

BEING A TEACHER IN THE HISTORY OF THE PRESENT: PERSISTENT, LATENT, AND PRESSING TEACHING CHALLENGES**I. FORTUNATO*, O. H. ARAÚJO, E. A. de MEDEIROS**

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the challenges of the teaching profession in the history of the present time, from an authorial and critical perspective. Organized into three categories, named persistent, latent, and pressing challenges, the text revisits structural elements of formal education, such as the curriculum, neoliberal rationality, and the advancement of digital technologies. From an autobiographical and formative approach, it

problematizes issues such as the dehumanization of teaching, entrepreneurial protagonism, and the use (and prohibition) of cell phones in schools. In conclusion, it advocates for a politicization of education inspired by Paulo Freire, aimed at reclaiming the utopian and emancipatory dimension of teaching, through acts of hoping.

KEYWORDS: Teaching profession, education, self-training.**SER PROFESSOR NA HISTÓRIA DO TEMPO PRESENTE: DESAFIOS PERSISTENTES, LATENTES E PREMENTES DA DOCÊNCIA****RESUMO**

Este artigo discute os desafios da profissão docente na história do tempo presente, a partir de uma abordagem autoral e crítica. Organizado em três categorias, nomeadas de desafios persistentes, latentes e prementes, o texto revisita elementos estruturais da educação formal, como o currículo, a racionalidade neoliberal e o avanço das tecnologias digitais. A partir de

uma perspectiva autobiográfica e formativa, problematizam-se questões como a desumanização do ensino, o protagonismo empreendedor e o uso (e proibição) dos celulares nas escolas. Ao final defende-se uma politicidade da educação inspirada em Paulo Freire, que resgate a dimensão utópica e emancipadora da docência, por meio de atos de esperança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Profissão docente, educação, autoformação.

1 INTRODUCTION

This is a text about Teaching in the first person plural, expressed by the expression *Ser Professor*, in capital letters. However, it is also a text about *the present time* of institutionalized education, from which we aim to emphasize the challenges that we face daily in the exercise of the profession of teaching.

With Delacroix (2018), we understand that dealing with the history of the present time is to address the trajectory of those who are alive, writing their own path in history. In a certain sense, this is all we really have: our time on Earth, coexisting.

Therefore, we agree with the idea of present time, whose “basic characteristic is the presence of living testimonies” (Delgado & Ferreira, 2013, p. 22). And this is exactly what we have been doing over the last few years, as we have considered our teaching practice as an object of investigation, or rather, of self-investigation. It is a self-formative process, placing analytical lenses during the development of teaching activities in classes, guidance, research, extension, management... seeing and reviewing what we do as teachers. And even though it is classified as self-formative, this is done in a shared and cooperative way among us, the authors, reporting the testimonies, sharing impressions, raising hypotheses and expressing emotions¹.

All of this is very alive, dynamic, organic, involved in multiple and complex learnings. Therefore, we speak of a history of the present time, which “is constantly rewritten, using the same material, through additions, revisions and corrections” (Delgado & Ferreira, 2013, p. 23). Some people call this methodology of acting, reflecting and (re)acting *praxis*. We agree.

In this constant process of rewriting (our) history, we often come across an abundance of challenges involving teaching, education, and learning. However, there is no way to address all of these challenges within the confines of a single text; therefore, in the section chosen here, we have created a tripartite typology that categorizes the obstacles we have chosen to address according to their most prominent characteristic. Here, we have chosen to discuss the following challenges: permanent, latent, and pressing.

Permanent challenges are secular obstacles faced by teaching, such as the impossible mission of “teaching everyone as if they were one” (Fortunato, 2024). *Latent challenges* are those that silently entered everyday life and became life goals, such as *protagonism* and *entrepreneurship* (Fortunato, 2023).

Finally, the *pressing challenges* are those that emerged as a promise, but have acted as negative interferences in education, society and life as a whole, such as the excessive use of social networks and the virtual structures of generative artificial intelligence platforms.

