

**PEDAGOGY OF COMPETENCIES AND TEACHING WORK: TENSIONS  
BETWEEN INSTRUMENTAL TRAINING AND THE EMANCIPATORY  
PERSPECTIVE**

**PEDAGOGIA DAS COMPETÊNCIAS E TRABALHO DOCENTE: TENSÕES  
ENTRE A FORMAÇÃO INSTRUMENTAL E A PERSPECTIVA EMANCIPATÓRIA**

**PEDAGOGÍA DE LAS COMPETENCIAS Y TRABAJO DOCENTE: TENSIONES  
ENTRE LA FORMACIÓN INSTRUMENTAL Y LA PERSPECTIVA  
EMANCIPATORIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article analyzes the influence of the Pedagogy of Competencies on the reconfiguration of teaching work and contemporary conceptions of human development, highlighting how educational policies, marked by administrative logic and adaptation to market demands, subordinate pedagogical practices to a productivist bias. The article discusses the impact of this model on the intensification of teachers' tasks, the precariousness of their autonomy, and the dissemination of pragmatic perspectives that promote individual blame for academic failure. It also highlights the tension between technical training and critical development, clarifying that the pursuit of immediate results neglects structural conditions and impedes the consolidation of an emancipatory perspective. To this end, an analysis is conducted, based on a literature review, which allows us to understand the effects of the Pedagogy of Competencies on pedagogical practices and teacher development. Finally, the importance of objective working conditions is highlighted, linked to the valorization of a critical pedagogy that supports a democratic and humanizing educational project.

**Keywords:** Pedagogy of Competences. Teaching Work. Human Formation.

**RESUMO**

Este artigo analisa a influência da Pedagogia das Competências na reconfiguração do trabalho docente e nas concepções contemporâneas de formação humana, evidenciando o modo como políticas educacionais, marcadas pela lógica administrativa e pela adaptação às demandas do mercado, subordinam as práticas pedagógicas a um viés produtivista. Discute-se o impacto desse modelo na intensificação das tarefas do professor, na precarização de sua autonomia e na difusão de perspectivas pragmáticas que promovem a culpabilização individual pelo fracasso escolar. Ressalta-se, ainda, a tensão entre a formação técnica e o desenvolvimento crítico, esclarecendo que a busca de resultados imediatos negligencia as condições estruturais e impede a consolidação de uma perspectiva emancipatória. Para tanto, procede-se a uma análise, baseada em revisão bibliográfica, que permite compreender os efeitos da Pedagogia das Competências sobre as práticas pedagógicas e

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a formação docente. Ao final, aponta-se para a importância de condições objetivas de trabalho, articuladas à valorização de uma pedagogia crítica que sustente um projeto democrático e humanizador de educação.

**Palavras-chave:** Pedagogia das Competências. Trabalho Docente. Formação Humana.

## **RESUMEN**

Este artículo analiza la influencia de la Pedagogía de las Competencias en la reconfiguración del trabajo docente y las concepciones contemporáneas del desarrollo humano, destacando cómo las políticas educativas, marcadas por la lógica administrativa y la adaptación a las demandas del mercado, subordinan las prácticas pedagógicas a un sesgo productivista. El artículo discute el impacto de este modelo en la intensificación de las tareas docentes, la precariedad de su autonomía y la difusión de perspectivas pragmáticas que promueven la culpabilización individual por el fracaso académico. También destaca la tensión entre la formación técnica y el desarrollo crítico, aclarando que la búsqueda de resultados inmediatos descuida las condiciones estructurales e impide la consolidación de una perspectiva emancipadora. Para ello, se realiza un análisis, basado en una revisión bibliográfica, que permite comprender los efectos de la Pedagogía de las Competencias en las prácticas pedagógicas y el desarrollo docente. Finalmente, se destaca la importancia de las condiciones objetivas de trabajo, vinculadas a la valorización de una pedagogía crítica que sustente un proyecto educativo democrático y humanizador.

