

Finding room for philosophy in a large-scale assessment: an overview of philosophy's presence over Enem's twenty years of existence (1998-2018)^{1 2 3 4}

Debater para encontrar caminhos: a evolução da presença da filosofia ao longo dos vinte anos do Enem (1998-2018)

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Abstract

Although the official curricular documents in Brazil in the last couple of decades recommend that philosophy be taught during high school, its presence in Enem was slow and inconstant. From an analysis of the evolution of the number and coverage of philosophy questions in the exam, this paper illustrates some challenges and possibilities that the exam offers to the implementation in curricula. This study gains particular relevance with the recent publication of Brazil's new common core curriculum (BNCC – Base Nacional Comum Curricular) and the reform of high school education. This article is divided into three parts: 1) a quantitative overview of philosophy coverage over Enem's history; 2) an analysis of the skills mobilized by philosophy questions over the exam's different phases; 3) considerations about BNCC from the possibilities and challenges to philosophy presented in the body of this article

Keywords: Enem, philosophy, High School, curricula references, BNCC.

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Resumo

Embora a presença da filosofia no ensino médio seja preconizada em vários referenciais curriculares nacionais nas últimas décadas, sua presença no Enem no mesmo período ocorreu de forma lenta e inconstante. Através de uma análise da evolução de quantitativo e cobertura de itens de filosofia ao longo das edições do exame, este trabalho ilustra alguns desafios e possibilidades que o exame oferece à implementação de referenciais curriculares. O estudo ganha particular relevância com a recente publicação da Base Nacional Comum Curricular e a anunciada reforma do ensino médio. O artigo é dividido em três partes: 1) panorama quantitativo do componente de filosofia no Enem; 2) análise das habilidades e competências mobilizadas pelos itens de filosofia nas diferentes fases do exame; e 3) considerações sobre a BNCC à luz das possibilidades e desafios para a filosofia apresentados no corpo deste trabalho.

Palavras-chave: *Enem, filosofia, Ensino Médio, referenciais curriculares, BNCC.*

Introduction

Resolution No. 3 of the National Council of Education, published on November 21, 2018, which updates the National Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Education, reaffirms in its article 11, para. 4, item VIII, the provisions of Law No. 13,415 of 2017 on the mandatory nature of philosophy and sociology (Law No. 13,415..., 2017, art. 3). This resolution also stipulates in its article 32 that “the matrices of the National High School Exam (Enem) and other selection processes for access to higher education must necessarily follow the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) (Resolution No. 3..., 2018). Published by the National Council of Education on December 4, 2018, the National Common Curricular Base lists philosophy as part of the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 547).

However, although necessary, legal regulations and curricular references are not enough to guarantee the presence of philosophy either in Enem or in high school. The teaching of philosophy in secondary education has been advocated in reference documents such as the 1999 National Curricular Parameters (PCN); the 2002 Educational Guidelines Complementary to the National Curricular Parameters (PCN+); the 2006 National Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Education (OCEM); and the wording given by Law No. 11.684/08 to the 1996 Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB). However, as this study will demonstrate,

its presence in the Enem took place slowly and unevenly and has only been consolidated in recent years due to the contribution of public debate with society and professionals in the field.

The present work adheres to the theoretical conception of the “policy cycle” of Stephen Ball and Richard Bowe, which can be summarized as follows:

This approach highlights the complex and controversial nature of education policy, emphasizes micropolitical processes and the action of policymakers at the local level, and indicates the need to articulate macro- and micro-processes in educational policy analysis. (Mainardes, 2006, p. 49).

This study assumes that there must be coherence between what is set out in the national curricular references, what is taught in the classroom, and what is measured in large-scale assessments, particularly the National High School Exam. One way of thinking about the interaction between these elements would be what in management is known as the PDCA cycle, i.e., Plan, Do, Check, and Act (Deming, 1982). Concerning the whole curriculum policy, curricular references would be the first stage of the cycle (Plan), implementation in schools would be the second stage (Do), and large-scale evaluation would be the third (Check), providing information for the fourth and final stage (Act), in which the necessary decisions are made so as to start a new cycle. In this model, the Enem would enter the third stage (Check) as a monitoring instrument that allows gathering information to measure the success of the action and provide subsidies for the next cycle (see also Macedo, 2021). In practice, however, following Ball and Bowe’s conception of a “policy cycle”:

These interrelated contexts do not have a temporal or sequential dimension and are not linear. Each of these contexts presents arenas, places, and interest groups, and each one involves disputes and clashes (Mainardes, 2006, p. 50).

Regarding the teaching of philosophy at the secondary level, for example, the PCN opens the chapter dedicated to this area of knowledge with the following questions:

[Is] this discipline really necessary or is it just to show that this school has more disciplines than the others” or even “if Philosophy is not part of the entrance exam, why do we have to study it?” Questions that arise, most of the time, in the first contacts of students with this “new reality” (...) In fact, if we consider that its curricular re-inclusion has been taking place gradually for almost two decades, it is not even admissible that this “new reality” can be treated as “novelty.” (Ministério da Educação, 1999, p. 44, original quotes)

In these twenty years after PCN were published, with the consolidation of the Enem and the publication of the new National Common Curricular Base in December 2018, these issues could seem to have been overcome. Since 2008, with Law No. 11.684/2008 that amended article 36 of the LDB, philosophy, and sociology are mandatory in high school, no longer being just optional accessories for some schools to present quantitative advantages over others. As Silvio Gallo points out, in his text *Philosophy and National High School Exam: Challenges and Perspectives regarding Assessment*:

Many have referred to this process as a “return of Philosophy to curricula,” which seems mistaken to me; how can something that was never present come back? If we take the historical studies on the presence of the discipline Philosophy in the curricula of Brazilian secondary education, we see a game of presence and absence, and this presence has never been as complete and intense as the one currently defined. (Gallo, 2013, p. 416)

Even if we agree with Gallo that philosophy has never been so present in Brazilian high schools, in more recent times, its mandatory nature has suffered some setbacks, a fact that once again exposes its fragility. Provisional Measure No. 746, of September 22, 2016, changed the wording of article 36 of the LDB so that the teaching of philosophy and sociology was no longer mandatory. Fortunately, when it was converted into Law No. 13,415, of February 16, 2017, the inclusion of article 3 resumed the mandatory nature of philosophy (as well as physical education, art, and sociology), which had their status reaffirmed at the end of 2018 in the Curricular Guidelines and BNCC. This turnaround indicates that, even with all the advances in recent years, it cannot be assumed that philosophy is firmly consolidated in high school. On the contrary, it still maintains the character of perennial “novelty” pointed out in the PCN in 1999, with its intermittent mandatory status over the last few decades.

Another point raised in this part of the PCN that could at first seem dated but that ends up reinforcing the thesis of this work is the rhetorical question about how to justify the study of philosophy since it is not part of the entrance exam. Twenty years later, with the increasing presence in Enem editions in recent years, this issue could seem unimportant, even more considering that determining what should or should not be taught is not a function of large-scale assessments but of curricular references, including the PCN itself. Even so, concerning philosophy in the Enem, this study shows that the inducing effect of the curricular references in the exam has not been immediate, linear, or self-sufficient. On the contrary, it has been a

process full of comings and goings, periods of dormancy, greater or lesser transformations, and greater or lesser interlocutions with the external public and professionals in the area.

Therefore, the purpose of this work is more than an exercise in historical curiosity. In addition to being fundamental to improving the Enem as an exam, this exercise also contributes to a reflection upon the role of debate in recognizing the limitations and possibilities that large-scale evaluation brings in the operationalization of curricular references. By analyzing the quantitative and qualitative evolution of the philosophical coverage over the editions of the exam, this article illustrates some challenges and possibilities that the exam offers to the implementation of curricular references. This study is particularly relevant at this time, after ten years of mandatory presence of philosophy in high school (2008-2018), twenty years of Enem (1998-2018), and the recent publication of the new National Common Curricular Base in December 2018 and the current high school reform. It is divided into three parts: 1) quantitative overview of the philosophy component over the twenty years of Enem; 2) analysis of the skills and competencies mobilized by the philosophy items in the different phases of the exam; and 3) considerations about the BNCC in light of the possibilities and challenges for philosophy presented in the body of this work.

Philosophy in Enem: quantitative analysis

The analysis of Enem tests in these 20 years since its inception⁵ shows approximately seventy items⁶ with themes or approaches compatible with the teaching of philosophy in high school, configuring, in theory, an average of about 3 to 4 items per year. However, the distribution of philosophy items is irregular over the years and can be divided into three main blocks: 1999-2003, 2009-2011, and 2012-2018, as illustrated in the following chart:

⁵ Enem tests are available at: <http://portal.inep.gov.br/provas-e-gabaritos>.

⁶ Items used in this analysis are listed in the Appendix.

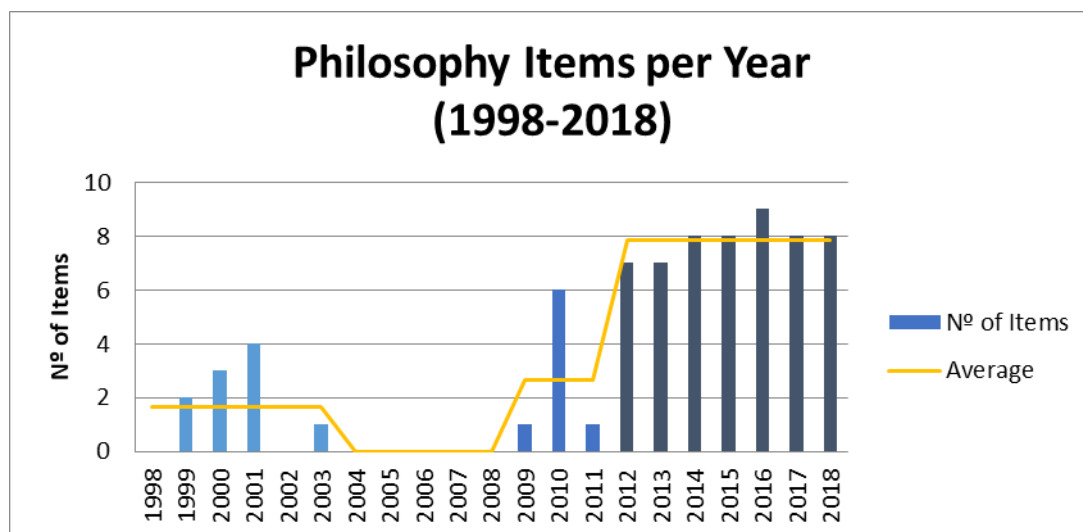


Chart 1. Number of philosophy items in each Enem test - 1998-2018

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

In the first eleven years of Enem, between 1998 and 2008, there were only ten philosophy items, which would result in an average of a little less than one item per test. However, only four of these eleven years had any philosophy-related item (1999-2001 and 2003), with no item in 1998, 2002 and the entire period between 2004 and 2008. Considering only the period between 1998 and 2003, the average was 1.66 items per test (Macedo, 2015).