Some say that describing the most modern digital communication and information technologies as pressing is to express a retrograde thought that goes against human progress.

¹As examples of this self-training self-investigation, we can mention the letter we wrote to undergraduate students, sharing metaphorical lessons about teaching (Araújo; Medeiros; Fortunato, 2024), our bold proposal to treat the classroom as a place of cosines (Araújo; Fortunato; Medeiros, 2024), and the exercise of delving into the meanings of teaching between profession and vocation (Fortunato; Araújo; Medeiros, 2023).

However, the more we anchor our organic way of life in the virtual and artificial world, the more we dehumanize ourselves. Would that be an exaggeration?

Well, let us echo the *authorial phrase* of one of the most renowned *chatbots* of generative artificial intelligence, reproduced in the epigraph: the future is a faster version of the present. Do we really want to speed up our lives even more?

2 PERSISTENT CHALLENGES IN TEACHING

In a public school the main work consists of learning subjects. Attendance at classes is compulsory. Pupils who are indifferent to mathematics are forced to sit there and do what they can. There must be discipline and no noise. But free children make a lot of noise. *In a conventional school everything is against the teacher* – the buildings, the lack of real play space, the military discipline – in fact the whole system. Any young teacher in a large school will find that it is impossible to depart appreciably from the school curriculum, or even from the traditions and customs of the school (Neill, 1976, p. 58, emphasis added).

We will not dwell on this first excerpt from the text. After all, the *persistent challenges* of teaching are so old that there is no point in ruminating on them. These problems are so persistent that, in the mid-1600s, it had already been written, in Comenius' universal treatise on the art of teaching (2001, p. 12), that it was necessary to “investigate and discover the method by which teachers teach less and students learn more”. Furthermore, in the aforementioned secular work we also find references to schools as places that could have “less noise, less boredom, less useless work”; instead, they should offer “more seclusion, more attractiveness and more solid progress”.

After so many years that separate the writing of the Didactic Magna from our testimony of the present time, we notice that we have not yet overcome the unequal correlation between teaching and learning. Teachers and teachers continue to teach more and more, to the point of exhaustion, or *burnout*, as we have often seen. At the same time, we notice that students continue to fail to learn, even when they show minimal interest in learning. Therefore, teacher exhaustion and student disinterest imply a noisy, boring and useless school. Could this not, in fact, be a persistent problem in teaching?

While this persists, solutions are being formulated in two main ways. On the one hand, attacks on teachers, starting with their poor quality initial training. This was highlighted, for example, by Maria Aparecida Bicudo (2003, p. 22), when she stated that there is a mistaken hypothesis accepted in society almost universally, that “the problem of contemporary school education is closely linked to teacher training”. The solution given in Brazil, for example, from this point of view, is the establishment of teacher training policies that seek to standardize the teaching profession (Porto & Fortunato, 2025).

On the other hand, there are attacks on the “new generations” who, uninterested in learning, ignore the knowledge offered by school. We read about this in the text by Morales and Alves (2016, p. 1, emphasis added): “In view of the various difficulties that education is facing in Brazil, there is *currently* a great *lack of interest* on the part of *many students* in school activities”. Just as we read about this in one of the books from Célestin Freinet (1975, p. 11, our emphasis): “*today*’s children are no longer *interested* in school, they think they know everything, but they don’t even know how to read properly”. Or even in the epigraph, when Neill mentions *indifferent*

students. Thus, we hypothesize that this issue is always a problem today, and therefore a persistent problem.

Furthermore, regarding this lack of interest, there are magic formulas for its solution, based on the “implicit understanding that interest is something preexisting, innate, that would only need to be awakened” (Santos, 2024, p. 15). Who is responsible for this awakening? The teachers, obviously, who need to do all kinds of tricks to make their classes (supposedly) interesting.

