

# CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL DISCURSIVENESS: AN EXPLORATORY APPROACH

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze contemporary educational discursiveness by an exploratory immersion in 1,165 interviews given by prominent figures in education and other related fields. These interviews were published in ten Brazilian magazines of educational publicization between 1986 and 2019. Based on Foucauldian theory, the study mobilized two strategies to analyze the data regarding the interviewees and the subjects addressed, with emphasis on cataloging some key statements found during the research procedures. The results of this study show the circulation of certain normative rationalities in the wake of multiple calls to professionals, generating unsuspected effects on the educational *ethos*.

EDUCATIONAL PRESS • EDUCATION MAGAZINES • DISCOURSE • CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

## A DISCURSIVIDADE EDUCACIONAL CONTEMPORÂNEA: UMA APROXIMAÇÃO EXPLORATÓRIA

### Resumo

A presente investigação propõe-se a analisar a discursividade educacional contemporânea mediante uma imersão exploratória em 1.165 entrevistas concedidas por expoentes do campo educacional e de outros afins, constantes de dez revistas brasileiras de divulgação pedagógica, entre 1986 e 2019. Com base na teorização foucaultiana, o estudo mobilizou duas estratégias na análise dos dados referentes aos depoentes e às temáticas abordadas, com destaque para o procedimento de catalogação de alguns enunciados-chave que atravessaram o arquivo investigado. Os resultados da investigação apontam para a circulação de certas racionalidades normativas na esteira de múltiplos chamamentos aos profissionais, gerando efeitos insuspeitos sobre o *éthos* educativo.

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## DISCURSIVIDAD EDUCATIVA CONTEMPORÁNEA: UN ENFOQUE EXPLORATORIO

### Resumen

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar la discursividad educativa contemporánea a través de una inmersión exploratoria en 1.165 entrevistas concedidas por exponentes del campo educativo y otros relacionados, contenidas en diez revistas brasileñas de difusión pedagógica, entre 1986 y 2019. A partir de la teorización foucaultiana, el estudio movilizó dos estrategias en el análisis de datos relacionados con los encuestados y los temas abordados, con énfasis en el procedimiento de catalogación de algunas declaraciones clave que pasaron por el expediente investigado. Los resultados de la investigación apuntan a la circulación de ciertas racionalidades normativas a raíz de múltiples llamadas a los profesionales, generando efectos insospechados sobre el *ethos* educativo.

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## LA DISCURSIVITÉ ÉDUCATIONNELLE CONTEMPORAINE: UNE APPROCHE EXPLORATOIRE

### Résumé

Cette recherche se propose d'analyser la question de la discursivité éducationnelle contemporaine dans 1.165 entretiens accordés par des personnalités du champ éducationnel et similaires, contributeurs fréquents à dix revues brésiliennes de divulgation pédagogique entre 1986 et 2019. Basé sur la théorie foucaultienne, l'étude a utilisé deux stratégies pour analyser les données concernant les participants et les thèmes abordés en particulier le processus de catalogage de quelques énoncés clés du *corpus*. Les résultats indiquent que la circulation de certaines rationalités normatives, observées dans le sillage des nombreuses interventions de ces professionnels, produit des effets insoupçonnés sur l'*ethos* éducatif.

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**T**HE RESULTS PRESENTED HERE DERIVE FROM AN EXPLORATORY IMMERSION INTO discursiveness in Brazil's educational field in recent decades. For this purpose, a set of ten pedagogical dissemination magazines was chosen as the subject of analysis – specifically, the interviews featured therein, given by different prominent figures in education and correlated fields.

The *corpus* comprises six blocks of printed material including ten different titles (and their respective acronyms): *Carta(s)*, including *Carta na Escola* [CE] and *Carta Fundamental* [CF]; *Educação* [ED]; *Nova Escola* [NE]; *Pátio(s)*, subdivided into *Pátio* [PT], *Pátio Educação Infantil* [PTei], *Pátio Ensino Fundamental* [PTef] and *Pátio Ensino Médio, Profissional e Tecnológico* [PTem]; *Presença Pedagógica (na Sala de Aula)* [PP];<sup>1</sup> and *Profissão Mestre* [PM].

Together, these publications brought to the public, starting in 1986 (date of the first interview, found in *Nova Escola*, published in the *corpus* under examination) until the end of 2019, 1,165 interviews given by 896 interviewees,<sup>2</sup> divided into 304 foreigners (or Brazilians living abroad) and 592 Brazilians (or foreigners living in Brazil), corresponding, respectively, to one and two thirds of the total of respondents.

The general research hypothesis is that educational publications work as a support for a type of discursive circulation whose scope does not end in the dissemination of information with the purpose of professional update – in the case of education agents –, but it also aims at persuading them as to certain guidelines of action and their concerning duties. The success of this investigation will depend on the continuous argumentative matches to *form the opinion* of that specific audience, resulting in a grammar that shapes their answers to certain unsolved problems; the ones constitute the discursive *corpus* under scrutiny here.

One of the first studies on *Nova Escola* (Vieira, 1998, p. 78, own translation) – the most emblematic artifact of this niche of publications – provides a summary of the editorial format of this segment:

... the kind of language used by the magazine gives it characteristics that approximate it to a newspaper, such as the presence of an editorial, a summary of the main reports on the first page, permanent sections, diversity of subjects and genres, the use of photos and illustrations, tables and graphs, the format and font size, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Distributed countrywide in different periods, the six blocks of magazines bore similar editorial profiles – except for specific variations –, including reports, accounts of experiences, suggestions of activities, reading recommendations, articles and opinions, in addition to advertisements and, of course, interviews. These pieces were usually featured at the start of the issues as a kind of editorial lure, and the same issue could have more than one interview at times. Along with the cover stories, the interviewees were clearly featured as the core of editorial attractiveness.

From the perspective of Foucauldian theorization – seen here as the basis of the intended analysis –, placing a given discursiveness into perspective presupposes placing it at the center of the veridiction processes ongoing in a given historical space-time. In the words of Foucault himself (2006, p. 343, own translation): “by production of truth, I do not mean the production of true

1 In 2018, with the change of publisher, the magazine was renamed *Presença Pedagógica na Sala de Aula*. Previously, it was called *Presença Pedagógica*.

2 The difference between the two amounts is due to the multiple appearances of some interviewees in two or more magazines or, in some cases, in the same magazine.

3 In the original: “a revista utiliza uma linguagem que lhe confere características que a tornam semelhante a um jornal, como: presença de editorial, resumo das principais reportagens na primeira página, sessões permanentes, variedade de assuntos e gêneros, uso de fotos e ilustrações, tabelas e gráficos, o formato e o tamanho das letras, etc.”.

statements, but the provision of domains in which the practice of true and false can be both regulated and pertinent”.<sup>4</sup>

From Foucauldian propositions, it is important to retain the fact that

... each society has its own regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth, that is, the types of discourses it harbours and causes to function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true from false statements, the way in which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures that are valorized for obtaining truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.<sup>5</sup> (Foucault, 2011, p. 217, own translation).

In this line, we highlight some studies related to what is proposed here, that is, the analysis of the repercussions of pedagogical magazines in the teacher/school environment from the Foucauldian perspective.

