

Curricular policy standardization, control, and accountability in the state of São Paulo (2007–2018)

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the curricular policies implemented in the education system of the state of São Paulo between 2007 and 2018, in order to understand their senses and meanings. In 2007, a standardized curricular model for São Paulo was implemented alongside a system including student performance evaluations and bonuses for teachers. Documents consulted in the elaboration of this paper reveal the genesis of this curricular policy model in the 1990s, a process that would culminate with the implementation of the São Paulo Faz Escola Program in 2007 and, later, in 2012, of the Escola Integral Program. Both programs are attempts to reshape schools through a modern curriculum based on a pedagogy of skills and competencies. These curricular policies reproduce a “new agenda” of public policies, which has been supported by the tripod of accountability, control, and standardization, changing the sense of quality of education, reduced to the scope of “learning”.

KEYWORDS

curricular policies; São Paulo State education system; educational work.

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PADRONIZAÇÃO, CONTROLE E ACCOUNTABILITY NA POLÍTICA CURRICULAR PAULISTA (2007–2018)

RESUMO

Neste artigo, investigam-se as políticas curriculares da rede estadual de ensino de São Paulo entre 2007 e 2018 com o objetivo de compreender seus sentidos e significados. Em 2007 foi implantado um modelo padronizado de currículo, articulado à avaliação de desempenho das escolas e à bonificação docente. Com base em pesquisa documental, buscou-se entender a gênese desse modelo de política curricular originado nos anos 1990 e que culminou, em 2007, com a implantação do Programa São Paulo Faz Escola e, posteriormente, em 2012, com o Programa Escola Integral. Ambos os programas são tentativas de remodelar a escola com um currículo moderno, baseado nas pedagogias das habilidades e competências. Essas políticas curriculares reproduzem o tripé de uma “nova agenda” de políticas públicas, baseada em *accountability*, controle e padronização, alterando o sentido da qualidade da educação, reduzido ao escopo da “aprendizagem”.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

políticas curriculares; rede estadual de ensino de São Paulo; trabalho docente.

ESTANDARIZACIÓN, CONTROL Y ACCOUNTABILITY EN LA POLÍTICA CURRICULAR DEL ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO (2007–2018)

RESUMEN

En este artículo investigamos las políticas curriculares implementadas en la red estatal de enseñanza de São Paulo entre 2007-2018, con el objetivo de comprender sus sentidos y significados. En 2007, se implementó un modelo de estandarización de currículo para São Paulo, articulado a la evaluación del desempeño de las escuelas y a la bonificación del docente. Con base en investigación documental, buscamos entender la génesis de ese modelo de política curricular originado en los años 1990 y que culminó, en 2007, con la implementación del *Programa São Paulo Faz Escola* y, posteriormente, en 2012, del Programa Escuela Integral. Ambos programas son intentos de remodelar la escuela a través de un currículo moderno, basado en las pedagogías de las habilidades y competencias. Esas políticas curriculares reproducen el tripé de una “nueva agenda” de políticas públicas basadas en el trípede de *accountability*, control y estandarización, alterando el sentido de la calidad de la educación reducido al ámbito del “aprendizaje”.

PALABRAS-CLAVE

políticas curriculares; red estatal de enseñanza de São Paulo; trabajo docente.

INTRODUCTION

The 1990s were characterized by the process of universalizing elementary education and expanding services to high school and early childhood education. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* — LDB/1996) (Brasil, 1996), resuming constitutional precepts, pointed to the reduction of educational inequalities through an education based on human freedom and solidarity, aimed at preparing young citizens for social life as well as for the world of work and the continuity of studies.

Thus, in the second half of the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, the curriculum in the education system of the state of São Paulo was organized based on the National Curriculum Parameters and Guidelines. Following current trends at the national level, during this period large-scale assessments and the payment of salary bonuses to education professionals associated with the performance of students in these assessments influenced, to some extent, the curricular organization and the work of the teacher in public institutions of basic education in the state of São Paulo. Our paper intends to contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon that involves standardization, control, and the counterpart of a very specific accountability model.

At the national level, from 2001 to 2012, the new National Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education were published, that is, “the guidelines that establish the common national base responsible for guiding the organization, articulation, development, and assessment of the pedagogical proposals of all Brazilian education systems” (Brasil, 2013). In 2010, the debate was redirected when the trend already presented in the LDB/1996 and in the National Education Plan (*Plano Nacional de Educação* — PNE 2014–2024) (Brasil, 2014) for the creation of a National Common Curricular Base [*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* — BNCC] advanced with the growing participation of “private promoters” (Cássio and Catelli Jr., 2019) in public debates on educational reforms. Following this educational reorganization, the São Paulo Faz Escola Program (SPFE), instituted by Resolution SE 76/2008 (São Paulo, 2008e), confirmed the difference with the curricular parameters and guidelines.

It is necessary to add to this series of facts new elements in the composition of a curricular policy. The process of establishing a National Common Curricular Base, completed only in 2018, was monitored and assimilated by the State Department of Education of São Paulo (*Secretaria Estadual de Educação de São Paulo* — SEE-SP)¹, as evidenced in Resolutions such as SE 18/2016 (São Paulo, 2016) and SE 55/2017 (São Paulo, 2017b), which created committees for the planning and implementation of the Common Curricular Base while such a normative document was under preparation. Thus, the São Paulo State Educational System advanced

1 According to Resolution SE n. 18, of May 2, 2019, the acronym of the State Department of Education of São Paulo became SEDUC-SP. In this article, we chose to use the acronym found in the consulted documents, namely SEE-SP, since the period analyzed is prior to the change.

practically a decade to this national process that culminated in the National Common Curricular Base.