These two ways of looking at the persistent problem of over-teaching and under-learning serve only as metaphorical smokescreens, hiding the heart of the matter. This is because teacher exhaustion and student disinterest have a common root: the curriculum and its institutionalized system of knowledge transmission, which forces teachers and students to perform mechanical and meaningless work. Paulo Freire (1987, p. 33), in his famous work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, called this method of education banking, making an analogy with the banking system of deposits, “in which the students are the depositaries and the educators are the depositors”. In this method, there is no transformation of reality, only repetition. Repetition of an oppressive system.

Recently, banking education has been described as “the doctrine of teaching everyone as if they were one” (Fortunato, 2024). After all, the serial work of depositing ready-made knowledge, stagnated by the oppressive reality in its formal curricula (linear, progressive and cumulative), requires teachers to present content, monitor consolidation exercises and consequently evaluate this same content. All of this indistinctly for all students, as if the student body were a single person.

It can be argued that teachers should give individual attention to each student, and should explain the same thing in many different ways, depending on whether questions are raised explicitly or covertly. It can also be argued that there should be reinforcement and recovery plans, just as there should be specialized support programs for specific needs. We agree with all of this and also understand that such actions are essential in educational institutions. Nevertheless, reinforcement, recovery and specialized support exist so that no student falls behind, since it is necessary for everyone to follow the curriculum without restriction.

Hence the adage contained in the epigraph: at school, everything is against teachers, who cannot stray from the curriculum. The curriculum, imperative, dictates all the work rules, schedules, programs and even tends to organize a good part of the social agenda of the lives of teachers and students, whose efforts are generally directed towards meeting curricular demands.

We thus have a persistent and insistent problem in teaching. However, it will remain unsolved as long as the institutionalized educational system remains subservient to maintaining the *status quo*. This occurs through its official curriculum that forces a pedagogical work of teaching and learning things unrelated to life, aiming only at (supposedly) preparing students for standardized external exams.

3 LATENT CHALLENGES IN TEACHING

[...] the student assumes the responsibility of choosing an activity, but also of taming the domain of all his choices for life, assuming full responsibility for them. It is important to emphasize that the

State, via public schools, is the guarantor of this proposal, and the school body has the role of mediating and enabling these projects to be developed by students, as long as they do not interfere with pre-established norms and goals (Vicentin & da Silveira, 2021, p. 32).

The latent challenges of teaching are revealed as silent but profound expressions of the neoliberal rationality that has infiltrated everyday school life. This logic transforms education into a space focused on producing results, competitiveness and entrepreneurship, displacing its ontological meaning of human development and emancipation. As Dardot & Laval (2016) state, neoliberalism is no longer just an economic policy, but a reason for the world that structures subjectivities and redefines the role of the State and education. In this scenario, teaching-learning processes cease to be inventive and supportive acts and become technical repetitions, focused on individual performance and the maintenance of social hierarchies.

The history of education, like life itself, moves amid tensions: on the one hand, the control imposed by neoliberal policies, such as exams and curricula; on the other, the constant struggle for a free education, essential to the human condition. More than two contradictory forces, easily identifiable in the history of education, we have constant latent challenges to teaching. However, it is not enough to recognize these poles of tension. It is necessary to perceive the force of oppression and control that often sustain them, just as it is necessary to recognize how we behave in the flow of this tension that runs through us. Who knows, perhaps therein, between perceiving and acting, lies the greatest force for building an education that frees us from the structures that dehumanize and opens space for human fulfillment.

The latent challenges of teaching also reveal a silent trend that permeates everyday school life: the replacement of education as a human achievement by a logic of protagonism and entrepreneurship focused on achieving results, under the dogma of financial capital (Fortunato, 2023). This perspective seems to exert a greater fascination than the solidarity, emancipation and commitment to planetary life and human development. Perhaps this is why the individual is placed with absolute responsibility for his or her choices, as if it were enough to decide, act and reap the rewards, ignoring the structures that condition these decisions. This logic, as the epigraph points out, only serves to cover up a deeper and more strategic motivation of the State: its refusal to make a transformative commitment to reality.

