



## INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR JOSÉ CARLOS LIBÂNEO - EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: WHAT ARE SCHOOLS FOR?<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

In a special interview for the journal *Educação em Análise*, Professor José Carlos Libâneo, whose reflections have a profound influence on the educational field, explores issues related to the role of pedagogy, teacher training, and the challenges of education in a context of intense social, cultural, and economic transformations. Divided into topics ranging from curricular policies to educational processes in human rights, the interview discusses the impact of neoliberalism on the school curriculum, the teacher training process, and the challenges posed by the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and BNC-Training. In addition to reflections on the social inequalities that permeate Brazilian public schools, the role of these schools in the formation of critical and emancipated citizens is also analyzed, providing a reflection on the identity and future of education in the country. Throughout the discussion, Professor Libâneo provokes deep questioning and reflections on the purposes of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After all, what are schools for?

**Keywords:** BNCC; BNC-Training; Curriculum; Interview; Socially fair school; Teacher training.

### Como citar

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## ENTREVISTA COM O PROFESSOR JOSÉ CARLOS LIBÂNEO - A EDUCAÇÃO NO SÉCULO XXI: PARA QUE SERVEM AS ESCOLAS?

**Resumo:** Em entrevista especial para a Revista Educação em Análise, o professor José Carlos Libâneo, cujas reflexões exercem profunda influência no campo educacional, explora questões relacionadas ao papel da pedagogia, à formação docente e aos desafios da educação em um contexto de intensas transformações sociais, culturais e econômicas. Dividida em temas que abrangem desde políticas curriculares até os processos educativos em direitos humanos, a entrevista discute o impacto do neoliberalismo no currículo escolar, o processo formativo de docentes e os desafios impostos pela Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) e pela BNC-Formação. Além das reflexões em torno das desigualdades sociais que permeiam a escola pública brasileira, também é analisado o papel dessas escolas na formação de cidadãos críticos e emancipados, proporcionando uma reflexão sobre a identidade e o futuro da educação no país. Ao longo da discussão, o professor Libâneo provoca questionamentos e reflexões aprofundadas a respeito das finalidades da educação no século XXI. Afinal, para que servem as escolas?

**Palavras-chave:** BNCC; BNC-Formação; Currículo; Entrevista; Escola socialmente justa; Formação de professores.

## ENTREVISTA CON EL PROFESOR JOSÉ CARLOS LIBÂNEO - LA EDUCACIÓN EN EL SIGLO XXI: ¿PARA QUÉ SIRVE LA ESCUELA?

**Resumen:** En una entrevista especial para la revista *Educação em Análise*, el profesor José Carlos Libâneo, cuyas reflexiones ejercen una profunda influencia en el campo educativo, explora cuestiones relacionadas con el papel de la pedagogía, la formación docente y los desafíos de la educación en un contexto de intensas transformaciones sociales, culturales y económicas. Dividida en temas que abarcan desde políticas curriculares hasta los procesos educativos en derechos humanos, la entrevista aborda el impacto del neoliberalismo en el currículo escolar, el proceso formativo de los docentes y los desafíos impuestos por la Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCC) y la BNC-Formación. Además de las reflexiones sobre las desigualdades sociales que permeabilizan la escuela pública brasileña, también se analiza el papel de estas escuelas en la formación de ciudadanos críticos y emancipados, proporcionando una reflexión sobre la identidad y el futuro de la educación en el país. A lo largo de la discusión, el profesor Libâneo provoca cuestionamientos y reflexiones profundas sobre los fines de la educación en el siglo XXI. Al fin y al cabo, ¿para qué sirven las escuelas?

**Palabras clave:** BNCC; BNC-Formación; Currículo; Entrevista; Escuela socialmente justa; Formación docente.

## Introduction

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**Interviewers:** Professor José Carlos Libâneo, two of your highly significant works have inspired this interview. In “*Pedagogia e pedagogos, para quê?*” (*Pedagogy and Pedagogues, for What Purpose?*), you present a critical analysis of the role of pedagogy and pedagogues in contemporary society, questioning the direction of education within a context of social and economic transformations. You invite educators to reflect on the role of pedagogy in constructing an education that goes beyond mere technical training, promoting a pedagogical practice aimed at social transformation and the development of critical and emancipated individuals. In another work, also titled in the form of a question, “*Adeus, professor, adeus, professora?*” (*Goodbye, Teacher, Goodbye, Teacher?*), you examine the impact of social, cultural, economic, and technological transformations on the role of teachers in contemporary education. In this work, you analyze the consequences of these changes for the teaching profession, problematizing the future of the teacher’s figure. We note that you consistently invite us to ask questions, as interrogation is a hallmark of the titles of your works. In this sense, through this interview, we propose a reflection on the changes experienced in the educational field since the turn of the century. Following this line of thought, we ask: “*What are schools for?*”

## The being and doing of teaching in Brazil

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**Interviewers:** Professor, in your opening lecture during the “*XX Semana da Educação, III Congresso Internacional de Educação, IV Encontro de Egressos e 30 Anos do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação*”, ao tratar do tema “*Formação e Trabalho Docente: A Educação no Próximo Decênio*” (*XX Education Week, III International Education Congress, IV Alumni Meeting, and 30 Years of the Graduate Program in Education*), addressing the theme “*Teacher Training and Work: Education in the Next Decade*), you mentioned the drama of being a teacher in Brazil. What are the main challenges faced by those who practice this profession in the country? After all, who really cares about teachers?

**Professor Libâneo:** First, I must thank the opportunity to delve deeper, in this interview, into some of the issues addressed in the lecture I delivered on September 23, 2024, at the State University of Londrina (UEL). I believe that the challenges faced by the teaching profession,

particularly in Basic Education, relate to at least two types of problems: one political-structural and the other pertaining to professional training, with each influencing the other.

The political-structural issues include the perverse salary policies, insufficient career plans, lack of working conditions, work intensification, and, ultimately, professional devaluation, not to mention the precarization and loss of professional autonomy. To this political-structural account, we must also add the deficiencies in school infrastructure, such as physical spaces, equipment, teaching materials, and, in general, the insufficiency of public investments—a topic that has deservedly occupied a significant space in research.

