

Editorial

External Evaluation Policies and Corporate Reform: Effects on the Social Quality of Education

*Políticas de Avaliação Externa e a reforma empresarial:
efeitos sobre a qualidade social da educação*

*Políticas de Evaluación Externa y la reforma empresarial:
efectos sobre la calidad social de la educación*

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Abstract: Officially, the discourse surrounding external evaluation policies, since their introduction in the country, particularly from the 1990s onward, has been associated with the thesis of promoting educational quality. Since then, academic research has focused on analyzing what such quality signifies, for whom it is intended, and what interests it involves. Quality conceived from the perspective of which subject? For which society? From a critical standpoint, it is impossible to view the category of educational evaluation without examining its relationship with the macrostructure of our society's organization. In summary, the category of evaluation is eminently political. It is in this context that the Dossier in the current issue of REPOD presents contributions from various authors to the discussion of External Evaluation Policies and their effects on the social quality of education.

Keywords: External Evaluation Policies; Corporate Education Reform; Social Quality of Education

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Resumo: Oficialmente, o discurso das políticas de avaliação externa, desde sua introdução no país, especialmente a partir da década de 1990, esteve associado à tese da promoção da qualidade da educação. Desde então, pesquisas acadêmicas têm se dedicado à análise do que significa tal qualidade, para quem ela é pensada e quais interesses a envolve. Qualidade pensada a partir da formação de qual sujeito? Para qual sociedade? Em uma perspectiva crítica não há como olhar para a categoria avaliação educacional sem analisar sua relação com a estrutura macro da organização da nossa sociedade. Em síntese, a categoria avaliação é eminentemente política. É nessa direção que o Dossiê do presente número da REPOD apresenta a contribuição de diversos autores(as) para a problematização das Políticas de Avaliação Externa e seus efeitos sobre a qualidade social da educação.

Palavras-chave: Políticas de Avaliação Externa; Reforma Empresarial da Educação; Qualidade Social da Educação.

Resumen: Oficialmente, el discurso sobre las políticas de evaluación externa, desde su introducción en el país, especialmente a partir de la década de 1990, ha estado asociado a la tesis de la promoción de la calidad de la educación. Desde entonces, investigaciones académicas se han dedicado al análisis de lo que significa tal calidad, para quién se concibe y qué intereses la rodean. Calidad concebida a partir de la formación de ¿qué sujeto? ¿Para qué sociedad? Desde una perspectiva crítica, no es posible mirar la categoría de evaluación educativa sin analizar su relación con la estructura macro de la organización de nuestra sociedad. En síntesis, la categoría de evaluación es eminentemente política. En esta dirección, el Dossier del presente número de la REPOD presenta la contribución de diversos autores y autoras a la problematización de las Políticas de Evaluación Externa y sus efectos sobre la calidad social de la educación.

Palabras clave: Políticas de Evaluación Externa; Reforma Empresarial de la Educación; Calidad Social de la Educación.

The official discourse surrounding external assessment policies since their introduction in the country, especially from the 1990s onwards, has been associated with the thesis of promoting educational quality (Richter; Silva, 2021). Since then, many academic studies have been dedicated to analyzing what this quality means, for whom it is intended, and what interests it involves. Quality conceived based on the formation of which subject? For which society? From a critical perspective, it is impossible to look at the category of educational assessment without analyzing its relationship with the macro structure of our society's organization. In short, the category of assessment is eminently political. Therefore, the need to move beyond Manichean analyses of “demonization” or “sacralization” is understood, in order to move away from apparent, phenomenal relationships and grasp what is effectively at the heart of public external assessment policies.

In this direction, it is understood that assessment policies that emerge from a capitalist worldview are organically linked to verification, classification, and selection, which brings ethical, political, and pedagogical effects. It is with this understanding that

assessment has taken a prominent place on the “agenda of governments, international organizations, business reformers, and agencies dedicated to restructuring the public sector, and particularly education” (Richter, 2015, p. 51). In a society where the social function of the school is expected to be to train the working class according to the needs of the market, adapting and conforming it to the profile of the new proletariat of the digital age and the uberization of work (Antunes, 2018), the conception of assessment is committed to the introduction of the principles of a class society in which assessment assumes competition and individualism as its premise.

Capitalist society has shaped a new proletariat (Antunes, 2018) and demands that schools fulfill the role of adaptation, that is, tailoring the training of the working class to the interests of the labor market. In the field of work, uberization, flexibilization, deregulation of labor rights, precarization, intermittent work, outsourcing – in other words, workers left to their own devices and held responsible for any reality – a worker who accepts this condition and adapts to it is what the school is expected to guarantee.

