

The Condition of the Discipline of Philosophy With the Implementation of the New Secondary Education

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The present study sought to present the condition of the Philosophy discipline with the implementation of the New Secondary Education in Brazil. With the implementation of Law 13,415/17, Brazilian education underwent significant changes. In this scenario proposed by the new legislation, the creation of a National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) complemented an ideal of education that is present in our country. We believe that this ideal is within a neoliberal logic that favors the interests of the market and private institutions that are increasingly inserted in the educational context. In this changing scenario, some disciplines lost space, such as Philosophy. Therefore, we seek to investigate the condition of this area of knowledge amidst the contradictions and changes brought about by this new reality. Methodologically, it is qualitative, bibliographic and documentary research. We believe that the changes provided by Law 13,415/17 represent serious setbacks not only for Philosophy, but for education in general.

Keywords: Philosophy. New High School. Common National Curriculum Base. Critical Education. Base Curriculum.

A Condição da Disciplina de Filosofia no Novo Ensino Médio: sintomas de um retrocesso no horizonte

Resumo

O presente estudo buscou apresentar a condição da disciplina de Filosofia após a implementação do Novo Ensino Médio no Brasil. Com a efetivação da Lei 13.415/17, a educação brasileira passou por mudanças significativas. Neste cenário proposto pela nova legislação, a criação de uma Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) complementou um ideal de educação que está presente em nosso país. Acreditamos que este ideal está dentro de uma lógica neoliberal que favorece os interesses do mercado e das instituições privadas que estão cada vez mais inseridas no contexto educacional. Nesse cenário de mudanças, algumas disciplinas, como a Filosofia, perderam espaço. Portanto, buscamos investigar a condição desta área do saber em meio as contradições e mudanças impostas por essa nova realidade. Metodologicamente, trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, bibliográfica e documental. Acreditamos que as mudanças proporcionadas pela Lei 13.415/17 representam sérios retrocessos não somente para a Filosofia, mas para a educação em geral.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia. Novo Ensino Médio. Base Nacional Comum Curricular. Educação Crítica. Currículo Base.

1 Introduction

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Philosophy, as a school subject, has an importance that goes beyond the simple assimilation of content by students. As it is a subject historically concerned with criticism and the emancipation of the subject, its presence at school is extremely important and relevant, not only for the educational environment, but for society as a whole. However, it is well known that with the curricular reforms that from time to time have become the order of the day in our country, Philosophy's place in the curriculum has been threatened, and this threat often comes in the form of its removal from the curriculum. This not only hinders a truly human education in schools, but also means that the curricular component itself is unable to gain a foothold.

With the implementation of the New High School, under Law 13.415 of 2017, substantial changes have taken place in Brazilian education¹. Despite the fact that these changes are being encouraged in the name of improving the Brazilian educational scenario, by making the curriculum more flexible and developing a comprehensive education based on student protagonism, it is possible to see that the reality resulting from this legislation is quite worrying, and the optimistic scenarios it envisages are not being realized in practice.

When we relate the implementation of this new high school model to the creation of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and its teaching by competencies and skills, as well as based on areas of knowledge and training itineraries, we have a very clear educational scenario: marked by market influences and neoliberalism, with an incentive for

¹ We would like to highlight the political debates that are currently taking place in our country regarding the New High School Law in the National Congress. In our opinion, this does not represent a resolution of the problem, but merely proves how necessary and relevant studies on this law still are.

an education that seeks preparation for the job market and employability, in contrast to a truly integral and critical human formation.

This idea is reinforced when we understand that an organization by areas of knowledge removes historically consolidated disciplines and creates a truly empty curriculum. In this scenario, Philosophy is once again understood as “studies and practices”, which is yet another step backwards for this area of knowledge in our country, as it has the aggravating factor of emptying the curriculum.

The Base Curriculum for Secondary Education in the Territory of Santa Catarina (CBTC) is also a regional manifestation of the Base itself and the legislation in force. The influence of the BNCC is present in the document at various points and reinforces this idea of education which, in the name of protagonism, encourages students to be passive in the face of an increasingly difficult reality, marked by social inequality and the interests of private institutions.

Given this scenario, the general objective of this study is to understand the condition of the subject of Philosophy with the implementation of the New High School (NEM) in Brazil. To achieve this goal, a contextualization is necessary. First, we present Law 13.415/17 and its inconsistencies. This is followed by the BNCC and the CBTC, official and normative documents that complement an ideal high school. Finally, we seek to answer the research problem: what is the status of the subject of Philosophy with the implementation of the New High School (NEM) in Brazil?