In my opinion, these points explain much of what has been called the "low attractiveness of the teaching profession," which has led to a drastic decline in the demand for teaching degree programs and, consequently, to a decrease in the quality of training and the improvisation of teachers. These are challenges of a political and structural nature, pointing to the need for mobilization and advocacy by professional associations, especially unions, teacher associations, and collectives.

The other type of problem is related to professional training, which, although also tied to the political-structural realm, can be addressed separately because it concerns the role of training institutions and the trajectory of teachers' own training. Research has shown deficiencies in the professional qualification of teachers at various educational levels, primarily due to the predominance of enrollments in commercial educational institutions and the alarming increase in students currently enrolled in distance learning (EaD) teaching degree programs, which account for over 90% of enrollments.

But I want to first address the precarious training of teachers for Early Childhood Education and the Initial Years of Elementary Education. I believe that it is at this level that many problems occur, such as weak theoretical-practical training, a complete absence in the curriculum of specific content disciplines that future teachers will teach in Elementary Education, the teaching of methodologies separately from content, the limited contribution of "Foundations of Education" disciplines to the teaching-learning process, and insufficient attention to preparing future teachers for actual teaching practices. There is no denying the impact of these deficiencies on students' academic performance, even if we avoid blaming teachers alone for academic failure.

Regarding the training of teachers for the Final Years of Elementary Education and High School, there are also serious problems, such as the disconnection between theoretical and practical training, the imbalance in the workload between disciplinary knowledge and

pedagogical-didactic knowledge, the lack of integration between these two types of knowledge, an emphasis on teaching content but separated from the investigative methods of the science being taught, and a certain absence of philosophical and ethical reflection on the act of teaching. I will elaborate on these points.

The issue of the disconnect between theoretical and practical training is longstanding and recurrent. Although there are teachers who do not master the subject matter, it is more common to find excessively theoretical classes that do not facilitate learning and fail to associate content with its practical teaching.

Practical training for teaching is usually done separately, in so-called "pedagogical" disciplines, often dissociated from specific content. I will elaborate further on this topic. According to data I have, pedagogical-didactic knowledge in these programs corresponds to 12% to 14% of the total workload, which I consider negligible.

On the one hand, this precariousness in pedagogical training can lead to unavoidable setbacks in students' academic trajectories, as overly traditional teaching methods, weak teaching procedures, and purely classificatory and punitive evaluations - essentially, the "lack of didactics" - result in superficial learning, student disinterest, absenteeism, aggressive reactions, and, very often, course dropout. On the other hand, there is a notable impotence in the field of education to provide teachers with theoretical and practical resources in didactics to effectively help them overcome their deficient pedagogical training.

In my research on didactics, I have studied the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical-didactic knowledge, finding that they are completely dissociated in the curriculum and in the teaching, methodologies used by teachers. This dissociation is reflected in the separation between general didactics and specific didactics, as if didactics had nothing to do with the epistemology of the disciplines. In my opinion, there is no such thing as general didactics that are the same for all subjects, just as there are no didactics outside of a specific content and the investigative methods that lead to the logical constitution of that content. This means that teaching, for example, biology, involves drawing on the content and investigative processes of that science and reconstructing them in didactic situations where students can engage in investigative activities like those of a biologist.

Thus, the teaching methods of a science are inseparable from the investigative methods of that science. I would go further: teaching methods are derived from the investigative processes through which the content of a science is developed. To summarize my point of view: the pedagogical-didactic knowledge of the teacher, whose function is to provide the means for

effective student learning, depends on the content and investigative particularities of the science being taught. In other words, the logic that governs pedagogical knowledge is subordinate to the logic of disciplinary knowledge. In addition to this, there are two more elements to consider in the professional work of the teacher: considering the individual physical, cognitive, and affective characteristics of students that affect their learning, and the sociocultural context they bring to the didactic situation.

I cannot fail to mention that this set of problems surrounding the professional practice of teachers has its roots in the social and historical formation of the country, where the social and political elite has historically maintained a perverse dualism in education: general propaedeutic education for the rich and vocational training for the poor. Educational policies since the military dictatorship have been intentionally defined within the interests of international capitalism, and in the New Republic, since the democratic transition period, and more precisely since the 1990s, they have been guided by the directives of international organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, among others. These directives, in the field of school education for at least 34 years, focused on outcome-based curricula aimed exclusively at preparing students with skills and competencies for work, resulting in a school of low social and pedagogical quality that devalues teaching work, transforming teachers into practical professionals stripped of autonomy, initiative, and creativity.

Therefore, serious challenges remain in the conception of training, curricular design, the teaching practices of teacher educators, the continuing education and professional development of in-service teachers, alongside the struggle for salaries and working conditions, the implementation of public policies for professional valorization, and necessary actions to attract students to teaching degree programs to ensure the social and pedagogical quality of schools in the service of the human formation of students and the development of the country.

### **Curricular Policies for teacher education**

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**Interviewers:** Recently, the National Education Council (CNE) published Resolution CNE/CP No. 04, on May 29, 2024, which establishes the National Curricular Guidelines for Initial Training at the Higher Education Level for Basic Education Teaching Professionals, revoking the acts of 2015, 2019 and 2020. Do you believe that significant changes occurred

with the advent of Resolution No. 04/2024 in relation to the previous ones? How do you view the initial teacher training in Brazil in this new scenario?

**Professor Libâneo:** I believe that commenting on CNE/CP Resolution No. 04/2024 and its consequences for teacher training requires a brief mention of the history of discussions on teacher training, previous resolutions and the context of its elaboration. Much debate has already taken place in the country on the format of teacher training involving the work of institutions, entities, associations and representatives of the Ministry of Education, and there are good publications on this.

The trajectory of the Curricular Guidelines needs to be considered according to historical contexts, considering the political orientation of different governments, power relations, the articulations of civil society involving educational field entities and associations, and especially the interferences of international organizations and their impact on educational policies.

I would like to go back in time a little. The most specific discussions on guidelines and formats of teacher training in our country, in recent history, began around the 1980s when there was a certain decline in the controls of the military dictatorship with the so-called political opening, opening space for holding congresses and academic and union meetings, debates, publication editing. It was this political climate that led to the reorganization and political and academic mobilization in the educational field with the creation of several entities such as the Center for Education and Society Studies - CEDES (1978), the National Association for Research and Graduate Studies - ANPED (1978) and the National Association of Education - ANDE (1979), among others. These three associations were at the forefront of the realization in 1980, in São Paulo, of the I Brazilian Education Conference, still in the period of the military dictatorship.

