

## Public School Teachers' Pedagogical Trends in a City of Rio Grande do Sul

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**ABSTRACT – Public School Teachers' Pedagogical Trends in a City of Rio Grande do Sul.** This study analyzed the pedagogical trends adopted by teachers of the final years of Elementary Education in peripheral schools in a city of Rio Grande do Sul and whether they promote the democratization of knowledge. Structured questionnaires were applied in six schools, with the participation of thirteen teachers. Three liberal trends were identified in 85% of the speeches, with the liberal renewed progressive trend being predominant in 46% of them. It was concluded that these trends do not contribute to the democratization of schools, as they have assumptions unrelated to student emancipation. It is suggested that similar studies be carried out in other regions, contexts, and levels of education.

**Keywords: Pedagogical Trends. Democratization of Public Schools. Teacher Professional Profile.**

**RESUMO – Tendências Pedagógicas de Docentes de Escolas Públicas de uma Cidade Gaúcha.** Esse estudo analisou as tendências pedagógicas adotadas por professores dos anos finais do Ensino Fundamental em escolas periféricas de uma cidade do Rio Grande do Sul e se elas promovem a democratização do conhecimento. Foram aplicados questionários estruturados em seis escolas, com a participação de treze professores. Três tendências de caráter liberal foram identificadas em 85% dos discursos, sendo a tendência liberal renovada progressivista a predominante em 46% deles. Concluiu-se que essas tendências não contribuem para a democratização das escolas, pois têm pressupostos descomprometidos com a emancipação do estudante. Sugere-se que estudos semelhantes sejam realizados em outras regiões, contextos e níveis de ensino.

**Palavras-chave: Tendências Pedagógicas. Democratização da Escola Pública. Perfil Profissional Docente.**

## Introduction

Given the way in which professionals enter the public service in Brazil, our public schools have wide diversity in terms of conceptions and ways of thinking. While there may be some convergence, there is also significant divergence in various aspects. Based on the premise that the primary objective of basic education, as stated in Article 25 of the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB), is to develop students and provide them with the necessary skills to exercise citizenship, as well as to equip them with the means to advance in their careers and further studies (Brasil, 1996) and also, considering Article 32 of the LDB, which states that the elementary school stage

[...] aims to provide citizens with a fundamental formation, including:

I - the development of learning skills, with full mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic as the basic tools;

II - the understanding of the natural and social environment, the political system, technology, the arts, and the values on which society is based;

III - the development of the capacity to learn, in order to acquire knowledge and skills and to form attitudes and values;

IV - the strengthening of family ties, the bonds of human solidarity, and mutual tolerance on which social life is based (Brasil, 1996).

It is important to consider the teachers' positions in relation to their own pedagogical conceptions, as well as the divergences and convergences between their discourses. Additionally, it is crucial to determine if and how educators incorporate students' experiences into both their language and actions, as teachers hold a great deal of power in their relationships with students and in the teaching and learning processes.

This relevance is evident when considering the necessity of democratizing public schools to emancipate the working classes. This means broadening the concept of collectivity, while still recognizing the individuality of each component of the educational process. Democracy is based on several elements, including power decentralization, critical participation in decision-making, autonomy to make one's own choices, individual and group representativeness and collective reflection aimed at exercising citizenship (Moreira, 2018; Guedes, 2021). Also crucial to the concept of school democratization is teachers' commitment to accurately translate common sense into a more sophisticated concept that can serve as a tool for students to critically position themselves in the face of the social inequality experienced by our society (Saviani, 2013).

Next, we defined pedagogical conceptions as the philosophical and epistemological assumptions of teachers regarding various aspects that determine or clarify their approach to work, such as: (i) their conception of the function of the school; (ii) their understanding of the processes by which students acquire knowledge; (iii) their views on the nature of teaching content and on the suitability of particular

teaching methods for ensuring student's learning; (iv) their approach to the teacher-student relationship; and (v) their ideas regarding the role and design of the assessment of students' learning (Libâneo, 2014; Luckesi 2011; Muniz; Muniz; Braga, 2020). All of these concepts will influence the pedagogical trend(s) that best characterize the professional performance of each teacher.

Historically, two broad pedagogical currents have coexisted contemporaneously, despite their different origins: liberal pedagogy and progressive pedagogy (Luckesi, 2011; Saviani, 1998).

Liberal pedagogy is described as understanding the school as a social institution designed to prepare students for societal roles based on their individual capacities. It involves adapting to the current social rules in place. Libâneo (2014, p. 22) suggests that "the emphasis [of liberal pedagogy] on the cultural aspect obscures the reality of class differences, because although it spreads the idea of equal opportunities, it does not take into account the inequality of conditions". Saviani (1985) argues that this pedagogical approach positions the teacher as the possessor of true knowledge, while the student, regardless of their background, is seen as lacking in knowledge and must passively receive what is transmitted by the teacher. Thus, it is evident that this approach does not consider the common knowledge that students acquire in their daily lives, disregarding it and even viewing it as an obstacle to the individual's cultural advancement.

In turn, the progressive pedagogical trend takes an antagonistic position to the liberal one. The school's function goes beyond guaranteeing the cultural development of students. It also seeks to enable them to critically analyze the social realities in which they are inserted (Snyders, 1974). This ability aims to transform society socio-politically towards the emancipation of the population, particularly those who suffer in social classes considered inferior by liberal bourgeois education.

Libâneo (2014, p. 73) notes that it is precisely in the concept of social transformation that

liberal pedagogy and progressive pedagogy oppose each other: while the former maintains that there is a permeability between social classes, making it possible to move from one to the other by means of cultural adaptation through school, the latter assumes that class antagonism results in domination, and that it is up to education to contribute to the transformation of class relations.

