

## Schooling of the self-entrepreneur: Generalization of the company-form in the New High School



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### Abstract

This paper analyzes the educational formation of the “entrepreneur of the self” as a generalization of neoliberal subjectivity in the New High School. The qualitative research is based on a Marxist perspective and on the studies of Dardot and Laval (2016) regarding the corporate subject. It also includes an analysis of New High School curriculum documents, such as the National Common Curricular Base (2018) and the Santa Catarina State Curricular Base (2021). The curriculum prioritizes the creation of self-managing and entrepreneurial individuals who are prepared to negotiate their place in the job market on an individual basis. The analysis highlights the political and administrative aspects of the curriculum and its implementation in Santa Catarina, with a focus on life projects, socio-emotional competencies, and entrepreneurship. The study concludes that this neoliberal rationality shapes the profile of the future worker, requiring a self-managing individual who can adapt to the crises of contemporary capitalism. In this context, a neoliberal pedagogical tendency is solidified as the theoretical and practical basis of this formative approach.

### Keywords

neoliberalism; managerial rationality; curricular policies; New High School; self-entrepreneur.

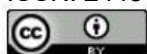
### Formação da subjetividade neoliberal: o empreendedor de si no Novo Ensino Médio

### Resumo

Este trabalho analisa a formação escolar do empreendedor de si como generalização da subjetividade neoliberal no Novo Ensino Médio. A pesquisa, de abordagem qualitativa, fundamenta-se na perspectiva marxista e nos estudos de Dardot e Laval (2016) sobre o sujeito empresarial e na análise de documentos do Novo Ensino Médio, como a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (2018) e o Currículo Base do Território Catarinense (2021). A proposta formativa prioriza a constituição de sujeitos autogerenciáveis e empreendedores, preparados para negociar individualmente sua inserção no mercado de trabalho. A análise destaca os aspectos político-administrativos do currículo e sua implementação em Santa Catarina, com ênfase no projeto de vida, nas competências socioemocionais e no empreendedorismo. Conclui-se que essa racionalidade neoliberal molda o perfil do futuro trabalhador, exigindo um indivíduo gestor de si, capaz de se adaptar às crises do capitalismo contemporâneo. Nesse cenário, consolida-se uma tendência pedagógica neoliberal como base teórica e prática dessa orientação formativa.

### Palavras-chave

neoliberalismo; racionalidade empresarial; políticas curriculares; Novo Ensino Médio; empreendedor de si.



## Formación escolar del emprendedor de sí: generalización de la forma-empresa en la Nueva Enseñanza Media

### Resumen

Este trabajo analiza la formación escolar del emprendedor de sí mismo como generalización de la subjetividad neoliberal en la Nueva Enseñanza Media. La investigación, de enfoque cualitativo, se fundamenta en la perspectiva marxista y en los estudios de Dardot y Laval (2016) sobre el sujeto empresarial, así como en el análisis de documentos de la Nueva Enseñanza Media, como la Base Nacional Común Curricular (2018) y el Currículo Base del Territorio de Santa Catarina (2021). La propuesta formativa prioriza la constitución de sujetos autogestionables y emprendedores, preparados para negociar individualmente su inserción en el mercado laboral. El análisis destaca los aspectos político-administrativos del currículo y su implementación en Santa Catarina, con énfasis en el proyecto de vida, las competencias socioemocionales y el emprendimiento. Se concluye que esta racionalidad neoliberal moldea el perfil del futuro trabajador, exigiendo un individuo gestor de sí mismo, capaz de adaptarse a las crisis del capitalismo contemporáneo. En este escenario, se consolida una tendencia pedagógica neoliberal como base teórica y práctica de esta orientación formativa.

### Palabras clave

neoliberalismo; racionalidad empresarial; políticas curriculares; Nueva Enseñanza Media; emprendedor de sí.

## 1 Introduction

Many studies and research projects on the educational landscape were carried out between the late 1990s and early 2000s. These projects relied on the participation of the Brazilian business community to reconfigure working-class training and align it with the new demands of the labor market. It is a concept that has become prevalent through educational reform packages affecting all contexts in which future workers are trained. One of the primary focuses of these reforms is teacher training, as explained by authors like Shiroma and Evangelista (2015). Recently, these principles have been reconfigured, especially in the education of children and young people. They have been extended to basic education through the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) at all levels of basic education, and more intensely after the High School alteration.

