


Neoliberal discourse on youth protagonism and impacts on teaching work in Professional Education


Discurso neoliberal do protagonismo juvenil e impactos no trabalho docente na Educação Profissional

Discurso neoliberal del protagonismo juvenil e impactos en el trabajo docente en la Educación Profesional

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Abstract: The objective of the article is to discuss the relationship between the neoliberal discourse of youth protagonism and teaching work in professional Education integrated to High School. We developed bibliographical research with qualitative focus and hermeneutic approach as methodological possibility, under the lens of historical-dialectic materialism based on a theoretical framework that analyzes the Nacional Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the National Curricular Base for Teacher Training (BNC of Teacher Training) and the New Secondary Education Law. In the analyzes, the broad privatization of education is evident, the precariousness of training and teacher work, and the dissemination of the neoliberal discourse of youth protagonism as a decoy that alienates young people from training in the subject's critical-emancipatory perspective.

Keywords: Neoliberal discourse. Youth protagonism. Precariousness of teaching work. Professional Education.

Resumo: O objetivo do artigo é discutir a relação entre o discurso neoliberal do protagonismo juvenil e o trabalho docente na Educação Profissional integrada ao Ensino Médio. Desenvolvemos uma pesquisa bibliográfica, de enfoque qualitativo, com abordagem hermenêutica como possibilidade metodológica, sob a lente do materialismo histórico-dialético, baseadas em um referencial teórico que analisa a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), a Base Nacional Curricular de Formação Docente (BNC de Formação Docente) e a Lei do Novo Ensino Médio. Na análise, fica evidente a ampla privatização da educação, a precarização da formação e do trabalho docente, e a disseminação do discurso neoliberal do protagonismo juvenil como engodo que aliena o jovem da formação na perspectiva crítico-emancipatória do sujeito.

Palavras-chave: Discurso neoliberal. Protagonismo juvenil. Precarização do trabalho docente. Educação Profissional.

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Resumen: El objetivo del artículo es discutir la relación entre el discurso neoliberal de protagonismo juvenil y el trabajo docente en la Educación Profesional integrada a la Enseñanza Media. Desarrollamos una investigación bibliográfica, con enfoque cualitativo, con un enfoque hermenéutico como posibilidad metodológica, bajo el lente de materialismo histórico-dialéctico, a partir de un marco teórico que analiza la Base Curricular Nacional Común (BNCC), la Base Curricular Nacional para Formación Docente (BNC de Formación Docente y la Nueva Ley de Educación Secundaria. En el análisis se evidencia la precarización de la formación y del trabajo docente, y la difusión del discurso neoliberal del protagonismo juvenil como suñuelo que aleja a los jóvenes de la formación en la perspectiva crítico-emancipadora del sujeto

Palabras-clave: Discurso neoliberal. Protagonismo juvenil. Precariedad del Trabajo docente. Educación Profesional.

Introduction

Neoliberalism is, as Draibe (1993) states, "[...] a *discourse* and a set of practical rules of action (or recommendations), particularly referring to governments and reforms of the state and its policies" (Draibe, 1993, p. 88, emphasis added), as the author discusses the social policies of the neoliberal state in the context of Latin America. Draibe (1993) highlights three proposals on the agenda of social programs in countries that have adopted this ideology: decentralization, targeting and privatization, so that decentralization focuses on how to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of spending, prioritizing organization in the municipal spheres; targeting is concerned with directing social spending to selected programs and publics; and privatization concerns the process of shifting "production of public goods and services to the private sector" (Draibe, 1993, p. 97).

In Brazil, from the 1990s onwards, the restructuring of the state, as recommended by supranational entities such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) was carried out as an attempt to overcome the crisis, redefining social policies in which educational reforms designed for the context of Latin America and the Caribbean (Silva; Azevedo, 2012) were developed by groups from big-firm (and entrepreneurial) capitalism.

According to this redefinition, the participation of civil society interest groups is enhanced, broadening the scope of the privatization of public institutions. In this regard, civil society entities are making efforts, using multiple forms of privatization (Peroni, 2018), acting in public education through *accountability*³ policies, the production of textbooks and teaching materials and the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

³ Translation the word *accountability* into portuguese it means *prestação de contas*, however, it usually carries the meaning of control, supervision and accountability. Maia e Oliveira (2019) state that the term "[...] implicitly brings personal responsibility for the acts practiced and explicitly the demanding readiness to render accounts, whether in the public or private sphere" [...]. Bringing the term into the context of education and reinforcing the reflections on the concept of accountability, we add to the understanding of its meaning, ranking and classifications [...]." (Maia; Oliveira, 2019, p. 1615).