In the mid-1990s, a text by Marisa F. Eizirick addressed *Nova Escola*. In light of the magazines’ insistent dissemination of the principles of Constructivism, the author expressed her amazement: “Why does a discourse become so all-encompassing? How does it assume such comprehensive status as the truth? How does it develop and spread, from preschool to adult literacy, from teaching physical education to mathematics?”<sup>6</sup> (Eizirick, 1996, p. 146, own translation).

Several studies approaching *Nova Escola* in the same analytical perspective came to light in later decades. Among the studies, we cite those by Anadon and Garcia (2005), on the official discourse and teacher identity; Oliveira and Fischer (2012), on the teaching of Mathematics in the early years of elementary school; Aquino (2013), on expertise as a privileged modality of teaching governance; Henning and Lockmann (2013), on ongoing discourses about school inclusion; Silva (2014), on the role of the teacher in the inclusive school; besides Rosa and Kopp (2018) on the interweaving between medical and pedagogical knowledge with a view to a biopolitical governance of school subjects.

There are two articles under the same theoretical affiliation that focused on, respectively, *Carta na Escola* (Silva & Fabris, 2013) and *Pátio Educação Infantil* (Silva & Henning, 2019) – in the first case, the thematization concerned constitution of teaching in high school; in the second, the mandatory schooling of children starting from age 4 in Brazil.

Despite having different concerns, these studies demonstrated that, through the different discursive procedures of the pedagogical press, an intense (self)governance process of the agents responsible for school practices would be perfected.

In our case, we chose to focus on a dense documentary mass to scrutinize the terrain under examination in detail, in its instituting geography, so to speak. In other words, we undertook a massive *archiving* of the raw material presented to us, according to the principle of *assemblage* of discourses (Didi-Huberman, 2016). Translated into Foucauldian terms, this procedural guideline describes the action of reordering the documentary sources around a given *problem*, which, arranged over series, enables the reconstitution of the rationalities in vogue in that historical framework, always in keeping with the premise that

4 In the original: “por produção de verdade, não entendo a produção de enunciados verdadeiros, mas a disposição de domínios em que a prática do verdadeiro e do falso pode ser, ao mesmo tempo, regulamentada e pertinente”.

5 In the original: “cada sociedade tem seu regime de verdade, sua ‘política geral’ da verdade, ou seja, os tipos de discurso acolhidos por ela os quais ela faz funcionar como verdadeiros; os mecanismos e as instâncias que permitem distinguir os enunciados verdadeiros ou falsos, a maneira como se sancionam uns e outros; as técnicas e os procedimentos que são valorizados para obter a verdade; o *status* dos que têm a tarefa de dizer o que funciona como verdade”.

6 In the original: “Por que um discurso se torna de tal forma englobante? Como assume foros de verdade tão abrangentes? Como se desenvolve e se espalha, indo da pré-escola à alfabetização de adultos, do ensino de educação física ao de matemática?”.

... no one will enter the order of discourse if they do not meet certain requirements or if they are not qualified to do so in the first place. More precisely: not all regions of discourse are equally open and permeable; some are highly forbidden (distinguished and distinguishing), while others seem almost open to all winds and, without prior restriction, at the disposal of each speaking subject.<sup>7</sup> (Foucault, 1996, p. 37, own translation).

If Foucault is right about the distributive economy immanent to the different enunciative places and their veridictive prerogatives, we must then admit that pedagogical press proves to be a factual continent of importance regarding the scoping of contemporary educational discursiveness in its characteristic prodigality.

Choosing magazines as a privileged source to analyze educational practices is not, however, an investigative novelty. On the contrary, its use in historiographic educational research is abundant, as shown by some studies that focused on specific titles: Guimarães (2011), Boto (2012), Rodrigues and Biccás (2015); among others.

According to Denice B. Catani (1996), one of the pioneers in studies using this documentary modality, publications specialized in teaching hold potential in two ways. First, they serve as a privileged means for the construction of classifying repertoires of the data they store, with the goal of supporting research on the history of educational practices, school subjects and education systems as a whole. The second use of educational publications concerns the intrinsic study of the very magazine under examination, enabling the intelligibility of specific moments of the organization and the dynamics of the pedagogical field. Therefore,

... it is possible to start from the study of certain educational magazines and take them as informative centers, whereas their characteristics evince ways of constructing and disseminating the legitimate discourse on teaching issues and the set of prescriptions or recommendations on ideal ways of teaching.<sup>8</sup> (Catani, 1996, p. 118, own translation).

However, the author notes a relevant analytical flaw that concerns the type of investigation proposed here: the work with simultaneous publications. For Catani (1996, p. 121, own translation), such an option would entail a risk

... in the sense that there is a broad recurrence of themes and ideas in the educational field, but at the expense of an in-depth approach that would consider the specific conditions of production in which the discourses are generated.<sup>9</sup>

Although generically congruent to the purposes of our investigation, Catani's argument differs from the contributions in use here for two reasons: the type of sources used and the analytical approach.

As for the first reason, what the researcher implied as a possible disadvantage becomes the exact opposite here: the generative conditions of the circulating discourse could be measured exactly by the sum of the different publications, and not only by the focus on one specific magazine.

7 In the original: "ninguém entrará na ordem do discurso se não satisfizer a certas exigências ou se não for, de início, qualificado para fazê-lo. Mais precisamente: nem todas as regiões do discurso são igualmente abertas e penetráveis; algumas são altamente proibidas (diferenciadas e diferenciantes), enquanto outras parecem quase abertas a todos os ventos e postas, sem restrição prévia, à disposição de cada sujeito que fala".

8 In the original: "é possível partir do estudo de determinados periódicos educacionais e tomá-los como núcleos informativos, enquanto suas características explicitam modos de construir e divulgar o discurso legítimo sobre as questões de ensino e conjunto de prescrições ou recomendações sobre formas ideais de realizar o trabalho docente".

9 In the original: "no sentido de que assim se caracteriza de modo amplo a recorrência de temas e ideias no campo educacional, porém deixa-se de lado o aprofundamento que é possível pela consideração das condições específicas de produção nas quais os discursos são gerados".

Regarding the second reason, the distinguishing element compared to the standard approach to magazines, as described by Catani, concerns the theoretical-methodological choices advocated here. Our interest does not lie in a historiographical study, unless it is understood in Foucauldian terms as an effort towards a *historical ontology of ourselves* (Foucault, 2000).

We should also clarify that the choice of different publications shares, in general, an argument put forth by Isabel C. A. S. Frade. After a survey of the investigative production on pedagogical magazines, the author notes that most studies use state publications, many of them already extinct. For her, “contemporary productions, especially commercial ones, have not been the object of research, not only from the point of view of the educational themes approached, but also as proposals for the construction of discourses to be read and of readers to be constructed”<sup>10</sup> (Frade, 1999, p. 170, own translation).

