

Critical reflection as a formative opposition to new technicism based on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Brazilian New National Education Plan

Audrei Rodrigo da Conceição Pizolati
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)

Abstract

The study examines how Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly targets 4.5 and 4.7, and the New National Education Plan (2026-2036) produce meanings regarding basic education, raising questions about critical reflection as a formative principle in the face of neoliberal rationality and neotechnicism in education policies. Education is understood, as a field of symbolic struggles in Bourdieu's framework, and the concept of habitus is employed to interpret neotechnicist dispositions. A documentary research is carried out based on studies of educational policies, grounded in these documents and guided by the concepts of quality, social justice, and human formation. The results indicate that the principles of equity, inclusion, and social justice support critical reflection as a counterpoint to neotechnicism, shifting education away from the logic of performance, flexible adaptation to the market, and individual accountability, and re-anchoring it in the right to education, democracy, social quality, and students' emancipation.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goal 4. New National Education Plan. Critical reflection. Neotechnicism. Social justice.

A reflexão crítica como contraposição formativa ao neotecnicismo a partir do Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 4 e do Novo Plano Nacional de Educação

Resumo

O estudo examina como o Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 4 da Agenda 2030 da Organização das Nações Unidas, especialmente nas metas 4.5 e 4.7, e o Novo Plano Nacional de Educação (2026-2036) produzem sentidos sobre a educação básica, problematizando a reflexão crítica como princípio formativo diante da racionalidade neoliberal e do neotecnicismo nas políticas educacionais. Compreende-se a educação como campo de disputas simbólicas em Bourdieu e mobiliza-se o conceito de *habitus* para interpretar disposições neotecnicistas. Realiza-se uma pesquisa documental ancorada nos estudos de políticas educacionais, fundamentada nesses documentos e orientada pelos sentidos de qualidade, justiça social e formação humana. Os resultados indicam que os princípios de equidade, inclusão e justiça social sustentam a reflexão crítica como contraposição ao neotecnicismo, deslocando a educação da lógica do desempenho, da adaptação flexível ao mercado e da responsabilização individual para reinscrevê-la no direito à educação, à democracia, à qualidade social e à emancipação dos estudantes.

Palavras-chave: Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 4. Novo Plano Nacional de Educação. Reflexão crítica. Neotecnicismo. Justiça social.

La reflexión crítica como contrapunto formativo al neotecnicismo a partir del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 4 y del Nuevo Plan Nacional de Educación

Resumen

El estudio examina cómo el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 4 de la Agenda 2030 de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, especialmente las metas 4.5 y 4.7, y el Nuevo Plan Nacional de Educación (2026–2036) producen sentidos sobre la educación básica, planteando la reflexión crítica como principio formativo frente a la racionalidad neoliberal y al neotecnicismo en las

políticas educativas. Se entiende la educación como un campo de disputas simbólicas según Bourdieu y se recurre al habitus para interpretar las disposiciones neotecnicistas. Se realiza una investigación documental anclada en los estudios de políticas educativas, fundamentada en estos documentos y orientada por los sentidos de calidad, justicia social y formación humana. Los resultados indican que los principios de equidad, inclusión y justicia social sustentan la reflexión crítica como contrapunto al neotecnicismo, desplazando la educación de la lógica del desempeño, de la adaptación flexible al mercado y de la responsabilización individual para reinscribirla en el derecho a la educación, a la democracia, a la calidad social y a la emancipación de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 4. Nuevo Plan Nacional de Educación. Reflexión crítica. Neotecnicismo. Justicia social.

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015), proposed by the United Nations, places education at the center of discussions on sustainable development, democracy and social justice. Within this commitment, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) affirms the need to "[...] ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015, p. 18, goal 4). This proposition establishes a horizon for educational policies in targets 4.5 and 4.7, which deal with equal access, elimination of disparities, education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and link basic education to equity, inclusion, sustainability, human rights and, therefore, critical and reflective formation.

SDG 4 (UN, 2015) strains the assumption of educational quality restricted to school access, formal permanence and performance in evaluations. Quality education starts to involve the ability to critically interpret the social, environmental, cultural and economic problems that cross the present, since education "[...] is never just to qualify children and young people and offer them a particular place in society [labor market]" (Biesta, 2018, p. 24).

The articulation between SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the New National Education Plan (Brazil, 2026) shifts this debate to the field of State educational

policies. The Brazilian New National Education Plan, established by Law no. 15.388/2026 (Brasil, 2026), updates this horizon for the 2026-2036 decade by reaffirming that:

[...] the centrality of the right to education, quality, equity, inclusion and learning [...] as guidelines for the formulation and implementation of educational policies (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item I).

Educational planning is now understood as a political mediation aimed at reducing inequalities and guaranteeing the right to quality public education. This inflection brings the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) closer to SDG 4 (UN, 2015), especially when the 2030 Agenda is committed to eliminating educational disparities and ensuring equal access to historically marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in situations of social vulnerability (UN, 2015, target 4.5). The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) explains equity as a structuring axis of policies by reaffirming "[...] the full exercise of citizenship [...] without discrimination of any nature" (Brasil, 2026, Annex I, objective 1, strategy 6. 8).