2 Methodology

Methodologically, this study is based on qualitative research, since it is concerned “[...] with aspects of reality that cannot be quantified” (Gerhardt and Silveira, 2009, p. 32). In other words, when seeking to understand the condition of a particular subject in a new teaching mold and educational ideal, we have a unique scenario that calls for a broad and subjective understanding. Ultimately, it is a quest to understand and explain a dynamic resulting from social relations (Gerhardt and Silveira, 2009).

The research was configured as bibliographical and documentary, since we used important theorists on the subject of secondary education and philosophy, as well as official documents and current legislation, in order to expose and understand the current scenario. Among the main authors used are Silva (2005, 2011, 2021), Cechinel and Mueller (2022), Frigotto (2012, 2022) and Saviani (2016). The official documents include the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and the Base Curriculum for Secondary Education in the State of Santa Catarina (CBTCem).

3 The controversies of the New High School in Brazil

Since MP 746/16 was presented as a matter of urgency, it can be said that the debate about secondary education in Brazil has been marked by disputes and polemics. Criticism of the current model began even in the pre-implementation phase, and although such opposition was not so effective at the time, given that the MP ended up becoming law, it is true that such criticism is entirely justified.

Before we actually point out the criticisms and obvious problems that arise with this proposal, it should be noted that the implementation of the New High School was suspended by the Lula government in April 2023. At the time of writing, Bill 1.299 of 2023, authored by deputies João Carlos Bacelar Batista and Lídice da Mata, which seeks to replace the training itineraries with areas of knowledge, is being processed in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies². These events, far from ending the discussion proposed here, only demonstrate the complexity of the issue. Although some significant changes have been requested by the deputies³, it should be noted that this is not a total repeal of the model. Many of the criticisms used to present the Bill are precisely those that authors and scholars

² See more at: <https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/975778-projeto-substitui-itinerarios-formativos-previstos-no-novo-ensino-medio-por-areas-de-conhecimento/>. It should be noted that in Santa Catarina, the in-depth courses have been replaced by **in-depth** courses in areas of knowledge.

³ Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/educacao/noticia/2023/10/24/apos-criticas-e-consulta-publica-sobre-reforma-mec-apresenta-proposta-para-novo-ensino-medio.ghtml>.

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Also because the basic structure of secondary education will not be substantially altered by these proposals (since there is still a flexible part of the curriculum), as well as the fact that they have not yet been put into effect, we believe that the criticisms exposed here may reinforce the need for these measures to be approved and, if possible, extended to other issues. But what are the problems arising from this new high school structure, put into effect by Law 13.415/17, and what are the consequences for students and school institutions in Brazil?

First of all, it is important to understand that many social reforms, including educational reforms, are intertwined with the capitalist logic in which we live, and this logic directly directs and influences the direction that social issues take. According to Silva and Santos (2021, p. 91),

In this capitalist market society, educational reforms cannot escape the mercantile criteria of efficiency and productivism. In this sense, the proposals for reforms in Brazilian education, by being defined by these criteria, legitimize a definition of the educational forms that are typical of the social domination in force.

In other words, education in this way seeks to maintain what has been established, since its role is to help production and market efficiency. It can already be said that this reform is directly associated with this context. Although the discourse of the ruling class seeks to ideologize it in such a way as to include young people in a kind of protagonism and a better life project, based on the structure of this new high school already presented: with a basic general education weakened by the areas of knowledge and a large part of the curriculum focused on training itineraries that abuse flexibility, while at the same time not offering it in an appropriate way.

In this logic, Motta and Frigotto (2017, p. 368) warn that this structure, in reality, “is rigid in terms of implementing the disciplines recommended by the collective and organic international organizations of capital and the market [...]”.]“, that is, subjects within the capitalist logic are encouraged and strongly recommended in the name of protagonism and flexibility, while at the same time there is a [...] tacit denial of basic knowledge for an autonomous reading of social reality, which is covered up by the delegation of the young person's 'free choice' among the options on offer” (2017, p. 368). This statement seems to sum up well what this reform proposes, and this proposal is, as Silva and Santos (2021) also warned, tied to market criteria.

A visible characteristic of reforms with a certain capitalist and market slant is their urgency. The problems pointed out by the ruling class are serious and the consequences devastating, so an urgent and practical attitude is needed, which can make changes happen extremely quickly. On the urgency of the implementation of Provisional Measure 746/2016, later Law 13.415/17, Motta and Frigotto (2017, p. 365) point out that

It is in this area that the restructuring of the secondary school curriculum is seen as urgent: improving performance in the IDEB and PISA, making the curriculum more flexible in order to facilitate the choice of subjects that young people from the lower classes would find less difficult and, as a result, probably perform better in large-scale assessments; developing skills and competencies that facilitate entry into the formal or informal job market, or that provide occupations that generate income - in this case, by teaching entrepreneurship.