At the turn of the century, there was an acceleration and sense of urgency for changes in high school curriculum organization, publicized by multilateral organizations (MO) and governments. These changes became the main focus of educational policies. This scenario, in turn, creates the need for a pedagogical reorganization that can articulate the purpose of school education in the context of the evolving world of work.

Although this new purpose is being consolidated through secondary education reform and the approval of the BNCC, this trend is easily accepted through discourses and slogans that claim an idealized quality of education without resistance.

The High School reform, initially approved by Law No. 13,415/2017 (Brazil, 2017), changed the annual school load from 800 to 1,000 hours, which were to be implemented by 2022. Recently, Law No. 14,945, of July 31, 2024 (Brazil, 2024), redefined the workload for High School to a total of 3,000 hours, with 2,400 hours for basic education and 600 hours for elective subjects. Consequently, the curriculum structure has changed since the first legislation was approved to meet the demands of the BNCC, which implemented a flexible curriculum. This flexibility, through the training journey, "offers" students choices based on their perceived aptitude, which is influenced by the opportunities available at each school. In other words, the New High School Curriculum obscures the real possibilities of offering these journeys by proposing the idea of training journeys and student agency in choosing their paths according to their individual interests. It hides the adversities that exist between each region of the country, networks, and education systems of each federative unit, and between municipalities, such as physical structure and working conditions for teachers.

The objective of this study is to elucidate elements of the current high school education system that align with the need for neoliberal subjectivity and the formation of the entrepreneurial self. We aim to understand how the school institution instills the ideology of the entrepreneurial subject during Basic Education and whether the future worker is solely responsible for their success or failure. This study presents partial results from a completed doctoral thesis, further developed and expanded during the first author's postdoctoral research, under the supervision of the second author.

In a previous study (Debiasi; Mueller, 2024), we mentioned a pedagogical trend in the country that aligns with the demands of contemporary capitalism. This trend is the result of various factors that change the focus of education and how teaching is organized, affecting the future workers' sense of self, which was designed to meet the demands of the 21st-century global scenario. In our view, this understanding has been presented uniformly in the debate about the school's *modus operandi*, disconnected from the socio-historical debate and with an alleged air of ideological neutrality. Support for

entrepreneurial education exists at all levels of education, from public workers and school administrators to teachers, and various manifestations of this support exist at the international level. Therefore, if this is the prevailing theme that emerges, it is up to us to present and discuss the elements that we have chosen as the most evident empirical expressions of the neoliberal pedagogical trend in the current context: the High School reform and its training journeys, as well as the life project, entrepreneurship, and socio-emotional competencies.

## 2 Methodology

This qualitative study uses the dialectical method to examine the structural and historical factors that influence a neoliberal pedagogical trend within the New High School curriculum. This aspect concerns the empirical materiality of the investigation. Therefore, we conducted documentary research to gather information that would help us understand the current educational purpose guided by business rationality in Brazilian school education.

Understanding the research object, depending on the adopted method, implies starting from the totality of the educational purpose with the necessary subdivisions while maintaining the fundamental unity necessary for comprehension. This totality requires considering the historical perspective, which can capture the movement of social, cultural, political, and economic determinations and determinants that significantly impact education and, consequently, the development of individuals.

We use ideas derived from materialist dialectics to establish a foundation for praxis aimed at human emancipation. We emphasize that our research is based on the theoretical and methodological framework of *The New Reason of the World* (Dardot; Laval, 2016), particularly the authors' thesis that neoliberalism is primarily a worldview based on "the generalization of competition as a norm of conduct and the enterprise as a model of subjectivation" (Dardot; Laval, 2016, p. 17).

Therefore, we chose as the empirical object of analysis guiding documents for educational action in High School, such as the BNCC (2018), the Basic Curriculum of High School in the State of Santa Catarina (CBEMTC, 2021), and international reports

from the World Bank (2018, 2022). The material expression focused on in High School was, above all, the curricular policies for the education of young Brazilians based on the New High School Law and its restructuring (Law No. 13,415/2017 and Law No. 14,945/2024).