In this Conference, paths and strategies were widely addressed, from a socio-critical perspective, of reconstruction of Brazilian education, especially the resumption of the social and political significance of public school and its social and political function in relation to the majority social sectors of the population. What I want to highlight here is the emergence of associations focused on the discussion of teacher training because it was in this I CBE that the National Pro-Educator Training Committee was created, initially focused on the reformulation of the pedagogy course, later including the global policy of educators' training. In 1983, this Committee was transformed into the National Commission for the Reformulation of Educator Training Courses (CONARCFE) which, in turn, gave rise, in 1990, to the National Association

for the Training of Education Professionals (ANFOPE). The political action of ANFOPE is well known, together with other representative entities in the field of education, especially in the process of elaborating the LDB of 1996, of CNE/CP Resolution No. 01/2006 on Curricular Guidelines for the Pedagogy degree course and the National Guidelines of 2015 for the training of teachers.

This recollection of the educators' movement for the reformulation of teacher training courses at the end of the military dictatorship leads me to make a connection with other important facts that emerged in Brazilian politics during the New Republic period from 1985 onwards. This period of democratic transition and the promulgation of the new Federal Constitution of 1988 coincides with the advancement of the neoliberal economic model, mainly from the 1990s onwards, which is the backdrop for the emergence of CNE/CP Resolution No. 01/2002 (DCN/2002).

This Resolution was the first specifically formulated for teacher training that emerged in the context of neoliberal educational reforms. These reforms began in the 1980s in European countries, then expanding to the Americas, generally revolving around four strategies: new patterns of management of education systems and schools, reformulation of curricula, prioritization of financial and administrative aspects, professionalization and training of teachers and large-scale assessment systems, with a new concept of educational quality based on productivity, competitiveness and efficiency as its axis.

As is well known, educational reforms emerged coupled with economic reforms, with the financial logic and the logic of the prevailing market. For developing countries, the improvement of the quality of education for international competitiveness was considered crucial, for which teacher training would be necessary. From 1990 onwards, international organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO began to formulate specific policies, guidelines and norms in relation to educational policies of developing or emerging countries.

The historical landmark of these supranational influences on global education was the holding of the World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, organized and directed by various international organizations, but mainly by the World Bank and UNESCO. This Conference resulted in the World Declaration on Education for All signed by member countries, including Brazil, with the commitment to develop Decennial Plans containing the guidelines and goals established in this Declaration. This is the origin of the various national education plans elaborated in Brazil. Subsequently, others were held in New Delhi, Dakar and Incheon, all of them reiterating the orientations of the 1990 Declaration, which

is still the main document of reference for political and technical guidance for emerging countries, mainly in Latin America and Africa. In Brazil, the Ministry of Education formulated the Decennial Plan for Education for All (1993-2003) in compliance with the resolutions of the Thailand Conference, the first of the subsequent plans.

The guidelines contained in the World Declaration on Education for All are clear in the sense of focusing school learning on useful knowledge and skills expressed in competences and abilities, measured based on external performance evaluation systems, a teaching model that came to be called results-based education.

A World Bank document of 2010 on Learning for All states, expressly, that education systems should set goals focused on the labor market to provide students with the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to thrive in a competitive global economy. CNE/CP Resolution No. 01/2002 was directly aligned with these guidelines, defining competences and skills to train an efficient teacher focused on practice, so much so that 400 hours of practice were fixed as a curricular component. They also establish the individualization of the continuing education process in which the teacher is guided to develop competences for the management of their own professional development and, together with this, forms of monitoring and control of their work that have caused changes in the conditions of professional exercise resulting in precariousness, devaluation and intensification of work.

In a new political context marked by the beginning of the Lula government in 2003 and, subsequently, by the Dilma Rousseff government (2011-2016), CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2015 was approved, which defined the National Curricular Guidelines for initial training at a higher level and for continuing education. This document contained quite different principles in relation to the previous resolution, among them, the defense of emancipatory and critical education, the need for a common national base of training, the valorization of scientific knowledge according to the inseparability between theory and practice, valorization of the education professional, link of training with social reality. It also established the responsibility of training institutions to ensure the inseparability between initial and continuing training and collaboration between Higher Education and Basic Education. Instead of a standardized curriculum, the training courses should guarantee their own identity. This content of the Resolution undoubtedly contemplated progressive aspirations of the organized movements of educators, ahead of ANFOPE.

However, it is necessary to analyze other aspects of CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2015 that concern the international and national political context of educational reforms. In fact, these

DCNs stemmed from the requirements of Federal Law No. 9.394/1996 and the recommendations of the National Education Plan 2014-2024, documents elaborated by different segments of society, such as the National Education Council, the Ministry of Education, government agencies, educators' associations, municipal education secretaries as well as by representatives of foundations and private sectors defending financial and market interests. It is nothing out of place to say that CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2015 resulted from a possible consensus amidst the dispute of interests between associations defending a public-school project and private sectors.

Because of this, the most forceful criticism of its content concerns the practicism in teacher training resulting, on the one hand, from the vision of the private sectors that conceived a practical and low-cost training devoid of theoretical foundations, in the logic of results-based education, on the other, from the adherence of a good part of the educators' entities to the epistemology of practice, a vision of teacher training that valued the pragmatic and instrumental character of training, that is, the reflection on learning by doing, based on the common sense knowledge existing in the current work experience. Thus, even though the word "competences" does not appear in the Resolution, it permeates its various articles in the form of detailing skills very close to practical aspects of the profession.

The trajectory of CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2015 was short. In fact, between the approval of these Guidelines and the formulation of those of 2019, discussions arose for the formulation of the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC), already instituted in Federal Law No. 9.394/1996, mobilizing, once again, on the one hand, entrepreneurs and private foundations and, on the other, associations and entities defending a socio-critical education. At this moment, the privatists organized themselves in the *Todos pela Educação* Movement taking the lead in the elaboration and construction of the BNCC.