4

In this perspective, the growing advance of a new technician-minded rationality in contemporary educational policies tends to convert the quality of education into measurable performance and planning into results management. It is necessary, therefore, to overcome this formative new technicism, which reduces learning to the acquisition of operational skills and subordinates human formation to the logic of efficiency, established and validated through "[...] judgment and comparison" (Ball, 2010, p. 50).

Theory and method

The study has a qualitative and documentary nature, inscribed in the studies of educational policies. The empirical corpus is composed of the 2030 Agenda, with emphasis on targets 4,5 and 4,7 of SDG 4 (UN, 2015), and the New PNE (Brasil, 2026). The choice of these legal frameworks arises from their centrality in the contemporary formulation of guiding principles for education, especially when they combine educational quality, equity, inclusion,

sustainability, social justice and human formation. The study aims to analyze how SDG 4 of the UN 2030 Agenda, with an emphasis on targets 4.5 and 4.7, and the Brazilian New PNE (2026-2036) produce meanings on basic education, questioning critical reflection as a formative principle in the face of the new technician-minded rationality present in contemporary educational policies.

The 2030 Agenda, approved within the framework of the United Nations, organizes a global horizon for sustainable development and assigns education a strategic role in promoting rights, citizenship, equity and sustainability. Within this document, target 4.5 is mobilized to address the elimination of educational disparities and equal access to vulnerable groups, while target 4.7 links quality education to sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, culture of peace, global citizenship and cultural diversity (UN, 2015). The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026), in turn, updates this debate in the Brazilian context by reaffirming guidelines related to the right to education, quality, equity, inclusion, learning, overcoming inequalities and incorporating cross-cutting themes linked to sustainability, citizenship and social justice.

The analysis of these documents does not take them as neutral or merely normative texts, but rather political productions inserted in specific historical, institutional and ideological contexts. From this perspective, documentary analysis requires attention to the conditions of document production, the interests that permeate them, the concepts mobilized, and the historical context that enables their emergence. This procedure requires "[...] a careful examination of the documents to understand the conditions of their production, the interest of the authors and the historical contexts that influenced their elaboration" (Cellard, 2008, p. 295). The document, therefore, is not limited to a source of information, configuring itself as an arena of ideological disputes, choices, silences and forms of classification of social reality. For this reason, its reading requires considering both the explicit statements and the internal tensions that organize the meanings of quality, equity and formation present within them.

This analytic procedure is articulated to the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu (2012; 2021; 2024), especially to the concepts of field, habitus and symbolic power. The notion of field allows us to understand

educational policies as productions inscribed in a space of disputes for the legitimate definition of the purposes of education. In this space, different agents and institutions, such as the State, international organizations, education systems, scientific communities, social movements, public managers and business sectors, dispute the meanings of quality, learning, evaluation, equity and formation. In Bourdieu (2024), the field moves away from the idea of a homogeneous structure, configuring itself as a relational network crossed by forces, positions and struggles.

A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, there are dominant and dominated, there are constant, permanent relations of inequality, which are exercised within this space, which is also a field of struggles to transform or conserve this field of forces (Bourdieu, 2024, p. 159).

6

Based on this theoretical key, SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) are understood as documents that condense democratic commitments and tensions inherent to the educational field. On the one hand, they affirm the centrality of equity, inclusion, sustainability, human rights and social quality. On the other hand, they circulate in a scenario crossed by managerial, performative and new technician-minded rationalities, in which quality tends to be reduced to measurement, efficiency, operational competencies and adaptation to external requirements, causing "[...] learning to be [be] replaced by performance objectives" (Ball, 2005, p. 553-554). The field category thus makes it possible to examine educational policy as a space of symbolic struggle, in which different projects of school, curriculum, teaching and human formation seek legitimacy before society.

In this sense, habitus deepens this reading by allowing us to understand that educational policies, in addition to organizing systems, targets and strategies, also participate in the production of dispositions in the individuals. The habitus, as a conceptual tool, refers to incorporated ways of perceiving, evaluating and acting in the social world, produced in relation to the objective conditions of existence. In educational policies, this means that certain rationalities can induce forms of subjectivities in school, defining expectations about what it means to learn, teach, evaluate, succeed and respond to institutional demands.

[...] systems of durable and transferable arrangements, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles that generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their purpose without assuming the conscious intention of the purposes and the express domain of the operations necessary to achieve them (Bourdieu, 2012, p. 87).

This formulation contributes to interpret new technicism as a rationality that is not limited to educational and curricular political organization, or evaluation, as it also produces dispositions guided by performance, flexible adaptation, know-how, self-management and individual accountability. The National Common Base for Teacher Formation (Brasil, 2020), although not the central object of this study, exemplifies a previous policy that expresses this trend in the educational field, by emphasizing competencies, instructional aspects and operational dimensions of teaching. Its mention becomes pertinent because it shows that the Brazilian New National Education Plan does not emerge in an empty field, but in the midst of policies and discourses already crossed by ideological disputes and technical trends around the purpose of formation.

