

CONCEPTION OF OMNILATERAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INTEGRATED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL: CONTRADICTIONS AND RESISTANCE IN IFRO'S INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDI)

CONCEPÇÃO DE FORMAÇÃO HUMANA NO ENSINO MÉDIO INTEGRADO: CONTRADIÇÕES E RESISTÊNCIA NO PDI DO IFRO

CONCEPCIÓN DE LA FORMACIÓN HUMANA EN LA EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA INTEGRADA: CONTRADICCIONES Y RESISTENCIA EN EL PDI DEL IFRO



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How to reference this paper:

Amorim Junior, J. W., Chediak, S., Ferrazzo, G., & Lopes Junior, J. (2026). Conception of omnilateral human development in vocational education integrated to secondary school: Contradictions and resistance in IFRO's Institutional Development Plan (PDI). *Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional*, 30, e026046. <https://doi.org/10.22633/rpge.v30i00.21196>



| Submitted: 20/01/2026
| Revisions required: 16/04/2026
| Approved: 30/04/2026
| Published: 30/05/2026

Editor: Prof. Dr. Sebastião de Souza Lemes
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

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ABSTRACT: The Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology in Brazil have, among their objectives, the promotion of vocational education integrated to secondary school from an emancipatory educational perspective. This objective, however, is situated within a field of dispute between distinct conceptions of world and humanity. Such disputes are expressed in the Institutional Development Plan (PDI), particularly in the Institutional Pedagogical Project, which guides the school curriculum. This paper aims to analyze how vocational education integrated with secondary education is conceived in the IFRO's PDI, in light of Dialectical and Historical Materialism. A documentary analysis is conducted to identify contradictions within the articulated conceptions. The findings indicate persistent tensions between the ideal of omnilateral education and market-oriented demands that constrain it, revealing contradictions inherent to vocational education in the Brazilian context.

KEYWORDS: Integrated Secondary Education. IFRO. Institutional Development Plans. Institutional Pedagogical Project. Historical-Dialectical Materialism.

RESUMO: Os Institutos Federais de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia têm como um de seus objetivos a oferta da educação profissional integrada ao ensino médio, fundamentada em uma perspectiva de formação integral e emancipadora. Contudo, tais pressupostos inserem-se em um campo de disputas entre distintos conceitos ontológicos e sociais. Essas disputas se expressam nos Planos de Desenvolvimento Institucional (PDIs), especialmente no Projeto Pedagógico Institucional (PPI), que orienta as concepções curriculares. Este artigo objetiva compreender como a educação profissional integrada ao ensino médio é concebida nos PDIs do Instituto Federal de Rondônia (IFRO), à luz do Materialismo Histórico-Dialético. Realiza-se uma análise documental de todos os PDIs desde a instalação do IFRO, buscando identificar manutenções, rupturas e contradições nas concepções apresentadas. Os resultados evidenciam tensões recorrentes entre o ideal de formação integral e as exigências que a restringem ao mercado de trabalho, apontando para contradições inerentes à organização da educação profissional no contexto brasileiro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino Médio Integrado. IFRO. Planos de Desenvolvimento Institucional. Projeto Pedagógico Institucional. Materialismo Histórico-Dialético.

RESUMEN: Los Institutos Federales de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología en Brasil tienen, entre sus objetivos, la promoción de la educación profesional integrada a la educación secundaria desde una perspectiva educativa emancipadora. Sin embargo, este objetivo se sitúa en un campo de disputa entre distintas concepciones de mundo y de humanidad. Dichas disputas se expresan en el Plan de Desarrollo Institucional (PDI), particularmente en el Proyecto Pedagógico Institucional, que orienta el currículo escolar. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo analizar cómo se concibe la educación profesional integrada a la educación secundaria en el PDI del IFRO, a la luz del Materialismo Histórico-Dialético. Se realiza un análisis documental con el fin de identificar contradicciones en las concepciones presentadas. Los resultados señalan tensiones persistentes entre el ideal de la educación omnilateral y las demandas orientadas al mercado que la restringen, revelando contradicciones inherentes a la educación profesional en el contexto brasileño.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación Secundaria Integrada. IFRO. Planes de Desarrollo Institucional. Proyecto Pedagógico Institucional. Materialismo Histórico-Dialético.

INTRODUCTION

Law No. 11,892 of 2008, which established the Federal Network for Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education (RFEPCT) and created the Federal Institutes (IFs), designated Integrated Secondary Education (EMI) as a priority in its conceptual and policy framework, establishing a pedagogical approach based on “combining technical and technological knowledge” aimed at overcoming strictly pragmatic instrumentalization, with a focus on science, “to establish itself as a center of excellence in science education, stimulating critical thinking,” and “to stimulate research, cultural production, and scientific and technological development” (Brasil, 2008, Art. 6). Furthermore, the objectives of the IFs include the emancipation of citizens: “to stimulate and support educational processes that lead to the generation of jobs and income and to the emancipation of citizens from the perspective of local and regional socioeconomic development” (Brasil, 2008, Art. 7). In this way, it is possible to recognize the political and social dimensions, with a focus on work, science, technology, and culture; on the other hand, the contradictions inherent in counter-hegemonic policy within a context of neoliberal hegemony also emerge.

We begin with the assertion that EMI in higher education institutions constitutes a counter-hegemonic and, therefore, challenging project, as it commits to offering a *omnilateral* education that aims to encompass all dimensions of human life—namely, work, science, and culture (Ramos, 2008a)—thereby overcoming the instrumental logic that has historically characterized vocational education in Brazil.

In this context, the Institutional Development Plan (PDI)—which includes the Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI) in one of its sections—constitutes the institutional expression of the political-educational project of the IFs and reveals, in its structure, the ontological, epistemological, and sociopolitical conceptions of education. Consequently, it serves as a guiding premise for the formulation of pedagogical and curricular proposals for the courses, thus becoming an important object of investigation.