Thus, liberal pedagogy aims to modify individuals to conform to social norms and values, while progressive pedagogy seeks to raise students' awareness as transformers of society. They can escape the fate of reproducing the current situation and work towards a society that is more inclusive and democratic, and that serves the interests of all classes, especially the historically dominated working classes.

From the two pedagogical strands mentioned above, specific conceptions emerge with different names at the discretion of each researcher. For this work, we utilized the theoretical framework pre-

sented by Libâneo (2014) in his book *Democratização da escola pública* to categorize teachers' pedagogical tendencies into the following subdivisions:

Using as a criterion the position they adopt in relation to the socio-political conditioning factors of the school, pedagogical tendencies have been classified as liberal and progressive:

A - Liberal pedagogy

1 - traditional [LT]

2 - renewed progressive [LRP]

3 - renewed non-directive [LRND]

4 - technicist [LTec]

B - Progressive pedagogy

1 - liberating [PLra]

2 - libertarian [PLria]

3 - critical-social of contents [PCS] (Libâneo, 2014, p. 21).

Thus, the pedagogical trends were characterized based on six socio-political factors: role of the school, teaching methods, teaching content, learning assumptions, teacher-student relationship, and assessment. Charts 1 and 2 describe the characteristics of each pedagogical trend. It is noteworthy that there may be similarities in characterizing different trends, so their manifestations are not absolute or mutually exclusive. Based on this description, one can infer if each pedagogical trend supports or hinders the democratization of public schools.

**Chart 1 – Characteristics of liberal pedagogical trends**

Pedagogical Trend	Role of the school	Teaching content	Teaching methods	Learning assumptions and assessment	Teacher-student relationship
<b>Liberal Traditional</b>	Individuals' intellectual preparation is a crucial aspect. The school is dedicated to fostering culture, while society bears the responsibility for addressing social issues.	Knowledge and values accumulated by society that must be passed on to students.	Verbal exposition and analysis, centered on the transmitter of knowledge, with an emphasis on repetition and memorization.	The process involves mechanically transmitting knowledge through repeated coercion, with evaluation based on verification and often negative reinforcement.	The teacher's authority is viewed as absolute, with the student expected to passively absorb the content as truth.
<b>Liberal Renewed Progressive</b>	Portray life as much as possible. To provide experiences that allow students to educate themselves through the interaction of cognitive and environmental structures.	Established according to the learners' experience with cognitive challenges and problematic situations.	Experimental attempts, research, discovery, studying the environment and problem-solving stand out.	Learning depends on the interest and motivation of the students, which in turn relies on the teacher's ability to stimulate them. Effective assessment is crucial to recognize students' progress.	The teacher facilitates the student's natural development, intervening only to guide their thinking.

<b>Liberal Re-noved Non-directive</b>	Forming attitudes, the school should prioritize psychological aspects over pedagogical and social ones.	The processes of developing relationships and communication is given priority over the transmission of content.	The conventional methods are unnecessary. The teacher's role is to facilitate and assist the student in organizing their thoughts and expressing themselves without feeling intimidated.	Learning involves changing one's own perceptions and developing a sense of being able to achieve one's goals. In contrast, school assessments are considered meaningless, and self-assessment is deemed more important.	The teacher creates an environment where the student's thoughts are accepted without interference to avoid inhibiting their learning.
<b>Liberal Technician</b>	Modeling students' behavior using specific techniques and organizing the process of acquiring skills, attitudes, and knowledge.	Information, scientific laws and principles established and ordered in a logical and psychological sequence by experts.	Procedures and techniques necessary for the arrangement and control of environmental conditions that ensure the transmission and reception of information.	Teaching is the process of conditioning responses through reinforcement to achieve specific objectives. Learning involves adapting individual behavior to pre-established goals.	The roles in the relationship are well-defined and objective. The teacher manages the system for transmitting content, while the students receive, learn, and retain the material.

Source: Adapted from Libâneo (2014, p. 21-33).

**Chart 2 – Characteristics of progressive pedagogical trends**

Pedagogical Trend	Role of the school	Teaching content	Teaching methods	Learning assumptions and assessment	Teacher-student relationship
<b>Progressive Liberating</b>	To question the reality of humanity's relationship with nature and with others in order to bring about change.	Generating themes, drawn from the problematization of the students' life practices.	Discussion groups are responsible for self-managing their learning and defining the content and dynamics of their activities.	Coding, decoding and problematizing the situation, seeking a more critical understanding of one's own actions. There can be evaluation of practice and self-evaluation	Aiming to ensure that everyone can express themselves, this approach promotes a horizontal relationship between teachers and students based on their cultural identification.
<b>Progressive Libertarian</b>	The goal is to transform students' personalities in a liberating and self-managing man-	Subjects are made available to the student based on the needs and interests of the group, rather than	Group experience and self-management of their own "institution", on their own initia-	Informal learning, aimed at removing all forms of repression and encouraging the	The teacher facilitates the acquisition of knowledge by engaging in collective re-

	ner. This has a political connotation as it acknowledges that individuals are products of society and that personal growth can only occur within a collective context.	being limited to conventional subjects. This approach allows knowledge to manifest itself in a way that is tailored to the students' needs and interests.	tive and without the manifestation of any form of power.	development of individuals who are free. Therefore, there is no need for any form of assessment, at least in terms of content.	reflection with the group. Depending on the group's autonomy, both the teacher and the students may choose to participate or remain silent.
<b>Progressive Critical-Social of Contents</b>	To prepare students for the adult world and its contradictions by providing them with the tools, through the acquisition of content and socialization, for organized and active participation in the democratization of society.	Universal cultural contents that have become autonomous domains in constant reassessment in response to social realities.	The content takes precedence over the method. It is essential to comprehend the students' empirical knowledge and then intervene to elevate it to a more sophisticated level of elaboration.	Students recognize themselves through their own efforts in the content and models presented, broadening their own experience. The evaluation demonstrates the student's progress and assists the teacher in maintaining or modifying their teaching methods.	The teacher mediates knowledge to the student while maintaining their role as an adult and expert in the subject. It is important to emphasize the significance of the student's experience in the learning process.