For Mészáros (2007, p. 148):

[...] The real obstacles confronted by labor in the present and near future can be summed up in two words: “flexibility” and “deregulation,” two of the most highly esteemed watchwords of the “personifications of capital” today, in both commerce and politics. Such terms are meant to sound quite attractive and progressive. [...] “flexibility” with regard to labor practices – which must be facilitated and implemented through various types of “deregulation” – actually amounts to the relentless precarization of the workforce.

The flexibilization of labor and the abandonment of stable employment are assumed by economists to be the rule of globalization and the post-Fordist paradigm (Vasapolo, 2005), and are thus presented as an alternative to high unemployment rates. Supported by this new paradigm of flexible work, they impose upon the worker an increasingly inhumane and hyper-exploitative reality. In this scenario, the school is charged with forming a proactive individual who is physically and intellectually available to more effectively serve the interests of capital, as well as with forming people capable of surviving in a highly unstable reality without guarantees. A worker, therefore, who is his/her own supervisor and responsible for meeting goals, with a psychological formation that conforms to this scenario that is becoming naturalized.

This logic is what is advocated by education entrepreneurs who have increasingly entered decision-making spaces in the field of public education policies. It is in this context that education reformers have reiterated, almost like a mantra, that schools need to train

individuals for a society in constant transformation, adapted to “learning to learn” with access to knowledge particularly selected with the functional intention of “knowing how to do”, which has led to a strong dissemination of reforms with a neo-technical bent in education, such as curriculum and evaluation reforms.

In the interview that comprises the current issue of *Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate* (REPOD), Freitas’s assessment (2024, p. 6) is noteworthy:

The pressure to maintain this system will involve the privatization of schools, that is, removing schools from the purview of the State (Ravitch, 2011; Freitas, 2018) under the total control of ideologically reliable entrepreneurs, in addition to opening the field for ideological interference in the formation of youth via far-right movements and allies who prevent young people from becoming aware of the ills that afflict them, preparing them only to be entrepreneurs, that is, future unemployed individuals with some form of self-sufficiency, in a world with increasingly less formal and more precarious work, harassed by robots and artificial intelligence. The educational project of capital, therefore, involves controlling the form and content of the school, especially via digital learning platforms, and restricting the teacher's role to what is officially programmed, as well as through the diffusion of a meritocratic justification for the inequalities and ills of the system, transferring the responsibility for poverty to the poor themselves, as if it were a personal choice, and exempting the current social system (Freitas, 2018; Prado, 2024). Accountability-based assessment processes based on a concept of "corporate quality" will be increasingly in vogue, designed to accustom students to these logics and to guarantee the success of these aims.

In this regard, in recent decades in Brazil, the primary interlocutors between society and the government have been education entrepreneurs, resulting in serious effects on the social quality of education, a quality compromised by a critical and emancipatory education. As Freitas (2024) assesses, we need to distinguish “social quality”, contrasting it with “business quality”. Therefore, a social quality committed to a socially just society is advocated, but also one that is just in its commitment to the preservation of the world itself. Faced with reality, there is much evidence of the consequences and effects of human action on our planet, given that we live in a social organization that for centuries has strongly attacked all of Earth's resources to satisfy the insatiable hunger of capital. It is a movement of exploitation capable of destroying everything in the name of its selfish desire for expansion, for as Viana (2017, p. 182) points out, “the capitalist mode of production establishes a destructive relationship with the environment”. We therefore need to form a generation committed to another world project, which means another societal project.

In the current issue of the *Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate*, the manuscripts delve into different analyses and problematizations, included in the thematic dossier entitled “External Evaluation in the Context of Business Reform: Challenges for Social Quality”, *Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate* – v. 13, n. 3, p. 1-9, set./dez. 2024

organized by professors Mara Regina Lemes De Sordi from the State University of Campinas, Maria Simone Ferraz Pereira from the Federal University of Uberlândia, and Regiane Helena Bertagna from the São Paulo State University “Júlio de Mesquita Filho” – Rio Claro. The aforementioned dossier significantly promotes the theme, featuring an in-depth interview granted by Luiz Carlos de Freitas, a national and international theoretical reference in the field of education and, particularly, in the area of educational assessment.

The articles in this Dossier encompass national and international authors affiliated with various institutions, such as: São Paulo State University (UNESP/Rio Claro); Federal University of São Carlos; Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte; Polytechnic Higher Institute of Manica (ISPM) (Vanduzi, Manica, Mozambique); Federal University of Viçosa; State University of Mato Grosso; Federal University of Alagoas; Federal University of Uberlândia; State University of Alagoas; Federal University of Minas Gerais; Municipal Network of Sabará; Federal University of Lavras; Pitágoras Unopar University; Anhanguera University; Municipal Education Department of Campinas; and University of Lisbon (Lisbon, Portugal).