Cynthia P. Sousa and Denice B. Catani (1994, p. 183, own translation) deny this discrepancy by stating that publications by the private sector, organizations, associations and other groups are “privileged instances to understand the legal guidelines and also how experts read these messages, to the extent that they translate them into recommendations for the daily work of teachers”.<sup>11</sup>

The argument of the authors is plausible, but only in part as the discursive effectiveness of magazines could not be limited to the collection and propagation of ideas gestated elsewhere. On the contrary, it is assumed that pedagogical magazines work more as a particular and discontinuous discursive production than as an apparatus of reification of exogenous statements.

Another argument presented by the very Isabel C. A. S. Frade shows this, in which the formal characteristics of pedagogical magazines and other types of printed materials were compared. According to her, the pedagogical press “is a universe of its own, with laws of production conditioned to various elements present in the educational field”<sup>12</sup> (Frade, 2005, p. 117, own translation). Similarly, another study, this time on the differences and parallels between two magazines – *Nova Escola* and *Presença Pedagógica* –, proposes the following contextualization:

. . . magazines, either journalistic and/or pedagogical, are presented as means/modes of conveying information and/or inciting debate, and the texts end up configuring what can be characterized as a hybrid genre of discourse, insofar as, at the intersection of education and journalism, they weave, together, voices from different places, bringing marks of academic, pedagogical and journalistic discourses.<sup>13</sup> (Smolka & Gentil, 2004, p. 210, own translation).

Another highlight is a constant manifestation of the empirical archive of this study, managed by Guiomar N. De Mello, then executive director of Fundação Victor Civita; the Foundation was responsible for the first three decades of *Nova Escola* – until late 2015, when it passed to the administration of Fundação Lemann – on the mission of the educational press: the dissemination of knowledge about education. Such an intent would aim at both the internal communication of the field and the external social marketing, encompassing different but complementary target audiences.

10 In the original: “não têm sido objeto de investigação produções contemporâneas, sobretudo as comerciais, não apenas do ponto de vista dos temas educacionais tratados, mas também como propostas de construção de discursos a serem lidos e de leitores a serem construídos”.

11 In the original: “Instâncias privilegiadas para compreensão das orientações legais e também da leitura que os especialistas fazem dessas mensagens, na medida em que as traduzem em recomendações para a atuação cotidiana dos professores”.

12 In the original: “constitui um universo próprio, com leis de produção condicionadas a diversos elementos presentes no campo educacional”.

13 In the original: “as revistas, de caráter jornalístico e/ou pedagógico, apresentam-se como meios/modos de veicular informações e/ou incitar o debate, sendo que os textos acabam por configurar o que se pode caracterizar como um gênero híbrido de discurso, na medida em que, transitando nas interseções da educação e do jornalismo, tramam vozes de diferentes lugares, trazendo marcas de discursos acadêmico, pedagógico e jornalístico”.

*The sector has a problem of internal communication, it has enough critical capacity to conduct a communication policy of its own, either because it involves a very large number of teachers or because it affects the entire population of a certain age group indirectly, a very large number of families too. The other side of the issue is social communication about Education . . . . Public opinion is unclear on the role of Education in the whole of social policies, and it is very difficult to reach a consensus on what the priorities should be. {Guiomar Namó de Mello, ED, 1998}.<sup>14</sup>*

Despite the, in our view, overestimated expectations given to the print media and its modulating role in the field, the effects of its circulation are controversial and ripe for debate. This is the conclusion from a set of other studies that examined pedagogical magazines and, in particular, *Nova Escola* – by far the prime object of interest of researchers –, such as the one by Bueno (2007), in recognizing in it a *regressive* cultural product marked by voluntarism and stereotyping, as well as a pragmatic views of knowledge. This is also the case of the study by Bezerra and Araújo (2012, p. 171, own translation):

Its thematic focus is restricted to the daily life in the classroom and the vertical relationship that is established between public policies and teachers. With this, the magazine assigns to the school and curricular practices visible autonomy in relation to socio-historical determinants, projecting onto teachers a large part of the responsibility for their success or failure.<sup>15</sup>

Discredited by critics and apparently acclaimed by the reading public, *Nova Escola* is certainly a unique chapter in the history of the educational press in Brazil. Based on the investigation by Daniel Revah (2013), it is known that the magazine was preceded by another similar initiative by the same publishing house, Editora Abril – the magazine called *Escola* – which ran from 1971 to 1974 with 27 issues published. Although they targeted the same audience, they are distinguished by the resounding editorial success of *Nova Escola* as opposed to the failure of *Escola*.

Unlike *Nova Escola*, its counterparts attracted little attention from researchers. Still, although the educational press is a vigorous place for research in education, the studies in this field do not usually involve cross-analyses of different publications or extended time periods, such as the one proposed here.

This study is interested in the set of the most active publications in recent decades –whether they are printed magazines (sold in different sales outlets and via subscriptions), or online magazines (all publications eventually made their content available online). In addition to expressive print runs, it is believed that these magazines covered much of the national territory, thus reaching a wide dissemination of certain discursive dictates among educational agents.

Finally, two relevant pieces of information: the places where the magazines were based and the editorial bodies responsible for them. In São Paulo: *Nova Escola*, under the auspices of Fundação Victor Civita and later Fundação Lemann; *Educação*, by Editora Segmento; and *Carta(s)*, by Editora Confiança. In Minas Gerais: *Presença Pedagógica*, by Editora Dimensão and, as of 2018, by Grupo Linha Direta. In Paraná: *Profissão Mestre*, by Humana Editorial. In Rio Grande do Sul: *Pátio(s)*, by Grupo A.

14 Henceforth, every time the sources of the study are cited, they will be indented and in italics to differentiate them from the other citations. Similarly, the bibliographic data – name of the respondent, acronym of the magazine and year of publication – will be indicated between brackets.

15 In the original: “Seu enfoque temático é restrito ao cotidiano da sala de aula e à relação vertical que se estabelece entre as políticas públicas e os professores. Com isso, o periódico atribui à escola e às práticas curriculares visível autonomia em relação aos determinantes sócio-históricos, projetando para o professor grande parte da responsabilidade por seu sucesso ou fracasso”.

## Assembling a complex archive

Among the requirements of the investigation, the screening of the material proved to be an especially laborious and time-consuming step. Since most magazines were present in the collections in a discontinuous way and/or were not available online, tracing them – in particular the older issues – required the use of libraries in different parts of the country. It should be noted that, because it is a fluctuating type of publication, its preservation as a document was not seen in all the collections. On the contrary.

Once we finished collecting the material, we were faced with a puzzle of statements that, at first glance, made impossible any attempt to preview an organization approach, as the subjects and opinions therein were so profuse and disconnected from one another.

Confronted with the intricate mass of data, we set out to construct a gradual approximation regarding the characterization of the respondents and topics discussed.

First general provision: in the time period covered by the investigation, the 1,165 interviews were distributed as follows:

### Graph 1

Number of interviews per magazine



Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

To contextualize these numbers, we should consider the frequency of the publications and the constancy of the interviews in the published issues. For the first item, *Educação* and *Profissão Mestre* had monthly issues; *Nova Escola* and *Carta(s)*, ten issues per year; *Presença Pedagógica*, a new issue every two months; and *Pátio(s)*, quarterly issues.