This investigation takes as its starting point a segment of research conducted within the Master’s program in School Psychology by Amorim Junior (2019), in which three PDIs from the Federal Institute of Rondônia (IFRO), valid from 2009 to 2022, as well as an EMI curriculum plan (PPC), to understand the proposal for integrated training and the overcoming of structural duality. In this article, however, we prioritize the PDIs, expanding the scope of analysis to include the latest version of the PDI (2023–2027), as well as updating the theoretical

framework. Thus, the PDIs from the following periods are the objects of analysis: 2009–2013, 2014–2017, 2018–2022, and 2023–2027.

The overall objective of this article is to understand how EMI has been conceptualized in IFRO's PDI, in light of the political and conceptual assumptions underlying the law establishing the RFEPCT. To this end, the mission, vision, values, and philosophical, pedagogical, and theoretical-methodological concepts expressed in the document are examined, observing how the relationship between work, science, and culture is configured, and the intentionality of human emancipation as an educational goal.

Based on Dialectical Historical Materialism (DHM), as well as Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Historical-Cultural Psychology, this analysis aims to reveal, beyond the surface of the aforementioned IFRO normative texts, the contradictions present, highlighting advances, setbacks, and impasses in confronting educational duality over nearly twenty years at IFRO.

Integrated Secondary Education: a counter-hegemonic project

The history of education in Brazil, particularly at the high school level, is characterized by an educational duality between a preparatory model aimed at training leaders and a model focused on the immediate training of those being led. In this context, Ramos (2008a) states that “educational duality is a specific manifestation of the social duality inherent in the capitalist mode of production,” that is, it is a reflection of the mode of production in the curriculum. Moura (2007) attributes the origin of this phenomenon to the welfare-oriented nature of vocational education, which, in its early days, was intended for the poorest, while preparatory education was directed at the elites. The author further explains that, in Brazil, vocational education has its origins in 1809, when the Decree of the Prince—who would become Dom João VI—established the Colégio das Fábricas. From that point on, many institutions were created by the state and sought out socially disadvantaged children to provide them with vocational training. Thus, as Moura (2007) states, it arrived in 1930 as a dual system and, to this day, still seeks ways to overcome this duality. Therefore, we cannot analyze vocational education—or indeed any form of formal education—in isolation from its historical context.

Kuenzer (2007, p. 1162) explains that the duality present in education cannot be resolved by education itself, since it arises as a consequence of “the need to valorize capital through private ownership of the means of production; in other words, the technical division that separates theory and practice is a consequence of the process of capital valorization.” However, the author herself also points to the contradictions and does not deny that, “as in every

contradictory process, there is room for emancipatory processes [...]”. Based on this, this study acknowledges that, although the IFs were created as a project of emancipatory education, the concrete reality is contested by distinct societal projects: on the one hand, the hegemonic project that limits itself to adapting the worker to the most immediate and pragmatic—and therefore alienated—needs; on the other hand, a counter-hegemonic project, which aims to build a more just society by promoting access to an education that encompasses all dimensions of human life. For the secondary level, vocational education, according to Ramos (2008b, p. 554), would be based “on the integration of work, science, technology, and culture,” proposing to overcome the distance and fragmentation between general and specific education and, thus, “[this] education would present itself as a synthesis that transcends classical academicism and narrow professionalism.”

Integrating these dimensions, according to Ramos (2008a), involves understanding work both as human fulfillment, in the ontological sense, and as an economic practice, in this context related to the means of production. Science, as knowledge produced by human beings, enables productive advancement, while culture is related to the values that guide social behavior. Understanding the relationship between these dimensions presupposes understanding work as an educational principle, which means “to say that human beings are producers of their own reality and, therefore, appropriate it and can transform it” (Ramos, 2008a).

Thus, we recognize that IFs are immersed in a system of capital valorization, permeated by neoliberal policies that undermine the educational project and impose a managerialist mode of management. In an investigation into the current state of research regarding managerialist and/or democratic management practices in IFs, based on a documentary analysis of the PDIs, Pachalski and Araújo (2024) point to results that show the impact of the managerial model on school management, which stifles the possibilities of an emancipatory education. The authors emphasize that, even if it is not possible to escape this neoliberal discourse on public management, there are possibilities for resistance by affirming democratic management, which is more aligned with the principles of emancipatory education.

In this context, it is worth noting that vocational education institutions (IFs) are under pressure from the dictates of international organizations and their expectations for Latin American countries. As Chediak (2024, p. 77) points out, “it is important to understand Brazil’s position within the global network, what is expected and guided by international organizations, and the demands that constitute strategies for the expansion of modern capitalism.” In this context, the author states that “policies for vocational education are strongly influenced by the

recommendations of international organizations” (Chediak, 2024, p. 80), as exemplified by the study published by the World Bank in 2010, titled *Achieving World Class Education in Brazil: The Next Agenda*, which outlines ‘recommendations’ for the Brazilian Basic Education agenda from 2010 to 2020, highlighting in one of its points the need to prepare the workforce at the secondary level for the 21st century. The recommendations, however, implicitly take on an instrumental character and are geared toward meeting the most immediate demands.

Thus, the quest to provide an emancipatory education is not only challenging but also counter-hegemonic, as it proposes a polytechnic education—that is, “an education that enables an understanding of the scientific, technological, and historical principles of modern production, in order to guide students toward making multiple choices” (Ramos, 2008a).

