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*METHOD OR PROCESS? AN ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL
EDUCATION IN PARANÁ'S BASIC EDUCATION¹*

**MÉTODO OU PROCESSO? UMA ANÁLISE DA EDUCAÇÃO
EMPREENDEDORA NA EDUCAÇÃO BÁSICA DO PARANÁ**

Gabriele Ewilin de Oliveira Ribas²

Pedro Neves³

Entrepreneurial Education (EE) emerges on the global stage as a strategic response to the challenges of preparing young people for the 21st century (Uemura; Vasconcellos; Silva, 2023). Recognized by UNESCO as an educational pillar, EE gains further relevance amid the global youth employment crisis (Silva, 2019). In Brazil, this trend is reflected in public policies and in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which included entrepreneurship as one of its key formative dimensions (Silva, 2025). However, despite growing interest, the literature reveals a significant gap: most studies focus on higher education, leaving basic education largely underexplored (Uemura; Vasconcellos; Silva, 2023).

At the core of the academic debate lies a fundamental tension regarding the nature and purpose of EE. On one hand, a reductionist approach prevails – teaching “for” entrepreneurship – focused on an instrumental logic of developing business plans and replicating predictable models (Araújo et al., 2024). This view is criticized for its ineffectiveness in preparing students for the unpredictable nature of entrepreneurial action and for inhibiting critical thinking. In contrast, another perspective conceives EE as a teaching-learning method: a holistic

¹ DOI: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17663983

² Universidade Federal do Paraná. gabriele.ribas@outlook.com

³ Universidade Federal do Paraná. pedroneves0703@gmail.com



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approach oriented toward action and collaboration aimed at developing a set of practices for thinking and acting entrepreneurially in multiple aspects of life (Silva; Mancebo; Mariano, 2017).

This editorial aligns with the latter perspective, understanding that for EE to be transformative, it must be grounded in essential practices such as creation, empathy, experimentation, play, and continuous reflection (Neck; Greene; Brush, 2014; Silva; Mancebo; Mariano, 2017). This methodological approach, in turn, resonates with a deeper theoretical current: critical pedagogy. From this perspective, EE transcends market-oriented training and becomes a tool for emancipation – a process that enables students to question, deconstruct, and reconstruct their realities, aiming for social change and the development of autonomy (Araújo et al., 2024; Verduyn, 2015).

It is within this complex theoretical and practical landscape that the Integral Education policy of the State of Paraná is situated. The official discourse, as reflected in guiding documents, promotes an advanced ideal of EE, seeking to foster “the entrepreneurial spirit of a new kind of student who produces innovations, solves problems, and takes risks” (Paraná, 2019, p. 52). However, the implementation of this policy – by assigning, primarily, humanities teachers without specific training to teach the subject – risks becoming a nominal innovation (Silva, 2025), in which the structure fails to match the ambition of the discourse.

Given the tension between EE’s emancipatory ideal, its practice-based methodological approach, and the concrete conditions of implementation in Paraná, a research question emerges: How do the conception and curricular structure of the Entrepreneurship subject in Paraná’s Integral Education dialogue with a perspective of teaching based on critical and humanistic practices, effectively aiming at the development of student autonomy and protagonism?



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To answer this question, a qualitative approach was adopted, configured as an instrumental case study. The selected case was the implementation of the Entrepreneurship subject in the Integral Education program of Paraná's state network. Epistemologically, the study aligns with an interpretivist perspective, which seeks to understand the meanings, premises, and underlying logics of public policy as a social construction (Denzin; Lincoln, 1994).

The corpus of analysis was built through document analysis based on two complementary sources that allowed for triangulation of perspectives: public policy documents (Paraná, 2019; Paraná, 2023) and the pedagogical material from a training course (Sebrae, 2024).