Regarding the frequency of the interviews, they featured in all the issues of *Carta(s)*, *Educação* e *Pátio(s)*. In *Profissão Mestre*, there are sporadic issues without interviews. In *Presença Pedagógica*, there is a gap between mid-2017 and early 2018, probably due to the publisher change. The magazine then resumes featuring an interview in every issue. As for *Nova Escola*, the interview feature was fragmentary from its launch until 2000, when a specific section titled “Fala, Mestre!” (“Speak, Master!”) began to feature, from 2013 onwards few issues were published without interviews, with bigger gaps beginning in 2016; in the last year of the study, however, there were interviews in all issues.

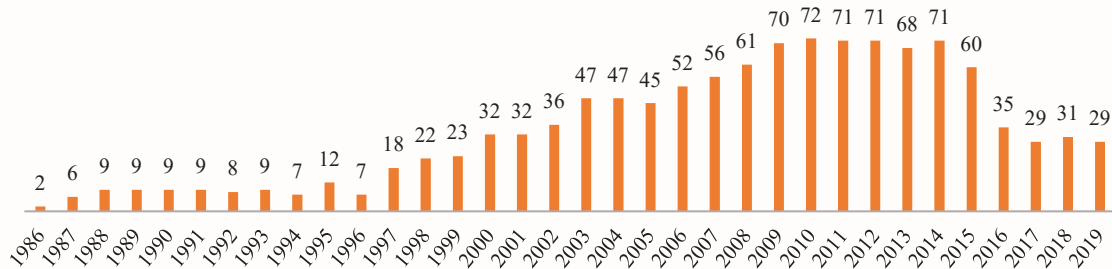
Three additional pieces of information are also required: 1) when an issue featured more than one interview, we chose only one of them (the one highlighted on the front of the issue); 2) most of the interviews were conducted with only one respondent; there were, however, 27 pairs, two trios (one in *Nova Escola*; another in *Profissão Mestre*) and only one quartet (in *Nova Escola*); and 3) the length of the interviews – including the photographic image of the respondent and a brief introduction presenting their professional credentials and the main subject – could go from two to sometimes more than ten pages (the latter case was found only in *Presença Pedagógica*), with three pages being the most common case.



Regarding the distribution of interviews by time, the outline is as follows:

## Graph 2

*Distribution of interviews by time*



Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

The graph attests the emergence, peak and decline of the editorial niche of pedagogical magazines. Despite the punctuality of the highlighted data, there is strong evidence that the emergence of the online modality of publications of the genre led to either the disappearance or the gradual replacement of the printed publication by the online counterpart. The first hypothesis is evident in the case of magazines discontinued during the investigation's time period: *Carta(s)* (discontinued in 2015), *Profissão Mestre* (2016), and *Pátio(s)* (2018). The second hypothesis applies to the magazines that continued to be published (until 2019): *Educação*, *Nova Escola* and *Presença Pedagógica na Sala de Aula*.

## Entering the universe of pedagogical magazines

Because of how rich the research topic at hand is, there are many possibilities to assemble the investigation archive. As far as we are concerned, the effort was made towards a more focused approach to the material, capable, perhaps, of answering two major surface questions: 1) who speaks; and 2) about what.

The restricted approach was chosen because we could not properly measure the effects of the reception of the discourses – the physical state of the archive we chose did not allow it –, we refrained from subtracting peremptory interpretative conclusions, much less unequivocal generalizations about the discursive figurations in front of us.

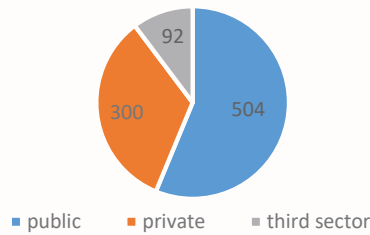
We wanted to delve into the intricacies of that thick discursive universe that was outlined in a closed way, trying to identify some landmarks of a discursive territory not only prolific, but also quite rugged, because of its asymmetrical and uneven character. Therefore, two procedural strategies were activated.

Regarding the first question (*who speaks*), we used a series of graphs and tables due to understanding them as useful cumulative resources for a panoramic presentation of the information about the respondents. The second question (*about what*) required a heterodox resource when assembling the archive as we had intended: the composition of lists of statements. This choice will be justified later. Let us approach the first front.

## Who speaks

The first movement towards the characterization of the respondents concerns their enunciative position; more specifically, the social sector from which they came and their link with the educational field. The data were those available at the time of conducting/publishing the interviews. Dated information, therefore.

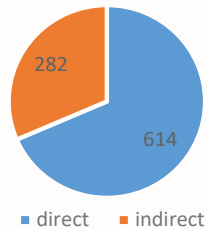
**Graph 3**  
*Interviewees' sector of activity*



Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

As for Graph 3, in percentage terms, 56% of the interviewees were linked to the public sector, 34% to the private sector and 10% to the third sector. As for Graph 4, 68.5% had a direct link with the field, whereas 31.5% had an indirect link.<sup>16</sup>

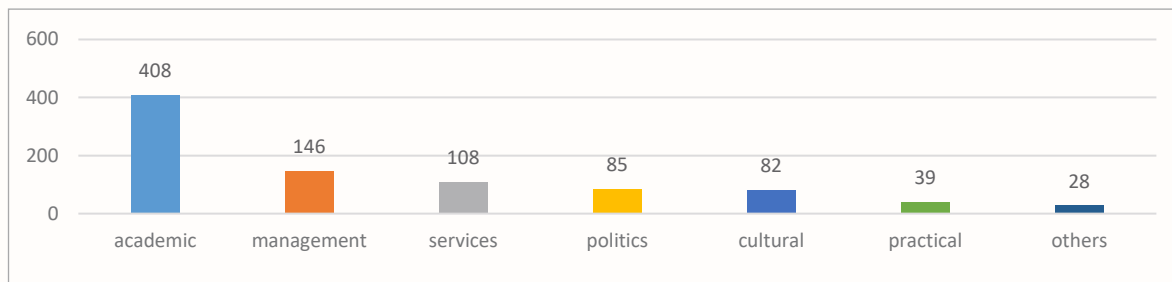
**Graph 4**  
*Interviewees' link with education*



Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

Another graph is presented with the interviewees' fields of activity.

**Graph 5**  
*Interviewees' field of activity*



Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

Considering the internal variations of the two groups of interviewees (Brazilian and foreigners), the distribution remained similar in both. Regarding each of the areas, we have the following:

The first – *academic* – accounts for 46% of the total. These are the respondents directly linked to the university sector, either as professors (most); deans, directors and university coordinators; researchers and heads of centers, laboratories and related services.

16 Note: regarding the gender of the interviewees, 59% were male and 41% were female.

*Management* – 16% – includes founders, directors, deans and coordinators of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), associations, institutes, foundations and other related bodies; directors and coordinators of state bodies and services; representatives of multilateral bodies.

The *services* item – 12% – includes consultants, advisors and speakers; entrepreneurs and executives in the educational sector; employees of public bodies; the whole range of professionals who provide services to schools and other educational bodies, such as trainers, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychopedagogues and speech therapists.

*Politics* – 9% – refers to State ministers; municipal and state secretaries; (vice-)presidents and secretaries of ministries and public bodies; senators, state and federal legislators, councilors; members of state and national councils and committees; even a president of the Republic and the respective first lady.