**Palabras clave:** Pedagogía de Competencias. Trabajo Docente. Desarrollo Humano.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary emphasis on the formation of skills, widely disseminated in public policies and in continuing education programs for teachers, translates into a redirection of the teaching work that goes beyond purely technical boundaries and invites us to reflect on the very meaning of education, especially when inserted in a context of transformations in the world of work. As the flexible accumulation regime (Harvey, 1992) reconfigures the notion of productivity, pedagogy becomes the target of the same logics that govern the market, which requires teachers not only to master school content, but also to adhere to models of rationalities typical of the productive sector, aligned with the hegemony of financial capital (Chesnais, 1996).

From this perspective, the Pedagogy of Competencies reaches the core of the teaching activity, directing the development of skills considered functional to the market, directly impacting the autonomy of the teacher, to the extent that it imposes that he responds to the demands of flexibility and employability. The neoliberal scenario, as highlighted by Antunes (2005), signals the wide dissemination of Toyotism beyond the factories, consolidating itself as a social strategy that aims to reconcile the achievement of consensus and the achievement of productive goals. To this logic, the Pedagogy of Competencies responds positively, as it introduces continuous training and systematic evaluations of teacher and student performance in the school, compromising the essential critical and formative dimensions.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the introduction of this logic in schooling impacts the conception of human formation, shifting the teacher from a creative and political role to a condition of executing proposals whose objectives are linked to the increase of social productivity indices (Frigotto, 2010). Under the aegis of capital, increasingly subordinated to the interests of speculative rentism (Chesnais, 1996), education tends to consolidate the status of a mechanism of functional formation for the market, which often weakens the project of social emancipation and the full development of human potentialities.

The Pedagogy of Competences, in this context, is not limited to changes in teaching methods, but significantly alters the role of the teacher and the educational process itself. Based on this observation, this article analyzes how this pedagogy can transform teaching practice and redefine the conceptions of education, inserting them in a context of intense managerial rationalization. In this context, the critical dimension of pedagogical work faces constant pressures, either by the control exercised by public policies or by cultural hegemony



that, in school spaces, simultaneously promotes consent and coercion (Harvey, 2013; Mészáros, 2009).

Questioning the Pedagogy of Competencies implies questioning the supposed neutrality of discourses on teacher qualification, in a context of crisis of capital that strives to strengthen its ideological control over school education. The objective is to understand how the changes brought about by the Pedagogy of Competencies affect identity, teaching praxis and perspective of omnilateral human formation.

## **2 THE REPERCUSSION OF THE PEDAGOGY OF COMPETENCIES IN THE TEACHING WORK**

Based on the logic of flexibility, adaptability, and efficiency, this pedagogical perspective shifts the focus from the teaching of content to the development of competencies and skills applicable to the demands of the labor market. In Brazil, its adoption gained strength from the 1990s onwards, especially as a result of educational reforms inspired by international organizations and the neoliberal agenda, which began to guide public policies for teacher training and curriculum organization.

Such changes are not limited to the sphere of educational policies, but have a decisive impact on the teaching work, redefining the role of the teacher in the face of the new demands for training imposed by the logic of flexible accumulation.

The Fordist requirement of mastery of expository techniques and "skill in eloquence", accompanied by "a good textbook" (Kuenzer, 1999, p. 168), is no longer enough for the teacher; It is necessary to adapt to new axes that emphasize the ability to manage plural didactic situations and incorporate the precepts of flexibility, productivity and continuous evaluation, according to the ideals of flexible accumulation. Consequently, since the 1990s, the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have advised that teacher training prioritizes the development of functional competencies and skills, with the school as the main space for preparing the workforce (Lima Filho, 2010).