In the field of education policies, we highlight the most recent reforms, following the 2016 putsch, marked by a backlash with the establishment of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), with Law No. 13,415/2017, which reforms secondary school (Silva, 2018). Consequently, provisions such as the National Curricular Basis for Teacher Training (BNC-Formação Docente), CNE/CP Resolution No. 02, of December 20, 2019, which defines the National Curricular Guidelines for the Initial Training of Teachers for Basic Education and establishes the Common National Basis for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers (BNC-Formação), CNE/CP Resolution No. 01, of October 27, 2020, which provides for the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers and establishes the Common National Base for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers (BNC-Continuing Education) and Ordinance No. 24, of January 19, 2021, which provides for the National System for the Recognition and Certification of Professional Knowledge and Skills (Re-Saber), were also created.

This package of legal instruments is characterized by the dismantling of socially referenced quality education and by the definition and orientation of *curricula* devoid of the possibility of critical and emancipatory training of individuals (Curado Silva, 2020).

According to these documents, student and teacher training *curricula* are based on the acquisition of skills and competencies which, according to the neoliberal discourse, are necessary to meet the demands of the 21st century (Duarte, 2008). In this sense, the expression "youth protagonism" has been part of the semantic field of the neoliberal "cantilena" (Shiroma; Evangelista, 2007), since the documents resulting from forums that preceded this legal framework, appearing abundantly in the legal provisions aimed at secondary education.

Youth protagonism is proclaimed in Brazilian society through the formulation of educational policies and it is present in legislation and in the development of training materials for students, teachers and managers, conceived by civil society organizations. These materials have directed teaching activity towards students' schooling aligned with the interests of neoliberal logic, alienating the student from a critical and emancipatory education. This education must be made possible by the teaching action of well-trained teachers, who have also been formed in this critical-emancipatory perspective. With the unequal clash of power, education in this sense has been distanced in both initial and continuing education.

Transnational actors recognize the transformative and resistance potential of teachers. Shiroma and Evangelista (2007) point out that "intellectuals linked to the Program for the Promotion of Educational Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean – PREALC – have stated that 'the greatest obstacle to the implementation of educational reforms is the teacher'" (Shiroma; Evangelista, 2007, p. 533). Based on this premise, we can understand the development of these structures in the

architecture of the neoliberal discourse of disqualification and discrediting of teaching work, in the devaluation of this professional, in the expansion of licentiate graduation courses in the private network, which privilege streamlined training, and in the centralization of knowledge in the acquisition of skills and competences, which in reality place the teacher as a mere applicator of ready-made materials, basing their work on the pedagogy of the motto "learning to learn" (Duarte, 2008). For Duarte (2008), pedagogies centered on this motto distort the real understanding of Vygotsky's psychology, sidelining its marxist character, while associating it with capitalist-based ideological discourse. They are pedagogies that "remove from the school the task of transmitting objective knowledge, the task of enabling students to access the truth" (Duarte, 2008, p. 23).

Considering this scenario, Oliveira (2021) emphasizes that "to keep up with the demands of the knowledge society, schools and teachers need to renew, reform and transform themselves. International organizations play a crucial role in this regard; they are the main disseminators of the reform discourse (Oliveira, 2021, p. 257).

As you can see, there are many intertwined aspects, involving the work of transnational agents and the instrumentalization of the state to maintain capitalist hegemony. It is in this perspective that we reflect on who this discourse of youth protagonism in public education serves, since students will not be able to fully develop their critical capacity, in the sense of formation as a critical individual, since educational reforms are also concerned with fragmenting teacher training, emptying the possibility of political-historical-cultural training for teachers, whether in initial or continuing training.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the relationship between the neoliberal discourse of youth protagonism and the precariousness of teaching work, based on official documents that guide the training and work of basic education teachers. Our perspective of analysis is based on historical-dialectical materialism, as we understand education as part of a historical-social totality, submitted to societal projects that are constantly in dispute. In this qualitative approach study, we carried out bibliographical and documentary research, with a hermeneutic approach as a methodological possibility to analyze and understand the texts. To this end, we chose "youth protagonism" and "teaching work" as *a priori* categories to be studied in the materials analyzed.

The article is divided into four sections, besides the introduction. In section 02 (two), we will reflect on neoliberalism and the privatization of education, presenting its types and dimensions. In section 03 (three), we will discuss the youth protagonism proposed by the documents and materials used in secondary education, focusing on vocational and technical secondary education. Section 04 (four) will present the issue of the precariousness of teaching work in the light of the exploration of the discourse of youth protagonism as the result of the analysis carried out based to the theoretical framework. Finally, we will present our final considerations.