This divide between technical skills and knowledge of the scientific, technological, and historical principles that enable an understanding of technology influences the individual’s development and their formation as a human being. In this sense, Duarte (2013) points out that human formation requires an education that promotes the appropriation of historically produced classical knowledge, culture, and work as dimensions through which the subject can understand their reality and transform it consciously. For the author, formation will be alienating if it does not result in “the realization, in individual existence, of the historically produced possibilities of conscious, social, free, and universal objectification” (Duarte, 2013, p. 98). That is, the critical appropriation of culture is a condition for the formation of individuality “for-itself.” That is, the individual’s transition from an existence merely determined by external conditions, or ‘for-another,’ to a form of existence that is conscious, autonomous, and capable of understanding and transforming the reality in which they live” (Duarte, 2013, p. 98). Thus, the continued division between general education and technical training weakens the emancipatory project and opens the door to the advancement of pragmatic conceptions linked to the pedagogies of learning to learn (Duarte, 2010).

Drawing on Vygotsky’s work, Martins (2013) argues that the development of higher mental functions—a prerequisite for humanization—occurs through the mediation and appropriation of cultural tools, particularly systems of signs, that is, language. Among these functions are attention, sensation, perception, imagination, memory, thought, language, feeling, and emotion. In the educational process, this mediation must be intentionally planned to enable a qualitative leap in the development of the psyche (consciousness/cognition), which requires systematic access to scientific, technological, and cultural knowledge. In other words, if Professional and Technological Education (PTE) is reduced to teaching tasks strictly to meet

the logic of employability, there is a detriment to the full development of higher psychic functions and, thus, a denial of its humanizing potential.

As we have seen, the quest to overcome this duality involves factors such as time, history, and various educational and administrative processes, ranging from the school management model—viewed through the lens of democratic management—to the ongoing professional development of teachers and support staff, the securing of funding, infrastructure, and personnel, as well as a constant focus on integration as a core aspect of school culture. However, this project is constantly threatened by neoliberal policies, such as the high school reform, which intensifies curricular fragmentation as a means of privatizing basic education. This old policy, disguised as 'new' for secondary education in Brazil, presents a pseudo-modernity under the justification of the need for a flexible curriculum in which students can choose their educational path, and further fragments curricular knowledge.

It is up to higher education institutions to continue on a path toward understanding in order to develop strategies aimed at overcoming dualism in the curriculum, addressing the contradictions—especially in their institutional documents—that regulate emancipatory practices, while acknowledging the challenges involved in doing so. In this sense, Ramos (2008, p. 555) argues that, to move forward, it is necessary to break with technocratic and supposedly new trends and that “[reclaiming] concerns that neoconservative trends wanted us to forget may be one of the first commitments to be made in the search for a different hegemony.” In this vein, Kuenzer (2005) argues that, to transform an educational project, it is necessary to transform the material basis of production. As we have seen, the author does not deny that, within these contradictions, it is possible to establish emancipatory processes (Kuenzer, 2007) and, to this end, it is necessary to understand historical, social, economic, and political phenomena and their relationship to education.

Thus, it is possible, for example, to understand how neoliberal pedagogy—which is hegemonic—appropriates concepts developed within the realm of counter-hegemonic pedagogy by simulating democratization in the school environment and producing ambiguous discourses and practices. This is reflected in the policies and curriculum of IFs, as Araújo (2022) points out, stating that hegemony intentionally spreads confusion and ambiguity by using terms such as “integral human formation,” “training for or in the workplace,” “youth protagonism,” etc., seeking to create the appearance of similarities to foster greater acceptance and conformity, with the aim of legitimizing the discourse to advocate for educational reforms from this perspective. Thus, according to Araújo (2022, p. 101), “it is evident that one of the objectives

of these policies is to appropriate certain terminologies with a view to denying their emancipatory character, generating ambiguities, and aiming to establish forms of domination.”

In other words, the discourse of hegemonic interest presents itself as emancipatory, but in practice takes on an adaptationist and utilitarian character, serving a market that exploits cheap labor. From the neoliberal hegemonic perspective on education, fragmentation, pragmatism, and subordination to the market prevail. In this sense, Duarte (2010) argues that contemporary hegemonic pedagogies, such as constructivism, competency-based pedagogy, and the pedagogy of the reflective teacher, incorporate elements like relativism and pragmatism into their epistemological foundation, denying the totality of educational relationships and leading to curricular fragmentation. These pedagogies, according to the author, tend to relativize science and reduce knowledge to its most immediate utility and the resolution of everyday problems.

From this, it is understood that curricular integration must be structured as a totality and viewed as more than a methodological principle that contrasts the subordination of one school subject to another or the juxtaposition of subject arrangements in general education or vocational training, but must be adopted as a political principle, an ideological stance in defense of education for the working class (Ramos, 2008a). Conceiving the curriculum as separate blocks is a means of reproducing the historical educational duality and undermines the role of IFs, which is to seek to overcome this duality in the curriculum and in pedagogical practices.

The resistance of higher education institutions to the neoliberal model requires strengthening the autonomy of the RFEPCT and exercising that prerogative, as freedom fosters work and responsibility in administrative, financial, and pedagogical spheres alike. This path proves challenging in the face of progressive budgetary constraints, which tend to undermine the provision of a comprehensive education and subordinate it to external forces, such as partisan political interests. Such education requires substantial investments in professional development, infrastructure with equipment, technology, laboratories, and supplies, the implementation of which is not fully covered by the regular budget. Thus, institutions become increasingly dependent on parliamentary amendments, which lack stability and are not necessarily aligned with the principles established in foundational documents.

This research is based on the assumption that mechanisms of resistance are constructed in various ways and are primarily enshrined in foundational institutional documents, such as the PDI and the PPCs, combined with a permanent offering of professional development aimed at restoring the identity and purpose of the IFs and all the courses they offer. In this article, we

highlight the EMI as a form of resistance and struggle against the historical subordination to the Capital.

