

THE KNOWLEDGE CONCEPTION OF THE COMMON NATIONAL CURRICULUM BASE FOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF CRITICAL THEORIES

LA CONCEPCIÓN DE CONOCIMIENTO DE LA BASE CURRICULAR NACIONAL COMÚN PARA LA EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA: UN ANÁLISIS A LA LUZ DE LAS TEORÍAS CRÍTICAS

A CONCEPÇÃO DE CONHECIMENTO DA BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR PARA O ENSINO MÉDIO: UMA ANÁLISE À LUZ DE TEORIAS CRÍTICAS

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Manuscript received on: May 4, 2023.

Approved on: March 6, 2024.

Published on: April 16, 2024.

Abstract

The present paper, of a theoretical nature and inscribed in the field of education, aims to identify the conception of knowledge present in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCCEM), in addition to the possible implications resulting from this conception. The selected methodological procedure corresponds to a systematic literature review and documentary research. Part of the theoretical foundation includes authors from the Critical Theory of Society, the Historical-Cultural Theory, and the Historical-Critical Pedagogy. It is inferred that the conception of knowledge presumed in the document refers to the practical applicability of the contents and does not develop its reflexive and self-reflexive character, subjecting the student to a semi-formation. This conclusion reaffirms the need to think about strategies to face this reality, fighting for training spaces guided by concrete human objectives.

Keywords: Education; Curriculum Reform; Critical Theory of Culture; Socio-Historical-Cultural Theory; Historical-critical pedagogy.

Resumen

Este artículo, de carácter teórico e inscrito en el campo de la educación, tiene como objetivo identificar la concepción de conocimiento presente en la Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCCEM), además de las posibles implicaciones resultantes de esta concepción. El procedimiento metodológico elegido corresponde a la revisión sistemática de literatura e investigación documental. Una parte de la fundamentación teórica incluye autores de la Teoría Crítica de la Sociedad, la Teoría Histórico-Cultural y la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica. Se infiere que

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la concepción del conocimiento que se presume en el documento remite a una aplicabilidad práctica de los contenidos y no desarrolla su carácter reflexivo y autorreflexivo, lo que somete al estudiante a una semi-formación. Esta conclusión reafirma la necesidad de pensar estrategias para enfrentar esta realidad, luchando por espacios formativos orientados por objetivos humanos concretos.

Palabras llave: Educación; Reforma Curricular; Teoría Crítica de la Cultura; Teoría Socio-Histórico-Cultural; Pedagogía histórico-crítica.

Resumo

O presente artigo, de caráter teórico e inscrito no campo da educação, tem o objetivo de identificar a concepção de conhecimento presente na Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), além das possíveis implicações decorrentes dessa concepção. O procedimento metodológico selecionado corresponde à revisão de literatura sistemática e à pesquisa documental. Parte da fundamentação teórica compreende autores da Teoria Crítica da Sociedade, da Teoria Histórico-cultural e da Pedagogia Histórico-crítica. Infere-se que a concepção de conhecimento presumida no documento faz referência a uma aplicabilidade prática dos conteúdos e não desenvolve seu caráter reflexivo e autorreflexivo, submetendo o estudante à uma semiformação. Essa conclusão reafirma a necessidade de se pensar estratégias para enfrentar essa realidade, lutando por espaços formativos orientados por objetivos humanos concretos.

Palavras-chave: Educação; Reforma do Currículo; Teoria Crítica da Cultura; Teoria Sócio-Histórico-Cultural; Pedagogia Histórico-crítica.

Introduction

The purpose of education, according to historical-critical pedagogy, is to transmit the historical legacy built up by humanity. In this way, this theory takes up the historical struggle for the emancipation of humanity. To this end, students must be guaranteed access to the most developed knowledge in the scientific, artistic, and philosophical fields (Saviani, 2013).

According to Theodor W. Adorno (2005), this knowledge is inherent to what he calls cultural formation. The cultural formation is the object of reflection and the development of consciousness, and through which the bourgeoisie rose economically and achieved its emancipation from the feudal system. However, after taking power, instead of universally socializing this knowledge for the development of free and equal beings "[...] the dominant parties monopolized cultural formation in a formally empty society" (Adorno, 2005, p. 5). And so, historically, this knowledge was denied to the less favored and underprivileged classes and placed at the service of capital.

