

EFFECTS OF THE STATE AS A MANAGER ON THE TEACHER'S WORK

EFEITOS DO ESTADO GESTOR SOBRE O TRABALHO DOCENTE

EFFECTOS DEL ESTADO DIRECTIVO EN EL TRABAJO DE LOS PROFESORES

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ABSTRACT: The present text, which is organized as a theoretical essay, intends to discuss the effects of the (re)configuration of the State - from the perspective of managerialism - on teaching work. To this end, it reflects, in general terms, on the meanings of the managing State in the interface with education and deals with external evaluations and teaching knowledge as objects that illustrate the repercussions of this model of State in teaching work. It is concluded that the teaching functions, understood as those whose central focus was on teaching-learning, has been subsumed by more expanded characteristics that go beyond the external control and training of this professional, thus pointing to the implications of the conditions of work on teacher's work.

KEYWORDS: State as a manager. External evaluations. Teacher's knowledge. Teacher's work.

RESUMO: Do tipo ensaio teórico, o presente texto pretende debater os efeitos da (re)configuração do Estado - sob o prisma do gerencialismo - no trabalho docente. Para tanto, reflete, em linhas gerais, acerca dos sentidos do Estado gestor na interface com a educação e aborda as avaliações externas e os saberes docentes como objetos que ilustram os rebatimentos desse modelo de Estado no trabalho docente. Conclui-se que as funções docentes, compreendidas como aquelas que tinham no ensinar-aprender seu foco central, tem sido subsumidas por características mais ampliadas e que perpassam o controle externo e a formação desse profissional, apontando, portanto, para as implicações das condições de trabalho sobre o trabalho docente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estado gestor. Avaliações externas. Saberes docentes. Trabalho docente.

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RESUMEN: *Como ensayo teórico, este texto pretende discutir los efectos de la (re)configuración del Estado -bajo el prisma del gerencialismo- en la labor docente. Para ello, reflexiona, en términos generales, sobre los significados del Estado gestor en la interfaz con la educación y aborda las evaluaciones externas y el conocimiento de los profesores como objetos que ilustran las repercusiones de este modelo de Estado en la labor docente. Se concluye que las funciones docentes, entendidas como aquellas que tenían en la enseñanza-aprendizaje su foco central, han sido subsumidas por características más expandidas y que pasan por el control externo y la formación de este profesional, apuntando, por tanto, por las implicaciones de las condiciones laborales sobre el trabajo docente*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Gestionar el estado. Evaluaciones externas. Conocimientos de los profesores. Trabajo docente.*

Introduction

When asked to answer about how to advance in face of the theoretical and political challenges to implement critical-historical pedagogy in public education networks, Saviani (2018) points out that there is a discursive production about the school's lag in relation to current issues and that it would be up to it to update itself in face of contemporary demands. In the same vein, Shiroma (2021), in a recent interview, highlights that it was essential in his studies to capture the "centrality that concepts such as 'quality', 'effective management', 'inclusion' and 'accountability' would assume in educational reforms [...] as a strategy for teacher management" (p. 275) and that there was a process of "construction of consensus necessary to hide the interests of reforming education to meet particular interests of the capital, under the discourse of quality education for all".

Considering these two assertions, there is a discursive-ideological articulation that defends that Brazilian education and schools need to be reformed. All kinds of data, statistics, and figures are produced to highlight that teachers do not perform their work efficiently and students do not learn and do not master the minimum inputs necessary for human development. Our hypothesis, upon which this essay is based, is that this deconstruction movement is the foundation of the hegemonic idea that education needs to adapt to the new times, to break with traditions in order to train the new man/worker in a context of technologies, advances, and, also, uncertainties.

To do so, through a theoretical and bibliographical deepening, it seeks to reflect on the meanings of the managerial State in the interface with education and approaches external evaluations and teachers' knowledge as objects that illustrate the repercussions of this State model in the teaching work.