In the meantime, the civil-parliamentary coup occurred with the deposition of Dilma Rousseff from power and the institution of the Michel Temer government which, among other measures, imposes changes in the composition of the National Education Council, which now includes the participation of private sectors and the third sector, gathered in the *Todos pela Educação* Movement, largely responsible for the final version of the BNCC, of 2017, and the BNC-Training, of 2019. Thus, CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2017 is created, in a troubled process and with criticism from the educational field, instituting the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) for Basic Education, consolidating results-based education and the curriculum based on competences and skills. In the logic of the BNCC, the content of CNE/CP Resolution No.

02 of 2019 consolidates the goals of the neoliberal agenda for teacher training, linking it, explicitly, to the competences and skills prescribed in the BNCC of 2017, and maintaining the persuasive and performative discourse of an efficient and effective teacher, previously inscribed in CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2002.

As a result, university institutions are disqualified as a privileged place of teacher training, with the presence of specific courses of a practical nature gaining space, in which pragmatic knowledge is valued more than scientific, artistic, philosophical and political foundations. Dissociating content and form, and subordinating the latter to the technicist logic, the teacher becomes an executor of prescriptions, evaluated now by what he executes and not by the quality of the content he organizes and the methodology he uses to drive the active learning of students. Thus, the instrumental view of the teaching profession and initial training is reiterated, and the reduction of continuing training to practical training.

CNE/CP Resolution No. 04/2024 was the CNE's response to the manifestations of movements and associations of educators in relation to the previous one. Its content brings clear indications that the legislators intended to minimize the negative reactions and criticisms that arose in the academic environment in relation to CNE/CP Resolution No. 02/2019, incorporating current terms in the area such as theoretical-practical unity, praxis, professional socialization, democratic management, inclusive education, sustainable development, exercise of critical thinking.

However, in the logic of the curricular policy assumed by the Ministry of Education and the legal prescriptions of the CNE, there is no way to ignore a basic question, that is, that this Resolution is inserted in the line of results-based education based on the model of competences and skills and large-scale evaluation, already widely rejected by the academic field of education and by many educators. Therefore, the link of the training curriculum with the contents that underline and demarcate the curricular guidelines for Basic Education, the BNCC, is maintained. What is at stake in this link? In my opinion and, certainly, of many educators, results-based education.

### **Challenges for teaching education**

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**Interviewers:** In this scenario of the impoverishment of teacher training, reduced to a set of skills and competences centered on pragmatism, immediacy and technicality, what

knowledge is necessary for the teacher in the face of the challenges of contemporary school? How can the institutions responsible for teacher training "occupy the gaps"?

**Professor Libâneo:** The question refers to research on teaching knowledge, a topic that has received considerable prominence in the field of teacher training and didactics. As professional knowledge of the teacher, teaching knowledge involves a set of elements that constitute the basic knowledge for initial and continuing training. In the tradition of research in this field, in Brazil, verified mainly in the events of ENDIPE and ANPEd, the typologies of knowledge that permeate the works are those of Maurice Tardif, Clermont Gauthier, Lee Shulman and more recently, Antônio Nóvoa. Authors such as Philippe Perrenoud, Donald Schon and Keneth Zeichner are also researched. Tardif and Gauthier are Canadians, Shulman, Schon and Zeichner are North Americans, Nóvoa is Portuguese, Perrenoud is Swiss. These authors have been the main references of studies carried out in Brazil. However, even the most differentiated research carried out among us, they cannot go further in relation to the original formulations. The hope of novelties may lie in research referenced in various modulations within the movement of critical didactics, recently revived.

To answer the question about what I think of the knowledge necessary for the teacher in the contemporary context, I need to briefly situate the discussion about teaching knowledge based on the authors mentioned. Tardif indicates as teaching knowledge: knowledge of professional training, which are the pedagogical knowledge acquired in academic training; disciplinary knowledge, referring to the domain of the specific contents of the subjects; curricular knowledge, which are the guidelines, programs and objectives of the school curriculum; knowledge of experience, referring to the knowledge acquired in daily practice and in interaction with the school context; knowledge of pedagogical traditions, values, practices and pedagogical methods inherited from the school culture. However, the author himself recognizes the primacy of knowledge of experience, in fact, constituted by the other knowledge.

Hence the emphasis on the reference to practice, the epistemology of practice, to apprehend teaching knowledge. Gauthier's list is very similar to Tardif's, he mentions disciplinary knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge of the sciences of education, knowledge of pedagogical tradition and knowledge of pedagogical action. In turn, Shulman points out seven types of knowledge: knowledge of content; general pedagogical knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of the curriculum; knowledge of students; knowledge of educational contexts; knowledge of the school environment and the factors that

affect teaching; knowledge of the ends, purposes and values of education. It is a practically complete list, which does not omit either the students or the sociocultural context.

However, Shulman's latest studies have reached a synthesis of four knowledge: the knowledge of the specific content; the pedagogical knowledge of the content - the most nuclear; the general pedagogical knowledge - which includes students, the curriculum, classroom management; the knowledge of the context both institutional and sociocultural. These studies also emphasize that the most important category is the pedagogical knowledge of the subject, which means organizing the content so that it is understandable to students, that is, it is the knowledge of the discipline about its teaching. This understanding of Shulman also appears in French authors, for example, Michel Develay, who highlight the relationship between didactics and the epistemology of disciplines, which leads, in teacher training, not only to value the domain of content, but the understanding of the nature of knowledge, its genesis and structure.

Nóvoa, more recently, presented five teaching dispositions: scientific domain of a certain area of knowledge; the appropriation of professional culture through dialogue with other teachers, reflection on work and the exercise of evaluation; the capacity of relationship and communication with students; teamwork, joint intervention in school educational projects; social commitment, assuming principles of social inclusion and cultural diversity.

A comprehensive look at these studies points to the relevance of the formulations, as they contemplate at least two basic knowledge based on the pedagogical tradition since Comenius, the Jesuits and Herbart, that is, the knowledge of the subject taught and the pedagogical knowledge. Perhaps one should criticize positions that overvalue practical knowledge, putting theory, scientific and academic knowledge in the background. In fact, as common points, they bet on the understanding that teachers need a solid base of knowledge from practice, that professional training should be based on practice and that teachers are reflective practitioners.