The school, as the main body responsible for formal education, is faced with a double challenge: "[...] socializing the highest knowledge, while criticizing the ideologies that distort and invert reality" (Ferreira, 2019, p. 60). These ideologies, represented by hegemonic educational conceptions, argue that knowledge, taken in the form of school content, should meet the immediate interests of students, prioritizing technical and instrumental rationality. Based on the precepts of efficiency and effectiveness, reforms and curricular proposals for education are presented to society as a possibility for progress and change.

This discourse of progress and change is presented as new, although it recovers an argument already made in the 1990s, known as "dusty", as criticized by Silva (2018a). This argument is stressed out especially about the National Common Core Curriculum for secondary education (BNCCEM). The function of the National Common Core Curriculum for Secondary Education (BNCCEM) is to help implement the reform of this level of education, proposed by Law 13.415/2017. The justifications presented now were part of the curriculum regulations of that period: the National Curriculum Guidelines for secondary education of 1998 and the National Curriculum Parameters of 1999.

The studies by Barbosa (2021), Lourenço (2021), Silva (2018a) and Vieira and Feijó (2018) indicates the subordination of knowledge in relation to competences in the BNCCEM. By reading them, the following questions are asked: is there a concept of knowledge in this document? If so, what does it refer to? Is it in the sense of historically accumulated human wealth? Or is it aligned with an instrumental perspective?

Faced with these questions and to answer them, this theoretical educational article aims to identify the concept of knowledge present in the BNCCEM, as well as the possible implications arising from this concept. It is not about the disciplinary content of the foundation, but rather the place of knowledge in its text, whether it is possible to infer its subordination to competences.

Barbosa (2021, p. 60) states "[...] that the BNCC operates from a narrow view of education, and neglects its emancipatory dimension, assuming a utilitarian and regulatory sense, of an education subject to control and economic logic". In this sense, we start from the hypothesis that the concept of knowledge in the document will refer to a practical and unreflective applicability. It subjects the student to semi-formalization.

This conception is contrary to what some authors of critical theories advocate, especially Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

This work is justified by the impacts that a common base, which is intended to guide the curricula of basic education, can generate by relegating knowledge. This common base would be de-characterizing the central role of the school and the curriculum which, according to Saviani (2013, p. 17), is responsible for organizing "[...] the set of core activities distributed in school space and time", selecting the most developed knowledge.

The methodological procedure selected is a systematic literature review and documentary research. The methodology will be explained in more detail in the next section. Then, we promote a debate of competency-oriented high school education. At the discussion, we argue about the concept of knowledge in the BNCCEM and, finally, the main conclusions of this article.

Methodology

The methodology was a systematic literature review and documentary research. The aim of the systematic literature review was to establish direct contact with scientific documents on the proposed topic, in sources that "are already recognized in the scientific domain" (Oliveira, 2007, p. 69), with previously defined search criteria. In this procedure, we (a) sought to identify data or theoretical categories already worked on by other researchers to (b) contextualize the problem within the area of study and (c) guide the documentary research; and (d) also guide the contributions of the analytical studies contained in the texts to be clear about the main theoretical-methodological issues pertinent to the topic (Severino, 2016).

Two searches were carried out on August 12, 2022, on the SciELO (*Scientific Electronic Library Online*) Brazil platform. This is a digital platform with freely accessible content. It is home to numerous works in the field of education. Since the construction of the BNCCEM began in 2015, but was only finalized in 2018, it was decided to delimit the time frame of the works to be researched between 2017, the year before the final version, and 2022; the same year in which this literature review was completed.

In the first attempt, the keywords searched were: knowledge (and) national common curriculum base (or) BNCC (and) secondary education. The results found covered the years 2017 to 2021. For a better delineation, the following filters were used: - Subject areas: Human Sciences, Applied Social Sciences, Linguistics, Letters and Arts; - Type of literature: Article and review article. In this way, 75 articles were selected. After reading the titles, ten studies remained, and after reading the abstracts, five articles were selected for full reading.

