Curricular policies for Secondary Education in Latin America: between capacities and opportunities

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Abstract
This paper presents the results of an investigation that seeks to understand the rationalities guiding curricular policies for Secondary Education. Specifically for this article we made an analytic choice prioritizing a diagonal reading of four documents published by international organizations aiming to guide curricular reforms in Latin America. We found that they are directed at the issues regarding the promotion of innovative pedagogical practices associated with the development of curricular forms rooted in the concepts of youth protagonism and skill-building. Thus, the article discusses how the education of contemporary youth is positioned in the curricular policies for contemporary Secondary Education. It identifies a strategic positioning of curricular policies as an “economic investment”, with an emphasis on the development of capacities as an imperative of the curriculum and on youth protagonism as a strategic goal.

Keywords: Curricular policies; Secondary Education; Capacities; Latin America.

So it is also in the economic world. In the breast of one who wishes to do something new, the forces of habit rise up and bear witness against the embryonic project (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 93).

Introduction
Curricular policies for Secondary Education have been the target of a set of political investments in the Latin American context (Tello & Mainardes, 2014; Silva, 2014a). Through different systems of pedagogical reasoning, we can verify the predominance of an educational grammar that assigns central importance to the constitution of individuals endowed with the skills to compete in the labor market, at the same time as they are schooled by innovative and creative processes. The school curriculum constituted in this configuration is described as promoting skills, triggering opportunities, organized by initiatives that take into account the subjective demands of young people and also their economic potential.

In this short text we shall present a few preliminary results of an investigation that seeks to understand the rationalities that guide the curricular policies for Secondary Education recently implemented in different regions of Brazil. Specifically for this article we made an analytic choice prioritizing a diagonal reading of four documents published by international organizations aiming to guide processes of curricular reforms promoted in the Latin American context. To begin with we can indicate that we found that they are directed at the issues regarding the promotion of innovative pedagogical practices associated with the development of curricular forms rooted in the concepts of youth...
protagonism and skill-building. Thus, we are interested in asking: **How is the education of contemporary youth positioned in the curricular policies for contemporary Secondary Education? What social, political and pedagogical meanings are engendered within this discursive plot?**

To deal with these investigative concerns, we organized the present article in three sections. In the first section we make a diagnosis of curricular practices currently mobilized in Secondary Education, taking as our main theme its concern with the triggering of innovative practices, locating youth education within the realm of an “occupational training” (Bauman, 2008). In the second section we perform a few historical digressions to understand the emergence of discourses on innovation in our time. As an analytic example of this context of emergence we choose the economic thinking of Joseph Schumpeter, availing ourselves of the sociological hypothesis proposed by Laval (2004). Finally in the third section we present an analytic exercise based on four documents produced by multilateral agencies and aimed at guiding the curricular reforms implemented in Secondary Education in the Latin American context. Thus, we find the strategic positioning of curricular policies for Secondary Education as an “economic investment” (López-Ruiz, 2009), with an emphasis on the development of capacities as an imperative of the curriculum and on youth protagonism as a pedagogical goal.

1. **Innovative practices in Secondary Education: a diagnosis**

We are recurrently urged to consider a crisis in public schooling in our country, especially in Secondary Education. The diagnoses of this stage of basic education point to the emergence of times of crisis, described by adjectives such as “outage of secondary education” (Ruiz, Ramos & Hingel, 2007) or even “audience crisis” (Barros & Mendonça, 2009). Under these conditions, a set of new orientations, guidelines and resolutions was produced intensively in recent years, both at the national and international level, aiming, politically, to produce changes in the patterns of performance of institutions and expand their potential to contribute to the social and economic life. In general lines, there is an aspiration to create new school curriculums that meet the demands of youth and are attractive, flexible and innovative (Silva, 2014a; Silva, 2014b).