With the new matrix, philosophy items reappear, but timidly and irregularly. In 2009, both the original test, cancelled due to leakage⁷, and the one which was applied in its place had each only one philosophy-related item. In 2010, there was a considerable increase to six items. However, this level was not maintained: in the following year, there was only one item could tangentially be considered philosophy, configuring an average of 2.66 items per test in these three years.

The 2011 edition was heavily criticized by the philosophy teaching community. In a colloquium at Inep’s office at the end of 2011, entitled *Assessments of Basic Education in Debate: Teaching and Reference Matrices of Large Scale Assessments*, Silvio Gallo, for example, argued:

⁷ Available at <https://educacao.uol.com.br/ultnot/2009/10/01/ult1811u397.jhtm>

[S]ince Philosophy is now a mandatory curricular component, taking full advantage of its “curricular citizenship,” it cannot be left out of the large-scale evaluation processes underway in the country. The consolidation of its presence in the curricula also involves its presence in exams such as the Enem. I see no alternative, therefore, for the moment, but to seek some provisional references, which can articulate elements of these three official documents produced in the last decade, even if they present different and sometimes irreconcilable perspectives, and even if they have been produced in a context in which Philosophy was not yet a compulsory subject and, therefore, did not precisely present referential matrices for its teaching. But let them be provisional references, used while we gain consistency in the production of a philosophy curriculum that may, in the future, effectively guide the presence of knowledge of Philosophy in large-scale exams, such as the Enem and Encceja. (Gallo, 2013, p. 426)

Few of the thirty Human Sciences skills of the 2009 Enem Reference Matrix,⁸ in their literal wording, make room for philosophical content and approaches compatible with high school, which can be explained, in part, by their origin: one more example of how different public policies are linked.

The 2009 Enem matrix emerged from the High School Level Encceja matrix,⁹ with punctual adjustments. High School Level Encceja is an exam to measure the skills and competencies of people over 18 years old who have not completed their schooling at the appropriate age.¹⁰ It operates on the assumption of a target audience with experience outside the classroom, and it is based on a less academic/school-centered approach and more grounded in a life experience acquired mainly in the job market. Considering the origin of the 2009 Enem matrix and Gallo’s argument, it is possible to understand why the most favorable spaces for philosophy are so scarce. Quoting Gallo again:

The 2009 Enem Reference Matrix does not directly present competencies and skills related to Philosophy, although we may see in some of the general “cognitive axes” and even in the competencies and skills related to the fields of History and Geography aspects that can be developed in philosophy classes. This fact is explained by the fact that, as is well known, only in 2008 did the Presidency of the Republic approve the Bill to replace the LDB, which made Philosophy and Sociology mandatory in the high school curriculum. Therefore, the question is how Philosophy can be part of this reference matrix for the Enem. (Gallo, 2013, p. 415-416)

Based on Gallo’s observations, 2012 is a turning point year for philosophy at Enem in many aspects. The quantitative issue is already significant: there were seven items this year,

⁸ Available at http://download.inep.gov.br/download/enem/matriz_referencia.pdf.

⁹ Available at <http://inep.gov.br/web/guest/educacao-basica/encceja/matrices-de-referencia>.

¹⁰ According to the Inep website, “the National Examination for the Certification of Youth and Adult Competencies (Encceja) was carried out for the first time in 2002 to assess the competencies, skills, and knowledge of youths and adults who did not complete Elementary School or High School at the proper age.” Available at <http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/educacao-basica/encceja>

which were maintained in subsequent years. This increase is an advance concerning the 2011 edition and the entire previous period, considering that in the ten years between 2002-2011, there were only nine philosophy items in the main applications (Macedo, 2015). However, in addition to the quantitative aspect, the philosophy items that emerged from 2012 brought innovations and reflections on the matrix that ended up reverberating in the National Common Curricular Base, published in December 2018.

Philosophy in the Enem Reference Matrix (2009)

Since its reformulation in 2009, the Enem has been divided into four areas of knowledge, each with its reference matrix. There are thirty skills in Human Sciences and its Technologies, organized into six competencies, each with five skills. In a forty-five-question test with a balanced distribution, every skill is mobilized by at least one item and by no more than two items.

Focusing on the items developed under this matrix, the sixty philosophy items between 2009-2018 cover fourteen of the thirty skills¹¹, distributed as follows:

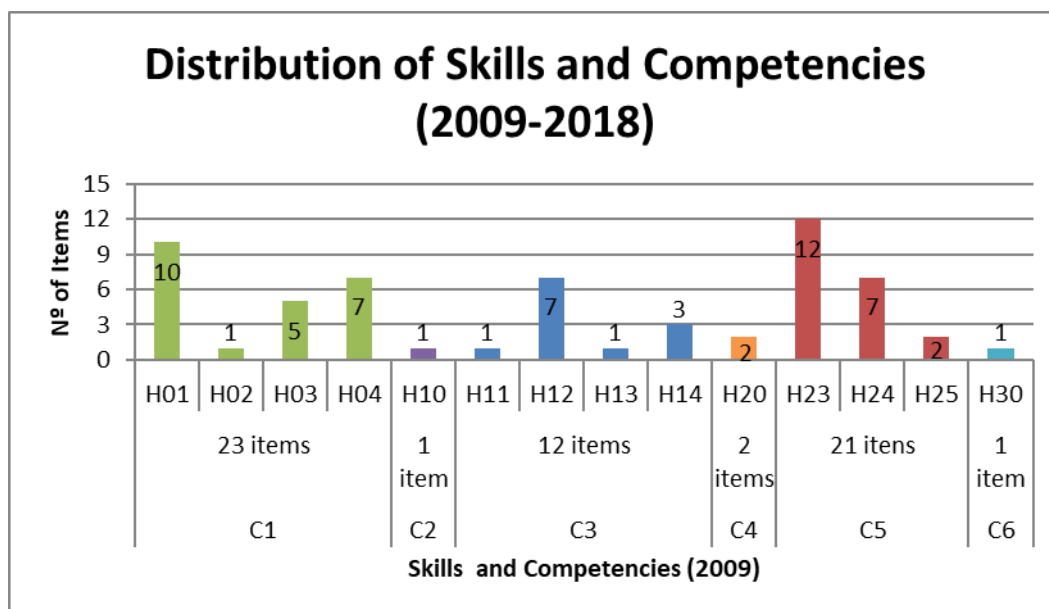


Chart 2. Number of philosophy items per skill and competency of the Enem reference matrix (2009) - 2009-2018

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

¹¹ The skill demanded by each item is available in the Enem microdata: <http://inep.gov.br/microdados>.

The skill with the highest number of items, twelve, is H23 “Analyze the importance of ethical values in the political structuring of societies.” In addition to the functions performed by this skill within the scope of Encceja’s objectives, consequently explaining its presence in the 2009 Enem matrix, skill H23 allows addressing a central area of philosophy: ethics. These two factors combined partially explain the greater occurrence of this skill in the group of philosophy items in the exam.

Ethics is also the area of philosophy directly in focus in the LDB text that establishes the mandatory status of philosophy, together with sociology, in its wording brought by Law No. 11,684 of 2008, when it requires of high school graduates “to master the knowledge of Philosophy and Sociology necessary for the exercise of citizenship.” (Ministério da Educação, 2008, art. 1). In the 2002 Educational Guidelines Complementary to the National Curricular Parameters (PCN+),¹² it also occupies a central role, with the second of its three axes entirely dedicated to this area: The Construction of the Moral Subject. All the themes of this axis allow for the operationalization of skill H23. Also, in the 2006 National Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Education (Ocem),¹³ several of the thirty suggested contents can provide elements for items that mobilize skill H23, for example, content 9 (ancient ethics; Plato, Aristotle and Hellenist philosophers); content 15 (the theory of virtues in the medieval period); content 22 (ethics of duty; foundations of morality; subject autonomy).

By way of comparison, none of the ten philosophy items on the test in the 1998 matrix¹⁴ addressed these themes and contents, or related contents that could also mobilize skill H23, such as content 18 (divine will and human freedom) and 20 (contractualism). This partly attests to the induction force of the curricular references that follow them (PCN+, Ocem, and the 2009 Matrix): while before these documents there was no philosophy item addressing these themes, in the years immediately following the introduction of the new matrix, the items of ethics are highlighted, with three of the eight philosophy items applied between 2009 and 2011 (Macedo, 2015).

¹² Available at <http://portal.mec.gov.br/seb/arquivos/pdf/CienciasHumanas.pdf>.

¹³ Available at http://portal.mec.gov.br/seb/arquivos/pdf/book_volume_03_internet.pdf.

¹⁴ Available at <http://download.inep.gov.br/download/enem/1998/relatorio/EnemRelatorioFinal.doc>.

The skill that had the second-highest number of philosophy items between 2009 and 2018, with ten items, was H1, “Interpret historically and/or geographically documentary sources about aspects of culture.” Returning to the origin of Enem’s skills in Encceja, it can be seen here that the activity proposed to the respondent is “to interpret historically and/or geographically:” in a manner consistent with the purpose of Encceja, the respondent is not asked to interpret “philosophically and/or sociologically,” a task that is more academic than what the exam proposes. Thus, in order to have philosophy items mobilizing this skill, it is necessary either to implicitly include in the task the possibility of “interpreting philosophically” or to consider specific fields of philosophy, for example, all of epistemology, as “aspects of culture.”

This reading of the matrix is consistent with the exercise proposed by Gallo at the end of 2011, of “thinking how Philosophy can be part of this reference matrix for the Enem.” At this point, it is worth noting that among the ten philosophy items demanding this skill between 2009 and 2018, only one was applied before 2012: all the other nine appeared after that year. Philosophy items employing this skill tend to focus on central themes of philosophy that would not otherwise find space in the Enem Reference Matrix. Among these themes are, for example, all those that make up the third axis of the PCN+, entitled “What is Philosophy,” with questions about theory of knowledge, philosophical thought, scientific method, and aesthetics. Comparing once again with the items applied under the previous matrix one notices that two of the ten items on the test between 1998 and 2008 addressed these themes: one on John Locke in 2000¹⁵ and one on Francis Bacon in 2001¹⁶. Such items could only appear under the current matrix if they were accepted as an operationalization of skill H1, once again revealing the gap that the 2009 matrix leaves in this area, as pointed out by Gallo.

