Interferences in the class: teachers' dynamic and perceptions [1] [2] [3] [4]

Interferências na aula: dinâmica e percepção dos professores

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Abstract

Instances of school institutions directly intervene on the public schools (state and municipal) in the city of São Paulo. There is a "dynamic of interferences": a set of frequent and direct interventions in the class, normally connected to the enactment of educational policies. This accumulation of projects in the schools lead to constant interruptions in teachers' work. We have researched its consequences on teachers and school education, based on the analysis of official texts and teachers' statements. We have found that, though such policies are supported by a discourse of quality in education, according to the teachers the dynamic of interferences hinders teachers' work and, possibly, school education.

Keywords: public school, trend in educational policy, teacher' work conditions, São Paulo (SP)

Resumo

Instâncias da instituição escolar intervêm diretamente nas escolas públicas (estaduais e municipais) localizadas no município de São Paulo. Trata-se de uma "dinâmica de interferências": conjunto de intervenções diretas e frequentes na aula, comumente ligadas à aplicação de políticas educacionais. Esse acúmulo de projetos implantados nas escolas leva a constantes interrupções no trabalho docente. Investigamos as consequências desse contexto para os professores e a educação escolar a partir da análise de textos oficiais e de enunciados de professores. Verificamos que, ainda que tais políticas se apoiem no discurso da qualidade da educação, segundo os professores a dinâmica de interferências vem prejudicando o trabalho docente e, possivelmente, também a educação escolar.

Palavras-chave: *escola pública, tendências da política educacional, condições do trabalho docente, São Paulo (SP)*

Introduction

In Brazil, many educational policies are created and put into action following a *top-down*[5] model, with little regard to the voices of school subjects, such as teachers, students, and community. In São Paulo, the state and municipal systems are no different. Though officially promoting a democratic administration in schools and reaffirming, on official documents, the need to promote teachers' work towards an education of quality, the secretaries of education promote policies without previously discussing them with their subjects– the consequences of that, at least for the teachers, are worrying. To apply these policies, the several instances of the school institutions directly intervene in the classes, interrupting the work teachers were doing with the students.

These interventions and their consequences to teachers' work were the focus of this research, developed in the scope of a master's degree in Human Geography. We started the

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[5] We are referring to the model of analysis developed in the scope of Political Science, according to which there is a clear distinction between the phase of creating a public policy and the phase of its implementation. During the elaboration phase the objectives are defined, the criteria of policies enforcement are established, concessions are made, etc. In the implementation phase, the policy, established during the previous phase, would simply be enacted. The top-down model has been heavily criticized as it does not consider that the legislative process does not encompass the whole phase of creation and approval of policies, as the actors responsible for their implementation alter aspects of the original public policy proposal (Hill, 2013). We use the term here to indicate that most educational public policies in Brazil is created under this perspective, that is, they expect that the actors who take part of it should not alter the original proposal, or actively participate in its creation.

research by noticing that the discourse of the need to improve public education in São Paulo seem to go against the statements that teachers need to have work autonomy. Though teachers' work autonomy is legally guaranteed[6], there are practices which, in fact, decrease it.

To understand this, we first must consider the Law on Brazilian Education Guidelines and Bases (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* - LDB, Law nº 9.394, 1996), in which it is established that the teacher is responsible to care for students' learning (Art. 13, Item III). The learning, whose responsibility is assigned to the teacher, does not take place only at the school. It is part of a broader and complex process, that happen in the relationship among teacher, students, and knowledge, which we call *teaching and learning process*. If the teacher has to watch over students' learning, the preservation of the instance in which the teaching-learning process happens (i.e., the class) is key for the teacher. If we consider that teaching and learning are central in school, we must also admit that the preservation of the *class,* its time and space[7], is (or should be) an objective of all those involved with the school (including the administrative and pedagogical personnel, parents and guardians, the school community, etc.).

In other words, the importance of this issue is presented on LDB itself, on article 12, item IV: "The educational establishments, following the common rules and those of the educational system, are responsible to watch over the fulfillment of teachers' work plan". From this, we can say that it is key that the personnel of each school should try to guarantee the necessary conditions for teachers to put their work plans into action. Nevertheless, teachers point out that they face difficulties to do their jobs, describing a scenario in which their classes are frequently interrupted by different types of interventions[8].

The main research objective was to analyze this scenario in the context of public schools, municipal and state systems, in the city of São Paulo aiming to understand the consequences of those interventions on teachers' work and school education.

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[6] We are referring to the article 206 of the Brazilian Constitution which establishes, among other things, that schooling should have as a base the principle of freedom to learn, teach, research, and disseminate though, art, and knowledge, as well as the pluralism of ideas and pedagogical concepts.

[7] Here, we consider *class* as the key *time-space* for school learning. We are not referring to a specific space of the school or a simple chronological time but to a complex *time-space* that involves knowledge, methods, objectives, dialogic and intersubjective interactions, guided towards learning, as well as other elements. We deepen the concept of *class time-space* in Lemes, 2017.

[8] We understand as *intervention* an action done in the classroom by a subject external to the class (but not necessarily external to the school) and that interrupts the work done by the teachers and students. Therefore, it is not an allusion to the interventionism of the State in the school, a perspective that would require a different theoretical perspective and analysis than the ones we use.

