachers, who are agents of the same type of activity and are grouped together in an institution and/or area. To conduct this first phase, a meeting was held with the collective, in which the demand for continuing education was confirmed and the TAC proposal was presented, with the aim of engaging teachers and forming a volunteer pair for the filming procedure. In the present study, both participants teach the same 7th grade class in middle school, one being a Geography teacher and the other a Portuguese language teacher.

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Subsequently, the proposal was presented to the students, who were invited to participate, at which point the Free and Informed Consent Forms were collected. Next, the intervener observed a class taught by each teacher, without recording, taking non-evaluative descriptive notes on teacher-student interaction, followed by individual feedback recorded on audio. The third stage consisted of filming one class of each teacher, from which the intervener selected excerpts related to the issues highlighted during the feedback.

The self-confrontation dynamic then began. In simple self-confrontation, each teacher watched the excerpt from their own class and was invited to describe in detail what they observed, reflecting on their practice. Once the individual sessions were completed, a cross-self-confrontation took place, in which each teacher watched excerpts from their colleague's class and made detailed comments, allowing them to compare perspectives and identify differences in ways of thinking and acting (Lima; Althaus; Parabocz; Teixeira, 2023).

Lima, Althaus, Parabocz, and Teixeira (2023) point out that, at this point, teachers often recognize themselves in their colleagues' activities, but

only partially, which generates controversy in ways of thinking and acting, as pointed out by Giordan and Sarti (2021). This situation is positive because it encourages dialogue about these differences and the possibilities for recreating practice, resulting in a psychodialogical movement among the participants that broadens the process of self-observation and promotes new perceptions about the “real of activity” (Lima; Althaus; Parabocz; Teixeira, 2023).

The third phase involves editing a video documentary about the classes and the issues addressed, to be shared with the collective in a pedagogical meeting, highlighting the reflections constructed and what can be transformed in teaching practice. Simultaneously, an academic analysis of the intervention is carried out, considering the teachers’ reflections as an object of study interpreted considering the theories that support TAC.

After the intervention was completed, the audio and video data were transcribed through a Transcription Workshop, with the participation of students from UTFPR’s Undergraduate Course in Portuguese and English Language Teaching, following the guidelines of the NURC-SP Project (Prete, 1999). In this article, the *corpus* focuses only on the stages related to the geography teacher: the descriptive notes from the observation of his unrecorded class and the simple and cross-self-confrontation sessions about the excerpt from his recorded class.

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The curse of knowledge: a blind spot now visible

Having understood the process of producing the analyzed data, it is important to understand what this intriguing phenomenon is before moving on to the presentation and analysis of *the corpus*, so that we can see its emergence as a problem in a more contextualized way. We have seen that, throughout all stages of an intervention, its theme has been constructed, so that, in this specific case, the curse of knowledge was revealed as a concrete problem in teaching practice.

Historically, the term curse of knowledge was introduced by Camerer, Loewenstein, and Weber in 1989, who define it as a cognitive bias in which someone, when mastering a subject, assumes that others have the same level of understanding. Once we know something, it becomes very difficult to

remember what it was like not to know it. Our knowledge interferes with our ability to imagine the experience of those who do not yet possess it.

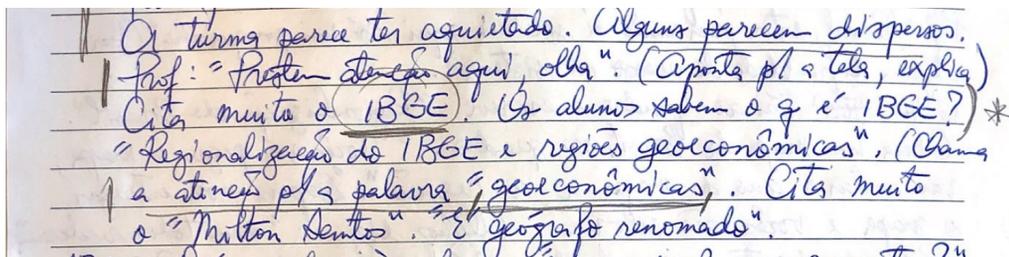
In the educational context, this proves to be a particularly challenging paradox: the more a teacher masters a subject, the more difficult it is to communicate it in a way that is accessible to beginners (Jones, 2023). Consequently, concepts that seem simple to the teacher may not be understood by students, impacting the clarity of explanations and the teaching-learning process. Wieman (2007) illustrates this issue in physics teaching, stating that many teachers face difficulties in achieving effective results because they tend to overestimate the ease of understanding the content, hindering the adequate mediation of students' level of understanding.