In the second attempt, the keywords used were: common national curriculum (and) secondary education. The results found covered the years 2017 to 2021. For a better delineation, the following filters were applied: - Subject areas: Human Sciences, Applied Social Sciences, Linguistics, Letters and Arts; - Type of literature: Article and review article. In this way, 22 articles were selected. After reading the titles, seven studies remained, and after reading the abstracts, four articles were selected for full reading.

The third search took place on August 13, 2022, on the CAPES Periodicals Portal since it gathers and makes available to teaching and research institutions a vast national and international scientific production. The same time frame was used as for the previous searches. The keywords used were knowledge (and) common national curriculum. The results found covered the years 2017 to 2022. We delimited the study by using the following filters: - Articles; - Peer-reviewed journals. After that, 162 articles were selected. After reading the titles, 24 studies remained, and after reading the abstracts, 11 articles were selected for full reading.

Once the review was completed, the aim of the documentary research was to analyze, characterize and draw up summaries that could provide greater knowledge of the object in question: the concept of knowledge present in the BNCCEM. This analysis technique sought to identify information in the document based on questions and hypotheses of interest, according to Lüdke and Andre (1986).

As for the analysis and interpretation of the data, content analysis was used, which has some methodological characteristics such as: "objectivity, systematization and inference" (Gerhardt; Silveira, 2009, p. 84). According to Bauer (2002), this type of analysis aims to understand the subject's thoughts through the content expressed in

the texts. By doing this type of analysis, the researcher seeks to categorize the words or phrases that are repeated, or do not appear, and the characteristics of this content, perceiving from this an expression that represents them. A systematic criterion was then developed for analyzing the data, guided by the theoretical and conceptual perspective presented below.

Competency-oriented high school education

Basic education, aimed at the emancipation of individuals, should promote autonomy and freedom through the development of a critical sense and reflective thinking. However, according to Adorno (2005), an education guided by capitalist assumptions, which does not guarantee this freedom, results in pseudo-education.

Pseudo-training is the same as false training. It does not induce the subject to reflect critically. It rather alienates them to the immediate interests of the market, in which "[...] knowledge is reduced to information, rejecting the experience and wisdom accumulated over thousands of years" (Galuch; Crochik, 2016, p. 241). Content takes on a secondary role to the ability to learn how to learn. It is argued that knowledge is already available to everyone and, therefore, priority is given to acquiring skills related to applying it to solve problems in everyday life.

Valuing form over content does not allow for a mediated understanding of phenomena at their roots, but tends to remain on the surface and not go beyond appearances. For this reason, pseudo-training reduces knowledge and acts to maintain capitalist society (Galuch; Crochik, 2016), since an adapted subject conforms to reality and does not see ways of transforming it.

Education based on a revolutionary conception of the world understands that the knowledge produced collectively constitutes a heritage of humanity responsible for the development of society. According to Leontiev (2004), the knowledge of the present generation is formed from the appropriation of the knowledge of previous generations. Knowledge is therefore not given and inherent to man's biological nature, but acquired and passed on between men in the educational process.

The school, as the main instrument of formal education, is responsible for preserving and passing on the knowledge accumulated from time to time. When dealing with the influence of the environment on the child's development, Vygotsky (2018a, p. 91) says that the development of higher psychic functions arises, exceptionally, "[...] as a form of collaboration with other people. Only then do they become individual internal functions[...]" . In this way, the school takes on the role of mediator between the student and knowledge, until it is incorporated by the student and becomes an instrument to be used to satisfy their needs.

However, there is little or no point in guaranteeing access to such knowledge if it does not contribute to critical thinking, because, as Galuch and Crochik (2016, p. 256) state, "[...] both education that considers culture to be an end in itself and education that is aimed at adapting to existing conditions are faces of pseudo-education". For this reason, school knowledge can only be justified if it provides a critical understanding that is closer to concrete reality.

Pedagogical work from a historical-critical perspective does not deal with just any content. It deals with content that provides the student with a "[...] new mental attitude and an appropriate response to social problems" (Gasparin, 2012, p. 52). In the same vein, Saviani (2008) emphasizes that when faced with the task of identifying what knowledge needs to be assimilated, the definition of the classic becomes fundamental. That is so because it is this concept that will guide the selection of the core contents of the curriculum. Schooling through this knowledge would therefore be in the interest of workers and workers' children. It is so due the ruling class's restricted access to such knowledge made cultural training a privilege.