It is also known that the emergence of these theories is associated with the educational reforms initiated in Europe and the United States in the context of neoliberalism in the late 1980s that included intervention in the initial training of teachers, relying on the epistemology of practice. However, I consider relevant the value of the experience of teachers as a reference for knowledge: their life history, what they think, what they do, how they solve problems in concrete situations. It is a perspective that turns research into the reality of the teacher and the school, in addition to contributing to the constitution of professional identity, although it is essential that this knowledge of experience be worked on in a theoretical perspective.

At least the research around the teacher as a reflective practitioner, within their own epistemological perspectives, emphasizes ways of overcoming the theory-practice relationship. The difficulties of consummating it are notorious. The real conditions of teachers' lives, whether linked to their social origin or those of their generally very precarious school education, do not provide them with the necessary theoretical repertoire for reflection on practice, in addition to the existence of a huge gap between the academic production of researchers and the appropriation by teachers.

This does not invalidate the fact that, in teaching action, neither practice nor theory alone is sufficient. So, differently from what the defenders of the primacy of practice argue, what is expected is that the process of teacher training begins with the demands of practice to submit them to reflection by the instruments of theory, surpassing common sense, immediate experience, that is, an instrumentality based on theoretical foundations.

For my part, I have sought to compose a vision of teaching knowledge from the theory of developmental teaching of Vasili Davydov, based on the historical-cultural theory of Vygotsky. As I have already said, I do not rule out the contribution of the studies, since there is not much to invent. In their training, teachers need to have knowledge of the content, pedagogical knowledge of the content, knowledge of students, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of the ends, purposes and values of teaching education. However, the content of these categories depends on philosophical and epistemological premises that will modify the understanding of them.

In a historical-cultural view, I think that education is a process of hominization and emancipation of the human being, and the school is the place where human beings appropriate the human capacities and abilities embodied in the contents of science, art, philosophy, morality, technology, through the teaching-learning process, therefore, the work of the teacher.

In this way, I understand as contents the basic knowledge of a subject that synthesizes general ways of solving problems in the scope of science, art, moral principles. What I mean is that the contents bring together in them the human capacities and abilities that have been developed throughout history in each science, art, and morality. I like to quote the Russian psychologist Aleksei Leontiev who says that appropriating social and cultural experience through knowledge means incorporating human capacities and behaviors formed historically.

For this, in school, it is necessary to put the student in an activity that reproduces the traits of human activity embedded in the object of study, that is, human capacities. In my reading, this means that the student learns biology by reconstituting, in a learning activity, the

investigative path of the biology scientist. In other words, it is a matter of placing the student in an investigative activity in which they can reconstitute, in the didactic situation, the logical and investigative procedures used by the scientist. This means that the teacher's pedagogical knowledge depends on the content and the proper ways of investigating biological science. Thus, one of the expected skills of teachers is to know how to extract from the contents of each subject of teaching those human capacities and abilities generalized throughout the development of the science that gives rise to that subject of teaching.

For this, they must, necessarily, have domain of the conceptual structure of the subjects and the investigative processes that led to the constitution of this conceptual structure. From this I conclude that the bases of pedagogical knowledge are contained in the bases of disciplinary knowledge. But this integration is not enough, it is still necessary for the teacher to consider the individual and social characteristics of the students and the social, cultural and material context of their lives.

It is a different view from Shulman's. He places at the center of his theory of teaching knowledge the pedagogical knowledge of the content that he understands as being the understanding that teachers develop about how to better teach the content to their students, that is, how to make the content understandable and engaging for students. This category of knowledge represents, for Shulman, the core of the teacher's professional identity.

However, he reduces pedagogical knowledge to more effective strategies and methods to teach the content as he himself suggests: bring examples, demonstrations, analogies, audiovisual resources, discussions, illustrations or explanations that facilitate more difficult content, correction of conceptual errors, connection with other knowledge. It is as if it were a bridge between the content and the teaching of this content to improve teaching, adapt teaching to the needs and conditions of students including the context of these students.

## **Curriculum and Neoliberalism**

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**Interviewers:** Professor Libâneo, in a context of neoliberalism consolidation, in which education is treated as a product to be consumed and the focus falls on a curriculum geared towards results, with emphasis on measuring competences and skills restricted to the demands of the labor market, how do you evaluate the role of the school in the formation of critical and

engaged citizens? Would it be possible to develop a curriculum of a democratic, humanizing and emancipatory character?

**Professor Libâneo:** I think that, presently, two visions of the purposes and functions of the school are in dispute worldwide, the neoliberal and the socio critical. They are answers to two opposing social and political projects, two visions of ways of functioning society, two visions about the human destiny of people. The neoliberal vision, in full force in the Brazilian educational system represented by the BNCC, has a proposal for a school aimed solely at the preparation of productive capacities and skills through preparation for work according to the interests of the market.

As well expressed in the question, it is about results-based education based on a pedagogy of transmission and on the measurement of learning by tests, whose results serve to control schools and teachers. This vision, linked to the guidelines of international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, the OECD, responds to the interests of the most industrialized countries in the world, influencing, for at least 30 years, the educational systems of emerging countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Brazil, these guidelines have been implemented in successive governments since 1990, as I mentioned earlier. Currently, these guidelines are assumed by foundations and organizations linked to private companies and banks, and which have invested heavily in influencing educational systems to prepare students for the productive system, including through the formulation of the BNCC. In my opinion, results-based education brings immense harm to public schools, puts obstacles to the work of teachers and harms the learning of students.

In contrast to this neoliberal vision of education and curriculum, the progressive socio-critical vision aims at a humanizing, emancipatory and democratic education. It is a school focused on the development of the human potential of students through the contents of science, art, the formation of critical consciousness, the valorization of sensitivity to others, solidarity, the development of collective social and moral values and creative forms of participation in social, professional and cultural life. More specifically, I share with many educators the understanding that the most important purpose of schools is the human formation of students through the conquest of knowledge produced by humanity and the development of human capacities, starting with the capacity to think. Much more than reducing the school to the preparation of students in productive capacities for the world of work, the socio-critical vision

bets on the global formation of human beings and citizens aiming at physical, psychic, affective, moral development.