Faced with this, we see that the curse of knowledge represents an intrinsic challenge to human communication and, consequently, to teaching. A deep mastery of a subject can paradoxically make it difficult to mediate knowledge to beginners, creating an invisible barrier between teacher and student. This highlights the need for teaching to be a constant exercise in empathy, otherness, and reconnection with the experience of not knowing.

10 From this perspective, central questions arise: how can we make the teacher's speech more accessible? To what extent do students understand what they are taught? And how can we make visible to the teacher what remains invisible in their practice? Lima (2023), during the V International Colloquium on Clinic of Activity at the University of São Paulo (USP), highlighted that this difficulty manifests itself in verbal language as a psychological tool of the teacher, being a complex problem that is beginning to be addressed in specific contexts, such as the school where this clinical intervention took place.

In view of the above, below we present a sample of the descriptive notes taken by the intervener during the observation of the unrecorded class of the geography teacher, whose experience is the central focus of this study. The notes were recorded at five-minute intervals, which allows for a temporally organized understanding of the sequence and dynamics of the classroom. The excerpts presented correspond specifically to the final minutes of the class:

Figure 1 – Excerpt 1 from the intervener's descriptive notes



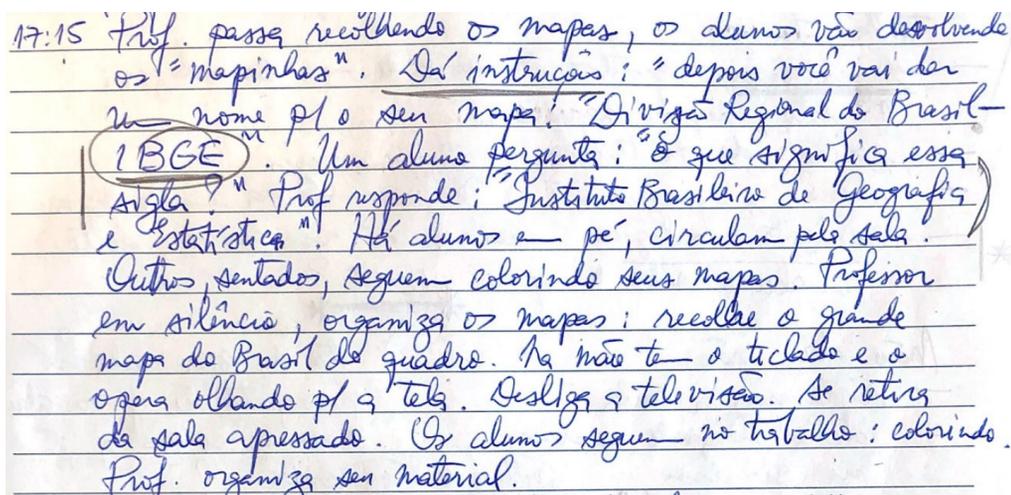
O turma parece ter aquietado. Alguns parecem distraídos.
 Prof: "Prestem atenção aqui, olha". (Aponta p/ a tela, explica)
 Cita muito o IBGE. Os alunos sabem o q é IBGE? *
 "Regionalização do IBGE e regiões geoeconômicas". (Chama
 a atenção p/ a palavra "geoeconômicas". Cita muito
 o "Milton Santos". "É geógrafo renomado".

[The class seems to have quieted down. Some seem distracted. Teacher: "Pay attention here, look." (Points to the screen, explains). He mentions IBGE a lot. Do the students know what IBGE is? "IBGE regionalization and geoeconomic regions." (He draws attention to the word "geoeconomic"). He mentions "Milton Santos" a lot. "He's a renowned geographer."]

Source: research corpus (2023).

In this excerpt from the intervener's notes, we note that the teacher frequently cites the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) throughout the class. The notes also raise the question: "Do students know what IBGE is?", revealing a concern with the students' understanding, given that the acronym was mentioned repeatedly. Let us look at a second excerpt from the same notes:

Figure 2 – Excerpt 2 from the intervener's descriptive notes



17:15 Prof. passa recolhendo os mapas, os alunos vão desdobrando
 os "mapinhas". Dá instruções: "depois você vai dar
 um nome p/ o seu mapa". "Divisão Regional do Brasil -
 IBGE". Um aluno pergunta: "é que significa essa
 sigla?" Prof responde: "Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia
 e Estatística". Há alunos em pé, circulam pela sala.
 Outros, sentados, seguem colorindo seus mapas. Professor
 em silêncio, organiza os mapas: recolhe o grande
 mapa do Brasil do quadro. Na mão tem o tchê e o
 opera olhando p/ a tela. Desliga a televisão. As reações
 da sala apressado. Os alunos seguem no trabalho: colorindo.
 Prof. organiza seu material.