Neoliberalism and the privatization of public education

Neoliberalism takes on different nuances depending on the society in which it is developed. It has in its rationalization the main objective of increasing profit rates and maintain its hegemony, developing in countries through deregulation, privatization, destabilization and the suppression of trade unions and social policies.

According to Harvey (2008),

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. [...] State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (Harvey, 2008, p. 12).

According to the author, in neoliberalism, the roles played by individuals and the state are clearly outlined based on the relations of power and coercion that the latter, as a mechanism for the economic and business system, establishes over the first. It is important to emphasize the author's judgement of the economic system's intervention in the markets, pointing out that neoliberal theorists attest to a certain ignorance on the part of the state when it comes to dealing with market issues, denouncing one of the elements behind the discourse on state inefficiency.

Regarding to the term neoliberalism, Damiano and Félix (2013) point out that it originated in 1938 with the German sociologist and economist Alexander Rüstow, at the Walter Lippmann Colloquium held in Paris. The idea was to redefine classical liberalism, under the influence of neoclassical liberalism, in the direction of destroying the structures that stood in the way of market logic (Damiano; Félix, 2013). The authors also point out that the control mechanisms, such as political, legal and commercial rules, are developed by the central capitalist countries over the underdeveloped countries, ensuring that there is "no need for organized political empires or the use of military force" (Damiano; Félix 2013, p. 215).

In Latin America context in recent times, Ibarra (2011) recognizes neoliberalism as a doctrine and highlights as one of its main characteristics the fact that it "gives rise to the diffusion of ideological visions that distort reality or history" (Ibarra, 2011, p. 246). In this sense, the ability to mimic is inherent to this doctrine, seizing terms from other strands, giving them new appearance and an air of innovation.

It is also in the field of discourse that neoliberalism discredits public services with the aim of undermining the state, since the construction of social policies along these lines serves as the basis for the cycle of precarious public services that worsens over time, always to the benefit of the maximum state for big-firm (and entrepreneurial) business and the minimum state for the working class. In public education, the discourse of improving quality has seduced Greeks and Trojans alike, opening the door to the widespread privatization of public education, which has materialized in a variety of ways.

Peroni (2018) points to the following as ways of privatizing education

ownership changes, with the transition from the state to the third or private sector; [...] partnerships between public and private institutions, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, in which the private ends up defining the public; or, what remains state-owned, but becomes market-based, mainly reorganizing management processes and redefining the content of educational policy (Peroni, 2018, p. 213).

These forms can be combined with each other, optimizing the process from a neoliberal perspective and, consequently, intensifying the strangulation of public services to make evident the supposed "inefficiency" of the state.

Motta and Andrade (2020) present the central dimensions of the concept of the *empresariamento* (entrepreneurialisation) of education:

mercantilization (the process by which school education is subsumed into the form and logic of the goods), *commodification* (the process by which school education is transformed into a market niche) and the *subsumption of education to the business community* (the process by which the Brazilian business community has assumed, in close relationship with the strict state and international organizations, the moral and intellectual direction of public and private education) (Motta; Andrade 2020, p. 4).

The authors also point out that these dimensions "are deeply intertwined" and highlight the "privatization of the classic type", which concerns the actual sale of public assets to companies or groups of investors, and the "commodification of the educational process in public networks" (Motta; Andrade, 2020, p. 4).

Educational companies perform widely in the public network, liaising with each other on various fronts. Regarding to initial training, Barreto (2015) states that with the expansion of primary education, based on Constitutional Amendment No. 59/2009, there was a need for teacher training to serve the demand, since that this amendment establishes compulsory higher education training for teachers working at all educational levels. The author points out that, with the change in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDBEN), Law No. 9394/1996, of 20 December 1996, distance education was at that point accepted at all levels of education, a fact that allows the expansion of teacher training.

These changes have allowed the opening of many licentiate graduation courses in this modality in private institutions, heating up this educational market, but without any considerable impact on the quality of education.

Barreto (2015) also points out that between 2001 and 2011, there was "a 46 per cent growth rate in the number of students" on higher education courses. In Distance Education, according to the author, "they jumped from an insignificant 0.6 per cent to 31.6 per cent in 2011. In this interval, enrolments in pedagogy courses went from 29.3% to 65.7% of the total number of students" (Barreto, 2015, p. 682).

At the secondary level, the role of the educational business community has expanded, especially in vocational education, with the National Programme for Access to Technical Education and Employment (Pronatec), created by Law No. 12.513/2011, characterizing the expansion and privatization of this modality.