Methodological approach of the research

This article is grounded in Dialectical Historical Materialism (DHM), which conceives of reality as a concrete, historical, and contradictory totality, according to which phenomena must be understood as historical-social constructions marked by disputes. Thus, it is understood that PDIs are the result of historical, social, economic, political, and ideological determinants. As such, they are not neutral and are not limited to the establishment of norms, but rather constitute expressions of the worldviews that guide the educational projects of higher education institutions. It is worth noting that the PDI is a document that presents the institution's strategic, tactical, and operational plan with a five-year validity period, and must contain minimum elements such as mission, objectives, goals, institutional pedagogical project, and didactic-pedagogical organization (Brasil, 2017). In this study, we focus on analyzing the mission, vision, values, and philosophical, pedagogical, and theoretical-methodological concepts to understand how EMI has been conceived and organized in IFRO's PDIs, in light of the principles of integral human formation and the tensions generated by the historical duality between preparatory education and vocational training.

In this vein, the analysis of the research object, based on the methodological approach of MHD, begins with the appearance or pseudo-concreteness of the empirical phenomenon in order to grasp the determinants that constitute the totality of its dynamics and, in doing so, presents the categories that are pertinent to it (Netto, 2011). In this context, Saviani (2015) highlights the categories of analysis presented by Marx, namely mediation, totality, and contradiction. For him, “‘Mediation’ is a central category of dialectics that, in conjunction with ‘reciprocal action,’ constitutes ‘totality’ and ‘contradiction’” (Saviani, 2015, p. 26). These principles form the basis for research grounded in the MHD. Thus, we begin by reading the PDIs, the object of our study, to grasp their materiality and empirical elements; and, using the categories of the MHD, we seek to analyze the multiple determinations in light of our theoretical framework, in order to go beyond what is given in the text. In considering the objective and the theories underpinning this research, we arrived at the following categories of analysis: 1) the concept of human development, considering polytechnia, *omnilaterality*, and work as an educational principle; 2) the foundations for the curriculum and pedagogical mediation, in relation to curricular integration from the perspective of polytechnia and *omnilaterality*, or how

fragmentation may be implicit; and 3) pedagogical hybridities, related to ambiguities, mixtures of pedagogies, and theoretical underpinnings for philosophical, pedagogical, and theoretical-methodological conceptions, as well as the influence of neoliberal managerialism on EPT policies and practices, which may highlight the coexistence of distinct and, at times, irreconcilable theoretical frameworks, generating epistemological tensions and potential processes of relativization in the educational field. Below, we present Table 1 with the categories of analysis and a description of the axes and elements of analysis.

Table 1.

Categories and elements of analysis

Category	Key areas and analytical elements
Conception of training for EMI	Elements of holistic education in EMI: polytechnics, <i>omnilaterality</i> , work as an educational principle; dimensions of human life; the centrality of work versus employability.
Foundations for the curriculum and pedagogical mediation	Curricular integration/fragmentation: integration of work, science, and culture; integrated curriculum; integration of knowledge; the centrality of social practices versus a competency-based curriculum.
Pedagogical hybridity	Pedagogical hybridity is characterized by the juxtaposition of distinct pedagogical conceptions, standing out as a grand synthesis of divergent epistemological bases, which suppresses theoretical and political conflict in favor of immediate solutions for pedagogical practice.

Note. Prepared by the authors (2026).

With regard to methodological procedures, this study is a documentary analysis aimed at identifying continuities, breaks, and contradictions in the way the EMI has been conceived at IFRO over time. Four PDIs were examined, with greater emphasis on the Institutional Pedagogical Project (PPI), a section of the PDI, covering the periods 2009–2013, 2014–2017, 2018–2022, and 2023–2027. In this article, they will be referred to as PDI 2009, PDI 2014, PDI 2018, and PDI 2023.

Thus, the aim is to construct an analysis that contributes to understanding the limits and possibilities of IFRO's educational proposal, particularly in recognizing its social function as an educational institution offering emancipatory secondary-level EPT for working-class youth.

Continuities, ruptures, and contradictions of the integrated education project in IFRO's PDIs

Under the law establishing the Federal Institutes (IFs), IFRO was created through the merger of the Federal Technical School of Rondônia and the Federal Agrotechnical School of Colorado do Oeste, as provided for in Article 5, item XXXII, of that law (Brasil, 2008). IFRO's first Institutional Development Plan (PDI) was in effect from 2009 to 2013. When comparing

it to the latest PDI for 2023–2027, one can observe the historical process of institutional maturation.

Over the years, IFRO has adopted different methodologies for conducting the document development process, even going so far as to contract external services to manage the process. In its latest version, covering 2023–2027 and developed primarily throughout 2022, the campuses received guidance from the institution itself to conduct their discussion forums and collect contributions from the community, thus representing an important step toward building a more democratic culture. However, it is observed that, to ensure the quality of these debates, continuing education must be adopted as a permanent policy, so that these contributions are made in a more conscious manner and aligned with the foundations and principles of EPT for the working class.

In this regard, it is worth emphasizing the imperative of paying special attention to the need for professional development, since, although we cannot immediately alter the objective conditions of the reality in which higher education institutions were established and in which they struggle to remain true to their mission, we can and must understand that reality free from fetishism, taking into account the social whole. While education cannot, on its own, transform concrete reality, it plays a role in fostering a critical engagement with that very reality.

The research takes into account the fact that IFRO will have celebrated only 17 years of existence in December 2025; for this reason, it is premature to determine the full scope of its impact regarding the promotion of an emancipatory education, which seeks to integrate preparatory education with vocational training in a historically dual society and which, according to Pacheco (2010), is inspired by an education that aims to contribute to ending the dichotomy separating the former—which prepares students for the productive world—from the latter, which offers students the opportunity to continue their studies at a higher level (Amorim Junior, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, we selected elements from the PDI regarding mission, vision, values, objectives, and the institutional pedagogical project (PPI)—particularly the latter’s philosophical, pedagogical, and theoretical-methodological concepts—for analysis in light of three central categories: the concept of human formation, curriculum foundations, and pedagogical hybridity. Below, we present Table 2 with these elements.