Source: Adapted from Libâneo (2014, p. 33-44).

In order to comprehend the democratization of public schools, we focused on the following research problem: do the pedagogical tendencies of teachers in peripheral public schools positively or negatively affect the democratization of these schools? In order to answer the problem, this work investigates the pedagogical orientations and trends that guide the development of the pedagogical action of the surveyed teachers. Thus, the aim of this study was to analyze whether these trends contribute to the democratization of public schools, particularly those serving the working classes with the greatest socioeconomic deprivation.

## Research Method

The research subjects were limited to teachers who teach in the final years of elementary school in public schools located in the outskirts of the municipality of Alegrete, in the interior of the Rio Grande do Sul state. These schools cater to a mostly financially, culturally, and socially deprived public. These criteria are based on the need to democratize public schools as universal access to formal education for the poorest classes is not sufficient to democratize knowledge. Quoting Libâneo (2014, p. 12),

The democratization of public schools must be understood as the expansion of educational opportunities, the dissemination of knowledge and its critical re-elaboration, the improvement of school educational

practice aimed at the cultural and scientific elevation of the working classes, while at the same time helping to meet their most immediate needs and aspirations (improving their lives) and their inclusion in a collective project to change society.

This group of teachers from the upper grades of elementary school was selected to explore diverse pedagogical approaches that are tailored to the unique characteristics of teaching each subject. The researcher chose the city of Alegrete-RS for logistical convenience, as it is their hometown. This allowed for easier visits to schools and research subjects, promoting greater engagement and efficient resolution of any doubts that arose.

After characterizing these subjects, we requested the Alegrete Municipal Department of Education to allow us to present our research proposal to the management teams of the municipal schools that provide the final years of primary education. The request was approved, and we presented the proposal, clarified any doubts, and registered those interested in participating. Additionally, we visited all urban municipal elementary schools, including those that initially showed no interest, and spoke with the headteachers and pedagogical coordinators. With the agreement of the management teams, we invited all subject teachers in these schools to participate in the research.

The data for the analysis was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that included both open and closed questions (as shown in Chart 3). The questionnaire was delivered to all teachers who expressed interest in participating in this study, either physically or digitally. Furthermore, a Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF) was provided to explain the purpose, risks, advantages, and confidentiality of the research.

**Chart 3 – Questionnaire Sections and Questions**

Section	Questions
Part 1 - General Concepts about Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List the social functions of the school from your perspective.</li> <li>2. How do the steps in the learning process take place from a cognitive perspective?</li> <li>3. What is your understanding of teaching content? How is it defined for your classes?</li> <li>4. Do you believe that the teacher's actions affect student motivation? How?</li> <li>5. Do you work in multiple schools? If yes, do you prepare distinct lessons or follow similar scripts for classes of the same grade?</li> <li>6. Do teachers of different subjects coordinate their content or are interdisciplinary projects being developed at your school?</li> </ol>
Parte 2 - Methodologies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How would you describe a typical class of yours?</li> <li>2. What is your primary method of teaching?</li> <li>3. Do you contextualize content in themes of social or local relevance?</li> <li>4. Do you focus on teaching specific content or on using an active method?</li> <li>5. Below are some teaching strategies (Dialogued lecture; Experimentation; Case study; Text study; Workshops; Portfolio; Concept map; Seminar). Please indicate how frequently you use each strategy per semester: frequent (more than 15 times), occasional (8 to 15 times), little (up to 8 times), never, or I don't</li> </ol>



	know. You may also mention any additional strategies you use. 6. What teaching tools do you typically use in the classroom (textbooks, models, games)? 7. What is your stance on the use of technological devices such as smartphones, tablets, and notebooks by students in the classroom? Do you use them for teaching? Why? 8. Describe the role of the textbook in your teaching practice. Choose from the following options: Irrelevant, Not very important, Important, Essential, or I don't use it. Explain your choice.
Parte 3 - Evaluation	1. What are your thoughts on assessment (importance, objectives, timing, target audience)? 2. Please provide a list of two to five data collection tools that you use for assessment, including their frequency of use and relevance to the final result. 3. Do you implement any classroom procedures after each assessment? Which ones? 4. How do you offer learning recovery to students who have not met the minimum learning objectives? 5. Do you consider all the content and concepts covered in class when creating your learning assessment tools?

Source: author's own work.

It is important to note that questionnaires have both strengths and weaknesses. The instrument has several positive characteristics, including lower response inhibition due to anonymity, standardized questions ensuring uniformity, ease of application, and a longer window of time for respondents to consider their answers. However, there are issues associated with the impossibility to rephrase or clarify the question, resolve ambiguities, rely on the understanding and interpretation of the research subject, and the increased likelihood of forgetting or abandoning the response (Ribeiro, 2008; Maia, 2020). The questionnaire underwent a pre-test with fellow researchers and a pilot application with an individual with similar characteristics to the research subjects to validate it. Participants in the survey requested that the survey be made available in both print and online formats to accommodate their preferences and to increase the participation rate.

As previously stated, the questionnaire was divided into three thematic blocks. Each section contained questions that aimed to gather information about socio-political factors on different pedagogical perspectives, as presented in Chart 4.

**Chart 4 – Data Collection per Questionnaire Section**

Section	Socio-political factors
1 – General conceptions	a) role of the school b) learning assumptions c) teaching content
2 – Teaching methods	a) teaching content b) teaching methods c) teacher-student relationship
3 – Assessment	a) learning assessment

Source: Authors' own work.