Thus, in the perspective in which I position myself based on the historical-cultural theory, school education consists of specific processes of appropriation, by students, of the culture and science developed socially and historically, forming human capacities and skills that help them organize their behavior and their actions, through the process of interiorization. For this, teachers need to be able to select and organize knowledge, that is, the elements of science and culture that need to be internalized by individuals of the human species so that they become human, and to adequately organize teaching for the appropriation of this knowledge by students.

In relation to this progressive socio-critical vision, I have in mind that, in the context of absolute hegemony of results-based education, the implementation of a curriculum and a pedagogy of a democratic, humanizing and emancipatory character can only be consummated as an action of resistance of educators, in collective movements, from classrooms and schools.

### **BNCC and the curriculum of immediate results**

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**Interviewers:** On December 20, 2017, the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) was approved. You point out that the mandatory document is based on an instrumental curriculum, with a focus on immediate results, centered on skills and competences limited to the demands of the labor market. Approaching seven years of validity, how do you evaluate the impact of the BNCC on the curriculum and the formation of students at the Brazilian public school? After all, professor, what was the school that was left for the poor?

**Professor Libâneo:** Yes, it has been seven years since the adoption of the current version of the BNCC, but, in fact, teachers, it has been 34 uninterrupted years of results-based education. I am situating the year 1990 when the World Conference on Education for All was held in Thailand, organized and funded mainly by the World Bank and UNESCO, as I detailed earlier.

Regarding the impact of results-based education on the functioning of schools, I coordinated, between August 2014 and August 2016, in the State of *Goiás*, large research entitled: Official educational policies: study of the repercussions of their quality of teaching

references in pedagogical practices and student learning in public elementary schools. The objective of the research was to detect in eight public schools, through classroom observation, the presence of the results curriculum in schools and its impact on the quality of teaching.

Among the conclusions, it appears that: 1) results-based education is focused much more on problems of economy than on the formation and human development of students; 2) the regulation of the school system by external evaluations led to the exacerbation of pedagogical technicality and, consequently, to the trivialization of the teaching-learning process by reducing it to teaching and memorization practices and by restricting assessment to the application of standardized tests; 3) Results-based teaching reduces the student to a passive consumer, depositary of knowledge and skills, disregarding their active role in learning; 4) Results-based education based on external evaluations results in a homogenized teaching that disregards the social, cultural, material factors, especially social inequalities, that intervene in school performance, including intra-school ones; 5) It aims at holding schools and teachers accountable for the success or failure of students, blaming and, at the same time, deprofessionalizing the teacher; 6) Results-based education has institutionalized, in public schools, a meritocratic school that establishes competition between students who are socially and individually unequal, compromising social justice at school.

The research concludes, therefore, that the vaunted quality of teaching induced by the neoliberal view of education has resulted in a restricted and restrictive quality and, in some cases, illusory. Restricted, because it is reduced to an instrumental education geared exclusively towards economic objectives, distant from human, cultural and scientific formation. Restrictive because, based on poverty alleviation policies in emerging countries, it ends up destining the poor to a merely instrumental school, of low cognitive level, which does not even guarantee the criterion of utilitarian quality in terms of employability. For this reason, too, it is an illusory proposal.

In short, it is a poor school for the poor, leading to the perverse dualism of public school that I have already denounced in an article of 2012, based on an affirmation by Antônio Nóvoa: knowledge and learning for the rich and social reception for the poor which includes a light and utilitarian teaching and actions of social integration. Thus, the BNCC, materialization of results-based education, produces evident impacts on the curriculum and the formation of students, reflecting on the teacher training system.

In the first place, there is a reversal of the purposes of the school: the right to knowledge and learning is reduced to meeting "minimum" learning needs for survival and preparation for

the labor market. This excludes education for the development of human capacities in all dimensions of personality formation.

Second, a school of content transmission and memorization is reintroduced, distanced from pedagogy and didactics, in which the student is seen as a passive individual, disregarding their active role in the learning process and in which the factors that intervene in school performance are disregarded, especially the social, cultural and material factors of life that promote diversity and inequalities, to the detriment of poor students.

Third, the results-based education policy has thrown all the weight of the supposed school innovations for poverty reduction into external measures such as standardized curriculum, business management models, pre-programmed teaching activities, without space for pedagogical actions in the school to address, within it, social inequalities and the mechanisms of selectivity and exclusion. Meanwhile, pedagogy and didactics are being abandoned and the teacher, without pedagogical assistance and support, refrains from acting in the emancipation of the student.

Fourth, results-based education has instituted the meritocratic school, generating a restricted and restrictive quality, generating social injustice as it promotes exclusion within the school, anticipating exclusion in social life. In short, this is the school that was left for the poor.

## Curriculum and Human Rights

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**Interviewers:** Professor Libâneo, considering that the National Plan for Human Rights Education establishes that themes such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, religious diversity, among others, should permeate the school curriculum, how do you believe that schools can integrate these issues into their curriculum and pedagogical practices?

**Professor Libâneo:** The project that has mobilized my research in recent years consists of thinking about a socially just school. I think that one of the most important challenges for researchers in education, for fellow teacher trainers, for teachers of Basic Education, is to seek answers to the question "what are schools for", especially those destined for the poor segments of society.

As I have already said, my bet is on a school that promotes and expands the development of human potential of all students aiming at their insertion in social, political, cultural,

professional life, at the same time, incorporating in pedagogical practices the sociocultural human diversity, in close connection with the social, cultural and material conditions of life where social inequalities are present.

I define as a socially just school the one that promotes and expands the development of human capacities and skills, through a curriculum of cultural and scientific formation open to the plurality of subjects in their social origins, differences and in their cultural peculiarities, pedagogically articulated with social inequalities and sociocultural diversity and, therefore, directly intertwined with the social, cultural and material conditions of life of students.

I consider that this school puts into practice two principles. The first is the ethical-political principle of ensuring everyone the right to the development of their potential through education and teaching, a condition of equality among human beings. The second, the principle of attending to human, social and cultural diversity, and the consideration of real social inequalities. All teaching must start with the concrete social, cultural and material conditions of life of the students, making an articulation between scientific knowledge and everyday knowledge generated in the experiences of the students in their social, cultural and material reality.