The official documents structuring the policy were analyzed, notably Guiding Document 01/2019 (Paraná, 2019), which establishes the implementation of the political-pedagogical project, and Guiding Document 01/2023, which details the learning objectives and content of the subject. These documents constitute the primary source for discourse and curricular structure analysis. As an analytical reference point, the material from the continuing education course "Pedagogical Training: Entrepreneurship and BNCC"⁴ (Sebrae, 2024) was examined. This course, aimed at basic education teachers, served as a proxy for an EE model aligned with the method-based perspective and the practices of creation, empathy, and experimentation (Neck; Greene; Brush, 2014; Silva; Mancebo; Mariano, 2017), allowing for contrast with the state's official proposal.

Data analysis was conducted using Content Analysis, through systematic exploration of the material to identify recurring patterns and thematic structures.

⁴ The proposed pedagogical training seeks to work in a transdisciplinary way, bringing together teachers and different areas of knowledge in a unique journey, and addresses the dimensions of continuing teacher education: knowledge, practice and professional engagement based on the development of skills for working with specific knowledge and teaching-learning strategies of experiences in entrepreneurial culture, in a cross-cutting manner to the areas of knowledge of the BNCC (Sebrae, 2024).



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The process followed the stages of pre-analysis, material exploration, and results processing, culminating in the creation of two central analytical categories:

Pedagogy of Autonomy: This category sought to identify in the documents elements aligned with the conception of EE as a method, such as a focus on student protagonism (Rogers, 1969), experiential learning, stimulation of creativity, empathy, and the development of non-cognitive skills (Silva; Mancebo; Mariano, 2017; Silva, 2019).

Technology of Behavior: In this second category, the analysis sought elements indicating a procedural approach, characteristic of Disciplinary Power. Terms and guidelines associated with the standardization of behaviors, predictable outcomes, content linearity, and the instrumentalization of entrepreneurship as a tool for producing specific subjectivities were mapped (Foucault, [1975], 2014). This category also included the analysis of the linear and mechanical rhythm imposed by the curriculum (Verduyn, 2015) and its implications for the development of a static cognition, to the detriment of socially situated cognition (Sasseti et al., 2018).

The final analysis consisted of a systematic contrast between these two categories, examining how they manifest, articulate, and interact within Paraná's public policy, thereby enabling a deeper response to the research question. In line with the interpretivist approach, which recognizes the active role of the researcher, this study benefited from an interdisciplinary perspective⁵.

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⁵ The analysis was enriched by the combination of the authors' experiences and knowledge: the perspective of a geographer and basic education teacher with direct experience in the subject at a full-time school in Paraná, and that of an economist and public administrator working on research into entrepreneurship and innovation policies. This duality allowed for an interpretation that considered both the nuances of pedagogical practice and the broader political and economic implications of the curriculum.



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In Brazilian Basic Education, entrepreneurship has been institutionalized as one of the core axes of the Formative Itineraries, with the stated goal of deepening knowledge, expanding skills, and guiding life projects (Brazil, 2018). Within this structure, the official discourse positions students as protagonists and teachers as mediators, aiming to foster students' critical thinking and autonomy. The public policy thus seeks to encourage students to "create personal or productive enterprises articulated with their life projects" (Brazil, 2023, p. 09), in a process that strengthens their autonomy and planning capacity.

From a pedagogical perspective, this proposal seems to dialogue with the theory of Carl Rogers⁶ (1902–1987), a critic of traditional education who advocated for meaningful experiential learning centered on the student⁷. The Rogerian perspective focuses on the integral development of the person, valuing not only cognitive but also socioemotional dimensions of learning (Silva, 2019). The official discourse of Paraná's policy, therefore, is grounded in this humanistic ideal, promising a type of education that transcends technical knowledge and focuses on personal development and the student's life project.

This perspective materializes in the guidelines of Guiding Document 01/2023 (Paraná, 2023), which details the curricular progression of the subject for the final years. The structure is sequential and cumulative: it begins, in the sixth grade, with fundamental concepts (what entrepreneurship is, types of enterprises) and progresses to market observation and the creation of fictitious companies. In the seventh grade, the focus shifts to startups, social impact businesses, and project planning. The eighth grade deepens the theme of cooperativism and introduces practical tools, such as podcast creation. Finally, in the ninth grade, students work on brand development and the application of

⁶ Carl Ransom Rogers (1902-1987) was responsible for structuring Humanistic Theory, also known as the person-centered approach.