This reinforces the need to restructure Brazilian secondary education, in curricular terms, in order to improve performance in large-scale tests, as previously pointed out and now reinforced by Motta and Frigotto (2017). However, restructuring education around this goal is extremely problematic. At first, as mentioned in the quote above, the tendency would be to choose subjects that students find easier, which would ultimately lead to an improvement in test scores, while at the same time their education would obviously move away from an integral education - so propagated in this discourse of innovation. This sounds quite contradictory, as success in exams does not necessarily mean knowledge learned. It also has to be considered that students' choices would be extremely limited due

to the schools' lack of structure. In the end, institutions tend to offer the flexible part of the curriculum as cheaply as possible.

This brings to light one of the basic problems of the reform: the fact that the reform of secondary education has been purely curricular. It's true that Brazilian education needs to change; however, these changes go far beyond curricular issues, requiring a close look at the structural issues of schools, investments in education, working hours and teacher training. However, “[...] the discourse of educational quality is attributed only to curricular organization, a context in which the material needs of schools, education workers and especially students' living conditions are ignored by public policies” (Zank and Malanchen, 2020, p. 134).

In the end, this discourse uses the supposed protagonism of students and their ability to undertake developed at school to prepare them and hold them responsible for their success in the job market, a success that is unlikely to materialize, since, as Cechinel and Mueller (2022, p. 164) point out, “the unrestricted possibilities communicated at every moment clash with concrete and complex scenarios of unemployment, widespread competition, job insecurity and hopelessness about a truly different future.” In an interview with the Humanitas Institute of UNISINOS, when asked about the new high school, Frigotto (2022) states that

Those who designed “the new” high school represent the dominant social forces that have never bothered to build a real nation. They have opted for a project of dependent capitalism that concentrates wealth in the hands of a few and widens inequality. Instead of producing science and technology, they have opted for copying; instead of developing an autonomous development project, they have opted for foreign debt; and finally, they maintain an asymmetry between their earnings and those of the workers. This explains the neglect of the universalization of basic education, especially secondary education, and the meager public investment to provide the material foundations for quality education.

This statement provides key elements for understanding the inconsistencies of the reform and seems to sum up the problems pointed out so far. At first glance, the inequality widened by the high school reform is totally linked to the reality of schools, a reality ignored by those responsible for designing the new high school model. Regarding this problem, it is possible to state that “the most precarious school contexts, without ample financial

investment in hiring and infrastructure, are doomed to replicate this precariousness in the form of one or another training itinerary capable of being made feasible in the existing structure” (Cechinel and Mueller, 2022, p. 131). In other words, the inequality between schools will be accentuated and materialized more and more, since, without public investment, all that remains is to adapt to what is already in place in each school institution.

Similarly, by pointing out the lack of production of science and technology of its own, Brazil's dependence on international organizations, such as the OECD, and how such international policies directly influence the country's educational structure, which is extremely damaging, since, according to Cechinel and Mueller (2022, p. 134), “the corporate treatment received by Brazilian education through the aforementioned public policies and their links with agents such as the OECD and IAS, produces, as a result, different forms of marginalization or exclusion”. This asymmetry between the workers and the ruling class, foreign indebtedness and the lack of development of their own technologies are all reflections of this exclusion. The marginalized end up being the vast majority of young Brazilians who attend public education, which, as mentioned by Frigotto (2022), is far from quality education.

According to Saviani (2016, p. 58), “there would be no point in democratizing school, that is, expanding it to make it accessible to the entire population if, at the same time, this were done by stripping school of its specific content, that is, literate culture, systematized knowledge”. This statement highlights what has been happening in this new model of secondary education: not only the replacement of subjects for supposed flexibility, but, above all, the emptying of the curriculum. According to Zank and Malanchen (2020, p. 135), “thinking that only 60% of the curriculum is reserved for areas of knowledge already characterizes, in itself, the emptying of content”. This statement is made even worse when it is understood that the other 40% lack any theoretical foundation, since, in the name of flexibility, choices can be made about what to offer, how to offer it, and this offer materializes precisely in a “wind pastel” (Frigotto, 2022).