Therefore, an expanded presence of philosophy in Enem in recent years can be noted in the greater quantity and regularity of items in 2012-2018, as well as in the greater scope of themes and approaches, which also translates into a greater diversity of skills and competencies mobilized by philosophy items with regards to the exam’s matrix of reference. For example, the

¹⁵ Item 53 in the yellow notebook, available at <http://portal.inep.gov.br/provas-e-gabaritos>.

¹⁶ Item 18 in the yellow notebook, available at <http://portal.inep.gov.br/provas-e-gabaritos>.

ten philosophy items of the first Enem matrix, if transposed to the current matrix, would operationalize only four skills: H1, H4, H12, and H14, as shown in the following table:

Table 1 Philosophy items in each Enem edition during the exam's 1st Reference Matrix (1998) and respective competency and skills - 1999-2008

	Edition	Item (yellow notebook)	Base Text	Original skill (1998)	Transposed skill (2009)	Transposed competency (2009)
1	1999	10	Aquinas, John Paul II	h18	H04	C1
2		31	Copernicus, Da Vinci	h19	H04	C1
3	2000	04	Cicero, Ulpian	h19	H12	C3
4		52	Locke	h21	H12	C3
5		53		h20	H01	C1
6	2001	18	Francis Bacon	h18	H01	C1
7		30	Hobbes, Bobbio	h19	H12	C3
8		31		h21	H14	C3
9		57	Shakespeare	h18	H04	C1
10	2003	48	Montesquieu	h19	H14	C3

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

Between 2009 and 2011, there were four skills as well: H11, H23, H24, and again H12, for a total of seven skills covered by philosophy items in fourteen years. However, in this last

period from 2012 to 2018, the philosophy items cover fourteen of the thirty Enem skills, as previously illustrated.

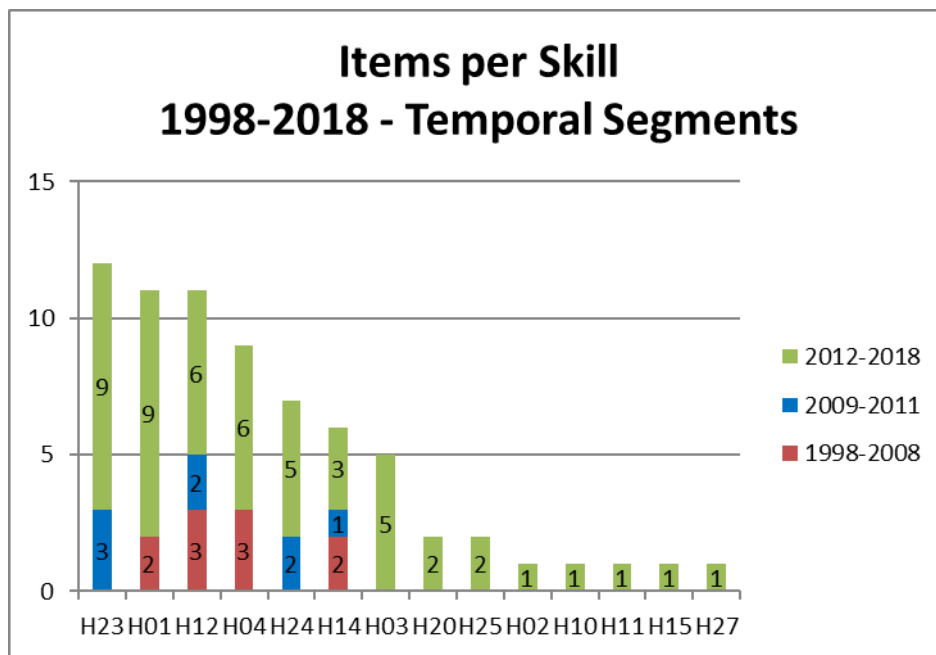


Chart 3. Number of philosophy items per skills of the Enem Reference Matrix (2009) - 1998-2018

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

An analysis from the point of view of competencies shows this point even more clearly. In the first decade of Enem, the philosophy items focused on themes and approaches that, in the current matrix, would focus on only two competencies: there would be five items in Competency 1 and five items in Competency 3. Between 2009 and 2011, there were eight items, also distributed in two competencies: three items in Competency 3 and five in Competency 5.

Between 2012 and 2018, although the concentration on competencies 1, 3, and 5 was maintained, the themes and approaches of the Enem philosophy items diversified enough for philosophy to permeate all six competencies, as shown in the following chart:

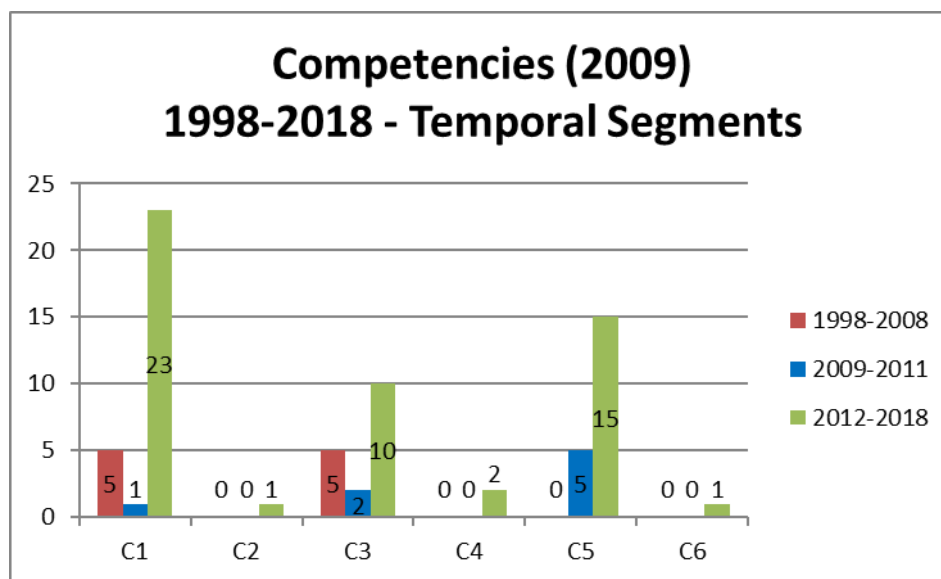


Chart 4. Number of philosophy items per competency of the Enem Reference Matrix (2009) - 1998-2018