As regards the Brazilian scene, Krawczyk (2014) suggests that our secondary schools are undergoing a period of transition. However, in her analysis, what is being considered as a pedagogical and organizational renewal process of public school, producing mechanisms of differentiation and inducing new forms of work, is connected to an articulation with the demands of businesspeople. With the intention of applying models pertaining to business management, according to Krawczyk, “evidence and pragmatism have become, in the last thirty years, the buzzwords to define policies, and the recording of successful experiences and measurable results have become privileged knowledge” (Krawczyk, 2014, p. 24). The predominant concept in the regimes where these policies are implemented is flexibilization, insofar as “the competitiveness of the country in the globalized market is the key to this project” (p. 37).

Looking at Secondary Education in the Latin American context, Tello and Mainardes (2014) pointed out a tendency to respond to the recommendations of
the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In a neoliberal logic, these researchers describe a direction given to the policies for Secondary Education towards the axes of decentralization, evaluation mechanisms and optimization of the quality of education. In an economy of knowledge, as this context is characterized, one can see the implementation of the mandatoriness of this stage of schooling; however, “the need for expansion and universalization of Secondary Education in the context of post-neoliberalism can be defended in order to attach the offer of education to economic development” (Tello & Mainardes, 2014, p. 172). In other words, an economic grammar is reinforced which, in our view, holds a vigorous dialogue with the innovative pedagogies emerging in this context.

Exploring some meanings of pedagogical innovation at present, the social reading by Paula Sibilia (2012) is very timely. When examining the cultural changes that question contemporary school, Sibilia underscores the approach of issues of education and culture to the logic of capital, delineated by consumption in its different nuances. Insofar as education is no longer presented under the modern conditions (of mandatory schooling), it is now “offered as fast food or in its gourmet version” (Sibilia, 2012, p. 132). School practices must become useful, fun and stimulating, so that the student becomes similar to the figure of a customer – “who is always right and wants to have fun, or somehow profit from their investments” (Sibilia, 2012, p. 132). The agendas of modern schooling are shifted.

The dispersion of contemporary school, as described in Sibilia’s work, marks a separation from the civilizing and disciplinary assumptions that had characterized pedagogical forms since the 17th century.

The contemporary offer of education seeks to offer a service that is adequate to the profile of each public, providing them with the resources so that each can triumph in the difficult market disputes. This is not for all, like the law, but has an unequal distribution like money: all consumers want to be distinct and unique, able to compete with the others to stand out with their differentiated advantages, in a globalized world in which an increasingly jovial, although also ferocious capitalism rules (Sibilia, 2012, p. 132).

The subject manufactured under these conditions is proactive and entrepreneurial, since they require the services of education to potentiate their forms of intervention in the competitive world of the economy. The pedagogy required for these tasks is associated with a training of skills, focusing on technical capacity-building, triggering “a type of teaching that now is usually given sports words as names, such as training or coaching” (Sibilia, 2012, p. 134). The teacher required to intervene in this process needs to take over the tasks resulting from life-long learning and also accept the pedagogical primacy of innovation.

Sibilia also explores the articulations of these educational conditions with echoes from the neoliberal discourse. Using “entrepreneurial ethics”, a term employed by her, new rationalities and political strategies are implemented in defining the agenda for schooling in the 21st century, namely: “autonomy, flexibilization, initiative and motivation, individual excelling and individual responsibilities” (Sibilia, 2012, p. 126).
About this topic, the issue of educational innovation, we also find major contributions in the writings of the French sociologist Christian Laval (2004). As changes occur in the field of production – with the emergence of new paradigms and the immaterialization of work – knowledge itself becomes a production factor. With the consolidation of policies with a neoliberal inspiration, the educational knowledge and values are displaced from the realm of a “universal culture” and are then ruled by new operational criteria, namely “efficacy, mobility and interest” (Laval, 2004, p. 57). This change, besides highlighting a pattern of understanding that was displaced, marks a change of meaning in schooling in its different configurations. Under these conditions, what emerges is a school concerned with potentiating human capital (López-Ruiz, 2009).