Table 2.

Mission, vision, and values in IFRO's PDIs

Doc.	PDI 2009-2013	PDI 2014-2017	PDI 2018-2022	PDI 2023-2027
Mission	To promote excellence in science and technology education through teaching, research, and outreach activities, with the aim of training citizens committed to the sustainability of society.	To promote excellence in science and technology education in the State of Rondônia, with the aim of training citizens committed to the development and sustainability of society.	To promote excellence in professional, scientific, and technological education through the integration of teaching, research, and outreach, with a focus on training citizens committed to sustainable human, economic, cultural, social, and environmental development.	To promote excellence in professional, scientific, and technological education through the integration of teaching, research, and extension, with a focus on training citizens committed to sustainable human, economic, cultural, social, and environmental development.
Vision	To establish itself as an institution of scientific, professional, and technological education at the regional, national, and international levels.	To become a benchmark of excellence in teaching, research, and outreach in the field of Science and Technology.	To consolidate the institution's role, being recognized by society as an agent of social, economic, cultural, and environmental transformation of excellence.	To consolidate the institution's role, being recognized by society as an agent of social, economic, cultural, and environmental transformation of excellence.
Values	Commitment, transparency, ethics, respect, social and environmental responsibility, and respect for human dignity.	... ethical commitment ... social responsibility, respect for diversity, transparency, excellence, and ... citizenship and humanism, with freedom of expression ... personal and professional ethics, ... solidarity, a culture of innovation, and the ideals of social and environmental sustainability.	Ethics, transparency, commitment, equity, democracy, respect, and effectiveness.	Ethics, transparency, commitment, equity, democracy, respect, effectiveness, and inclusion.

Note. Prepared by the authors (2026).

In the first two PDIs (IFRO, 2009, 2014), the **mission** statement emphasizes “scientific and technological education of excellence” and training committed to sustainability, without, however, explicitly addressing the centrality of integrated professional education or the relationship between work, science, and culture. However, starting with the 2018 PDI, and continued in the 2023 PDI, a significant advancement can be observed through the explicit incorporation of professional, scientific, and technological education and the integration of

teaching, research, and extension. Furthermore, it broadens the notion of education for human development and addresses dimensions such as the economy, culture, and society, while maintaining sustainability. This reorientation appears to bring institutional discourse closer to the principles and foundations of EPT from a counter-hegemonic perspective, although it is still necessary to analyze the implementation of the curriculum.

One must also consider the explicit dimensions, which still lack a connection to work from an ontological perspective and not merely an economic one (Ramos, 2008a), as human fulfillment and not merely an economic practice for survival. Although it is implied that science is part of research, it would still be necessary to explicitly highlight it as a dimension, given that its status is not guaranteed, since, in the face of postmodern neoliberal ideology, we have witnessed various discourses that relativize and deny science, as pointed out by Duarte and Duarte (2011).

Regarding the values described in the PDIs over the years, it is evident that there is a more stable core set of values, such as ethics, transparency, commitment, and respect. These values reflect continuity, consistent with a public education system committed to social responsibility, and provide a normative foundation aligned with the promotion of EMI as public policy.

In the second PDI, from 2014, one can observe an expansion of the set of values, with additions such as social and environmental responsibility, humanism, citizenship, freedom of expression, solidarity, a culture of innovation, excellence, and determination. This expansion, however, did not demonstrate systematization or discursive alignment, since, despite engaging with IFRO's institutional mission statement, it also reveals an alignment with a managerialist perspective, influenced by neoliberal policies in education, demonstrating ambiguity regarding the counter-hegemonic perspective, which tends to dilute the institution's political-pedagogical direction.

In the 2018 and 2023 Institutional Development Plans (PDIs), however, it is evident that foundational values have been maintained, alongside significant additions such as equity, democracy, and, in the most recent plan, inclusion. This restructuring indicated greater alignment with the concept of the individual's holistic development, highlighting the limitations in countering neoliberal rationalities.

Regarding the vision expressed over the years in the PDIs, it is noted that institutional consolidation and social recognition, associated with academic excellence, remain. In the first two PDIs, this recognition is linked especially to institutional visibility and academic

performance, with a focus on science and technology, and in the second to the triad of teaching, research, and extension, which reflects the need for IFRO's legitimization within the educational landscape. When associated with academic performance, it also points to the managerial aspects of school administration.

Starting in 2018, and continued in the 2023 Institutional Development Plan (PDI), a redefinition of the institutional vision can be observed, as the focus on excellence—previously defined in purely technical and academic terms—is now linked to the recognition of IFRO's role as an agent of social, economic, cultural, and environmental transformation. This redefinition brings the institutional discourse closer to the concept of omnilateral education, insofar as it highlights aspects linked to an emancipatory education, such as the transformation of reality, rather than merely adapting to it. However, it is worth noting that the persistence of social recognition as a central axis creates a tension between the understanding and affirmation of a transformative project and the pursuit of legitimacy, subjecting the institution to performance according to traditional parameters of excellence, generally grounded in a market-oriented, managerialist view of education, which leads us to pedagogical hybridity.

Finally, we can understand that, in general, there are still several contradictory elements in IFRO's mission, vision, and values throughout this trajectory. Even with advances in the recognition of its social function as an institution promoting education for the working class, there are still traces of conformity to managerialist policies for education. In general, the conceptual categories of EMI and the foundations for the curriculum point to elements in the third category of analysis, which is pedagogical hybridity.