This logic, more present than one might imagine, has invaded everyday school life, replacing the construction of knowledge as an artisanal and inventive act with the speed and turnover of information. At the same time, the spirit of collectivity and cooperation has been overshadowed by unbridled competitiveness, which often leads to rivalries and further increases inequalities. In this logic, teachers and students have often been reduced to disposable characters, prevented from intervening in pre-established norms and goals. To be recognized as part of the neoliberal constellation of entrepreneurs, they simply have to conform. Those who resist this scenario are often rejected, punished, excluded and even harassed.

From this perspective, teaching-learning processes end up, in a certain way, emptied of their potential as pleasurable, dynamic and inventive acts, being reduced to the mere mechanical repetition of content. This repetition, far from forming critical subjects, serves to sustain the *status quo*, preserving hierarchies, inequalities and ways of life that benefit a few.

However, teaching and learning should not serve to reproduce an unequal order. Teaching and learning processes are, in their essence, unfinished, artisanal and inventive and, therefore, essentially human. Far from being instruments of domination and control, these processes should be practices of freedom and collective creation. In view of the challenges that teaching faces, it is necessary to reaffirm the dialectical nature of these processes, as Paulo Freire argued: teaching and learning should be acts of transformation of the world.

It is easy to see how neoliberalism and the colonization of teaching-learning processes are inseparable realities. For example, the control of education through large-scale standardized exams and prescriptive curricula stifles the ongoing struggle for freedom. Freedom is an essential element of the human condition and, therefore, indispensable to teaching-learning processes. However, by reducing education to measurable goals and results, this logic ignores the complexity of the act of teaching and learning, which requires space for doubt, creation and dialogue.

The maintenance of neoliberal colonization of teaching-learning processes depends, to a large extent, on the dissemination of its ideas, such as protagonism and entrepreneurship in the school context. These concepts function as pillars of educational control, by attributing to students individual responsibility for their choices and trajectories, as indicated in the epigraph. For neoliberalism to achieve its objectives, it is necessary for the subjects themselves to incorporate this logic, accepting previously defined norms and goals. Thus, school structures guided by these ideas become essential to the reproduction of this model of control.

Given all that has been exposed, it is possible to understand that the latent challenges of teaching are deeply linked to the maintenance/disruption of the *status quo*. If this interpretation is valid, it becomes necessary to develop a critical perception of the force of oppression and control that neoliberalism exerts over education, as well as an active commitment to overcoming these challenges. This action needs to be supported by a utopian consciousness: the belief that the freedom to teach and learn must prevail over the forces of domination. Without this perception and this transformative commitment, the teacher will hardly be able to face the challenges that mark educational practice. After all, it is in freedom that the true dialectic of the teaching-learning processes takes place.

Teaching, learning and freedom are inseparable realities. A pedagogical work of true teaching and learning is capable of a radical critique of the relations of oppression and neoliberal control over education. Without this, the challenges will simply remain: permanent, latent and pressing. And with this, an education relevant to freedom as an essential element of the human condition will not be built. It is precisely at this level that being a teacher in the history of the present time means more than ever forging History through teaching-learning processes without oppression, but as a political action that develops a critical spirit and goes against the subservience of neoliberal control. It is for this reason that teaching-learning processes need to free themselves from neoliberalism.

4 PRESSING CHALLENGES IN TEACHING

Authors: ChatGPT, should schools ban students from using cell phones? Why?

My vision: Instead of banning them completely, schools can invest in clear rules about responsible cell phone use, integrating technology into learning and promoting respect and focus in class. This way, cell phones stop being an enemy and become an ally of education (ChatGPT, May 2024, emphasis added).

Authors: ChatGPT, should students use chatbots like this to do their schoolwork? Why?

My opinion: Chatbots are great support tools, but they should not replace the student's effort. The ideal is to use them to better understand, get inspired and learn, but always producing original work, with your own words and reflections. This way, the learning is true and lasting (ChatGPT, May 2024, our emphasis).