According to Laval (2004), the search for technical and useful knowledge is prioritized. This option is justified by the fact that such notions are considered “more appropriate for the young people from the popular classes and adapted to the companies’ needs” (p. 59). The educational policies, responding to economic criteria, present a double claim. “On the one hand, in favor of a major educational investment and, on the other hand, in favor of reducing the knowledge considered useless and tiring when they do are not clearly related to a practice or interest” (Laval, 2004, p. 59). The justification for this change of scenario is expressed in the possibility of schooling creating personal, social and economic well-being.

The creation of new educational profiles, densified by generic capacities and competencies, is potentiated by the importance of innovation, interpreted on the basis of the presuppositions of Schumpeter – which we will further discuss in the next section. The universities and other educational institutions are urged to approach businesses, establishing various partnerships and collaborations. According to Laval, the above condition shows the meaning of education that is reinforced based on neoliberalism – the formation of “assets”. Such individuals, economically potentiated to compete, are led to pursue “the application of strategic knowledge in exercising a specialized profession or an activity considered socially useful” (Laval, 2004, pp. 78-79).

We find a point of convergence between the academic productions of Sibilia (2012) and Laval (2004) – about the relations concerning the production of an educational innovation – in the systematization proposed by Bauman (2008). According to this sociologist, under the cultural conditions of the present stage of Modernity, subjectivities are manufactured focusing on a “detachment” and a search for new solutions. In his words, “The life success (and so the rationality) of postmodern men and women depends on the speed with which they manage to get rid of old habits, rather than on the quick acquisition of new ones” (Bauman, 2008, p. 161). Not becoming attached to standards, pre-established habits and educational experiences is presented as essential. This suggests new relations with time and with knowledge.

As regards time, Baumann shows the emergence of an episodic relationship. Differently from earlier centuries, when time was perceived continuously, cumulatively and directionally, contemporaneity is outlined in a fragmentary, “episodic” dimension, in this author’s view. Under these conditions, he argues that “each episode has only itself to supply all the sense and purpose
it needs or is able to muster to keep it on course and to see it through” (Bauman, 2008, p. 163).

Another relationship concerns knowledge itself, the raw material of the teaching activity, which ensured stability of the processes of human education (Bildung), through cultural transmission. The legitimacy of Bildung is questioned, among other reasons, by the predominance of instrumentalist concepts demarcated by occupational training.

Under these circumstances, short term, ad hoc professional training, administered by the employers and guided directly towards the jobs that are in view, or the flexible courses and the (rapidly used) “learn on your own” kits, offered on the market by extra-university media, become attractive (and actually a more reasonable choice) than a completely new university education, which is no longer able to promise, much less guarantee, a lifelong career (Bauman, 2008, p. 168).

In this direction we find that educational policies for Secondary Education are directed towards their attachment to a logic of economic development (Tello & Mainardes, 2014). However, in our view, this directioning is also expressed in the curricular choices made at this stage of education, strengthening a logic focused on pedagogical innovations. Innovating becomes an educational imperative of our time insofar as the student approaches the status a customer (Laval, 2004), knowledge acquires a competitive connotation (Laval, 2004) and human education is reduced to occupational training (Bauman, 2008). Exploring the hypothesis of Laval, we shall perform a few historical digressions, situating the emergence of this logic of innovations in one of the main 20th century economists.

2. Schumpeter’s economy of innovations: a few digressions

The image of worship of novelties and an optimistic bet on creativity are not unknown figures in the course of history. Different sectors, social groups, political or entrepreneurial movements have already advocated these issues. However, currently innovation appears as essential to the very development of capitalism (Fontenelle, 2012). From the organizational perspective we perceive the predominance of different forms of management in which, with more or less intensity, “innovation is attached to the concept of usefulness – it is creativity put into practice – and it actually means creativity in the service of the process of creating value for organizations” (Fontenelle, 2012, p. 101). Under these conditions, we encounter a context in which it has become “impossible to disagree” with the discursive apparatus that establishes innovation as an explanatory principle (Laval, 2004).

