



## Reforms of education and work in Brazil. A brief history of a crumbling education system<sup>1</sup>

Reformas da educação e trabalho no Brasil. Um breve histórico do ensino em migalhas

Reformas de educación y trabajo en Brasil. Un breve histórico de la enseñanza en pedazos

Lilian Fávaro Alegrância Iwasse  
Universidade Estadual do Paraná (Brazil)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3638-4718>  
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7432731201234850>  
[coordlilianfavar@gmail.com](mailto:coordlilianfavar@gmail.com)

Renan Bandeirante Araujo  
Universidade Estadual do Paraná (Brazil)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6199-1061>  
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/9293271922485263>  
[renanbandeirante@gmail.com](mailto:renanbandeirante@gmail.com)

Amanda Cristina Ribeiro  
Universidade Estadual de Maringá (Brazil)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1625-2953>  
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6469646290776952>  
[amribeiro.historia@gmail.com](mailto:amribeiro.historia@gmail.com)

### Abstract

In this paper, the reforms of public education in Brazil and their relationship with the transformations of the working world are analyzed. The thesis that aligned education with the civilizing process is discussed, an issue raised by the 1932 Pioneers' Manifesto and soon interrupted by the adoption of the incipient technical pragmatism, which guided the reforms promoted by Gustavo Capanema. When considering the typical constraints of nations of late capitalist development, education reforms that have to meet the imperatives of productive processes and new people management techniques arise. Thus, when offering vocational or regular education in a shorter time, this should fit the creation of a necessary workforce, which is why concepts such as skills and competencies are shaping the current High School National Common Curricular Base. To support this paper, we relied on the bibliographic reference, documentary sources and legislation on the subject.

**Keywords:** Brazilian public education. Development and educational reforms. Education and work.

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<sup>1</sup> English version by Janete Bridon. Email: [deolhonotexto@gmail.com](mailto:deolhonotexto@gmail.com). Review by Louise Potter. E-mail: [louise.potter@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:louise.potter@yahoo.co.uk).

## Resumo

Neste artigo, analisam-se as reformas da educação pública no Brasil e sua relação com as transformações do mundo do trabalho. Discorre-se sobre a tese que alinhou a educação ao processo civilizatório, discussão suscitada pelo Manifesto dos Pioneiros de 1932 e logo interrompida pela adoção do pragmatismo tecnicista que, incipiente, orientou as reformas promovidas por Gustavo Capanema. A considerar os estrangimentos típicos das nações de desenvolvimento capitalista tardio, tem-se que as reformas da educação atendem aos imperativos dos processos produtivos e das novas técnicas de gestão de pessoas. Dessa forma, ao oferecer um ensino profissionalizante ou regular, aligeirados, este deve adequar-se à criação de uma força de trabalho necessária, daí a razão pela qual os conceitos como habilidades e competências estão a matizar a atual Base Nacional Comum Curricular do Ensino Médio. Para fundamentar o artigo, apoiou-se no referencial bibliográfico, fontes documentais e legislação sobre o tema.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação pública brasileira. Desenvolvimento e reformas educacionais. Educação e trabalho.

## Resumen

En este artículo se analizan las reformas de la educación pública en Brasil y su relación con las transformaciones del mundo laboral. Se discute sobre la tesis que alineó la educación con el proceso civilizatorio, discusión planteada por el Manifiesto de los Pioneros (1932) y luego interrumpida por la adopción del pragmatismo tecnicista que, incipiente, orientó las reformas promovidas por Gustavo Capanema. Considerando las limitaciones típicas de las naciones de desarrollo capitalista tardío, ocurre que las reformas de la educación cumplen con los imperativos de los procesos productivos y de las nuevas técnicas de gestión de personas. De esa forma, al ofrecer una enseñanza profesionalizante o regular, aligerados, ésta debe adecuarse a la creación de una fuerza laboral necesaria, razón por la cual los conceptos como habilidades y competencias están matizando la actual Base Nacional Común Curricular de la Educación Secundaria. Para fundamentar el artículo, se recurrió al referencial bibliográfico, fuentes documentales y legislación sobre el tema.

**Palabras clave:** Educación pública brasileña. Desarrollo y reformas educativas. Educación y trabajo.

## Introduction

In general, in the early twentieth century, the supply of public education was restricted to the elite portion of the population. From the 1930s onwards, as part of the redirection of state actions aimed at overcoming a coffee-based economy, the resumption of development that implied overcoming negative social indicators such as illiteracy, the debate on the need to expand access to public education was initiated, hence the formulation of education policies associating teaching with learning a job/profession.

In the midst of these discussions on the need to overcome a predominantly agricultural national economy, it is that we must understand the multiple social meanings related to the publication of the 1932 Pioneers' Manifesto and the principles that founded Progressive Education in Brazil. The historical relevance of the 1932 Manifesto can be seen in two fundamental statements that guided the document: a) the inalienable right of individuals to access public education; b) education as an indelible presupposition of the civilizing process, an indispensable ingredient for the development of the nation.

Considering the contradictions of the late development of Brazilian capitalism (ARAÚJO, 2018), less than a decade after the publication of the Manifesto, the educational reforms undertaken in the 1940s by Gustavo Capanema implied the curricular reformulation and the reorganization of education. The priority given to vocational education, in accordance with the principles of technical training of the period, denied that broad segments of workers obtained access to an education focused on humanistic and scientific education, conforming to another facet of dual education as stated by Saviani (2009). Thus, based on a technical perspective, the reform implied the strengthening of public education in its instrumental form.

Following the paths of late development, the consolidation of the Taylorist/Fordist production system related to the profile of the industry installed during the period of Juscelino Kubitschek's government (1956-1961) contributed to an industrialism subordinated to monopolist international capital linked to the sectors of durable consumer goods and production goods. In accordance with this productive logic, a technicist-based education was disseminated, which later, anchored on the assumptions of the theory of human capital, was extensively disseminated throughout the military governments (1964-1985). Keeping their historical specificities in common, these reforms affirmed the process of denying the omnilateral formation of the generic human individual.