Empirical field

We have identified the issue of interferences in the *classes* when participating of the *Círculo de pesquisas e estudos de fronteiras teóricas para a formação de professores de Geografia e outras áreas do currículo*, a research and study group coordinated by Prof. Maria Eliza Miranda PhD, in the Department of Geography at *Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo* (FFLCH/USP). Public school teachers, the main participants of the group[9], were invited to reflect on their practices based on theoretical frontiers and created didactic sequences to be used in their schools. There were different themes, encompassing several curriculum components[10]. The aim at that moment was for teachers to freely plan their practice, considering students' needs and the contexts of their schools, based on a methodological-theoretical ground collectively built, searching for possible approximations to different perspectives[11].

Though discussing the everyday school life was not the central focus of the group, the frequent meetings held while the didactic sequences were put into action have led to collective reflections on different aspects of teachers' work. The questions approached had a wide range, from classroom dynamics to the administration of the school. In this context we heard teachers' testimonies on the interferences in their classes and the interruptions of their works.

These questions, related to the work conditions in schools, could emerge in these meetings because, among other aspects, the didactic sequences created by the teachers were put into action without changing these conditions, that is, we tried to see the applicability of the group proposals in real public-school conditions:

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[9] Besides teachers from state and municipal schools, there were also private school teachers and undergraduate and graduate students.

[10] During the years, the group received teachers of Portuguese, English, Education technology, History, Geography, and Biology. Each teacher chose a content to be developed in a didactic sequence, created materials and activities that would be used in the classroom, and organized their work plan based on the studies and discussions held in the group.

[11] Among the main theoretical strands used in this process, there are: Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004), with their proposal of *didactic sequences*; Bakhtin (2016 [1953]) and the genres of discourse; the theory of *mediated learning experience* of Feuerstein (2010); and the concepts of Vygotsky (2010) on the development of scientific concepts in school age.

The choice of the conditions to do the research considered the possibility of theoretical and methodological marks to be developed by the group of teachers involved and the possibility of a research in real time, that is, applied in the daily teaching conditions and school practices. The scope involved refers to the didactic and pedagogical practice, the teacher in the classroom with no direct interference on the dynamic foreseen by the Pedagogical-Political Plans of the schools, nor the initial teaching plan prepared to be developed in the curricular work, predicted for the subject the teacher will teach during the school year (Miranda, 2014, p. 8).

Besides this, we tried to guarantee, in the research and study group meetings, an open environment for the teachers, allowing reflection moments not marked by institutional control[12]. Thus, the teachers could talk about many aspects related to the school and teachers' work.

It is in this context that the issue of interferences in the *class* emerged, and the contours of our investigations started to be outlined. From an empirical perspective, we mainly used audio video recordings to the meetings[13], during the three research phases developed by the group, as well as characterization questionnaires, and interference registries filled by the teachers. For the analysis, we also considered official documents and texts published in the websites of the state[14] and municipal[15] secretaries, as well as texts created by regional directories, published in their own websites, blogs, and Facebook official pages[16]. All this material is systematized in the following table:

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[12] We are referring to the meetings that take place in previously established spaces and moments in the schools, as the ATPC (*aula de trabalho pedagógico coletivo*- class of collective pedagogical work), in the state schools, and the pedagogical meetings during the so-called hour-activity in the municipal schools.

[13] All teachers signed a term of informed consent to participate and were aware of the audiovisual recordings of the meetings, as well as that the material obtain from the enactment of the didactic sequences could be used on studies related to the research.

[14] Website of *Secretaria da Educação do Estado de São Paulo*: http://www.educacao.sp.gov.br/. Accessed in July and August 2017.

[15] Portal of *Secretaria Municipal de Educação de São Paulo*: http://portal.sme.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/. Accessed in July and August, 2017.

[16] The education directories (DE) of SEE/SP have their own domains on the internet. Not all directories of education (DREs) of the municipal secretary of education have a webpage. Most have official pages on Facebook or blogs.

Table 1 – Main research materials

Material	Details	Year
Audio visual registries of teachers' meetings	30 hours of video with teachers' statements on the process of putting the didactic sequences into action	2010, 2011, 2013
Characterization questionnaires	Filled by the seven participant teachers in the third phase of the research	2013
Interference registries	Filled by five participant teachers in the third phase of the research	2013
Texts created by the secretaries of education and regional directories	Taken from official sites and electronic addresses (blogs and Facebook pages)	2013, 2014, 2015
Decrees, resolutions, and reports	Taken from the sites of the City of São Paulo and the State of São Paulo	2008 – 2016

Source: Lemes, 2017, p.91.

Methodology

We based our research mainly in the analysis of the statements from oral (meetings with teachers) and written (institutional texts, work plans, etc.) texts. To follow this investigative pathway, we were supported by Bakhtinian works[17], considering its contributions to the methodology in human sciences.

On the contributions of the Bakhtinian thought to the methodology adopted, we highlight that in the human sciences the lenses of the researcher are focused on the cognizant *subject*. The subjects speak, express themselves, and cannot be model by the researcher. In the case of our research, this *other* is the teacher. The care on dealing with the statements of these subjects involved trying to *understand* the verbal and non-verbal aspects to identify how the teacher thinks and deals with the interferences in the class. The statement analysis did not start from a rigid structure. After all, according to the Bakhtinian authors: "there are no *a priori* categories, mechanically applied to texts and discourses, aiming to understand ways to produce meaning in a given discourse, in a given work, in a given text" (Brait 2012 [2006], p. 14).