Managerial state, external evaluation and teachers' work

Since their implementation in the 1990s, external evaluations were justified as a necessary instrument to monitor the functioning and the "quality of education", historically so propagated by the Federal Government and State Governments, in order to subsidize public policies that leverage the levels of education, whose ideology is identified with the economic rationality of the State Reform under the principles of a Managerial State.

In this period (the 1990s), several evaluation systems were created/articulated, such as SAEB (Basic Education Evaluation System), PROVA BRASIL, among others (such as state evaluations, for example), which make up the IDEB (Basic Education Development Index). In calculating the IDEB, the approval rates of all the grades of each of the evaluated stages of education and the reading and problem solving proficiency of students in the last grade of each of the evaluated stages are incorporated. Thus, the IDEB reduces all indications of learning to performance (average performance in the Inep assessments - *Prova Brasil* and *Saeb*). Therefore, there is a standardization in the evaluation system to verify that all schools in all regions are at the same level, disregarding the other areas of knowledge, the individual, local and regional specificities and, perhaps, the social conditions in which the students are found in the various states and municipalities. It is, therefore, a formatting evaluation characteristic of production systems.

Thus, educational reforms - of which assessments are a fundamental part - have managerialist characteristics, because, according to Lima (2011, p. 48)

The managerial model is characterized as one that concentrates high degrees of efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity, with emphasis on deconcentration of production, financing, and supply of social policies, and centralization of their evaluation and control.

Evaluations focus on the results of student achievement and, if initially they were diagnostic, they later became curriculum and methodology guides. In this current evaluation model, there is little information that can truly guide the educational processes; there are many essential issues to be discussed with society beyond the ranking.

It is undeniable that the act of evaluating is fundamental to reflect on the pedagogical and institutional work, as well as extremely important for the redefinition of the teaching practice. However, the way these evaluations are set, the learning process is no longer prioritized, much less how it develops in different contexts, since it does not even consider the particularities and the various levels of knowledge that each student is at.

As an example, in the state of Goiás, the learning goals for high school were developed in partnership with Instituto Unibanco, in a public-private "collaboration" typical of the managing state. In the words of Bresser-Pereira (1998, p. 26)

The transformation of non-exclusive state services into non-state public property and their declaration as social organizations will be done through a 'publicization program', which should not be confused with the privatization program, insofar as the new entities will retain their public character and their financing by the state.

The main objectives of the partnership are the fight against school dropout, the reduction of regional inequalities in the school environment and the increase of the average IDEB score in Goiás, through the Management Circuit program⁴, proposed by the Institute, always with the perspective of improving the "quality" of education in the state. The Institute itself stipulated for each regional coordinator a specific goal and, in general, a single goal for the state of Goiás, which is to raise the previous national index score from 4.28 to 4.43. Already in 2019, the state averaged 4.8, maintaining its leadership in the country.

Some effects of this reorganization of the State that is presented in the condition of educational policy and external evaluation can be listed: first, the fact that an economic agency delimits policies and actions for education; second, the disagreement in relation to the 4.8 result verified in 2019. We must question: how did the state obtain this grade - considered the best in Brazil - if the conditions are not conducive to effective learning, since what we see are students with deficits in learning the content, dropout, distance between education and the local reality and what is required in external assessments, lack of material resources and technologies, lack of teachers, among many others? In a third moment, in time, it is necessary to point out that the result considered outstanding is vexing when compared to a minimum grade for approval in the Goiás State Network of 6.0 and, even more, when compared to other countries that have much higher averages and superior school conditions, because they invest more in this area, therefore, there is nothing to celebrate.

