

## New Upper Secondary Education and curriculum organization: towards interdisciplinarity?

### ARTICLE

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### Abstract

The article aims to understand the impacts of the High School reform on curriculum organization and teaching practices within the State Department of Education of Santa Catarina (SED/SC). A qualitative study was conducted based on the complexity paradigm, using a descriptive approach with four participants from municipalities in the southern region of Santa Catarina. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework was grounded in the works of Edgar Morin, Michael Apple, and Paulo Freire. The results indicate that although educational policies urge school systems to develop their guidelines in an interdisciplinary manner, SED/SC still maintains a fragmented curricular organization, reflecting a mechanistic logic of traditional education.

**Keywords:** High School. Interdisciplinarity. Complex Thinking.

### O Novo Ensino Médio e a organização do currículo: rumo à interdisciplinaridade?

### Resumo

O artigo tem como objetivo compreender os impactos da reforma do Ensino Médio na organização curricular e no trabalho docente na Secretaria de Estado da Educação de Santa Catarina (SED/SC). Foi realizada uma pesquisa descritiva qualitativa sob a ótica do paradigma da complexidade, com quatro participantes de escolas estaduais da região Sul de Santa Catarina. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas. O referencial teórico teve como autores principais Edgar Morin, Michael Apple e Paulo Freire. Os resultados indicam que, embora as políticas educacionais pressionem as redes de ensino a construírem suas diretrizes de forma interdisciplinar, a SED/SC ainda mantém uma organização curricular fragmentada, refletindo uma lógica mecanicista do ensino tradicional.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino Médio. Interdisciplinaridade. Pensamento Complexo.

## 1 Introduction

This article aims to understand how the reform of Brazilian Upper Secondary Education, through the implementation of the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)* within the Department of Education of the State of Santa Catarina (SED/SC), affects curriculum organization and teaching practice. In response to the emerging demands of contemporary education, we analyze educational reforms based on a discussion grounded in Edgar Morin's theory of complex thought. Therefore, our starting point for interpreting and analyzing the findings of this study lies in Morin's paradigm of complexity, seeking to understand educational reforms in their multidimensionality<sup>1</sup>.

In contrast to simplifying thought<sup>2</sup>, complex thought points to the dynamics of relationships, interactions, and feedbacks, engaging with deeper and more systemic discussions, that is, going beyond what simplifies, divides, and separates, striving for a paradigmatic change in worldview, thought, and action (Morin, 2008). It is understood that today's debate on education necessarily involves reflecting on the successive educational reforms that the country continues to experience through ongoing implementation processes across different school systems, whether state, municipal, or federal. This article is part of a broader investigation that may highlight a series of elements, pathways, and developments for understanding the implications posed by these reforms in the Brazilian educational field.

Considering the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions, categories that are essential to understanding contemporary schooling, what emerges in Brazilian education as a project are successive reforms designed to meet the interests of a privatized educational model shaped by market demands. According to Correia (2013),

<sup>1</sup> The multidimensional implies not isolating the parts from the whole, nor the whole from its parts.

<sup>2</sup> According to Morin (2008), simplifying thought views the object in a fragmented way, seeking to isolate the major fields of knowledge.



aligning education with the market is a political movement that can lead to a worrying reductionism by prioritizing certain conservative and neoliberal agendas<sup>3</sup>, thereby relegating to the background the human, social, and cultural dimensions that are fundamental to the educational process.

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In this sense, such actions and projects by the State unfold in the Brazilian educational field alongside international movements, as noted by Correia (2013), and as widely discussed in the United States by Apple (2002) since the beginning of the 21st century, as well as by Freire (2006) in previous decades in Brazil. Apple (2002), the intensification of the debate on education centers on contesting the school as a social space of conflict and commitment, thus bringing together the participation of various sectors<sup>4</sup> that do not belong to the educational field, with the aim of instrumentalizing the State and “solving”<sup>5</sup> the problem of education.