[The teacher goes around collecting the maps, and the students return their “little maps.” He gives instructions: “Next, you’re going to give your map a name: ‘Regional Division of Brazil - IBGE.’” A student asks: “What does that acronym mean?” The teacher replies: “Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.” Some students are standing, circulating around the room. Others, seated, continue coloring their maps. The teacher, in silence, organizes the maps: he takes the large map of Brazil from the board. In his hand he holds the keyboard and operates it, looking at the screen. He turns off the television. He leaves the room hurriedly. The students continue their work: coloring. The teacher organizes his materials.]

Source: research *corpus* (2023).

We also see a record of a situation in which the teacher collects the students’ maps and guides them in carrying out practical activities. During this stage, when the teacher dictates instructions for writing the title of a map, which must contain “IBGE,” a student questions the meaning of the acronym, to which the teacher replies: “Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics” and continues the class, which was already coming to an end.

With these notes in hand, the intervener provided individual feedback to the teacher, reading the notes produced during the observation and, together, making considerations based on what had been described, including the episode related to the explanation of the acronym. This initial dialogue allowed the teacher to become aware of aspects of his practice that often go unnoticed in everyday life. Next, as planned in the third stage of the procedures, a new class by the teacher was filmed. From this material, the intervener selected a part of the class directly related to the issues raised in the previous feedback, in order to maintain continuity between the stages of the process. This excerpt was taken to the self-confrontation sessions, in which the teacher watched the excerpt from his own class and was invited to describe it, analyzing it in detail.

Below is the full transcript of the selected recording, which corresponds to the beginning of the class following the feedback session. For proper reading, the transcript follows Preti’s (1999) standards, in which: capital letters indicate emphasis in speech; :: indicate vowel or consonant prolongations; ... indicate any pauses; ((xxx)) indicate comments by the transcriber; and “” indicate direct quotes. To identify the subjects, we use: I (Intervener), P1 (Geography Teacher), P2 (Portuguese Teacher). In the speeches during the video, these are identified as P1V and P2V. Students are indicated as A1V, A2V, A3V, etc., only following the order of speech, without any link to their

identity. It should be noted that this is the beginning of the class that followed the feedback session:

last class... you received a map that worked with and discussed the IBGE's regional division... right?... so the IBGE um:: then the teacher didn't actually explain to you what the IBGE is... so very quickly here... the IBGE is the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics... ok? Right?... what is the function of this institute?... It is an institute linked to the government... which: does what?... It conducts demographic censuses... linked to what issue?... of the population... so the IBGE is actually the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics which works with the census... the demographic census... can anyone tell me when the last census was? (P1V, 2023).

[...]

ninety-eight? around then? (A1V, 2023).

[...]

when was the last census? (P1V, 2023).

[...]

forty-five? (A2V, 2023).

[...]

NO::... the DEMOgraphic cenSUS everybody is not the regional division... the demographic census is conducted every ten years (P1V, 2023).

We noticed that the teacher begins by “very quickly” explaining the meaning of IBGE to the students. He briefly details what the letters of the acronym stand for and quickly explains the function of the agency, pointing out that the IBGE “conducts demographic censuses.” Immediately afterwards, he asks the students: when was the last census?

What we see in this excerpt is that the teacher revisits the concept of IBGE, which he realized, through conversation with the intervener, may not have been fully clarified to the students. Even so, we see that he “had a relapse” into the same issue, since, by admitting to the students that he had not previously defined what the IBGE was and that they might not know, the teacher introduces his definition based on a new concept: that of “demographic census.” In an attempt to clarify the term IBGE through the notion of census, the teacher assumes that the students already understood this concept. However,

when asked about the date of the last census, the students' answers reveal confusion and associations with other content previously covered, but which was not actually related to the demographic census.

We see that, even though the teacher realized and acknowledged that the students might not have the background knowledge he imagined through the feedback from the intervener, when trying to mediate the situation, he repeats the same issue, highlighting the subtlety of this blind spot, which begins to be revealed throughout the intervention.

It is also worth noting that the intervention has already triggered a process of change in the teacher's way of acting: the development that has begun, still in its early stages, is starting to have concrete effects on his practice. This first attempt represents a significant milestone, as it is the moment when the teacher transforms an externally provoked perception into internal reflection and, in a way, already into action. Although incipient, the movement observed indicates the beginning of a shift from the automatic, from the blind spot to visibility.