In this logic, Cechinel and Muller state that “the causal relationship ‘more education = a better life’ is as false as ‘less education = a worse life’, especially when the spectacular

training process is analyzed in relation to the social totality and its inherent contradictions” (2022, p. 39). In other words, with the offer of a school and a greater idea of education which, as well as emptying the curriculum of the knowledge needed to be acquired by the students, holds them responsible, from an idea of protagonism, for the probable failure that follows, it is certain that the relationship “more education = better life” becomes an unsustainable fallacy.

Frigotto (2012) points out that the education of young people must be linked to work, culture and science, which are indispensable for knowledge of historical reality and for the development of their criticality and creativity. And, as we have seen, everything indicates that the reform proposed by law 13.415/17 is far from understanding work as a broad concept, let alone developing cultural and scientific aspects. This ultimately removes the criticality and uniqueness of each subject, where the protagonism propagated does not really appear, because a reform of this breadth only seeks to “[...] transform the school into a space for bourgeois legitimization and postmodern thinking objectified in the fragmentation necessary for the world of work in capitalist society” (Zank and Malanchen, 2020, p. 137). In this way, the goal of an education that develops the human being in a truly integral and critical way

[...] cannot be achieved with curricula that aim to confer competencies for carrying out the somewhat mechanical and mundane tasks demanded by the occupational structure, focusing on the issue of professional qualification and sidelining the full development of the person and preparation for the exercise of citizenship, as evidenced in the proposal released by the MEC on the common national curriculum (Saviani, 2016, p. 81-82).

Saviani's reading of the BNCC, even years before its latest version, already showed the inconsistencies that were to come. Although we believe we have explained in a general way how this reformulation of secondary education, implemented by Law 13.415/17, is problematic, exposing some aspects of the BNCC and the CBTC can contribute to a better understanding of Philosophy and the country's own educational reality. According to Ferreti and Silva (2017, p. 397), “[...] there are, in our view, relations, if not of identity, of close approximation between the educational purpose that guides the BNCC and that which serves as the theoretical, political and ideological basis for MP No.

746". Thus, the next subtopic aims to briefly explore the inconsistencies between the BNCC and the CBTC and how these documents reinforce an uncritical conception of education in our country.

We need to ensure that young people learn to operate in a society that is constantly changing, to prepare them for professions that don't yet exist, to use technologies that haven't yet been invented and to solve problems that we don't yet know about. Certainly, a large number of future professions will directly or indirectly involve computing and digital technologies (Brasil, 2018, p. 473).

This excerpt from the Base demonstrates the understanding of education that it contains. It's a discourse based on change, in a flexible world, requiring a leading role in dealing with uncertainty, since we don't know what the professions, technologies or problems of the future will be. It is easy to identify the relationship between this discourse of flexibility and the provisions of the high school reform, with the option of choosing paths and developing the student's life project. However, the question immediately arises: how can we prepare young people for a world that is uncertain? For problems that don't exist yet? This objective seems to fail right from the start.

It is clear that the strategy adopted by the Base for adapting to the new and unexpected must be developed based on competences and skills. This is the reason for organizing a curriculum by areas, to the detriment of historically consolidated contents and subjects. According to Zank and Malanchen (2020, p. 146),

[...] instead of valuing the appropriation of historical knowledge [...], the market is looking for people who are only able to learn what's new and who can perform technical functions with skill, without historical or critical involvement in work, education and social development.

In the words of Saviani (2016, p. 82), the organization of the curriculum, regardless of the level of education, "[...] should take as a reference the form of organization of today's society, ensuring its full understanding by all students". From this, it is possible to see that what the BNCC proposes goes against what the author says, since, in addition to making a decontextualized reading of social organization, it prevents students from receiving a full understanding of reality, since it empties the curriculum, weakens consolidated disciplines

and imposes skills and competences as if they were the key to knowledge, making students neutral in the face of the very reality they live in.

This neutrality is reinforced in the BNCC by the socio-emotional competences, which serve not only to accept the BNCC itself, but also the high school model proposed more broadly. Regarding the presence of such socio-emotional competences in Brazilian education, Cechinel and Mueller (2022, p. 179) state that this “reveals the moment when the idea of training gradually cedes its critical space to a reintegrating therapeutic element coming from the very heart of the society of the spectacle and its dynamics of production and consumption”. In other words, far from forming a student who will question the reality in which he or she is inserted, Brazilian education, along these lines, creates a student prepared to deal with his or her own imminent failure, which arises from the very society in which he or she lives. Without criticism to challenge, they are left to accept and be passive about the injustices that befall them, in the name of flexibility and taking responsibility for themselves.