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

My analysis of each competency showed that C1 was the one that increased the most, from six items in the fourteen years between 1998-2011 to twenty-three items between 2012-2018. As mentioned earlier, this reflects an increase in items mobilizing skills like H1. In second place came competency 5, increasing from five to fifteen items in the same period. There was no philosophy item addressing themes related to this competency in the first matrix of the Enem, extending the arguments I presented concerning H23 to the other skills of this competency. Competency 3 had a relatively more balanced behavior: seven items between 1998-2011 and ten items between 2012-2018.

Innovations can be seen in the approach to skills from competencies 2, 4, and 6, never demanded by philosophy items before 2012. In Competency 2, “Understand the transformations of geographic spaces as a product of socioeconomic and cultural relations of power,” there was only one item in all twenty years of Enem addressing philosophy-related themes. It was an item in the 2015 edition (item 42 of the blue notebook), which used a text by philosopher Simone de Beauvoir to mobilize skill H10, “Recognize the dynamics of the organization of social movements and the importance of collective participation in the transformation of historical-geographic reality.” The item addressed the philosopher’s text in an

interdisciplinary manner, by proposing to the respondent the task of situating it as a contribution to social movements for gender equality.

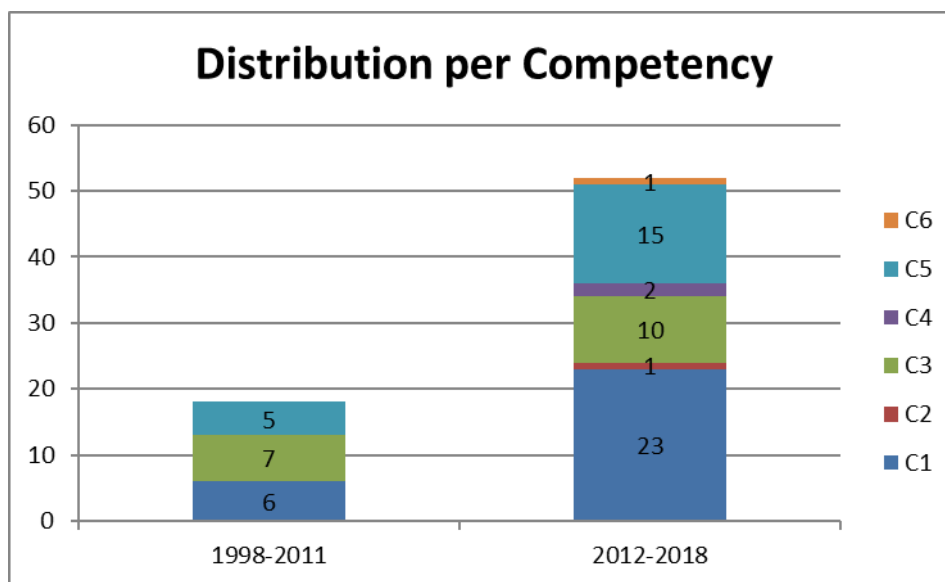


Chart 5. Number of philosophy items per competency of the Enem Reference Matrix (2009) - 1998-2018

Source: Own elaboration, based on Macedo (2015)

In Competency 4, “Understand technical and technological transformations and their impact on production processes, on the development of knowledge and social life,” there were only two items in all twenty years under analysis, both in H20, “Select arguments in favor or against the changes imposed by the new technologies to social life and the world of work.” The first was an item in 2013 about the vision of nature and science in authors such as René Descartes and Francis Bacon and the entire Enlightenment tradition (item 31 in the blue notebook). The second was in 2016, in an item based on a text by contemporary philosopher Hans Jonas (item 25 in the blue notebook), which deals with the threat of modern technologies and ethical responsibility towards future generations.

Finally, the 2018 edition presented a philosophy-related item demanding for the first time a competency skill of area 6, “Understand society and nature, recognizing their interactions in space in different historical and geographical contexts.” The item is number 89 in the blue notebook, using a motivating text on different views on sustainable production to measure the

respondent's understanding the formulation of scientific models. It mobilizes skill H30, "assess the relationships between preservation and degradation of life on the planet at different scales."

All of these items require competencies and skills which, at first glance, would not leave room for philosophy questions. At the same time, they all address topics which are absolutely relevant to the area and compatible with the teaching of the discipline at this stage. They are thus good examples to think about not only how philosophy can be part of the exam matrix, responding to the challenge proposed by Gallo, but also about how the consolidation of philosophy at the high school level can offer subsidies to debates which are current and relevant to the target audience and society at large.