7

[...] the National Common Base for Teacher Formation seems to go backwards in relation to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, emphasizing predominantly instructional aspects. There is a return to technicality, now with a new appearance, focused on know-how and skills (Cunha; Reschk, 2024, p. 73).

This citation does not shift the focus of the article to teacher formation, but allows us to demonstrate the presence of a new technician-minded rationality in the field of Brazilian educational policies. The return of technicism with a new appearance expresses a broader dispute, in which formation is often defined by measurable competence, efficiency and functional adequacy. When articulated with SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the New PNE (Brasil, 2026), these elements reveal the conflicting coexistence between different formative projects: one guided by social quality, equity, citizenship and social justice; another marked by measurement, performance and productive adaptation.

Critical reflection is taken, in this scenario, as a formative principle capable of exerting tension on the new technician-minded habitus produced by policies centered on efficiency, performance, and self-accountability. It is not reduced to an isolated cognitive competence or an instrumental skill incorporated into teaching and learning, at the risk of reproducing the logic according to which "[...] learning is restated as the result of a cost-benefit policy; success is a set of productivity targets" (Ball, 2005, p. 546). It is, therefore, a formative provision aimed at reading the historical, social, and political conditions that affect schooling, allowing for the interrogation of the criteria by which quality, learning, merit, equity, and inclusion are defined.

[...] critical reflection constitutes a transforming agency of (re)existence to the current new technicism by displacing basic education from the logic of market performance, mere adaptation and individual accountability (Pizolati, 2025, p. 47).

8

Therefore, by limiting itself to the critical perspective, the documentary analysis, established here, aims to identify how SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) mobilize meanings of educational quality and to what extent these meanings approach or move away from social quality. The critical reading of the listed materiality considers three articulated analytical movements. The first examines the statements that associate education, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and human rights. The second observes the tensions between these principles and the new technicism present in the educational field. The third questioning critical reflection as a formative mediation capable of inscribing basic education in the field of democracy, substantive equality and social emancipation of students.

Assumptions for critical-reflective formation in SDG 4 and the Brazilian New National Education Plan

The articulation between SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) allows us to understand critical reflection as a formative principle located in the field of contemporary educational policies. The 2030 Agenda affirms the need to "[...] ensure inclusive and

equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015, p. 18), expanding the sense of quality beyond access, school flow and performance in assessments. This understanding gains density when target 4.5 proposes

[...] eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational formation for the most vulnerable, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in situations of vulnerability (UN, 2015, p. 23).

Equity, therefore, requires recognizing the inequalities that cross individuals, territories, cultural belonging, and material conditions of existence.

The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) updates this horizon in the Brazilian context by reaffirming "[...] the centrality of the right to education, quality, equity, inclusion and learning [...] as guidelines for the formulation and implementation of educational policies" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item I). This formulation shifts educational planning to a political mediation aimed at guaranteeing the right to education, reducing inequalities and strengthening social quality. The plan itself explains that this direction presupposes "[...] overcoming educational inequalities and eradicating all forms of prejudice of origin, race/color, sex or age and any forms of discrimination" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3).

In this sense, target 4.7 of SDG 4 (UN, 2015) deepens this understanding by establishing that students should acquire

[...] knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence (UN, 2015, p. 23).

Quality, in this sense, presupposes the ability to critically interpret the relationships among inequality, sustainability, democracy, human rights and cultural diversity. This reflection is linked to the reading of historical conditions that produce exclusions and limit the social participation of individuals. Such a reading is necessary because the 2030 Agenda, while promising to leave no

one behind, can preserve zones of silence about the structures of inequality. As noted by Martins, Miranda and Paes-Sousa (2024):

The concern of the 2030 Agenda to prioritize the groups that would be at the "end of the line" in the distribution of income, goods, rights and opportunities does not end up questioning the reasons why these individuals find themselves in that position. In other words, Agenda 2030 does not discuss the existence of the social pyramid itself or direct its efforts to face the sources that perpetuate these inequalities (Martins; Miranda; Paes-Sousa, 2024, p. 4).

This inflection allows equity to be stressed as a political principle and not just as a normative statement. The presence of equity in educational documents only gains formative density when articulated with the confrontation of social, economic, racial, territorial and institutional conditions that interfere with access, permanence and learning.

However, the main issue left open for policies aimed at those "left behind" was that the properties of interdependence between the SDGs and their guiding principle were neither conceptualized or operationalized. In addition, the result of the official definition of the metrics made many indicators only partially reflect the official targets, without adding the more qualitative components of the goals (Martins; Miranda; Paes-Sousa, 2024, p. 4).

Although the aforementioned study is linked to the field of health, this understanding can be shifted to education, since it allows us to think of equity as the institutional capacity to act on the social determinants of inequality. In this sense, SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) cannot be read only as programmatic documents, as they are configured as political texts crossed by disputes around the meanings of quality, social justice, human formation and the rights to education, health, linked to social dignity.