In other words, “socio-emotional competences would have the psychoactive effect of instituting an educational process that eases the pain of a crisis that makes it impossible for individuals to prosper socio-economically” (Cechinel and Mueller, 2022, p. 173). Reality has set in, and all that is needed is compliance with this situation of vulnerability and lack of alternatives for individuals. In addition to the socio-emotional competences present in the Base, other inconsistencies are clearly visible throughout the document. Cechinel and Mueller (2022, p. 129-130) argue that:

Another of the BNCC's sore points that has received a great deal of criticism concerns the loss of training caused during high school by the reduction in the workload of almost all the components of the curriculum, with the exception of Portuguese and mathematics. In other words, as is well known, in addition to the logic of the competences and skills that make up the four areas of knowledge - languages and their technologies, mathematics and its technologies, natural sciences and their technologies, and applied human and social sciences - the BNCC maintains only Portuguese and mathematics as fixed curricular components, reducing previous subjects such as history, geography, sociology, philosophy, physical education, arts etc. to mere cross-cutting themes that appear diluted here and there in the form of skills.

In this excerpt, the authors bring up a fundamental point of the new high school, which was already discussed in the previous subtopic: the emptying of the curriculum. Perhaps this is even a differentiation from the other discussions on reforms that have taken place in our country; such curricular emptying, in the name of flexibility, seems to be something typical of this moment in which we live, based on the legislation explained above. This hollowing out occurs when historically consolidated subjects are treated as mere cross-cutting themes, which ends up confusing them in terms of skills to be developed, which, in the name of interdisciplinarity, ends up creating confusion, including on the part of teachers, about what to teach and what not to teach.

This also reinforces the lack of satisfactory theoretical clarification of what is meant by competence in the BNCC, since in the official document, “[...] it is defined as the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), skills (cognitive and socio-emotional practices), attitudes and values to solve the demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work” (Brasil, 2018, p. 8). However, this concept moves away from a clearer idea of comprehensive education and emphasizes a certain technicist instrumentalization of the curriculum (Cechinel and Mueller, 2022).

This view of curriculum organization, responsible for meeting capitalist needs, is also reinforced by the Life Project subject. This “new” curricular component, with a considerable workload, now becomes responsible for helping young people define their future and take the lead. The “subject without content” brings a great deal of relativism to Brazilian education, all in the name of flexibility that ends up damaging students' education, distancing them from an integral education and contributing to the emptying of the curriculum. In this way, comprehensive education becomes a channel for reaffirming the triumph of the individual in the midst of barbarism and the struggle of all against all (Cechinel and Mueller, 2022). This results in a lack of responsibility on the part of the state itself and a burden on subjects such as Life Project, Entrepreneurship and Financial Education.

Along the same lines as the BNCC, it is possible to see how the CBTC understands secondary education based on the reform proposed by Law 13.415/17, adapting it to

current legislation. As it is directly influenced by the Base, many of the criticisms leveled at the BNCC also end up “splashing” on the curricula developed in Santa Catarina. Despite making some changes⁴, it is possible to say that the structure of the CBTC is in line with the national reality, with a large part of the curriculum focused on training itineraries to the detriment of basic general training. One of the reasons given by the CBTC to justify this structure proposed at national level is the need to

recognize that school is not an attractive space for many young people, capable of providing elements for their life projects, and also to identify the considerable number of young people who leave school to join the job market, are aspects that deserve special attention. Given this diagnosis, it is possible to say that formal education and work have sometimes become spaces that exclude themselves from the life plans of young people who either dedicate themselves to their studies or to work. From this perspective, the two dimensions unfortunately compete for the attention of our youth (Santa Catarina, 2020, p. 41).

The quote in the CBTC is very strong and, like other official documents and opinions, focuses on the student's life project as a justification for its changes. Making school more attractive to young people is one of the ways forward, so that they consider the school institution as part of their life project. It is implicit that the way to make it more attractive would be by offering training itineraries, since the student will direct the paths they want to take at school. However, by again bringing up the fact that it is not a real choice, we have an empty discourse that does not materialize in practice.

Similarly, by arguing that students leave school to enter the job market, a dichotomy is created that seeks to encourage a relationship between school and the world of work, so that students don't have to choose between the two options. However, although the document states that work should be understood as “[...] a constitutive category of the human being, which must be understood as an educational principle” (Santa Catarina, 2020, p. 41), this relationship remains superficial.

