



**Content factories:  
the subordination of academic labour under the logic of financialisation and platformisation<sup>1</sup>**

*Fábricas de conteúdo:  
a subordinação do trabalho docente à lógica da financeirização e plataformização*

*Fábricas de contenido:  
la subordinación del trabajo docente a la lógica de la financiarización y plataformización*

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**Abstract:** This article aims to present elements of ongoing research that investigates the reconfiguration of academic labour in Brazil based on the phenomenon of "content factories", understood here as companies that produce didactic material for private Higher Education Institutions. In front of the growing expansion of the private sector and the Distance Learning modality, driven by processes of financialisation and platformisation of education, it becomes crucial to investigate how educational content is produced. The central hypothesis is that content factories materialise a project that, under the veil of technocentrism, promotes the subordination of knowledge to the logic of capitalist accumulation. Through processes of fragmentation, standardisation, and intensification, teaching work is reconfigured and precarious. This article presents an analysis of the structure of these factories and their implications for teaching labour, challenging technological determinism and pointing to the need for resistance.

**Keywords:** Content factories; Academic labour; Platformisation of education; Financialisation of education; Technocentrism.

**Resumo:** Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar elementos de uma pesquisa em andamento que investiga a reconfiguração do trabalho docente no Brasil a partir do fenômeno das "fábricas de conteúdo", entendidas aqui como empresas que produzem material didático para Instituições de Ensino Superior privadas. Diante da crescente expansão do setor privado e da modalidade de Educação a Distância, impulsionada por processos de financeirização e plataformização da educação, torna-se crucial investigar como os conteúdos educacionais são produzidos. A hipótese central é que as fábricas de conteúdo materializam um projeto que, sob o véu do tecnocentrismo, promove a subsunção do conhecimento à lógica da acumulação capitalista. Por meio de processos de fragmentação, padronização e intensificação, o trabalho docente é reconfigurado e precarizado. Apresenta-se neste trabalho uma análise da estrutura dessas fábricas e suas implicações para o trabalho docente, tensionando o determinismo tecnológico e apontando para a necessidade de resistências.

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**Palavras-chave:** Fábricas de conteúdo; Trabalho docente; Plataformização da educação; Financeirização da educação; Tecnocentrismo.

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar elementos de una investigación en curso que investiga la reconfiguración del trabajo docente en Brasil a partir del fenómeno de las “fábricas de contenido”, entendidas aquí como empresas que producen material didáctico para Instituciones de Educación Superior privadas. Ante la creciente expansión del sector privado y de la modalidad de Educación a Distancia, impulsada por procesos de financiarización y plataformización de la educación, se vuelve crucial investigar cómo se producen los contenidos educativos. La hipótesis central es que las fábricas de contenido materializan un proyecto que, bajo el velo del tecnocentrismo, promueve la subsunción del conocimiento a la lógica de la acumulación capitalista. Por medio de procesos de fragmentación, estandarización e intensificación, el trabajo docente es reconfigurado y precarizado. Se presenta en este trabajo un análisis de la estructura de estas fábricas y sus implicaciones para el trabajo docente, tensionando el determinismo tecnológico y apuntando a la necesidad de resistencias.

**Palabras clave:** Fábricas de contenido; Trabajo docente; Plataformización de la educación; Financiarización de la educación; Tecnocentrismo.

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### Introduction: technology, capital and education in dispute

The Brazilian educational scenario, especially in Higher Education, has been the scene of profound transformations, notably due to the expansion of the private sector and the Distance Learning (DL) modality. Recent data from the Higher Education Census shows that in 2023, the private sector accounted for 79% of undergraduate enrolments (Inep, 2024). This expansion is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather a symptom of broader processes of capitalist reorganisation, through which education becomes a fertile niche for financialisation and the accumulation of value (Seki, 2021; Minto, 2021).

In this context, there are companies specialising in the mass production of educational content for private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), known here as ‘content factories’ due to the capillarity and intensity with which they produce and reproduce on a large scale in the field of education. These business organisations supply everything from single subjects to complete courses – including video lessons, e-books and automated assessments – to large educational conglomerates. They represent the spearhead of the platformisation of education, using digital tools to further a teaching model aligned with market logic.