⁷ Meaningful or experiential learning, which is significant, deals with the whole person, that is, feelings and intellect, and is self-directed and self-appropriated (Saramago de Oliveira et al, 2021).



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startup management concepts, culminating in the creation of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP).

However, a critical analysis of this curricular structure reveals profound contradictions. Paraná's approach, by organizing learning into linear stages with predictable outcomes, reflects a view of EE as a process rather than as a method (Silva, Mancebo & Mariano, 2017). A process, by definition, is composed of known inputs leading to standardized results, which is inadequate for the inherently unpredictable nature of entrepreneurial action. A method, in contrast, represents a set of adaptive practices for navigating uncertainty (Silva, Mancebo & Mariano, 2017). The emphasis on a procedural curriculum becomes even more problematic in light of empirical evidence demonstrating the low effectiveness of purely theoretical approaches compared with practical models of incubation and learning through action (Zhao et al., 2022).

This contradiction deepens when examined through the lenses of cognition and power. Paraná's curriculum appears to be based on a static model of cognition focused on information transmission, ignoring the socially situated nature of entrepreneurial cognition – which is dynamic, embodied, action-oriented, and contextually distributed (Sasseti et al., 2018). From a critical perspective, this sequential structure can be interpreted not as a pedagogy of freedom, but as a technology of Disciplinary Power (Foucault, [1975], 2014) aimed at producing a specific type of subject. The imposition of a linear and mechanical learning rhythm, therefore, seeks to normalize and control the complex rhythms of everyday life, rather than empowering students to intervene in and creatively transform them (Verduyn, 2015).

Therefore, the Entrepreneurship curriculum in Paraná positions teachers in a central and challenging role. The teacher becomes a mediator of multiple tensions: between humanistic discourse and disciplinary structure; between the promise of a creative method and the reality of a linear process; and between a



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static model of cognition and the need for dynamic, situated thinking. Pedagogical training, in this context, transcends technical mastery of content and emerges as a demand for critical formation – one that enables educators to decide whether their practice will reinforce the logic of normalization or, despite the structure, foster a truly emancipatory method that prepares students not only for the market but to autonomously intervene in and transform their realities.

THE CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

Entrepreneurial Education (EE) in Brazil, in its most advanced discourse, is conceived as a component that transcends the instrumental perspective of business creation. More broadly, it aims to develop students' capacity to intervene in their contexts, transform ideas into value for others – whether financial, cultural, or social – and foster a proactive mindset for dealing with life's challenges. This approach aligns with contemporary demands for cognitive and socioemotional competencies, offering tools for young people to strengthen their autonomy in a complex world.

If the central issue of this study is the promotion of student autonomy, the teacher's perspective emerges as the critical point of the discussion. As noted, in Paraná, the subject has been primarily assigned to humanities teachers, whose intellectual capital lies in critical thinking and creativity but not necessarily in technical expertise in entrepreneurship. This scenario reflects a national challenge: the lack of consistent public policies and specific training for EE educators in Basic Education. Gicele Santos da Silva (2025) highlights that, without proper training, many initiatives are limited to isolated activities such as school fairs and fail to consolidate into transformative pedagogical proposals.

In this context, continuing education programs, such as the course "Pedagogical Training: Entrepreneurship and BNCC" (Sebrae, 2024), emerge as



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an apparent solution. Its proposal, by articulating EE with Social Technology, Social Entrepreneurship, and project-based learning, aligns with a modern pedagogical discourse. However, the effectiveness of such training depends on its ability to go beyond teaching a linear process – focused on tools like business plans – and to promote a teaching method that develops practices of empathy, creation, and experimentation (Silva; Mancebo; Mariano, 2017). Ideally, teacher training should focus on developing Socially Situated Cognition in students, enabling them to think dynamically and adaptively, rather than merely reproducing static models (Sasseti et al., 2018).