The data obtained were evaluated through content analysis (Bardin, 2016), using a format adapted from evaluative assertion analysis (EAA). This perspective of analysis proposes the organization of the discourse into recording units corresponding to each assertion, which can be considered as an attitude towards an object. In this sense,

[...] attitudes are characterized by their intensity and direction. These two dimensions are used by the EAA technique to define and measure underlying attitudes. *Direction* is the direction of opinion according to a bipolar pair. It can be favorable or unfavorable. [...] *Intensity* demarcates the strength or degree of conviction expressed: support can be cold or passionate, opposition can be mild or vehement (Bardin, 2016, p. 204).

From this perspective, we divided each recording unit identified in the teachers' responses into three subdivisions: the **object of attitude (OA)** - the object on which the evaluation falls, the **evaluative terms with common meaning (TC)** - which qualify the OA, and the **verbal connector** - which connects the OA and TC (Bardin, 2016).

The objects of attitude were categorized into six pre-established and independent contextual sub-units that correspond to the six different elements sought in the questionnaire: the role of the school, learning assumptions, teaching content, teaching methods, teacher-student relationship, and learning assessment. All of these contextual sub-units make up the "Pedagogical Trend" contextual unit, and none of them takes precedence over another.

The intensity of the rating for each recording unit is measured on a seven-point scale ranging from three negative points (-3) to three positive points (+3), as shown in Chart 5.

**Chart 5 – Coding of OA Rating Intensity**

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Very Negative	Moderately Negative	Slightly Negative	Neutral	Slightly Positive	Moderately Positive	Very Positive

Source: adapted from Bardin (2016).

In this way, if the analysis of a recording unit had a rating intensity of -3, it means that the subject's position in the statement was understood to be very much against OA. Similarly, another recording unit that was hypothetically coded with a rating intensity of +2 means that the subject's position was moderately pro-OA.

To determine the intensity of the evaluation of each recording unit, we analyzed the verbal connector(s) and adverb(s) used in the discourse. To be considered a very intense position, a verb must have been used in the present tense that denotes immediate action (e.g., to be, to have, to must, to do, etc. – "Education is scrapped"), accompanied or not by an adverb that maintains or increases its intensity (e.g., no, always, very, absolutely, etc.). Sentences considered moderately intense are those that use verbs in tenses other than the present, con-

ditionals, weak verbs, and verb phrases (e.g., can, try, seek, can be, can have, etc. – “The teacher **can** empathize with the student”), even in the present tense. Finally, positions considered as slightly intense are those that combine at least two of the features that characterize moderate positions (e.g., conditional + future verb, conditional + weak verb phrase, weak verb in a tense other than the present - “The school **could become** a better place”) or those that are accompanied by an adverb indicating low intensity or doubt (e.g., little, slightly, possibly, maybe, etc.).

Regarding the third subdivision, the evaluative terms, we made an adaptation in which, instead of evaluating only good or bad, these terms were understood as characterization of one of the pedagogical tendencies based on the conception expressed about the object of attitude in each recording unit.

As an example, we have the following statement: “Learning happens when students come into contact with the knowledge transmitted by their teachers”. According to the analysis criteria, the three subdivisions are as follows:

- OA: “Learning”, which falls under the context sub-unit “Learning assumptions”;
- Evaluation intensity: “happens”, an action verb in the present tense without an adverb, which indicates a “+3” value for this component;
- Evaluation: “when students come into contact with the knowledge transmitted by their teachers”, which we consider to be a liberal traditional tendency, where knowledge can be transmitted by the teacher to the student.

In this context, the recording unit presented as an example shows us a position of the interlocutor that is very favorable to the traditional pedagogical trend in the context of learning assumptions. After analyzing all the recording units identified in each questionnaire, we organized them by contextual subunit. In each context subunit, we calculated the average intensity of the discourse for each pedagogical trend. In this way, we obtained the average pedagogical tendency of each teacher for each of the six contextual subunits.

In order to understand and delineate the pedagogical profile of each teacher, we calculated the average value of the intensity of discourse for or against each of the seven pedagogical trends outlined in the six contextual subunits analyzed independently and with the same level of prevalence.

After analyzing the speeches individually, we summarized the dominant and secondary pedagogical tendencies of the responses. To achieve this, we considered those with an average intensity difference of up to 0.15 points (5% of the maximum intensity value for or against) to be virtually tied. This allowed us to compare and contrast the pedagogical profiles of all the teachers who participated in the research.

## Findings and Discussions

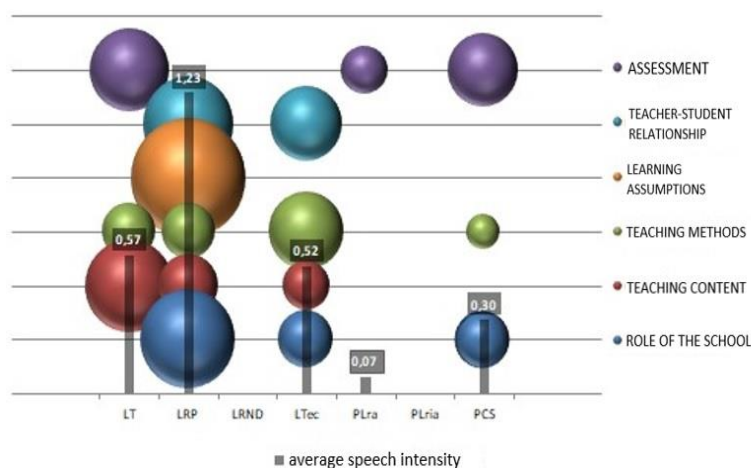
During the initial presentation of the research proposal to the management teams, six schools expressed interest in participating. Five of these schools are situated in the East Zone of Alegrete-RS, which is a peripheral region characterized by limited social, economic, and cultural conditions for many families. The only school outside of the East Zone that has expressed interest is also situated in a peripheral area and is subject to similar micro-social issues. During our visits, we included all of the schools that expressed interest, as well as other urban schools that met the criteria for participating in the study. Another school in the eastern part of the city expressed interest in participating, while that one located in a different peripheral region withdrew.