This paper, considering the particularity of each historical moment that accompanied the discussion on public education in Brazil, discusses the relationship between educational reforms and social, political and economic processes, in order to highlight their permanent subordination to the imperatives of the world of work. Seen in its dialectical procedurality, be it the Capanema reform or the technicality that marked education in the subsequent decades, until the reforms advocated by Law no. 13,415, of February 13, 2017, which gave legality to the High School National Common Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017), we have the permanence of technical principles as a basic reference that aims to organize the public education system.

As part of the counter-trend movement, the defense of unrestricted access to public education must be accompanied by the defense of an omnilateral training education that, in addition to work, entails the challenge of thinking of the school as a space whose access to knowledge contains civilizing potential, which must be used in opposition to the innumerable forms of social barbarism in the present time.

## The Pioneers' Manifesto and the expansion of public education

The discussions started in the 1930s about the importance of free public education as well as the ensuing assembly of the National Education System are actions that must be understood in their political, historical and social sense, due to the inherent need to overcome the limits of a fragile economy based on a coffee monoculture. These were processes responsible for promoting profound changes in the country's economic platform, in order to allow, in the late 1950s, a substantial change in the Brazilian industrial park. To Cury (1978, p. 10, our translation), "[...] the conversion of the economic, social and political structure and the very mentality of various sectors of the population, implied [the] reconversion of the educational structure, in order to value the new aspirations and as far as possible to achieve them". In fact, overcoming the dependence on the productive model based on an agrarian-exporting economy of commodities was the greatest challenge.

As Carvalho (2012, p. 63, our translation) points out, "[...] at the threshold of the 1930s, the world economy plunged into the most catastrophic depression in the history of capitalism". The Brazil of coffee followed this crisis trend and exposed its economic vulnerability; for that same reason, it was necessary to promote the transition. According to Romanelli (1986, p. 48, our translation), "[...] from the traditional to the modern sector, that is, from the agricultural to the industrial area". Thus, the measures taken by Vargas, at the same time that they served to face the crisis, aimed to sustain economic activity, which contributed to the creation of more favorable conditions for industrial development.

In conditions analogous to the more general process that accompanied the transformations of capitalist modes of production, in a historical perspective, we had that manufacturing created the conditions for overcoming the predominantly agricultural economy, laying the foundations for the emergence of large industry, the new industrial capitalist economy itself. Marx (2008, p. 415), analyzing this social process, indicated that it completely revolutionizes the worker and "[...] takes possession of the individual workforce at its roots. It deforms the worker monstrously, leading him, artificially, to develop a partial skill, at the expense of repressing a world of instincts and productive capacities" (MARX, 2008, p. 415, our translation).

From Marx's analysis, we have that the labor relations in modernity were transformed in order to meet the needs of capital, "[...] in the capitalist system, the dominant class aims to maintain the private property system, the division between capital and labor and the social relations established in terms of merchandise" (CURY, 1978, p. 5, our translation). In this case, the division of labor affects work activity, as it creates a list of new professions that result precisely from partial work, a fact that expropriates the "free time" of the worker, because, when creating new professions, the very content of the factory extends to other instances of social interaction. "[...] not having free time, workers end up not having training experiences, either at work or elsewhere" (GALUCH; PALANGANA, 2008, p. 71, our translation). This emerging mode of production, as presented by Marx (2008), also produced a new economy, a new policy and a new society that required a workforce capable of adjusting to new methods of work.

In the context of public schooling, tuned to the needs of capitalism, the understanding of the contents to be taught tends to be restricted to useful knowledge related to the professions that result from partial work activity. Cury (1978, p. 18, our translation) highlights that "[...] until 1930 the country's needs still included, with the oligarchy in power, a type of education aimed to satisfying oligarchic interests [...]"; thus, "[...] broad sections of the population were marginalized from the school educational process. Education exclusively serves the elites". However, Brazil in the Vargas period was experiencing precisely the challenge of developing the industry and creating a new literate workforce consistent with the new productive platform.

When analyzing the Pioneers' Manifesto, we found that their theses related to the formation of the nation contributed to the process of expanding the public education system. To Vidal (2013, p. 585, our translation), "[...] it is nevertheless enlightening to perceive the Manifesto as part of the political game for the dispute over control of the State [...]. The document was also representative of a group of intellectuals who embraced the same nation project [...]". The expansion of the public school was implicit in the analysis carried out by Vidal (2013), in his paper *80 anos do Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova: questões para debate* (80 years of the Pioneers' Manifesto of Progressive Education: questions for debate), in which the author states that "[...] the Manifesto survived as a letter of pedagogical principles, as a milestone in favor of a renewed school, but mainly in defense of the State's responsibility for the diffusion of public education in the country" (VIDAL, 2013, p. 586, our translation). In Vidal's words (2013, p. 584, our translation), the Manifesto "[...] was not within the strict scope of the dispute in the educational field, but also represented a preaching of a macro political nature". The importance of the document can be measured by the relevance of its signatories<sup>2</sup>.

The Pioneers' Manifesto proposed that education, as the responsibility of the State, should incorporate as many citizens as possible in any degree, accessible not to a minority, by economic privilege, but to all citizens who were willing to receive it. In fact, the State could not make education compulsory, without making it free (MANIFESTO DOS PIONEIROS, 2006). It is in this same sense that Cury (1978) states that "[...] the diffusion of the school would cause social changes, accommodating the different social classes due to the very rise it would generate" (CURY, 1978, p. 18-19, our translation). In this perspective, the emblematic passage contained in the Pioneers' Manifesto (2006) is added, informing that it was necessary to "[...] put the educational problem of the rural masses and the worker element of the city and industrial centers into a resolution path by extension of the school of educational work and the school of professional work [...]" (MANIFESTO DOS PIONEIROS, 2006, p. 197, our translation).

In this context, education was seen as a means capable of disseminating social modes of a civilizing character. For this reason, "[...] in schools, work appears as a central element of material progress, for the satisfaction of material needs and not as a liberator of the spirit, it also appears as a central element in the production of the new man" (ARROYO, 2012, p. 120, our translation). The expansion of public education, as presented by the Pioneers' Manifesto, under a certain angle of analysis, can be conceived as an educational/civilizing movement in which claimed "[...] for education the function of 'creating' citizens and reproduce/modernize the 'elites' and, simultaneously, to contribute to addressing the social issue" (SHIROMA; MORAES; EVANGELISTA, 2011, p. 12-13, our translation).