Finally, it is possible to state, from the presentation of the problems with Law 13.415/17 and its manifestations in the BNCC and the CBTC, that this model of education seeks to maintain what is in place and substantially distances itself from a critical

⁴ Despite adhering to the areas of knowledge, the CBTC is still obliged to offer the curricular components of each area.

conception of education, as we discussed earlier. Therefore, in the next topic, we will discuss how Philosophy, historically a critical discipline, is conditioned in this mold of high school reform, as well as a possible role attributed to it in this context and the possibilities for transformation, even in a complex and chaotic scenario such as the one presented.

3.1 The Condition of Philosophy in the New High School (NEM): symptoms of a setback on the horizon

When we pointed out some of the main inconsistencies resulting from the implementation of the new high school model, it became clear how the subject of Philosophy also ended up being harmed, in a very objective way: the removal of its compulsory nature as a subject is yet another considerable setback in all the struggles that have taken place in the country for its insertion and compulsory nature in high school. This confirms Carminati's thesis (1997, p. 47) that “the teaching of philosophy in high school, especially in this century, has oscillated according to government interests, sometimes present, sometimes absent”. In other words, history seems to be repeating itself along the same lines, and this time the government's interests prove to be closely aligned with private institutions, which are certainly relieved at the removal of a subject capable of emancipating students from a difficult reality, which, according to them, should be embraced by students.

Carminati (1997, p. 60) goes on to state that “although the critical role of philosophy in the history of Brazilian thought is affirmed, it seems to us that philosophy in general has been much more aware of the crisis and much less of a project to get out of the crisis”. This reality described by the author, as well as materializing right now, seems to have an aggravating factor: with the absence of Philosophy as a subject, even awareness of the crisis seems to be absent from the school environment. This absence seems to be motivated both by the confusing combination of components in the humanities and by the socio-emotional competencies already mentioned, which ultimately make the student responsible for their failures. This characterizes not a general reality in crisis, but a

particular failed case, which, however, can win out in the name of protagonism and the proposed flexibility.

However, the aim of this final moment is not only to point out how the structures of the new high school model harm philosophy as a subject, but also the problems of this condition of philosophy as a critical subject. It seems clear to us that the concept of a critical education and of philosophy teaching geared towards criticality are totally contrary to the idea of education propagated in current legislation, which often seems to confuse comprehensive education with full-time education (Cechinel and Mueller, 2022).

According to Cechinel and Mueller (2022, p. 173), “the production of a subjectivity pacified by the quantification of competences and reconciled with constant social instability seems to be the ultimate goal of school education in the current context”. We believe that the authors are right and, as we saw at the beginning of this topic, the very awareness of a period of crisis, or, according to the authors, constant social instability, ends up being undermined, because the school would be there precisely to pacify the students, placing them at the center of the process of their lives, assuming their successes and mistakes. Perhaps this is precisely where philosophy becomes a major stumbling block: philosophy and passivity in the face of reality are naturally irreconcilable.

According to Alex Sander da Silva (2005, p. 37), “the references of classical antiquity, located mainly in Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, present philosophy in a restless search for truth, building its path in a not very friendly relationship with the Polis”. This statement, in addition to pointing out the historical character of “bothering” those responsible for organizing collective life from an early age, also highlights the fundamental mission of Philosophy: the restless search for truth, which can even be, as we have seen, a nuisance for rulers, if they do not agree with the philosophical mission. Understanding that Philosophy, as a curricular component in the school context, maintains this character of an effective and restless search for truth, it is easy to see why its absence is so well liked by those responsible for organizing these uncritical models of education. Regarding Philosophy as a curricular component, Silva (2005, p. 49) points out that

The disciplinary task of philosophy in the school environment would be to face a complex and challenging space, especially when an intentional look at the students' world is emphasized. A gaze that is, above all, bothered by the facts and situations that affect the school environment, the misfits and naivety. Faced with this dissatisfaction, philosophy's critical gaze has an extremely important place in the unfolding of the mundane situations reproduced in the school environment. Philosophical criticism must therefore be seen as different from the various types of criticism in general.

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In this way, it can be seen that Philosophy, as a subject, seeks to look intentionally at the reality of each student. However, this look would be one of discomfort with social problems, with the social naivety that seeks to maintain the same, and with conformity in the face of a reality that appears to be unjust. What's more, after this reading of reality, what would be sought would be its transformation, rather than acceptance. It would mean “naming names” and not taking the blame alone for what happens, because, as the author points out above, philosophy's critical gaze is important not only for the school environment, but for worldly situations that occur more broadly and certainly end up being reflected in the school as well. By seeking to understand reality as a whole, philosophy not only goes “from the school to the world”, but also “from the world to the school”, in other words, there is a dialectical relationship that allows students to understand that their lives do not depend solely on themselves, while at the same time not placing them in a position of victimhood and passive acceptance of reality, no longer through conformism, but through discouragement, through philosophical pessimism.