Adorno (2005) argues that privileged access to knowledge and its monopoly by the bourgeoisie as a form of domination implies that

Education was not just a sign of the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, nor was it just the privilege by which the bourgeoisie got ahead of people of little wealth and peasants. Without cultural training, it would have been difficult for the bourgeoisie to develop as entrepreneurs, managers or employees. [...] The dominant classes monopolized cultural education in a formally empty society. The dehumanization implemented by the capitalist production process denied workers all the prerequisites for training and, above all, leisure (Adorno, 2005, p. 5).

For this reason, educational legislation, such as Law 13.415/2017, which instituted thereform of secondary education, by fragmenting general knowledge into itineraries, removes the opportunity for a more solid general education and weakens the sense of thisstage as basic education (Silva, 2018a).

This fragmentation promotes an unequal distribution of knowledge. This is a result of social and economic inequality itself, as well as the social division of labor. Some people are responsible for low-complexity material or even intellectual work, while othersare responsible for more complex and socially valued intellectual work, and it is not necessary for both to receive the same training.

For Leontiev (2004, p. 277), "[...] the concentration of material wealth in the hands of a dominant class is accompanied by an intellectual concentration in the same hands". Inthis way, intellectual culture, although it seems to be available to everyone, is only accessible to a minority. This results in a majority that must be fine with the minimum that is offered to them within the social functions to which they are subjected.

Aligned with this understanding are the so-called hegemonic pedagogies, such as the pedagogy of learning to learn (Duarte, 2001) and the pedagogy of competencies (Ramos, 2008), for example. The last one aim to train flexible, adaptable and competitive individuals. They advocate learning geared towards solving problems in everyday life and value form over the quality of what is learned. Some of these characteristics can be seen inthe high school reform proposal (Brasil, 2017).

According to Law 13.415/2017, part of the curriculum will consist of general education (according to the learning rights and objectives defined by the BNCCEM) up to a maximum of 1,800 hours; and a diversified part of up to 1,200 hours consisting of one of five possible training itineraries: "[...] I - Languages and their technologies; II - Mathematics and its technologies; III - Natural sciences and their technologies; IV - Applied human and social sciences; V - Technical and professional training" (Brazil, 2017, Art. 36). Students must opt for one or more of these itineraries according to the possibilities of each educational institution.

Choosing one or more itineraries, rather than all of them, provides for a tapering off of a period of schooling that should be general, with all the content of the four areas

of knowledge. In some cases, it also provides professional and technological training. According to the 2018 National Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Education (DCNEM), "[...] the offer of training itineraries must consider the structural possibilities and resources of the educational institutions or networks" (Brasil, 2018a, Art. 12, item IV, § 8). Therefore, even if the law applies to all schools, while private institutions may have the infrastructure to offer all the itineraries, public institutions will depend on public funding to build or expand laboratories, hire staff, provide specialized training for teachers. In that cases, students will be limited to what the school can offer.

It's important to note that one of the Temer government's measures (2016-2017), prior to Provisional Measure No. 746/2016, which initially instituted the reform of secondary education, was the proposed Constitutional Amendment 241, later Bill 55/2016 and finally PEC 95/2016. This last one implemented the New Fiscal Regime, starting in 2017. The Constitutional Amendment 95 limits public spending for 20 years and institutes strict restrictions on the country's primary spending, freezing investments in essential areas such as health and education.

For this reason, educational reforms do not always represent an improvement, but can have the opposite effect, as Adorno (2005) points out when he says that

Isolated pedagogical reforms, which are indispensable, make no substantial contribution. They could even, on certain occasions, reinforce the crisis, because they soften the necessary demands to be made on those who must be educated and because they reveal an innocent unconcern about the power that extra-pedagogical reality exerts over them (Adorno, 2005, p. 2).