The prevailing tone, driven by the agents involved in these disputes, is one of alignment with international assessments of high standards, linked to a market-oriented education concerned with competitiveness, prioritizing policies aligned with the objectives of the ruling class (Apple, 2002). The bourgeoisie's interest in education is not new; its planning, actions, and projects have directly or indirectly shaped educational policies as a means of dominating the working class. Thus, we see that these groups organize their agendas around market interests, overcoming their own internal contradictions and foundational tensions to maintain the hegemonic bloc of power in society<sup>6</sup>.

This organizational capacity is expressed, for instance, in the development of

<sup>3</sup> Thus, it becomes evident that both political and educational spheres have been permeated by conservative and neoliberal agendas, which show great interest in influencing curricular definitions and the country's educational agenda.

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Itaú (Unibanco), Fundação Lemann, Instituto Ayrton Senna, Todos Pela Educação (TPE), Escola Sem Partido (ESP), and Amigos da Escola are among the most prominent groups involved in these educational projects within the Brazilian context.

<sup>5</sup> These groups do not aim to solve the problems of education but rather to align themselves with the political interests and economic demands that shape our society.

<sup>6</sup> To further explore the formation and consolidation of these groups' power coalition, see Apple (2002).

the *BNCC*, which brings together various agents (as previously mentioned) holding different forms of capital in the process of legitimating the document (Michetti, 2020). The author further highlights the alliances that facilitated the legitimation of the *BNCC* among representatives of state and municipal education systems<sup>7</sup>, established through major foundations and corporations that participated in the social space of the Base's construction. These groups hold significant political, social, and economic capital. However, as the author points out, agents with economic capital seek legitimation through symbolic capital within the social disputes that take place in the sphere of public education. Clearly and evidently, Michetti (2020) observes that the discursive consensus sought among participating agents channels interests toward developing a national curricular guideline that meets the competencies and skills demanded by the labor market. As a result, the genuine concern for an education oriented toward future generations<sup>8</sup>, as Morin (2001) advocates, becomes detached from the desired educational project, which, as Freire (2006) emphasizes, is not predetermined but constantly under dispute.

From the contextualization of the processes arising with the *Novo Ensino Médio* and the *BNCC*, this article seeks to contribute to educational discussions in Brazil by bringing complex thought closer to the reality of the state education network of Santa Catarina.

## 2 Methodological decisions, study participants, and data collection instruments

Investigating through the epistemological lens of the paradigm of complexity involves a scientific rigor that seeks to examine the phenomena of educational reforms

<sup>7</sup> At the state level, the *Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação* (Consed) acted as the representative body, while at the municipal level, representation was carried out by the *União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação* (Undime).

<sup>8</sup> According to Morin (2001), the education of the future requires a complex perspective in order to understand the individual who emerges from this equally complex society. It is an education that demands such an epistemology, in the sense that knowledge itself becomes the central element of the educational proposal.

in their multidimensionality, not isolating or reducing each of their dimensions in a mutilating way, but rather complexifying their antagonistic and complementary interactions. Research, as a multidimensional phenomenon, brings together all the central characteristics of the object of study, encompassing every element of the environment in which it is situated. In this way, the paradigm of complexity constantly confronts the simplifying paradigm, which reduces the research object and denies reflection upon it (Morin, 2005).

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Qualitative research emerges as a methodological alternative to quantitative positivism, offering different approaches as an option for educational research (Triviños, 1987). According to Minayo (1994), there are two major questions regarding the scientific nature of the social sciences: the first concerns the concrete possibility of studying a reality of which we are agents, and the second involves the search for the essence of social phenomena and processes, the profound meaning present in subjectivity. The objective of the sciences is historical, that is, human society exists in a specific space where social formation is particular, with the present being shaped by the past and projected toward the future, given the movement of construction that arises from the confrontation between the lived world and that which is yet to be built (Minayo, 1994). Therefore, for Minayo (1994, p. 13), "provisionality, dynamism, and specificity are fundamental characteristics of any social issue." We reiterate that the objective of the social sciences is, in every way, qualitative, finding in the dynamics of social reality, in the relationship between individual and collective life movements, the richness of meanings, which at many times proves to be richer than theory itself (Minayo, 1994).