We begin this section on the challenges of our current times, which require immediate attention from teachers, with a short “interview” we conducted with a generative artificial intelligence *chatbot*. The two questions and respective answers contain prominent elements about the daily life of schools in our current time: the controversy over the ban on students using cell phones in school, and the use of the *chatbot itself* in the production of school work. In addition, we highlight the fact that artificial intelligence approaches issues from *its own point of view* and *gives its opinion*. Let's take it one step at a time.

Among these pressing issues, it is impossible to ignore the near omnipresence of smartphones *in* human life, whose insertion and influence has penetrated school walls for more than a decade. Research such as that by Nagumo and Teles (2016) has already shown that, despite frequent institutional prohibitions, students continued to use their mobile devices at school. The authors revealed the tension between institutional control and technological appropriation, because, while the school tries to limit the use of cell phones, its entire community, including teachers and students, integrate them as part of their daily lives.

Still on the study by Nagumo and Teles (2016), the authors indicated four important categories regarding the correlation between cell phones – including, obviously, the internet and its social networks – and school education. Among them, the *rules* of use and prohibition. At the time of their article, the prohibition of cell phones in schools was already a reality, being the object of municipal and state laws and school regulations. Nevertheless, the research revealed that the use of cell phones in classrooms depended on the attitude of the teaching staff, highlighting the importance of dialogue and situated agreements.

A few years later, a UNESCO report (2023) found that less than a quarter of countries had laws banning the use of smartphones *and* other internet-access devices in schools. The following year, a Euronews article² revealed that several European countries, such as France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, have already implemented or are discussing policies to ban or restrict the use of cell phones in schools, reflecting a common concern about the impacts of excessive use of these devices in the educational environment. This international trend was echoed in Brazil: in January 2025, the president of Brazil enacted law number 15,100, which, among other things, prohibits students from

² Euronews (2024, December 29). *Which countries in Europe have banned or want to restrict smartphones in schools?* <https://www.euronews.com/next/2024/12/29/which-countries-in-europe-have-banned-or-want-to-restrict-smartphones-in-schools>

using “personal portable electronic devices during class, recess, or breaks between classes, for all stages of basic education.”

We do not agree with the ban on the use of cell phones in schools as it was implemented. After all, this is a device that is present in everyday life and has been recognized for years as a potential pedagogical tool. Instead of banning it, it would be more appropriate to adopt educational practices that guide its critical and conscious use, with institutional support.

The imposition of the ban runs counter to recent advances in digital inclusion policies in education. Nevertheless, we recognize that excessive and unregulated use of cell phones can compromise learning, thus requiring pedagogical responses, not just normative ones.

But would banning the use of cell phones be a solution? And, after all, a solution for what? Wouldn't banning students from using devices in schools just be falsifying the problem, supporting an analog, sterile education that is disconnected from real life? Banning devices in schools would be a real way to confront *nomophobia*. (King; Valença & Nardi, 2010), a word coined to describe the fear of being without access to cell phones (from English: *no-mobile- phone phobia*)? Does banning cell phones in schools improve education? In fact, what would improve education?

These questions become more relevant when we observe that the use of cell phones, especially among young people, is intertwined with ways of being, interacting and learning. Policies that seek to simply eliminate cell phones from the school environment seem to ignore the fact that, outside of school, these devices have become extensions of the body and mind. Devices that mediate everything from social and emotional bonds to work strategies, consumption and personal organization.

In this sense, it seems that the laws and regulations that remove cell phones with internet and social media access from students in schools raise many questions. This is because, in recent years, the digital technology of the internet and cell phones has been improving very quickly. In everyday life, it has become a practically indispensable element not only for communication, but also for entertainment, personal organization, services and utilities, work and business. In the meantime, in the years 2020 and 2021, we experienced the most acute period of the Covid-19 pandemic, whose social isolation further promoted the virtualization and digitalization of life, including school life (Fortunato, 2021; Fortunato, Rodríguez & Araújo, 2021).