Next, we will analyze the PPI, understanding it as a snapshot of IFRO's intentions. More than just an integral part of the PDI, the PPI constitutes the pedagogical DNA, within which we observe the molecular struggle between two visions of society: one that subordinates education to neoliberal efficiency, and another that seeks an *omnilateral* education. It is within this documentary fabric that the institution materializes the process of appropriation and objectification; if the PPI operates under a logic restricted to the instrumental, it curtails psychic development, keeping the subject within the sphere of 'individuality-in-itself.' However, by grounding the curriculum in critical-dialectical principles, the document becomes the necessary mediation for humanity's historical heritage to be converted into essential forces of the individual, propelling the attainment of individuality for itself.

Thus, we understand that the epistemological basis is not explicitly stated; however, by analyzing these conceptions, we can identify it and thereby grasp, beyond the text's literal

meaning, the conceptions of human formation and curriculum. It is also worth noting that the first three PDIs contain contradictory excerpts, pointing in different directions regarding the purpose of professional education and its social function—sometimes restricted to labor market integration and pragmatic goals, and at other times focused on social transformation. There is greater coherence in the 2023 PDI, though more specifically in the PPI, rather than in the document as a whole. Based on the categories of integral human formation, curricular integration, and pedagogical hybridity, we proceed with our analysis.

Next, we will address the first analytical category: conceptions of human formation. Over the years, it has been possible to observe some advances and setbacks regarding these conceptions. In the first three PPIs, they still appeared disconnected from a more critical perspective on the social division of labor, with a narrow focus on employability. Despite this, the 2014 PDI presented some elements compatible with integral education, but regressed in 2018. Only in the 2023 PDI is it possible to more explicitly verify the alignment of this concept with those of polytechnic education, *omnilateralism*, and work as an educational principle.

In its first version, the 2009 PPI presents a holistic education linked to citizenship, ethics, and social inclusion. Work is presented as the goal of education, with the aim of productive integration and employability, rather than as an ontological principle.

The philosophical principles are outlined with the aim of providing the individual with technical skills (learning to do) capable of overcoming the challenges of the world of work, characterized by rapid technological advancement and the demand for dynamism in interpersonal relationships ... All of this will be directed toward achieving the main goal, which is the integral development of the individual (learning to “be” as a person) ... so that they may learn to learn. (IFRO, 2009, p. 25)

There is a noticeable emphasis on utilitarian knowledge—that which is immediately relevant to an individual’s daily life—and is therefore contrary to an emancipatory education, as it confines the individual to their material circumstances. Holistic education is linked to pedagogies of learning to learn, associated with relativism and pragmatism, as explained by Duarte (2010). Thus, the philosophical principles are grounded in the four pillars of education proposed by Jacques Delors (2010): learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be, with no mention of polytechnics or *omnilateralism*.

Although it points to work as an educational principle—both as a challenge for educational policy and as a methodological principle for the curriculum (IFRO, 2009)—this

appears disconnected from the premises of a counter-hegemonic pedagogy or work from an ontological perspective. It is important to note, however, that the critique is not directed at the training of students for the world of work, but at the reduction of the educational purpose to the immediate or to work solely as an economic practice, thereby undermining IFRO's role in the appropriation of science, culture, art, politics, and work in their entirety.

Similarly, the 2009 PDI includes terms such as “employability” (IFRO, 2009, p. 31) and “development of competencies and skills” (IFRO, 2009, p. 44), which indicates a closer alignment with the perspective of learning for employability than with the concept of *omnilateral* education, given that these terms are recurrent in the formulations of competency-based pedagogy and are historically associated with the individual's adaptation to the demands of the labor market, rather than with their emancipation. *Omnilateral* education, however, presupposes full development, which integrates dimensions of human life such as work, science, and culture (Ramos, 2008a), requiring the appropriation of scientific, artistic, and philosophical knowledge linked to the totality of social practices, rather than merely the acquisition of operational skills geared toward employability. Thus, by adopting vague language with no coherent connection to the philosophical-pedagogical foundations of emancipatory education, IFRO's initial PDI reproduces elements of technocratic logic, particularly due to the absence of proposals for more consistent curricular mediation.

The same passage on the philosophical principles of human formation, linked to the four pillars of education for the 21st century, was repeated in the 2014 and 2019 Institutional Development Plans (PDIs), indicating a greater alignment with hegemonic pedagogies and a departure from the foundational principles of polytechnic and *omnilateral* higher education institutions, as discussed by Pacheco (2010). Also in the 2014 and 2018 PDIs, expressions/terms such as: “a set of skills and competencies that foster the construction of knowledge” (IFRO, 2014, p. 94), “competencies necessary for training for the world of work” (IFRO, 2018, p. 67), course offerings tailored to the needs of the “labor market” (IFRO, 2014, p. 95; 2018, p. 82), and “use of active teaching methodologies” (IFRO, 2009, p. 26; 2014, p. 79; 2018, p. 61).

Despite retaining passages that indicate a closer alignment with hegemonic pedagogies, in its second version, the 2014 PDI adopted a discourse closer to the concept of holistic education, reaffirming the principles at the genesis of the RFEPCT, such as “the inseparability of teaching, research, and extension” and “work as an educational principle” as a structuring element of the curriculum (IFRO, 2014, p. 81). In further describing the conception of the curriculum and its structuring elements, the document presents ontological and sociopolitical

foundations based on a historical-critical conception, although other passages in the 2014 PPI itself refer to hegemonic pedagogies. Therefore, although it addressed these points more directly, this did not translate into qualitative advances in the attempt to overcome the duality, as its formulation lacked the alignment and coherence necessary to organically integrate general education and technical training and to guide the formulation of PPCs.