Thus, our analytical search focused on identifying an educational purpose articulated with a business rationality, in view of the new demands of the world of work. We therefore selected the following documents for analysis: a) two World Bank reports regarding the world of work, namely: the "Report on skills and jobs for youth," from 2018, and the "Brazilian Human Capital Report," published in 2022; b) three national documents: the BNCC – High School (2018); the CBEMTC document (journal 1 – general provisions) – High School Stage, published in 2021; and d) the document "Back to the new – a contribution to the socio-emotional strengthening of educators and students," published in 2021 on the Ayrton Senna Institute website, which was involved with the implementation of the New High School in Santa Catarina, totaling five documents analyzed.

The selected documents are justified insofar as the basis for their selection is their centrality in educational policies and in international documents that guide and project educational trends worldwide. Furthermore, the education of young people is a constant theme in guidelines from international organizations. Therefore, the choice of the secondary education level was made because we understand that the precepts of a neoliberal educational trend could be more evident at this stage of studies, since the educational needs are strongly aligned with those of the world of work or, more precisely, the current labor market, which, ultimately, constitutes a possibility for selling labor power, and not for employment. Our research focuses on the relationship with business rationality, based on the discussions of Dardot and Laval (2016). The analysis was limited to the relationship between business rationality and the selected documents. The focus was on elucidating the empirical aspects of the "entrepreneurial self" ideology aligned with the neoliberal pedagogical trend. The data were analyzed and discussed based on three categories, namely: educational public policies, the BNCC and school education; the connection of the Santa Catarina Educational System with the Ayrton Senna Institute and socio-emotional competencies; and the corporate

model in the school curriculum. The analysis was carried out using data extracted from the documents, based on Marxist theoretical foundations and the authors' critical perception of the meanings of school education in the neoliberal context.

### 3 Public educational policies, BNCC and school education

According to the 2024 School Census (Brazil, 2025), 7.8 million students enrolled in secondary education, which is a 1.5% increase from the previous year. This group of young people is directly affected by the current demands of capital. Within the school system, the neoliberal pedagogical approach aims to shape the new subject: an interconnected, self-entrepreneurial individual with self-control, technical skills, and abilities. Furthermore, this approach aims to develop socio-emotional competencies that will enable these individuals to succeed in the new world of work.

An important consideration regarding the enrollment figures is the educational network serving these students. Only 3.1% of enrollments, or about 244,000 students, correspond to the federal education system. One million students are enrolled in the private system, corresponding to 13.2% of total high school enrollment. The state network serves 6.5 million students, corresponding to 83.1% of the total. This means that the group of students affected by the public policies of the New High School, the interventions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing large business owners' interests, and the neoliberal pedagogical trend designed to meet these demands reflects a bleak scenario that impacts the future working conditions of all students.

In its 2018 report, about skills and jobs for the youth, the World Bank makes several recommendations to help the country cope with an aging population while training young people to be employable in the face of constant demands and changes, especially those imposed by new technologies. Furthermore, the World Bank emphasizes the need to reform basic education with a focus on the skills necessary for the 21st century. According to the document: "If basic education and the skills development system are prepared to meet the demands of employers, young people will have a greater chance of keeping up with and responding to changes" (World Bank, 2018, p. 9). The document goes on to indicate that changes in the world of work redefine new priorities and

challenges for education, since the development of these skills is the “new focus” to be observed in the educational path of young people.

As earlier mentioned, the condition already known from previous decades regarding the formation of secondary education is added to, namely, the development of technical competencies and, especially, observable skills, predominant in vocational technical education. This is a demand that extends to all aspects of young people's education in secondary school, coupled with the need for even more "important" competencies: socio-emotional competencies. In other words, young people are required to enter an uncertain world of work, in which they need to be technically competent (including in the use of technologies), but, in addition to this whole scenario of uncertainties, these young people need to be able to be emotionally prepared for the most diverse demands, which go far beyond the technical capabilities that once constituted the demands of the world of work.

Until the mid-1990s and early 2000s, possibilities for collective work still predominated. However, in recent years, workers with employment contracts have had to organize themselves in increasingly individual activities. This is because their productive capacities must align with their ability to remain desirable in the labor market. They must be employable in an environment that increasingly requires them to be solely responsible for the conditions that allow them to earn an income and perhaps even be employed. In this sense, the current training proposal serves an educational purpose in the realm of employability rather than jobs involving unstable and temporary work activities, rather than permanent jobs. This encompasses both manual labor activities and those involving digital technologies, including occupations in the gig economy.