The research from which this article is based<sup>4</sup> seeks to answer crucial questions: what are the working conditions of the education professionals who work on the production and application lines of the educational content produced in the “content factories” for Higher Education? How is the process of platformisation of education constructed through the work of these professionals? What theoretical and methodological concepts are present in the processes of these factories? And how do these questions relate to the hegemonic neoliberal discourse of technocentrism?

Within the limits of this article, it will not be possible to address all the elements and determinations raised by the aforementioned questions; however, we will try to raise a few points arising from the research. The hypothesis raised is that the ‘content factories’ represent the expression of a project by the education business community which, in line with the new determinations of the capital crisis - which requires the incessant search for new market niches and the downgrading of working conditions - leads to the precariousness, fragmentation and intensification of teachers’ work. This process results in the pedagogical alienation of workers and the dismantling of a critical scientific culture, replacing it with a digital culture subsumed to the interests of capital. The investigation aims to reveal the precarious and invisibilised labour relations (Antunes, 2020) that support this model, questioning the supposedly redeeming role of technology.

This article is structured, in addition to the introduction, in three topics: a methodological note, which briefly presents the theoretical-methodological affiliation to which the study is linked, and a description of the technical procedures for collecting and analysing the data. In the section *The logic of capital in education: financialisation, platformisation and the critique of technocentrism*, it is briefly discussed the capitalist production process and the manifestation of its crises, considering the financialisation of education, investment in technologies and the specificity of the so-called ‘content factories’ in this context. In the section *Content factories and the production line*, the analysis of the research data is briefly presented and an attempt is made to explain what ‘content factories’ are and how they work. The third section, *Teacher work and training in dispute: precariousness, alienation and automation*, presents the implications of content factories for teacher work. Finally, we return to the object of study and conclude that ‘content factories’ are an expression of the platformisation and

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<sup>4</sup> This article presents the previous results of an ongoing doctoral research project focusing on content factories in private higher education. This research is part of a broader study funded by the Santa Catarina State Research and Innovation Support Foundation (Fapesc, Notice No. 48/2022) entitled *The contributions of Lenin and Gramsci to the analysis of educational policy determinations in Brazil in recent decades*. The research is also funded by a UNIEDU/FUMDES scholarship (Public Call 261/SED/2022).



financialisation of higher education in Brazil. It also highlights the need to identify the possible fissures, contradictions and forms of organisation and resistance of education workers, in order to build an emancipatory perspective in which the hegemony is that of the working class, reaffirming education as a right and not as a commodity.

### **Methodological note**

This research is based on Historical-Dialectical Materialism, a method developed and employed by Marx (1818-1883) to understand the logic that underlies class society. This society is characterised by the existence of two fundamental classes: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the working classes, who, deprived of these means, have to sell their labour power to the owners of the means of production. This relationship is neither harmonious nor natural, but guided by the logic of accumulation. For the bourgeoisie, there is only one purpose in this relationship: the private appropriation of socially produced wealth with a view to maintaining and expanding capital through the extraction of surplus value. In turn, for the worker – who only owns their labour power – this relationship translates into expropriation, alienation and exploitation of their labour power. In this sense, we recall Marx's famous phrase: “[...] The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Marx; Engels, 2005, p.45).

From the above, social reality, considering its objective and subjective dimensions, is governed by the logic of capital and, although it may appear as a set of isolated contexts, it needs to be understood through its contradictions and by analysing the totality (Kosik, 1976; Paulo Netto, 2011). The totality, in its turn, is not reduced to the sum of the parts, but involves understanding the parts and the relationships they establish with each other, which presupposes that the particular of a given reality (social phenomenon) must be understood in its dialectical connection with other processes, in other words, as a synthesis of multiple determinations. However, these determinations are not set in stone; on the contrary, they are in constant movement and contradiction. This contradiction simultaneously creates and destroys, imposing the need to overcome it and at the same time revealing the historical and processual nature of social reality.

In light of the above considerations, the phenomenon of mass production of content on a large scale by companies operating in Higher Education – the so-called “content factories” – and the consequent configuration of teaching work cannot be taken as isolated or merely technical phenomena, the result of the supposed wonders of technological development, conceived almost magically as a means of solving humanity's



problems in order to guarantee the overcoming of social inequality and free access to knowledge. On the contrary, these phenomena must be understood as expressions of historically determined social, economic and political relations, embedded in the movement of the contradictions inherent in the capital order. In this context, the educational technology industry, whose companies are known as EdTechs, is closely linked to “[...] financial capital, the State and the market dynamics that shape the sector and determine its trends”, as Seki (2025, p.2) points out.