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[17] We used the concept of Bakhtinian works to refer to a collection of works produced between 1920s and 1970s in the Soviet Union. They were elaborated in the context of a group of intellectuals from different areas that gathered to discuss on various themes (Brait & Campos, 2009).

Therefore, our investigation on the statements was part of a dynamic process, in which we identified categories of analysis from our approximation with the texts.

The procedures adopted can be divided in three phases: i) establish the near and far contexts of the statements – that is, identify the characteristics of most immediate social situation and the broader social environment involved in teachers' statements; ii) select and transcribe excerpts of the meetings; iii) analyze the transcribed statements.

In the first phase, we initially analyzed the context close to the statements, that is, the conditions of the meetings in which they were produced. Considering this aspect was key, as the meetings constitute texts with immediate interaction, that is, the face-to-face dialogue. Statements created in these conditions are strongly determined by the conditions of immediate discursive communication, in which the axiological position takes in response what was said and quickly gains an enunciative expression. This allows an important type of voice intersection, in which heterodiscourse and polysemy are even more evident.

In this moment, we perceived that most research group participants were teachers in the public system (state and municipal) of São Paulo. Thus, we established a common starting point: the group was formed by professionals who knew the reality of public schools and dealt with common issues in their work. The participant undergraduate and graduate students were also involved in the activities, what has contributed for the interaction and proximity of all participants. Most of the analyzed meetings took place in classrooms on the Department of Geography (FFLCH/USP), between 2010 and 2013, on Saturdays.

Regarding the farther context of the statements, it referred to the broader social environment of the participant teachers. We could perceive a plurality of contexts – but with common elements. Out of the 19 participant teachers, only four did not teach Geography, only one has used the didactic sequence in a private school, and only one teacher developed his work in the early years of elementary school. Most teachers in the group worked in public schools, teaching the final years of elementary school and high school. Thus, the statements analyzed reflect the social of environment of these subjects and we can imagine that the results of our investigation are more representative of the reality experienced by Geography teachers in municipal and state school who teach for the final years of elementary education and high school in the city of São Paulo. We also identified that the perception of interferences does not depend

on their time of experience in the classroom – those who have been teaching for more than 11 years point out the same problems as those with two years or less of experience.

Finished these phases, we transcribed excerpts of the meetings. To select them, we considered Bakhtinian idea on the concept of statement *theme*. The statements are composed by linguistic variables (words, sounds, intonation, etc.) and non-verbal expressions. When taken in its full complexity they have a *theme* that is "the total meaning of the statement" (Volóchinov, 2017 [1929], p. 227). As the theme can only be grasped when considering the statement as a whole– its verbal and non-verbal elements, its closer and farther contexts– we used the already systematized data in the situation of immediate social communication and the broader social environment of teachers to make our selection. With this data in hand, we watched six meetings and identified all excerpts with statements regarding interference in the class.

When the transcription[18] of the pre-selected excepts finished, we made a preliminary analysis of the material do identify certain aspects of the research problem that were recurrent in the statements. Then it was possible to have a global perspective of the issues to be deepened, and, from this, we created categories to analyze teachers' testimonies.
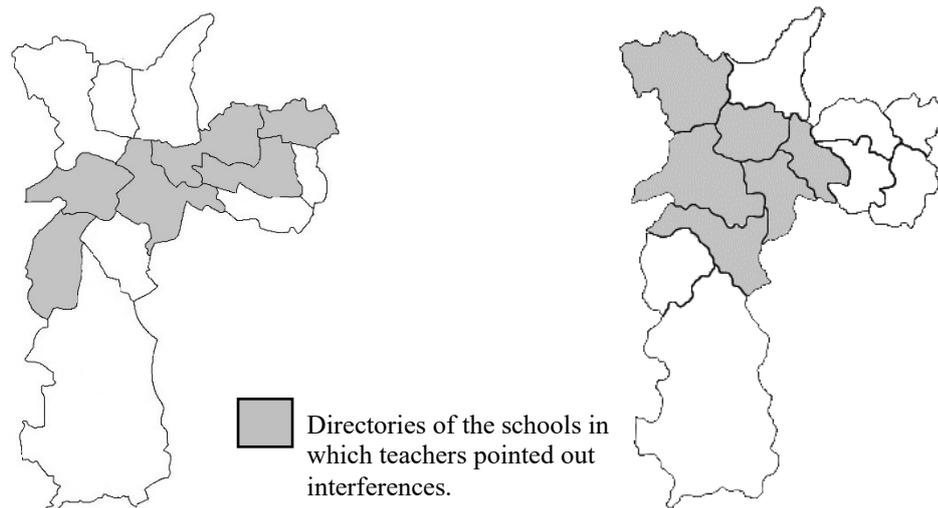
After this initial analysis of the material, we searched for official texts that could present a counter-position to teachers' statements. To do so, we researched the official site of the *Secretaria da Educação do Estado de São Paulo* (State Secretary of Education- SEE/SP) and the portal of the *Secretaria Municipal de Educação* (Municipal Secretary of Education -SME-), as well as the official pages of the regional directories (DREs and DEs) and the available material of the Teachers Training course offered by the state (*Curso para Professores Integrantes 2015 – estado de São Paulo*). With the texts in hands, we could establish a dialogue between them and the teachers' statements, identifying agreement and disagreement points among the different subjects on the dynamic of interferences.