The relationship between technology and artificial intelligence is addressed in the 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report, launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The document provides several examples of artificial intelligence's use in education, including systems that monitor students' progress and identify areas of difficulty. The document further emphasizes: "As repetitive tasks become more automated and jobs increasingly require higher-order thinking skills, the pressure on educational institutions to develop these skills will grow" (UNESCO, 2023, p. 13). We disagree with the document regarding the issue of the

increasing need for higher-order thinking in jobs, given that, as we have already pointed out, the tasks driven by artificial intelligence and the gig economy are becoming increasingly simpler, resembling manual labor, which has historically been considered "inferior" work, less valued, and less well-paid.

In the face of current and future uncertainties, it is necessary to make adjustments to work. With informal work growing exponentially, it is up to the individual to prepare for this reality. It is precisely in this need to redirect the future worker that the imposition of an education system capable of instilling, even during their formative journey in Basic Education, this new profile of worker resides, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, performance, flexibility, and the ability to deal with the most adverse and precarious conditions. As we observe in the excerpt, the self-service curriculum is one of the fundamental points for education to fulfill its role of equipping the future worker for informality, whether in manual labor or in work virtualized by information and communication technologies (ICTs). These changes are observed, according to Albino, Rodrigues, and Dutra-Pereira (2024), in the intense advancement of educational movements and policies that serve the interests of the neoliberal agenda.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated an already challenging secondary education landscape, further reinforcing the need for reform and the idea of "recovering lost time." One example is the Brazilian Human Capital Report, published by the World Bank in 2022. The document, which features catchy phrases, presents several proposals, focusing on the need to enhance, for example, the productivity increase of Brazilians after the age of 18. In the field of education, the report's guidance emphasizes that: "Recent national reforms to make the curriculum more flexible and promote more equitable funding in education should also be maintained and strengthened. Successful policies are a lever" (World Bank, 2022, p. 24). In a footnote, the document emphasizes the BNCC and the New High School as pillars, along with the Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica (Fundeb), in terms of mechanisms in the search for the "lost decade."

Although the New High School was approved in 2017, the pandemic and its consequences further exacerbate the sense of urgency for an education system for young people that considers the demands of capitalism, with an emphasis on "[...] socio-

emotional skills, which are fundamental for accumulating human capital" (World Bank, 2022, p. 39). This scenario demands the construction of social consensus. The BNCC for High School is one of these instruments that introduces, into the educational landscape, the "necessary justifications" for the curricular reorganization imposed on young people. According to the document, there is a limitation in ensuring the right to education at the elementary level. Among the reasons that explain this situation are the insufficient academic achievement of students upon completing elementary school and the current organization of the secondary education curriculum, which has too many components and a pedagogical approach that is distant from youth cultures and the world of work (Brazil, 2018, p. 461).

This entire movement had the intense participation of various sectors of civil society "[...] identified with the national business community that, for some time, including during the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) governments, has been exerting strong influence over the Ministry of Education to adapt Brazilian education to their interests, including those of a financial nature" (Ferretti, 2018, p. 26). While, at a certain point, third-sector institutions influenced and imposed demands specific to business sectors within the scope of public education policies at the national level, it would still be necessary to add to these efforts the largest share of high school graduates, who, as mentioned, are in state public schools. Thus, the conquest of this territory would still need to be forged by these institutions, consolidating partnerships with the state education systems, which we will explain below.

### ***3.1 "Partnership" within the scope of education systems for the production of consensus in the school environment, the case of Santa Catarina***

For the public policies surrounding the implementation of the New High School to be effective, the "actors" directly and decisively involved in consolidating High School reform policies had to step in: the third sector, representing the interests of large business owners and multilateral organizations. It is precisely in relation to the implementation of the BNCC that the State "distributes" the responsibilities of organizing education, with a view to fulfilling the prerogatives of the document. It is therefore made explicit that the

coordination of public and private school networks would need to account for the "curricular action and management plan" to organize, systematize, and put into motion the proposals that reflect neoliberal pedagogy. It is in this context that one of the greatest involvements of private interests in the national scenario regarding the purpose of education in the country has been observed.

For example, the Ayrton Senna Institute was directly involved in initial initiatives and public policy definitions that took large corporations' interests into account. The institute is also massively present in teacher induction, articulation, advising, and training in school systems; in promoting state seminars; and in organizing educational resources. The institute's goal is to instill neoliberal pedagogical ideas in various areas of school organization.