The study's approach is qualitative and based on documentary and exploratory analysis, in the terms proposed by Gil (1989). The data collection and analysis procedures that support the preliminary analyses presented here include: a bibliographical and documentary survey on the subject; content analysis of the websites of 14 companies in the sector (the selection criteria prioritised larger companies, with national operations and which serve large educational conglomerates); and semi-structured interviews with professionals who have worked in this ecosystem.

In the interview phase, which has already begun, we plan to interview 15 professionals. The group of participants includes people who worked directly on the course production line – such as content teachers, educational designers or production coordinators – as well as teachers linked to the HEIs that received these materials produced by the so-called ‘content factories’.

The interviewees were chosen through the network of contacts established by the researcher during her time working for companies in this sector, complemented by recommendations from other professionals and teachers with experience in the area.

According to Triviños (1987), the interview is a fundamental instrument in qualitative research. The semi-structured model, in particular, stands out for combining the active and reflective presence of the researcher with the spontaneity and freedom of expression of the interviewee, which increases the richness and depth of the information obtained.

It is important to note that the analysis of the data collected (documents, websites, interviews) will be guided by the principles of Historical-Dialectical Materialism, looking for connections between the concrete working conditions, the production processes of the so-called “content factories”, the trends of capitalism and the ideological conceptions present in the discourses and practices analysed. As already mentioned, this article, the result of ongoing research, presents only the first findings, based on the material gathered so far.



## The logic of capital in education: financialisation, platformisation and the critique of technocentrism

To understand the phenomenon of the so-called “content factories”, it is necessary to situate them in the current phase of capitalism, characterised by Harvey (1993) as flexible accumulation. This stage is marked by the incessant quest to make production more flexible, reduce costs and expand the frontiers of accumulation into new sectors – especially the public sector – such as education. Over the last few decades, various researchers (Minto, Motta, Seki, among others) have pointed out that education has become an object of interest for capital, to the point where it has been stripped of its priority status as a fundamental right (even though this right is anchored within the limits of the bourgeois order, for which education plays a fundamental role) and reduced to a commodity, whose fundamental objective is to guarantee the continuity of capital's accumulation process, which is always eager to extract surplus value, for which new markets with new commodities are essential. According to Marx (1985, p. 161):

The capitalist production process, considered articulated as a whole or as a process of reproduction, produces, therefore, not only the commodity, not only surplus value, but also produces and reproduces the capital relationship itself, on one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer.

It is clear that the capitalist production process, aimed at the private accumulation of socially produced wealth, does not take place in a linear and smooth manner. For Marx (2008), there is a tendency to decrease for variable capital (v), related to investments in labour power, and for constant capital (c) to increase, which refers to the means of production, such as machinery and technological investments. This relationship between constant and variable capital, known as the organic composition of capital (occ), is expressed in the occ formula:  $c/v$ . Thus, based on Marx (2008), Faust, Melgarejo and Silva (2020) point out that the development of the productive forces has the consequence of reducing the use of labour power through the incorporation of new machinery that automates part of the work, making it possible to produce goods in less time and with less participation of living labour, which raises the organic composition of capital. As the surplus value can only be extracted from labour power (living labour), the rate of profit tends to fall (Faust; Melgarejo; Silva, 2020). In Marx's own words (2008, p. 164):

[...] through the increasing use of machinery and fixed capital, more raw and auxiliary materials are generally transformed by the same number of workers in the same amount of time, i.e. with less labour, into products. This corresponds to [...] an increasing cheapening of the product. Each individual product, considered in itself, contains a smaller amount of labour than at lower stages of production. [...] It therefore expresses the real tendency of capitalist production. This, with the progressive relative decrease of variable capital in relation to constant capital, generates an increasingly higher organic composition of global



capital, the immediate consequence of which is that the rate of surplus value, with a constant and even increasing degree of exploitation of labour, is expressed in a continuously falling general rate of profit.