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[18] Regarding the technical elements of transcription (symbols and codes used to register non-verbal aspects of the statements), we chose to adopt, an adapted version, of the transcription signs proposed by Marcuschi (1986), in his book *Análise da conversação*. We opted to use signs that indicate orality aspects that we consider necessary to the statement interpretation, such as pauses ((+)), truncations (/), among others. To guarantee the anonymity of the participants in the group, we substituted their names for codes.

Results

We initially started with the notion that, given the current management model of the system, the interferences in the class were a systemic phenomenon, that is, took place in basically all municipal and state public schools in the city of São Paulo. Thus, work interruptions would be a condition faced by almost all teachers on São Paulo public system. The results we found corroborate this initial idea. The current organizational model, with a net structure, seems to guarantee that in every school there are actions, programs, and projects that interfere in the classes.

We could see that from the systematization of teachers' statements. Out of the public 18 schoolteachers who talked about their works in the meetings, 15 verbally pointed out that the interferences harmed the work developed with the students. If we consider the regional directories of education (DRE – municipal system) and the teaching directories (DE – state system) in which the schools of these teachers are located, we have the following spatial distribution of the problem:

Directories of the schools in which teachers pointed out interferences.

Ipiranga, Butantã, Penha, Itaquera, Campo Limpo, São Miguel.

Norte 1, *Centro-Oeste, Centro-Sul, Centro, Leste* 5, *Sul* 1.

Figure 1 – Regional directories of education (DRE – municipal system), on the left, and the teaching directories (DE – state system), on the right

Source: Images adapted from *Portal da Secretaria Municipal de Educação de São Paulo* and the website of *Secretaria da Educação do Estado de São Paulo*. Lemes, 2017, p.118.

During the research we did not have participant teachers from schools in other directories[19], threfore we cannot categorically affirm that there are cases of class interferences in all of them. However, the data point to a scenario of relatively homogenous distribution of the dynamic. Out of the participant teachers' 12 regional directories , all had at least one report of interference. We can then deduce that it is highly probable that public school teachers from the city of São Paulo have to deal with intereferences in their classes[20].

The analysis of official texts also showed that there are incentives for the administrative personnel to promote projects that intervene in the *school*- contributing to this homogeneous distribution pattern. These interventions emerge as inevitable consequences of enacting programs and action proposals developed in the secretaries. Even the interventions created and enacted by the school administrators are similar to the system logic, as the programs enacted by them answer to the prescriptions of other instances, which incite the creation of "innovative" programs in the schools. For instance, in the state system, principals are expected to lead the elaboration of plans and actions, coordinating school projects[21], while in the municipal system the administration team is expected to "…have a key role in the administrative and pedagogical organization, as well as the full development and implementation of projects in the school" (São Paulo [Município], 2017, p. 11). Thus, the projects proposed by the school administrators, though different in each unit, are part of a net of educational policies in school.

We see that there are different types of interventions that caused interruptions in the *class*, resulting in proposals headed by the secretaries of education [22] and the school administration teams[23]. They answer different objectives, and it was not possible to analyze each one. However, it is important to highlight that they should not be considered indistinctively.

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[19] In the case of the municipal system, we did not have participants from the schools of the DREs of Pirituba, Freguesia/Brasilândia, Jaçanã/Tremembé, Guaianases, São Mateus, Santo Amaro, and Capela do Socorro. In the state system, we had no participants from DEs Norte 2, Leste 1, Leste 2, Leste 3, Leste 4, Sul, and Sul 3.

[20] There are testimonies of teachers about interferences in state schools outside the city of São Paulo, in the metropolitan region (DREs Guarulhos Sul and Suzano) – suggesting that the interference dynamics is not restricted to the city of São Paulo but articulated to the state system administration.

[21] According to the official document, the principals of state schools must be able to "lead the elaboration, implementation, evaluation, and guide the plans and actions in synch with the principles, guidelines, and educational rules of SEE-SP, of the Curriculum, and the pedagogical proposal of different levels, phases, modalities, areas, and subjects" (São Paulo [Estado] – Resolução SE-56, 2016).

[22] Some examples are awareness campaigns with the community (ex: health campaigns on viral diseases, as dengue), external evaluation, planning meetings, etc.

[23] Such as festivals open to the community or outings with the students to amusement parks (aiming to raise funds to fix something, purchase school material, etc.), awareness lectures to the community on various themes, didactic-pedagogical projects, among others.

Some actions are key for school working– such as teachers' councils and parent-teacher meetings–, furthermore we cannot ignore the relevance of projects that involve teachers' participation in collaborative cultures. Thus, in our research we were not interested in rating the relevance of those interventions but seeing how they create frequent interferences in the class and what are their impact on teachers' work.