This horizon becomes more problematic when crossed by rationalities guided by performance, adaptation and individual accountability. The implication of this individualization operates when educational policies shift the burden on students, teachers and schools for the success or failure of formative processes, without sufficiently addressing the social, institutional and material inequalities that condition schooling. In this context,

[...] the exercise of teaching takes on a new meaning in the present, as education aligns with the principles of a free-market rationality that adheres to the entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship of (Pizolati, 2025, p. 35).

Neoliberal rationality has effects on the organization of educational policies, teaching work and modes of school subjectivation. Education is no longer understood primarily as a social right and is conceived as individual investment, productive adjustment and preparation for competition with oneself and others. In this process, "[...] practices operate through which we act on ourselves and on others, so that we become specific types of beings" (Rose, 1992, p. 161).

In this context, the neoliberal strategy operates precisely through the expanded production of contingent market situations in the school pedagogical practice.

The neoliberal strategy will then consist of creating as many market situations as possible, that is, organizing by various means [...] the obligation to choose so that individuals accept the market situation as imposed on them as reality, that is, as the only rule of the game (Dardot; Laval, 2016, p. 217).

11

The formal presence of equity, inclusion, and sustainability in the documents does not, by itself, ensure an emancipatory formation, especially when subjected to criteria of measurement, efficiency and performativity. In contexts marked by new technicism, these principles can be emptied by restricting the necessary autonomy to critical-reflective teaching and learning practices. The dispute focuses, therefore, on the legitimate definition of educational quality, because, when reduced to a measurable result, operational competence or adaptation to external requirements, school education starts to respond to performative rationality. This inflection weakens the normative horizon of target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda, which links educational quality to the guarantee of "[...] equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels" (UN, 2015, p. 4).

The strategy of the New PNE (Brasil, 2026) focused on interdisciplinary themes reinforces this dispute by providing areas and themes oriented to "[...] promotion of human rights, human dignity, respect for diversity, social and

environmental sustainability and the full exercise of citizenship" (Brasil, 2026, item III). This guideline brings the Brazilian plan closer to target 4.7 of SDG 4 (UN, 2015) by situating school education in the field of human rights, sustainability, global citizenship and diversity. Its effectiveness, however, depends on political, pedagogical and institutional conditions that prevent the reduction of these themes to market competencies and performance metrics. This tension refers to Morosini's (2001) warning, which analyzes the shift from educational quality to the centrality of evaluation: "[...] quality control was usurped by the market and technological information" (Morosini, 2001, p. 91).

The social quality of education requires elements that go beyond external evaluation, such as adequate financing, appreciation of education professionals, school infrastructure, democratic management and recognition of inequalities that affect schooling processes. The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026, Anexo I) points in this direction by associating financing with the confrontation of racial and socioeconomic inequalities, as well as by affirming the importance of guaranteeing access, supply and permanence in indigenous school education, rural education and quilombola school education. These statements bring the Brazilian plan closer to target 4.5 of SDG 4 (UN, 2015), as they recognize that educational equality requires differentiated policies for historically marginalized individuals and communities.

The convergence between SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) allows us to affirm that critical reflection is not reduced to an instrumental competence, but constitutes the formative principle articulated with social justice, democracy, sustainability and the emancipation of students. The criticism of new technicism, in this sense, does not refuse technique, planning or evaluation, but raises doubts about their conversion into a formative purpose, especially when it subordinates the school to performance, individual responsibility, flexible adaptation to the labor market and income generation. This understanding is corroborated by the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026), which establishes the right to education through "[...] humanistic, professional, cultural, scientific, technological, critical, creative and citizen training of students" (Brasil, 2026, art. 4), reaffirming that the technical and professional dimensions must be part of a broader educational project, without becoming an exclusive axis of school education.

The centrality of the student in SDG 4 and the Brazilian New National Education Plan: tensions between new technicism and critical reflection

The centrality attributed to the student in SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and in the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) requires careful reading, since student leading role does not have a single meaning in the field of educational policies. When articulated with social quality, equity, inclusion and social justice, leading role can express the active participation of students in the construction of knowledge, in the critical reading of reality and in democratic action in the face of social problems that cross school life. However, when captured by neoliberal rationality, this same principle can be shifted to a new technician-minded logic, in which the student is questioned as a manager of himself, executor of skills, consumer of flexible learning and responsible for converting his school trajectory into performance and life project.

This ambivalence becomes relevant because SDG 4 (UN, 2015), especially target 4.7, associates quality education with formation for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, culture of peace, global citizenship, and cultural diversity. From this perspective, the student is not only conceived as a receiver of content, nor as an operator of previously prescribed skills, but rather as an individual located in historical, cultural, political and environmental relations. Leading role, thus understood, approaches critical reflection, because it implies the ability to interpret inequalities, recognize social conflicts, raise questions about injustices and participate in the construction of more democratic forms of coexistence and exercise of citizenship.