The current reform of secondary education (Brasil, 2017), by proposing training itineraries, without all of them being guaranteed by public schools, could worsen the quality of education for the most vulnerable by ignoring the extra-pedagogical reality of the different regions of the country. Since, when the nearest school, or the only one in the city, doesn't offer all the options to the student, the young person's education will be compromised.

The Ministry of Education (MEC) provides for a series of mechanisms: the BNCCEM, the DCNEM, the National High School Exam (ENEM), the Common National Base for teacher training (BNC-Formação), the National Textbook Program (PNLD) and

the National Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) (Brasil, 2018c). A wide-ranging and articulated set of devices that go from the curriculum, through assessment systems, to the training of future teachers.

With regard to the BNCCEM, although the document states that it does not constitute the high school curriculum itself, it guides

[...] the essential learning to be guaranteed to all students and **guides the (re)elaboration of curricula and pedagogical proposals**, both with regard to the specific scope of the BNCC and with regard to the organization and proposal of training itineraries (Brasil, 2018b, p. 471, emphasis added).

Institutions will consider their own characteristics to build their curricula, but what the document does not provide is the necessary support for all of them, from the most to the least structured, to be able to do so. Therefore, from being guiding, it becomes prescriptive, expressing its regulatory and restrictive dimension of the learning that will be part of the curriculum (Silva, 2018b).

These essential lessons, according to the 2018 DCNEM,

[...] are those that develop competencies and skills understood as **knowledge in action**, with meaning for life, expressed in cognitive, professional and socio-emotional practices, attitudes and values that are continuously mobilized, articulates and integrated, to **solve complex demands of everyday life**, the exercise of citizenship and **action in the world of work** (Brazil, 2018a, Art. 7 § 3, emphasis added).

The terms underlined give what the document understands as essential: the ability to do, characterized using knowledge to solve everyday problems and meet the demands of the job market.

The BNCCEM defines a list of competencies and skills that will make up the graduate profile. In its introduction, it explains the concept of competences as follows:

In the BNCC, competence is defined as the **mobilization of knowledge** (concepts and procedures), skills (practical, cognitive and socio-emotional), attitudes and values to solve the complex demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work (Brasil, 2018b, p. 8, emphasis added).

The competences are therefore in line with the essential learning defined by the 2018 DCNEM, since "mobilizing knowledge" to solve everyday demands is like "putting it into action", reaffirming the pragmatic and utilitarian aspect expected of the teaching and learning process in secondary education.

This is why competences should not necessarily be considered as a type of knowledge, but rather as a way of knowing how to do a given singular situation (Carvalho;Martins, 2013). Based on this, and considering the studies by Silva (2018a), in which she states that in the BNCC competences and skills overlap with knowledge, and by Lourenço (2021, p. 230), whose study concludes that a critical reading of the BNCC text "[...] allows us to speculate about the secondary place occupied by knowledge and the intellectualization of students", the next topic will seek to identify, based on critical theories and other research on the subject, whether there is an explicit conception of knowledge in this document, as well as the possible implications arising from this conception.

The Conception of Knowledge in the BNCCEM

In general, it can be said that the Critical Theory of Society, Historical-Cultural Theory and Historical-Critical Pedagogy are based on a materialist interpretation of society - of a Marxist nature³ and multidisciplinary (with contributions from sociology, philosophy, psychology and psychoanalysis). According to Netto (2011, p. 44), theoretical knowledge is, for Marx, knowledge of the concrete, of the essence of phenomena that is not immediately available to thought, which is why "[...] it must be reproduced by it and only 'the reverse journey' [towards the concrete thought] allows this reproduction". It is essential to understand the multiple determinations of knowledge to arrive at the concrete knowledge of the object. The more thought reproduces them, the more it expresses the concretization of reality.

³ Marxist: theoretical system composed of authors who adopt the principles and philosophical basis that emerge from the work of Karl Heinrich Marx [1818-1883] (Bottomore, 1988, p. 243)

Knowledge, from this perspective, are concepts and theories that constitute syntheses of the historical appropriation of material and socio-cultural existence. Their production requires a method that starts from the empirical and, through analysis, arrives at the general relationships that determine and constitute the totality. After this analysis, a synthesis is drawn up that represents the whole, now as a reproduction of thought guided by the determinations of reality (Marx, 2008). While for the Critical Theory of Society knowledge is power, and is therefore not neutral, Historical-Cultural Theory and Historical-Critical Pedagogy recognize this non-neutrality and defend the possibility of its objectivity and historicity (Lopes; Macedo, 2011).