As part of the new direction given to the public school, we observed the attempt to elaborate an educational/professional planning to elevate the school to the category of an institution capable of redeeming itself from social ills through the dissemination of culture and job learning. Therefore, if, for a long period of Brazilian history, public education was mainly aimed at the education of the elite, the 1930s were marked by the discussion of a new format of education, because, within the emerging needs, the illiterate needed to be educated, literate and instrumentalized. In this sense, Xavier (2002, p. 15, our translation) concludes that, "[...] according to the Manifesto, it was necessary for that man to acquire a

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<sup>2</sup> The Manifesto was signed by: Fernando de Azevedo; Afranio Peixoto A. de Sampaio Doria; Anísio Spínola Teixeira; M. Bergstrom Lourenço Filho; Roquette Pinto; J. G. Frota Pessôa; Julio de Mesquita Filho; Raul Briquet Mario Casassanta; C. Delgado de Carvalho; A. Ferreira de Almeida Jr.; J. P. Fontenelle; Roldão Lopes de Barros; Noemy M. da Silveira; Hermes Lima; Attilio Vivacqua; Francisco Venancio Filho; Paulo Maranhão, Cecilia Meirelles; Edgar Sussekind de Mendonça; Armanda Alvaro Alberto; Garcia de Rezende; Nobrega da Cunha; Paschoal Lemme and Raul Gomes (HISTEDBR On-line, Campinas, Special number, p. 188-204, Aug. 2006).

new parameter for interpreting reality, that is, a rational parameter for understanding his individual life and society as a whole”.

As it is a process immersed in contradictions, Arroyo (2012) points out that the bourgeois class has nothing to gain from traditionalism and the people's ignorance. For the author, a minimum of modernity would be a condition for survival. Thus, he compares the insertion at school like taking a bus, which is a necessary way to get to work, guarantee employment and survive. The education of the working class became a minimum condition to meet the logic of capitalist society. “The people are forced to work to survive and have to fight for the instruments that lead and conduct them to work” (ARROYO, 2012, p. 122-123, our translation). Thus, in the historical context of the 1930s, there was a clear relationship between the search for expanding access to public education and the movement that associates teaching and work, the intrinsic relationship between education and the industrial process, as it is “[...] for the work that society delivers itself to educate its children” (MANIFESTO DOS PIONEIROS, 2006, p. 191, our translation).

In parallel with the State's measures to promote industrialization, there was a need to promote the expansion of public education by associating learning with the acquisition of a job/profession. The Pioneers' Manifesto presented not only the reform in the administrative and systemic format of education, it proposed an orientation in relation to the structure of public education and the knowledge transmitted, as well as the methodologies to be adopted. The Manifesto announced the new pragmatism in education, a totally secular teaching, a public, compulsory and free education. For this, the pedagogical model of the Progressive Education was used which “[...] proposes to serve not the interests of classes, but the interests of the individual, and which is based on the principle of linking the school with the social environment, has its ideal conditioned by the current social life, but deeply human, of solidarity, of social service and cooperation [...]” (MANIFESTO DOS PIONEIROS, 2006, p. 191-192, our translation).

To the pragmatism of the Manifesto, we must add the analytical misunderstanding when suggesting that the education/teaching process is above the antagonistic classes in favor of the individual. In the capitalist system, individuals invariably belong to one of the classes, in no way does the individual overlap or lie outside them. By denying the relationship between education and social classes, contradictorily, a confused thesis is elaborated on which the school is founded, based on the principles of solidarity and cooperation. Class interests are diluted in an ambiguous social interpretation that aims to re-establish the spirit of discipline, solidarity and cooperation among men. “[...] the fundamental postulate of the new educational theory is that human nature tends to fulfill itself, as long as there is control over itself and the environment, demanding from the student him/herself virtues such as effort, patience and courage” (CURY, 1978, p. 85, our translation).

Thus, the expansion of public education represented the consolidation of the new project of the hegemonic class, a process attested by the educational dualism between the school formatted for the worker and the private school aimed at segments of the elite, focused on the propaedeutic education that enabled them to access the University education. It was, therefore, exclusive for the segments that made up the new proletariat. For the worker, the expansion of education implied a mixture between the investments made in regular schools and technical schools, because “[...] educating for work, in this way, becomes an outstanding educational policy” (DOMINSCHECK, 2015, p. 205, our translation).

These new proposals in the field of education and teaching were accompanied by other actions such as the creation of the Ministry of Education and Health; the establishment of compulsory public primary education in 1934; the implantation of the 1934 *Plano Geral Nacional de Viação* (PGNV) - General National Road Plan, which, in addition to the expansion of the railway lines, included the construction of the road network, resulting in the creation of

the *Departamento Nacional de Estradas de Rodagens* (DNER) - National Department of Highways - in 1937. Thus, a set of state actions, articulated to those that occurred in the 1940s, consolidated the conditions for the economic transformations that occurred in the following decades, particularly the industrialization process that started in 1955.

### **The New State and the technicist pragmatism of the Capanema Reform**

In 1937, with the establishment of the *Estado Novo* (New State), “[...] the new Constitution devoted far less space to education than the previous one, but enough to include it in a strategic framework with a view to addressing the ‘social issue’ and combat ideological subversion” (SHIROMA; MORAES; EVANGELISTA, 2011, p. 22, our translation). The relationship between the educational system and the economic system was deepened. From the point of view of the renovating movement, the idea of the educational plan remained; however, the content that at first was understood as an instrument for introducing scientific rationality into education policy was reversed from the rationality of political-ideological control, becoming a script followed by the government of Getúlio Vargas in relation to the measures taken within the educational scope. Marcon (2017) indicates that there was a joint action between the State and entrepreneurs in industry, commerce and agriculture, as both segments aimed for the formation of a working class with a new profile. According to Marcon (2017, p. 26, our translation), “[...] a more collaborative workforce, capable of boosting the project of economic development and national industry”.