The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026), by reaffirming the right to education, equity, inclusion, learning and social quality, allows to shift student leading role from the individualizing sphere to a public and collective perspective. The protagonist student cannot be reduced to the figure of the entrepreneurial student himself, responsible for managing his schooling as an individual investment, adapting to the demands of the market and converting his formative trajectory into performance capital. In this way,

[...] the emphasis on school entrepreneurship, disconnected from an ethical commitment to social justice, can contribute to the

consolidation of an educational project based on meritocracy, in which the individual is responsible and the role of the State is attenuated (Pizolati, 2026, p. 2).

This reading weakens the sense of social justice present in educational policies, as it tends to erase the material, territorial, racial, cultural and institutional conditions that interfere with access, permanence and learning.

Student leading role cannot be linked to competency-based pedagogy, performativity, and measurement, because, in this shift, autonomy is no longer understood as intellectual, ethical and political formation and is translated as self-management, productive adaptation and efficient response to external demands. Thus, school education approaches a new technician-minded and market grammar, in which learning means demonstrating skills, producing results and continuously adjusting to scenarios of political, economic and social instability. This guidance contrasts with the guideline of the Brazilian New National Education Plan, which ensures the constitution of a "[...] plural learning environment and critical debate from different perspectives" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item IV), reaffirming that the formation of students cannot be reduced to functional adaptation to the immediate requirements of the market.

The pedagogy of competencies is one of the most sensitive points of this inflection. Its strength lies not only in the recurrent presence of the category "competence" in educational documents, but in the way this category starts to organize expectations about the teaching, learning, evaluation and conduct of the individuals. When shifted to a market rationality, competence tends to fragment knowledge into observable performances, operational skills and adaptive responses, reducing school education to a repertoire of knowledge that can be mobilized in productive situations.

The democratization of teaching does not consist, therefore, in diluting content, in lowering the level of requirements under the pretext that students are disadvantaged. It consists, rather, in providing the conditions under which the students of the popular classes can appropriate the universal cultural contents, as instruments of social struggle (Libâneo, 1985, p. 23).

In this displacement, the student ceases to be primarily a individual of law, culture and democratic participation and is questioned as an agent of his

own employability, a manager of choices and responsible for converting schooling into a competitive advantage. This formative understanding is stressed at the political-normative level by SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026), which link educational quality, equity, inclusion, social justice and human formation to dimensions that constitute the right to education.

This analytical key allows us to understand that new technicism is updated by the pedagogy of skills, especially when this rationality brings school education closer to the formulations associated with the Theory of Human Capital, since "[...] the ideal of socioeconomic and cultural achievements is attainable through education to be accomplished in accordance with individual ability, ability or competence" (Pasini; Cossettin; Dolla, 2024, p. 8).

In this sense, the exercise of teaching, as presupposed by National Common Base for Teacher Formation, becomes guided by "[...] development of professional skills, organized into three dimensions: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement" (Brasil, 2020). Although this formulation can contribute to qualify pedagogical practice, it can also adhere to a new technician-minded rationality when subordinated to the logic of results, efficiency and large-scale evaluations. This scenario worsens as national guidelines align with international evaluation pressures and metrics. The effort to adapt to the quality indicators institutes a "[...] digital new technicism, proclaimed as a way of pedagogical action, a resource for obtaining goals and standards to be evaluated" (Andrade; Castro, 2024, p. 8), which subordinates teaching autonomy to mere behavioral and reproductive performance.

This debate takes place when the student's centrality is shifted from critical formation to self-management of individual skills, results and paths. In this inflection, student leading role ceases to express democratic participation and approaches individual accountability and adaptive performance. The centrality of the competency-based curriculum reconfigures pedagogical work and guides teachers' appropriations toward pragmatic demands. This instrumental formatting collides with the guidelines of the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026), which establish as a principle the guarantee of "[...] equity, inclusion, learning and social quality" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item

III), as well as the promotion of "[...] social and environmental sustainability and the full exercise of citizenship" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item III).

[...] especially those in situations of vulnerability should have access to lifelong learning opportunities that help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to explore opportunities and fully participate in society (UN, 2015, p. 9).

Likewise, the logic of individual efficiency goes against target 4.5 of the 2030 Agenda, whose international commitment imposes the duty to "[...] ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational formation for the most vulnerable" (UN, 2015, p. 23), reaffirming that systemic policies must aim at social equity and not meritocratic selection based on income metrics.

This dynamic also allows us to understand how apparently consensual terms, such as autonomy, competence, flexibility, life project and leading role, carry disputes about the purposes of basic education. In dialogue with Bourdieu (2021; 2024), it can be said that these categories participate in the production of legitimate classifications about what it means to learn, teach and form. When appropriated by the grammar of the market, they naturalize the idea that it is up to the student to adapt individually to trajectories crossed by structural inequalities. Conversely, when articulated with critical reflection, these same categories are re-inscribed within an emancipatory perspective, which advocates ensuring that all students acquire the necessary knowledge to promote social inclusion (UN, 2015; Brasil, 2026), understood as a constitutive dimension of social justice.