In this investigative process, it is essential that the researcher engage with the uncertainties and the unexpected aspects of qualitative research, understanding knowledge as an open spiral that maintains a permanent sense of doubt about the research object. These doubts enable a constant questioning of the object of study, always challenging it and examining the very thinking and epistemological lens that

lead us to believe in something as true. For this reason, the study adopts a qualitative social research approach to address its objective: to understand the impacts of Upper Secondary Education reform on curriculum organization and teaching practice within the Secretaria de Estado da Educação de Santa Catarina (SED/SC).

Given our theoretical and methodological inspiration from qualitative research in the social sciences and the epistemological lens of the paradigm of complexity, we adopted a descriptive study design to interpret the analytical process, using Bardin's (1977, p. 8) *análise de conteúdo* method, which she defines as "a set of communication analysis techniques that employ systematic and objective procedures for describing message content." Descriptive studies focus essentially on understanding the community, its defining features, people, problems, schools, teachers, and educational practices, among other aspects. They also require the researcher to gather extensive information about what is being investigated and what is intended to be described regarding the facts and phenomena of a given reality, which involves understanding existing work structures, schools, age groups, and gender identities (Triviños, 1987). Furthermore, this type of study seeks to describe the facts and phenomena of a given reality and may establish various relationships and interactions among the variables present in the research (Triviños, 1987).

To participate in the research, the study subjects signed an *Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido* (TCLE), and participation was entirely voluntary. There were four participants, identified by fictitious names to preserve their anonymity: Advisor 1, Advisor 2, Principal 1, and Principal 2. They are members of the State Education Network of Santa Catarina, located in the southern region, more precisely in the coal-producing area of the state, distributed among schools in four different municipalities: Urussanga, Orleans, Criciúma, and Morro da Fumaça.

For data collection, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the four participants. This instrument is frequently used in fieldwork because it enables researchers to pursue a well-defined objective through verbal communication,

facilitating the process of obtaining both objective and subjective data (Minayo, 1994).

Moreover, it does not represent a neutral or casual conversation, as it serves as a means of collecting facts reported by participants who experience the reality under investigation (Minayo, 1994). Triviños (1987) emphasizes the importance of the researcher's presence while also proposing approaches that allow for the interviewee's spontaneity, enriching the investigation. The semi-structured interview in qualitative research is based on key questions, theories, or hypotheses relevant to the study, thus creating new fields of inquiry formulated by the participants themselves (Triviños, 1987). Triviños (1987) also highlights the need to interview different groups in order to obtain better results, which is why this study includes at least two distinct groups (advisors and principals) in different municipalities.

Based on the data collected, the following analytical categories emerged and will be presented in this text: *Public Upper Secondary Education in Brazil and legal frameworks and Educational reforms in the state of Santa Catarina*.

### 3 Public Upper Secondary Education in Brazil and legal frameworks

Understanding the legal frameworks that govern Upper Secondary Education is essential for comprehending the guidelines and regulations that shape this stage of schooling. This analytical category emerges from a deepening of the participants' general statements and seeks to present the orientations that guide curriculum organization, as well as the rights and duties of teachers and students established by law. Analyzing these legal milestones allows for a critical reflection on the implementation of educational policies and the challenges faced by school systems.

Within the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (LDB), of December 20, 1996, in Title V, "Dos Níveis e das Modalidades de Educação e Ensino," Chapter I, "Da Composição dos Níveis Escolares," Article 21 establishes that "school education comprises: I – basic education, which includes early childhood education, elementary education, and upper secondary education; II – higher education" (Brasil,

1996). Furthermore, the *Constituição Federal* of 1988, in Article 211, determines that the education system must be organized in cooperation among the Union, the states, the Federal District, and the municipalities, as stated in the following sections:

§ 1º The Union shall organize the federal education system and that of the Territories, finance public federal institutions of education, and exercise, in educational matters, a redistributive and supplementary function to guarantee equity in educational opportunities and a minimum standard of quality through technical and financial assistance to the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities (Amendment No. 14, 1996).