14 It is worth noting that the situation experienced by this teacher is not an isolated case, but something that occurs repeatedly in the practice of many teachers. The issue is not to assess whether his assumptions are correct or mistaken, but to understand that such assumptions are part of a way of operating that is already incorporated into teaching. When these elements become visible, possibilities open up for them to be analyzed and, consequently, transformed not only by this teacher, but by the collective.

In the self-confrontation session, the intervener invites the teacher to watch this excerpt from the class and describe in detail what he appears doing in it. This exercise is repeated several times with the mediation of the clinical professional, while, with each new formulation and reformulation of speech, the teacher begins to perceive more clearly activities and actions that are automated in his practice, as well as other possibilities for doing. This movement is the result of the self-confrontation process itself, which promotes awareness.

Within his clinical role of mediating this space, at a given moment, the intervener highlights precisely this point of relapse into the curse of knowledge:

[...] so:... the impression I have... you confirm it or not... (I, 2023).

[...]

yes (P1, 2023).

[...]

[...] is that you:... are trying... to explain something they don't know... in terms of something else... that they: also don't know... does that make sense to you? (I, 2023).

[...]

[...] look, professor... um:... when... in this... it might even make sense, right... it DOES, actually... but:... like:... here:... with regard to:... it's:... that as we talk, we go on, saying a lot of things like that... but we start from some assumptions there... that:... don't really stick to this question of:... details as we're doing right now... which is detailing... in a very... very:... right... detailed way... what happens here sometimes is that some things go unnoticed, overlooking this detailing that we're doing, right:... in the sense of the class here, you understand?... in relation to this issue, I see it more... like this... but let's go on, right... (P1, 2023).

The teacher's statement reinforces the idea that, often, in the exercise of teaching, we rely on implicit assumptions that go unnoticed in the school routine. This leads to automated practices, as well as highlights the importance of these situations and spaces for reflection by the subjects themselves, since it makes it possible to identify these previously hidden points and, through this, initiate a movement of development. Let us note that a different view of the student becomes the subject of the teacher's statements:

[...] I think like this... it's:... it's important... the:... observations... but it's what I... that... I had already commen/ we... when we teach we don't get caught up in all the details... who knows... we would have to see, right... and:... this matter... that there are many in our daily lives... we start from some assumptions that end up kind of:... let's say... assuming that the student knows... what the student... right... and then you:... I think it would be interesting to do a/ go into more detail... on the other HAND... we would ask ourselves... many questions... as we saw before like what is the IBGE... and now this issue of the census as well... so... in this case... what would be possible... to... to improve:... improve... in the sense that... from the moment you're working if you're going to address some... some concept... something, right... you need to

have this perspective that the students should know what I'm talking about... (P1, 2023).

After the simple self-confrontations, the cross-confrontations begin, in which the movement is to dialogue with a peer about the same section of the class. In this case, the portuguese teacher joins the discussion with the geography teacher and the intervener, and they begin to talk together about what they observe. It is important to note that, during this process, the portuguese teacher identifies the curse of knowledge not only as something observed in the geography teacher's practice, but also as a difficulty present in her own teaching. Thus, the problem is no longer seen as an individual issue and comes to be understood as a shared challenge, opening space for joint reflection, in which they begin to develop strategies to address this limitation.

As the teachers engage in self-confrontation dialogue about this difficulty in adequately measuring students' knowledge and not leaving gaps in understanding in the classroom, the intervener introduces the term "curse of knowledge" for the first time, a phenomenon that had not been named until then, but whose effects had already been discussed and recognized by the teachers. He suggests that they search for a definition of the term on the internet, and the Portuguese teacher does so, in such a way that her immediate reaction is revealing:

(reading the definition on the internet) "the curse of knowledge... is a cognitive bias that occurs when an individual who is communicating with other individuals... assumes that other individuals have a similar background... and depth of knowledge to understand this bias also called by some authors... the curse of expertise" (P2, 2023).

[...]

(school alarm rings) got it? (I, 2023).

[...]

[...] it's the teacher's curse isn't it... we always think that students know everything we're talking about... which is exactly what you described... like us (P2, 2023).

This statement is highly relevant, as it demonstrates a significant movement of recognition of and within the problem explained, which has now been

revealed as a term. This identification did not come from an external agent, but from the teacher herself, who, upon encountering the definition of the curse of knowledge, promptly associates it with the reality of teaching, naming it as the “teacher’s curse.” The gesture of appropriation reveals that the phenomenon is not perceived as an isolated difficulty, but as a characteristic shared by the collective to which she and he belong. By including herself in this process, the teacher broadens the scope of the analysis, shifting it from the individual to the collective level, and shows that this way of acting is incorporated into the activity.