Thus, it is necessary to ensure that students acquire knowledge that promotes "[...] global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity" (UN, 2015, p. 23, target 4.7) through policies. Article 3 of the Brazilian New National Education Plan reaffirms the centrality of "[...] equity, inclusion, learning and social quality" (Brasil, 2026). The ethical commitment to citizenship and inclusion is emptied of analytical density and becomes mere individual resilience in the face of economic vulnerabilities. However, under the scrutiny of critical reflection, these legal prerogatives become training devices capable of instrumentalize the student for democratic participation and the questioning of structural inequalities that permeate the school experience in its historical context.

The clash between new technicism and critical reflection in the teaching and learning process expresses a dispute for the legitimate definition of basic education within the educational field, conceived as a "[...] space of forces" and a "[...] arena of struggles" (Bourdieu, 2024, p. 143). Although SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) affirm commitments to equity, sustainability and social quality, these principles compete with a performative grammar that translates quality into indicators and performance targets.

The criticism of student pseudo-leading role deepens this problem. In certain formulations of educational policies, expressions such as life project, self-entrepreneurship, autonomy and youth leading role can shift the responsibility for facing vulnerabilities that are social, economic and institutional to the student.

[...] false autonomy, false democracy, solidary leading role, entrepreneurship of oneself and for capital, precariousness of work, in a school without working conditions for teachers, as well as study and permanence for students, with control of the curriculum and life that constitutes a degraded school, which forms the user consumer (Costa Neto, 2023, p. 263-264).

17

This criticism does not refuse the active participation of students, but it questions their capture by neoliberal rationality. When the student is called upon to act as a company of himself, managing social risks as individual performance challenges, leading role moves away from democratic formation and approaches personal accountability. In this configuration, the public school is pressured by demands for flexibility, updating, innovation and verifiable results, while the student is formatted as a consumer of formative experiences and the starts to operate under the logic of educational clientelism. This relationship shows that "[...] performativity goes hand in hand with the commodification of education" (Ball, 2010, p. 38).

Collective emancipation gives way to individual optimization, and human formation tends to be fragmented into operational learning, certifications, performance and personalized experiences of educational consumption, a logic that is also articulated with social acceleration. In late modernity, the school is pressured to respond to increasingly intense rhythms crossed by

methodological innovation, monitoring of results and adaptation to technological demands. Thus, the temporality of formation, which requires mediation, maturation, reading, conceptual elaboration and shared experience, becomes tensioned by a culture of urgency.

In late modernity, the social acceleration of time becomes a totalitarian force that subjugates the individual to a constant updating of operational skills, undermining the temporal conditions necessary for the full exercise of critical reflection (Rosa, 2022, p. 74).

In the context of basic education, critical reflection depends on temporal and institutional conditions that are not reduced to the speed of response, the efficiency of execution or the immediate measurement of learning. Critically reflecting requires relating experience and knowledge, interpreting contradictions, historicizing inequalities and questioning the naturalization of the social world. When converted into a principle of educational policies, acceleration favors a temporal new technicism, in which learning comes to mean responding with speed and utility. This pragmatism is supported by "[...] respect for the freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate culture, thought, science, art and knowledge, based on the pluralism of ideas" (Brasil, 2026, art. 3, item II), as well as in "[...] global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development" (UN, 2015, p. 23). Thus, the development of critical thinking demands pluralism and pedagogical time, not flexible adaptation to market flows and acquisition of skills.

This issue becomes clearer in the face of the advancement of digital technologies in education. New technicism no longer operates only through curricular prescriptions, standardized assessments or competence matrices, as it is updated through platforms, data, algorithms, monitoring panels and learning metrics. This movement expands the performative rationality that, analyzed by Ball (2005; 2010), transforms school practices into records that allow comparison, measurement and continuous adjustment.

The so-called algorithmic modernity amplifies this tension by shifting the responsibility for vulnerabilities that are structural to the individual. When public institutions lose their capacity for mediation and protection, the individuals are called upon to manage risks, inequalities and uncertainties as if they were problems of personal performance. In this sense, liquid modernity has

reached its algorithmic phase, in which social institutions no longer function as solid anchors. Individuals are forced to navigate structural inequalities, fully assuming responsibility for their systemic vulnerabilities and acceleration: "[...] in Modernity, everything seems to get faster" (Rosa, 2022, p. 18).

Managerialism captures student autonomy and shifts the responsibility for managing their school trajectory to the student in an environment regulated by metrics, algorithms, standardized assessments and performance expectations. Under this logic, the promise of autonomy hides the transfer of state responsibilities to the individual, especially when socioeconomic inequalities that compromise access, permanence and learning are converted into individual challenges of adaptation, resilience and competitiveness.

In the educational field, this movement strains the inclusive principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and the equity targets of the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015), especially when social inclusion is reduced to statistical quantification and the right to education is understood as an individual investment in operational skills. This inflection contrasts with the international commitment assumed by SDG 4 (UN, 2015):

At the heart of the Agenda, in addition to the completeness of the objectives, is the central transformative principle of "Leaving No One Behind" (LNOB). The LNOB emphasizes the need to ensure that all people benefit from development, regardless of their residence, income, gender, ethnicity, among other factors (Martins; Miranda; Paes-Sousa, 2024, p. 2).