The way the administration team defines the project calendar headed by them is one of the factors that hinders teacher work, according to teachers' statements. One of the reasons for this is that, often, teachers are not previously warned about these interferences, so it is hard to deal with the consequences. Apart from this, the administration can promote a series of projects that makes unfeasible the work already under way. As shown by excerpt 01:

Excerpt 01
(pE2): the school has an absurd amount of projects**'** talent shows**'** ethnic-racial questions**'** three things are going on right now **'** I'm also involved in three project things at school **'** **[...]** so many things**/** this week **'** on the second is the day of**/** the talent show**'** on the fourth is parents' meeting **'** on the other week, on the tenth is circus day **/** circus the whole day **((**other participant teachers laugh**)) '** and I also have the radio project the newspaper project **((**laughs**)) '** and I am in the middle of all this**'** (28 set. 2013)

pE2 considers an "absurd" the number of projects headed by the school. The teacher is involved in the activities, but the adjective used suggests that the number of proposals are, in her opinion, exaggerated.

Another problem pointed out by teachers are activities that take place on Thursdays. As a result, students often do not go to school the next day, creating a long weekend. According to the teachers, the actions guided by the administration personnel (as parent-teacher meeting) when happening on a Thursday interrupt for two days the work in the classroom.

Beyond those cases, according to the teachers, *non-planned actions*, decided and enacted in the same day, are also quite common in the school, such as the dismissal of students. There is, for example, a non-official dismissal of students in the last weeks of class before vacations. After the external evaluation, it is common not to demand the attendance of students, and teachers are sometimes told not to register absences. As shown by the excerpt bellow:

Excerpt 02

(pM3): my::: **(+)** my coordinator threatened me **((**laughs**))** if I gave the**/** I approached her and said "on the fifth we have classes, right? It is school year**" '** because the tests were over, the saresp[24] was over right **'** no student will come anymore**'** and she said **"** you won't teach on the fifth**" '** and I said **"**why**?" ' "**no**'** because if you teach on the fifth someone will denounce you and they won't like you**"** I said "but where does it say that I can't**??" ' "**no, in December you can't register students' absence**" (+)** and I said **"**how come**?" ' "**no, you can't. Don't you do that **"**(December 17th, 2011)

Though considering the particularities of the case, this is one of the most common interferences appointed by teachers: after a certain date (that often coincides with the end of external evaluations), the teachers are incentivized not to teach, and the students are incited to miss school. This happens even during evaluation week, though they last a maximum of two days, the result is that schools are empty:

Excerpt 03

(pF1): saresp also 'got in the way' **((***teachers pC1 and pM1, nod in agreement***))** because saresp is a week **(**without classes**) ((laughing))**
(pK1): there are no classes
(pF1): only the students **(**at**)** saresp**'** so**'**
(Dec. 8th. 2010)

This emptying in the end of school year is consistent with another aspect of the interferences: the time distribution. Teachers' statements reveal that interventions are intensified as of October. Consequently, the last bimester is busier for teachers, who need to ensure their work despite the many interruptions and few classes – though the official school days are, theoretically, guaranteed:

Excerpt 04

(pK1): up to December twenty two**'** is a school day **(+)** on paper**'** right**? ((***teachers nod in agreement***))**
(December 8th, 2010)

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[24] T.N.: Saresp stands for "*Sistema de Avaliação de Rendimento Escolar do Estado de São Paulo*", the Evaluation System of School Performance in the State of São Paulo. It is a standardized test applied to students on the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th year of Elementary school and the Senior year of High School, on the following themes: Portuguese, Mathematics, Human Sciences, Natural Sciences, and composition.

The fact that the "school days" are officially guaranteed, but not the *classes,* is also a recurrent issue in teachers' testimonies. The school days are registered in the 'class journal', even if there are no classes. This is a key conceptual difference: "school day" (or "effective schoolwork day") is not a synonym of "day with classes", despite de official definition of 2010:

> Art. 2º – Effective schoolwork days are those with students' compulsory atendance and under teachers' guidance in which regular classes and other didactic-pedagogical activities are developed, aiming effective learning.
>
> § 1º – Events and activities not planned on the school calendar are forbidden, if harming planned classes.
>
> § 2º – School days and/or programed classes that are not held by any reason should be replaced according to the pertinent legislation, even if this replacement has to be done on Saturdays. (São Paulo [Estado] – Resolução SE-74, 2010)

The resolution SE-74 (2010) establishes, with the definition of *effective schoolwork day,* the importance to fulfill the work developed by teachers and reinforces, though in other terms, the need to preserve the *class*, as well as the activities already planned. In fact, official texts of the municipal and state systems indicate a great importance given to the work teachers develop with the students during classes[25]. However, when analysing the daily school routine, as described by teachers' statement, this is not the reality: there is in São Paulo a dynamic of intereferences which lead to the supression and compression of the *time-space of the class*. That is, despite official determination, there are school days in which the *class* does not take place (it is suspended), and the teacher has less number of classes to develop the work with the students– this scenario, according to the statements analyzed, is even worse during the fourth bimester:

Excerpt 05
(pK1): no**'** because you know**'** when November comes it is complicated as much as October you know **'** **s**o *(pA2):* school stops in October and doesn't return anymore **'** only in February *(pK2)***:** yeah there is that (September, 28th, 2013)

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[25] In the case of the municipal system, we can read on "Art. 7th – School Activity Calendar has to be approved by the CEI Council/School Council/CIEJA and followed to the Regional Directory of Education…The same procedure must be used during the school year, when there is a need for alterations and/or adequacy of the Activity Calendar, due to the suspension of classes and other ways that mischaracterize the day/hour of effective schoolwork …." (São Paulo [Município] – Portaria 5969, 2012).