Of course, all of this has implications. The aforementioned *nomophobia* , as a form of psychological suffering associated with the absence of the device, is just one of the possible manifestations of problematic cell phone use among adolescents. According to Rolim (2024), excessive cell phone use is associated with a series of risks to physical and mental health, including sleep disorders, impaired eating, visual and hearing problems, musculoskeletal injuries, sedentary lifestyle, symptoms of depression and anxiety, digital addiction, *cyberbullying* , attention deficit, and impairment of social relationships (on, but mainly off, the screens).

However, none of this is new, as concerns have been raised about the excessive amount of time spent in the virtual world for almost 20 years. Harris et al. (2020) located almost 80 validated psychometric scales, created since 2007, to measure and characterize excessive cell phone use and the level of dependence. This reveals that although cell phones are deeply integrated into modern life, their use has generated scientific concern, mainly due to the negative impacts on mental health, behavior, and social relationships. Advances in tools for assessing problematic use show

the urgency of understanding not only the frequency, but also the contexts, motivations, and consequences of this excessive use.

Thus, we return to another category of Nagumo and Teles' (2016) research on student cell phone use: *consequences*. This category addresses the impacts of frequent use, highlighting that, although distraction is a central reason for rules that prohibit cell phones in schools, many students also use the devices to learn, which suggests that prohibiting them without understanding the context may not only render the rules ineffective, but also reduce the lack of concentration and interest in school to cell phones alone.

In this direction, the category of *motivation for the use* of Nagumo and Teles (2016) can help to better understand the use of cell phones and other mobile internet access devices and their social networks. For the authors, the main motivations would be boredom in class and the desire for interaction on social networks. Ten years ago, when cell phones and fast fourth-generation internet connections (4G) were becoming popular here in the country (Brazil), we were already signaling *unfair competition* between the banking model of school education and the nod to entertainment on mobile devices (Fortunato & Penteado, 2015). This competition occurs because, while the traditional school model often offers decontextualized and unengaging learning experiences, digital devices, on the other hand, offer constant stimulation, interactivity, and connection with the students' lived world. This only shows that, the more digital technology develops, the more pressing the challenge of teaching becomes.

Hence the fourth category indicated by Nagumo and Teles (2016) about cell phones in students' lives: their *educational uses*. In the study, they observed that many students, even without formal encouragement, used their cell phones for educational purposes, such as research and support for school activities. For the authors, there was a pedagogical potential in mobile devices that was still underutilized by schools.

In this sense, the prevailing discourse is that cell phones and similar devices that access the internet "gain strategic importance: they expand the possibilities of research, authorship, sharing, publishing, and the multiplication of spaces and times" (Moran, 2017, p. 71). It is believed, therefore, that the omnipresence of digital connections in life should also be appropriated by schools, since, according to this logic, there would be no other way to exist other than being connected. Contrary to this fashionable discourse, it has already been stated and demonstrated that the supposed pedagogical renewal brought about by portable internet access represents only an update of the modern school from the beginning of the last century; or even of even older models (Herrán & Fortunato, 2017). Transforming schools, in the progressive sense of Paulo Freire, requires changing their format and not just equipping their communities with technologies that reinforce their *status quo*.

Thus, these four categories identified by Nagumo and Teles (2016), i.e. rules, consequences, motivations and didactic possibilities, help to understand how the use of cell phones in schools reflects broader tensions in the educational environment. Given all this, it is clear that the dilemmas related to the use of cell phones cannot be analyzed in isolation, as they are only one aspect of a broader set of challenges that challenge teaching. These challenges concern not only the use of technologies, but the very structure of the educational system, the conditions of access, the way in which pedagogical links are organized and the way in which knowledge is constructed.

It is in this scenario, in which daily school life is permeated by digital devices, that other urgent issues also emerge.