This leads us to reflect on the changes that have been taking place in the educational field for some decades, guided by international education conferences, whose symbol is the report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century, coordinated by Jacques Delors for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in which the four pillars for lifelong education are presented: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Delors, 2000). This set of learning experiences deepens the models introduced by the Faure Report, also a result of UNESCO's work, entitled "Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow" (Faure *et al.*, 1972), which displaces education understood as "transmission of contents" to "constant learning", throughout life and present in the multiplicity of situations. Coincidence or not, these reports appear at central moments in the implementation of new public management models, as suggested by some authors (Laval, 2004; Biesta, 2013).

Biesta (2013) draws an interesting consequence from that. In the first place, the author perceives a shift in the discourse of educational policies. When, for example, the SEE-SP documents put the problem of "learning" at the center of the debate, it is not just an *aggiornamento* of the educational management vocabulary with international standards, but a paradigm change that affects education policies and the way the problems of school life are conceived. There is a shift from what the author calls the "language of education" to the "language of learning" (Biesta, 2013). At first sight, that seems to be a complaint by the author about the increase in the number of times the term "learning" is used, alongside the decrease in the use of the term "education", in national and international documents on educational policies. However, this is not just an exchange of words, because, as the author reminds us, language "makes some ways of saying and doing possible" as well as makes other ways of saying and doing impossible or difficult (Biesta, 2013, p. 29). Otherwise, in the erasure of education and its language, the predominance of the language of learning emerges, or rather, "learnification" (Biesta, 2012, p. 816) and its consequences in the learning processes, especially the individualization of such processes. By reading the documents and resolutions we followed this diagnosis to understand what is valued and what is not valued in the curricular proposals of the state of São Paulo.

Following this logic, the right to education is replaced by the right to learning in order to reformulate the processes of school life and even the way of teaching, given the results made visible by the large-scale assessments produced by the SEE-SP. As we shall see, the curricular choices are decided following what is valued as fundamental within the language of learning. Certainly, with this paradigm shift, it is possible "to express ideas and understandings that were somewhat difficult to articulate through the language of education" (Biesta, 2013, p. 30). It is the opportunity, for example, to assess on a large scale and identify learning problems in a system as wide and complex as the one in the state of São Paulo. However, and here is the risk that

we intend to demonstrate throughout this study, something of the language of education is lost as learning is assumed as the only guiding principle of educational policies. The purpose of the processes becomes the photograph extracted from the exam indexes, which starts to command the entire hierarchy of decisions within school life.

We have to consider how much the rankings from the local and international assessments worry school managers and teachers. That index is supported by an important argument for social justice, which defends the access of all to an education of equal quality. Hence, the levels of learning become an important normative value to understand how each student is developing within the curriculum offered by the school. So far, this is a plausible argument that helps us think about the debate around the quality of education. However, the counterpart of this control standard, considered important to assess the quality of the service offered in the São Paulo State Educational System, is based on the terms of the New Public Management.

Thus, this diagnostic assessment of the system combines elements of accountability and choices that are often reduced to previously established quality standards and unrelated to the demands of the school's community. From the ranking, dangerous identities of "unsuccessful schools" and, in some cases, of "unsuccessful teachers" are implied. In the mismatch of the accountability, principals and teachers in defense of the school and its practices accuse "disinterested parents", "problem students" or students diagnosed with some type of "learning deficit". In this set of figures from the school community, the inequalities within the São Paulo schools deepen more and more.

In a scenario of increasingly centralized and standardized educational policies, as in the period studied, the irony within these processes presented by Biesta (2012, p. 411) is appropriate, that is, when accountability is "limited to the choice based on a fixed menu" it lacks the democratic dimension. In other words, the alleged elasticity of choice is restricted to what is offered to decide. Besides, despite the constant complaints from school managers and teachers, this does not mean the growing participation of parents and students in the definition of school forms and contents. About these excesses, Dunker (2020) brings the image of the "Procrustean school", referring to the myth that deals precisely with the norms and values established by a single value measure, in which whatever escaped the standard should be adapted, even if this meant the deformation of its particularities. The myth becomes even more interesting when Procrustes himself is devoured by his norm, since not even he, who established this standard, could be admitted as a reference for its measure.

Concerning the regulations and their standards, the documents that reference these new measures become important. The curricular policy of the state of São Paulo, in the period from 2007 to 2018, was analyzed based on legislation such as SEE-SP resolutions and ordinances, to understand the senses and meanings of this process as forms of curricular centralization and standardization, with effects of accountability that the teacher's work is increasingly submitted to.

A documentary and bibliographic research was carried out as methodology. A survey of the national and São Paulo state legislation was conducted, using mainly the Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação* — MEC) and SEE-SP websites. The website *Portal da Legislação-Planalto* was used to search for some laws. The reading of the legislation allowed the description and analysis, in legal terms, of the curricular policies in the state of São Paulo, in the central aspects, with emphasis on the SPFE Program, the main curricular policy of the São Paulo government in the period under study, covering all schools in the education system; and also, the Escola Integral Program (PEI) of 2012, which, although with a limited scope, also made changes to the school curriculum.

From this introduction to the final considerations, two topics are presented. The first discusses the new curricular agenda adopted in 2007. In the second, the curricular policies of the São Paulo government are analyzed based on the SPFE Program and the PEI curricular proposal, of 2012, followed by an analysis based on the displacement of a school curricular logic that sought to be harmonious with the reality of its students, causing significant shifts in the curricular debates that are held within the “Life Project”. In the final considerations, we conclude that this period demonstrates a deepening of curricular policies around the language of learning, configuring both a “competence school” and its correlate in the teaching function, the “competent teacher”.