Although the principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) mobilizes a collaborative horizon, it is tensioned by neoliberal rationality and meritocratic logic, which tend to shift the inclusion from the field of collective rights to the plane of individual adaptation, personal overcoming and performative self-management. By affirming the need to face historical inequalities and guarantee the right to education for all, this principle preserves a public and redistributive dimension.

Student leading role can be captured by devices that promise customization and flexibility, but that often reinforce standardization, comparison and flexible adaptation to the market. Therein lies the challenge of preventing autonomy from being converted into performative self-management and subjected

to regimes of "[...] target-oriented production" (Rosa, 2022, p. 20). Therefore, critical reflection becomes indispensable to preserve the public school as a space for mediation and collective construction of knowledge.

In the light of Bourdieu (2021; 2024), this tension shows that education constitutes a field of symbolic disputes, in which different agents seek to legitimize competing meanings of quality, autonomy, learning and formation. On the one hand, SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) affirm principles associated with equity, inclusion and social justice; on the other hand, managerial and new technician-minded rationalities inscribed in the neoliberal agenda seek to redefine these same principles according to business criteria of performance, efficiency, performance and individual accountability. Symbolic power acts precisely on the ability to present these classifications as natural, converting certain conceptions of education into legitimate references to guide policies, curricula and pedagogical practices that structure the relationships of teaching and learning in the school.

The concept of habitus, in Bourdieu (2012), allows us to deepen this analysis, given that educational policies not only establish goals and guidelines but also participate in the production of durable dispositions, that is, ways of perceiving, evaluating and acting that individuals incorporate throughout their social experiences. When students, teachers and managers come to understand self-management, competitiveness, adaptation, individual accountability and measurable performance as evident attributes of educational quality, a new technician-minded habitus is consolidated that guides practices and expectations through an uncritical adherence to this rationality. Critical reflection operates, in this sense, as a counterpoint to these provisions, by historically situating the categories that organize the school experience and reinscribing autonomy, student leading role and social quality within the horizon of the right to education, equity and collective emancipation.

Final considerations

The analysis developed allows us to understand that SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) offer a relevant political-educational matrix to think about critical reflection as a

formative principle of basic education. By articulating quality, equity, inclusion, sustainability, human rights, citizenship and addressing inequalities, these documents expand the sense of quality education and bring it closer to social justice. The Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) reinforces this direction by reaffirming the right to education, learning with equity, diversity, inclusion, infrastructure and federative governance, understood as articulation among agents, institutions and different levels of government to coordinate educational decisions and ensure education as a public good.

From a critical perspective of Bourdieusian orientation, the results show that the empirical material analyzed is inserted in an educational field permeated by symbolic disputes around the legitimate definition of the quality of education and the meanings attributed to formation. By affirming the elimination of disparities, the inclusion of historically vulnerable groups, human rights, sustainability and citizenship, these documents offer principles capable of tensioning new technician-minded dispositions guided by performance, flexible adaptation and individual accountability. The concept of habitus allows us to understand that this dispute does not remain restricted to the normative level, as it also focuses on the ways of perceiving, evaluating, and acting of students, teachers, and managers.

Thus, critical reflection operates as a counterpoint to new technicism by tensioning the reduction of education to measurement, efficiency and the adaptation of individuals to the dictates of the market. Its power does not consist in denying technique, evaluation or planning, but rather in preventing these elements from replacing the public, democratic and emancipatory purpose of basic education. SDG 4 (UN, 2015) and the Brazilian New National Education Plan (Brasil, 2026) do not eliminate disputes around the definition of educational quality, although they offer a horizon capable of reinscribing it in the field of equity, critical formation, social justice and the right to education. The realization of this orientation depends on policies to confront structural inequalities and preserve the public school as a space for critical reading of the world, democratic participation and human formation.

References

ANDRADE, Viviane Toraci Alonso de; CASTRO, Edna Cristina Jaques Brelaz. Conformação do *habitus* docente pelo discurso neoliberal de organismos internacionais. **Revista Aurora**, Marília, v. 17, p. 1-8, 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36311/1982-8004.2024.v17.e024003>.

BALL, Stephen John. Performatividades e fabricações na economia educacional: rumo a uma sociedade performativa. **Educação & Realidade**, Porto Alegre, v. 35, n. 2, p. 37-58. 2010. Disponível em: <https://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/educacaoerealidade/article/view/15865>. Acesso em 1º jun. 2026.

BALL, Stephen John. Profissionalismo, gerencialismo e performatividade. Tradução de Celina Rabello Duarte, Maria Lúcia Mendes Gomes e Vera Luiza Macedo Visockis. **Cadernos de Pesquisa**, São Paulo, v. 35, n. 126, p. 539-564, set./dez. 2005. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0100-15742005000300002>.

BIESTA, Gert. O dever de resistir: sobre escolas, professores e sociedade. **Educação**, Porto Alegre, v. 41, n. 1, p. 21-29, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1981-2582.2018.1.29749>.

22 BOURDIEU, Pierre. **O senso prático**. Tradução Maria Ferreira. 3. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2012.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. **O poder simbólico**. Lisboa: Edições 70, 2021.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. **Coisas ditas**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2024.