From the curricular perspective, we have found varied results of research that approach this consideration. Fabris and Dall’igna (2013) describe the processes of manufacturing innovative teaching in the context of a program for initial teacher training in Brazil. Looking at Secondary Education in Brazil, Silva (2011) highlights the constitution of innovation as a permanent pedagogical attitude for teaching at this stage of basic education. In order to outline the ways in which this logic of innovations was engendered over the course of the 20th century, we will present a few historical digressions, seeking to understand the context of the economic doctrines of that period. Before this, there should be a proviso: we acknowledge that contemporary capitalism presents other outlines
and faces new contingencies, different from the context of the first half of last century.

The emergence of the logic of permanent innovation characteristic of contemporary capitalism can be found in the economic ideas of Joseph Schumpeter (Fontenelle, 2012; Laval, 2004). This Austrian economist, who worked at American universities from the 1930s onward, developed major contributions to the study of economic cycles. The transition between the different economic cycles (long, medium and short) described and characterized by the author was to occur through the vector of innovations. “The stimulus to begin a new economic cycle was to come mainly from the technological innovations introduced by entrepreneurial businesspeople” (Sandroni, 1999, p. 547). According to this argument, the changes in cycle come from innovative processes.

According to Sandroni (1999), in a well-known dictionary of Economics, Schumpeter’s thinking refers to the importance of entrepreneurial businesspeople. “Without daring businesspeople and their proposals of technological innovation, the economy would remain in a position of static balance” (Sandroni, 1999, p. 547). Thus, technological innovations occupy a privileged space.

Schumpeter considers “technological innovations” to be five categories of factors: manufacturing a new good, the introduction of a new method of production, the opening of a new market, the conquest of a new source of raw materials, the carrying out of a new economic organization, such as establishing a situation of monopoly (Sandroni, 1999, p. 547).

In an exercise of systematization, Sandroni (1999) indicates that one of Schumpeter’s main formulations is that of “investment opportunities”, an essential situation for economic development. The author’s thinking operates from the perspective of producing new markets, outlined by seizing opportunities¹, which are induced by innovation. Even though Marx had already stated previously that capitalism progresses through crises, destroying productive forces, Schumpeter’s thinking indicates that capitalism advances through the dynamics of the innovations performed by the action of entrepreneurs, as we pointed out previously. With this approach, which is influential in contemporary times, the emphasis of the capitalist practices is shifted from the capital or labor to the permanent opening of new opportunities. We will expand this approach below with a brief historical incursion into Schumpeter’s economic thinking.

The economic investigation developed by Schumpeter considers the revolutionary changes that occurred within a particular period of central importance. The problem of economic development, as theorized by the author, is distant from traditional interpretative models, insofar as development is considered “only such changes in economic life as are not forced upon it from without but arise by its own initiative, from within” (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 74). Thus, according to this view, the phenomenon is not justified by strictly economic reasons, but is led by changes triggered in the non-economic world, i.e. the broader social world.

Development would not be equivalent to economic growth in Schumpeter’s sense, because economic growth does not give rise to new events, changes of data or new directions. This is important from the point of view of the
reconstruction of the author's thinking, insofar as "every process of development creates the prerequisites for the following" (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 74). Since every development process is based on the previous one, new directions could be created permanently, moving away from stabilization or balance. Ultimately, Schumpeter sees development as "spontaneous and discontinuous change in the channel of the circular flow, disturbance of equilibrium which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing" (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 75). In other words, development corresponds to a permanent search for innovation.