Silva (2005) also points out that the aim of philosophy as a subject in secondary education is not to awaken specialist philosophers, or “philosophy professionals”, but that one of its main missions is to teach young people to think better, in a coherent and critical way. Philosophy in high school would provide a better development of something we naturally already do: human formation.

However, by stating that Philosophy remains in the curriculum, but only as “formative itineraries”, which may or may not be chosen by young people, this idea of human formation is substantially removed. This is because young people must choose, according to their own guidelines, paths that interest them professionally or that have to do with their “life project”. However, due to the lack of understanding of Philosophy itself on

the part of the students, as well as the lack of effectiveness of the life project, the idea of Philosophy itself is that of a career focused on the area, of Philosophy specialists, and not necessarily as a truly human and integral formation, which, as we can see, the life project is far from realizing. This situation only reaffirms the absence of philosophy in curricula, but with the “justification” that students simply haven't chosen it, which is totally irresponsible.

The situation gets even worse when we consider the “swaps” made by the students, replacing some subjects with others, which represents an emptying of the curriculum, since Philosophy is taken out and the “life project” is put in, a subject with no content, no specific teacher and different assessment methods. In other words: you have nothing. We point out and believe in philosophy's ability to develop critical thinking, however, such critical reflection is not possible without the acquisition of knowledge. The knowledge to be acquired by students is a fundamental element for a critical attitude to really occur. There is no criticality without knowledge, and in order to obtain knowledge, we believe that content is necessary, otherwise we fall into curricular emptiness.

In addition to the flexibility placed throughout the school's curriculum, it is also possible to see that this discourse extends to teaching practice itself. In addition to the guiding documents, such as the BNCC and the CBTC, this incentive for flexibility and interdisciplinarity is also found in continuing education books, which prepare teachers for this new high school model, described in the official documents explored in the first topics of this chapter. In the book *Travessias Filosóficas: um olhar interdisciplinar para a formação no Novo Ensino Médio: Filosofia*, for example, some ways of understanding and organizing philosophy based on this new teaching vision are presented. Despite talking about flexibility in teaching practice at various points, the author, Luciene Torino, also provides some starting points to guide what and how to teach philosophy in secondary education, based on the BNCC standards:

1. To awaken the philosophical attitude par excellence: doubt and radical inquiry about everything that surrounds us;
2. To lead students, through admiration, astonishment and fright, to recognize their own ignorance of the world;

3. To encourage the free use of one's own reason, the exercise of thinking for oneself;
4. To have the history of philosophy as a fundamental source for the teacher in the preparation of teaching and learning activities and strategies, in order to avoid the dispersion and dissolution of the contents proper to this curricular component in favor of other contents that distort it, as well as allowing the precise treatment of its own contents in the categories present in the competences and skills of the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences in accordance with the norms of the BNCC (2021, p. 64).

Although, at first glance, these starting points seem to be in line with effective philosophy teaching, some problems are perceived. Perhaps the most incoherent of all is the hope that these objectives will be realized in a curriculum focused on the development of competencies and skills. This educational model already demonstrated its weaknesses in Brazil in the 1990s, under the FHC government (Zank and Malanchen, 2020), and represents a technicist understanding of education, which goes substantially against an effective teaching of philosophy that seeks emancipation and a critical education, capable of reading and transforming reality.

Furthermore, one can see the superficiality in dealing with the first three objectives, since concepts such as “doubt”, “astonishment” and “thinking”, when not properly characterized and contextualized, can be found in any philosophical discourse. Mentioning that the history of philosophy should be a fundamental source for teachers can result in technical teaching of philosophy and in philosophy “historians”. The need to make the history of philosophy fundamental is, according to the author, to avoid “dispersing” what is proper to philosophy. This argument only demonstrates the imminent relativity of working with large areas of knowledge. In this context, themes from various components end up getting mixed up, diluting the objects of study, while making the educator believe that they have done a satisfactory job, as long as the students have “developed skills”, but these skills, based on categories, which, instead of helping the teacher to define the contents, seem to contribute to greater confusion and mixing up of the themes to be worked on by them with the students.

At another point, the author stresses that it is essential to promote interaction between the Philosophy curricular components and the development of skills in the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences (Torino, 2021). For this to happen, it is necessary:

Firstly, to clearly define the objectives, i.e. the results we want to achieve with each teaching plan or activity;

Secondly, to propose the means - methods - by which it will be possible to guarantee the achievement of the previously defined objectives (Torino, 2021, p. 66-67).