Still with regard to learning, it is necessary to reflect on the following questions: how are these assessments prepared? Can these instruments, in fact, measure learning? What parameters are used for this? Do they contribute or not to change education? Are the results really real or are they the result of data processing? Despite the questions and the knowledge

⁴The Management Circuit Program is the method, proposed by Instituto Unibanco, that makes School Management for Learning Results a reality, allowing it to guide and organize the processes, responsibilities, and activities of school management at all levels. Information available at: Instituto Unibanco Portal. Available at: <https://iuportalhmg.azurewebsites.net/metodo/>. Accessed on: 10 Oct. 2021..

that the evaluations do not consider the different levels of literacy of the students and do not reflect a search for equity, it is known that the result of each student and each school can impact on state and municipal policies, in order to re(guide) the resolution of learning problems, failure and dropout. Thus,

evaluations have shown that municipal education is a bottleneck due to the political mistakes of governments in transferring to municipalities almost exclusively for the maintenance of basic education (SAVIANI, 2009, p. 36).

In this context, the blame for the results of external evaluations, dropout, repetition and nonlearning is one of the most distressing aspects that has determined incisively the performance of the teacher. The teaching class has been increasingly pressured to obtain a new performativity. For Ball (1998, p. 6-7), it is

[...] a control mechanism, a form of indirect control or distance control that replaces intervention and prescription with goal setting, accountability, and comparison. Moreover, as part of the transformation of education and schooling and the expansion of the power of capital, performativity provides sign systems that "represent" education in a self-referential and reified way for consumption. And indeed, many of the specific technologies of performativity in education (Total Quality Management, Human Resource Management, etc.) are borrowed from commercial contexts.

This new performativity is consistent with the guidelines of this evaluative state. Gandim (2012, p. 69) states that

The new form of state management, that is, managerialism, has also brought changes in the educational sphere. Just as the New Right attributed the mismanagement of the State to the capitalist crisis, in education the blame for what was pointed out as lack of quality and efficiency fell on the mismanagement of schools.

Managers and, especially, teachers are faced with new demands in which their work is remodeled by guidelines from world and multilateral organizations. The State imposes ready-made plans, "suggestions" of methodologies, continuous surveillance of student attendance to curb dropout, to inform even the Guardianship Council, so that it is aware of this absenteeism and mobilizes its actions. In this sense, Evangelista and Shiroma (2011, p. 127) point out that

The hyper-emphasis on evaluation instruments and mechanisms has produced a reorganization in educational institutions that take away much of the time they would dedicate to educational work to record information and fill out and send reports to higher levels.

The teaching practice has been under contumacious surveillance by managers, coordinators and the like, who are concerned almost exclusively with filling out reports and performance evaluation questionnaires. The teacher works tirelessly, fearful of procedural warnings and other punishments (often linked to salary), which has been occurring more frequently. According to Lima (2011, p. 37)

In an autocratic mode of evaluation, the State imposes rules and definitions about the evaluated object: how to evaluate and the results to be achieved. This is the model of performance evaluation. Performance indicates result. When results do not meet the program, the evaluated person is punished.

There is no more concern with the process of integral formation of young people and much less incentive to the qualification of this teacher who cannot even enjoy the right to study leave, on the contrary, he is cornered by the obligation of formatted training; he is like a machine in a factory. There is, then, an extreme emphasis on productivity, an exacerbated demand to increase the rates.

The Recognize Project is another example of the impact of the Managing State on the work of teachers through external evaluation. The project evaluates the entire performance of the collegiate body, which needs to "live" for the school and has stimulated a cruel competitiveness, resulting in a dehumanization among peers and a lack of collective identity, because if the teacher is not an "exemplary" professional, he or she does not receive the project's bonus at the end of the semester. Thus, a category of workers that was already being disarticulated and seeing its union slowly fading away, lost even more its class consciousness. The consequence of this precariousness is the getting sick, the demotivation, resulting from the mechanized work and the deprofessionalization, which is reflected, ultimately, in the students' education. Meanwhile, it seems distant to glimpse a truly quality education, which is based on valuing teachers.

Managerial state, knowledge and teaching work

In this process of reconfiguration of the State, education is seen - increasingly more openly - as a commodity and, from this perspective, labor relations, as well as the (re)configuration of teaching knowledge, are affected.