Like the classical economists, the author considers the importance of meeting the needs of the consumers or the demands of a given market. However, from his economic perspective, the producers are the ones responsible for inducing economic changes by permanently creating "new combinations". The consumers, according to this view, are "taught to want new things, or things which differ in some respect or other from those which they have been in the habit of using" (p. 76). One should consider the consumers' demands, but permanently lead them to taking different attitudes. When discussing the notion of "new combinations", Schumpeter refers both to the development of new enterprises and to redirecting the already existing ones.

The slow and continuous increase in time of the national supply of productive means and of savings is obviously an important factor in explaining the course of economic history through centuries, but it is completely overshadowed by the fact that development consists primarily in employing existing resources in a different way, in doing new things with them, irrespective of whether those resources increase or not (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 78; emphasis added).

Although conventional factors such as credit are relevant, Schumpeter prefers to observe the production of innovations via the notion of "enterprise". In his approach, "the carrying out of new combinations we call 'enterprise'; the individuals whose function it is to carry them out we call 'entrepreneurs'" (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 83). Enterprises, then, are led by entrepreneurs who are capable of carrying out new combinations. The entrepreneur described by Schumpeter should not be confounded with a capitalist (the owner of capital, in classical economics), but is rather associated with a function or attitude.

The carrying out of new combinations as the attribution of the entrepreneur is seen as a special function. "Therefore, entrepreneurs are a special type, and their behavior a special problem, the motive power of a great number of significant phenomena" (Schumpeter, 1997, pp. 88-89). Schumpeter positions the search for new knowledge that could bring a business close to a state of perfection in connection with the entrepreneur's behavior.

To be sure, his own intentions are never realized with ideal perfection, but ultimately his behavior is molded by the influence on him of the results of his conduct, so as to fit circumstances which do not as a rule change suddenly. If a business can never be absolutely perfect in any sense, yet it in time approaches a relative perfection having regard to the surrounding world, the social conditions, the knowledge of the time, and the horizon of each individual or each group. New possibilities are continuously being offered by the surrounding world, in particular new discoveries are continuously being added to the existing store of knowledge (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 79).
In the constitution of innovations, according to the reasoning offered by Schumpeter, another relevant aspect concerns the development of leadership. The figure of the leader starts from an effort of will (close to mental freedom), which is essential to produce “scope and time for conceiving and working out the new combination and to bring oneself to look upon it as a real possibility and not merely as a day-dream” (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 93). The entrepreneurial type of leadership obstinately seeks success, in which they attempt to seize “the immediate chance and nothing else” (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 95). In other words, the leadership of Schumpeter’s entrepreneur is based on two dispositions, namely: the will to conquer and the joy of creating.

According to the Austrian economist, the will to conquer is materialized in a particular feeling of power and by the instigating wish to compete. [It is] the impulse to fight, to prove oneself superior to others, to succeed for the sake, not of the fruits of success, but of success itself. From this aspect, economic action becomes akin to sport – there are financial races or rather boxing-matches. The financial result is a secondary consideration, or, at all events, mainly valued as an index of success and as a symptom of victory, the displaying of which very often is more important as a motive of large expenditure than the wish for the consumers’ goods themselves.

The other disposition close to the will to conquer is the joy of creating, which, according to Schumpeter, is the will to do new things, or the joy of “simply exercising one’s energy and ingenuity” (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 99). The engine of economic development, from this perspective, rejoices in the “adventure” and its possibilities. Schumpeter’s entrepreneur, finally, permanently seeks innovations, meaning enterprises that can create new combinations, inducing processes of change through two dispositions that are part of their behavior: the will to conquer and the joy of creating.

As we pointed out in the first section of this text, there is a contemporary tendency to attribute central importance, in the curricular policies for Secondary Education, to the issues of pedagogical innovation and the development of skills. Realizing that this perspective derives from a particular form of economic thinking developed during the 20th century, in this section we revisited the thinking of Schumpeter to approach some of his notions. The outstanding aspects were the will to conquer and the joy of creating as essential contributions to human education under the emerging conditions of contemporary capitalism. We will now present, in an articulated manner, an analysis of four documents produced by multilateral agencies to guide curriculum reforms in Latin America. The most visible aspect is a creative and innovative view of human education which will promote abilities and opportunities and, at the same time, will constitute subjects that are protagonists for a community of learners.