In Marx's understanding, there is a tendency for the average rate of surplus value to fall, which manifests itself in recurring crises. Therefore, capitalism moves through crises, and this is not an individual choice of the capitalist, but a condition of capital's existence, resulting from intercapitalist competition itself. This imbalance in the organic composition of capitalism, as Silva *et al.* point out (2021, p. 10),

[...] is due to the disproportion between the expansion of dead labour and the compulsory reduction of living labour. This occurs because capitalism thrives on competition between capitalists, and with each new cycle of accumulation, investments must guarantee an increase in labour productivity through the development of technologies. It so happens that value is determined by the amount of abstract human labour and, therefore, can only be obtained through the consumption of the labour force. Thus, there is a situation of instability precisely because there is a greater increase in constant capital, such as machinery and raw materials, to the detriment of investment in variable capital, i.e., the labour force, causing a downward trend in the rate of profit (Marx, 2011) and the consequent resumption of the cycle using devices that mitigate the effect.

The complexity with which capitalism seeks to overcome its crises in the accumulation process requires the formulation of increasingly sophisticated responses, which explains the rise of financial capital. Considering the particularity of the object of study presented here, it is in this field that financialisation flourishes, with investment funds and capital (domestic and foreign) penetrating Brazilian HEIs massively since the 2000s and forming educational oligopolies whose central strategy is profit maximisation (Seki, 2021).

Technology, far from being neutral, is a central tool for making this project viable, as it makes it possible to increase productivity without a corresponding increase in investment in living labour. It is mobilised to intensify exploitation, standardise and control the work process. As Álvaro Vieira Pinto (2013) warned, the technology fetish tends to obscure the social relations of production that it mediates. In the educational context, the "platformisation of education" (Silva, 2022; Teixeira, 2022; Diniz; Oliveira Neto, 2025) is the process by which pedagogical work and school management come to be mediated, organised and controlled by private digital platforms (such as Virtual Learning Environments – VLE and Learning Management Systems – LMS). These platforms, in the context of private higher education, not only mediate pedagogical relations by automating corrections, simplifying and reducing the time needed for each teaching task, but also subordinate them to the logistics of standardised content delivery and automated data extraction, integrating the logistics of



information-digital capital. Supported by digital neotechnicalism, platformisation represents one of the current forms of subsumption of teaching work to capitalism.

By making an association between the categories mentioned above, we can see that platformisation, uberisation and content factories are interdependent dimensions of the same capitalist rationality, which reconfigures teaching work and the educational field under the imperatives of information capital. Content factories, in particular, represent the corporate materialisation of platformisation, acting as bridges between corporate digital logic and the productive restructuring of education, deepening the precariousness and pedagogical alienation of higher education workers.

This dynamic, often celebrated under the discourse of technocentrism, has a profound impact on teaching work. Teaching mediated by prefabricated content tends towards simplification and the loss of the critical dimension. According to Minto (2021), the intellectual dimension of teaching is subsumed by processes of control. The so-called “uberisation” of work (Antunes, 2020) also manifests itself here, with professionals hired as service providers (Individual Microentrepreneur – MEI and Autonomous Payment Receipt – RPA) without formal labour rights and security, who individually assume the risks of an increasingly precarious activity.

In this analysis, the State is not an impartial actor. Contrary to the liberal view, the Marxist (Lenin, 2017; Silva; Marcassa, 2020) and Gramscian (Dantas; Pronko, 2018) perspective reveals it as an agent that guarantees the reproduction of capitalist relations. As Lenin (2017, p. 29) states in *The State and Revolution*: "[...] the State is the product and manifestation of the irreconcilable character of class contradictions. The State arises where, when and to the extent that class contradictions cannot objectively be reconciled".

Gramsci (2024, p. 1694) advances this analysis, demystifying the neutrality of the modern State:

Certainly, the State is conceived as an organism proper to a group, designed to create the conditions favourable to the maximum expansion of that group, but this development and expansion are conceived and presented as the driving force behind a universal expansion, a development of all ‘national’ energies, in other words, the dominant group has been concretely coordinated with the general interests of the subordinate groups and State life has been conceived as a continuous formation and overcoming of unstable balances (within the framework of the law) between the interests of the fundamental group and the interests of the subordinate groups [...].

In education, this action is manifested in the promotion of public-private partnerships, regulation favourable to large groups, the allocation of public resources to nurture the private sector (Higher Education Student Financing Fund – Fies and University for All Programme



– ProUni) and the incorporation of market intellectuals into policy formulation. It is from this critical perspective that the emergence of content factories should be analysed.