In addition to the manuscripts in this issue of the Journal, there are the articles in the “Continuous Demand” section, comprising 10 texts, with authors belonging to international institutions and from diverse regions of the country, covering distinct themes, particularly unified by the analysis of public education policies at different levels and stages.

Vanesa Romualdo, from the University of Buenos Aires, is the author of the text “Beyond the Federal Education Council, what constitutes Argentine educational federalism?” which analyzes the instances of federal articulation of Argentine education that were configured to agree on policies for the secondary level as a prelude to the Federal Education Council in the period 2006-2019. It centrally highlights two national governmental administrations of different political natures (Frente para la Victoria and Alianza Cambiemos) and in three provinces through qualitative research based on the analysis of documents, secondary data, and semi-structured interviews with technicians and public officials. The results indicate that although in each administration the instances assumed different forms, they were centralist, allowed informal intergovernmental relations, and the provinces had disparate actions.

“Educational Policies Aimed at the Teaching of Philosophy in the New High School: A Study from the State of Alagoas’ School System” is the title of the article authored by Roberto Ribeiro da Silva and Alice Miriam Happ Botler, both from the Federal University of Pernambuco. In the aforementioned manuscript, the authors analyze educational policies aimed at the teaching of Philosophy, based on a case study in the State Education Network in

the State of Alagoas. They start from the assumption that Philosophy, recognized as a discipline responsible for the civic education of young students, could represent an aid to the dialogue between community knowledge in the school's surroundings, but the data show that the place of Philosophy in the implementation process of the so-called "New High School" has not had room for this purpose.

In the text "Women Deprived of Liberty: Readings and Reviews as an Alternative to Sentence Reduction", authors Ana Maria Marques, Joselene Ieda dos Santos Lopes de Carvalho, Danielle Souza Gabriel, and Letícia Souza de Arruda, all affiliated with the Federal University of Mato Grosso, discuss the theme of female (de)incarceration and alternatives for sentence reduction through educational activities. Based on extension activities carried out between November 2022 and October 2023 and grounded in critical literacy and reading as a practice of freedom, the authors aimed to assist in the processes of writing and evaluating reviews for the purpose of sentence remission for women deprived of liberty.

The text "Challenges for Democratic University Management: A Reading Based on Bills and University Councils", authored by Daniel Calbino, from the Federal University of São João del Rei, Daniela Nery and Geruza de Fátima Tomé Sabino, both from the Federal University of Vale do Jequitinhonha and Mucuri, and Mariana Mayumi Pereira de Souza, from the Federal University of Viçosa, aimed to problematize the challenges to the advancement of autonomy and democratic management in federal universities. Through documentary research and the application of questionnaires to university councilors from ten federal institutions, the authors highlight setbacks in democratic management, as well as the representative discrepancy in collegiate bodies and the legacy of the chair culture marked by internal resistance to participatory forms of management.

Mateus Lorenzon and Angelo Vitória Cenci, both from the University of Passo Fundo, in their text "The Absence of Anthropological Discussion in the Neoliberal Context: Reflections on Education in the Face of Latent Barbarism", argue that in contemporary society, there has been a renunciation of major anthropological discussions about humanity, and the silence produced around these debates leads to a state of anthropological drift, in which the conceptions underlying neoliberal rationality are uncritically accepted. However, they further argue that by analyzing the neo-subject necessitated and produced by this world-reason, it becomes clear that it is predisposed to a state of barbarism, since the logic of competition and the atomization of the individual tend to produce resentment and psychological suffering. They assert that in order to restore homeostasis, contemporary individuals may join gregarious hordes libidinally united to a leader. In light of this reality,

they discuss the functions of education in a contemporary context in which, due to the absence of anthropological discussion, there is a flirtation with the latency of barbarism.

The manuscript “The Inclusion and Integral Human Formation in the Professional and Technological Education of Blind Students from the Araguaia Region in Pará” was developed by Carla Santos Ramos, Rivadavia Porto Cavalcante, Marcelo Rhythowem, and Mary Lucia Gomes Silveira de Senna, all affiliated with the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Tocantins (IFTO). In the article, the authors address the integral formation of blind students in Professional and Technological Education, at an institution located in the Araguaia region, state of Pará, with the objective of analyzing the laws that protect blind students and their experiences in the institution. Grounded in Gramsci, Marx, and Freire, they conceptualize the integral formation of the blind student. Through interviews with two blind students, representing 100% of the blind students at the institution, it is evident that despite some progress, there are still difficulties in the adaptation of materials, accessibility, and teacher training.