A NEW CURRICULAR AGENDA IN EDUCATION IN SÃO PAULO

The analysis of curricular policies allows us to understand which projects, interests, and purposes the school curriculum is inserted in. According to Apple (2008), the curriculum is not a neutral document, and it is not just a list of contents that students are expected to learn. It is also an expression of the way that school organizes power relations and gives meaning to educational processes. Certainly, educational institutions are not separated from social interests and conflicts, either in their goals or in what is expected from their educational and social results. In the school and the curricula, there is a commitment to maintaining the status quo, contributing to the reproduction of inequality and social control. But there are also questions regarding the inequalities, prejudices, and discriminations that affect the reproductive role of the school — something that reflects the curriculum as praxis and disputed territory (Gimeno Sacristán, 2000; Arroyo, 2011) in the shadow of a hegemonic ideological project.

Hence, it is possible to analyze the curricular policies of the state of São Paulo, from 2007, as the implementation of a kind of “new curricular agenda”. In August of that year, SEE-SP officially announced a plan to restructure the São Paulo educational policy (São Paulo, 2007b). In the text announcing the new agenda, aspects of the curriculum policy were highlighted, such as the elaboration and dissemination of the curricular proposals for basic education in São Paulo, including the indication of learning expectations for all students and methodological guidelines for the curriculum implementation; curricular diversification of high school, with diverse itineraries, from a common base with emphasis on the mastery of the

Portuguese language, scientific language, artistic language, computer language, and a modern foreign language, adopting one or more modalities of professionalizing technical qualification; creation of the position of the Teacher Coordinator (*Professor Coordenador* — PC), who should act as pedagogical support to implement this new curricular policy; and focus on large-scale assessment systems, including bonus policies as an incentive for education professionals to achieve the proposed goals and in managing for results.

In this context, in the year following the announcement of the new agenda, Resolution SE-76 (São Paulo, 2008e) structured the Curricular Proposal of the State of São Paulo for elementary and high school education, establishing a common, standardized curriculum for the entire state system, as part of the SPFE Program. In 2009, this policy was implemented with the delivery of teaching materials for state schools, such as the Teacher's Notebooks, as well as the School Manager's and Student's Notebooks.

This entire process of curricular centralization shows a strong tendency to reduce teaching autonomy in the formulation and implementation of curricular and pedagogical proposals, undermining collective processes in the school. Thus, articulated with the São Paulo curricular centralization policy, Resolution SE-74 (São Paulo, 2008d) regulated the School Quality Program (*Programa Qualidade da Escola* — PQE). This program structured the implementation of the São Paulo State Education Development Index (*Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação do Estado de São Paulo* — Idesp).

Under this policy, the School Performance Assessment System of the State of São Paulo (*Sistema de Avaliação de Rendimento Escolar do Estado de São Paulo* — Saresp) started to be used as the basis for the composition of Idesp, guiding the calculation of the bonus for results paid annually to education workers (São Paulo, 2009), regulated by Complementary Law nº 1,078 (São Paulo, 2008b). With this policy, goals, indexes, enrollment flows, transfers, and student dropouts are component elements of the Idesp calculation. These statistics are presented as a guideline for the curriculum and daily school activities in the São Paulo state educational system, shaping a system to guide the work of school managers and teachers based on the results obtained.

Thus, the state of São Paulo structured an educational practice based on curricular standardization and results measured through periodic exams, configuring indexes, and rankings of educational institutions, characteristic of neoliberal policies, as indicated by Dardot and Laval (2016). In the school where managing for results and the right to learning prevails over the right to education, effort is focused on transforming teachers into goal achievers and students into good learners and conformed consumers (Biesta, 2013; Linhart, 2014).

CURRICULAR POLICIES IN THE SÃO PAULO STATE SYSTEM

Given the educational policies that emerge from the new SEE-SP agenda, we analyze in more detail the curricular policy expressed in the SPFE Program and in PEI and how the transversal themes are articulated in these programs.

THE SÃO PAULO FAZ ESCOLA PROGRAM

The SPFE Program made the contents and the educational proposal common in the state of São Paulo, aiming at improving the quality of education, as announced by the SEE-SP. SPFE aims to overcome the low performance of students in external assessments through changes in management and internal assessment procedures within the school, always having the curriculum as the basis. This curriculum is expressed in the school's initiative to take responsibility for its application (Fini, 2009) and reveals what is specific to each school in building and managing its pedagogical project within a standard measured by the results of external assessments. According to Resolution SE 76, the implementation of the SPFE results from the need to

establish common references that meet the principle of quality standard assurance provided for in item IX of article 3 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law — Law nº. 9394/96; subsidize school staff with common curricular guidelines that ensure the students' access to basic content, and essential and specific knowledge and competences at each stage of the segment or level of education offered. (São Paulo, 2008e, p. 1)

The curriculum reform, presented in the document Curricular Proposal of the State of São Paulo (São Paulo, 2008c), established the objective of “improving the pedagogical and teaching work [...] in partnership with teachers, coordinators, pedagogical assistants, principals, and supervisors” (São Paulo, 2008c, p. 7). At the center of the proposal was the creation of a common curriculum for the entire system, whose central principles are the school that learns, the curriculum as a space of culture and competences as the learning axis. The actions announced in the SPFE encompass a set of decisions, established by legal norms, with repercussions on the attributions of education professionals, on the didactic-pedagogical procedures of schools, and on the curriculum. For the implementation of the Curricular Proposal of the State of São Paulo, the school director and the Teacher Coordinator are required to play a leading role in guiding the didactic-pedagogical activities to be developed in the classroom, having as reference the curricular material produced by SEE- SP.