To Batista (2015), the defense of rational education took place more effectively in this period. To the author, considering the emergence of Taylorism/Fordism in production, the rationalization of work sought to prepare young people for companies. In the educational field, the courses adopted the same premise of rationalization and taught, based on the logic of this productive model, being concerned with efficiency at work, improving quality and increasing production, and the workforce should adapt “[...] to its productive social function, which meant a behavior more appropriate to the discipline required by the new rationalization of work inside the factories”, because, in this way, “[...] the worker would be a honored worker that would contribute to the order of the country, avoiding damage to economic progress, as projected by the State and capital” (MARCON, 2017, p. 27, our translation). In this way, capital sought to maintain its hegemony based on the ideological control of the worker and “[...] disseminated its theses through the IDORT Journal, making discourses for the workers of class conciliation, collaboration, discipline, all united in favor of the progress of the country” (BATISTA, 2010, p. 287, our translation).

Economic progress was supported by the policies of National Developmentalism. In this case, the State acted as a planner, financier, intervener, administrator and owner of state-owned companies. National developmentalism initiatives can be seen in the undertakings carried out from 1934 to 1953, with emphasis on the creation of the Labor Court (1939) and the Consolidation of Labor Laws (1943). Among the projects carried out, state companies such as the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (1934); *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional* (1941) - National Steel Company; Vale do Rio Doce Company (1942); National Motor Factory (1942); Vale do São Francisco hydroelectric plant (1945); National Bank for Economic and Social Development (1952); and Petrobrás S/A (1953). The ideology of developmentalism was based on the thesis of overcoming the underdevelopment identified in the absence of competitive state and private industries, inactive state, population poverty and systemic illiteracy. In this scenario, “[...] education is understood as an instrument to promote growth and reduce poverty” (OLIVEIRA, 2010, p. 219, our translation).

The new methods applied to work control in companies contributed to the increase in production. They were characterized by rigidity, by the dissociation between intellectual and

manual work, by obedience, by tasks with repetitive movements, by the alienation of the worker and by the control of his/her industrial and private life, by the timed control of the manufacturing time. As stated by Marcon (2017, p. 28, our translation), “[...] the rationalization of work, which should reflect on the daily conduct of workers, is based on assumptions of the scientific organization of work, consistent with the Fordist/Taylorist management model”.

The methods of rationalizing production became part of the worker’s life inside and outside the factory. “[...] the new work methods were inseparably linked with a certain way of living, thinking and experiencing life: it is not possible to succeed in one field without obtaining tangible results in the other” (GRAMSCI, 1980, p. 393 *apud* GALUCH; PALANGANA, 2008, p. 78-79, our translation). In education, this rationality was incorporated by Gustavo Capanema’s Reform, which, through Decrees, redefined the incipient Brazilian public education system. Education linked to the social need imposed by the means of production, however, became rational and pragmatic just like the work in the factory, deepening the dualism between the school for the elites and the school for the subordinate classes. According to Carvalho (2012, p. 147, our translation), “[...] the contrast between popular education and education aimed at attending elites can be clearly seen in the educational reforms undertaken since 1942”.

The Decree-Laws or Organic Laws of Education were implemented, known as Reforms of Capanema, totaled eight reforms, four of them implemented by Gustavo Capanema and another four by his successor in the Ministry of Education, Raul Leitão da Cunha. The Decree-Laws created institutions that aimed to train skilled labor - professional technical training - aimed at meeting the needs of industries. In this sense, two different training courses were offered, one based on rapid teaching and the other on learning, aimed at the qualification of industrial apprentices (ROMANELLI, 1986).

The first corresponded to Decree-Law no. 4,073, of January 30, 1942 - Organic Law on Industrial Education, with teaching primarily aimed at the expanding industry at the given historical moment (BRASIL, 1942b). The unfolding of this Decree-Law aimed, according to Romanelli (1986, p. 166, our translation), “[...] the preparation of minor apprentices in industrial establishments, training and continuation courses for workers not subject to apprenticeship”. What differentiated the two Decree-Laws, therefore, was that the first one was maintained by the State, while Decree-Law no. 4,048, of January 22, 1942, which created the *Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial* (SENAI) - National Service for Industrial Training, had the private sector as the maintainer, represented by the industrialists who selected the best students (BRASIL, 1942a).

Decree-Law no. 4,244, of April 9, 1942 - Organic Law on Secondary Education, was geared towards the formation of “conducting elites” (BRASIL, 1942c), given the fact that the training was intended for those who chose to continue to a higher level of education. Thus, as the Decree-Law for Industrial Education was created, so was the Decree-Law for Commercial Education, known as the Organic Law for Commercial Education (Decree-Law no. 6,141, of December 28, 1943), with the purpose of offering courses aimed at employees of commerce (BRASIL, 1943).

Other Decree-Laws were created after 1945, during the Provisional Government of José Linhares. Among the Decrees approved by the provisional government, we had the Organic Law for Primary Education; Normal School; *Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial* (SENAC) - National Commercial Learning Service; and Agricultural Education. With Decree-Law no. 8,529, of January 2, 1946, primary education was divided into two stages - different categories - the first, primary education, lasting five years (four years for elementary primary and one year for the complementary primary), aimed at serving children between 7-12 years old; the second category was supplementary primary education, lasting two years, aimed at teenagers and adults who did not complete primary education at the appropriate age (BRASIL, 1946a).



The Organic Law for Normal Education (Decree-Law no. 8,530, of January 2, 1946) (BRASIL, 1946b) was intended for the training of teaching staff, the qualification of school administrators and to develop and propagate the knowledge and techniques for training within the following structure: the first level or cycle was attended in the normal regional schools, lasting four years, aimed at the training of primary school teachers; the second level or cycle was attended in normal schools, lasting three years, aimed at training primary teachers.

SENAC (the Brazilian National Commercial Learning Service) was created through Decree-Laws no. 8,621, of January 10, 1946 (BRASIL, 1946c) and no. 8,622, of January 10, 1946 (BRASIL, 1946d), with the main objective of training professionals capable of exercising commercial activities, which occurred with SENAI (the Brazilian National Service for Industrial Training). Finally, the Organic Law on Agricultural Education, although its direction was not different from other documents, with a structure based on technical/professional training in agricultural education. According to Romanelli (1986, p. 156, our translation), “[...] its organization based on two cycles: the basic agriculture in four years and the mastery in two years, in the first cycle, and several technical courses of three years, in the second cycle [...]”.