Therefore, the pressing challenges of teaching are not limited to the dilemmas highlighted by the four categories regarding the use of cell phones. We cannot ignore the *inequality of access*, which further aggravates existing socioeconomic inequalities (Gozzi, Comini & Perra, 2024), or the *depersonalization of the pedagogical relationship*, in which there is a growing tendency to entrust school teaching to platforms managed by artificial intelligence (Evangelista, 2024). This *platformization* only favors the standardization and fragmentation of the teaching process, and consequently of learning (Barbosa & Alves, 2023). Not to mention the *control and surveillance* of the entire school system, removing teaching autonomy, standardizing behaviors, emptying subjectivities and reinforcing inequalities (Amiel et al., 2021; 2023).

Furthermore, the digitalization and virtualization of life also favor the spread of misinformation through influencers and *fake news*, which spreads easily through social networks, compromising critical training and weakening democratic processes (Silva & Carvalho, 2020).

We also cannot fail to mention the phenomenon of the *Instagrammable world*, sustained by a false aesthetic of beauty, happiness and meritocracy. This aesthetic began to impose itself as a social order, "a way of qualifying the environment, which surpassed and became independent in relation to the platform itself that contributed to its emergence" (Souza e Silva & Alcântara, 2024, p. 216). This logic of appearances has even invaded educational institutions, both public and private, which transform their *stories* and *feeds*³ into showcases of idealized realities. In contrast to the concrete challenges of everyday school life, these displays convert the educational space into an arena of disputes for visibility, likes and symbolic validation.

In this context, the rise of *algorithmocracy* becomes evident (Amado & Aragão, 2024), which implies a regulation of social life through the display of private life and the consumption of virtual lifestyles on digital social networks. The more virtual content is consumed, the more social network algorithms work to personalize access, keeping their users constantly connected. The more connected one lives, the less one lives the organic experience of being and being in the world.

To conclude this section inconclusively, we return to its beginning, resuming the "dialogue" with a generative artificial intelligence *chatbot*. There, we come across not only the information generated from an accumulation of previous queries stored explicitly or implicitly in the search history made in internet browsers, in social media messages and emails, and in previous dialogues with the *chatbot itself*. In this dialogue about cell phones and generative artificial intelligence in schools, the *chatbot* expressed its point of view and gave its opinion. This leads us to doubts and speculations: will generative artificial intelligence evolve to the point of feeling and thinking? Will we live, in the future, realities like the one portrayed in the 2001 film *AI* by Spielberg, with humanoid robots in our place? In 2029, will the company Skynet send the cyborg Cyberdyne 101 back in time to prematurely eliminate the human who will lead the resistance against the robots?

³ *Stories* and *feeds* are the platform's post formats. *Stories* are ephemeral content, usually lasting 24 hours. *Feeds* are fixed posts on users' profiles.

Such questions may sound exaggerated and fanciful, but they are provocations of our time that should mobilize us as teachers. We must either succumb to a technological world with no return or recover a humanity that we believe can exist.

5 EDUCATION AS CHALLENGES IN THE MAKING

Utopia is the aspiration of an education that promotes criticism of persistent, latent and pressing challenges to teaching in the history of the present time. Instead of a virtual and artificial world that often dehumanizes us, this education establishes utopia as a real possibility of transforming the historical context in the present time. In this movement, it feeds other utopias and feeds on them.

This is what Paulo Freire (1996, p. 68) always dreamed and defended: "It is in the directiveness of education, this vocation that it has, as a specifically human action, of addressing itself to dreams, ideals, utopias and objectives, that we find what I have been calling the politicality of education". Freire He thus announced education as a political act that mobilizes dreams, ideals, utopias and objectives of transformation that allow the creation of a new world. Unfortunately, the educator's optimism is still a challenge in the making. However, the real possibilities of the political aspect of education have not completely disappeared. Perhaps, the challenges have simply increased: the persistent and latent ones have now been joined by pressing ones.