We invited a total of fifty-one subject teachers from six participating schools to answer the questionnaire. Thirty-one teachers declared their interest in contributing to the research, and thirteen teachers completed the questionnaire and signed the FICF.

Several reasons were cited as justification for those who did not return the questionnaire, with lack of time being the most common issue. Although we don't intend to dwell on the subject, the reasons for teachers' lack of time to develop different activities, take part in continuing training, improve their skills and abilities are recurrent in everyday situations and also in studies in the field of education (Cavalcante; Vilar; Costa, 2013; Lima; Vasconcelos, 2008; Franchin *et al*, 2006; Santos; Ostermann, 2005) and a research analyzing discourse suggests that the belief of lack of time can be fallacious (Laburu; Barros; Kanbach, 2007).

The analysis of the questionnaires yielded two hundred and eighty-one (281) recording units, which were categorized into six proposed contextual sub-units based on their characteristics. After analyzing each unit individually and grouping them into their corresponding sub-units, we calculated the average for each pedagogical tendency in each teacher's contextual sub-unit. As an illustration, Figure 1 displays the results obtained from analyzing the questionnaire of teacher P1.

Figure 1 – P1's pedagogical tendency graph



Source: Authors' data collection and analysis.

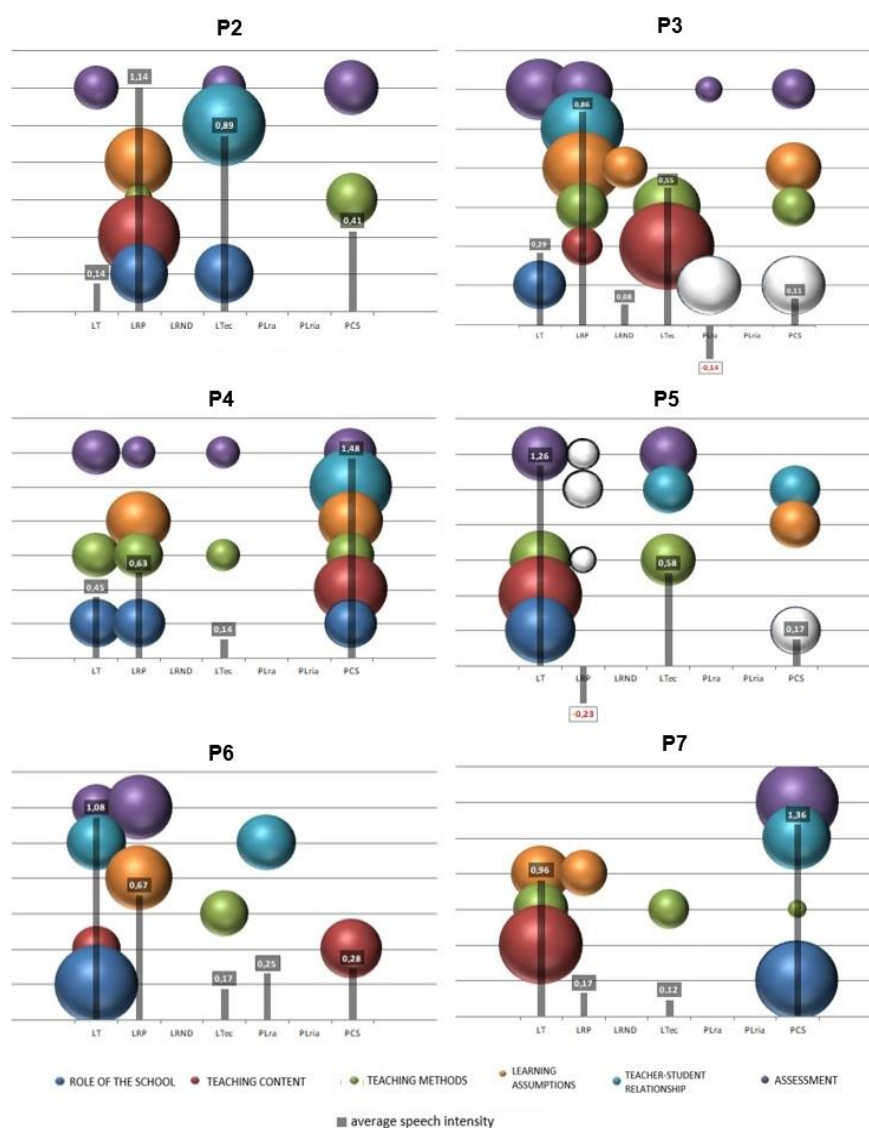
The graph cross-references pedagogical tendencies (horizontal) and contextual sub-units (vertical), marking the coding of the discourse with bubbles. The size of the bubbles is proportional to the intensity, with filled bubbles representing a favorable stance and empty bubbles representing an opposing stance. The superimposed bar graph shows the average intensity of the teacher's discourse for each pedagogical trend. Therefore, it is evident that the pedagogical trend that had the highest average intensity (+1.23) and frequency (5 bubbles) in P1's responses was LRP. P1 provided answers indicating that the school's purpose is (i) "the development of the individual's physical, cognitive and affective potential", that (ii) "learning is the process by which competencies, skills and knowledge are acquired or modified as a result of study, experience, training, reasoning and observation, from different perspectives" and that it is based on (iii) "personal motivation, [. ...] teacher guidance and own research" and that "the teacher needs to create situations that are common to the student's day-to-day life and make them interact actively". These statements suggest that for P1, the school should represent life by creating content based on students' experiences and focusing on their interests, which is consistent with the characteristics of the LRP.