The institute's official website contains several references to World Bank documents and reports. These references are intended to reinforce the institute's vision of education and provide a global "pseudo-endorsement" for the implementation of neoliberal pedagogical ideals. The institute convinces people that its practices are guided by research and contribute to a protected consensus. This further solidifies the idea that the Ayrton Senna Institute's guidelines are in line with the most "current, modern, and innovative" educational practices.

With the support of the institute through agreements between the states, the neoliberal pedagogical approach reaches its main "clientele": the teachers, who are also responsible for implementing the educational components. These are proposals considered innovative, given the supposed comprehensive education advocated by the institute. These educational components are implemented in different ways, with the validation and improvement of projects developed in partnerships with the education departments. Therefore, the Ayrton Senna Institute has endorsed, coordinated, and provided support materials and training for managers and teachers that align with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) demands, through the channels of Brazil's neoliberal pedagogical trend.

The partnerships and initiatives developed in the states with the Ayrton Senna Institute are imbued with a romanticized narrative and, at the same time, promote a supposed quality that would be capable of raising the level of student learning. One of

these initiatives is called "Socioemotional Dialogues" and aims to develop students' socioemotional competencies, considering the objectives of comprehensive education policies aligned with the BNCC proposals. Obviously, in order to empower teachers and become a guiding light for pedagogical actions within schools, the website presents a methodological proposal for formative assessment based on a rubric instrument that references the matrix of socioemotional competencies used by the institute itself and that aims to work with each student's specific needs.

The neoliberal pedagogical trend is evident in the institute's focus on socio-emotional competencies, which are presented as a form of holistic education. Through partnerships with state education departments, the Ayrton Senna Institute has inserted itself directly into the activities of schools by offering these "solutions". These initiatives are aligned with the guidelines of the World Bank, the OECD, and UNESCO, a body of work focused on socio-emotional skills, whether in their various publications, in partnerships with states, or through direct actions in high schools.

This partnership was endorsed by the Conselho Estadual da Educação de Santa Catarina (CEE/SC) from 2010 to 2015, when the council legitimized the OECD guidelines for the state education system (Siems; Bassi, 2023). The partnership began in 2017 with the explicit objective of implementing "holistic education," starting with full-time secondary education. This initiative impacted various aspects, including the adoption of teaching materials, teacher training, and the pedagogical approach. There are approximately 50 news reports published on the website of the Secretaria de Estado da Educação (SED) about the Ayrton Senna Institute and its activities in Santa Catarina. These activities demonstrate that the public-private partnership occurred in various areas, from actions with administrators and teacher training to the promotion of seminars for sharing experiences with teachers and administrators, as well as visits to schools, together with representatives from the Coordenadorias Regionais de Educação (CRE).

One of the main focuses of the implementation, especially with the approval of the BNCC for New High School, is the development of socio-emotional competencies. In 2020, considering the pandemic period, the program "Back to the New - Program for the Development of Socio-emotional Competencies" was launched.

The program was structured around five macro-competencies that are addressed in the Ayrton Senna Institute's programs (2021, p. 1) and which are "[...] considered fundamental for the full development of all. These are: emotional resilience, kindness, openness to new experiences, engagement with others, and self-management". There are supporting materials on each of the macro-competencies, such as web conferences and reading materials, for example, self-management, one of the pillars of the subjectivity imposed on the future worker, and one of the purposes of the (re)shaping of the neoliberal pedagogical trend. The guidance book also appeals to the self-management of teachers, with guidelines that resemble training and rules of good conduct. Teachers with self-management:

They are punctual, organized, and handle the development and monitoring of agreements that benefit learning well, making it clear to students what is expected of them, summarizing the content at the end of the lesson, and reviewing the material before assessments (IAS, 2021, p. 6).

Explicitly, the document aligns self-management with the general competence of the BNCC that deals with life planning: "To value the diversity of knowledge and cultural experiences and to appropriate knowledge and experiences that enable them to understand the relationships inherent in the world of work and to make choices aligned with the exercise of citizenship and their life plan" (Brazil, 2018, p. 9).