Reflexes and reflections on philosophy in the BNCC

[W]e would be ignoring the nature of social changes, including educational ones, if we were to assume that the new high school will emerge from a vacuum or from the radical denial of the experience accumulated so far, with its qualities and limitations. In fact, (...) the knowledge and practices already consolidated constitute a reference for the new ones, which operate as consolidators in a given historical moment. (Ministério da Educação e do Desporto, 1998, p. 65)

This study adopts as framework the policy cycle theorized by Ball and Bowe, which allows one to see different public policies in a non-linear and richly intertwined way. Under this perspective, different actors with different interests and in different spheres and at different times are influenced and influence each other.¹⁷ In the specific terms of this study, this theoretical contribution allows one to view large-scale evaluation, in this case, the Enem, not only as receiving the influence of curricular documents, but also exerting influence on these documents, either in their implementation or in their composition.

To exemplify how the exam contributes to the implementation of curricular references, I mentioned previously the role that the PCN itself attributed to university entrance exams concerning the presence (or absence) of an area of knowledge such as philosophy in high school,

¹⁷ "Ball (1998a) further argues that policy analysis requires an understanding that is based not on general or local, macro or micro influences, but on 'the changing relationships between them and their interpenetrations'" (Mainardes, 2006, p. 56).

especially considering that at that time philosophy was not yet mandatory and the guidelines presented by the PCN for the area did not have a rigidly normative value.

In the case of the BNCC, the 2018 Curricular Guidelines explicitly mention the normativity of this document on Enem. The exam must comply with the Base, not the other way around. Although the BNCC thus has an explicit legal priority over the Enem, the exam's temporal priority over it exerts a perceptible influence on its composition. Using two skills analyzed in greater detail in the previous section (H1 and H23) and their respective competencies, this section illustrates not only how some BNCC Human and Applied Social Sciences skills and competencies are conceptually close to those of the current Enem, but also how the challenges and possibilities pointed out in this study for philosophy at Enem are reconfigured in the BNCC.

In terms of operationalization by philosophy items, the writing offered by the BNCC skills offers much more possibilities than the Enem matrix. Even with a perceptible interdisciplinary emphasis, the spaces where philosophy can transit in the BNCC are demarcated much more clearly than in the current matrix of the Enem. Going back to the previous examples, philosophy items of the type that currently mobilize skill H1, even if tangentially, could be used to address, now with much more propriety, the BNCC skill EM13CHS101:

Enem (2009): H1: *Interpret historically and/ or geographically documentary sources about aspects of culture.*

BNCC (2018): Skill EM13CHS101: *Analyze and compare different sources and narratives expressed in different languages, **with a view to understanding and criticizing philosophical ideas** and historical, geographic, political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural processes and events. (emphasis added)*

One can notice that at the same time that the BNCC brings the central element of Enem's skill H1, which is the analysis of different types of sources about aspects of culture, it does so in a much richer way by explicitly including, among other possibilities, the understanding and the critique of philosophical ideas as goals encompassed by this skill. The text of the respective area competency also follows this pattern:

Enem (2009): Area competency 1: *Understand the cultural elements that constitute identities.*

BNCC (2018): SPECIFIC COMPETENCY 1: *Analyze political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural processes at the local, regional, national, and global levels at different times, based on epistemological and scientific procedures, to understand and critically position themselves concerning these processes and the possible relationships between them. (emphasis added)*

Here it is also possible to note that the competency wording maintains the same characteristics listed concerning the skill text: it maintains the central core “understand the cultural elements that constitute identities,” but more comprehensively, with a more extensive list of possibilities, beyond the cultural: it explicitly includes specific aspects of philosophy in this list, in this case by specifying “from epistemological and scientific procedures.”

Similarly, these features permeate all the skills used by philosophy items in the Enem matrix and how they are reflected in the BNCC. Returning, for example, to skill H23, “analyze the importance of ethical values in the political structuring of societies”, one may observe that, in theory, items that have been used to mobilize H23 could transit in any of the skills of the BNCC Specific Competency 5:

BNCC (2018): SPECIFIC COMPETENCY 5

Recognize and fight the various forms of inequality and violence, adopting ethical, democratic, inclusive, and solidarity principles, and respecting Human Rights.

(EM13CHS501) *Understand and analyze the foundations of ethics in different cultures, identifying processes that contribute to the formation of ethical subjects who value freedom, autonomy, and decision-making power (will).*

(EM13CHS502) *Analyze everyday life situations (lifestyles, values, behaviors, etc.), denaturalizing and problematizing forms of inequality and prejudice, and propose actions that promote Human Rights, solidarity and respect for differences, and individual choices.*

(EM13CHS503) *Identify different forms of violence (physical, symbolic, psychological, etc.), their causes, meanings, and political, social, and cultural uses, evaluating and proposing mechanisms to fight them based on ethical arguments.*

(EM13CHS504) *Analyze and evaluate the ethical-political impasses resulting from scientific and technological transformations in the contemporary world and their consequences in the attitudes and values of individuals, social groups, societies, and cultures.*

In practice, the philosophy items of the current Enem H23 would more accurately measure skill EM13CHS501, whose text has the kind of similarity pointed out above concerning skill H1 skill and competency C1. Regarding EM13CHS504, item 12 of the 2014 edition, about human cloning and bioethics, or 25 of the 2016 edition, about sustainability and responsibility with future generations, are good examples of how such skills can be addressed in Enem. However, although it is possible to think of philosophy items mobilizing skill EM13CHS502 or EM13CHS503, none of the seventy items analyzed in this study would efficiently operationalize these skills.