§ 2º The Municipalities shall act primarily in elementary and early childhood education (Amendment No. 14, 1996).

§ 3º The States and the Federal District shall act primarily in elementary and upper secondary education (Amendment No. 14, 1996) (Brasil, 1988).

To address public Upper Secondary Education in Brazil, it is essential to discuss it from the perspective of the legal instruments that promote the democratization of education, as established by the 1988 Constitution. Chapter III, “Da Educação, da Cultura e do Desporto,” Section I, “Da Educação,” Article 205 states: “Education, the right of all and the duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the cooperation of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work” (Brasil, 1988).

In Article 206 (Brasil, 1988), the principles that must guide education are defined as follows:

I – equality of conditions for access to and permanence in school; II – freedom to learn, teach, research, and disseminate thought, art, and knowledge; III – pluralism of ideas and pedagogical approaches, and the coexistence of public and private institutions; IV – free public education in official institutions.

The first movement observed was the expansion of access opportunities, driven by social demands during the redemocratization period following the business-military dictatorship. With LDB No. 9.394, of December 20, 1996, progress was made toward the principle of “equality of opportunities.” Title II, “Dos Princípios e Fins da Educação Nacional,” Article 2 states that education, a duty of the family and the State, aims at the full development of learners, preparing them for citizenship and qualification

for work (Brasil, 1996). Article 3 reaffirms that teaching shall be based on the following principles:

I – equality of conditions for access to and permanence in school; II – freedom to learn, teach, research, and disseminate culture, thought, art, and knowledge; III – pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions; IV – respect for freedom and appreciation of tolerance; VI – free public education in official institutions; XIII – guarantee of the right to education and lifelong learning (Brasil, 1996).

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Regarding the scope of Upper Secondary Education, the LDB, in Article 35, establishes that it is the final stage of basic education, with a minimum duration of three years, and the following purposes:

I – to consolidate and deepen the knowledge acquired in elementary education, enabling the continuation of studies; II – to prepare learners for work and citizenship, promoting their ability to adapt to new conditions of occupation or improvement; III – to develop learners as individuals, including ethical formation and intellectual autonomy; IV – to understand the scientific and technological foundations of productive processes, relating theory and practice in the disciplines (Brasil, 1996).

Beyond the universalization of Upper Secondary Education, it is essential to highlight concerns regarding student retention. Although the 1988 *Constituição Federal* advanced in expanding access to schooling, a gap remains between the aims of democratization policies and the realities within schools.

The organization of disciplines often diverges from students' lived experiences. Therefore, reflecting on the quality of Upper Secondary Education, in order to meet the needs of young people and ensure their permanence, is crucial. In this context, it is important to consider the reform of *Ensino Médio*, implemented on February 13, 2017, by Law No. 13.415 (Brasil, 2017). The reform, organized by the *Ministério da Educação* (MEC), was based on the need to make students' learning pathways more flexible and to increase the time spent in school, aiming to improve performance compared to other countries. This new organization of Upper Secondary Education provides for a division into areas of knowledge and the adoption of a national common core.

However, as Ferreira (2017, p. 306) argues, improving the quality of Upper Secondary Education in Brazil, reducing educational inequalities, and truly changing the quality of what is offered require a coordinated set of actions involving school networks and government levels, with the goal of promoting the political and cultural emancipation of youth. In this sense, the next section explores educational reforms and their impact on curriculum organization and teaching practices within the state education network of Santa Catarina.