For critical theorists of society, knowledge should be aligned with human interests and not just those of the financial market. Their texts question the unequal distribution of this knowledge. They stress the difference of distribution of knowledge not only in material and symbolic ways, but also the power in society because of this limited distribution (Lopes; Macedo, 2011). In the same vein, cultural - historical and historical - critical theorists add that knowledge refers to scientific, artistic and philosophical objectifications in their most developed forms; a dialog with the culture historically accumulated by humanity (Saviani, 2011; Vygotsky, 2018b).

With these assumptions in mind, we moved on to analyze the BNCCEM. It is composed as follows: presentation, introduction and structure of the document – common to all stages of basic education; a specific part for the respective areas of knowledge, and a technical file. To meet the objective of this study and answer the questions it raises, the document was analyzed from four aspects, defined based on the results of the literature review and the critical theories that made up the theoretical foundation. These are: the subordination of knowledge to competences; a lack of commitment to comprehensive education; the primacy of the Portuguese Language and Mathematics components; and a dual education proposal.

Right from the document's pedagogical foundations, present in the introduction, there is a mention of the priority that knowing how to do (skills) has over knowing (knowledge). At this point in the text, it is stated that

[...] the BNCC indicates that pedagogical decisions should be oriented towards the development of competences. By clearly indicating what students should 'know' (considering the constitution of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) and, **above all**, what they should '**know how to do**' (considering the mobilization of this knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to solve complex demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work), the explicitness of competences offers references for strengthening actions that ensure the essential learning defined in the BNCC (Brasil, 2018b, p. 13; emphasis added).

Despite the supposed concern with what the document calls essential learning, there is no conception of society, man or education in it, nor of the knowledge that should be prioritized at this stage of education. In the same vein, Vieira and Feijó (2018, p. 42) notice that even the concepts of competences, skills and subjects are not "minimally problematized", suppressing their differences. However, even if there is no explicit concept of knowledge, the intended training, focused on knowing how to do things, would be indicative of what the document advocates: a perception that the knowledge present in school should be utilitarian, pragmatic and reserved for productive activity.

Regardless of the importance that knowledge has in the curriculum, the BNCCEM assigns a secondary role to this issue. It corrupts the school's social function of transmitting humanity's historical legacy through systematized knowledge, which, according to Lourenço (2021), is typical of hegemonic curricular policies.

The centrality of competences in the curriculum produces what Adorno (2005) calls administered education, as it reinforces instrumental education. According to the author, education takes on this characteristic when (a) it is subject to control, (b) it is guided by interests external to individuals, and (c) it is subordinated to the logic of training for the job market. On this basis, it constitutes semi-formalization, aimed at adaptation and alienation. It is said that it ignores the historical-cultural dimension of human formation.

This leads to another point, also analyzed in the text, which is its commitment to comprehensive education, even though the document claims the opposite. It happens when the system promotes fragmented education through the itineraries. This issue was already discussed in the previous topic and suggests that this proposal removes the opportunity for a broader education. According to the BNCCEM

In the new global scenario, recognizing oneself in one's historical and cultural context, communicating, being creative, analytical-critical, participative, open to what is new, collaborative, resilient, productive and responsible requires much more than the accumulation of information. It requires the development of skills to learn how to learn, to know how to deal with increasingly available information, to act with discernment and responsibility in the contexts of digital cultures, to apply knowledge to solve problems, to have autonomy to make decisions, to be proactive in identifying the data in a situation and seeking solutions, to live with and learn from differences and diversity. In this context, the BNCC explicitly affirms its commitment to **comprehensive education** (Brasil, 2018b, p. 14, emphasis added).

The BNCCEM requires the development of competencies. It is an explicit affirmation of the commitment to comprehensive education. However, this concept of comprehensive education is not focused on human emancipation based on a broad cultural education that promotes reflection on oneself and society. Contradictorily, it sees the imposition of in-depth itineraries in only the chosen area as positive. From this perspective, only the knowledge that is part of this itinerary is considered useful (Kuenzer, 2017).