As a result, at the same time that the model of the teacher "executor of pre-established programs" (Maués, 2003, p. 91) is overcome, policies are supported whose focus makes the teacher responsible for the students' learning results. Thus, under the justification of methodological deficiencies and the "mismatch" between school practice and the transformations in the world of work (Maués, 2003), the belief is disseminated that "in-service

training" would solve the gaps of a theoretical pedagogical nature. Such initiatives turn a blind eye to the "unsatisfactory preparation" of teachers and reinforce the thesis that, in order to overcome the "poor performance of students", it would be essential to act according to standards of flexibility and adherence to goals, as occurs in business management (Brasil, 2001).

Thus, pedagogical practices begin to incorporate elements of Toyot's organizational culture, such as the encouragement of a "new professional profile" based on the performance of multiple functions and constant willingness to meet the demands of the market. The 2017 Brazilian High School Reform itself, by welcoming into schools professionals without specific training in their areas, evidences the valorization of practical skills and specific competencies to the detriment of robust academic and scientific training. Such flexibility of the requirements for teaching is supported by the thesis that theory would be an obstacle to renewal, camouflaging a posture that tends to make the teaching work more precarious and to detract from pedagogical knowledge essential to the critical understanding of schooling itself.

Under these conditions, the understanding that the classroom should be an environment of "permanent learning of its agents" (Brasil, 2001, p. 99) is consolidated, attributing to the teacher responsibility for conducting contents, but also constant self-reflection that positions him as a "subject of his knowledge" (Brasil, 2001, p. 232). Accompanying this apparent autonomy is the intensification of demands for results, as the competential logic emphasizes the individual and his or her abilities, generally ignoring the structural problems that affect the school. In other words, pedagogical flexibility, which requires planning, executing, evaluating and managing conflicts in the classroom, hides the existence of external control – supported by international reports and centralized policies – and guides what should be taught and how teaching work should be evaluated (Contreras, 2012).

The reorganization of pedagogical practices based on the logic of competencies goes beyond a simple didactic reorganization, by encouraging the adoption of a proactive, entrepreneurial posture that is psychologically aligned with the institution's objectives; impacts the way the teacher perceives himself. At the same time, the responsibility for school failure is often attributed to their performance, consolidating the idea that the "re-education of educators" would constitute a solution to the challenges of education (Giannotti, 2013). This view, however, disregards the economic and political factors that influence the entire training process.

The position taken in this article is that the orientation described above tends to reduce the school to a training space, weakening the critical and transformative potential of the act of teaching. This position is corroborated by the following passage from Duarte (2001), who quotes Perrenoud (1999):

Perrenoud states that "the formation of competencies requires a small 'cultural revolution' to move from a logic of teaching to a logic of training (coaching), based on a relatively simple postulate: competencies are built by exercising themselves in complex situations" [...] (Perrenoud, 1999, p. 54 *apud* Duarte, 2001, p. 35).

If, on the one hand, teaching practices have been assimilating new methodological and technological resources, on the other hand, the core of pedagogical autonomy is subordinated to norms of efficiency and immediate results, imposing on the teacher the adaptation to the demands of an unstable and competitive world of work.

Thus, the thesis of the "reflective teacher" thrives, conceived as one who, by dialoguing with reality, would be able to "learn to learn" (Duarte, 2008, p. 5), who adapts almost automatically to the changes required by the productive restructuring. This, however, rarely exposes the historical roots of such changes, as if the teaching profession should simply follow in a pragmatic way "the productive logic operated by the Toyota production system" (Martins, 2015, p. 11).

The valorization of self-reflection, conceived as a cycle of "action-reflection-action", often maintains that improvement in education is exclusively linked to the supposed lack of skills of the teaching staff. From this presumed individual deficiency, "practical solutions based on the fetishism of technological innovation and the ideology of professionalism" emerge (Silva; Heloani; Piolli, 2012, p. 376). These alternatives reinforce the "constant search for improvements" while aligning with the people management processes of the business model, how to do it (Kaizen<sup>3</sup>). Such ideas are linked to the premise that historical or theoretical reflection is secondary, because, according to this premise, the school daily life requires quick responses to the multiple conflicts that emerge within it. In this context, there is a resistance to recognizing in the teacher the ability to construct syntheses that transcend the fragmentation of the "estranged daily life" (Duarte, 2008), as the mastery of techniques and repertoires is prioritized to respond quickly to the challenges of the classroom.