In view of the above, it is clear that such Decree-Laws were intended to maintain educational dualism: on the one hand, secondary and higher education continued to be aimed at elites; on the other hand, professional education and primary schools in the educational system were directed to the popular strata, in other words, to the formation of a workforce stock through the expansion of public education. On the subject, Marcon (2017, p. 42, our translation) states that “[...] the capitalist mode of production makes the school more a contributory space for social reproduction in accordance with the logic of capital that, contradictorily, incorporates the possibilities and human potential”.

In this process of expansion of the Brazilian industry and the dualization of education, instrumental knowledge was valued, that is, basic instrumental skills to meet the needs of the production process. Thus, the Decree-Laws gave rise to what we now know as the S System, with emphasis on the current *Serviço Social do Comércio* (SESC) - Social Service of Commerce; SENAC; *Serviço Social da Indústria* (SESI) - Social Service of Industry; SENAI.

The transformations produced in the relations of production and, above all, the population increase in urban centers, focused on the need to eliminate illiteracy while requiring qualification for work; thus, we have that “[...] capitalism, notably industrial capitalism, engenders the need to provide knowledge to ever more numerous layers, whether due to the demands of production itself, or to the needs of consumption that this production entails” (ROMANELLI, 1986, p. 59, our translation). Nevertheless, the need for a qualified workforce for companies has made professional technical courses a quick response to market demand. On the other hand, workers have incorporated the idea that education is reduced to the scarce knowledge necessary to carry out work, knowledge that is adequate for raising productivity rates. Initially, it is a speech directed to the broad segments of the proletariat, but, later, it was disseminated through the “sophisticated” theory of human capital, more specifically in the 1960s and 1970s.

### **JK’s National Developmentalism and technicist neopragmatism**

So far, we have demonstrated that the expansion of public and professional education in the country during the 1940s was the result of pressures caused by the social demands emanating from the implementation of the “new” Brazilian capitalism. In the following decade, the course of economic development gained a new lease of life with the opening of the internal market to international capital under Juscelino Kubitschek’s government (1956-1961). The new developmental pattern was supported by the thesis of the expansion of the economy, in a new impulse anchored in a more denationalized national production, opening possibilities for the

entry of a considerable volume of capital from the USA and Europe. In this context, Romanelli (1986, p. 53, our translation) states that “[...] with Juscelino, the implementation of heavy industry in Brazil is accentuated, but the entry of international capital also gains new forms, through the implantation of multinational branches”. The author also highlights that “[...] in the political sector, Getulio Vargas’ model continues, in the economic sector the doors of the national economy to international capital are widely opened”.

The implementation of heavy industry in the country was one of the actions carried out by Juscelino Kubitschek (JK), through his Goal Setting Plan: 50 years in five. The president, in his speeches, stated that the objective was to provide the country with 50 years of progress in five years of achievements. The plan was composed of 30 goals, distributed over five axes. The State made investments in energy, transport, food, industry and education sectors (BRASIL, 1958).

President Juscelino Kubitschek’s economic development policy is reflected in his goal setting program, which includes projects to be carried out with public and private resources. The program translates a dynamic and progressive set of works and undertakings that can be carried out in several stages, some of which must be completed by the end of the current five-year term of government (1961) and others scheduled for completion in 5 to 10 years, as is the case of the electricity target, in which about 40% of the investments in progress will only be consummated between 1961 and 1965 (BRASIL, 1958, p. 9).

When considering the strategic importance of the energy sector, a significant volume of investments was directed towards the installation, production and distribution of electricity, evidently without disregarding a smaller volume of investments made in the areas of nuclear energy, mineral coal and oil. In the transport sector, road transport was prioritized, complemented by means of rail, air and naval transport. In the food sector, less investment was made, followed by the educational sector focused on intensifying the training of technical personnel, with a view to meeting the business demand pressured by investments made in the industrial sector, especially in the sectors of consumer durables and capital goods. As can be seen in the document entitled Goal Setting Program by President Juscelino Kubitschek: “The goal setting plan aims to provide the country with an industrial infrastructure and superstructure and to modify its economic situation; if this setting does not interconnect with the other economic, social and political phenomena, the plan will fail” (BRASIL, 1958, p. 95).

It was clear that, in the Goal Setting Program, the priorities were concentrated in the transport, energy and, by extension, education sectors, expressed even in the order in which the document was prepared, since education is the last theme. These were essential investments for industrial development in compliance with the new pattern of capitalist accumulation in Brazil. In this sense, the Goal Setting Plan contributed to the boost of urbanization in regions such as ABC Paulista and São Paulo Metropolitan area. As stated by Araújo (2012, p. 36, our translation), “[...] as a result of this development model, a certain form of urban spatial occupation arose that, centered on the needs of the monopoly industry, converted the region in *locus*, in the privileged space of reproduction of social life”.

The “denationalized” national developmentalist policy was anchored in supportive policies of the Brazilian State, tax exemptions, infrastructure, market protection, being an attraction for multinationals to settle in Brazil. Among those that made up the durable consumer goods production industries, we had: “Scania Vabis, Mercedes Benz, Chrysler, Volkswagen, Toyota, Simca, Willys and Vemag” (ARAÚJO, 2012, p. 95, our translation). Consequently, around the multinational industries, production chains were created, opening space for the

participation of national companies, generally in the segments that demanded a smaller capital contribution. Thus, the National Developmentalism of JK proposed an economic policy that sought a new format in production, allowing the definitive affirmation of the Taylorist/Fordist as being the predominant form of management and organization in Brazil. The Taylorist/Fordist organization and management of production disseminated new social patterns, resulting in mass disciplinization. These characteristics were thus defined by Pinto (2007, p. 32, our translation), in the sense that “[...] would distribute workers and their tools effectively along a line, by standardizing work in activities whose operations were standardized”.

The consolidation of these productive models implied the need for an education system aimed at professionalization, based on the forms of rationalized work organization. Education anchored in Taylorism/Fordism, by purpose, aimed at training to meet the demand of workers and production staff, since the separation between conception and execution required tasks related to intellectual and instrumental actions, whose training was well defined according to class relations (KUENZER, 1999). We emphasize that education in this new phase of Brazilian industrial expansion has incorporated a kind of neopragmatism. In this case, the reaffirmation of the need to expand public education not only maintained the pragmatism of Gustavo Capanema’s reforms, but sought to expand the contingent of the available workforce, an indelible need to consider the implantation of monopolistic industries, the new insertion of the Brazilian economy in the international division of labor.