The text “Education as a Commitment of the Psychology Councils System: Analysis of the Deliberative Notebooks of the National Psychology Congresses (CNP)”, authored by Pablo Mateus dos Santos Jacinto from the State University of Southwest Bahia, aims to understand the development of Brazilian psychologists’ positions on education. Based on documentary research, using Iramuteq and MaxQDA software, the author analyzes the deliberations of the CNP held between 1994 and 2022. The research reveals that Brazilian psychologists have adopted a critical and proactive stance regarding School and Educational Psychology, contributing to the defense of human rights, inclusion, and the democratization of education.

The manuscript entitled “The Policy Cycle Approach in the Study of the Curricular Policy of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana/RS”, authored by Cristiane Gonçalves Hernandez and Fernanda Figueira Marquezan, both from the Franciscan University, discusses curricular policies and explores Stephen Ball's (1992) Policy Cycle proposal. The aim is to understand the process of creating and implementing curricular policies, focusing on the Guiding Document of the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana/RS (DOTMU), from the perspective of the Coordinators of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana. In the Policy Cycle approach, the study analyzes the Context of Influence, the Context of Text Production, and the Context of Practice. The results highlight the weaknesses, even with the participation of education professionals in the construction of the DOTMU. However, it reveals potential as it is perceived by professionals as a means of organizing pedagogical practice, standing out for its theoretical consistency and

democratic formulation, contributing to the educational journey in the schools of the Municipal Network of Uruguaiana.

In the article “Discourses of Science Teacher Educators on the Implementation Process of the BNCC in the Ceará Region Covered by the CREDE”, Margarida Maria Martins de Freitas, Maynara Karla Soares Sampaio, Joan Petrus Oliveira Lima, and Francisco Ranulfo Freitas Martins Júnior, all affiliated with the State University of Ceará, analyze the discourses of thirteen science teacher educators regarding the implementation process of the Brazilian Common Core Curriculum (Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC) in the Ceará region covered by the Regional Coordination of Education Development (Coordenadoria Regional de Desenvolvimento da Educação - CREDE). To this end, they employ French-line and critical Discourse Analysis as the method for categorizing understandings of science teaching, continuing education for school organization, and educational management, collected through semi-structured interviews. The results indicate oppositions and articulations between the discourses of the teacher educators and researchers, with the former concerning the non-standardization of science teaching in schools and the latter referring to the implementation of curricular practices through different school agents.

The text “Public-Private Partnership and its Normative Genesis in Minas Gerais-Brazil and Education”, authored by Liege Coutinho Goulart Dornellas, from the Presidente Antônio Carlos Foundation, Joyce Wassem from the Social Service of Industry-SESI-ES, and Eliza Bartolozzi Ferreira, from the Federal University of Espírito Santo, aims to narrate the legislative process that took place in the State of Minas Gerais, which approved, for the first time in the country, a law regulating the Public-Private Partnership (PPP), State Law No. 14.868/2003. The authors utilize the theory of Pierre Muller and Surel on the cognitive approach to policies as a theoretical-methodological contribution, emphasizing the "agenda setting" phase, and demonstrate that the PPP surpasses the definition of privatization by referring to the incorporation of ideas from the private sector into the core of the State apparatus.

Finally, in the publication of this issue, we would like to share our joy regarding the result of the Quadrennial Evaluation (2017-2020), in which the *Revista Educação e Políticas em Debate* (REPOD) [Journal of Education and Policies in Debate], linked to the Research Line State, Policies and Management in Education of the PPGED/Faced/UFG, was rated A3 in the Qualis/Capes. This fact recognizes the work of REPOD, which, over its 12 years of uninterrupted publication, has collaborated with the publication of national and international manuscripts that deepen critical reflections pertaining to public education policies.

We extend our gratitude for the dedication and commitment of all national and international collaborators of REPOD: to the editors; to the dossier organizers; to the

reviewers; to the manuscript formatting and layout team; to the social media team; to the Periodicals Secretariat/FACED; and to our fellow editors of other journals of the Faculty of Education for their camaraderie. We also highlight the support of FACED, UFU, and the Library System, which houses the UFU Periodicals Portal and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the editorial flow, providing technical support services to the editors.

We also hope that this issue will similarly enable the expansion of analyses and debates regarding public education policies, providing researchers, faculty, and undergraduate and graduate students from different national and international institutions with the dissemination of research results and experiences that demonstrate consistency.

We wish everyone an excellent reading experience and profound reflections.

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