## 4 Educational reforms in the state of Santa Catarina

The current landscape of the Brazilian educational field has been marked by the intensification of policy discourses that serve the market-oriented interests of capital. From the early stages of their formulation to the phases of instrumentalization and implementation, educational reforms reveal education as a field of dispute among hegemonic groups<sup>9</sup> with opposing interests. The interactions established by these groups, who contend over education as an object, generate dialogical relations<sup>10</sup>, conflicts, and opposing forces that both complement and organize themselves, producing<sup>11</sup> and being produced by causalities. Thus, education is both the “cause” and the “effect” (Morin, 2005).

In this dispute, the victor is neoliberalism, which penetrates educational policies and projects social reproduction according to its mercantile and privatizing interests. These interests directly and indirectly construct the hegemony of the bourgeois class under the aegis of the internationalization of education<sup>12</sup>, maintaining

<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the participation of organizations representing society, such as *Todos Pela Educação* (TPE), the ultraconservative liberal front, public entities, and large national and international corporations, becomes evident in the implementation of educational reforms.

<sup>10</sup> According to Morin (2015, p. 74), the dialogical principle “makes it possible to maintain duality within unity. It associates two terms that are at once complementary and antagonistic.”

<sup>11</sup> For Morin (2015, p. 74), the hologrammatic principle “is a process in which products and effects are at the same time causes and producers of that which produces them.”

<sup>12</sup> World Bank (WB), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International

dominance over the working class. In this sense, according to Apple (2017), education is not a passive reflection of society but rather an active force that legitimizes the economic, political, social, and ideological forms connected to it.

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There is a simplifying movement in how the Brazilian educational context is conceived, aligned with rationalizing currents developed by the State to create mechanisms of control over schools and their workers. The consequences of such educational policies foresee the (re)organization of municipal, state, and federal school systems to meet the demands of the business sector through the recent counter-reforms: the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC) and the reform of *Ensino Médio*, implemented through Law No. 13.415/2017. The advancement of these educational policies promotes a type of education that benefits the interests of specific groups belonging to the bourgeois class in Brazilian society. This can be clearly observed in the BNCC, when it proposes that schools should:

[...] foster a culture conducive to the development of attitudes, abilities, and values that promote entrepreneurship (creativity, innovation, organization, planning, responsibility, leadership, collaboration, vision of the future, risk-taking, resilience, and scientific curiosity, among others), understood as an essential competence for personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability (Brasil, 2018a, p. 466).

It is evident that the BNCC for teaching is directed toward intellectual impoverishment and the consequent precarious training of students and teachers, structured around the logic of individualism, competition, meritocracy, entrepreneurship, and managerial governance. Within this framework, working conditions become precarious, intensified, overexploited, and flexible, all aligned with the demands that sustain the hegemony of capital.

The actions driven by these reforms within the Brazilian educational system carry with them an organizational curriculum guided by the BNCC, whose goal is to homogenize the curricula of public and private education networks through

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Monetary Fund (IMF), UNESCO, UNICEF.

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competencies and skills. In this way, the curriculum guided by the *BNCC* aligns with the *Novo Ensino Médio* (*NEM*) of Santa Catarina, which, according to its official documents, seeks to make the curriculum more flexible. Based on this proposal, the *NEM* is divided into *formação geral básica* – the definition of competencies that must be commonly offered to all students – and *formação específica* through *itinerários formativos*, the flexible part of the curriculum.

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This curricular structure, guided by the *BNCC*, reduces the total class hours devoted to general education, as stated in Article 35-A, §5º: “the total workload devoted to the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* cannot exceed one thousand and eight hundred hours of the total hours of upper secondary education, according to the definition of the education systems.” The *itinerários formativos* (Life Project, Second Foreign Language, Elective Curriculum Components, and Advanced Study Tracks) must total at least 1,200 hours.

The reforms break with traditional curricula, which were marked by disciplinary fragmentation, hierarchy, and specialization. For Morin (2015), specialization promotes efficiency, speed, and functionality, but at the cost of a loss in the quality of understanding at the level of the whole. It leads to diminished autonomy and hinders the development of individuals' competencies and potential, as disciplines impose boundaries on thought. According to Morin (2015), specialization closes in on itself, preventing its integration into a global problem or an overarching conception of the object, of which it considers only one aspect or part.