The data presented by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) reveal this process, demonstrating how public education and education for professionalization expanded dramatically, enrollments for the decade (1950/1960) showed an increase in relation to the previous periods, reaching both primary and secondary education levels. According to the data presented by IBGE, in the 1950s, public professional education reached 273,391 enrollments and 309,249 for the 1960s, with emphasis on industrial education as SENAI’s private education expanded by almost the whole country. It is worth mentioning that SENAI had received a support guaranteed in the Constitution:

The 1946 Constitution contained a provision that ensured tax exemption for educational institutions, prohibiting the Union, States and Municipalities from imposing taxes on their goods and services, provided that their income was fully applied in the country and for educational purposes. In the constitutional reform of 1965, the tax privileges of these institutions were amplified, extending the tax exemption to their income. The 1967 Constitution and the 1969 Amendment maintained this provision. Thus, private schools began to enjoy true tax immunity, which expanded their possibilities for capital accumulation. (CUNHA, 2007, p. 812, our translation).

In the 1960s, the growth of the public and private education network in vocational education maintained its pace of expansion. “[...] SENAI invested in systematic training courses, intensified training within companies and sought partnerships with the Ministries of Education and Labor and with the National Housing Bank” (SENAI/PR, 2015, p. 3, our translation). Thus, in this period, with the articulation of public education with the schools of the S System (SESC, SESI, SENAC, SENAI, the institutions functioned as true promoters of an education/training directed primarily to the industry, commerce and services sector. As Marcon (2017, p. 40, our translation) points out, “[...] the creation of business systems for social professional education - just like SESI - had the responsibility/mission to train, in a more enlightened manner, a larger range of people available to meet the demand of the production sectors involved in the national economic development project”.

Training conceived in a subordinate manner to production contributed to the development of technical education. Kuenzer (2011) analyzes the development of the labor relations process aimed at worker education, indicating some of the elements that make up an instrumentalist pedagogy that educates for the factory. As the author states, “[...] hence the levels of education are defined by the expected behaviors and not by degrees of education, at the same time that experience is taken as a substitute for schooling” (KUENZER, 2011, p. 114, our translation), a common situation in the technicist educational model. The experience undertaken here was intended to replace school knowledge with practical and habitual knowledge “knowing how to do” with an emphasis on school education aimed at reproducing everyday life.

When reflecting on the dimensions of daily life, Heller (2008, p. 31, our translation) emphasizes that “[...] everyday life is the life of every man. Everyone lives it, without any exception, whatever their position in the division of intellectual and physical labor”. Still according to the author, everyday life is characterized by two fundamental traits, namely: spontaneity and pragmatism. In this sense, we apprehend that knowledge based on common sense leads the individual to live the uncritical spontaneity typical of ingrained forms of life. According to Netto and Carvalho (2007, p. 14, our translation), on the one hand, “[...] everyday life, this everyday life and of all men, is perceived and presented differently in its multiple colors and faces”. On the other hand, the struggle for reproduction as a work force imposes on the individual a pragmatic way of life, oblivious to his/her condition as a subordinate class.

On the subject of everyday life, Netto and Carvalho (2007, p. 15, our translation) assert that “[...] all studies on everyday life indicate the complexity, contradictory and ambiguity of its content. More importantly, everyday life cannot be refused or denied as a source of knowledge and social practice”. However, spontaneity and pragmatism contribute to the perpetuation of an alienated way of life that, resulting from class subordination, implies a complex process of social staleness of individuals. In addition, it is necessary to consider that “[...] everyday life is, for the State and capitalist forces, a source of exploitation and space to be controlled, organized and programmed” (NETTO; CARVALHO, 2007, p. 20, our translation).

In the early 1960s, the first National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (known in Brazil as LDBEN) and the National Education Plan were approved. It is worth mentioning that the approval of the documents, considering the political context of the period, received the support of social movements in the struggle for democracy and in defense of the basic reforms advocated by the President of the time - João Goulart. According to Shiroma, Moraes and Evangelista (2011, p. 26, our translation), “[...] popular mobilizations claimed Basic Reforms - land reform, reform of the economic structure, education, reforms, in short, in the structure of Brazilian society”. This movement had an intense impact on the field of culture and education. In order to contain popular mobilizations, control state actions and preserve the dominance of the dominant classes, in 1964, the Military Regime (1964-1985) was installed, which adopted mechanisms of repression for opponents.

In the educational field, to Piletti and Piletti (2014, p. 204, our translation): “From 1964 onwards, Brazilian education, in the same way as other sectors of national life, became a victim of the authoritarianism that was installed in the country”. However, the authoritarian and centralizing policy maintained the logic of support for the multinational industrial capital installed in the country, leading to greater State indebtedness as was seen in the outbreak of the foreign debt crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s (TAUJLE, 2001). Looking at this period, Carvalho (2012, p. 179) demonstrated the supporting pillars of the economic growth model adopted by the military government:

1) massive inflow of foreign capital, in the form of investment and loans; 2) deepening of the exploitation of the working class who were subjected to a wage crunch and political repression; 3) guarantee, by the State, of capitalist expansion and the consolidation of large national and international capital, especially through subsidies and monetary policy as mechanisms of inflationary control. (CARVALHO, 2012, p. 179, our translation).

Based on the above, we apprehend that an alliance was formed between companies, particularly multinationals, and the State, with a view to accelerating the modernization process of capitalism, giving rise to the period of the “economic miracle” (1968-1973). On the one hand, this was due to the high percentage shown in the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reaching an average of 10% per year. On the other hand, Ferreira Jr. and Bittar (2008) stated that such rates were only possible due to the intensification of the exploitation of Brazilian workers, triggering, at the same time, a process of suppression of democratic freedoms.

Evidently, the political conjuncture of the period contributed to outline the theses presented when the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law - Law no. 5,692, of August 11, 1971 - was drafted, establishing the guidelines and bases for the teaching of 1st and 2nd grades, “[...] pretentiously called Education Guidelines and Framework Law of 1st and 2nd grades, this policy consisted of the merger of the branches of the 2nd cycle of High School (in the nomenclature in force at the time)” (CUNHA, 2014, p 914, our translation), reiterating the permanence of the technical tendency, of teaching as being part of the process of preparing the individual for work.