This process becomes even more evident in the face of the lack of concrete conditions

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<sup>3</sup> Japanese philosophy that emphasizes continuous improvement in all aspects of personal and professional life.

for what Heller (1972) calls the "exit from everyday life", understood, according to Guimarães (2002, p. 19), as "the human awareness of the unity between being particular and being generic". Under the logic of productivity, the teacher faces an overload of administrative and pedagogical responsibilities, from which he is constantly pressured to develop collaborative work strategies, engage in projects and master systematic evaluation methods.

In a similar way, the demands for "continuous improvement" are transformed into almost uncontested mandates, diverting the focus from a critical analysis of the alienating conditions of the teaching work. Material precariousness, as well as the lack or lack of quality of public policies for teacher training, induces the treatment of structural issues as individual deficiencies, whose overcoming is attributed exclusively to the teacher's personal effort.

To this extent, the so-called reflexivity is supported by references that, according to Martins (2015), privilege the development of "self-training strategies", reinforcing the thesis of the egocentric individual who adapts immediately to the circumstances, without questioning the bases that generate such flexibility requirements. The unfolding of this perspective accentuates the submission of the school to the dictates of the market, while hiding the context of the structural crisis of capital, implicit in the productive restructuring (Alves, 2011). Thus, if the socioeconomic system requires "polyoperators" within the factories (Alves, 2011, p. 50), the school institution starts to produce "polyteachers", who not only teach, but are also responsible for multiple attributions, from the dissemination of social values to the development of methodologies and conflict management.

As a result, the fundamental values of education, linked to integrated and critical human formation, are overshadowed by the insistence on shaping "entrepreneurial" individuals and prone to uncritical adaptation. The very idea of the "reflective teacher" often disguises the business direction that permeates the school routine, reducing "the ability to handle concrete situations" (Martins, 2015, p. 11) to the ability to solve immediate problems, without considering the complexity of the historical mediations involved.

It is, therefore, a redirection of pedagogical forces towards the elaboration of short-term solutions, to the detriment of formative projects that could effectively break with the alienation of teaching work.

At this point in the exposition, it includes a clarification of the theoretical framework that sustains the analysis contained herein, the conception of the educational act by Dermeval Saviani (2013, p. 13): "educational work is the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each singular individual, the humanity that is historically and collectively



produced by the set of men". Roteski and Derisso (2021) interpret Saviani's quote as follows:

We learn from this passage that the intentional educational act concerns the role of the educator in the broad sense, but also refers us to the reflection of school education in capitalist society, whose intentionality tends to be determined by the bourgeois educational project that denies the historically produced humanity and stimulates the ideological reproduction of the system. And as an intentional act, it is necessary to consider the effects not only of the official teaching programs elaborated by state agents, but also the individual action of the teacher or of a group of teachers who are guided by building a counter-hegemonic alternative within the state school, in the sense of facing the character of ideological reproduction that it tends to assume due to the pressures of capitalism (Roteski; Derisso, 2021, p. 1199).

The demands of the market, in this scheme, are consolidated as the ultimate parameter of the proposals for teacher training and evaluation, deepening the mismatch between the socio-political mission of the school and the instrumentalization of its practices at the service of the reproduction of social relations marked by precariousness and competitiveness.

In addition, in the midst of Toyot's productive restructuring, from which "knowledge became potentially more important for the productive process than it was before the 1970s" (Marcelino, 2004, p. 81), the idea was established that teachers should shape their practice to develop "linguistic skills and abilities" (Brasil, 1998, p. 23), at the same time that the transmission of structured scientific knowledge is expected. This tension significantly affects the organization of the teaching work, because reconciling the demand for immediate pragmatic results, based on the "fetishism" of competencies, with the formative responsibility of transmitting historical and systematized contents, places the teacher in a permanent state of overload and redefinition of priorities.