Nine percent of the interviewees were connected to the *cultural* field. This is a list of various types of crafts: writers and authors of books, including textbooks; journalists and article writers; filmmakers; musicians, composers and conductors; art and literature critics; museum and theater directors; choreographers; storytellers; comic book writers etc.

The *practical* scope includes those responsible for projects and training programs; primary school teachers; headteachers at schools, daycare centers and networks; pedagogical coordinators and supervisors; pedagogues in general. In all, 4% of all respondents.

Finally, the category *others* – 3% – includes fields of activity less close to the educational domain or respondents whose interviews did not focus on topics of immediate interest to this domain: entrepreneurs and executives from other industries; economists; law professionals; activists, etc.

Amid the plethora of information laid out so far, it is worth underlining the fact that the characterization of the discursive characters was presented in a way that is too loose and elastic, bringing together different social/professional types – a sample, perhaps, of an excessive porosity of the field to a range of exogenous points of view about a practice carried by millions of professionals in a country with continental size. Even if we admit that this is a practice that borders many fields, we should ask ourselves: who is actually qualified to speak on behalf of, or for, Brazilian education?

To sketch a reasonable answer to that question, three basic distinctions must be considered: 1) as seen, the respondents could present affiliation bordering the educational field *stricto sensu*; 2) they could be foreigners (and Brazilians residing outside Brazil) or Brazilians (and foreigners residing in the country); and 3) could be more or less immediately recognizable by readers.

As for the last point, we notice, especially in the case of Brazilian interviewees, a remarkable list of well-known individuals from a broad social and cultural spectrum, including, for example, Paulo Freire, Olavo de Carvalho, anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, Congressman Romário; the choreographer Ivaldo Bertazzo, entrepreneur Ricardo Semler, the first lady Ruth Cardoso, psychologist Rosely Sayão, geographer Milton Santos, cartoonist Ziraldo; the sex therapist Marta Suplicy, the NGO head Viviane Senna, indigenous activist Ailton Krenak, the literary critic Antonio Candido, and so on.

Regarding foreigners – from thirty countries – the list of prominent names includes writers José Saramago, Gonçalo M. Tavares and Mia Couto; intellectuals Pierre Lévy, Paul Virilio, Fernando Savater, Domenico De Masi, István Mészáros; historian Roger Chartier; psychiatrist Claudio Naranjo; art critic Luis Camnitzer; Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi, among many others.

As for interviewees who featured more than once (up to three times) – showing solid public recognition and, therefore, the degree of editorial interest they aroused –, we have the following configuration:<sup>17</sup>

- nine appearances: António Nóvoa.
- eight: Howard Gardner and José Pacheco.
- seven: Magda Becker Soares.
- six: [foreigners] Antoni Zabala, César Coll and Emilia Ferreiro; [Brazilians] Cristovam Buarque, Maria Helena G. De Castro, Paulo Renato Souza and Yves de la Taille.
- five: [foreigners] Alicia Fernández, Bernardo Toro and Roger Chartier; [Brazilians] Guiomar Namó de Mello and Mario Sergio Cortella.
- four: [foreigners] Ana Teberosky, and Anne-Marie Chartier; [Brazilians] Bernard, Carlos Roberto Jamil Cury, Celso Antunes, Claudio de Moura Castro, Dermeval Saviani, Fernando Haddad, Frei Betto, Joel Rufino dos Santos, José Francisco Soares, Maria Alice Setubal, Mozart Neves Ramos, Paulo Freire, and Rubem Alves.
- three: [foreigners] Alvaro Marchesi, Bernard Lahire, Boudewijn Van Velzen, Carl Honoré, Carlos Alberto Torres, Charles, Hadji, and Fernando Hernández-Hernández, Isabel Alarcão, José Morais, Lee Sing Kong, Marcelo Gleiser, Mario Carretero, Pierre Levy, Sarah Paín, and Thomas Armstrong; [Brazilians] Ana Mae Barbosa, Ana Maria Machado, Antonio Carlos Gomes da Costa, Cipriano Luckesi, Edmir Perrotti, Elvira Souza Lima, Gilberto Dimenstein, Gustavo Ioschpe, Ivan Izquierdo, Jean-Baptiste de Araújo Oliveira, Katia Stocco Smole, Laurentino Gomes, Léa Fagundes, Luís Carlos de Menezes, Marcos Bagno, Marcos Garcia Neira, Maria Antonieta Celani, Maria Malta Campos, Nita Freire, Paulo Ghiraldelli Júnior, Roberto Lent, Simon Schwartzman, Sírio Possenti, Tania Zagury, Telma Vinha e Ubiratan D'Ambrosio.

Special emphasis should be given to the participations of Paulo Freire, the author most widely referred to by the other interviewees, both Brazilian and foreign. Freire was interviewed four times: two by *Nova Escola* (1989 and 1993), one by *Presença Pedagógica* (1995) and another by *Pátio* (1997) – the latter was a compilation of excerpts from previous interviews conducted by Carlos Alberto Torres. Such texts, we believe, have undoubted value as documents in terms of Freire's bio-bibliography. Moreover, the same can be said about Magda Becker Soares, the most assiduous Brazilian interviewee in the analyzed archive.

However, when the interviewees are arranged side by side – and remembering the proportion of foreign participations (1/3 of the interviews) –, the recurrence of António Nóvoa stands out, with interviews given to seven of the ten magazines, between 2001 and 2017. Thus, if we had to choose one person as the epitome of the editorial niche of pedagogical publications, this would undoubtedly be the former dean of the Universidade de Lisboa.

### What is spoken about

The second front of the analysis of the archive aimed at an extensive mapping of the thematic configurations that came to light in the interviews. It was the most ingenious step in terms of investigative archiving, since it required diving into the proper argumentative scope of the material, resulting in a *proto-cataloguing* of the topics discussed. Thus, a list of themes was drawn comprising ten different general categories, subdivided into 45 subcategories.

17 In the case of the Brazilian Marcelo Gleiser and the Argentinian Carlos Alberto Torres, linked to American universities, both were counted as residing in the United States. The opposite occurred with Iván Izquierdo and Bernard Charlot, based in Brazil.

Many of the thematizations contained in the interviews are closely related to the various subcategories and may present juxtaposition, therefore leading to other types of framing. In our case, the allocation criterion was based on the type of emphasis chosen by the interviewees themselves.

**Chart 1**  
*Interview themes*

Teaching - 22%	cross-sectional topics
	teaching of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
	Language teaching
	teaching theorizations
	early childhood education
	teaching of Humanities/Social Sciences
Pedagogical/school life - 19%	learning/development
	digital age
	conviviality/school conflicts
	the youth
	learning assessment
	family and school/education
Education policy and organization - 13%	educational/school management
	educational legislation
	education financing/economics
	educational assessment
	the university
	curriculum
The situation of the educational field - 12%	role/functions of education/school
	socio-educational situation
	criticism of education/school
	education/school perspectives
	history (of education)
Reading and writing - 10%	literature/literary reading
	literacy
	reading practices
	textbooks
Teaching profession - 9%	teacher training
	the work of teachers
	teacher identity
Programs and projects - 5%	public sector initiatives
	third sector initiatives
Teaching modalities - 5%	non-school practices
	special/inclusive education
	vocational/technological education
	education of indigenous peoples
	youth and adult education
	rural education
	distance education

(Continua)

(Continuação)

International experiences – 5%	Europe
	Asia/Oceania
	Latin America
	North America
	Africa
Other – 1%	others

Source: Prepared by the author based on research data.