Melo and Moura (2016) point out that "Pronatec was created and came into force under the discourse of a lack of qualified labour" (Melo; Moura, 2016, p. 105). The authors point out that the decision on how to design training for the working class in the program was taken by the "S" system and other private sectors, subsidized with public funds. This materialized in the Training-Scholarship (student and worker), reflecting the logic of transferring public resources to the private sector, under the auspices of the law on public-private partnerships (PPPs), Law No. 11.079, of 30 December 2004.

In addition to this transfer, in the ideological field there is a transfer of private logic through PPPs, with a view to maintaining the hegemony of the current system, in the dispute over the content of Brazilian public education. Caetano (2018) warns about the implementation of private logic in public education through teacher training programmes developed by private entities in public education on a global scale. Analysing the *Ensina Brasil* Programme, which recruited and selected young talent by providing initial training aimed at developing classroom practices and leadership skills (humility, resilience, problem-solving, among others), the author states that

the main skills developed in the training courses are connected to socio-emotional skills: values alignment, resilience and persistence, humility and empathy, being communicative, motivating and collaborative, pragmatism and accountability, problem-solving skills and dreaming big (<https://www.ensinabrasil.org/sejaumensina>, 2016). These skills become seven criteria for selecting participants. At no point, pedagogical content or broader political-pedagogical training are mentioned, which makes us reflect on the training of this new teacher who has taken center stage in the teacher training market (Caetano, 2018, p. 127).

Caetano (2018) also points out that the investment and interest of private companies occurs not only in teacher training but also in changing the very logic of training, pointing out that light training programs, such as the *Ensina Brasil* programme, "become a key component of most versions of

privatization, threatening to change both the forms and the content of work at school, directly affecting school culture and the relationship established between teachers, students and the community" (Caetano, 2018, p. 128).

It is also worth highlighting the support that these entities find to act through the National Education Plan – PNE (2014-2024), Law No. 13.005, of 25 June 2014, particularly in Goals 6, 7 and 11⁴, which focus on and intensify the actions of these private entities in establishing the neoliberal ideology in public education, in which these groups, via PPPs, strive to meet the objectives of implementing full-time education (Goal 6), promoting the quality of education, based on large-scale assessments (Goal 7), and collaborating with the expansion of professional education (Goal 11).

Discussing on the precariousness of teaching work, Kuenzer (2021) highlights flexibilization as a neoliberal strategy that

defines the pedagogical project of flexible accumulation in various dimensions: in the concept of learning, which is flexible and increasingly mediated by information and communication technologies; in curricular proposals, such as the flexibilization of secondary education in the latest reform; in the streamlined of training at all levels of education, including teacher training, in order to produce flexible subjectivities; in the organization and management of work processes, making teaching work more flexible (Kuenzer, 2021, p. 238).

From this perspective, pointed out by the author regarding teacher training, we would also like to highlight the role of private organizations in the continuing training of teachers within the scope of public education, through partnerships signed with state and municipal secretariats, which apply the pedagogical primer discussed by Kuenzer (2021). The teacher draws attention to the implications of this ideology and emphasizes:

from an epistemological point of view, postmodern conceptions are the ideological cement of the regime of flexible accumulation; every mode of exploitation needs an ideological discourse to give it consistency, filling in the gaps that characterize it, so that it appears to be true. This is how various conceptions of knowledge, learning, teachers and students have been presented in such a way as to lead to uncritical adherence, given their apparently true character (Kuenzer, 2021, p. 238).

⁴ Goal 6 aims to "offer full-time education in at least 50% (fifty per cent) of public schools, in order to serve at least 25% (twenty-five per cent) of basic education students"; Goal 7 proposes to "promote the quality of basic education at all stages and in all modalities, improving school flow and learning in order to achieve the following national averages for the Ideb"; and Goal 11 aims to "triple enrolments in technical professional education at secondary level, ensuring the quality of the offer and at least 50% (fifty per cent) of the expansion in the public segment". BRAZIL, 2014. Law No. 13.005, of 25 June 2014. **Approves the National Education Plan – PNE (2014-2024)** and makes other provisions, Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2014/lei/113005.htm. Accessed on: 30 October 2023.

This discourse, which captures the uncritical adherence of teachers, managers, students and society in general, is solidified in such a way that its rupture becomes almost impossible in the face of the articulation of the various strategic mechanisms used by the hegemonic system, undermining the emancipation of subjects.