However, his speech covered four additional trends, all of which had a coder below 1.00, indicating weak speech intensity. The LT (+0.57) and LTec (+0.52) tendencies are their main secondary tendencies and are evident in phrases such as (iv) "content is the set of values, knowledge, skills and attitudes that the teacher must teach", (v) "teaching material can be defined as a pedagogical instrument and product used in the classroom, specifically as instructional material that is prepared for didactic purposes" and that assessment is "an ac-

tivity that consists of gathering, in a consistent manner, data of interest for the performance of study, planning, research, development and experimentation tasks”, showing a clear mixture of liberal pedagogical tendencies.

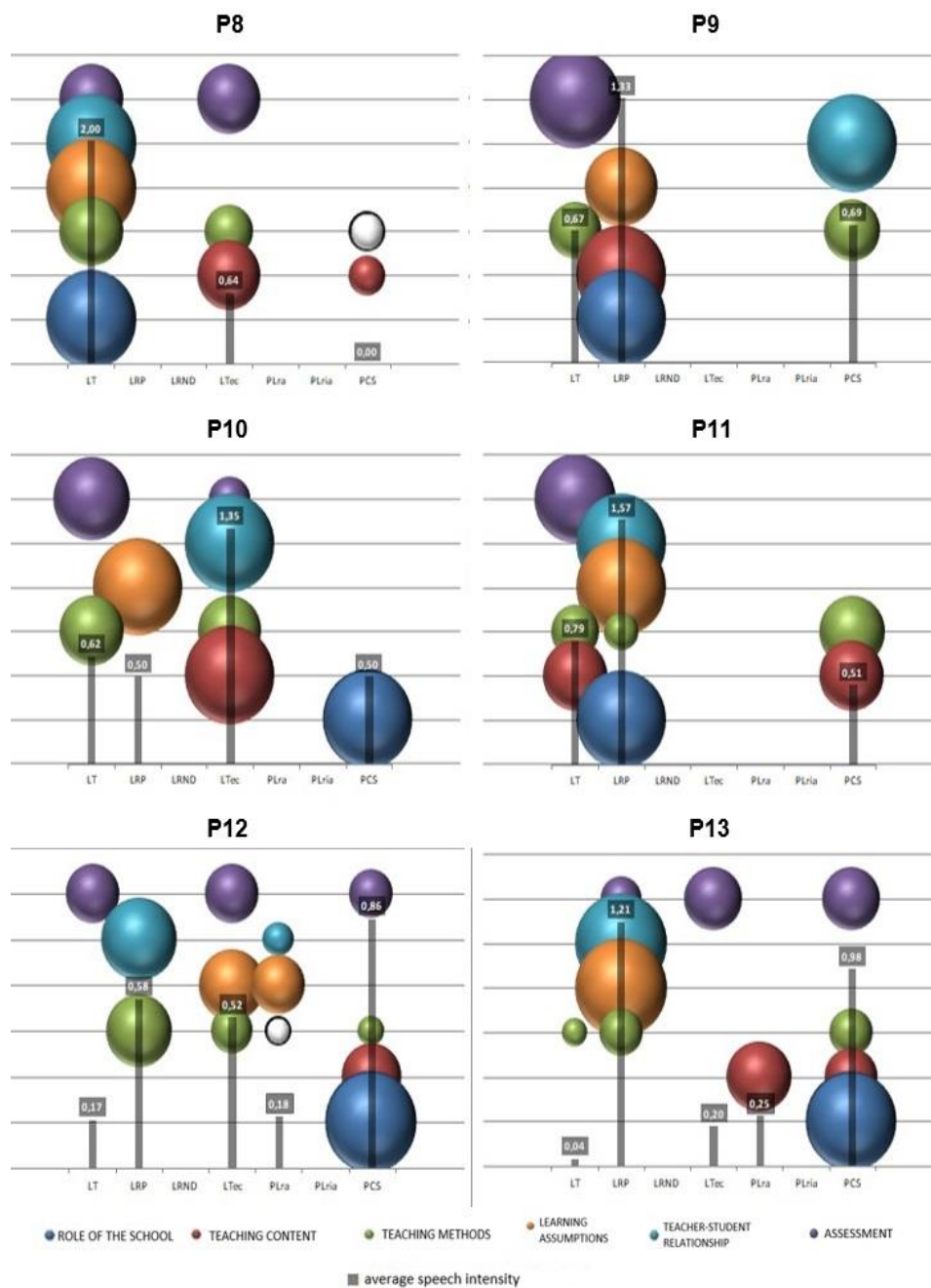
After showing P1's individual analysis, in order to demonstrate the technique, we present Figures 2 and 3 containing the graphs of the other twelve teachers interviewed, (P2 to P13), to summarize the analysis and discussion.

Figure 2 – Pedagogical trend graphs from P2 to P7



Source: Authors' data collection and analysis.

Figure 3 – Pedagogical trend graphs from P8 to P13



Source: Authors' data collection and analysis.

Upon analysis, it is clear that the teachers surveyed exhibit a wide range of tendencies, both on an individual and collective basis. This dissonance in the theoretical-methodological organization within the specified constraints has already been noted in other research. Silva and Santana (2022, p. 18), for example, conducted qualitative research with 8th grade math teachers in which “the statements of most teachers expose inconsistencies in their pedagogical practices”, as the answers often indicate contradictory information in relation to their pedagogical stance.

Chart 6 displays the frequency of each trend, emphasizing the two most prominent trends in each teacher's speech.

**Chart 6 – Frequency of pedagogical trends mentioned in teachers' speeches**

Pedagogical Trend	Incidence per teacher / per sub-unit	Main intensity	Secondary intensity <sup>1</sup>
Liberal Traditional	13 / 34	3	4
Liberal Renewed Progressive	12 / 38 <sup>2</sup>	6	4
Liberal Renewed Non-directive	1 / 1	-	-
Liberal Technician	11 / 27	1	6
Progressive Liberating	5 / 8 <sup>3</sup>	-	-
Progressive Libertarian	0	-	-
Progressive Critical-Social of Contents	13 / 38 <sup>4</sup>	3	3

Source: authors' data collection and analysis.