These numbers cannot elucidate the thematic vastness that grew in body and movement in the material under examination by themselves. Next, the 45 subcategories are detailed, highlighting the predominant topics in each case. It is clear, however, that the subjects listed below do not exhaust the astonishing number of issues addressed in the hundreds of interviews. The categories are described below.

Covering almost a quarter of all interviews, the category *education* describes a type of explicit concern of the speakers: the proper didactic/methodological focus on certain subjects. In *cross-sectional topics*: issues regarding food, environmental, financial, moral, emotional, sexual and gender education. In *teaching of Natural Sciences and Mathematics*: scientific learning and literacy, ethnomathematics, history of science. In *Language teaching*: theater, music, dance, visual arts, cinema, body and linguistic cultures. In *teaching theorizations*: ideas of Freire, Montessori and Ferreiro, curriculum based on skills and projects. In *early childhood education*: kindergarten, playing and games, psychology, sociology and neuroscience of childhood. Finally, in *teaching Humanities/Social Sciences*: questions regarding training in/teaching philosophy, history and geography.

The second largest category includes a group of pressing issues in the daily lives of educators. Namely, in *learning/development*: body, emotions, desire, subjectivity, health, morality, cognition, school failure and evasion. In *digital age*: digital exclusion and inclusion, conscious use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and social networks. In *conviviality/school conflicts*: violence and bullying in everyday school life and families, indiscipline, conflict mediation. In *the youth*: youth culture and leadership, prevention of drug addiction, depression, etc. In *learning assessment*: formative and external evaluation, Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio [National High School Exam] (Enem), criticism of the logic of failure/approval. In *family and school/education*: responsibilities and differences between parental and teaching roles, new family arrangements.

The third category, *education policy and organization*, was organized into six different blocks. Namely: in *educational/school management*: the quality of public and private schools, educational reforms, municipalization, business management model, Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica [Primary Education Development Index] (Ideb), different administrations of the Ministry of Education (MEC). In *educational legislation*: (critical) analysis of the Lei de Diretrizes e Bases [Bases and Guidelines Law] (LDB), the Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente [Child and Adolescent Statute] (ECA), the Plano Nacional de Educação [National Education Plan] (PNE), the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais [National Curriculum Guidelines] (PCN), the Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação Infantil [National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education] (DCNEIs), the Base Nacional Comum Curricular [National Common Curriculum Base] (BNCC) and other legal frameworks. In *education financing/economics*: (critical) analysis of the Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação [Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Primary Education and Valorization of Education Professionals] (Fundeb), World Bank policies, good (and bad) practices

of use of funds. In *educational assessment*, school systems of different countries and the position of Brazil, state evaluation systems, institutional evaluation in early childhood education. In *university scope*: race/social quotas, Fundo de Financiamento Estudantil [Student Fund] (Fies), Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação à Docência [Institutional Program of Undergraduate Research Scholarships] (Pibid). In *curriculum*: (critical) analysis of PCN, transdisciplinarity, full-time school, curricular changes in Brazil and other countries.

The category *situation of the educational field* concentrated the most reflexive approaches on education (particularly on the school), subdivided according to the five axes. In *role/functions of education/school*: educational crisis and utopia, democratic citizenship, ideas by Paulo Freire and other thinkers. In *socio-educational situation*: structural problems of the Brazilian education system, globalization, reforms, etc. In *criticism of education/school*: democratic school experiences, poor training of teachers and school managers, criticism of the Ministry of Education. In *education/school perspectives*: an agenda for the twenty-first century, innovative spaces around the world, new technologies and changes in the cognitive paradigm. Finally, in *history of education*: nineteenth and early twentieth century, Escola Nova, etc.

The predominant themes in the fifth category, *reading and writing*, were: in *literature/literary reading*: children's, indigenous and African-Brazilian literature, storytelling; in *literacy/literacy*: proposals for literacy, training and conversation of reading as a habit; in *reading practices*: policies to promote reading, school libraries, audiovisual literacy; *textbooks*): Programa Nacional do Livro e do Material Didático [National Program of Books and Teaching Materials] (PNLD), publishing market, outsourcing, etc.

The category *teaching practice* was subdivided into three complementary fronts, including the main inflections around *teacher training*, initial and/or continued, and *the work of teachers*, teaching conditions, career, wages. The third subcategory includes discussions about the *teacher identity*: role and profile of the (good) teacher, crisis, (de)valuation, etc.

In the category *programs and projects*, the data were subdivided into two types: 1) *public sector initiatives*, such as the programs Alfabetização Solidária, Mais Educação, Bolsa Família, Escola Integrada (PEI), etc.; and 2) *initiatives of the third sector*, such as the Center for Studies and Research in Education, Culture and Community Action (Cenpec) and the Centro Popular de Cultura e Desenvolvimento [Center for Popular Culture and Development] (CPCD), the Victor Civita and Bradesco Foundations, the Institutes Ayrton Senna, Reação, Geledés, etc.

The eighth category, *teaching methods*, covers types of educational initiatives aimed at the general public or specific segments of the public. The themes mobilized approached the references and challenges encountered in the practices of *special/inclusive, professional/technological, indigenous, youth and adults, rural and distance education*. In the case of *non-school practices*, the highlights were discussions about non-formal and informal education, educational cities, art and science museums, as well as television channels.

The penultimate category, *international experiences*, includes the report of some specific actions carried out in different parts of the globe: Nordic countries, Portugal, Spain, France, China, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Argentina, United States and Mozambique.

Finally, the category *others* covers discussions that, such as they were conducted, did not approach education directly. Three themes, however, repeated: slavery in Brazil, indigenous issues and the life/biography of Getúlio Vargas.

\* \* \*

So far, the findings uncover a universe marked by impressive copiousness, heterogeneity and multiplication of discourses, covering everything – from intricate debates about equally intricate subjects to trivial, commonplace topics. The analytical task could stop had we decided to formulate a specular portrait of the archive and not to create a moving picture of some events operating there in a transversal way.

How to do it? Umberto Eco (2010, p. 15, own translation) aptly states that,

. . . when we define by essence for something and so, to be able to talk about it, to make it comprehensible and in some way perceivable, we list its properties . . . . From the Greeks to our days, the accidental properties of a thing are considered infinite.<sup>18</sup>

Via this kind of discursive infinity that designates the archive as materiality, a new strategy was activated to prospect certain enunciative cores that dotted the discursive mass of the study: the listing process. More specifically, it involved the making of some lists – only six here, among many other possibilities –, each revolving around the same type of general thematization: in this case, what the interviewees stated that the educational field *has* and *does not have*, as well as what educators *need*, *want*, *must* and finally *cannot* do in their work. Three pairs, in a way antithetical, or in another way complementary as a whole.