It is precisely in the purpose of EE that its deepest tension resides. The premise that entrepreneurial skills serve as a bridge between education and the labor market can lead to the objectification of the subject, reducing it to a mere instrument for meeting market demands. This instrumental vision, however, is challenged by a more critical approach that understands EE as a tool for emancipation (Araújo et al., 2024). From this perspective, integration with the world of work is not limited to producing a workforce but to forming citizens capable of intervening in and transforming the social and economic rhythms of their communities (Verduyn, 2015).

Therefore, the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the National Common Curricular Base (Brazil, 2018) formalizes its importance but does not resolve its internal contradictions. The realization of EE as a transformative pedagogical practice – and not merely an instrumental one – fundamentally depends on educators' ability to navigate these complexities. The teacher's challenge goes beyond implementing a curriculum; it consists, through critical formation, in fostering an experiential learning environment that, despite pressures for economic outcomes, prioritizes the development of autonomy, situated cognition, and young people's capacity to become authors of their own futures.



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On the other hand, the analysis of the entrepreneurial education proposal in Paraná reveals a fundamental contradiction: while its public discourse evokes a humanistic pedagogy of autonomy and protagonism, aligned with meaningful and experiential learning (Rogers, 1969), its curricular structure operates in a prescriptive and sequential manner. To uncover this tension, this policy is analyzed through the lens of Michel Foucault's *Disciplinary Power* ([1975], 2014). It is argued that, beyond its explicit educational purpose, the Entrepreneurship subject functions as a sophisticated technology of power aimed at producing a specific type of subject, whose autonomy is, in fact, the newest and most effective form of behavioral governance.

In Foucault's conception, *Disciplinary Power* is not a repressive force that merely prohibits but a productive one that fabricates, molds, and trains. It operates through subtle techniques to create docile bodies – bodies that become simultaneously more useful and more submissive (Foucault, [1975], 2014). This power is articulated through three main instruments: hierarchical surveillance – a continuous gaze that renders individuals visible; normalizing sanction – a system of rewards and punishments that corrects deviations from the norm; and examination – a ritual that combines surveillance and sanction to individualize, classify, and document the subject, inserting them into a field of knowledge and power.

These instruments are clearly identifiable in Paraná's educational policy. The school, as a disciplinary institution par excellence (Foucault, [1975], 2014), becomes the laboratory for cultivating "entrepreneurial behavior" (Paraná, 2019, p. 51). Surveillance manifests itself in the role of the teacher-mediator and in the annual curricular progression, which allows constant monitoring of students' development according to a predefined trajectory. The normalizing sanction operates through continuous project evaluation: success at a business fair or approval of a prototype functions as a reward that reinforces adherence to the



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norm, while difficulties are treated as deviations to be corrected. Finally, the development of the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in the ninth grade constitutes the examination – a ritual that qualifies the student, documents them as competent, and inserts them into a hierarchy of performance, validating the effectiveness of the training.

However, the action of this power transcends the walls of the school and the spatial dimension, seeking also to colonize the temporal dimension of students' lives. From the perspective of Lefebvre, explored by Verduyn (2015), power manifests itself through the imposition of rhythms. Paraná's curriculum imposes a linear, mechanical, and teleological rhythm (oriented toward an end), organizing learning in an industrial cadence of production: concept → plan → prototype → product. This monorhythmic logic of capital seeks to overlay and dominate the complex polyrhythm of young people's everyday lives, channeling their life projects into a predictable flow. The paradox is striking: entrepreneuring, which is fundamentally a practice of arrhythmia – a rupture with established routines and rhythms – is here taught through the strictest eurhythmia, the regularity of a controlled process. The policy thus teaches what innovation is while suppressing the conditions of disorder and unpredictability from which it arises (Verduyn, 2015).