An important aspect to be considered in the analysis of the Curricular Proposal is the partnership between SEE-SP and private institutions for the production of the material. The notebooks were prepared by *Fundação Vanzolini*, with the participation of a group of professionals responsible for each area of knowledge (São Paulo, 2008a). Here we can see a hybrid zone of public-private partners that move between the state field and the different partnership fields. Besides hiring this Foundation, SEE-SP hired major publishers and/or printers through a public notice to print and distribute the material to schools. The entire structure mobilized for the preparation of the teaching materials for students in the São Paulo public system was surrounded by criticism and controversy. Added to this was the fact that the material distributed to teachers and students contained errors.

The first of them, with national repercussion, was an error in the Geography notebook of the 6th year of elementary school², which contributed to manifestations by teachers regarding the implementation of the Proposal (Zan, 2012). About the episode, SEE-SP only informed in a note that the errors were the responsibility of the company that produced the material and that the schools had been warned about flaws through the website, while *Fundação Vanzolini* alleged that the material was produced under the supervision of SEE-SP. Therefore, it is interesting to notice that, on the one hand, SEE-SP has engaged a discourse of accountability on the part of schools and their teachers; on the other, responsibility is diluted or even obscured among partners when the issue of accountability turns to the management problems of the programs.

At the beginning of 2008, the materials sent to schools were Student's Journal and Teacher's Magazine, later called Student's Notebook and Teacher's Notebook. Four volumes of the Teacher's Notebook were prepared, one per two months, for all subjects. The material has didactic sequences and suggestions to guide the classes. SEE-SP requested feedback from teachers and school managers to improve the materials, which was to some extent incorporated. Unrelated to any pedagogical projects already developed in schools, SEE-SP also defined that the Student's Notebook would be specific by subject and also one per two months, to be used as the student's reference material, in which he or she would record notes, do activities and develop skills.

After a year of applying the materials produced by the SPFE in the São Paulo state schools, the 2009 Saresp was prepared based on the new Curricular Proposal. According to SEE-SP³, participation in the assessment was a record: 77% of the 2.5 million students in the system took the exam. Municipal and private schools also participated. In 2010, SEE-SP announced the consolidation of the Curriculum based on the good results of the implementation of the Curricular Proposal, evaluated by Saresp on the feedback from the teaching staff and the school community. The student's notebooks were updated in 2011 and the SPFE Program remains in effect in the São Paulo state system, with updates and adjustments of the material to the BNCC.

Not only teachers and students received standardized material, but also the school managers, with the School Manager's Notebook, completing the process of implementing the program in schools and also in the figure of the Teacher Coordinators and principals. As Carvalho and Russo (2016) point out, as a way to better implement the intended reform, the Teacher Coordinator's responsibility was intensified with the work of planning strategies in schools to achieve the perfor-

2 The notebook presented Paraguay twice on the map of South America and also inverted the location of Uruguay and Paraguay. The error was presented in the student's and teacher's notebooks. Another problem was the non-inclusion of Ecuador on the map. Due to this, the student had no information to answer the following proposed question: which are the South American countries that do not border Brazil? (Coissi, 2009).

3 Information source: <http://www.escoladeformacao.sp.gov.br/portais/Default.aspx?tabid=1208>. Accessed on: Apr 20, 2020.

mance goals established by SEE-SP. Thus, the *Manager's Notebook: Curriculum Management at School* (São Paulo, 2008a) supports the role of these professionals in the process of implementing the new proposal. In the presentation of volume 1 of this document, the Secretary of Education states that the year 2008 would be a watershed for education⁴. Thus, although managers were not called to collaborate with the construction of the curricular proposal, they were assigned the mission of disseminating and implementing it (Maldonado, 2013).

To a certain extent, the SPFE expresses the SEE-SP conception that through precise guidelines on what and how to teach and the control of the teacher's work, students can perform better in external assessments. It begins to operate what Masschelein and Simons (2017, p. 142) call "quality culture". So, the whole apparatus of performance assessments creates a kind of "all-seeing quality eye". A "culture police" that regulates whether the culture of quality is present. As a result, the inability or refusal to be accountable is seen with suspicion or a sign of lack of quality. And so, in this "police regime" of quality, the teacher tames himself, "he submits to a court of quality and obeys the laws of the quality service" (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 143).

In fact, the improvement in external assessment indexes was associated with the implementation of the SPFE. The speech of the creators of the proposal claims that the elaboration of the notebooks occurred intending to facilitate the teacher's work in the classroom to fulfill their goals. The work was "facilitated" to such an extent that, according to Boim (2010), teachers were merely responsible for reproducing the contents, without actually designing their work material. The teacher's autonomy and the freedom to carry out the pedagogical planning were little considered in this process. Thus, the figure of a domesticated employee was created, the "competent teacher", whose professional profile "works as an instrument to assess, adjust and develop the teacher's professionalism" (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 140). The list of functions, competences, and sub-competences gained a complexity in the network of knowledge to be performed, which had gained a life of its own.