At the core of his dialogical movement, Morin (2015) does not reject disciplinary specialization but understands that each discipline contributes by presenting its particular characteristics and individual qualities. In the traditional model of education, knowledge is reductionist and mutilating, or rather, simplistic and simplifier. For Morin (2015), the fragmentation of knowledge produces an atrophy of understanding and reflection, making knowledge only a fragment of the whole, institutionalizing division and specialization, and isolating relationships with other

disciplines.

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Therefore, it is necessary to open the disciplines to complexity. The *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino Médio* (DCNEM) state in §2º that “the curriculum by area of knowledge must be organized and planned within the areas in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary manner.” Subsequently, §5º emphasizes that the areas of knowledge must be treated in a contextualized and interdisciplinary way so as to break with the isolated work of the disciplines (Brasil, 2018b). The articulation with complex thought is clear in these guidelines, since, for Morin (2019, p. 188), the *complexus*:

[...] is that which is woven together; it is the fabric formed by different threads that become one. That is, everything interweaves and interconnects to form the unity of complexity; yet the unity of the *complexus* does not destroy the variety and diversity of the complexities that have been woven into it..

Complexity does not operate through individual and isolated actions, as occurs with disciplines in their traditional form. Its starting point is the reconnection of disciplines and the construction of transdisciplinary thinking, with the ability to contextualize: “[...] pertinent knowledge is that which is capable of situating any information within its context and, if possible, within the whole in which it is inscribed” (Morin, 2015, p. 15).

In the construction of the curriculum, it is possible to perceive the intentionality of educational policies that reduce the scope of general education and create *itinerários formativos*, organized in an interdisciplinary manner. According to the *Curriculo Base do Ensino Médio do Território Catarinense* (Santa Catarina, 2020, p. 50):

[...] the proposal for presenting and articulating knowledge through the areas of knowledge favors interdisciplinary work, strengthens relationships among curricular components and their contextualization, and contributes to interdisciplinary conceptual development. Therefore, it must be noted that such organization does not imply, in any way, the removal or emptying of content

specific to each component. The procedures and concepts unique to each component remain present in the curricular organization [...].

In regard to the organization of the curriculum in Santa Catarina, the *itinerários formativos* aim to formalize the interdisciplinary character of education. In this sense, Morin (2001) explains that interdisciplinarity can take two paths: one in which disciplines assert and defend their own interests and sovereignties in relation to others, and another in which interdisciplinarity involves mutual exchanges and cooperation, transforming it into something organic. Interdisciplinarity in the state education network is a challenge, yet it opens possibilities for teachers to address content and themes in ways that promote understanding, without losing the necessary focus on their own subject area.

However, the interdisciplinarity proposed in Santa Catarina's curriculum presents several issues. When the *Novo Ensino Médio* (NEM) was implemented in the state, textbooks approved by the *Plano Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD) were restructured to align with the reform's proposal, following its guidelines and reorganizing the content by areas of knowledge. This restructuring had an immediate impact on the school network, causing significant changes in teachers' planning:

"Before, we had a set of history books, or philosophy, or sociology, or geography, which are the disciplines of the Humanities. Now it's not like that anymore. Now there's a single book for everything. [...] The idea was to build the Humanities field." (Principal 2)

"The planning changed, the didactic sequence changed. Now the chemistry teacher has to talk to the biology teacher, who has to talk to the physics teacher. And the chemistry book connects with the biology book, which connects with the physics book. Three common complaints: first, 'this isn't the sequence I usually follow,' that thing of 'I have my pattern, I always go the same way, this isn't the order I'm used to.' Second, 'Where's my physics book?' 'Where's my chemistry book?' The teacher wanted the book for their subject, not one that mixed all three. And third, 'I do my planning, you do yours, so how are we supposed to make a joint plan?'" (Advisor 2).