The final product of this dual technology of power – which disciplines the body within the institutional space and rhythms life within daily time – is ultimately a subject endowed with a specific cognition. The procedural structure of the curriculum, by focusing on stages and expected outcomes, is implicitly based on a static model of cognition that assumes the entrepreneur is someone who applies a set of rules and heuristics to well-defined problems (Sasseti et al., 2018). This approach stands in direct contrast to Socially Situated Cognition (SSC), which describes entrepreneurial thinking as dynamic, embodied, action-oriented, and contextually distributed (Sasseti et al., 2018). By eliminating



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ambiguity, uncertainty, and the need for improvisation in the learning environment, Paraná's policy creates the ideal conditions to prevent the development of the very cognition most essential for real-world entrepreneurship. It may produce students highly skilled in following the process of entrepreneuring, but unprepared for the method of thinking and acting entrepreneurially (Silva, Mancebo & Mariano, 2017).

Thus, a deeper analysis reveals Paraná's EE proposal as a sophisticated biopolitical project. The policy uses school discipline (Foucault) and the imposition of a productive rhythm (Lefebvre) to fabricate a subject whose cognition (Sassetti) is optimized for self-management within a market logic. The autonomy and protagonism promised in the official discourse do not therefore represent emancipation from power, but the internalization of its norms. It is the most efficient form of governance: one that convinces the subject that the system's rules are the ultimate expression of their own freedom.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study set out to analyze how the Entrepreneurship subject, within the context of Integral Education in Paraná, contributes to the development of student autonomy and protagonism. The investigation revealed a fundamental contradiction that lies not in implementation failure, but at the very core of the policy: a profound dissonance between its emancipatory pedagogical discourse and its disciplinary curricular structure.

The analysis demonstrated that, discursively, the proposal aligns with a humanistic ideal of learning that evokes Rogerian pedagogy. However, this promise of autonomy clashes with the reality of a curriculum that operates contradictorily on multiple levels. On the pedagogical level, the discourse of a creative method is denied by a linear process-based structure with predictable outcomes – an approach whose effectiveness is questioned by evidence pointing



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to the superiority of practical incubation models (Silva, Mancebo & Mariano, 2017; Zhao et al., 2022). On the political level, the promise of freedom is strained by a technology of Disciplinary Power (Foucault, [1975], 2014) that trains behaviors and imposes a mechanical rhythm of production on the temporality of students' lives (Verduyn, 2015). And on the cognitive level, the goal of forming innovators is undermined by a model that inhibits Socially Situated Cognition – essential for entrepreneurial action in the real world – in favor of a static cognition trained to follow rules (Sasseti et al., 2018).

In light of this, the answer to the research question is necessarily complex. The Entrepreneurship subject in Paraná does not promote unrestricted autonomy; it fosters governed autonomy. The protagonism encouraged is not that of an author who creates their own path, but that of an actor who efficiently performs a role pre-scripted by the entrepreneurial subject framework. It is a project aimed at shaping self-manageable individuals, capable of taking responsibility for their own productivity and success, aligning their life projects with the demands of a market-oriented logic.

The most significant implication of this study falls upon the figure of the teacher, who emerges as the central agent positioned at the epicenter of these tensions. The possibility for EE to transcend its disciplinary bias and become genuinely emancipatory depends crucially on the teacher's performance in the classroom. For this to occur, continuing education cannot be limited to technical training in management tools. It must be a critical formation process that equips educators with the theoretical framework necessary to (1) recognize the difference between teaching a process and facilitating a method; (2) understand their role within a normalizing power structure; and (3) create microspaces of experimentation that stimulate situated cognition, even within a prescriptive curriculum.



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It is concluded, therefore, that the Entrepreneurial Education policy in Paraná has an ambivalent potential, whose final outcome is contested within everyday pedagogical practice. The future of EE in Brazil – and the fulfillment of its promise of holistic education – depends on moving beyond the mere importation and implementation of curricula. A deeper debate on the purposes of education and the type of subjectivity it seeks to cultivate is imperative. As a future research agenda, ethnographic studies are suggested to investigate how teachers, in their daily practice, negotiate, subvert, or reinforce the contradictions identified here, revealing the multiple realities of EE in the school context.

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