To formulate some sort of taxonomy of discursive events under examination amid their continuous proliferation and dispersion, listing was conducted as a cataloging gesture whose analytical results would come from the recomposition, on other foundations, of the anonymous order of discourse, in the wake of which unfolds a myriad of veridictive-subjectivating effects between those in and entangled by it.

Oblivious to any interpretative, elucidative, illustrative or any other opportunities, the analytical power of lists is, in this case, made up by the analog ordering – by mere contingency and not by similarity, we should stress – of statements arranged side by side; regardless of the original context in which they emerged. The importance here lies in the combinatorial balance of the statements as their intrinsic inconstancy is considered. In short, it attempts to temporarily catch something that is always moving.

It can be said that the list sits in the game between discontinuity and continuity. It can be read in different directions, and the items that compose it can be arranged according to different classification criteria, such as numerical, alphabetical, sonorous and hierarchical . . . . In addition, its flexibility allows the insertion and subtraction of elements in the relationship that constituted it, without damaging its structure. Its boundaries are mobile.<sup>19</sup> (Maciel, 2009, p. 29, own translation).

The following are the compositions that we managed to create. The excerpts are arranged in chronological order, without repeating the interviewees. In all, sixty different interviewees in sixty excerpts, always in the first person of the plural – as they materialized in the archive –, thus consubstantiating a net effect of contemporary educational discursiveness.

And if our argument has been plausible so far, the textual arrangements ahead should speak for themselves.

18 In the original: “quando não se consegue dar uma definição de alguma coisa por essência e, portanto, para falar dela, para torná-la compreensível, perceptível de alguma maneira, elencam-se suas propriedades . . . . As propriedades acidentais de uma coisa, desde os gregos até os nossos dias, são consideradas infinitas”.

19 In the original: “Pode-se dizer que a lista assenta no jogo entre descontinuidade e continuidade. Ela pode ser lida em diferentes direções, e os itens que a compõem podem ser ordenados segundo vários critérios de classificação, como o numérico, o alfabético, o sonoro e o hierárquico . . . . Ademais, sua flexibilidade permite a inserção e subtração de elementos na relação que a constituiu, sem que isso prejudique sua estrutura. Seus limites são móveis”.



What we have:

- *a weakness: we feel rewarded not only financially, but mostly by the smiles and growth of the children* {Antoni Zabala, ED, 1998};
- *the impression that everything is as it always has been and we, workers in the field, are feeling very dispirited, asking ourselves how to train teachers* {Isabel Alarcão, PT, 2002};
- *the feeling of going through a time of fast-paced change in how knowledge is socially managed and, simultaneously, a stagnation in the ways of teaching or transmitting it* {Juan Ignacio Pozo, PT, 2005};
- *few teachers that we could call full and competent readers, able to discuss a book that they are reading or for whom reading is part of their daily lives* {Marisa Lajolo, CF, 2008};
- *a large number of university students, for example, of Pedagogy and Language majors, but most of them will not work as teachers* {Marcos Bagno, PP, 2008};
- *a large deficit in childcare, youth and adult education (EJA) and vocational and higher education* {Flávio Arns, PM, 2009};
- *the “Escolinha do Professor Raimundo”, but not the “Hospital do Dr. Raimundo”. I mean, there is a systemic devaluation of the profession here* {Romualdo Portella de Oliveira, EC, 2010};
- *cases of bullying, threats, assault and cyberbullying* {Antonio Ozório Nunes, CF, 2011};
- *a culture in which the teacher needs to be liked, as if a successful education depended on having a good relationship with students* {Juvenal Savian Filho, CN, 2012};
- *a crazy thing in Brazil, in which there is a kind of anti-education, an education that does not work for anything, except to humiliate and hurt people* {Marcia Tiburi, PM, 2015}.

What we lack:

- *the courage to say “come to my class if you like it”, because we are afraid to being left to talk to ourselves* {Pedro Demo, NE, 2001};
- *Black diplomats, very rare doctors, the Federal Supreme Court does not have a black minister* {Cristovam Buarque, PT, 2003};
- *routines to structure children’s lives* {Lino De Macedo, NE, 2005};
- *good moral examples to give our children* {José Ângelo Gaiarsa, PM, 2006};
- *reliable political and cultural references* {Luciano Pires, PM, 2006};
- *how to change the basic conditions that produced inequality in this country* {Selma Garrido Pimenta, EC, 2008};
- *a culture of demand, rigor and quality* {Domingos Fernandes, ED, 2009};
- *a concern with building the national identity through education* {Ana Clara Bortoleto Nery, ED, 2010};
- *a curriculum that establishes, for example, “at the end of the first year, the child should be able to...”, or “at the end of early childhood education, the child should be able to...”* {Magda Becker Soares, PP, 2012};
- *a policy of recognition and appreciation of this professional [teacher], at all levels* {Monica Gardelli Franco, ED, 2017}.

What we need:

- *to remove the obstacles that prevent us from being happy and to reject the idea that teaching and learning are necessarily boring and sad practices* {Paulo Freire, NE, 1989};
- *to value ourselves, this is very important for the new school to emerge. Appreciation that begins in the small things* {Moacir Gadotti, NE, 1991};

- *to know three important things: to know how to teach; to know who John is; to know in what context John lives* {Hamilton Werneck, PM, 2006};
- *to understand who the teacher is, their personality, because the way of teaching, teaching practices and pedagogy are closely linked to their personal history* {Ivor Goodson, PT, 2007};
- *to not forget that there can be in every child and in every young person, waiting to be awoken, a philosopher, a thinker, a poet, a builder of his world* {Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, PTem, 2009};
- *to create the space for dialogue between teachers and young people. Everything is possible and does not need juggling around* {Juarez Dayrell, PP, 2010};
- *to stop viewing teachers as priests. They are managers and a manager produces effects* {Cipriano Luckesi, ED, 2012};
- *to encourage them [the children], to give them more elements to understand the value of education. This will come from inspiration, which must be instilled by the school and the teacher* {Brian Perkins, ED, 2013};
- *passionate, engaged people to give society hope, but those who join should know that they will work incessantly* {Andrea Caldas, EC, 2015};
- *of far fewer yard keepers, fewer police, fewer outside intervenors. Teachers need to spend less time disciplining* {José María Avilés Martínez, ED, 2015}.

#### What we want:

- *everyone to leave school with the necessary skills to read, write and do calculations. We want this reading to make sense and to help us understand the world* {Maria Aparecida Perez, ED, 2003};
- *to awake in them [students] the ability of abstract thinking, to think about systems, to solve problems, to work as a team and to cope with uncertainties* {Cristián Cox, NE, 2004};
- *every student to learn more than he learns today* {John Edwin Mein, ED, 2005};
- *to leave our children with people who can add value to their happiness, enthusiasm, optimism and personal fulfillment* {Rogério Mainardes, PM, 2004};
- *to establish what the child needs to know at the end of each year. If we make this clear to parents, they will know what to demand from school* {Mozart Neves Ramos, PTef, 2011};
- *teachers to promote the search for this knowledge by students, teaching students to research and discover, to work as a team, to learn how to learn* {José Fernandes de Lima, CN, 2011};
- *to build conscious citizens who read and who can make incredible discoveries through the literary text, which can break the formatting shackles of education* {Aparecida Paiva, CF, 2013};
- *students to know how to produce knowledge competently to perform well in many areas of everyday life* {Colin Lankshear, PP, 2013};
- *a school that helps students to consider the same fact through different perspectives, points of view and lenses, so that they can reach their own conclusion, with elements that support their opinions consistently* {Carla Viana Coscarelli, PP, 2017};
- *students to be able to no longer accept as natural the injustices they witness and, therefore, to be able to act to overcome them to prevent these violations* {Oscar Vilhena Vieira, ED, 2017}.