Again, this is superficial. Stating that, in order for the components of philosophy to be developed, it is necessary to define these objectives and propose methods, doesn't answer much, since these practices are necessary for any educator and any practice they want to carry out at school. Defining objectives is ineffective when you don't know what those objectives are. Likewise, methods are useless when you don't know where you want to go. It seems that the objectives are defined by the teacher themselves, because “the teacher will therefore be respected in their autonomy and also in their philosophical profile, creating more effective teaching and learning strategies that can effectively converge with the objectives determined by the BNCC” (Torino, 2021, p. 70).

Although it is not the focus of this study to deal specifically with teacher training, it is true that, in order to give educators autonomy, they need to have the necessary preparation and teaching practice capable of promoting quality teaching. With the lack of qualified teachers⁵, as well as the MEC's own preparation courses on the new high school, flexibility becomes a relativism and the emptying of the curriculum is further aggravated by teachers who accept this reality and “pretend to teach” while students “pretend to learn”. A possible counter-conduct to a curriculum without content would be a teaching practice that, within the limits imposed, seeks to promote a minimum of social change. However, it seems that even this practice is difficult to achieve in the name of flexibility and interdisciplinarity.

⁵ It can be seen that because Philosophy has not established itself in the country, many of the teachers who teach Philosophy are teachers from related areas, who sometimes have a brief second degree or who are improvised in the Philosophy curriculum component.

Therefore, based on the above, it can be seen that, far from it being just an empty curriculum that is responsible for the precarious condition of Philosophy in this new teaching model, its very provision, when it occurs at all, is hampered by confusion with other subjects in the Human Sciences area. Added to this is the encouragement of flexibility for teachers who are not prepared to teach philosophy. It is possible that the idea of flexibility proposed by the official documents has the understanding that this will not result in critical teaching, which would reinforce, according to Silva (2011), that this is not an accident, but a project.

4 Conclusions

This study sought to problematize the educational context in which we find ourselves, with this new high school model and its consequences. More specifically, we tried to point out the condition of the Philosophy subject in this way, and what problems arise from its absence in secondary education, or its presence characterized by the relativism that is encouraged in the name of flexibility and interdisciplinarity.

We recognize the breadth of the subject and the different ways of approaching it, and we understand that other aspects could also be addressed in order to gain a better understanding of the current reality. However, within the strategies adopted, we believe it has been possible to verify how Brazilian education is experiencing serious problems, and how these problems are the result of strategies from the business sector in education, since this business logic has increasingly increased its influence on the Brazilian educational reality, both in curricula and in the teaching materials present in schools. This reality can be understood from the path taken in this study.

By dealing with the condition of the Philosophy subject in the legislation and guiding documents, we were able to point out how far it is from its true educational function. Far from promoting its particularity as a critical education, it is treated, based on this current legislation, as “studies and practices”, which ends up generalizing Philosophy in the school

context, not guaranteeing its place as a curricular component, nor with its particularities of criticality.

Philosophy is thus absent from this new high school model. It is worth noting, however, that we have identified that this absence seems to materialize in two different ways: firstly, with its effective removal from the curriculum, in the name of interdisciplinarity and flexibility based on broad areas of knowledge, as encouraged by the BNCC. Secondly, it is present in schools as a specific curricular component, but with its focus shifted to less critical issues, becoming complicit with the idea of the student's life project and protagonism. In our opinion, these discourses seek to conform students to their precarious reality, without sensitizing them to the possibilities of social change and transformation.

Both the shift of philosophy to “studies and practices” and its position as a subject in the area of general or flexible knowledge, based on training itineraries, represent, in our view, a precariousness of philosophy teaching in our country, which, it seems, is not accidental, but planned and executed by relevant private institutions within the neoliberal scenario. Furthermore, with an idea of secondary education that prepares young people for the job market, it is possible to fall into the trap of reducing the role of philosophy in school to training philosophy specialists, which is far from being its main contribution in basic education.

Historically, it has been known that philosophy should promote a truly integral education, with a critical approach that seeks to transform reality and combat social inequality. Therefore, its position in school is more than just a work area or technical content. Philosophy is, above all, a human education, with the potential to promote social transformation.

May Brazil's pessimistic educational scenario not serve as an incentive for educators, philosophers and all those who really care about Brazilian education to fail. It is through studies, debates and different points of view being crossed that effective changes can take place. These changes are important and necessary not only for the students, but for society as a whole.

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