Saviani (2010, p. 383, our translation) asserts that “[...] from the pedagogical point of view, it is concluded that, if for traditional pedagogy the central issue is to learn, and for new pedagogy, learning to learn, for the technicist pedagogy what matters is learning to do”. Thus, “learning to do” not only maintained the social aspects, but reaffirmed the technicist neopragmatism after JK. Kuenzer (1999, p. 167, our translation) states that this pedagogical model “[...] gave rise to proposals that sometimes focused on content, sometimes on activities, without ever contemplating a relationship between student and knowledge that truly integrated content and method, in order to provide the intellectual domain of social and productive practices”. In this case, based on the premises of instrumental education, it was enough to provide employees with information that would allow them to develop skills and initiatives for decision making, to guarantee employment and differentiated wages. It turns out that economic changes boosted a restructure in the productive, social and political fields, with repercussions on education<sup>3</sup>.

The 1973 crisis was marked by an intense worldwide recession. As Harvey (2008, p. 140, our translation) states, “[...] as a result, the 1970s and 1980s were a troubled period of economic restructuring and social and political readjustment”. This passage points out that the capital appreciation crisis implied an intense process of restructuring production and labor, which were developed based on the triad rationality, efficiency and productivity. Thus, in the

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<sup>3</sup> In the context of the affirmation of the new Brazilian industrial standard, in the 1970s and 1980s, considering the process of political reconfiguration, new proposals for changes in the educational field emerged, especially in university circles that, in general, criticized the technical teaching of instrumentalist bias. However, the new proposals with a progressive bias did not have any force against a global educational public policy agenda, guided, in particular, by international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), especially in Latin American countries or in the so-called peripheral countries, which, under the perspective of neoliberal policy, presupposed the intense rationalization of public spending, passed on to private initiative, in an attempt to modernization of the State, adapting it to the new dictates of the international order.

central capitalist countries, in the more developed productive segments, the rigidity of Fordism was gradually being superseded by the Toyota “flexible” model. This is a new complex of productive restructuring designed by engineer Taiichi Ohno, a Japanese model born at Toyota and disseminated throughout the world since the 1970s. Antunes (2009) describes that the main features of this productive model are related to production linked to demand, to teamwork, to productive flexibility, to the utilization of the time, to the connection of wages with production, as well as to the demand for competent and skilled professionals. Galuch and Palangana (2008) present the consequences of this new productive mode, based on flexible accumulation:

structural unemployment; increased competition; the demand for new skills, while others disappear or become obsolete; wage stagnation; and, in the political field, a huge loss of union power, given also the flexibility in the work regimes and contracts in which regular employment increasingly gives way to temporary contracts, subcontracts, outsourcing and self-employed workers. These transformations are translated into a new form of industrial organization, above all by the emergence of small businesses, including the reappearance of defunct work systems, such as: handmade and family work. However, it should be noted that these work systems are now subject to large companies. (GALUCH; PALANGANA, 2008, p. 72, our translation).

Flexible accumulation “[...] involves rapid changes in the patterns of unequal development” (HARVEY, 2008, p. 140, our translation), with education “[...] becoming one of the fundamental factors to explain economically differences of work capacity and, consequently, differences in income productivity” (FRIGOTTO, 2010, p. 51, our translation). We can see that both Harvey’s (2008) unequal development and Frigotto’s (2010) differences in work capacity and differences in income productivity are processes closely related to the social aspects that lead us to the theory of human capital.

### **From Human Capital Theory to the destructive era of hegemonic financialized capital**

It is important to clarify that the history of education in Brazil has hitherto been directly related to the social division and the technique of work, and the referrals have been conducted in line with the social forces in dispute. In this sense, the focus on training for work, practice and theory took place in the courses offered by private sector institutions that made up the S System (SENAI, SENAC and SESI), a place where technical training was disseminated and aimed at the use of workforce in the manufacturing space. On the other hand, for training in the public school itself, “professionalizing courses - aimed at training technicians and technical assistants for the most diverse economic activities” were offered (CUNHA, 2014, p. 915, our translation). These courses were based on the theoretical premises of human capital theory. According to this theory, investment in the training of people - qualification and improvement - would result in increased productivity, consequently increasing the profits of capitalists, linking education to economic development.

Cunha (2014, p. 920, our translation) asserted that “[...] the conception of vocational education was based on the need to organize High School in a way that would provide graduates with a professional qualification”. According to Saviani (2010, p. 344, our translation), this general sense aimed at professional education “[...] is translated by the emphasis on the elements arranged by the theory of human capital; in education as training of human resources

for economic development within the parameters of the capitalist order; [...]”, thus requiring the training of skills and initiation to work found mainly in vocational courses.

Given the immediate needs of the world of work, inspired “[...] by the principles of rationality, efficiency and productivity, technicist pedagogy advocates the reorganization of the educational process in a way that makes it objective and operational” (SAVIANI, 2010, p. 381, our translation), or, also, the educational process can be understood as pragmatic and disciplinary. Araújo and Oliveira (2017) state that, in the context that involves capitalist society, school education has the role of training workers or future workers, resulting in the formation and social reproduction of the workforce.

we realize that in capitalist society, school education situated in the dimension of the superstructure (ideological and political) has the role of training workers or future workers and follows, therefore, the needs imposed by infrastructure (productive-economic base) which implies, in turn, in the existence of teachers whose ‘training’ is consistent with the proper exercise of certain teaching practices, considering the contemporary imperatives for the training and social reproduction of the workforce. (ARAÚJO; OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 90, our translation).

The authors also address that “[...] education permeates a fruitful field of dispute” (ARAÚJO; OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 90, our translation). Thus, it is understood that the human capital theory emerged from the unfolding of the marginalizing economic theory inserted in education. Frigotto (2010) unveils the concept of human capital, stating that “[...] from a reductionist perspective, it seeks to build itself as one of the explanatory elements of development and social equity and as a theory of education, follows, from the research point of view, a tortuous path” (FRIGOTTO, 2010, p. 49, our translation).