BRASIL. [Lei nº 15.388, de 14 de abril de 2026]. Aprova o Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE). **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, DF, 15 abr. 2026. Disponível em: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei/2026/lei-15388-14-abril-2026-798950-normaatualizada-pl.pdf>, Acesso em: 3 abr. 2026.

BRASIL. Conselho Nacional de Educação. Conselho Pleno. Resolução CNE/CP nº 2, de 20 de dezembro de 2019. Define as Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Formação Inicial de Professores para a Educação Básica e institui a Base Nacional Comum para a Formação Inicial de Professores da Educação Básica (BNC-Formação). **Diário Oficial da União**, Brasília, DF, 15 abr. 2020. Disponível em: <https://abmes.org.br/arquivos/legislacoes/Resolucao-CNE-CEB-002-2019-12-20.pdf>. Acesso em: 4 abr. 2026.

CELLARD, André. A análise documental. In: POUPART, Jean; DESLAURIERS, Jean-Pierre; GROULX, Lionel-Henri; LAPERRIÈRE, Anne; MAYER, Robert; PIRES, Álvaro Pelbart. **A pesquisa qualitativa: enfoques epistemológicos e metodológicos**. Tradução Ana Cristina Nasser. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2008. p. 295-316.

COSTA NETO, José Geraldo da. **Concepções pedagógicas e práticas de ensino de geografia no modelo de Escola Cidadã Integral Técnica da Paraíba**. 2023. Dissertação (Mestrado em Geografia) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Geografia, Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa, 2023.

CUNHA, Maria Isabel da.; RESCHKE, Maria Janine Dalpiaz. A Docência e a Aprendizagem em Cursos de Licenciaturas. **Revista da FAEEBA: Educação e Contemporaneidade**, Salvador, v. 33, n. 74, p. 67-80, 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21879/faeeba2358-0194.2024.v33.n74.p67-80>.

DARDOT, Pierre; LAVAL, Christian. **A nova razão do mundo: ensaio sobre a sociedade neoliberal**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2016.

LIBÂNEO, José Carlos. **Democratização da escola pública: a pedagogia crítico-social dos conteúdos**. São Paulo: Loyola, 1985.

MARTINS, Ana Luisa Jorge; MIRANDA, Wanessa Debôrtoli; SILVEIRA, Fabricio; PAES-SOUSA, Rômulo. A Agenda 2030 e os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS) como estratégia para equidade em saúde e territórios sustentáveis e saudáveis. **Saúde em Debate**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 48, n. 1, p. 1-15, ago. 2024. Disponível em: <https://www.saudeemdebate.org.br/sed/article/view/8828>. Acesso em: 2 jun. 2026.

MOROSINI, Marília Costa. The quality of higher education: isomorphism, diversity and fairness. Interface: **Comunicação, Saúde, Educação**, Botucatu, v. 5, n. 9, p. 89-102, 2001. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-32832001000200006>.

ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS. **Transformando nosso mundo: a Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável**. Brasília, DF: Nações Unidas Brasil, 2015. Disponível em: <https://brasil.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/agenda2030-pt-br.pdf>. Acesso em: 7 abr. 2026.

PASINI, Juliana Fátima Serraglio; COSSETIN, Márcia; DOLLA, Margarete Chimiloski. As prescrições da UNESCO nos Relatórios Globais de Aprendizagem: uma análise sobre “Qualidade” e “Avaliação” para a Educação de Jovens e Adultos. **Educar em Revista**, Curitiba, v. 40, p. 1-19, 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-0411.94036>.

PIZOLATI, Audrei Rodrigo da Conceição. Políticas curriculares e relações de ensino-aprendizagem: tensões entre a formação neotecnista e o esmaecimento da reflexão crítica. **Revista da FAEEBA: Educação e Contemporaneidade**, Salvador, v. 34, n. 77, p. 35-50, 2025. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21879/fae-e-ba2358-0194.2025.v34.n77.p35-50>.

PIZOLATI, Audrei Rodrigo da Conceição. Políticas curriculares e formação crítica reflexiva no ensino médio em contextos de transformação. **Revista Espaço do Currículo**, João Pessoa, v. 19, n. 2, p. 1-27, 2026. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15687/rec.v19i2.72300>.

ROSA, Hartmut. **Alienação e aceleração**: por uma teoria crítica da temporalidade tardo-moderna. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2022.

ROSE, Nikolas. Governing the enterprising self. In: HEELAS, Paul; MORRIS, Paul (eds.). **The Values of the enterprise culture**. London: Routledge, 1992. p. 141-164.

24

Audrei Rodrigo da Conceição Pizolati

Postdoc in Education

Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil)

Member of the Southern Brazilian Network of Higher Education Researchers (Ries)

Junior Postdoctoral Scholarship (CNPq)

Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0656-0995>

Email: audreipizolati@gmail.com

English language translator

Affonso Henriques Nunes

affonsohnunes@gmail.com

Accepted on July 21, 2026

Received on June 13, 2026



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.