As the process continues, we see a movement that goes from recognition to identification of the problem, through confrontation, and culminating in the collective search for strategies to overcome it. This journey is sustained by dialogue among teachers who, by sharing experiences, detail concrete examples of their practices, point out paths that could or might have been followed, raise alternative ways of acting in the classroom, and reflect on how such points can be transferred to other situations in their professional and personal lives.

The expected effects of this exercise - which are already beginning to manifest themselves during the intervention - concern the possibility that these teachers will return to their daily practice with a more attentive and sensitive eye for aspects that previously remained invisible or naturalized. By making visible what was previously a blind spot, space is opened for a gradual transformation of the activity.

In this sense, the clinical training process contributes to the construction of a more empathetic and otherness-laden view of the student, since, by recognizing the curse of knowledge as a concrete problem in practice, the teacher is able to place themselves in a more open position to understand the difficulties and needs of students.

Final considerations

The present study aimed to analyze the curse of knowledge as a problem in teaching practice, discussing its invisibility in everyday school life and the processes of visualization triggered by the Activity Clinic (AC). Based on a

dialogical-developmental theoretical framework, which articulates the assumptions of Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology and Bakhtin's Philosophy of Language, we supported the understanding that teaching is a complex activity, permeated by blind spots that are only revealed through reflective processes mediated by the work collective through discourse on practice.

The intervention carried out through the cross-self-confrontation method proved to be a powerful device for making visible a phenomenon that is often naturalized in teaching practice. The analysis revealed that the curse of knowledge manifests itself as a recurring cognitive bias, characterized by the teacher's tendency to assume that students share the same conceptual repertoire as they do. The process of observation, recording, feedback, and self-confrontation created conditions for a progressive movement that started with the initial identification of the problem, went through conscious confrontation, and advanced to the collective development of strategies for overcoming it. Awareness of the curse of knowledge does not occur in a linear or definitive way, but is a gradual process, marked by advances, setbacks, and reconstructions, highlighting the strength and subtlety of the phenomenon.

18 The participation of the professional peer proved to be fundamental in this process: by recognizing in her colleague's practice difficulties similar to her own, the Portuguese language teacher not only validated the problem identified but broadened their understanding by bringing her own experience to bear. The moment she readily recognized the curse of knowledge as "the teacher's curse" consolidated the phenomenon as a collective issue, shifting it from the individual level to the level of the teaching profession. Among the concrete strategies developed by teachers, the following stand out: systematically questioning whether students understand the terms used; explaining concepts, acronyms, and technical vocabulary before using them; creating support materials such as glossaries; taking breaks to check comprehension; and reconnecting with one's own learning trajectory, recalling the time when one did not know what one now masters.

It can be concluded that confronting the curse of knowledge requires articulation between individual recognition and collective construction of strategies, which reinforces the importance of collaborative continuing education practices. Unlike traditional training models based on external prescriptions, the AC promotes analytical, critical, and dialogical training, in which teachers

are recognized as subjects of their own transformation. The results show that, when supported by spaces for qualified listening, shared reflection, and situated analysis of real activity, teachers can identify structural problems in their practice, consciously address them, and develop contextualized alternatives to overcome them.

By highlighting a recurring issue that has been little explored in Portuguese-language literature on teaching, this study contributes to broadening the scientific and practical debate on teaching work. The research showed that the curse of knowledge, far from being an individual failure on the part of teachers, is a cognitive phenomenon that can only be adequately addressed through methodological devices that create conditions for awareness, collective analysis, and transformation of the activity. In this sense, the Activity Clinic presents itself as a necessary and powerful approach, capable of breaking with the professional isolation of teachers, creating support networks among peers, and expanding teachers' power to act on their own practice.

Finally, we suggest the need for further research to explore the topic in depth at different levels and in different educational contexts, as well as to explore the relationships between the curse of knowledge and other dimensions of teaching activity, thus broadening our understanding of this phenomenon and its implications for the quality of education.

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Ms. Stefani Skodowski
Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (Câmpus Pato Branco – Brasil)
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7722-9378>
E-mail: stefani.skodowski@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Anselmo Lima
Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (Campus Pato Branco – Brasil)
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras
Orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-2165>
E-mail: anselmo@utfpr.edu.br

Translators' names and emails
Stefani Skodowski
stefani.skodowski@gmail.com
Anselmo Lima
anselmo@utfpr.edu.br

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