## Content factories and the production line

The “content factories” are the materialisation of the logic described above. Characterised as EdTechs or startups (Melo, 2022; Silva, 2022), their business model consists of producing and selling standardised educational solutions to educational institutions. Their self-promotional speeches, visible on their websites, are focused on innovation, technology, scalability and efficiency, offering a varied portfolio of products (subjects, courses, learning objects, platforms) and mentioning large educational conglomerates as clients (Kroton/Cogna, Ânima, YDUQS, Ser Educacional, etc.).

The typical workflow of these companies mirrors an industrial model characterised by the division of tasks, which fragments the pedagogical act into isolated and controlled stages. Once the client HEI has contracted the service, the factory activates its network of remote professionals, generally hired as MEIs or by RPA (therefore without formal employment relationships such as the Consolidation of Labour Laws – CLT), to carry out the production tasks.

In this context of informal employment, it is worth mentioning that the Labour Reform (Brazil, 2017b) and the Outsourcing Law (Brazil, 2017a), both approved in 2017, are examples of how the State, through the approval of laws, contributes to the precariousness of working conditions.

Coercion and consensus, in the capitalist mode of production, both have their limits set by the essential needs and dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. To this extent, the dissolution of State instruments to make rights viable – social policies and the set of labour laws and their supervisory and legal instruments – are part of the ways out that big capital articulates to resolve – always provisionally – its economic crises (Granemann, 2020, p.6).

The economic crises mentioned above by Granemann (2020) demonstrate the subjection of the State to the demands of capitalist accumulation. A central point that we must emphasise is that there is no capitalism without crisis; crises represent the ways in which capital extends its domination further and further (Mészáros, 2010).

Returning to the structuring of content factories, the typical workflow, described on the basis of our professional experience, begins with the client HEI contracting the service. Deadlines, scope and characteristics of the content to be produced are established. The various functions that can make up the workflow, summarised below, show a marked technical division of labour, characteristic of an industrial model applied to the production of educational content:



- **Content teacher:** responsible for writing the basic content of the course. They usually receive a ready-made teaching plan from the client HEI and must strictly follow templates and metrics defined by the factory (number of pages, quantity of instructional resources, format of assessment questions). Their autonomy is limited and contact with the final student is non-existent. The work is individualised and sometimes subject to precarious contractual conditions (payment conditional on approval of the content by the HEI, penalties for delays, etc.);
- **Educational designer (ED)/instructional designer (ID):** adapts the teacher's content to the template, inserts pre-defined instructional objects, reviews the structure and ensures compliance with the metrics. Acts as a link between the raw content and the final platformised format, but within strict parameters;
- **Proofreader/editor:** carries out grammatical and textual proofreading;
- **Video Scriptwriter:** transforms snippets of content into storyboards for video lessons or animations;
- **Graphic Designer (GD)/diagrammer:** creates the visual identity and infographics, diagrams the e-book (offline version);
- **Illustrator, animator and video editor:** produce the audiovisual components according to the scripts and visual standards;
- **Presenter:** records a certain piece of predefined content set out in a video script. They usually read out the content using a teleprompter in a recording studio;
- **Online content organiser:** inserts the finished interactive content into the client HEI's LMS platform;
- **Production coordinator:** manages the entire flow, controls deadlines, distributes tasks, trains professionals using templates and metrics, carries out a superficial validation of the material and bridges the gap between the various links in the production line. His job is to guarantee delivery on time and according to standards, ensuring the efficiency of the 'assembly line';
- **Teacher applicator (at the HEI):** in hybrid courses, this is the HEI teacher who uses the material produced by the factory as the basis for their lessons and interactions, answering students' questions. Their autonomy over the main content is limited or non-existent;
- **Tutor (Distance Learning):** a professional who accompanies students in the DL modality, answering questions about the content pre-produced by the factory, generally without being able to change it.



This structure reveals a logic that refers to the fusion of elements of Fordism/Taylorism (extreme division of labour, standardisation) with flexible accumulation (precarious external labour, remote work, on-demand production). The process of intellectual creation, inherent to teaching, is broken down into repetitive and controlled tasks.