The actions of various international actors have directly interfered in national public policies and, concomitantly, in educational policies and reforms as exemplified in external evaluations, states Ball (2014). His research makes clear the complex range of financial

activities of universities, in this case in the public sector (also by way of example), which are intertwined with those of the private sector. Therefore, as this researcher states, these organizational forms within the capital society obscure the moral and educational foundations of educational practices. In line with Ball (2014), it is understood that the results of these contracts lose the focus of the construction of knowledge for an emancipatory education, of the necessary teaching knowledge in this struggle, as they seek to involve public universities and teacher training in this process of commodification.

Since the 1990s, different international and governmental agencies have played increasingly instrumental roles in the advancement of free market ideas. Private interests have grown and governments have embraced the introduction of competition and choice policies along the lines of the managerialist state. These interferences of the capitalist market, as Robertson & Verger (2012) assert, carry neoliberal discourses that represent a transfer of authority from the public to the private domain and favor the growth of Public Private Educational Partnerships (PPPEs).

This cycle of the commodification of education in the form of a dark and complex network, as Ball (2014) mentions, and which enhances PPPEs, as Robertson & Verger (2012) state, reproduces the neoliberal ideology in Education and potentially brings about changes in the way the debate(s) in relation to teachers' knowledge takes place, both in policy-making and in teachers' own praxis.

To illustrate this phenomenon, Saviani (1996) states that the mobilization of critical-contextual knowledge is of utmost importance. According to this author, it is to know how to understand the demands of the current context and the socio-historical conditions that define the educational work, since only then the educator will understand which (re)configurations are necessary within the social and educational context in question. However, this knowledge has been weakened due to the prevailing (neo/ultra) liberal discourse in the teaching work.

In other words, we have had as demand the "[...] result of increased competition for more and greater school credentials or social status in order to secure employment in a global and increasingly competitive labor market" (ROBERTSON; VERGER; 2012, p. 1138) despite the socio-historical conditions of professional practice, as well as the devaluation of local and regional needs for external assessments. Thus, it is noticeable that PPPEs are used as a key to solving problems of (or lack of) effectiveness in the context of a managerial state. According to these same researchers, PPPEs contribute to the transformation of the education sector, especially with regard to increasing private authority.

This managerial and regulatory state, from the view of PPPEs by Robertson and Verger (2012), induces the reconfiguration of work in all its elements, therefore, also compels teacher training and its own praxis. This network causes us to form a new working society to meet the demand of the new relations between public and private.

In other words, a new conception of education is being shaped on the basis of private interests. As Robertson and Verger (2012) state, the private sector is now deeply embedded at the heart of public educational services at all levels, from policy and research to classroom learning. Hence, the need to identify and discuss how this regulatory and evaluative context affects educational reforms which, consequently, culminate in the restructuring of teachers' work and teachers' knowledge.

Considering this situation, Maués (2005) and Hypolito (2015) criticize the regulatory role of the State and its lack of attention to academic research on teacher education and professional development, respectively.

This advent of the State with a regulatory and evaluating role, linked to market interests, shapes the reforms in education, as said. According to Maués (2005, p. 6), reforms are "forms of arrangements that facilitate a social and political reordering based on new production patterns," that is, reforms can be seen as a form of regulation. In this sense, reforms have a controlling role in education, since the transformation of economic and social policies affect the performance of teachers' work and define and solidify tools for controlling this teaching activity in order to ensure a financial return for the capitalist system.

These regulations favor the strengthening of a paradigmatic transition of capitalism, called the "new technological boss" by Pérez (1991). This productivity pattern causes the scientific production, for example, to be accelerated and overloads the teachers' work.