Youth protagonism and the emancipation of the subject

Within the scope of the New High School, the neoliberal discourse used the argument of young people's freedom to choose their education, with professional education also being highlighted as a niche for exploitation. As pillars supporting the reform of secondary education, Moura and Lima Filho (2017) emphasize that

the main justifying arguments are clearly ideological and neoliberal in nature, based mainly on three aspects: criticism of the current so-called "rigid curriculum" and, as a result, the urgent need to replace it with another that is "flexible, lean and dynamic"; the proposal to establish differentiated training itineraries in the HS, in order to "value the choice" of students for the itinerary that most satisfies them, granting them the so-called "youth protagonism"; the establishment of the "full-time school" (Moura; Lima Filho, 2017, p. 119).

The construction of a positive aura around these neoliberal propositions in the redefinition of policies, as already mentioned, is part of this mimicking characteristic of neoliberal discourses. The idea of a "rigid curriculum", with many subjects that would not be targeted at young people's life plans, and the "valuing of individual choice" sounded and still sounds like a siren song, leading the school community, and especially young people, into a trap of modelling, conforming and reproducing the neoliberal ideology.

In contrast to this argument of freedom of choice, it is obvious that this does not exist when a limited number of alternatives are presented and the choices have already been previously determined, but not by adolescents and young people. Krawckzy and Ferretti (2017) emphasize this argument, since that they will not be able to "choose a solid general education" and regarding the five training itineraries, the "offer will depend on the proposals and concrete conditions of each state and each school" (Krawckzy; Ferretti, 2017, p 37-38). In the Brazilian reality, many municipalities have only one school offering secondary education, and the question arises as to what the issue of youth protagonism looks like in these cases, from the perspective of neoliberalism.

Considering this framework, youth protagonism as outlined by Costa⁵ (2006) is a "modality of educational action" and concerns the "creation of spaces and conditions capable of enabling young people to get involved in activities aimed at solving real problems, acting as a source of initiative, freedom and commitment" (Costa, 2006, p. 179).

Carvalho and Noma (2011) explain that "the idea of youth protagonism [...] is based on the recognition that young people are social actors, bearers of new collective identities" (Carvalho; Noma, 2011, p. 180), but they draw attention to the term "social actors" because it takes "the contradiction between activity and passivity to another, less visible plane" (Carvalho; Noma, 2011, p. 180).

Young people are called upon to act in society through projects that are devoid of the possibility of emancipatory political training and that obscure the need for real engagement in the fight for social policies, redirecting them towards collaboration in the hegemonic project. The promise, however, is one of empowerment, education for citizenship and autonomy.

Carvalho and Noma (2011) also explain:

The union of autonomy, citizenship and competence, in the discourse of youth protagonism, is essentially geared towards the survival of the individual in a society where there are no more guarantees, especially in relation to the labor market. In this sense, in a society without guarantees, it is up to the individual to develop their own skills, i.e. without the backing of social rights and without joining collective movements. In this way, the autonomous individual who has developed their skills gets active – becoming an active subject – and relates to other individuals. However, it is important to emphasize that the relationship between active individuals occurs because of individual objectives, which does not alter the state of private isolation and presupposes a peculiar notion of citizenship. Thus, the mobilization of young people serves an agenda of personal interests, in a strategic manipulation, as a condition for building sentiment, today modernized and under the control of the media, to recreate a personalist and, consequently, anti-democratic legitimacy base (Carvalho; Noma, 2011, p. 180-181).

The findings highlighted by the authors, regarding the condition of society and the condition of young people who have the neoliberal ideology as their ventriloquist, become exponentially worrying given the pandemic and *necropolitical* context in Brazil. The necropolitics concept was developed by Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe. For the author, this concept refers to "contemporary forms that subjugate life to the power of death" (Mbembe, 2018, p. 71). Mbembe develops his work based on "Foucault's concepts of biopower and Agamben's concepts of state of exception and state of siege, to argue that the right to kill emerges from the notion that the other is the enemy, 'appeals to

⁵ Antônio Carlos Gomes da Costa is one of the theoreticians whose work on the Pedagogy of Presence underpins the School of Choice Methodology, adopted in the public network when full-time education was implemented in secondary schools.

the exception, to the emergency and to a fictional notion of the enemy", as Sefair and Cutrim (2019, p. 31) point out.

Immersed in this necropolitical context that defines the citizens' destinies, it is necessary to prepare the ground to put all this logic into effect as a *status quo*. This is why the pedagogy developed under the neoliberal logic assumes the motto of "learning to learn", as put by Duarte (2001), centred on the pedagogy of competences.