### **Teaching work and training in dispute: precariousness, alienation, and automation**

The productive configuration of content factories directly impacts teaching work and training, placing them in a field of disputes and contradictions. The main effects, analysed in light of empirical observations and the theoretical framework adopted, are:

- **Extreme fragmentation and pedagogical alienation:** teaching work, traditionally an integrated whole (planning, creation, teaching, assessment), is broken down into isolated functions. The content creator creates, but does not teach; the tutor teaches, but does not create. This fragmentation prevents integrated and reflective pedagogical practice, leading to the alienation of workers, who become estranged from the final product of their work (the complete educational process) and its purpose;
- **Precarisation and dismantling of rights:** hiring, predominantly carried out via MEI or RPA and driven by legislation such as the Labour Reform (Brazil, 2017b) and the Outsourcing Law (Brazil, 2017a), is devoid of basic rights (holidays, 13th month salary, Guarantee Fund for Length of Service – FGTS), unstable and transfers costs to the worker. The figure of the “entrepreneur” masks a relationship of subordination and exploitation (Antunes, 2020);
- **Standardisation and loss of autonomy:** the widespread use of templates and standards removes professionals' autonomy over what and how to teach. Creativity and adaptation to the students' context are replaced by conformity to an industrial standard, resulting in a process of disqualification in which the intellectual and critical dimension of teaching is minimised;
- **Intensification, digital surveillance, and automation:** short deadlines, strict metrics, and assembly line production logic intensify the pace of work. Digital platforms not only mediate content delivery but also enable forms of control and monitoring of workers' performance, establishing a culture of surveillance that punishes deviations and rewards compliance;



- **Invisibility:** many of the professionals working on the production line are invisible to students and the academic community itself. Their intellectual work is appropriated by the factory and sold as a product of the contracting brand, deepening alienation.

Some of the interviews already conducted with professionals who have worked in different private HEIs and educational content production companies, the content factories, clearly show the concrete effects of platformisation and financialisation on teaching work. In line with what Antunes (2020) calls the “new morphology of work,” there has been a reconfiguration that combines intensification, fragmentation, and loss of intellectual autonomy.

The interviews conducted so far reveal a growing fragmentation of teaching functions; and in some cases, with the internalisation of ‘content factories’ by the educational institutions themselves, as demonstrated in the examples below. A teacher at a private HEI, which offers distance learning, describes a hierarchical division of tasks between the teacher, the mediator and the tutor, in which each performs an isolated part of the pedagogical process, without participating in the design of the content: “*We [regent teachers] do not have enough hours for the number of students we receive. The tutor corrects the assessments and the mediator acts as a bridge with the student, but without autonomy*” (Rosana, 2025, oral information)<sup>5</sup>. This division expresses the factory logic applied to the field of education, whereby teaching work becomes the fragmented execution of previously prescribed tasks.

A similar phenomenon is reported by another teacher from a private HEI, who states that teaching materials are developed by “curator” teachers and replicated across all institutions in the ecosystem. Classroom teachers become implementers of this content, with no autonomy over what they teach. According to her, “[...] teachers avoid being content-focused because they [content factories] pay very little [pause], it takes a lot of time, a lot of study, it's not worth it, and it's our intellectual material that stays with them” (Maria, 2025, oral information).

The intensification of work is also evident in several testimonials. A teacher at a community college teaches up to twelve different subjects, with a weekly workload of thirty hours, in both face-to-face and distance learning modalities, without clear criteria for workload distribution or remuneration. Another teacher mentions the feeling of alienation and loss of pedagogical meaning in the face of standardised subjects in distance learning/hybrid mode: “*That, for me, seemed very much like pretending I was teaching. And then, of course, there was a question*

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<sup>5</sup> Quotes with oral information refer to interviews. To maintain the anonymity of interviewees, we use pseudonyms.



*of guilt, almost a question of teaching responsibility. That, right there, [pause] felt like I wasn't doing my job*” (João, 2025, oral information).

Contractual precariousness is a recurring theme. One content-focused teacher reports having been hired on a project basis, under an informal contract, to produce materials and record video lessons. Another content-focused teacher and proofreader states that she works continuously on a temporary contract basis and issues invoices as a self-employed individual, with no formal employment relationship. Both accounts highlight the extreme flexibility of these working arrangements.

One of the most recent and revealing aspects of precariousness is the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems in content factories, aimed at partially or totally replacing teaching work. Field interviews show that, under the discourse of technological innovation and efficiency, the use of AI has resulted in job losses, lower wages, and loss of authorship.