In this configuration it is stated, therefore, that the teachers' role is being reconfigured in a mercantilist way due to these educational policies. According to Maués (2005, p. 13), "these educational policies will change the division of tasks, the discrimination of activities, the division of time, and, soon, will change the organization of the teaching work. In short, education as an ideological apparatus of the State is a central piece in the reform process aimed at solidifying a new paradigm, that is, a new regulatory role that controls the teaching work and strengthens the cycle in the search for profit and reproduction of capital.

Hypolito (2015) states that for many decades, educational reforms, specifically their reformers, have not given due attention to the criticisms formulated by researchers and educators about the limited development of Brazilian education, whose responsibility falls on teachers and their training. For this reason, it is essential to look at the whole - the relationship

between education and the multiple determinations that shape this process - and understand its essence. According to Kosik (1976, p. 16), "to capture the phenomenon of a certain thing means to investigate and describe how the thing itself manifests itself in that phenomenon and how, at the same time, it hides in it. To grasp the phenomenon is to reach the essence". Part of this detour is the research of Hypólito (2015), which deals with the detours and misunderstandings of managerialist policies in public education entrenched in the National Education Plan (PNE).

Hypólito (2015, p. 521), in agreement with Ball (2014), states that the Managerial State was gradually manifesting itself in the PNE and this movement of precariousness and privatization of public education ignores the quality that should guarantee the right to education. The quality parameters that are foreseen in the PNE will never be achieved if the real goal of these partnerships, as Hypólito (2015) mentions, is to weaken the theoretical and critical content in the school space.

The valorization of the teaching profession is simply ignored by educational policies and, although the PNE presents relevant points for education to advance with a view to the comprehensive training of students, political actions do not show advances. For Hypólito (2015), it is coherent that policies fertilize public-private partnerships and that documents, such as the PNE, direct in a managerialist way the evaluation policies, the national curriculum, and the training centers and policies. This apparatus implies in teacher training and professional valorization, or rather, results in teacher disqualification and deprofessionalization.

Therefore, taking into account that this context inevitably induces the restructuring of the teaching work and accelerates an intentional process of (re)construction of teaching knowledge, it is important to highlight that the knowledge needed for the exercise in question are tools that help achieve the goal of education and professionalization, but not in the performative way as the managerial State has claimed.

Final remarks

Hoping to advance in relation to the initial objective proposed in this manuscript, which is: reflect on the meanings of the managerial state in the interface with education and address the external evaluations and teaching knowledge as objects that illustrate the impact of this State model in the teaching work, we sought to bring elements that could provide the dialogue between the reconfiguration of the role of the State and the teaching work.

Initially, it was highlighted that there is an ideological propaganda pointing to the "inefficiency" of the school and the need for reform, retaking its bases, having, for this, numbers

that substantiate the inability of the school to fulfill its role. However, what is needed is a reflection on the multidimensionality of the school entangled in a web in which the project of society, the State management, the regional and local realities, the teacher training project, the disputes over the curriculum, the population's access to work and income, among other aspects that directly impact on the "result" that the school produces.

This discursive plot, showing that the school needs to be reformed and adapted to the needs of a "present time", has contributed to the production of a consensus that mitigates all the struggle and resistance to the disfiguration of the school as a locus of integral formation of man.

It can be seen - by means of: i) massive presence of evaluations (external, especially) in schools which disregard the local reality and the consequent curricular adaptation, the profile of the student body as well as the many aspects that imply the results of a test; and ii) by the strong propaganda and influence on teacher training policies as the panacea for the solutions to the problems of schools and the defense of the reconfiguration of teaching knowledge in order to produce a "new" teacher with a profile that meets a world and a school in paradigmatic transition - tools operating to forge this State.

We conclude that the teaching functions, understood as those that had teaching-learning as their central focus and specificity, are subsumed by more expanded characteristics in order to contemplate the needs of the modern world and the new man/worker and that go through the external control through evaluations and the training of this professional through the defense of new knowledge for the professional exercise, pointing, therefore, to the effects of the managerial State on working conditions and teacher training.

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