The data indicates that 84.62% of the participating teachers have mixed up four pedagogical trends in their discourse, suggesting that their pedagogical practices lack a clearly defined theoretical foundation.

Here, it is crucial to emphasize Libâneo (2014, p. 21) stating: “it is necessary to clarify that trends do not appear in their pure form, nor are they always mutually exclusive, nor can they capture all the richness of concrete practice”. From this, it is evident that it is natural for teachers' professional training and their work to encompass various pedagogical trends. These differences between theory and practice do not diminish the value of analysis as a tool for understanding teaching practices or recognizing the need for changes in pedagogical actions to promote the democratization of public schools.

However, the presence of conflicting tendencies, such as the LT and PCS tendencies, in the discourse of most teachers may be an indication of the need for further training to strengthen the conceptual basis of the teaching practice. In this case, it is important to consider Bigge's (1977) perspective on the challenges that teachers without strong theoretical training may face in promoting student learning and understanding, rather than simply presenting content. Saviani (2007) also emphasizes the importance for educators to acquire a theoretical foundation in order to improve their practice and to over-



come the limitations of pedagogical knowledge that is acquired solely through teaching experience.

With a well-developed intellectual framework and by acknowledging and overcoming the hybridization of seemingly contradictory concepts, teachers can create didactic-pedagogical situations that enable students to critically understand structured knowledge. This contributes to the democratization of knowledge and, in turn, the democratization of school itself.

Another noteworthy point in the analysis is that 75% of these priority trends are liberal in nature. These results indicate a contrast between teaching practices and Brazilian research, as opposed to the findings of Bazzo (2022, p.13), where “it is concluded that Brazilian authors have been demonstrating a need to overcome the liberal, uncritical and conservative conception as the *modi operandi* of teacher training”. The priority given by the teachers to historically constructed scientific knowledge over the common culture brought by the students undermines the democratization of the peripheral public schools. This devaluation weakens the representativeness of the students and creates a barrier to the development of their individual autonomy and the possibility of building an emancipatory collective thought in the face of society's dilemmas.

It is also important to note that the speeches had little presence of three pedagogical trends, including the progressive liberating trend, which is mainly characterized in the works of Paulo Freire. It is essential to recall the characteristics of progressive liberating and libertarian theories, which “based on a critical analysis of social realities, implicitly support the socio-political purposes of education” and “have in common anti-authoritarianism, the valorization of lived experience” (Libâneo, 2014, p.33), which legitimize the fundamental precepts of democratization towards the exercise of reflective and participatory citizenship.

Upon analyzing the discourse intensity, it becomes evident that the four most prevalent pedagogical trends were also the most intense. LRP was the most intense in almost half (46.15%) of the teachers who took part in the survey. Additionally, its intensity was found in almost 77% of teachers when considering primary and secondary tendencies. This result is consistent with other similar studies (Silva; Goi, 2017; Silva; Santana, 2022).

It is possible that these basic education teachers do not apply or are not even reached by the knowledge produced by academic research, thus perpetuating anti-democratic tendencies.

It is also important to note that even though some of the teachers mentioned working with contextualized content, they only focused on the demonstrative and/or verification aspect of the contextualization that was applied. In other words, contextualization serves only as a means of eliciting or confirming scientific theory, without problematizing or critically thinking on reality. These thoughts and problematizing are essential to enable our students to emancipate

themselves from the problems that may arise and meet the fundamental criteria that consolidate a democratic and democratizing education.

This allows us to see that liberal pedagogies (still) dominate pedagogical actions compared to progressive pedagogies, indicating that the appropriation of progressive lines of action has not yet taken place in the public primary schools analyzed. As shown in other studies, this situation is somewhat worrying because it indicates a traditional operationalization and without critical reflection of the pedagogical movement (Bazzo, 2022; Souza, 2021).

The perception of the hegemony of New School, technicist and traditional pedagogies today also reveals the difficulty of teachers to perceive the weaknesses of these currents in the epistemological aspect and in the didactic-pedagogical aspect. The epistemological assumption of New School reduces the teacher to a purely mediating position, where students, through their own motivation and individual and/or group interest, will organically choose what they want to learn in a form of “self-education”. In the other two hegemonic tendencies, the assumptions of both bring us the worship of content, which has its undeniable cultural value and importance and must be transmitted to students in order to make them better educated (traditional) or better prepared for employment (technicist).

Even considering the revolutionary nature of the renewed pedagogy at the time of its emergence, it is questionable to have it as the predominant discourse among the group of teachers, since there are arguments questioning its validity and limitations. The main problems brought up (Libâneo, 2014) to demonstrate the weaknesses of this New School pedagogical conception are:

- a) the belief that students are capable of spontaneously uncovering or inventing knowledge that they have not yet appropriated through free discovery and investigation;
- b) non-directiveness in establishing the content and teaching methods, since the content should emerge from the students' experiences and the teacher's role is solely to provide opportunities for the students, in groups, to reflect on an experimental problem and develop the knowledge they have not yet acquired; and
- c) the subtle training resulting from the absence of a guarantee for students that they will acquire knowledge/content that can equip them for democratic practice in their lives, fighting for their rights and claiming liberation from a real world of domination by one class over another in a relationship that is totally contrary to this proposed non-directivity.

Another aspect highlighted by the analysis is that a significant majority of teachers incorporate three or more different pedagogical trends in their discourse. This finding aligns with previous studies that aimed to comprehend the pedagogical inclination conveyed by educators (Silva; Goi, 2017). In teaching practice, it is common to encounter various pedagogical orientations aimed at addressing differ-

ent types of problems, such as cognitive, socio-affective, and motor issues. It is also important for teachers to familiarize themselves with these different trends so that they can select the one that best aligns with their didactic-pedagogical conceptions for each aspect of education. Back and Teixeira (2019) even point out that

it is possible for professionals to make use of the various trends to build their educational actions, thus seeking a change in their methodology or rebuilding it. However, formative reading is essential. The teacher of the future needs to be creative and innovative, a researcher and make their classroom a field of constant research (Back; Teixeira, 2019, p. 154).