An analysis of the other competencies would reveal similar gaps, in such way that, if in the current matrix the philosophy items took twenty years to cover fourteen of the thirty skills, if transposed to the BNCC, these same items would cover only four or five of the thirty-two skills proposed for the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences. This fact in itself is not a problem, as, despite having points of contact with the Enem matrix, the BNCC is not and should not be identical to it.

Therefore, we do not have here the problem that Gallo identified concerning the Enem Matrix, of not presenting “directly, competencies and skills related to Philosophy.” (Gallo, 2013, p. 415-416). On the contrary, the BNCC makes room for philosophy both in the sense of demarcating a more explicit space in the skills and competencies already exercised by the Enem philosophy items, and in the sense of proposing possibilities of specific themes within the philosophical field that could have been addressed in these twenty years of Enem, but have yet to appear in the exam; for example, “identify different forms of violence (physical, symbolic, psychological, etc.), their causes, meanings, and political, social and cultural uses, evaluating and proposing mechanisms to fight them, based on ethical arguments,” as requested by skill EM13CHS503.

However, Ball and Bowe’s theoretical support can allow us to extract valuable insight from this analysis. From this perspective, we see large-scale evaluation, in this case, the Enem, in the dual capacity of receiving and exerting influence concerning curricular documents and central debates on education in the country. As Mainardes summarizes:

In the policy cycle described earlier, the simplicity and linearity of other policy analysis models are replaced by the complexity of the policy cycle. The policy cycle approach contributes to policy analysis since the political process is **multifaceted and dialectical**, articulating macro and micro perspectives. (Mainardes, 2006, p. 55, emphasis added).

Every year, for some time now, we have seen how Enem has acted as an inductor of debate at various levels, in various spheres, with various actors who display a greater or lesser degree of influence, involvement, or knowledge. Not as much can be said about Enem as the receiving end of the debate. I say “receiving end of debate,” and not simply “object of debate,” because my emphasis here is not how much is discussed about the exam but how much the exam itself is open to being transformed by this discussion. This is a condition in which the exam should be constantly, but especially now, when it is about to be reformulated. In moments like this, the “multifaceted and dialectical” aspect of the policy cycle has the most potential to show its strength.

Such a debate is difficult and complex but necessary. Whether in the form of colloquia or academic discussions, or yet in the form of online public consultations or public hearings, such debates are not only laborious and costly to organize, but it is impossible to make them include and take into account all possible views. This impossibility, however, does not negate the need for debate. On the contrary, since no debate is final and conclusive, this theoretical framework reaffirms the value of constant debate (Young, 2000), a central precept in philosophical, as well as in democratic training.

While, in 2011, Gallo pointed to the need for provisional references, to be “used while we gain consistency in the production of a philosophy curriculum that may, effectively, in the future, guide the presence of knowledge of Philosophy in large-scale exams, such as the Enem and Enceja” (Gallo, 2013, p. 426), perhaps we can say that, with the publication of the BNCC, we now have such a guiding document. However, as this study argues, there is a long path between curricular document and operationalization in the exam, in which the debate with different sectors is needed. The need of such debate is both ethical and pragmatic. It is ethical, because debate is at the heart of the democratic spirit, especially when it has as its object something so central in the country’s formation, such as education. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this study, it is pragmatic because, it is from the debate with different actors in different spheres, that public policies leave the plane of ideas and start to materialize.

Conclusion

The implementation of public policies does not occur in a linear, liquid, and sure fashion. It is a complex work resulting from the constant debate and subject to ongoing construction (Mainardes, 2006). The case of philosophy in high school illustrates this in a particularly striking manner, especially if we consider the historical fragility of philosophy at this level of schooling. Observing its evolution throughout the Enem, resuming previous documents, such as the PCN, PCN+, OCEM, and the origin of the Enem Reference Matrix from Enceja, is fundamental to improving the exam as an exam. Furthermore, it also contributes to a recognition of the challenges and possibilities that large-scale assessment brings to the operationalization of curricular references and of the importance of debate throughout this process.

This type of exercise is crucial at a moment such as the present, in which looking at the past, as we have completed ten years of the mandatory presence of philosophy in high school (2008-2018) and twenty years of Enem (1998-2018), while, looking at the future, we reflect on the recently published BNCC and how the current reform of secondary education and the consequent reformulation of the exam matrix will occur. Amid such reflections, philosophy and debate are necessary not only as objects of study, but also as a *modus operandi*, be it for high school students, teachers and school professionals as well as public policymakers, researchers in the field, and society in general.

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Appendix

The items used in this study are listed below. All Enem tests are available at <http://portal.inep.gov.br/provas-e-gabaritos>.

Year	No. of Philosophy Items	Items	Notebook
1998	0	--	Yellow
1999	2	10, 31	
2000	3	4, 52, 53	
2001	4	18, 30, 31, 57	
2002	0	--	
2003	1	48	
2004	0	--	
2005	0	--	
2006	0	--	
2007	0	--	
2008	0	--	
2009	1	58	
2010	6	29, 30, 34, 39, 44, 45	Blue
2011	1	2	
2012	7	1, 7, 9, 25, 28, 30, 31	
2013	7	4, 10, 22, 24, 27, 36, 41	
2014	8	4, 11, 12, 14, 19, 24, 25, 29	
2015	8	3, 13, 16, 17, 26, 28, 34, 42	
2016	8	1, 6, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 37	
2017	8	49, 64, 65, 66, 84, 85, 88	
2018	7	49, 51, 52, 66, 83, 89, 90	