The partnership with the Ayrton Senna Institute also included the implementation of the New High School and the CBEMTC. Implementation began in 2020, with 120 pilot schools. The focus of the actions was curricular flexibility for the development of curricular components. A very contradictory situation lies in the indigestible "symbiosis" between the institute's proposal for comprehensive education and comprehensive education in the conception of historical-cultural theory, which should serve as the theoretical basis for school education in the state. According to document *Journal 1* – general provisions of the CBEMTC, comprehensive education is the objective of this stage, as advocated by the Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDBEN), Law No. 9,394, and the BNCC. The document states: "This conception, which, from a historical-cultural perspective, is called 'comprehensive education', includes emancipation, autonomy, and freedom as prerequisites for active and critical citizenship" (Santa Catarina, 2021, p. 41).

Another excerpt highlights that the New High School's structuring axes (scientific research, creative processes, sociocultural intervention and mediation, and entrepreneurship) and training journeys, a flexible part of the curriculum, are guided by a historical-cultural perspective. According to the document: "The historical-cultural perspective figures as the main organizing axis of the structuring axes; that is, it articulates all of the structuring axes foreseen in the BNCC" (Santa Catarina, 2021, p. 60).

The guidelines of the BNCC have been imposed on all Federal Units of Brazil, therefore it is imperative and challenging for state education departments to comply with these guidelines and maintain the theoretical perspective that has been adopted, as is the case in Santa Catarina, for more than two decades, even though, as is known, the historical-cultural perspective has also undergone transformations alongside other completely dissonant conceptions, within the scope of the work of schools and the training of teachers and administrators themselves.

Nevertheless, what is striking is that, throughout the document, this supposed articulation between a pedagogical conception of the BNCC (which is not explicitly presented) and the historical-cultural perspective occurs in a very harmonious, naturalized, and uncritical way. The understanding expressed in the publication is that the guidelines of the BNCC, by addressing an education based on socio-emotional competencies, autonomy, and student agency, can be understood within the scope of a critical theory, which proves the dystopia that haunts theoretical knowledge in education, as Moraes (2001) had already warned. This provides further evidence that neoliberal "micronarratives" are widespread in all social settings, penetrating education with little resistance and much acceptance. This, coupled with the necessary consensus-building, allows the neoliberal pedagogical trend, for example, to flourish with little active resistance throughout the country.

In Santa Catarina, the CBEMTC (Curriculum Base for High School Education in Santa Catarina) was developed with the participation of teachers from the state school system, which reinforces the construction of the necessary consensus for the acceptance of the proposal. At the same time, it absolves them of responsibility for a dystopian educational framework, with biased concepts of holistic education, autonomy, self-

knowledge, entrepreneurship, and socio-emotional competencies. In our view, the document relies on the "Life Project" as a component that incorporates this formative dystopia, which we analyze below.

### ***3.2 Life project, socio-emotional skills and the entrepreneurial self***

The educational framework proposed by the BNCC, especially in secondary education, implies a reorganization of the educational process, aiming at the "necessary" (re)shaping of young people for an increasingly uncertain job market. Since its approval, however, various arrangements have been organized. This indicates that there are multiple formats of the New High School education curriculum that differ in the educational opportunities offered between states, public, and private schools.

Because the organization of these components falls to the individual states, the distortions and methods of offering them multiply exponentially. In Santa Catarina, the flexible part of the curriculum is called elective curricular components (CCEs), which, in this curricular arrangement, integrate the formative pathways. Although the offering of CCEs has some organic structure, there are 25 possibilities of "choices" for the student. Such diversity of offerings was possible because, as mentioned, the state had the consensus of the teachers involved through listening to the pilot schools.

Thus, the construction of consensus around these arrangements, on the surface, indicates that there was indeed a great mobilization of those involved in the entire process. However, we question: did the type of listening in the pilot schools allow for hearing the young people and teachers and their difficulties and aspirations? Does such a diversity of elective components evidence the weaknesses that are so often propagated to justify this curricular fragmentation? What type of training and what profile of teacher do these components demand? These empirical expressions prove that the New High School Curriculum and its multiple possibilities of curricular arrangements are an immense challenge, exponentially increasing inequalities in the training of future workers and further weakening the teaching profession. Considering the accusations made by Shiroma and Evangelista (2015, p. 317), who state that: "The proposals directed at teachers, especially, have moved in the opposite direction to the idea of producing 'knowledge'", linked to the crisis in the production of knowledge in education, pointed out

by Moraes (2001), which help us to understand the weakening of the processuality in institutionalized education in general. Certainly, teacher training, in its relationship with a neoliberal pedagogical trend, is quite consolidated. Thus, even though apparently the sense of collectivity in the construction of the New High School curriculum in Santa Catarina has included the participation of teachers, there is an impoverishment of the intellectual formation of the class that also needs to be challenged and problematized, which opens spaces for the attacks and ready-made solutions of “educational companies”, as seen in the state.