3. Between capacities and opportunities: curricular policies for Secondary Education under discussion

In 2011, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean published a document called “Invertir en juventud” [Investing in Youth] through which its regional report ascribed central importance to the investments to be made in Latin American and Caribbean youth. In its preface, it pointed out that this objective was relevant insofar as the region perceived such investments as
an opportunity and at the same time a need. Investment in youth was characterized as an opportunity insofar as the region is currently going through a period of demographic transition, in which the significant number of people above the age of fifteen is a “bonus” for economic and social development. As shown by the document, this demographic bonus is “a huge window of opportunities for the countries, since it means a larger proportion of population with the capacity to work, produce, save and invest” (CEPAL, 2011, p. 6).

Likewise, the investment in youth was evidenced as a need. This argument was justified because the “demographic bonus” would not last forever; in other words, it was necessary to make use of the good moment to accumulate income to ensure the costs of the future (represented by various types of pensions). Another aspect of the need referred to the promotion of cohesion and social development, combating the great inequalities in the region. Having set the challenge, the document pointed out its urgency.

Youth cannot wait: it requires an offer of possibilities for the development of its potentials and prospects of social and occupational mobility over the life cycle, which will allow strengthening their feeling of belonging; and this should be the generation of youths who will manage to revert the reproduction of inequality and poverty throughout their life cycle (CEPAL, 2011, pp. 6-7; emphasis added).

The challenge set in the composition of the document concerns the production of investments in youth, both from an individual perspective and collectively. There is a political commitment to develop policies that produce opportunities and develop capacities in young people in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the words of the preface of the cited document, “the capacity to make use of the potential of its young population now is what will define the future of the countries” (CEPAL, 2011, p. 7). It is suggested that investment in youth means acknowledging that they are protagonists of regional development, as long as their rights are guaranteed and they receive an education that will promote capacities and opportunities.

The composition of this agenda of investments in the schooling of young people can also be seen in a document published by the World Bank during the period before the elections in Brazil in 2014, aiming to give recommendations to the new Minister of Education who was to take office. Pointing at the results achieved by Brazil in the last two decades, the document “Atingindo uma educação de nível mundial no Brasil: próximos passos” [Achieving a world level education in Brazil: the next steps] takes a favorable position regarding the “wave of innovative reforms” currently ongoing in the country at different levels. It claims that these innovations, attached to the insertion of national education into a competitive world and the consolidation of the large scale evaluations, will become more relevant and productive if investments were made in new skills that are more appropriate for the new century.

Emphasizing the labor market, the document produced in the aforementioned economic organization highlights a set of educational propositions aimed at the next generation of Brazilian workers. Outstanding among other propositions is the need for “graduates able to think analytically, ask critical questions, learn new skills and operate with a high level of interpersonal and communication skills, which includes a good command of foreign languages and the capacity to work effectively in a team” (Banco
These “21st century skills” should be developed at all stages of schooling; however, Secondary Education should be a priority target to the extent that it prioritizes the balance between academic education and professional education, as signaled by the excerpt below.

A few promising paths to improve Secondary Education in Brazil can be grouped according to the following categories: universal strategies (curriculum and training reform, large investments in infrastructure for a longer school day and eliminating evening school, improving the quality of teachers); demonstration schools (full time, well-funded secondary schools that both test innovations and show that high quality secondary schools are feasible); and public-private partnerships in technical and vocational education (to ensure an easy transition to the labor market for secondary school graduates who do not go on to higher education, by guiding the vocational content of the curriculum to the skills that are locally demanded). The private sector also is supporting school management based on results (World Bank, 2014, pp. 7-8; emphasis added).