Finally, in its fourth version, the PDI 2023 represents a step forward in terms of conceptual restructuring and coherence by presenting concepts of comprehensive and *omnilateral* education, as well as formulations that are more cohesive and aligned with the principles of emancipatory education, including explicit references to the interconnection between work, science, and culture, and to work as an educational principle. By presenting concepts of the human being, society, school, education, learning, vocational and technological education, *omnilateral* education, and polytechnic education (IFRO, 2023), it clearly defines its commitment to emancipatory education for the working class.

Education is understood as a social practice, “as a process of humanizing people ... embedded in the context of their social relationships” (Libâneo, 2003, p. 68). Thus, IFRO, as part of the Federal Network of Education, Science, and Technology, is grounded in a historical-critical, democratic, and emancipatory conception. It is understood that work, as a general educational principle, “moves toward overcoming the dichotomy between manual and intellectual labor, between vocational and general education”. (Saviani, 1989, p. 13) (IFRO, 2023, pp. 58–59)

This reorganization is evident in the conception of the human being as a historical and social subject, to be educated to understand and transform concrete social reality. Regarding *omnilateral* education, the document defines it as that which seeks the individual’s comprehensive development in the dimensions of work, science, and culture, with the aim of overcoming alienation and fostering a critical understanding of social contradictions. Still in the conceptual realm, the proposal for polytechnic education is clearly described, with an emphasis on the articulation between theory and practice, science and technology, aiming at the formation of autonomous and conscious individuals.

We will now move on to the second analytical category, foundations for the curriculum and pedagogical mediation, related to the elements that indicate curricular integration or fragmentation, the integration of social practices—whether in the relationship between work,

science, and culture—or the curricular fragmentation explicit in pragmatism, learning to do, instrumentalization, and practices oriented toward utilitarian and adaptationist ends. In other words, this analytical category of the curriculum stems from the concept of human formation.

In all PDIs, one can observe an emphasis on the integration of the three pillars of teaching, research, and extension. However, only in PDI 2023 is there an emphasis on overcoming the dichotomous model of EPT.

Professional, Scientific, and Technological Education at IFRO is based on moving beyond the traditional, dualistic model, which divides knowledge into rigidly separate disciplines, with the aim of integrating different areas of knowledge into a unified educational program that seeks to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and promote a omnilateral, polytechnic education. (IFRO, 2023, p. 57)

Interdisciplinarity is also presented as a theoretical and methodological principle in the 2009, 2014, and 2018 PDIs, though without proposing a break from the logic of disciplinary fragmentation. Only in the 2009 PDI are there concrete implementations, through projects and overarching themes, but these are restricted to the “development of competencies and skills,” even suggesting the possibility of “modularization” in curriculum organization (IFRO, 2009, p. 44). Also in the 2009 PDI, curricular integration is associated with the different levels of education.

The integration of theory and practice can be observed in all PDIs, with distinct purposes, whether as a challenge for teaching, as methodological guidance, or as institutional policy.

Integrate theory and practice in a meaningful way, fostering student autonomy. (IFRO, 2009, p. 31) [challenges of teaching].

Thus, pedagogical practice must integrate science and technology, as well as theory and practice; it must view research as an educational and scientific principle. (IFRO, 2014, p. 84)

Meaningful integration of theory and practice through a curriculum that includes interventions and experiences that facilitate the interrelation of essential theoretical and practical knowledge, promoting professional development and student autonomy. (IFRO, 2018, p. 79; 2023, p. 78) [education policies].

The integration of teaching, research, and outreach is mentioned in all PDIs, with greater emphasis in the 2023 PDI, which introduces the concept of the inseparability of these three pillars. The integration of the dimensions of human life into curriculum design and pedagogical mediation is evident in PDI 2023; however, PDI 2009 establishes that the concept of EPT “guides training processes based on the premises of integration and articulation between science, technology, culture, and specific knowledge” (IFRO, 2014, p. 84), and the 2018 PDI also mentions the focus “on strengthening the relationship between EPT and Basic Education, introducing young people to the thematic universe of the world of work/science/technology and culture, inseparable dimensions” (IFRO, 2018, p. 78).

An important element in the analysis of the PDIs was related to “curricular flexibility” (IFRO, 2009, p. 44; 2014, p. 87) or “flexibility to establish training pathways” (IFRO 2009, p. 26; 2018, p. 78), subject to the needs of the market and contemporary society, thereby relegating the very mission established by IFRO to the background.

[didactic-pedagogical organization] principles ... of flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and contextualization, in addition to outlining educational profiles that meet the demands of the contemporary world. (IFRO, 2009, p. 43)

In light of changes in the economy and the labor market... the possibilities for curriculum organization with optimized time management and curricular flexibility. (IFRO, 2014, p. 96; 2018, p. 82)

In other words, it is clear that curricular flexibility actually reflects curricular fragmentation, with proposals for “tracks” or blocks that fragment a comprehensive education. It is also geared toward adapting to the productive model, prioritizing economic and managerial issues at the expense of a comprehensive education. On the other hand, the PDI 2023 does not explicitly mention curricular flexibility, but, in addressing the philosophical principles for the development of the PPCs, it presents elements that point to paths for curricular organization, such as theory as the foundation of practice, the relationship between more elaborate knowledge and prior knowledge in learning, the conception of teaching as the mediation of knowledge, and “social practice and work processes as a starting point for curriculum organization and its implementation” (IFRO, 2023, p. 61).