The New High School Model approach to training young workers, which involves electives translated into various course formats, essentially results in “curricular add-ons” that fragment students’ education. It’s a school for each curriculum or a curriculum for each shift of instruction. Contrary to what the proponents of this educational model advocate, we believe that the tendency for student dropout is more a typical symptom of a 21st-century neoliberal pedagogy and its peculiarities. Currently, although the component is no longer mandatory as a subject, it is still present in an interdisciplinary way, impacting the work of all teachers.

One of the configurations of the New High School that, in our view, clearly expresses the precepts and purposes of the neoliberal pedagogical trend as a guiding and directing force for pedagogical action aimed at the (re)shaping of the entrepreneurial subject, concerns two central elements: the life project and socio-emotional competencies, which result in the need for the formative profile of the entrepreneurial self.

The Life Project is one of the empirical expressions with the widest dissemination in the discourses, didactic materials, and guidelines of a neoliberal pedagogical trend. Among the structuring axes that make up the New High School curriculum, the flexible part is intrinsically aligned with this neoliberal trend. Although in Santa Catarina the project will no longer be mandatory from 2025 onwards, it remains interdisciplinary, as guided by the 2025 Resolução do Conselho Nacional de Educação, which mentions that, among the common competencies of the formative itineraries, the Life Project must be developed, integrating self-knowledge and being defined based on personal and collective objectives, with a view to personal aspirations and collective transformations,

taking into account the world of work and its challenges at the local and global levels (Brazil, 2024).

The Life Project is aligned with a pragmatic bias insofar as it attributes the conditions necessary for an entrepreneurial subject to it. Considering that evidence of learning occurs when students deliver products, services, or other results from using technologies, the training is geared towards a neoliberal society. In this society, "[...] the great novelty lies in the modeling that makes individuals able to withstand the new conditions imposed on them, while their own behavior contributes to making these conditions increasingly harsher and more enduring." (Dardot; Laval, 2016, p. 329).

It is possible to perceive that the excerpts from the authors regarding a neoliberal rationality of the worker also express what has been developing in the education of young people in the New High School Curriculum. What we have observed in the pedagogical organization, whether in didactic materials or in the guidelines of public-private partnerships, is a different order of orientation for the life project in the formation of future workers. This order is quite pragmatic and individualistic, which requires young people to adopt an individualistic and competitive rationality that is incompatible with any possibility of critical analysis of reality, given the impossibility of overcoming inequalities.

This profile requires articulating and reconfiguring the work of teachers, taking into account the guidelines of the new student training profile, which is currently most well-established in High School education. Another expression of the business trend in teacher training, which also affects teachers themselves, is the demand for a teacher profile that is attentive to the demands of contemporary capitalism, with the capacity to develop flexibility and resilience, which reinforces our argument for an entrepreneurial teacher profile, capable of dealing with their frustrations, insecurities, and uncertainties. This scenario impacts everything from initial training to continuing education for teachers, who find themselves involved in demands that are not, in essence, the object of their training.

Teacher training in Brazil, historically weak, is once again being called upon, and now teachers are expected to take on the task of dedicating themselves to the formation of the entrepreneurial self. This is because, to train future workers in this mold, it is also necessary to reorganize the training of those who train them. This (re)shaping is entirely

alien to collective aspirations, which should be the product of a formalized education, but what is expected of the teacher is attitudes and conditions to deal with a school education that disregards its specific objects and content, and that is capable of relativizing disciplines and established knowledge. This is justified because future workers are expected to be efficient and self-managing. The life project is articulated with the logic of entrepreneurship and socio-emotional competencies in these aspects, which requires teachers to train young people to have an entrepreneurial spirit and to be able to deal with crises. To this end, they need socio-emotional competencies that enable them to be productive, creative, resilient, and self-managing.

For example, in the textbook *Projeto de vida e atitude empreendedora*, for the 3rd year of high school, Fraiman (2019) makes clear the individuality that underlies the Life Project and entrepreneurship model, that is, individualism. The student "[...] learns from an early age that the distance between their dreams and their achievements is largely mediated by their attitudes. The more commitment and entrepreneurship, the greater the chances of success and happiness" (Fraiman, 2019, p. 14), a clear indication that, supposedly, it is up to the individual, through the life project, entrepreneurial attitudes, and the development of socio-emotional competencies, to be responsible for their own happiness.