Beyond a simple alternation between theoretical content and practical skills, we are faced with a phenomenon in which the precariousness of the teaching career and the absence of public policies for educational financing remove the possibility of maintaining a teaching committed both to the apprehension of scientific knowledge and to the development of skills aimed at democratic participation and the critical exercise of citizenship. Thus, it is a fundamental requirement to ensure adequate time and working conditions so that the teacher can plan and execute tasks that are not just "simulations" of situations, but formative experiences that ensure reflective thinking and the effective appropriation of historically accumulated knowledge.

### 3 HUMAN FORMATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PEDAGOGY OF COMPETENCIES

The adoption of the Pedagogy of Competencies as a structuring axis of curricula and public policies induces the issue of human formation, as it indicates the risk of prioritizing instrumental dimensions to the detriment of the integral formation of the subject. From this perspective, we found that the emphasis on "acting effectively" (Perrenoud, 1999, p. 7), supported by knowledge, but not limited to it, promotes a redistribution of educational objectives, as the ability to solve practical problems becomes central, while the notion of education aimed at the emancipation of the individual tends to be reconfigured in terms of social utility and employability. In this sense, when, "[...] instead of starting from a body of existing disciplinary contents, [...] one starts from concrete situations" (Ramos, 2002, p. 221), there is the risk of emptying the value of knowledge considered fundamental to the historical and cultural understanding of the subjects, reducing training to punctual and immediate aspects.

We cannot ignore that human education, as developed by the Pedagogy of Competences, dialogues with the demands of a market that demands "efficient human capital" (Dias; Lopes, 2003, p. 1156) and individuals capable of quickly adjusting to fluctuations in the economic scenario. The international and national guidelines that foster this perspective reinforce the idea that education should guarantee skills compatible with productivity, shifting the responsibility for the so-called "social failure" to the school (Santomé, 2011). When this failure occurs, the supposed inability of the school to engender the profile of the flexible worker required by the new productive dynamics is blamed, contributing to what Flickinger (2010, p. 179) calls "growing alienation in relation to the experiences of the world of life".

However, if the articulation between practice and broader knowledge is not thought of critically, there is a risk of "educating the citizen to adapt flexibly to the new conditions of occupation" (Brasil, 1998), emptying the possibility of a formative project that contemplates the totality of the being, the ethical, aesthetic and political values indispensable to a citizen consciousness. At this point, the critique of instrumental rationality outlined by Frigotto (1996, p. 93) reinforces the perception that, in societies that are "strongly unequal and subordinated to the exclusionary global market", education by competencies can easily become an apparatus for legitimizing competitive and individualistic logics. Therefore, the tension persists between the contribution of a pedagogical proposal that values learning by doing and



the limitations imposed by the hegemony of a social project that centralizes training on the horizon of performance, "know-how" and productivity.

We highlight, however, a greater challenge: to reconcile the development of practical skills required by the new times with the construction of a human education that does not renounce the reflective and critical dimension. Such conciliation would necessarily involve a review of teacher training policies, in the sense that the teacher is not limited to being the executor of didactic techniques, but that he or she is the subject of reflections on the purposes of education. Only in this way will it be possible to oppose the reduction of man to a simple "human resource" and rescue, in its multiple possibilities, the "maximum education" (Flickinger, 2010, p. 177) that refers to the very essence of educating: that of a process committed to constituting full subjects, capable of critically understanding their historical time and of intervening by transforming it.

In this scenario, we observe a constant tension between technical training and critical development. In the Pedagogy of Competencies, this tension is evident in a clear way, since the emphasis on the mastery of practical skills can leave aside formative aspects with an emancipatory character, which are fundamental for teachers and students to understand and reflect on the social world. In addition, in a context in which the teaching work is subordinated to the capitalist logic and faces processes of fragmentation, training tends to acquire a technician character, reducing pedagogical practice to the simple application of methods, as if it were possible to detach it from theoretical foundations and a broader view of reality.