Regarding the last analytical category—pedagogical hybridity—it was found that all PDIs present controversies and tensions, with greater prevalence in the first three. However, when analyzing the PPIs specifically, the 2023–2027 PDI demonstrates greater coherence with the foundation of Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

While the 2009 PDI emphasizes humanism, geared toward adaptation to the world of work, by referring to the “holistic training of the critical-reflective professional-citizen” (IFRO, 2009, p. 40), the 2014 PDI presents elements related to a “critical-progressive” pedagogy and an aspect of “socio-interactionist psychology” (IFRO, 2014, p. 79). The 2018 PDI, on the other hand, blends Historical-Critical Pedagogy and “learning to learn” pedagogies, with an emphasis on competency-based pedagogy and the pillars of “learning to be, to do, and to live together” (IFRO, 2018, p. 60). Thus, in its first three versions, there is an explicit emphasis on elements of pragmatism and relativism, which culminate in pedagogical relativism (Duarte, 2010).

Pedagogical hybridity is also reflected in the guidelines for developing course-based pedagogical projects, as the document states that this constitutes “a pedagogical practice resulting from the interaction and convergence of various structures (political, administrative, economic, cultural, social, educational...)” (IFRO, 2014, p. 80), signaling an attempt to move beyond the merely technical and normative dimension. However, the proposal remained generic and was not accompanied by guidelines pointing a direction for overcoming curricular fragmentation. This inconsistency is discussed by Amorim Junior (2019), who highlights the persistence of a fragmented curricular structure, with little articulation between the components of general and professional education. The 2014 PDI itself highlights this trend by affirming the importance of “skills development, preparation for citizenship, training for the world of work, and the continuity of studies” (IFRO, 2014, p. 94).

Finally, it was possible to identify the continuities, advances, and setbacks in approaches aligned with an emancipatory education over the years, through the PDIs. A significant qualitative leap was identified in the 2023 PDI, particularly regarding the Institutional Pedagogical Project, which aligns with the social function envisioned in the founding of the IFs. However, these advances coexist with internal contradictions, as the PDI approaches a managerialist model, distancing itself from the principles of democratic management outlined in the PPI. Thus, even though the counter-hegemonic discourse has gained traction, goals and strategies linked to productivist demands and managerial rationality persist. In general, one observes the persistence of indicators centered on performance, quantitative expansion, and supply conditioned by market demands, shifting the focus from the quality of the educational

process to the fulfillment of institutional goals. This tendency toward a managerial logic reflects the hegemony of neoliberal ideology in vocational education, where technical training takes on a utilitarian and pragmatic character driven by market demands. By absorbing this logic without critical scrutiny, the institution risks compromising the emancipatory educational project that guides the RFEPCT.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

IFRO's Institutional Development Plans (PDIs) articulate its mission, vision, values, and philosophical, pedagogical, and theoretical-methodological concepts, which define the profile of human development and the model of society that the institution is dedicated to fostering or upholding. This research, by analyzing these documents and their relationship with multiple historical, economic, political, and social determinants, points to ways to foster the development of emancipatory educational proposals. However, a limitation is the fact that this is an exclusively documentary analysis, not addressing the materialization of these concepts in the institution's concrete pedagogical practices. In light of the categories of the MHD—namely, totality, contradiction, and mediation—it was possible to frame the analysis using the categories inherent to this study, which are: integral human formation, foundations for curriculum organization, and pedagogical hybridity.

It should be noted that integral formation is a permanent category of the PDIs, found in the PPIs, and that these have been redefined over time, with a qualitative leap occurring only in the 2023 PDI, in accordance with the principles of polytechnia and *omnilateralism*. The principles for curricular organization, although they show traces of integration, are predominantly focused on the fragmentation resulting from historical duality, with the exception of the 2023 PDI, which points to possible paths forward without denying the structural challenges. Thus, the 2023 PDI represents an important milestone in IFRO's history for its recognition as an institution promoting education for the working class. Pedagogical hybridity reflects the institutional effort to reconcile the tensions between antagonistic projects. That is, to reconcile the irreconcilable—sometimes reiterating a purely instrumental education, and at other times one aimed at social emancipation.

Finally, it is observed that the pressure exerted by neoliberal policies and the managerial model within EFA runs counter to the political-pedagogical principles of EMI in the RFEPCT, highlighting that the dispute is not one of terminology, but rather of a societal vision—whether

from an emancipatory perspective or one that serves market logic. The PDI, in and of itself, as a text, does not guarantee integral human formation from a counter-hegemonic perspective, but it is an extremely important guiding document in the development of curricular, training, pedagogical, and management policies at IFRO. Furthermore, the ontological constitution of teachers is not realized immediately or automatically with every normative or documentary change. It is a historical and contradictory process, forged throughout their educational, professional, and concrete life trajectories, traversed by multiple legal reforms, institutional guidelines, and objective working conditions, both within and outside institutions.

As a follow-up to this research, we suggest conducting studies that analyze how these guidelines are implemented in the daily institutional routine, especially in pedagogical practices and curriculum organization, thereby broadening our understanding of the limits and possibilities of holistic human development within the scope of IFs.

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CRediT Author Statement

- ☐ **Acknowledgments:** Federal Institute of Rondônia (IFRO).
 - ☐ **Funding:** None.
 - ☐ **Conflicts of interest:** None.
 - ☐ **Ethical approval:** This study did not need to be reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee because it was based solely on a literature review and did not involve human subjects.
 - ☐ **Data and materials availability:** The data and materials used in this study are available via the links provided in the references.
 - ☐ **Authors' contributions:** Jorge W. de Amorim Junior: conceptualization (study design, definition of research questions and objectives), overall project management, supervision, selection of documents for analysis, data analysis and interpretation; drafting of the text, etc. Sheylla Chediak: data curation, formal analysis, methodology (research design), editing, and proofreading. Gedeli Ferrazzo: formal analysis, editing, and proofreading. Jair Lopes Junior: proofreading (critical review of the original manuscript and approval of the version to be submitted) and editing.
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Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação
Review, formatting, normalization, and translation