Another problem with replacing the historical disciplinary organization with training itineraries is that it would give a fundamentally general stage a kind of "early specialization", as Ferreti (2018, p. 31) observes. According to the author, condensing disciplines may seem attractive at first. However, adolescents will be forced to make a school and professional choice with little or no support as to how to go about it. This proposal for specialization runs counter to the understanding that the general content present in the four areas of knowledge is also professionalizing, insofar as a solid general education is an essential requirement for professional qualification (Ramos, 2010).

But this doesn't seem to be the BNCCEM's understanding when it prioritizes the Portuguese Language and Mathematics components, to the detriment of the other subjects. The text criticizes the curricular organization of secondary education prior to the document and explains that one of its problems was the excess of curricular components. According to the text,

Secondary education is the final stage of basic education, a subjective public right of every Brazilian citizen. However, the country's educational reality has shown that this stage represents a bottleneck in guaranteeing the right to education. Among the factors that explain this scenario are the insufficient

performance of students in the final years of elementary school, the current high school curriculum organization, with **too many curricular components**, and a pedagogical approach far removed from youth cultures and the world of work (Brasil, 2018b, p. 461, emphasis added).

Once again, there is no question as to which components both the high school reform and the BNCCEM consider representing this excess, but the very layout of the text surveyed gives indications of the knowledge that this new proposal considers to be most relevant.

One of them is the fact that only the Portuguese language and mathematics skills are detailed, and these are the only components that must be offered in the three years of training:

Due to the provisions of Law No. 13,415/2017, the Portuguese Language and Mathematics skills are detailed, considering that these curricular components must be offered in all three years of high school. Even so, to ensure that education systems and schools can build curricula and pedagogical proposals that are flexible and appropriate to their reality, these skills are presented without any indication of serialization (Brasil, 2018b, p. 32).

For the other components, there is no such requirement. In the case of Art, Physical Education, Philosophy and Sociology, it is mandatory to study and practice these areas, preferably in an interdisciplinary way, either as a component or in the form of projects. In this way, these subjects would contribute to the study of a specific theme, without the need to delve deeper into the body of knowledge that constitutes them as fields of study (Ferreti, 2018).

Another indication of the secondary nature of the other areas can be seen in the number of pages the document devotes to each of them. The area of Languages and their Technologies (Portuguese Language, Art, Physical Education and English Language) is given 16 pages, followed by a specific topic for Portuguese Language with a further 27. The area of Mathematics and its Technologies (Mathematics) is given 19 pages. In the area of Applied Human and Social Sciences, which comprises four components (History, Geography, Sociology and Philosophy) there are 18 pages. Finally, the area of Natural Sciences and its technologies (Biology, Physics and Chemistry) has a total of 9 pages.

Several authors (Ferreti, 2018; Motta; Frigotto, 2017; Lourenço, 2021; Vieira; Feijó, 2018; Silva, 2018b) attribute this valorization to skills linked to a limited number of subjects, such as Portuguese Language and Mathematics, because they are verifiable and more valued by performance assessment systems, especially SAEB, which directly influences the results of the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), via the Latin American Laboratory for the Evaluation of Educational Quality in Latin America.

To conclude the analysis here, we come to the last aspect, which refers to a dual proposal for education: one that promotes access to higher education and another that prepares for the job market. After citing Art. 36 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB), describing the new organization of secondary education, which should be made up of the BNCC and the training itineraries (Brasil, 1996), the BNCCEM explicitly mentions two possibilities: continuing studies with access to higher education and professional technical training, reaffirming a historical duality:

This new structure values youth protagonism, since it provides for a variety of training itineraries to meet the multiplicity of student interests: **academic study** and **professional technical training**. In addition, it ratifies the organization of secondary education by areas of knowledge, without direct reference to all the components that traditionally make up the curriculum at this stage (Brasil, 2018b, p. 467, emphasis added).

Even though the use of the conjunction *and* indicates addition, only the itineraries related to the four areas of knowledge provide for further academic study and the continuation of studies, so those who opt for the professional education itinerary would have immediate access to the job market.