Ramos (2001), discussing the pedagogy of competences, observes that the notion of competence disseminated by the school is that this knowledge would promote the encounter between work and training, and explains:

On the labor front, there has been a shift away from the concept of qualification towards the notion of competence. On a pedagogical level, we are witnessing the organization and legitimization of the shift from teaching centered on disciplinary knowledge to teaching defined by the production of competences that can be verified in concrete and specific situations. These competences are defined in relation to the work processes that subjects must be able to understand and master (Ramos, 2001, p. 1).

This notion, which has guided educational legislation and is explored in training materials for both teachers and students, supports mechanisms for monitoring and controlling education. These mechanisms feed databases that constitute a network of privileged information, placed under the control of the educational business community in the field of public education. In this way, since these competences are supposedly measurable, they feed back into the system in order to encourage the construction of new formulations, be they public policies, teaching materials or open discourse on communication networks (TV, radio, internet), articulated not in order to mitigate social inequalities, since this is a natural condition for the existence of capitalism, but with the aim of guaranteeing the permanence of the neoliberal ideological bias.

In this sense, young people are cut off from the possibility of development in the perspective of integral human formation, without an offer of education that favors their emancipation as critical subjects.

Mueller and Cechinel (2020) highlight the BNCC's emphasis on socio-emotional competences and its "explicitly technical character" (Mueller; Cechinel, 2020, p. 15). In it, the "neoliberal discourse of individual choice, freedom, flexibility, creativity, heterogeneity and plurality" causes concern because it is aligned with international student performance assessment policies, with Portuguese and Mathematics as the basis for these assessments (Mueller; Cechinel, 2020, p. 17).

The discourse that supports the need for reforms considers large-scale assessment indicators as parameters for evaluating quality in basic education but highlights data that celebrates the ranking of

public schools or encourages private entities to work in public education. In this way, the indicators referring to the federal network indicate, within those parameters, the high level of student performance⁶, but it is ignored or masked in the publicized comparative tables.

Valões *et al.* (2020) point out that Integrated Secondary Education (EMI), the structuring model of the Federal Institutes (IFs) and some state schools, has been overlooked when it comes to calculating and publicizing the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) for schools that adopt this structure. The EMI at the IFs is "a training model that aims to provide the student with an integral education, by overcoming the dichotomy between intellectual and technical knowledge and by adopting work as an educational principle" (Valões *et al.*, 2020, p. 18).

The Federal Network Schools have historically had very satisfactory results in terms of the quality of education and the training of young people. These institutions have shown results in these large-scale evaluations that are higher than those of developed countries. Naturally, these federal schools should serve as a parameter of quality and therefore be taken as a basis for formulating public policies, but what we have seen is the discourse that depreciates the teaching of the FIs. There is an attempt to privatize them when, for example, they are used as the *locus* of training programs with an exclusively market bias, without quality compatible with the Institutes, such as the New Paths Program. Also, in this attempt at disqualification, it is worth highlighting the withholding of resources, aggravated by the approval of Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2017⁷, which freezes "spending", and the neoconservative interventions in the rectories, precisely because the FIs are also a space in which youth protagonism is configured differently from the model explored by the neoliberal ideology and promotes young people's real possibility of emancipation as critical and autonomous individuals.

It should be noted that the neoliberal ideology has also reached many FIs through the curriculum. We can observe an emphasis on subjects such as Entrepreneurship, for example, and more specifically, regarding our discussion, there is the introduction of "coach pedagogy", with the application of educational *coaching* in the continuing training of teachers with a view to improving student learning. Accession to this training perspective has had important impacts, as explained in the following topic.

⁶ Federal institutes achieve average like that of developed countries in international exam. Available at: <https://www2.ifmg.edu.br/portal/noticias/alunos-de-institutos-federais-alcancam-media-de-paises-desenvolvidos-em-exame-internacional>. Accessed on: 02 June 2021.

⁷ Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016 instituted the New Fiscal Regime, limiting "public spending" for 20 years.

Job insecurity and the erasure of the teaching role in "youth protagonism"

Teachers have already been recognized by education reform intellectuals as obstacles to educational reforms due to their potential for organizing and transforming society (Shiroma; Evangelista, 2007), Giroux (1997). Addressing the condition of teachers as transformative intellectuals, identifies that the role of teachers as trainers of active and critical citizens has been ignored in recommendations and documents. When they do consider these professionals, educational reforms reduce teachers "to the status of high-level technicians fulfilling prescriptions and objectives decided by experts" absent from the daily reality of the classroom (Giroux, 1997, p. 157). Kuenzer (1999) presents an analysis in which she notes that the educational reforms are aligned in the sense of making the construction of a teacher identity unfeasible and in the sense of constructing a "task-oriented" teacher, trained to develop an education aimed at "the leftovers", who only need basic education, used only as an instrument against social chaos (Kuenzer, 1999, p. 180).