Regarding the implementation of these interventions, the statements we analyzed indicate that the school management personnel have an important role. This can be understood when we consider the strongly prescriptive character of educational policies done by the secretaries. Though officially recognizing the importance of teachers' work, the educational policy adopted is permeated by interventions that try to pre-determine aspects of school education. Therefore, aiming to guarantee the enactment of different programs and projects, the secretaries use intermediary instances[26] and try to control the implementation process with a combination of prescriptions. When such prescriptions reach the school, they accumulate, and the administration personnel is the first to deal with the demands of its enactment[27]. To fulfill them, they do direct interventions in the *class,* interrupting the work developed by the teachers – but guaranteeing the 200 schools days determined in the constitution.

Despite the important role the managing teams have to enact the interferences, the teachers who participate in the research do not show any major problems in their interactions with principals, vice-principals, and pedagogical coordinators. After all, there are also testimonies of colaboration and the daily work leads teachers to avoid conflicts. The statements analyzed point out that though there are cases in which teachers openly disagree with the interferences from the administration, when possible they avoid the conflict with other school subjects. Even if this opens the door to more interferences and/or work interruptions, teachers avoid giving a dissonant opinion. This meets what Hargreaves identified in his research: teachers prefer working without open antagonism, as disagreeing with the projects (*missions*) can set them apart from the rest of the teaching staff:

> … if missions develop loyalty among the faithful and confidence among the committed, they also create heresy among those who question, differ and doubt. … The social construction of heresy is, in this sense, a powerful ideological force. It suppresses proper discussion of choices and alternatives by patronizingly disregarding their seriousness or by undermining the personal credibility of those who advance them. Heretics, then, are not merely dissenting or disagreeable.

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[26] Such as regional directories. In the case of the state system, the supervision teams of education in each regional directory should "…present to the school team the main goals and projects of the secretary, towards its implementation…." (São Paulo [Estado], Decreto nº 57.141, 2011 – art. 72).

[27] An official document that shows this demand is the Decree nº 54.453, de 2013 (São Paulo [Município] – art. 11) which afffirms that the pedagogical coordinator has to "…promote and *ensure* the implementation of the programs and projects in the Municipal Secretary of Education…"

They are personally flawed. Weakness, madness, or badness are the hallmarks of the heretic, the qualities that mark him or her out from the rest" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 163).

Regardless on how the teacher deals with the management, it is inevitable that the enactment of interventions harms the work done with the students. Therefore, teachers create strategies to deal with the interferences, searching for ways to minimize their negative impacts. We classified the strategies pointed out by the teachers into three groups.

The first are tactics used mainly to bypass actions and projects headed by the management team. The advantage of these strategies is that they do not alter aspects of the work plan[28]. The disadvantage is that they commonly lead to a conflict between the teacher and the management team– and therefore are not much used.

One of these strategies is when teachers position themselves directly against an administration attitude, preventing interferences in their classes. This strategy is not always successful and can fray the relationship between teachers and administrators. Another strategy is to guarantee student presence in the school days that would be empty due to other programs. According to teachers' statements, this maneuver is mainly used in the end of the school year. The teachers convoke students to school, despite the already established pressure and/or culture in the school of dismissing students in the end of the year:

Excerpt 06
(pL2): I had to convoke **'** it was a suggestion of *pK1* so that they could come the day after the cultural fair because they normally don't go anymore **'** [...] they came and I cried happy tears **' "**ah**'** you don't know how important you are**" '** and it was nice**'** it was the last day**/** they did a metacognition of module four and a final dissertation and**/** and the metacognition of the didactic sequence after **'** puff**'** the whole day (December, 17th, 2011)

However, the result, according to the teachers, is far from ideal and, though using maneuvers to bypass this type of interference, it still leads to consequences to the *class*. The work conditions at school, for example, change considerably and it is not uncommon for the administration team to pressure teachers to finish their works as soon as possible. Besides this,

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[28] We call *teachers' work plan* the plan that organizes the work to be done by the teachers with their classes during a certain period (e.g., a bimester). This definition meets the one used by the state and municipal systems of São Paulo.

not all the students go to class, and it is hard to guarantee their attendance for even just a day after the dismissal.

The second group of strategies involve altering teachers' work plans. This type of strategy is used when teachers think they will not be able to finish the work developed with the students. With this, they avoid conflicts with the administrators (which were common in the previous strategy). However, there are other consequences. Dynamics that, according to the teachers, would be important for students' learning are suppressed or are greatly altered [29], hindering their work under way.

The third group of strategies used to bypass the consequences of the interferences involve guaranteeing the enactment of the work plan with no major alterations, despite the school interventions that interrupt the work developed with the students. The analysis of teachers' statements point that this is the most used type of strategy– maybe because with it, it is possible to avoid conflicts with administrators and, at the same time, avoid changes in the work plan. Teachers mainly do that in three ways.

In the first way, the teacher asks another teacher to enact the activities created. This maneuver then interferes in the class of a colleague. It is a strategy in which a teacher *voluntarily* enacts the activity of another– it is not an action based on institutional pressure.