This approach is supported by several mechanisms – curriculum policies, continuing education programs anchored in efficiency goals or even the valorization of short-term practices – that sustain a notion of "competence" linked to rapid and adaptive results, as if the teaching profession were equivalent to assembly line work. However, educational activity is characterized by aspects that go beyond material production, because "in immaterial production, there is a 'production that is inseparable from the act of producing'" (Marx, 1980, p. 404). Thus, the teacher not only elaborates a "product" that can be separated from its production process; it acts directly on subjects in formation, intermediating knowledge and values that imply the social and historical dimension of these students.

The separation between technical training and critical development often appears in the debate on the "valorization of practical knowledge" to the detriment of "systematized knowledge" that would enable a more comprehensive reading of the contradictions that cross the school (Enguita, 1991). If, on the one hand, the technical emphasis meets the demands



of the market for workers capable of operationalizing methods and "solving immediate problems" (Schön, 2000), on the other hand, it can empty the intellectual autonomy of the teacher, inserting a conception of practice as an instrumental application of techniques. In this logic, teacher education is converted into training for specific competencies and is diluted in a properly reflective dimension, which weakens the possibility of the teacher assuming the role of "transformative intellectual" (Giroux, 1997, p. 71).

The perspective of an emancipatory education presupposes conceiving the school as a contradictory space, in which the teacher can assume postures of resistance and collective action (Enguita, 1991), despite the mechanisms of control and rationalization. In this scenario, research and theoretical reflection must occupy a central place: research is not spoken of as a mere subjective observation of one's own practice, but as the production of knowledge that goes beyond common sense and approaches methodologically rigorous analyses, capable of revealing the contradictions that underlie the appearance. By restricting oneself to the instrumental dimension of work, one runs the risk of falling back into a "new technicality" disguised by reflective language, but based on the uncritical objective of developing competencies and skills.

Teacher training that integrates theory and practice as praxis requires a conception of school work that values both the specificity of the act of teaching and its insertion in social, political and economic relations. Thus, the teacher is not only an "autonomous professional" who applies neutral techniques, but is inserted in class dynamics, with the power to combat alienation. To advance in this direction, the teacher needs a solid theoretical basis that makes it possible to critically analyze society and his own activity, and to offer spaces for collective organization that go beyond isolated actions (Enguita, 1991).

The logic according to which school success depends on the combination of individual merits and test results transfers to teachers the responsibility for achieving a "high Basic Education Development Index (IDEB)", while neglecting the working conditions and continuing education of teachers. Under the argument of effectiveness, conceptions such as "training and product education" (Fernandes, 2015, p. 402) emerge, which promote the "taskmaster teacher" and the "student marks x", reducing teaching and learning to a technical and repetitive practice.

In this context, it is foreseeable that standardized evaluations, designed as instruments of "comparison, classification and selection" (Sousa, 2003, p. 188), will intensify the exclusion of groups already affected by the insufficiency of public policies. The meritocratic logic, by



ignoring "economic and social factors" (Sousa, 2003, p. 182), maintains that "everyone can compete on equal terms", reinforces the responsibility of teachers and students for school failure, without facing the problem of existing inequalities. Thus, curricular content is reduced and measurable results are prioritized, configuring a "game of winners and losers very much to the taste of business logic" (Freitas, 2013, p. 123).

This logic, often referred to as accountability, seeks to give legitimacy to supposedly objective diagnostic policies and ends up normalizing "inter-institutional competition" as a catalyst for a supposed "creative motivation" (Brooke, 2013, p. 111). From this orientation, the worsening of inequalities and internal tensions in schools is made invisible, as well as the growing precariousness and devaluation of teaching work, since such dimensions do not fit into the technical parameters of evaluation and control proposed by this rationality. In this way, meritocratic rhetoric and large-scale evaluation devices, presented as neutral instruments for quality improvement, produce inverse effects, deepening inequalities and mechanisms of control over the teaching work.