My concern as a pedagogue is how to deal pedagogically with the manifestations of difference, diversity and social inequalities. I think that a socially just school cannot be satisfied with the rather vague criterion of social quality that has been used by progressive educators and academic and union entities in the field of education.

I want to talk about political and pedagogical quality that includes: 1) a solid curriculum of cultural and scientific formation, but also flexible to incorporate in it social, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender particulars, and others; 2) the adoption and application of effective pedagogical-didactic actions that address sociocultural diversity and promote reparation for social inequalities of origin and school inequalities, with appropriate methodologies, with systems of permanent support to address and repair difficulties arising in the teaching-learning process. What I propose is to insert in the work with the contents the questions that emerge from social inequalities and social and cultural diversity; 3) In the organization of teaching, providing each student with the possibility of maximum development of their human capacities, maintaining a common egalitarian base of knowledge and, at the same time, considering social and school inequalities and sociocultural diversity.

I cannot guarantee a common schooling without considering the individual and social characteristics of the students, the repertoire with which they arrive at school, their ways of

learning, their previous learning, their culture, their values, their ethnicities, that is, to recognize and value the sociocultural practices lived by the students in their daily lives.

I want to propose, therefore, that the attendance at the sociocultural and material diversity of our students ceases to be a rhetorical and edifying discourse. It is not enough to recognize the differences, socio-educational actions in the school are not enough to include social and cultural diversity. Nor is it enough to bring experiences from the daily life of students, from the culture of students, just to motivate them to study. Much less is it enough for school reduced to attending cultural identities. It is necessary for the development of conceptual understanding by students, to have the function of knowledge in their life outside the school and, for that, to insert the reality of the students in the very forms of curricular, pedagogical and organizational organization of the school.

### **Educational poverty in Brazilian public schools**

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**Interviewers:** You point out that the curriculum, the relationship between teachers and students, the management, the evaluation, the human, physical and material conditions, and the financing are essential requirements for the functioning of a school. In this sense, how do social inequalities impact each of these elements? How do you evaluate the relationship between poverty and education in the context of the Brazilian public school?

**Professor Libâneo:** In this last decade my studies have turned to the relationship between didactics and social inequalities. I never tire of repeating that social inequalities produce school inequalities; school inequalities produce social inequalities. In short, what does poverty have to do with the teaching-learning process? In what does poverty affect school education and in what can school education minimize or amplify poverty? I will comment on this now.

As I have expressed several times in this conversation, I think that the school fulfills its social function when it promotes and expands the human development of students through the contents, skills and values, thus acting in the formation of their personality. The role of the school is to help students in the appropriation of knowledge, capacities and skills, condition for the cognitive, affective and moral development of students, therefore, condition of humanization of individuals.

The feasibility of this relationship between education, learning and development occurs in the teaching-learning process through the professional work of teachers. It is necessary to complement this positioning. The appropriation of contents and skills is given by concrete subjects, with their own needs, interests, motives, inserted in social, cultural and material contexts. It is here that difference, sociocultural diversity and, especially, social inequalities enter.

This means that the domain of school knowledge by students has to do with the individual, social and cultural characteristics of students, that is, by the real experiences in their families and in their communities, by their taste for study, by their experience in the daily life of the school, by their motives for the study. It is, then, to join the purpose of the school of cultural and scientific formation with the individual, social, cultural, material characteristics of the students. In the work of the teacher with the contents, with the capacities and skills, with the human values, he must, necessarily, consider human diversity and social inequalities.

My understanding is that human diversity arises from the difference between human beings, it is the difference situated in historical and concrete contexts, while inequalities, also circumstantial, arise when a condition of individuals or groups leads to the deprivation of rights such as health, education, employment, housing etc., therefore, they are economic, social, legal, cultural.

In the case of the school, social inequalities have to do with the living conditions, occupation of the parents, level of schooling, the cultural characteristics of the family, the practices of raising children, the family practices of reading and writing, monitoring homework, the internal organization of housing, the expectations of parents in relation to the study of their children. They have to do with race, sex, religion, number of children, family organization, and so many other diversities. These circumstances affect the curriculum, the work of teachers and students, the forms of organization and management of schools, and the evaluation of learning.

I think that there is a necessary fight of the whole society against poverty, an indispensable condition for sustainable development and the humanization of society, and I fully agree with that. This commitment to poverty passes through the economic, the social, the environmental, which are the dimensions of sustainable development. But I think we have a pedagogical commitment to poverty and social inequalities in the daily life of the school and classrooms. That is why I speak of the social just school, a school that acts in the preparation of social inequalities through the curriculum, pedagogy, the forms of organization and management of the school. So, what characterizes a socially just school?

In the first place, the existence of a curriculum common to all, of a scientific character, open to the plurality of subjects in their differences, social origins, and in their cultural particularities, aiming to articulate the principle of cultural and scientific formation with the principle of attention to diversity and social inequalities. It is a curriculum centered on school knowledge, they are what enable the strengthening of intellectual capacities, to form concepts, to develop the capacity to think, to argue, to establish relationships between the scientific concepts worked by the school and the daily concepts brought from their life in the family, in the community.

In the second place, the socially just school puts into action pedagogical-didactic practices that introduce in the curriculum and in the work of the teacher the cultural diversity and social inequalities, based on the understanding of scientific concepts and their connection with the social, cultural and material conditions of life of the students, where diversities and inequalities are.

In the third place, it is a school that ensures attention to students in the socio-affective area, interpersonal relationships, affective relationships, and support to students in their psychic and school difficulties.

In the fourth place, it puts into action formative practices in moral and attitudinal values referring to respect for others, differences, human solidarity, and justice. These values should permeate the contents, but they appear in the forms of organization and management of the school, in the daily life of school life and in the forms of interaction of the members of the school.

In the fifth place, it should consider that technologies, like human production, integrate the set of pedagogical mediations that enable the development of capacities and human skills of students, in an emancipatory perspective.

In the sixth place, it introduces forms of organization and management that favor a welcoming, comfortable, safe school environment, aimed at learning and development of teachers and students. They provide the social and human context that can favor but also inhibit learning and personal and social development. This means that the organization of the school is educational practice, it also teaches, forms behaviors and ways of acting.