In this case, despite the collaboration between teachers, the maneuver described does not allow an ideal *time-space* to enact the planned activities. Though enacted by a teacher during a *class,* the relationship among teacher-students-knowledge is modified: the teacher that puts the plan into action is not its author and does not have the same mastery of the content or the dynamic. The students also establish different interactions with each teacher. Thus, despite the guarantees the realization of the activity, the interferences still have consequences in the process in *class:*

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[29] We are not referring here to the alterations thought considering students' needs, but due to the interferences. After all, work plans are often changed by the teachers, to guarantee students' learning. During the meetings on the process to enact the didactic sequences, the teachers indicated alterations on some aspects of their plans to reach this goal. However, the systematization of the statements indicates that the changes due to interferences in the class were more common.

Excerpt 07

(pK1): the 5th grade b**'** I had a::: like**'** I wasn't going to have classes with them so I asked a teacher to take it and do it so it was a chaos **/ ((**laughs**))** the final product**/** ask another one to do it is silly**'** better **(+) ((**shaking head negatively **))** because then you skip such an important phase of the work and :::**'** then they just wrote anything to get rid of it (December 16th, 2010)

In the second way, teachers exchange classes. This happens when a teacher does not teach one class to teach another, aiming to put their work plan into action. As the learning rhythm of students and classes are not the same, in some cases teachers decide to teach more classes to a class whose learning process demands more time. Besides this, it is common that the interferences in *class* harm more one group of students than another.

Of all the strategies described by the teachers, according to them, exchanging classes is the one which allows a more adequate scenario to enact their work plans. Out of the participant teachers who did this maneuver, none reported that the dynamic or predicted activities were hindered during the class exchange. The main problem of this strategy is that it is not doable when the teachers have to work with all the classes, so they have to teach of all them.

The third and last strategy of this type involves the teachers using the ATPC moments and activity-hours to give classes, or work outside their normal schedule to guarantee the enactment of their work plan, using free time of their groups. In the case of municipal teachers, many also used the period they have in the school, without classes, to teach:

Excerpt 08

(pK1): there were two 8th grades that I**/** that I worked**'** with four weekly classes**'** but as *pL2* is:: in the first semester I:::: I only had two classes**'** so in every free class that I could enter I entered and worked with this **'** (December 17th, 2011)

Within this third set of strategies, the statements analyzed indicated that the last two maneuvers (exchange classes with other teachers and use free time) hinder the least the enactment of teachers' plans, allowing the teacher to develop classes with the groups according to the expected objectives. This happens because when the teacher exchanges classes or works

with the classes during their free time, the dynamic of activities planned happen with the presence of the teacher-author of the plan. Therefore, the strategies allow a closer scenario to that imagined by the teacher when creating his/her work plan.

However, adopting these maneuvers cause problems in other aspects of teacher work. To do them, teachers often must work more at school and/or neglect other obligations outside the classroom, which are also important to teachers' work. As can be seen by *pE2's* statement:

Excerpt 09
(pE2): the activity-hour which is a time in which we have to plan, to organize ourselves, does not happen anymore in my/ in my week' because my whole period is used with the classes (November, 09th, 2013)

About these strategies, it is also important to highlight that despite approaching them separately, teachers' statement indicate that they are used together. That is, during the school year, the same teacher can use more than one strategy. Adopted in an articulated way, they help teachers guarantee the enactment of their plans, despite the school's programs and projects.

The result, however, is far from ideal. Due to the interferences in the *class,* there is less time to work with the classes on what was thought and planned. According to teachers' statements, because of the lack of time, they do not work with a great part of the content, students' learning rhythm is not respected, and they cannot explore potential issues that emerge in the interaction between teacher and students.

Nonetheless, we need to note that the participant teachers were involved in a research group and the concern to guarantee the sample they needed appeared in some statements as an important factor to adopt these strategies. It is possible that this context might have led to an even higher mobilization of the teachers, who wanted to guarantee that all the activities planned were put into action. Yet, it would not be correct to assume that, without the research, teachers would not do any maneuvers to bypass the consequences of interferences. The strategies are appointed by the teachers as something common and were not seen as unusual by the members of the group, or, according to the statements, by other school subjects – this suggests that they are part of teachers' repertoire and practice.

Final remarks

Out of the scenario we described, we understand that the dynamic of interferences harms a dialogical teaching that takes into consideration students' statement to review aspects of the work plan. Besides the lack of time due to (among other things) the use of the *class* time to other projects and programs from different instances, there is the problem of interruption in the enactment of the work plan what disarticulate activities that were originally though in articulation with one another.

Officially, the state and municipal system believe that education, and learning, is a process[30]. The Secretary of Education of the state of São Paulo justifies learning situations[31] and proposes:

> This reflection in a system that organizes its curriculum by classes is particularly important. First, because *each class must have its maximum potential of learning.* Second, because *the control of classroom improvisation is a vital condition* to organize the teaching-learning process. And, finally, because the *systematization and the sequence of classes* should be carefully planned to respect students' learning time and answer the objectives planned (São Paulo [Estado] – Caderno do Gestor, 2010, p. 11 – italics by the author).

Despite this official concept, the constant interferences in the classes interrupt this process, culminating in the opposite scenario of that described in the excerpt above. The classes' potential is not always guaranteed, teachers constantly see themselves obliged to improvise faced by the interferences, and the sequence of classes planned to guarantee students' learning looses its continuity. These aspects contribute to a fragmented teaching process.