#### What we must do:

- *put ourselves as equals, where respectfully we may also say “Hey, I do not accept what you are doing”. In other words, it is a game of authority that we cannot deny* {Ángel Díaz Barriga, PP, 1998};

- *be attentive to the fact that, perhaps, Brazil is pushing onto school and education too great a responsibility* {Geraldinho Vieira, PP, 2000};
- *earn to have confidence in ourselves: we are perfectly able to move towards a society of permanent learning and creation* {Pierre Lévy, PT, 2001};
- *be humane and have the ability to respect and a contagious citizen's joy. This will be passed on to the children* {Fernando Savater, NE, 2002};
- *be demanding with our children and students. But we must never put the demand before understanding* {Antonio Carlos Gomes da Costa, ED, 2003};
- *live the profession for hope and with hope to be able to give hope to our students. There can be no educational process without hope* {Xesus R. Jares, PTei, 2006};
- *encourage them [children] to have universal solidarity. It is clear that the family plays a crucial role, but the school also plays an important and unique role* {Philippe Meirieu, PT, 2008};
- *apply the same kind of reasoning to brain differences that we apply to biodiversity or cultural diversity* {Thomas Armstrong, PTei, 2008};
- *stop lying to students pretending that we teach them useful things. Sometimes this is true, and by doing so, we give pedagogical strength to what we teach* {Bernard Charlot, PTem, 2011};
- *greatly improve the training and cultural and informational level of our teachers* {Iván Izquierdo, PTef, 2018}.

What we cannot do:

- *leave professional ethics out of our considerations: we need to do things as best as possible because of our actions produce strong consequences for our students* {Miguel Zabalza, ED, 2004};
- *to pour into them [schools] all the problems of society – that is a responsibility of society as a whole* {Peter Moss, PTei, 2005};
- *teach that the world belongs to the strongest, smartest or richest and encourage individualism, competition, omission and alienation* {Tião Rocha, PP, 2005};
- *overestimate technological resources because nothing replaces the presence and interference of the teacher in the classroom* {Tania Zagury, NE, 2006};
- *let go of the thought that transformation is possible. Keeping utopias alive is keeping the human being alive* {Graça Paulino, PP, 2011};
- *discuss the causes of poor performance measured by a test without discussing the test. No evaluation is neutral* {Luiz Márcio Imenes, CF, 2013};
- *find it normal that a school has walls sprayed, bathrooms lacking toilet paper and a mirror, that is not reasonable* {Tereza Perez, CF, 2013};
- *talk about a deficit of something that has not yet been defined. In other words, how can we talk about attention deficit without a prior definition of what attention is?* {Alicia Fernández, PM, 2014};
- *submit to this kind of “information tsunami” that we experience every day and that stupefies us* {Mario Sergio Cortella, PM, 2015};
- *end inequality in education if we do not face the issue of the difference between private and public education* {Abdeljalil Akkari, PM, 2016}.

### Final considerations

The path that comes to an end here enables some brief reflections on the *modus operandi* of contemporary educational discursiveness and the ethical-political horizon it has nurtured.

We are faced with an extensive chorus of voices – rarely dissonant ones, it is true – that come together to call for a more proactive and rewarding education, or at least less innocuous than the one that has been in force in recent decades. Whether by the bias of criticism or proposition, the consensus in the discourse was the lively enthusiasm regarding the renewal of pedagogical practices and customs – naturally always for an undisputed improvement of the world and its inhabitants, despite so many adversities, reluctance and iniquities; they also frequently alluded to in the archive.

To admit that such thinking is reasonable, we must go back to the opening hypothesis of the study, that the pedagogical press had not only the overt task of keeping the people in charge of the nation's education up to date, but to the same extent the intention of establishing certain normative rationalities, spreading them and perhaps entrenching them in daily practices. This would be achieved with the voluntary subscription of educators to a series of common axioms and the duties related to them.

Thus, with the motto of inevitable progress – of students, of society, of the country, of the world, of themselves, of whatever it was –, a spiritual voracity seems to have settled in the bosom of educational discursiveness, regimenting a continuous, multicentric and, after all, undetermined self-government of professionals, in the wake of which marks of excess and insufficiency coexist in a strange harmony. Hence a fundamental paradox: if, on the one hand, the more duties educators have, the more they need, want and should have, on the other hand, as these duties grow, the poorer the results are and the less effective. Rise and fall at the same time, so to speak.

Thus, a circular and saturating discursive movement is set in motion since its starting and ending points are the same. In other words, advances and setbacks seem to annul each other reciprocally and continuously. Perhaps, the Sisyphean tragedy that often emanates from the images shared about the teaching profession, according to which everything boils down to aiming too high and achieving too little.

A possible elucidation of this phenomenon is offered by Noguera-Ramírez and Marín-Díaz (2019, p. 31, own translation):

... the growing process of “educationalization” or “social pedagogization,” accelerated since the last decade of the last century, put education at the center of the most diverse social problems while implying a certain weakening of Pedagogy (as a discipline and as a professional field), due to the dispersion and disarticulation of concepts, notions, techniques and practices promoted from different institutional instances.<sup>20</sup>

The immersion in the empirical materiality of the study leaves no doubt as to an overtly discretionary bias emerging among the insistent appeals to educators, resulting in a menu of expectations as extravagant as they are unenforceable, as a whole. Such an inflationary tone is diagnosed without touch-ups by the one of the most recurrent voices among all the others.

*There is a kind of rhetorical appreciation of teachers. Everything is asked of them. Who will save the world? Who will ensure the growth of everyone? Who will ensure progress? For all these questions, the answer is always the same, Education. Some institutions are like huge trucks carrying tons in goods, but they have bicycle wheels in place of large tires. Education has taken on many tasks. It is the phenomenon of the overflowing school. {António Nóvoa, NE, 2012}.*

20 In the original: “o crescente processo de “educacionalização” ou “pedagogização social”, acelerado desde a última década do século passado, ao mesmo tempo que colocou a educação no centro das mais diversas problemáticas sociais, implicou certo enfraquecimento da Pedagogia (como disciplina e como campo profissional), devido à dispersão e à desarticulação de conceitos, noções, técnicas e práticas promovidas a partir de diferentes instâncias institucionais”.

In the face of such irreversible circumstances, we must admit that the excessive proliferation of the borders of the contemporary educational field – a process that, as has been observed, has relied on the powerful aid of the pedagogical press – entails not only to the risk of a mischaracterization of the typical tasks of the profession, but, above all, a set of unknown side effects on the educational *ethos*. No one knows.

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#### Data availability statement

The data underlying the research text are informed in the article.

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