It is a context that has long been concerned with depriving teachers of their condition as transformative intellectuals, as critical-reflective educators, whether in initial or continuing training, or in the development of teaching work, through educational reforms, so that neoliberal policies are entrusted of ensuring that teachers become docile collaborators in the neoliberal project.

In this sense, Pires and Cardoso (2020) highlight the formation of the bicameral commission in 2019, which aimed to review and update CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2015 and establish the BNC for Teacher Training. Almost 100 per cent of the commission was linked to the private sphere and business sectors and movements, with only two members linked to the public education network.

The teacher training prescribed in the legal provisions supports fragmented, streamlined training that is free of critical-emancipatory political training, centered, as we have emphasized, on the acquisition of skills and competences, and it is this training that will be reproduced for the students.

Regarding to training materials for students, we point to the emptying of teachers' work and their role as intellectual transformers of society, making them mere executors of ready-made materials. Figure 1 shows part of a ready-made lesson plan developed by the Institute for Co-responsibility for Education (ICE) for secondary education.

The provision of ready-made lesson plans attacks the teacher's autonomy and disrespects the subjectivity of the students and the community in which they live, no matter how much the possibility of changings and adaptations to the students' reality is orientated. These are materials developed by third sector groups that disseminate the neoliberal logic in public education and, in the case of Figure 1, support the development of youth protagonism in secondary schools.

In this process, the teacher is also seen as the tutor (Moraes; Monteiro; Henrique, 2020, p. 334-335), with the aim of tutoring students through problems, guiding them towards protagonism and their life project, and promoting mastery of their emotions.

In this sense, it is worth emphasizing that curricula are impregnated with *coach* pedagogy, especially in secondary education, guiding teacher training and work. Scherer and Gräff (2020) discuss the implications of the inclusion of this pedagogy in the work of teachers, analyzing the role of teachers in a context of flexible and emotional capitalism. The authors initially draw attention to the constitution of customized education and the positioning of teachers as tutors or *coaches* for students, emphasizing that "expressions such as *flexibility, competence, responsibility, effectiveness and the need for results* have become part of the contemporary pedagogical agenda" (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 5). They consider the centrality of flexibility and emotionalization, which is the mobilization of one's own potential through the use of emotions, to be important for understanding teaching in the context of the constitution, and point out: "in this context, it would be up to the coach (professional coordinating the process or teacher) to identify the singularities within a collective and develop a pedagogical proposal based on differences, and for the *coachee* (client or student) to plan changes and build strategies, based on a point of action" (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 7).

It's important to stress that this whole game is part of the process of neoliberal docilization, because it subjects the individual to an aptitude for modelling according to the needs of the system in force. It is also necessary to clarify that the senses and meanings encapsulated in the terms and concepts used within the scope of neoliberalism assemble tonalities specific to this doctrine, it has a nature that is its own and from which it cannot fluctuate. For example, if a teacher or coach is to work on aspects linked to singularities, to differences, these aspects will necessarily be developed with this doctrine as a foundation. They will therefore be working on individualism, an autonomy that fulfils neoliberal dictates and is therefore a false autonomy. It is worth emphasizing that capturing the terms of progressive agendas is part of neoliberal strategies, alienating individuals from a critical education, often directing them towards struggles that defend the interests of capitalism to the detriment of their own interests and the interests of their equals.

At this scenario, the dimension of emotional capitalism involves the control and management of emotions, based on self-help discourses, as the authors emphasize (Scherer and Gräff, 2020, p. 8). Figure 1 shows the appeal to sensitivity and the stars in the orientation of the lesson plan. In the same material, emotional self-management is addressed in a lesson on adaptability, using the term "resilience". To fulfil this responsibility, emotional competence must be sought by teachers so that they meet the profile required for the development of *coaching* subjects. Teachers come to appropriate this ideology to such an extent that they fall into emotional distress when, in their performativity, they fail

to meet the demands of contemporary pedagogies. By assuming the role of teacher-coach, this professional becomes "a motivator for the class, through their posture, speech and questions that direct learning" (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 8).

Under the pedagogical project of capital, according to Kuenzer (2021),


the teacher is therefore displaced from his role as organizer of meaningful learning situations to promote the transition from common sense and tacit knowledge to scientific knowledge, which does not happen spontaneously. This function gives pedagogical intervention a decisive role. Now, the teacher of the day is the one who uses the new technologies to plan and produce distance learning lessons that can be reproduced countless times, sometimes online, not always accompanying their students through tutoring, which can be taken over by other professionals at lower cost. Thus, the teacher takes on a secondary role in learning relationships, which shift to the group, which interacts with or without their support (Kuenzer, 2021, p. 246-247).