In the history of the present time, humanity often prioritizes success and fame (even if superficial), idealized beauty, superfluous goods and abundant privileges. Nevertheless, many people find themselves full of noise inside, precisely because they are unable to express their essence in the virtual and artificial world. There are, therefore, utopias that have been trying to impose themselves as absolute ends in education in the history of the present time, by trying to colonize the fabric of life: *latent* challenges, such as *protagonism* and *entrepreneurship*. The utopia of protagonism and entrepreneurship aims to place the individual as the driving force behind economic and technological development, thus creating an illusion of satisfaction in the individual, by producing more and more things and consuming at a dizzying rate. On the ruin of the utopia of protagonism and entrepreneurship in the face of infinite human desires, the most modern digital communication and information technologies, through the virtual and often artificial world, triumph as instruments capable of further increasing the feeling of full realization of the consumerist utopia of individuals. From an even more radical perspective, we no longer consider the virtual and often artificial world as a utopia, but rather a real way for neoliberalism to liquidate utopias, dreams, ideals and objectives. In other words, we are experiencing the end of the political nature of education advocated by Freire.

This is because the terribly materialistic character of latent and pressing challenges radically corrupts human beings in their aspirations for transcendence, distancing us from collective desires and needs. At the same time, the exacerbation of individualism suffocates collective utopias and removes any possibility of education being political as a possible utopia.

The forms of coexistence that persistent, latent and pressing challenges impose on teaching in the history of the present time are often not humane, but rather unjust, egocentric and oppressive. For this reason, teachers in the history of the present time, as soon as they recognize

inhumanity, live, suffer and aspire to another education, another teaching. In this movement, they maintain the vanguard spirit of those who have not lost their humanity.

If Paulo Freire was not mistaken with what he called the politicality of education, the human being is a being of transcendence, that is, he is called to become, realizing himself as a historical subject. This realization occurs through education as a dialectical act that changes life and, therefore, is an emancipatory, relational, critical and transformative movement. Realization as an action of transforming into reality what is not yet reality in favor of the growth of humanity (understood as a process of humanization, autonomy, critical awareness and ethical commitment to social transformation).

Fulfillment is *ontological* because it is a constitutive mark of the human being, as a subject that has begun but is always unfinished. Repressing or preventing the fulfillment of the human being is an ontological *prison*. Therefore, it is urgent to free education from the material bias of latent and pressing challenges. The fulfillment of the human being makes possible his emancipation, his creativity and the resignification of life. In it, subjectivity and intersubjectivity are born, because no one is fulfilled alone. Therefore, the political nature of education involves the articulation between lives and the mutual commitment to the fulfillment of the other.

Thus, being a teacher in the present day requires the courage to not conform to the materialistic, consumerist, competitive and meritocratic character of neoliberal capitalism. Passively or naively accepting these values, in the face of the challenges discussed here, would be like a certificate of ontological failure of the teacher as a human being. That is, a rejection of the very Being of a teacher as a human being committed to emancipation.

In the context of this discussion, the political nature of education implies the emancipation of the individual from the empire of instrumental reasons, which manifest themselves as persistent, latent and pressing challenges in teaching in the history of the present time. Challenges that transform the ends of education and life in society into mere means to achieve their own (neoliberal) objectives. Reversing this scenario requires placing these same challenges, such as protagonism, entrepreneurship and the most modern digital technologies of communication and information, at the service of life, and not against life, as has been happening. The cornerstone of this new utopia is still the emancipatory role and the relationship of education with the persistent, latent and pressing challenges of teaching in the history of the present time, which becomes a force against the trivialization of the human being.

At the moment, what should concern us most is the prospect of the future as a faster version of the present, as stated at the beginning of this article. It is urgent to (re)feed the political aspect of education to resolve the persistent, latent and pressing challenges of teaching. Being a teacher, in the history of the present time, is to focus on the fulfillment of the human being. This is the ethical and historical task of those who chose to educate as a way of giving hope to the world.

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