As a result, the authors denounce the disappearance — or at least the silence — of "the caring teacher who is truly dedicated to the cause" (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 141). Tamed by the universe of skills and competences, the teaching duty is annulled, the one that in the classroom workshop used to operate with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that directed attention to the world. There remains a "flexible teacher", someone who is no longer "carried away by his subject and lives for it, but someone who can be carried away by everything — as the demand demands" (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 146). What the authors suggest is that this "uneasiness" in education has to do with the centralization of educational processes, their management in the form of performance results, and the devaluation of classroom dynamics that take into account the singularities that are so unique of learning processes.

4 Information source: http://www.rededosaber.sp.gov.br/portais/Portais/18/arquivos/CADERNO_GESTOR_FINAL_red.pdf. Accessed on: Mar 12, 2020.

THE ESCOLA INTEGRAL PROGRAM

PEI was implemented in 2012 by Complementary Law n°. 1,164/2012 (São Paulo, 2012a), aiming to extend the time students stay at school. According to Resolution n°. 52/2014 (São Paulo, 2014), which regulates the organization and operation of schools that have joined the program, it aims to educate solidary, autonomous, and competent individuals, based on the full development of the human person and the preparation for the exercise of citizenship.

The new model of full-time school, inspired by the model developed in Pernambuco, involves changes in the pedagogical approach, curriculum content, and workload. Aiming at “the education of an autonomous, solidary and competent young person”, the Program is based on four theoretical and philosophical principles: “Interdimensional Education, The Pedagogy of Presence, The Four Pillars of Education for the 21st Century and Youth Protagonism” (São Paulo, 2019, p. 13). Based on these principles, SEE-SP intended to implement an “integrated and diversified curriculum”, whose matrix must be flexible and include activities involving students, professors, and school managers.

From the curricular point of view, this educational perspective is structured in two pedagogical axes: Life Project (academic and professional future plan for students); Youth Protagonism (stimulation of self-management learning, towards facing problems in everyday school life, in the community, and social life). Youth Protagonism is a recurrent concept in Costa (2006), whose proposal is the autonomy of young people, mediated by the teacher and linked to attitudes and initiatives developed at school and outside it, thus contributing to the construction of their Life Project. Voorwald and Souza (2014), in defending the PEI model, appropriate concepts such as Youth Protagonism and Life Project, adding elements such as Class Leaders, Youth Clubs, and Tutoring. The combination of these concepts in PEI schools leads to curricular practices in which they evidence a kind of supervised autonomy promotion, as it presupposes that the activities are guided and tutored by educators.

The curricular matrix of the schools that joined the PEI is composed of the different curricular components of the common national base and the diversified part of complementary activities and elective subjects (São Paulo, 2014).

According to the document *Escola Integral Program Guidelines*, the assessment conception of PEI is supported by the assumption explained by Perrenoud, who claims that changes in school assessment demand changes in the school itself, since assessing involves the establishment of criteria and values around the educational processes. Thus, the assessment in PEI “presupposes not only rethinking the assessment conceptions and principles but also, and mainly, thinking about the school itself, its purposes and its social function” (São Paulo, 2019, p. 22). Fodra (2015, p. 4) says that it is a “360° assessment”, in which “everyone assesses themselves and is assessed by both the other educators and the students”, expressing what Masschelein and Simons (2017) call the panopticon of the competences and skills assessment.

PEI also involves a re-dimensioning of teachers' working conditions, with the introduction of the Full-Time Dedication Regime (*Regime de Dedicção Plena e Integral* — RDPI), which establishes 40 teaching working hours per week, and the Full-Time Dedication Bonus (*Gratificação de Dedicção Plena Integral* — GDPI) of 75% of the base salary (São Paulo, 2012a, 2012b). This is supposed to create more adequate working conditions but, on the other hand, it creates a climate of insecurity in schools, since teachers may have their participation in the project terminated if they fail to meet the requirements established by the SEE-SP. Here is, in another form, a re-dimensioning of the teaching position in the school, dominated by another strategy: “professionalization through the pressure of responsibility” (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 141).

A profile of the competent professional subjected to “a whip in the government's hand” is drawn, made by skills and competences, used to tame not only the school but also the teachers (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 140). It is not, of course, a responsibility that takes into account the world around the thoughtful teacher's experiences and concerns. Otherwise, it is a “tamed” responsibility, proper to accountability, “the ability to respond with a view to accountability”, an emptying of the “pedagogical responsibility”, which demands time for care and attention to the elements of learning, reduced to a responsibility understood as “the justification of results and their returns” (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 145), structured by the time of assessment and the processes that generate this result. Perhaps, to avoid this contrast, the PEI curricular axis has had a significant shift.

The organization of the pedagogical work in PEI is mainly based on the development of the Life Project, a central strategy for a pedagogical model that defends student protagonism and the involvement of all school professionals in the unfolding of actions/activities related to Child Protagonism, Emotional Education, and Different Languages (theatre, music, dance, and visual arts, culture of movement). In the final years of elementary school and high school, the Youth Protagonism axis is also worked on, in which the student is encouraged to develop solutions to real problems observed in social life; the Youth Clubs, organized by the students, and the Tutoring, which consists in monitoring the Life Project.

Notwithstanding the intentions of greater student protagonism in the educational process, stated in the materials that guide the implementation of PEI, the research by Quirino *et al.* (2018) found that the curriculum remains focused on carrying out the activities of the student's notebook, with little space for creative and critical work. In the words of the students interviewed by the authors, “the day was limited to [...] answering the notebook questions” (Quirino *et al.*, 2018, p. 88). Also, according to Quirino *et al.* (2018), the Youth Clubs were one of the “moments of the day when students could create collective spaces to discuss themes, propose actions, without the rigidity of school management” (Quirino *et al.*, 2018, p. 88). In this regard, it is important to remember Cavaliere's (2014) warning about the directions that the extension of the time students stay at school can take when lacking an articulated pedagogical project, with a focus

on integrating the various dimensions of development and education of children, teenagers, and young people.