Along the same lines as Kuenzer (2021), Scherer and Gräff (2020) highlight the statement by Biesta (2016), in which the researcher states "that we may be witnessing the disappearance of teaching and teachers" (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 3). 3), explaining that, in the author's understanding, this is not the end of the profession, but that he aims to "warn of 'the erosion – of a certain way of understanding teaching and teachers'" (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 4). This conception of teaching and the teaching profession is the one that underlies the formulation of public policies that guide public education, as we have already pointed out, expanding and intensifying the precariousness of teaching work.

Silva (2019) presents various dimensions of the precariousness of teaching work and points out, among the movements of the "precariat" of teachers, the stratification of public school teachers and "the formation of a layer of teachers who start working with privatized business programs in search of better working conditions and salary" (Silva, 2019, p. 25), although working conditions are not always truly favorable for the development of activities, since many of these schools monitored by institutes and foundations do not have the appropriate physical structure or resources.


In addition to the precariousness of teaching work that teachers have been suffering for years, there is also the obliteration of the teaching function in terms of its autonomy, on behalf of the development of a youth protagonism that serves the dictates of the neoliberal ideology, compromising the emancipation of subjects and the future of young people and society.

FIGURE I – Part of the finished lesson plan. Lesson 28: Sensitive reason and enchantment of the world




Objetivo Geral

- Refletir sobre a coexistência de pensamento racional e sensibilidade como um atributo indispensável para o encantamento do mundo.



Material necessário

- Recortes do “horóscopo do dia” de algum dos principais jornais da cidade ou do estado.



Roteiro

ATIVIDADES PREVISTAS	DESCRIÇÃO	PREVISÃO DE DURAÇÃO
Atividade: O que os astros nos fazem dizer?	1º Momento: Conversação inspirada no “horóscopo do dia”, entre colegas de mesmo signo. 2º Momento: Socialização das ideias e conversação com toda a classe.	10 minutos
	30 minutos	
Avaliação.	Avaliação do educador.	5 minutos

Source: Educator's material - Life Project Lessons for the 1st and 2nd years of secondary school. Thematic axis: Competences for the 21st century, p. 258. Available at: <http://www.iema.ma.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MATERIAL-DO-EDUCADOR-AULAS-DE-PROJETO-DE-VIDA.pdf>. Accessed on: 18 March 2021.

Final considerations

In this article, we discuss the damage caused by neoliberal policies to the training of teachers and students in basic education, especially secondary education integrated with vocational education. We highlight, based on what various authors have postulated, the materialization of the privatization of public education through educational reforms and the influence of the neoliberal discourse on society, luring young people mostly with arguments of freedom of choice, autonomy and empowerment, while preventing their access to an integral human education.

We can see the emphasis in the documents on training teachers and students in the acquisition of skills and competences, which will train teachers to develop pedagogies based on the motto "learning to learn", with a technicist bias, docile teachers and collaborators of the neoliberal ideology, who play

the role of mere applicators of content and *coach* culture in public education, idealized according to neoliberal logic and guaranteeing the hegemony of big-firm (and entrepreneurial) capitalism.

We agree with Scherer and Gräff (2020) when they say: "the position of the teacher as a motivator/incentivizer of students seems problematic to us, as it indicates the subversion of the public and democratic role of schools (Scherer; Gräff, 2020, p. 12). In this sense, we can see that the insertion of private logic through teaching corrupts the emancipatory role of the school, in a work in which the teacher himself is simultaneously removed from his formative role and de-subjectifies himself. In this system, the teacher becomes a tool for modifying and deteriorating the school, aligned with the hegemonic system through discourse modelling.

We argue that the discourse of youth protagonism present in official guidance documents and often developed by Third Sector entities in public education materializes in teachers' work by intensifying precarization of labor and promoting the obliteration of teachers as intellectual transformers of society. These impacts reverberate on teachers' mental and physical health, causing them to fall ill and quit the teaching profession.

In this discursive clash between neoliberal protagonism and critical-emancipatory protagonism, teachers find themselves cornered by a set of legal provisions, hegemonic media and management mechanisms that control initial and continuing training and the development of teaching work. In this scenario, the question arises of how to break away from the privileged discourse of neoliberal youth protagonism and what alternatives to resist this discourse to seek. Along these lines, the proposal for comprehensive human development built up in many federal institutes presents itself as a path towards a critical-emancipatory youth protagonism. This proposal can also be used as a parameter and alternative for struggle, seeking to mobilize society to confront that youth protagonism that alienates young people and negatively impacts teaching work.

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