Another point that can attest to this argument is the planned restructuring of ENEM, one of the main means of access to higher education, which will have to adapt to the BNCC, according to the DCNEM

§ Paragraph 1 The National High School Exam will be held in two stages, the first of which will be based on the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) and the second on the provisions of the Guidelines for the Development of Training Itineraries. § Paragraph 2 Students enrolled in the National High

School Exam (ENEM) will choose the exams for the second stage according to the area linked to the higher education course they intend to study. § Paragraph 3 Higher education institutions must consider the results of both stages of the National High School Examination for access purposes, when applicable (Brasil, 2018a, Art.32).

But what about the situation of students who have studied the professional and technical route? Supposing they decide to take a higher education course related to one of the areas of knowledge they haven't studied, wouldn't that put them at a disadvantage? It is understood that, in this situation, the BNCCEM hinders access to higher education and, because of this, reiterates an educational duality, to restrict the working class's appropriation of systematized knowledge and, consequently, their ability to continue their studies (Kuenzer, 2017).

This duality is explained by what Leontiev (2004) called the ideological struggle, since the unequal distribution of knowledge tends to perpetuate the current social order and divert the less privileged from their struggle for social justice. For Kuenzer (2017), within the logic of flexible accumulation prevailing in capitalist society, which seeks increasingly compliant and adaptable professionals, education must produce a workforce with "[...] unequal and differentiated qualifications [...] attending to different forms of hiring, subcontracting and other precarious agreements, [which] ensure the desired level of productivity, [...]" (Kuenzer, 2017, p. 341).

Education is governed by "flexible learning" (Kuenzer, 2017, p. 337), guided by economic interests that are increasingly dynamic, competitive, individualistic and linked to constant scientific and technological development, and in this way, the curriculum offers the minimum knowledge necessary for workers to adapt to this reality and develop generalist and low-complexity functions.

As a result, the equal distribution of knowledge materialized at school through solid, classic content related to what has been most developed by humanity, tends to lose ground in the context of flexible training, as it would not be in the interests of the current mode of capital accumulation, which depends on an increasingly insecure, unstable and unequal market. Nor would it be convenient for this same capitalist system to allow unrestricted access to the knowledge available to enable workers to overcome the current mode of production and exploitation.

Final considerations

The aim of this article was to identify the concept of knowledge in the BNCCEM, as well as the possible implications of this concept. Criticism of this document, in the face of the current reform of secondary education, is a form of resistance and defense of an education centered on the cultural elevation of workers, as proposed by authors linked to the Critical Theory of Society, Historical-Cultural Theory and Historical-Critical Pedagogy. These theories aim to build an education for transition, concerned with a new way of producing human existence, beyond private ownership of the means of production.

Based on the theoretical framework, the systematic literature review and the documentary research carried out, it was found that there is no explicit concept of knowledge defined in the document, and that it does not problematize fundamental issues such as its concept of man, society and education. It is inferred from this research that the conception of knowledge presumed in the BNCCEM text refers to the practical applicability of the content and does not develop its reflective and self-reflective character, subjecting the student to semi-formalization.

The utilitarian and pragmatic vision of education set out in the BNCCEM impoverishes working class education by proposing training itineraries, limiting the possibilities of continuing studies and having access to a human education that includes scientific, artistic and philosophical knowledge. Consequently, by valuing competences and skills related to a restricted number of subjects, such as Portuguese and Mathematics, it emphasizes the aim of meeting the demands of large-scale national and international assessments, neglecting the interests of real students.

The BNCCEM's conception of knowledge, which overlaps competences, ratifies educational duality by distributing knowledge unequally, since on the one hand it allows the dominant class to continue to have access to knowledge in all fields of study, and makes it difficult for the working class to appropriate systematized knowledge by subjecting them to "early specialization" (Ferreti, 2018, p. 31).

This conclusion reaffirms the need to think of strategies to confront this reality, fighting for training spaces oriented towards workers' interests. Given the complexity and dimension of the document, future studies are recommended in relation to its objectives, perspectives and impacts for basic education as a whole with specific analyses for each area of knowledge, in addition to the references used to draw up training itineraries for professional and technical education.

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