Another issue regarding PEI is its effect on schools in the same region. As described, the organization and functioning of PEI differ from that of the regular schools in the system, with a kind of parallel structure. Also, the study by Quirino *et al.* (2018) found that between 2011 and 2016 there was better performance in the Idesp of PEI schools in relation to others in the same region, indicating, at first, positive effects of the program. However, PEI schools tend to have students of better socioeconomic status, who can devote more time to their studies, and those who have better academic performance, centrifugating to neighboring schools, in the same region, those who do not adequately correspond to PEI's expectations.

These socio-spatial and educational inequalities arising from the implementation of PEI have been signaled by several studies (Batista *et al.*, 2016; Grosbaum and Falsarella, 2016; Vieira *et al.*, 2016; Giroto and Cássio, 2018) and constitute challenges to public policies for basic education concerning the extension of the school day.

It is necessary to think about how PEI and the SPFE Program are connected. On the one hand, we have a school project submitted to an increasingly standardized regime, focused on the results of improvement in student performance, from external assessments to internal school processes. This project is found, in different forms, in both programs of the public school system in São Paulo. On the other hand, studies indicate a certain split in the implementation of these curricular programs, giving PEI schools an aspect of a teaching model aimed to attend a few, generating inequalities in the region where they are implemented.

Indeed, it is interesting that, although PEI schools encourage a debate on comprehensive education, aimed at meeting individual needs, the risk of standardization and emptying of pedagogical processes is not small when such a model is established in a context of management by results. This is a hypothesis that is noted when school time is occupied by the logic of assessments, sometimes comprising the longest time inside the school without a more detailed reflection of the spaces, times, and also the knowledge in the school (Galian and Sampaio, 2012).

After all, to what extent is the logic of comprehensive education reduced in its potential, when the quality of education offered in this model is just an intensification of curricular standards and controls? Such a question requires the effort of understanding these programs by the logic of the curriculum itself, to comprehend what is the materiality of this curricular standardization present in apparently diverse school models.

FROM INTERDISCIPLINARY TO DISCIPLINED LIFE

Approximating the pedagogical proposals of different school models only from the perspective of the implementation of the programs is interesting to understand an external logic that aims at such curricular proposals in association with

management models. However, it is also interesting to expose the very materiality of the curriculum in operation, organizing the school relations and social functions that prevail in it. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand why this path is sustained, despite the numerous criticisms about the devaluation of teachers and pedagogical proposals that are continually poorly assessed. There is something in the logic of the curriculum itself that allows the school staff to adhere to the control and quality standards offered by SEE-SP. There is a change that allows for this shift in school functions and language. And it is in the practices that make up a curriculum that this becomes visible. Therefore, an analysis of the meanings mobilized by the subject-based proposal of the “Life Project” can be revealing. Understanding the genesis of this component becomes fundamental.

In the late 1980s, Gimeno Sacristán (2000, p. 55) had already perceived a change in the social place of school in what he called the “globalizing conception of education”, which carries with it new demands for the curriculum, including notions of personal hygiene, traffic education, sex education, education for consumption, drug prevention, mass culture, youth culture, integration into the adult world — beyond the classical areas of knowledge. This reflects a change in all pedagogical relationships, including a change in the curriculum codes that presuppose a more active pedagogy to the detriment of traditional and content-centered education and the reduction of the language of education into a language of learning, as pointed out by Biesta (2013) — something implicit in the São Paulo curricular proposals since the 1990s, and wide open in the procedures adopted since 2007.

Certainly, the subject-based logic of the Life Project accompanies this shift towards a “globalized conception of education”. As described in the Teacher’s Notebook, this component has as its principle “to teach the student to look, to say, to listen, to perceive himself and the other, to respect himself and the other, to take responsibility for the personal and collective process” (São Paulo, 2014, p. 7). It is a powerful instance to reframe the classic and subject-based contents towards a curricular model that considers the individual’s place in the face of the challenges offered by the globalized world.

This shift had already been taking place since the National Curriculum Parameters (*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* — PCN), with the introduction of transversal themes. However, what stands out with the Life Project is also a shift within the interdisciplinary and transversal proposals that once aimed to generate a school capable of introducing school subjects into the daily life of the world. It is enough to notice that the central themes that guided transversality revolved around a cultural change due to the globalization of the 1990s.

In fact, the transversal themes, given the social conflicts and the students’ own experiences, were concerned with making the educational process something more than the simple transmission of content, providing an “education for life”, with a learning model that equips “students to face the problems of the real world” (São Paulo, 2007d, p. 13). It follows a trend that is strengthened at the federal level, such as the National Curricular Guidelines specific to transversal themes, which

reinforce their centrality⁵ and put into effect specific policies at the state level (such as Law nº 12,780/2007, which institutes the State Policy on Environmental Education) and even the preliminary version of the State Plan for Human Rights Education (São Paulo, 2017a).

Despite this, the SPFE Program follows the trend analyzed by Macedo (1999) in which the transversal themes would be secondary to the subject-based logic. It is enough to note the main axis of curricular policies by the results of Saresp and its centrality in Portuguese and Mathematics. Given these two paths, certain schizophrenia is formed in official documents which, according to the author, despite valuing the rupture of traditional teaching models in defense of an education connected to social reality, maintain the character in which the contents are transmitted. This is a dual curricular logic in which the pedagogical procedures of the school are affected, losing strength to the weaker side and without much care. Associated with the assessments, what starts to be analyzed is the confluence of agendas of a standardized curriculum in teaching materials, regardless of the particularities of the school contexts.