In practice, the theory of human capital “[...] constitutes a powerful instrument for maintaining common sense” (FRIGOTTO, 2010, p. 46, our translation), establishing education as a means of maintaining capitalist order incorporating relations of domination and submission, facts that not only hinder “[...] deciphering the dilemmas of education/teaching, but hinder the performance of the agents involved in the sense of improving teaching in Brazil” (ARAÚJO; OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 91, our translation). Thus, it was found that the expansion of public and disciplinary education has an intimate relationship with the concept of education present in the theory of human capital, “[...] hence the diffusion of the need for behavioral changes, the taking of initiatives, the individual effort, training focused on the management of own resources and entrepreneurship, that is, technical and human skills, fundamental to the organization of work after the productive restructuring” (MARCON, 2017, p. 61, our translation).

If, until the 1980s, the designs of education were centered on creating, expanding and adapting specific institutions for the school system, in order to guarantee their productive and reproductive function of the training of the workforce, in the following decades, scientific and technological changes in the world of work resulted in the deepening restructuring of productive work and services. In production, in addition to the decrease in jobs, the idea of entrepreneurship has spread, in which each individual becomes responsible for his/her success or failure.

In the educational sector, the need for a more adequate teaching/professionalization to the parameters of flexible work was disseminated, according to the thesis of education for all. Neves and Ponko (2008) assert that:

This implies both the quantitative expansion of the years of basic schooling and a curricular organization aimed at a more immediate the development of technical capacities and a new sociability of the working masses that contribute to the expanded reproduction of capital and to obtain active consent for the bourgeois relations of exploitation and domination currently. (NEVES; PONKO, 2008, p. 25, our translation).

This education and society project, which involves the training of the workforce and an education for the formation of consensus, is introduced in the current High School Reform, given by Law no. 13,415/2017 and in the High School National Common Curricular Base (known in Brazil as BNCC). In this sense, the relationship involving the formation of human capital and education with assistance characteristics are in line with the content of such documents, which also included a list of “action indications”, based on objectives, commitments and requirements, focused on a premise of “improving the quality of life” or leading the individual to “learn to learn”.

From this process, arises the fact that Law no. 13,415/2017 organizes teaching by formative itineraries, and BNCC, by curricular arrangements, as provided in art. 36:

Art. 36. The High School curriculum will consist of the National Common Curricular Base and training itineraries, which should be organized through the offer of different curricular arrangements, according to the relevance to the local context and the possibility of the education systems, namely: I - languages and their technologies; II - mathematics and its technologies; III - natural sciences and their technologies; IV - applied human and social sciences; V - technical and professional training. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 1, our translation).

The aforementioned law also adds that, “[...] upon availability of places in the network” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 2, our translation), it will be possible for students who have completed High School to take another training course. In this sense, Schults (2012, p. 29-30, our translation) points out that “[...] the work of education is then seen as that of building the capacity of these individuals, preparing them to be eternal students, who will need to be accredited for their roles in changeable occupations”. It seems to us that the High School Reform and the National Common Curricular Base are moving in the same direction. As an aggravating factor, Law no. 13,415/2017, when dealing with training provision with technical and professional emphasis, indicates that: “I - the inclusion of practical work experiences in the productive sector or in simulation environments, establishing partnerships and making use, when applicable, of instruments established by the legislation on professional learning” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 2, our translation).

From the above, two aspects deserve attention: 1) the inclusion of practical experiences and training for work that empties knowledge based on the study of Sciences and Humanities, deepening unilateral training; 2) the establishment of partnerships, in line with international guidelines, such as the United Nations (UN), according to the Sustainable Development Goals “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, more specifically in objective 4 - Quality Education in its subtopic 4.3 – “By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” (UN, 2015, n.p.). We have that the national and international guidelines emphasize the public-private “partnership”, as it is denoted in paragraph 8, of art. 36, of Law no. 13,415/2017: “The offer of technical and professional training that item V of the



caput refers to, carried out at the institution itself or in partnership with other institutions [...]" (BRASIL, 2017, p. 2, our translation).

In this way, we have that educational reforms tend to deepen the historical technicist pragmatism, accentuating the features of the permanent subordination of education to the needs of capital expansion, corroborating processes of concentration of income and social inequality, an aspect related to the capitalist development of adherent characteristics, a process that worsens as "[...] the crisis of capitalism in its current phase is irreparably recrudescing social barbarism" (RIBEIRO; ARAÚJO, 2018, p. 4, our translation).

### **Final considerations**

We saw that, in the 1930s, the 1932 Pioneers' Manifesto disseminated an educational proposal related to a project for the development of the nation, to overcome the obstacles that hindered the nation in the sense of treading civilizing paths. Although the Manifesto suggested an education aligned with the job learning, a conception aimed mainly at the socially most vulnerable sections of the population, the State's intervention in public educational actions and the construction of the National Education System represented new possibilities for expressive segments of the Brazilian population, without, until then, any access to the necessary means for literacy or forms of work limited to rural areas.

For this reason, the 1932 Pioneers' Manifesto contained civilizing spasms, as it linked the nation's prospects for economic development to improvements in the social conditions of Brazilians. In the following decade, from the Capanema reforms, the educational pragmatism that subordinated teaching to work prevailed. The arrival of multinationals, during the 1950s and 1960s, and the new demands of the productive world implied the affirmation of the Taylorist/Fordist model, whose rigid form of organization and management of the workforce demanded changes in the Brazilian education system, a dynamic also driven by the introduction of human capital theory. As a result of this process, the obstacles to the expansion of capital made the management and organization of flexible work predominantly in line with the Toyota model in the later period. In Brazil, this model took on a systemic aspect since 1990.

As part of the same historical process, we can now observe that the new reforms of public education express precisely the trends under the hegemony of financial capital. This not only acts to obtain most of the public budget through payment of government bonds, but limits the promises of any civilizing project, since it acts by withdrawing guarantees and labor rights. Technical and professional education, reserved for the broader poorer segments of the proletariat, tends to be limited to teaching skills and competences for use in precarious and disenfranchised jobs, a real setback to considering the losses of social achievements of the last decades, as seen through the recent social security and labor reforms. Currently, the instability of those who live by selling their labor is correlated with the changes in the labor world that make intermittent employment prevail without guarantees or protection, of the low qualification required and availability of maximum time according to the uberization process. In this context, wage earners are required to develop the capacity to develop resilience, mobilization and physical/psychological disposition, a process in line with the new skills and competencies advocated by the High School National Common Curricular Base.

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