The guidelines on entrepreneurship and socio-emotional skills in school education are highlighted by the Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (Sebrae). Regarding entrepreneurship, the Sebrae website (2021, p. 1) indicates that "[...] the current market is looking for citizens who are protagonists of their own history, who have sharp critical thinking, environmental and social awareness, in addition to socio-emotional skills," a "guideline" that defines what is expected of teachers and what is expected of students and that is fully aligned with the scenarios of crises and uncertainties of the contemporary world, to which the neoliberal pedagogical trend aligns and articulates itself. Additionally, its objectives are in line with the necessity for members of the new generations to manage themselves to be productive, whether in regulated work environments (which are becoming increasingly scarce) or in the global trend of flexible and precarious work, such as microtasks via digital platforms, which will also be replaced by artificial intelligence in the future.

Although it ceased to be a curricular component in Santa Catarina from 2025 onwards, the current High School Curriculum Guidelines emphasize that the life project "[...] is a curricular strategy and may follow a transversal logic across areas of knowledge and should be present throughout all of High School" (Brazil, 2024, article 12, single paragraph). This formative purpose presupposes, throughout the entire educational process, the formation of a neoliberal subject, in which "[...] each individual must learn to be an 'active' and 'autonomous' subject in and through the action that he or she must perform on him or herself" (Dardot; Laval, 2016, p. 337). School education has been structured to meet neoliberal demands precisely to reinforce and shape this subjectivity, instilling in future workers the awareness that they are entirely responsible for their choices, regardless of the chaos generated by the incessant crises of the capitalist system.

#### 4 Final considerations

The study examined the extent to which business rationality has influenced the development of self-managing and entrepreneurial individuals, particularly within the framework of the New High School Curriculum. This scenario is well-established nationally, with diverse curricular arrangements for this stage of education articulated by public-private partnerships. These arrangements have entered school spaces with little resistance. Although our initial focus of analysis was on the New High School Curriculum, it is possible to infer that the principles of a neoliberal pedagogical trend are also present in the other stages of Basic Education. Thus, this educational purpose spreads throughout all of school education, even though the focus on a pseudo-empowerment of the student and their curricular choices is only "possible" at the High School level.

To meet these demands, public-private partnerships are one of the requirements, as can be seen in the "solutions" for teacher training, the development of teaching materials, and "research" that points to the need to adopt such practices in schools. In this respect, the Ayrton Senna Institute has presented itself as the main spokesperson for the global demands emanating from multilateral organizations, acting as an executor of demands and an inducer of Brazilian public educational policies.

Furthermore, it has a strong presence in partnerships with state education departments and in the training of managers and teachers. It is precisely this necessary reinforcement and (re)shaping of subjectivity that school education has been articulating to meet neoliberal demands, instilling in future workers the awareness that their choices are entirely their own responsibility, regardless of the chaos generated by the incessant crises of the capitalist system.

The orientation is clearly defined in Santa Catarina's guiding documents, in the work of teachers, and in the expectations for students. It is fully aligned with the crises and uncertainties of contemporary society, with which neoliberal pedagogical trends align and articulate themselves. Its objectives are in line with the need for new generations to manage themselves to be productive, whether in increasingly scarce regulated work environments or in the global trend of flexible and precarious work, such as microtasks via digital platforms, which will also be replaced by artificial intelligence in the future.

Two aspects of a scenario should be highlighted in future studies: a) the approval of the new PNE, especially the goals and indicators for secondary education, insofar as they may reveal future perspectives on the formative profile we are aiming for; b) the adjustments and "improvements" to the New Secondary Education curriculum based on Law No. 14,945/2024. This suggests a shift towards more open dialogue in the current government, but as we can see, there's still a strong hold on neoliberal ideas in education, and perhaps on the educational goals needed for the current economic, political, and social situation. In this way, a neoliberal pedagogical trend remains articulated with the prevailing business rationality and affects subjectivity, especially that of future workers. We understand that comprehending this scenario and its particular symptoms is essential to challenging this neoliberal trend. One of the possibilities for such a confrontation is critical education, linked to curriculum reformulations, teacher autonomy, and the recovery of the collective meaning of education.

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