What is interesting is that the two discourses (transversal and subject-based) appear in the guidance documents and in the intentions of school managers: the efficient and productive school is the same one that presents the subject, independent of his/her context, to the world. This is perhaps one of the main elements of this curricular schizophrenia. For there is among these documents and intentions a dispute with regard to the conception of the school, the organization of its times, spaces and work — something fundamental if we are to think about the curriculum amid so many structural changes (Galian and Sampaio, 2012, p. 420). In the ethnographic report by Catanzaro (2012, p. 86), the influence of such standardizations in school coordinators' speeches and the mismatch of expectations and recognition by the teaching staff are visible. It is a diffuse pattern in the view that young people have of school and certainly distant from the passage between a learning space and a meeting place for their generation (Pereira, 2016, p. 135). In this contrast between education for life and external assessment, an impoverished and already much-criticized teaching model is reproduced (Apple, 2008; Freire, 2013) which is based on minimum knowledge of reading and calculation aimed at Saresp.

However, the proposal of the Life Project in PEI schools is seen as an effort to dissolve this contradiction. In this program the possibility is open for other curricular proposals, considering an integrated curriculum and an education focused on the experiences of a protagonist youth. In contrast to a school that continues to offer an education of low quality and is disconnected from the

5 Something that can be found in the following documents: National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture (Brasil, 2004), National Guidelines for Human Rights Education (Brasil, 2012a), and, in the case of ecological debates, we highlight Law nº 9,795, of April 27, 1999 (which establishes the National Environmental Education Policy) and, later, the National Curricular Guidelines for Environmental Education (Brasil, 2012b).

reality and needs of students, PEI responds with a pedagogical project organized “in line with the needs and desires of students” and with visible improvements in “learning results” (Fodra, 2015, p. 6). The author bases her conclusion on the 26% Idesp growth of the high schools in the Program in 2014, without a better interpretation of how the Life Project impacts these results. Even though we consider such benefits, it is symptomatic that Fodra’s statements (2015), representative of SEE-SP, measure the success or failure of a curricular policy in the results translated into an index, by which the articulation with the needs and desires of students is not obviously measurable.

Nevertheless, from the standpoint of the Life Project, we can say that such perspective of the SEE-SP is not a discrepancy but a deepening of the logic of skills and competences, reinforcing the trend analyzed by Macedo (1999) of the prevalence of a subject-based logic over the interdisciplinarity required by the transversal themes. In the curricular architecture set up for PEI, the path generated in their times, spaces and work revolves around the individual learner’s options based on a subjects’ menu.

At first glance, the call to responsibility and participation opens up interesting possibilities. However, as Apple (2008) suggests, it is important to note how this discourse is established in everyday school practice, in the setting up of rules and actions that organize the dynamics and its subjects, considering that the school is part of the system of “social control” institutions, and that such a discourse is not limited to the subjects, but extends to the forms and meanings produced and transmitted in this educational space.

This consideration is important since what is at stake is a change in the meaning of the problems that previously supported the transversal themes and their possibilities of bringing the school context closer to the social reality of its students. With PEI, it is important to note how the grammar of “problem management” becomes operative. It is not by chance that youth protagonism is associated with the Life Project axis, which is recognized as “the great differential” of the PEI school model (São Paulo, 2019, p. 13). Having the Life Project as its central axis, PEI associates the curricular field with youth expectations for the future. Furthermore, a whole menu of “choices” is offered to students, who supposedly start drawing their trajectory in the school’s curriculum. This justifies the presence of tutor teachers to guide choices, the organization of elective courses offered to students, the class “leaders”, the youth clubs to incorporate “opportunities for organization, management, and coexistence among their members” (Fodra, 2015, p. 8). Even the “study guidance”, which apparently would escape this logic of consumption of curricular offers by offering “support for students to consolidate and expand the skills provided so that they do not present new gaps” (São Paulo, 2014, p. 32), shares that logic. After all, how to maintain the performance indexes of this model school if such assessment values are not introjected in the youth’s desires and needs?

The grammar in which the Life Project is presented is curious. Faced with a complex and contradictory reality, instead of a critical perspective — a term that has been increasingly depleted in education documents — the management of actions and the design of projects in search of effective solutions become valid.

In this curricular turn, the problems of the world, previously dealt with in the transversal themes, start to integrate the school in the form of “crisis management”, in which the individual is called upon to choose solutions. As Laval (2004, p. 53) suggests, the individual becomes “responsible”, a protagonist “aware of the advantages and costs of learning who must make the best educational choices for their own good”. This characteristic extends to the teaching staff, who become “guides, tutors, mediators” accompanying the “isolated individuals in their education process” (Laval, 2004, p. 53).

As a result, the transversality is reduced to the matter of management, and the interdisciplinarity is blocked by the subject-based logic. In this reality, curiously, issues are left aside, deep problems of social contradictions, often exploding into issues of race and gender, come to be seen as a programmatic deviation, or even accused of ideology in view of a “neutral” education. This neutrality, at best, represents the efficiency and productivity expected by external assessments in the shadow of the conflicts that inhabit the school community in different ways. Social contradictions are disturbances in the results machine. Being resilient is imperative to keep the treadmill turning. This is what is expected from a school of competences: teachers and students who are competent in their own choices, regardless of the social, economic, and political conditions that surround them.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The picture shown in this article relates to a certain enclosure of the productive capacities and powers present in the school. From 2007 to 2018, just over a decade of the curricular policies, what emerges is an understanding structured by the standardization of curricula, by the control of pedagogical procedures and the de-intellectualization of teaching practice (Shiroma, 2018), by public-private partnerships and a culture of accountability. These analytical axes are evident as we notice the advance of a pedagogical discourse based on skills and competences, reinforcing a narrow view of educational processes as reduced to the grammar of learning and its efficiency and productivity measured at the pace of external assessments.