Even reference documents, such as the Common National Curriculum Base, have characteristics of different pedagogical trends in their general competencies, with liberal pedagogies once again prevailing (Apolinario; Tarrago; Ferst, 2021). It is worth pointing out that, although the new Curriculum Base tries to present itself as “new”, Duarte (2001) points out that the contemporary trend of skills pedagogy and “learning by doing” are just new clothes for liberal pedagogical lines based on New School pedagogy.

In addition, for us to be able to see the incongruities and pitfalls of these fads, it is essential that pedagogical discourses and practices have a theoretical foundation and are not so antagonistic. In this sense, Souza (2021, p. 117) brings us an important reflection when he says that the study and the appropriation of pedagogical trends

[...] are of great value so that the teacher, throughout their training, can build themselves up as a professional who is equipped and who bases their actions on what they believe is most appropriate to their pedagogical conceptions and the concrete situation in which they work. In this case, the absence of a coherent and systematized philosophical-pedagogical body leads to a spontaneous teaching practice, which takes common sense as its guide.

In this sense, although there is more and more talk about pedagogical trends in Brazilian scientific research at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Bazzo, 2002; Apolinario; Tarrago; Ferst, 2021; Paula; Sostisso, 2021; Muniz; Muniz; Braga, 2020; Gaya; Freitas, 2020), these studies do not seem to find their way into basic education in a fluid way. Therefore, Da Silva (2018, p. 104) surgically points out that

[...] understanding the different pedagogical conceptions does not just mean reading what different theorists and thinkers say or write about them; it means understanding the educational practice close to the lived context so that reflection makes it possible to discuss and act for transformation.

Libâneo (2014) shows us that the struggle for the democratization of public schools began with an attempt to overcome liberal pedagogies aimed at producing work force for the labor market, in the direction of progressive pedagogies of a critical-liberating nature, shaped from the perspective of human emancipation in socio-political conditions. In this sense, it is essential that teachers know

(and recognize) the different pedagogical trends that govern their didactic and methodological process. In this way, it will be possible to position oneself as an educator – and also as a student – in order to mediate the learning process and develop critical, reflective and transformative individuals in society.

For this reason, it is essential that teachers reflect on their own practice in order to understand what, why, for what and for whom we teach, to overcome their limitations and contradictions, and to remain in constant professional training, with the horizon constantly pointing towards the emancipation of the working classes and the democratization of learning at school.

### **Final Considerations**

In view of the aspects analyzed and perceived, and taking into account the pedagogical tendencies whose manifestation in favor had greater intensity (liberal traditional, liberal renewed progressive, liberal technicist and progressive critical-social of contents), we understand that the perception of education by the subjects of the research has a mostly positivist aspect, giving enormous value to pure scientific knowledge in teaching-learning process, whether it is directive (traditional and technicist pedagogies) or non-directive (renewed pedagogy).

Given that our research problem was “Do the pedagogical tendencies of teachers in peripheral public schools positively or negatively affect the democratization of these schools?”, upon examining the three liberal pedagogical visions that stand out in the speeches, we are faced with a great risk for the democratization of public schools, since it is not possible to consider with any of them a democratic pedagogical act based on the aforementioned principles of autonomy, representativeness, participation and the exercise of citizenship by all the actors in the pedagogical process. In addition to the excessively aseptic liberal perspective, the wide variety of pedagogical trends present in the speeches of individual teachers strongly indicates the need for continuous pedagogical development in order to overcome the empirical perspective that sometimes guides the pedagogical act.

Furthermore, we must also stress the importance of building a collective commitment to teaching (and this involves not only the regular teachers, but also the school management teams and the pedagogical nuclei of the maintaining institution), since transformative action in education – and its positive consequences for the democratization of schools – requires determination of all the actors involved and responsible for educational success. The commitment to self-education must be the beacon that lights the way for teachers to follow, because the ability to educate people is a consequence of an adequate personal formation, and personal formation must be built not only through external training offers, but also through personal initiative and self-management of one's own development needs.

Of course, this study has several limitations. The small number of teachers who actually answered the questionnaire limits the possibility of more general inferences, and the results, discussions and conclusions are limited to the group of subjects in this research. Moreover, by analyzing only discourse (and not pedagogical practice), we end up relying only on the teachers' own view of their practice, which increases the risk of bias. The choice of only one reference author to support the description of trends can also be considered as a limiting factor, since the definitions differ in the approach of different authors.

With these perceptions and limitations, we reinforce the need for a conceptual and pedagogical evolution based on the democratization of knowledge and social, historical and concrete culture, without ceasing to understand the school's primary function of guaranteeing the acquisition of knowledge by students, but rethinking this knowledge and how much it effectively contributes to the emancipation of student subjects in the face of the social relations to which they are and will be subjected in contemporary society. We also suggest conducting research on the pedagogical tendencies of teachers at different levels of education, from primary to higher education, in public and private schools, in different locations, and serving students with different socio-economic characteristics. Other than that, we suggest conducting studies that, in addition to discourse, can evaluate teachers' pedagogical actions with students in order to compare teachers' discourse and practice.

Received April 23, 2023

Approved on January 18, 2024

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> There are over 13 secondary incidences, as we consider a tie when the intensities of different trends have a difference of less than 5% of the amplitude (0.15).
- <sup>2</sup> LRP: Three quotes with a negative evaluation.
- <sup>3</sup> PL: Two quotes with a negative evaluation.
- <sup>4</sup> PCS: Three quotes with a negative evaluation.

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Availability of research data: the dataset supporting the results of this study is published in this article.

Editor in charge: Carla Karnoppi Vasques