This investment in 21st century skills can also be found in a document published by UNESCO, in 2014, aimed at the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Entitled “BRICS: Building education for the future”, the document compiles orientations to drive the development of education in these countries, encouraging international cooperation and serving as an example for other developing economies. Although the BRICS countries have achieved a significant advance in education in the last few decades, the UNESCO document lists a number of issues to be examined by the aforementioned countries, outstanding among which is an emphasis on basic education, higher education and the development of skills.

As regards the schooling of children and adolescents, which is the focus of our study, one can see a set of efforts towards investing in economic skills, aiming at broadening the development and diversification of the productive sectors, as pointed out by the excerpt below.

BRICS need to create complex skills development systems in order to diversify their economic base, reduce their dependence on exporting raw materials, add more value to goods and services, and foster innovation and new economic activities. To that end, top priorities include: defining or implementing national qualifications frameworks, thus facilitating the recognition of informal training and work experience; expanding and upgrading the technical and vocational track of secondary and higher education; and giving companies incentives to train their workers. BRICS also need to expand training programs that target disadvantaged youth and adults (UNESCO, 2014, p. 3; emphasis added).

The document also stresses how important it is for the BRICS countries to participate in a world trend to construct policies for skill development. This should be implemented by filling a gap in the relations between education and work, as these policies include a “broad range of skills required for economic growth and the diverse channels through which they may be acquired, such as initial technical and vocational education and training, higher education, continuing training and workplace learning” (UNESCO, 2014, pp. 34-35). There is, then, an understanding of the need to improve the quality and relevance of the skills acquired during schooling, above all by adjusting them to the labor markets.

Beyond the emphasis on development of skills through the promotion of capacities and opportunities, investment in Secondary Education acquires specific nuances in the document “Curricular prototypes of Secondary Education
and Integrated Secondary Education”, published by UNESCO in Brazil, in 2011. In this political text the assumptions indicated in the previous documents take on a curricular connotation, specifying routes and possibilities of intervention. In the “Curricular prototypes" we find a productive articulation between emphasis on economic opportunities and a centrality in pedagogical innovations. Around this the enhancement of the students’ activities and the development of their protagonism are reiterated.

School is the best known social unit and work environment, near and common to all students. It is a good point of departure for experimentation and carrying out investigation (research) processes and individual and collective activities for transformation (work) which will require the protagonism of the young and the teachers in constructing and developing a learning community (UNESCO, 2011, p. 11; emphasis added).

The prototypes signal the urgency of betting on “pedagogical forms that privilege the student’s activity in developing their capacities and in constructing their knowledge” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 15). Innovation is taken as a fundamental characteristic of the proposed curricula insofar as, in their view, “the methodology centered on the lecture by the teacher and the transmission of finished and decontextualized contents or knowledge is relegated to the background” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 15). Another shift that can be seen in the prototypes concerns the school knowledge to be selected, which is replaced “by the definition of learning activities” (p. 22). Thus we find the practices developed by the students themselves at the center.

Objectively, we point out that throughout this text we try to show the contemporary directing of curricular policies for Secondary Education toward the development of capacities as a curricular imperative, associated with youth protagonism as a pedagogical objective. This scene is further strengthened under the pedagogical conditions of our time, as it prioritizes innovation as an indispensable attribute, just as it potentiates a concept of knowledge centered on the capacity to compete and reduces human education to “occupational training” (Bauman, 2008). The current capitalist arrangement, expressed in Schumpeter’s thinking, by favoring innovation and creativity, creates the conditions for a permanent search for “new combinations”, triggered by two basic assumptions: the will to conquer and the joy of creating. In future studies we shall continue to examine the curricular policies for Secondary Education, producing diagnoses about their connection with particular political rationalities.

Notes
1. This approach is different from the one currently proposed by Amartya Sen, who tries to articulate economics and ethics (Kerstenetzky, 2000).

References


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