As a result, the curricular proposals of this period increasingly reinforce a subject-based and content logic, with the over-assessment of Portuguese and Mathematics to the detriment of other subjects. With the curricular impoverishment thus established, there is nothing more predictable than an “unschooled school” (Masschelein and Simons, 2017), enraptured in a constant ritual of assessments far from the complex social contexts of the state of São Paulo.

With the centralized curriculum, assessed by Saresp, accompanied by a bonus policy for teachers’ salaries based on Idesp, an element that is alien to the context of each school is implemented. The time, space, and work that structure the curriculum of schools begins to be emptied by assessment processes, contextualizing the schools in the territory of rankings. Given the general abstraction of the indexes, it does not matter which neighborhood the school is located in, who attends it, or what the unique strengths of each pedagogical project are. The school of competences is nourished by competent teachers and students.

Certainly, this is not an exclusive option of the São Paulo government. Curricular policies in Brazil, since the 1990s, have been guided by the so-called pedagogy of competences and by a centralizing perspective of the school curriculum. The National Curriculum Parameters and Guidelines for elementary and high school education were important pedagogical guidance documents. External assessments, also implemented from the 1990s onwards, have been important instruments for inducing school curricula at the national level to improve student performance on tests, in addition to teaching bonus policies based on results.

However, since 2007, São Paulo has concentrated on its system — the largest in the country — the changes in standard school procedures. What is clear is the role played by curricular policies when associated with new public management, based on results. Standardization, control, and accountability are imposed when a series of administrative tools are aligned with a conception of curriculum that is often confused with a subject-based model, be it more or less flexible. Despite all the criticism present in official documents about the limits of “traditional” and “subject-based” education, this one still perseveres in practice, reconfiguring the expectations present in the assessment of results.

This is so in the SPFE program, and it continues to be so in the PEI schools. Even though these schools offer a bolder pedagogical model, providing didactics that consider students co-responsible for their formative itineraries, there are points of corrosion. Something remains obscure concerning the proposal of the Life Project as its central axis and the improvement of its results under the criteria expected by SEE-SP. At first glance, a model of standardization and control grows and generates enormous pressure on its staff, as well as a selective process of its audience even before they enter into the institution, considering the socioeconomic levels of its students in comparison with other students from surrounding schools (Quirino *et al.*, 2018).

Given the curricular proposals presented in both the SPFE and PEI, the culture of accountability also grows. Here, not only the accountability for the index's heaven and hell is taken into account. The calculation also includes certain rationality of pedagogical practices structured in the individualization of apparent choices, regardless of what is offered. The “competent” teacher in the school of competences is the one who, despite the adversities that make it impossible for their tasks to be equal, achieves the possible results within the framework of manageable expectations (Masschelein and Simons, 2017, p. 148). The “competent” student is the one who is efficient and productive, capable of sustaining his “life project”, fixed on the “wall of dreams”, distinct from the one that follows the order of “fooling around”, a student dissonance produced the social context of where they live (Pereira, 2016, p. 79) and that must remain silent in the competences school order.

Silenced? Perhaps. After all, even if the managerial-curricular machine of standardization, control, and accountability is established, it is necessary to remember the noise produced within it. It resonates in the school manager, who understands the school in which he works through the perspective of a pedagogical project integrated into the school's territory; in the teaching activity that materializes the critique of the contradictions of reality; in the moment students occupy schools

so they just do not close. Here, the responsibility is different and it is completely integrated with the world and its challenges made of flesh and blood.

To understand the meaning of these terms, we refer to Hannah Arendt (2016), who presents a concept of responsibility directly opposite to that contained in the terms of accountability. For the philosopher, education — and learning within it — contains a responsibility towards the world and the new generations (Arendt, 2016): a responsibility that requires, therefore, the time of care and attention sustained, in particular, by intersubjective bonds. It is different from accountability and its “cynicism of results” (Dunker, 2020, p. 49), whose fulfillment is assessed by the responsibility each one has to “play their role”. Each one in his or her own sector: the school manager manages, the teacher teaches, the student studies — and each one becomes individually responsible for this. It is a way of seeing education only in its fragments, like pieces of great engineering in a non-functional division of labor — a photograph quite far from the multidisciplinary tone of education and its responsibility based on the ethics of alterity, as defended by Arendt (2016), who criticizes precisely this absence of thought in the bureaucracy in which each one “fulfills a function” without seeing the other.

Unlike this fragmentation, and surrounded by the same materiality, the individuals of the school recognize themselves as such. Here, no one is charged for the abstract “accountability”, but in the “eye to eye”, for the word that circulates, for the attention and care they dedicate to the world. In the density of these relationships, everything that is *learnification* vanishes into thin air. The assessment file fills with dust, the currency of competences and skills begins to lose its value. It can be seen from what high school students most mobilized when they occupied schools in 2015: chairs, once a place for disciplining bodies, now a place from which they can explain their social place in school (Campos *et al.*, 2016). Also, it can be noticed from what is demanded when Saresp is boycotted. Here the order of time, space, and activities is different, far from the eternal reproduction of empty assessments, from the standard that excludes and the control that silences.

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