The teachers participating in the research group also approached the issue of interruption of the teaching-learning processes in school. According to the statements analyzed, when the process under development has long interruptions, the teachers need to remember previously taught content with the students. This happens because when the students miss days (or weeks) of classes, which would continue the work developed by the teacher, they do not resume the work from where it stopped but need to see some lessons again. This takes time and

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[30] The term "teaching-learning process" appears in many official documents, as the Decree nº 54.453 (2013), in the case of the municipal system, and the booklet on the *Nova Estrutura Administrativa da Secretaria do Estado de São Paulo* (2013), in the case of the state system.

[31] Learning situations are organized work plans, proposed by the *Currículo Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*.

is not always effective, especially if we consider that new interferences might happen. Thus, teaching, understood as a process, is harmed by the interruptions.

Our data indicates that this often frustrates teachers who, in many times, need to place themselves against the pressures of many instances. As seen in the excepts bellow, teachers show a lack of motivation when describing to the group how they put into action the didactic sequences amid interferences. There are many challenges and having to act against the dynamic established by the system is tiring:

Excerpts 10 and 11
(pC1): there were a series of **(+)** external problems that hindered the enactment and the 8th grades were even more troubled**'** I took the work up to the point I could**'** **[...]** the students that **(**they were all creating a wall[32]**)':**:: I even told *pS1* that I couldn't do it**'** 'cause I was having insomnia**'** then I couldn't develop (December 8th,2010 – our highlight)
(pK1): I'll finish on November 29**/**I WON'T continue in the first week of December **'**cause:: **(+)** it doesn't **'** actually**'** exist**/**then I'll be crazy there:: **(+)** and the kids won't go anymore**'** then there is a meeting**'** and then**'** **((***intonation indicating that the events keep happening. pL2 agrees with the comment by nodding***))** (October 26th, 2013- our highlight)

This context of frequent suspension and compression of the *class time-space* has negative consequences to teachers' work and probably, also hinders students' learning. It is thus perfectly possible to affirm that the dynamic of interference is harmful to the quality of school education– even though a quest for quality guides many of these actions, programs, and projects applied in the schools.

Nevertheless, the interventions held in school are hardly seen as a problem by the other subjects (except the teacher). In our research we found evidence that this is due to two main reasons: the pluri-meaning of the concept of *school day* and the prescriptive character of educational policy. The dynamic of interferences, despite frequently suspending classes in school, does not mischaracterize the concept of *school day* for the administration, regional directories, and secretaries. Consequently, the days without classes are not apparent and, thus, it is harder to identify a pattern of interferences for those outside the school. Besides this, as the

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[32] The teacher refers to an established practice in the school in which the students decide to collectively miss class (the whole group) in school days in last bimester, when the number of direct actions in the school increases.

public policy is mainly implemented from the norms and regulations that trickle down instance by instance, following a hierarchical structure of a network management model, what happens in the ground instance (school) rarely reaches the top ones (secretaries and central bodies).

It is also important to highlight that this scenario persists despite the discourse that guarantees an *autonomous and democratic administration* in schools. These issues are present in the legislation an even in the LDB that, in 1996, called for schools' pedagogic and administrative autonomy, as well as the participation of education professionals in their administration[33]. However, the realities described by the teachers indicate that these conditions were not reached. The education model organized in network can be efficient to enact large-scale public policies (answering to diverse objectives and interests) but do not guarantee the necessary conditions to autonomy and democratic administration. Even within each school community, the hierarchical structure of the subjects collaborates to the intensification of this scenario, allowing a disorderly accumulation of actions during *class time-space*, which can harm learning (understood here as a process).

Therefore, we consider the need to review the current educational policy used by the state and municipal systems of São Paulo. The prescriptive model makes it hard for the secretaries to notice the impacts caused in *classes* by their programs. Then the subjects responsible for the interferences might not know that the volume of actions proposed hinders teachers' work– and, maybe, school education. In fact, there are projects acknowledged by teachers as important because they deal with aspects that directly impact the school community[34], often helping the complete formation of students. Thus, according to the teachers, the programs themselves are not the problem but the way they are enacted, frequently interrupt the work developed with the students.

We think that educational policies could be more effective if the subjects in charge of its elaboration considered the contribution of school subjects. In the case of the interruptions, listening to the teachers is key, as they are the ones who could best indicate what actions impact the *class*– the central instance of teachers' work. These types of information could be useful

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[33] We refer specifically to the articles 14 and 15 of LDB, Law nº 9.394/1996.

[34] For example, the vaccination campaign in 2018 in which the Ministry of Health and Education promoted the vaccination against HPV and meningitis in the schools of São Paulo (www.saude.gov.br, accessed on October, 9th, 2019). Another example is the Educational Program Against Drugs (*Programa Educacional de Resistência às Drogas* - Proerd), whose official objective is to promote a preventive education against drug use (www4.policiamilitar.sp.gov.br, accessed June 7th, 2017).

when creating programs and projects that do not especially harm the work with the students. After all, the dynamic of interferences harms not only teachers' work but also goes against the official conception of teaching and learning as a *process*. It seems to us that, if the objective is to improve the quality of school education, it makes sense to review the way these interventions are enacted, so that the *class time-space* is kept and teachers can plan and organize the elements of the *class*, mainly aiming students' school learning.

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