In the first year of implementation of the *NEM* in 2022, the state network reorganized teaching by areas of knowledge and required teachers to create joint plans



by area. By imposing this model, teachers' planning underwent drastic changes: "In 2021, each teacher worked on their own, comfortably, in their little drawer, right? Then, in 2022, everything changed. And the training offered didn't cover such a major shift." (Principal 2). Although both the guidelines and the state network advocated interdisciplinarity, teachers did not feel prepared for collective work, since they were used to teaching individually and preparing their plans independently, according to their specific training.

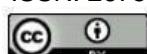
Through *Portaria* No. 226/2022, of February 3, 2022 (Santa Catarina, 2022a), the State Government established criteria for organizing and fulfilling *horas-atividade* (activity hours) for teachers in the state education network. Half of the workload to be completed in schools would be allocated to integrated planning sessions by area of knowledge or interdisciplinary groups, guided by the pedagogical team.

"An arrangement was made within teachers' *horas-atividade*. There was also the role of a coordinator, someone responsible for that work. [...] Some schools managed to do it, others didn't. Some schools had these sessions, others didn't. And today, it doesn't exist anymore." (Principal 1)

"But those weekly meetings are hard to schedule because the timetables don't align. The workload makes it complicated. We tried several times to have these meetings, to get together, but it's very hard to bring all the teachers together." (Advisor 1)

"It had been promised that there would be collective planning by area, and that teachers would be compensated as if it were a teaching period, but that didn't happen. So how are you supposed to sit with your colleagues, your peers in the same area, if you don't have time for that? It's hard for everyone to be at school at the same time, because classes are scattered, and many work in two or three schools. So it wasn't possible. It was rare to achieve that kind of collective planning by area." (Principal 2).

Thus, the *horas-atividade* were intended to be reorganized so that schools could schedule weekly meetings for collective planning. However, after strong mobilization by the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Educação na Rede Pública de Ensino do Estado de Santa Catarina* (SINTE-SC), *Portaria* No. 226/2022 was amended by *Portaria* No. 1.671/2022, of July 11, 2022, which made the workload





requirements more flexible (Santa Catarina, 2022b).

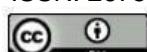
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As a result, teachers' work in Santa Catarina's education network became even more intensified. Apple (1995, p. 39) notes that this process "represents one of the tangible ways in which the labor privileges of educational workers are degraded." The conditions surrounding the teaching profession are deeply affected by these reforms, devaluing teachers' intellectual work. In addition to their individual responsibilities as SED/SC teachers – such as lesson planning, developing assessments, participating in pedagogical meetings, continuing education programs (both in-person and online), and class councils – they must also attend weekly collective planning sessions, which correspond to 25% of their total *horas-atividade*.

In the state of Santa Catarina, class hours are not counted as sixty minutes per class but as forty-five minutes of instruction. The remaining fifteen minutes are considered *horas-atividade* according to Law No. 668/2015 (Santa Catarina, 2015) and Decree No. 1.659/2021 (Santa Catarina, 2021). A teacher with a forty-hour weekly workload must complete 800 minutes of *horas-atividade*, divided equally between time spent at home and at school. Thus, *Portaria* No. 1.671/2022 made these *horas-atividade* more flexible within the school unit, allocating 25% of this time to collective planning and 25% to the teacher's exclusive use, which may be fulfilled during "gaps" between classes or in the intervals between shifts.

The SED/SC places a heavy burden on teachers in the state education network and fails to provide the necessary material infrastructure (high-quality internet, spaces that can accommodate all teachers, organizational structures that foster collaboration, etc.) for them to move beyond traditional teaching models. In this regard, "[...] integration is impossible without, at the very least, paid and collective time allocated to teachers" (Machado, 2023, p. 66).