In reality, the application of standardized tests and the awarding of the "best" tend to reinforce a dynamic that intensifies social segregation and deepens the processes of blaming teachers. At the same time, the adoption of socio-emotional competencies in the list of supposed "solutions" to the ills of public education (Santos, 2018; Silva, 2015) illustrates the manipulation of the subjectivity of teachers and students as the target of interventions that prioritize adaptability, resilience, and behavioral control.

In this context, the pedagogical implications are profoundly significant: the proposal of a "lean" curriculum (Fernandes, 2015, p. 402) limits the capacity to develop criticality, intellectual autonomy and cultural diversity; the prioritization of "quantifiable skills" restricts scientific, historical, and artistic knowledge; the emphasis on extrinsic motivation – through bonuses, awards and rankings – reinforces distortions, privileges the logic of performance and creates an environment in which "evaluation is seen as the possibility of measuring knowledge that, in turn, can be measured, devoid of any complexity and subjectivity" (Fernandes, 2015, p. 402), compromising the principles of an emancipatory education, widely defended in the context of public schools.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the ideological effects of the Pedagogy of Competencies go beyond the discourse: by being linked to teacher accountability policies, this approach consolidates a vision in which the school must meet the demands of the market, transferring to teachers and students the responsibility for presenting increasingly effective

"performances". In this model, structural contradictions – such as poverty, job insecurity, and urban segregation – are hidden by narratives that emphasize "individual capacity." The result is the validation of a project that, while promising quality, often extends the exclusion of the less fortunate. As Sousa (2003, p. 188) warns, "educational policies when contemplating [...] comparison, classification and selection" promote exclusion, which is in direct conflict with the principle of "everyone's right to education". If the objective is to build an inclusive and critical public school, it is essential to recover the collective and democratic character of pedagogical practice, highlighting the emancipatory function of knowledge. This requires moving away from metrics and rewards that, rather than promoting equality, perpetuate social inequalities.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

In this article, we argue that the Pedagogy of Competencies has introduced practices and assumptions that challenge the essence of education, especially with regard to the teaching work and the conception of human formation. By focusing on flexibility, efficiency and adaptation to market demands, this approach tends to reduce the political-critical nature of teaching, treating the teacher as an "executing agent" of productive objectives, which limits their opportunities for autonomous and reflective action. As a result, essential elements of integral education, such as democratic participation, the capacity for historical questioning, and the critical analysis of the contradictions of the system, are relegated to the background.

The dissemination of managerial goals and mechanisms of teacher accountability, supported by large-scale evaluations, reinforces this logic, subjugating pedagogical activity to productivity parameters that ignore the various economic and sociocultural influences present in the daily life of schools. This scenario is aggravated when the rhetoric of innovation and "learning to learn" becomes an instrument of individual blame, treating educational problems as the exclusive responsibility of teachers or their supposed lack of competence. The overvaluation of pragmatism, in turn, creates a sense of urgency that, disguised as technical neutrality, masks the transformations in the curriculum and in the teacher's identity, making it more difficult to criticize the precariousness of work and the strong influence of capitalist interests in the formulation of educational policies.

In this context, reaffirming an emancipatory and critical perspective requires, on the one hand, the strengthening of policies that guarantee objective conditions for the exercise of teaching – such as quality initial and continuing education, fair remuneration and adequate



school infrastructure – and, on the other hand, the promotion of a pedagogical practice that values, in fact, collective involvement, consistent theoretical reflection and articulation with social movements. In this way, the school space can recover its public and democratic dimension, becoming an environment of integral education for all. Facing this challenge means, therefore, questioning the bases of the competentialist discourse, rejecting the logic that naturalizes unbridled competition and the instrumentalization of knowledge for almost strictly professional purposes. Only in this way will the school be able to reaffirm its commitment to an education that goes beyond the immediate demands of the market, cultivating ethical, political and aesthetic values capable of boosting social transformation and human development from the opening of real possibilities of access to the most developed knowledge.

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