One instructional designer interviewed, with extensive experience in the production of teaching materials for different companies, reports a drastic change in the production model after the pandemic, associated with the spread of automated tools (Ricardo, 2025, oral information):

*There aren't many financially attractive offers for content-focused teachers, are there? Yeah. I basically left the market little by little because, since the pandemic, I think due to the AI boom, the offered values have been steadily declining. [...] I worked at [company name] as an internal employee and I know that all the materials produced are made by AI, with the knowledge of the institutions that hire the company. There wasn't even a curator – although this role exists, it wasn't active – and it was basically left to the reviewer or educational designer to deal with it.*

The report shows that automation does not eliminate teaching work, but rather reconfigures it into correction and repair tasks, transferring to workers the responsibility for giving coherence to automated products. AI does not act as a support tool, but as an instrument for disqualifying authorship, converting the teacher into a peripheral operator of an algorithmic system.

Similarly, another instructional designer with extensive experience mentions the advancement of generative AIs in content production flows: “*Nowadays, you do a lot of content production with artificial intelligence [...] you no longer need to hire content teachers for everything. The teacher only comes in to review or adjust the tone, and often not even that, because the text is considered 'sufficient'*” (Vanessa, 2025, oral information).

This process highlights the transition of the teacher from author-creator to reviewer of algorithmic texts, which implies the loss of the critical and intellectual dimension of the work. The corporate discourse that accompanies this transition, centred on ideas of productivity, efficiency, and innovation, obscures the logic of replacing human labour and standardising content.



The introduction of AI in content factories thus consolidates a new stage of technological subsumption of labour (Marx, 2008). Automation fulfils a function analogous to that described by Marx in industrial machinery: it removes control over the production process from the worker and transforms them into a mere operator of a technically mediated system. By displacing teachers from the centre of pedagogical practice, platforms and companies reinforce the subordination and control of the educational process. What is presented as “technological advancement” actually operates as an instrument for intensifying the exploitation of teaching labour and deepening the intellectual alienation of teachers.

Reports from teachers and other production line professionals reveal that content factories and educational platforms operate as a concrete expression of the real subsumption of teaching labour to capital. By fragmenting the pedagogical process, standardising intellectual production and introducing automation via AI, these structures consolidate a form of work reorganisation that removes teachers' control over their entire practice.

In summary, the empirical evidence from the research demonstrates that platformisation and automation do not represent a pedagogical advance, but rather a new stage in the exploitation of teaching work by informational-digital capitalism.

This whole configuration has nothing to do with the desired image of teaching work, associated with intellectual autonomy, research, original creation, and meaningful pedagogical relationships. What is increasingly evident is a form of work subsumed to the logic of commodity production, aligned with the imperatives of capital accumulation in the financialised and platformised education sector. The “application teacher” or “tutor”, at the end of the line in HEIs, also suffers the effects of this reconfiguration, often acting as a mere mediator of content over which they have no control.

### **Final considerations: between subordination and resistance**

This article sought to analyse the phenomenon of “content factories” as an expression of the platformisation and financialisation of higher education in Brazil. It was argued that, behind the technocentric discourse, there is a profound process of reconfiguration of teaching work, marked by precariousness, fragmentation, intensification, and pedagogical alienation. The hypothesis that these factories correspond to a business project to adapt training to the demands of capital finds strong initial support.

The notes here are preliminary and will be further developed with the conclusion and analysis of interviews with workers, which will bring the perspective of those who experience this reality. However, the data collected initially already allows us to highlight the debate



proposed by this dossier. Criticism of technocentrism and technological fetishism was made by revealing how technology is instrumentalised for exploitation. The analysis of work and teacher training as fields of dispute was central, detailing the risks of automation, alienation, and dismantling promoted by technopriate solutions. Finally, regarding acts of resistance, although the focus of this study is to denounce structures of domination, the critical analysis undertaken here constitutes a form of intellectual resistance.

Unveiling the mechanisms of exploitation and the contradictions of hegemonic discourse is a fundamental step towards building alternatives. The continuation of this research aims not only to deepen the denunciation, but also to identify possible fissures, contradictions, and forms of organisation and resistance among education workers that may point to the appropriation of technologies from an emancipatory and counter-hegemonic perspective, reaffirming education as a right and not as a commodity.

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