It is evident that the objective conditions offered to teachers do not provide



sufficient time for planning across different areas of knowledge, resulting in only minimal opportunities for dialogue, such as during the *paradas pedagógicas* at the beginning and middle of the school year (January and July): “[...] what we do during the *parada pedagógica* is reserve one day exclusively for planning. [...] So, it's a day when they meet by area to plan together.” (Advisor 1 – additional comment).

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These few occasions when knowledge areas can interact are extremely limited, since it is impossible to design a didactic sequence or articulate interdisciplinary interactions in a single day. Consequently, even when the areas of knowledge appear to be connected, they lose their grasp of the whole when their actions remain focused on fragmented parts. In other words, the simplifying paradigm, which separates and isolates, continues to structure the curricular organization of schools that have incorporated the guiding document. This approach, reproduced across the state education system, perpetuates a limited and compartmentalized understanding of disciplines, placing barriers between knowledge areas and isolating them from one another and from broader problems that transcend disciplinary boundaries (Morin, 2001).

It is therefore possible to affirm that, in the state education network of Santa Catarina, the areas of knowledge proposed by educational policies differ significantly between what is prescribed and what is practiced. The conditions do not allow teachers to effectively carry out collective planning among major knowledge areas, resulting in individualized planning processes. As Advisor 1 points out:

What I think is missing are planning sessions – planning by area, collective planning – so that we could discuss strategies. [...] It's missing. Teachers can't meet, so when we want to work on something, a project, or by area, which we know is the current structure, it becomes a problem.” (Advisor 1).

Given this context, it becomes clear that education networks adopt the inter-

and transdisciplinary discourse that the twenty-first century demands, yet without achieving real progress, since the educational structure and the system itself still operate under traditional models. To change this reality, it is necessary to break with the “well-filled head” model, in which knowledge is merely accumulated and stored, as Freire (2016) denounces in his critique of *educação bancária*, thereby challenging the logic of hyperspecialization.

18

To overcome these entrenched forms and models of education, Morin (2015) proposes a reform of thought, presented in his book *A cabeça bem-feita: repensar a reforma, reformar o pensamento*. In it, the author argues that to achieve the challenge of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, the problem is not only to open boundaries between disciplines but to transform what generates those boundaries: the organizing principles of knowledge itself (Morin, 2015, p. 24–25).

Thus, to think through complex thought is to understand that it invites us to reflect on concepts without ever considering them complete; to break closed spheres; to reestablish connections between what has been separated; to strive to comprehend multidimensionality; and to think of singularity in articulation with locality and temporality, so that we never lose sight of the integrating totalities (Morin, 2005).

## 5 Transitional considerations

Writing from the perspective of the paradigm of complexity challenges us to transform our structures of thought and worldview, proposing profound qualitative ruptures and advances in the way science is conducted, especially when contrasted with the foundations of simplifying science. In a certain sense, it means facing the future as a challenge to be overcome rather than as something predetermined, assuming a role not only as an object but also as a subject of events and transformation (Freire, 2006).

It can be affirmed that educational reforms affect both curriculum organization and teaching practice within the state education network, intellectually devaluing teachers

and intensifying their workload. The changes brought about by textbooks alter planning structures, shifting from individual to collective modes and pressuring school networks to construct their guidelines in an interdisciplinary way. However, the organization currently adopted by the *Secretaria de Estado da Educação* (SED/SC) reflects the persistence of a fragmented and compartmentalized view of disciplines. Thus, the simplifying rationality fails to break with the mechanistic logic of traditional teaching.

19

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that, even though the curricular guidelines for Upper Secondary Education move toward inter- and transdisciplinarity, the SED/SC does not provide the working conditions necessary for this ideal to move from paper into practice within schools. It is essential that the SED/SC establish conditions that promote collective, transdisciplinary work, thereby fostering integrative and complex educational practices and ensuring that teachers have paid, shared *horas-atividade* for collaborative planning. In this sense, as Morin (2015) asserts, it is necessary to rethink reform and to reform thought.

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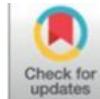
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