I want to say one more thing about the relationship between poverty and school. Poverty is not destiny, neither our students nor teachers are condemned to the condition of poverty, we can break with poverty, we can invest in seeking to give more quality to our work. Life can always be better; we can do better what we already do well.

In the case of teachers, they help our students to have access to knowledge, to have discipline in the study, to form a scientific attitude, to develop their capacity to think, to develop the taste for reading and writing, to develop a spirit of solidarity, to respect human diversity.

### **After all, what are schools for?**

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**Interviewers:** Finally, professor, you stressed, in your speech at the opening conference, that there is a great disagreement among researchers, educators, legislators and associations on educational purposes. Education is thus revealed to be a field of conflicts of worldviews and theoretical, ideological and political perspectives. In this sense, what are the main contemporary conceptions about the purpose of the school? After all, what are schools for?

**Professor Libâneo:** To answer this question, I need to talk a little about this theme that are the educational purposes of the school, or, in a more explicit way, what are schools for? This is a theme worked on in the philosophy of education and that refers to the intentionality of educational processes, since the ends of human action precede decisions.

I understand, then, that the purposes of education are a prerequisite to define educational policies, national curricula, school contents, forms of school organization. Teachers also need the purpose of developing their lesson plans and giving meaning to their work. Each teacher, each teacher who is on the front line of school education, when going to their school, has in mind the purposes that motivate them, they have an answer to this crucial question: "what are schools for?".

The first conceptual clarification about educational purposes is that they are principles that indicate philosophical orientation, conceptions and values that underline the organization of an educational system, then translated into objectives and functions. The second is that they express ideals that a society understands that it should introduce and maintain aiming at the education of its members, and that these ideals express intentions and interests of different classes and social groups that make up that society, at a world, regional, local level. Third, it is that they induce educational and curricular policies and, in this way, directly affect the functioning of schools and the work of teachers.

This is the case, for example, of the BNCC. I also need to say that purposes and objectives are also objects of theoretical and political-ideological dispute in human sciences and education, which result in different perceptions about the objectives and functions of

schools, forms of organization and management, forms of concretization of the teaching-learning process. I think that today there is great disagreement among researchers, teacher trainers and teachers about the purposes of the school.

I have already mentioned in this conversation the existence, at an international level, of two political and pedagogical projects in dispute, the neoliberal vision and the progressive socio-critical vision. Their views on school educational purposes are projected in the elaboration of curricula, in the characterization of the work of teachers, in the forms of organization and management and in the evaluation practices. They are also answers to the question of social justice at school. They have resonance in Brazilian education, the first of a neoliberal nature, manifesting itself in results-based education, the second of a progressive nature, unfolding into three visions, the sociological/intercultural, the post-critical and the socio-historical-cultural. They are the pedagogical conceptions that, in my opinion, have more expressiveness in the progressive field.

Results-based education has already been presented, it aims to serve everyone by offering a "minimum" curriculum based on competences and skills, measured by standardized tests, aiming at preparation for the world of work. This is the educational purpose adopted in Brazilian educational policies for at least 34 years, meeting expectations established by international organizations and by sectors of business and private foundations.

In the progressive field we have three answers more in evidence in research and in teacher training institutions in relation to the question "what are schools for?". The first I call a sociological/intercultural vision in which education is considered in the context of social interactions. It aims to serve everyone by offering a diversified curriculum based on local and daily sociocultural experiences, in an environment of welcoming differences and sociocultural diversity, in an intercultural perspective. In this view, this is how social justice is promoted at school. It gains several names such as intercultural education, plural education, education for diversity, pedagogy of daily life, and inclusive education.

The second is the post-critical vision, partly derived from the previous vision, which proposes a local curriculum associated with cultural identities, having as a criterion the difference and cultural diversity between individuals and groups, especially ethnic-racial and gender differences. In this view, more than social inequalities that arise in social reality, the ethnic and cultural and gender traits that mark the differences between people matter more. With this, there is no universal knowledge, there is knowledge generated cultures and cultural identities.

These two visions of school education carry, without a doubt, a humanistic and emancipatory sense, with a strong weight on sociocultural practices in society and at school. Hence the valorization of indigenous education, *quilombola* education, Afro-Brazilian education, among others, without a doubt, necessary in the face of respect for differences. But I think that the overestimation of diversity, difference and cultural identities, in relation to equality of rights, leaves in the background school knowledge and the development of thinking skills, weakening the right to a consistent curriculum of cultural and scientific formation and development of intellectual capacities and skills.

For my part, I defend a vision that I consider close to the socio-historical-cultural perspective, which proposes for all a curriculum of cultural and scientific formation, pedagogically articulated with sociocultural diversity, and directly linked to the social, cultural and material conditions of life of students. The position I defend is different from that which reduces the school as a place to offer a kit of competences and skills of social survival, according to the curriculum of results.

It is also different from those who defend a school of experiences of sociocultural experiences, focused predominantly on attending to the sociocultural diversity or cultural identities of students, leaving in the background the contents and the properly pedagogical work. I also do not share a vision of school only as a place of reception and social integration of students in situations of social vulnerability.

I propose a socially just school which materializes the dialectical relationship between equality and difference. That is, I argue that we are all equal, we are all different, but difference as a constitutive characteristic of the human being, so that the universality or equality among human beings is a presupposition of human particularities.

In this way, the ultimate purpose of school education is the formation and development of all dimensions of the human being, that is, in what the human being has of universal, in their concrete conditions; being the attendance to diversity a constituent aspect of a broader view of educational purposes of the school. As Sinésio Ferraz Bueno writes, the universality of the human being includes the development of reason, intelligence, and the right to the appropriation of forms of symbolization.

But we must start with the singularity of the individual so that he develops human capacities that are characteristics of the universality of the human being. I think, then, that democracy at school, social justice at school, consists in working, at the same time, with equality and difference, in the sense of providing all with a solid cultural and scientific

formation articulated with social and cultural diversity, intertwined with the social, cultural and material conditions of life.

School education and access to knowledge make it possible to contribute to overcoming social, ethnic-racial, economic, cultural, religious, political, gender, sexual and other exclusions. It is what I call a socially fair school.

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