


**EDUCATE, WATCH TO GOVERN: THE CLASS DIRECTOR TEACHER (CDT) AND THE REGULATION OF SCHOOL LIFE** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.041-015>

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**ABSTRACT**

The article discusses, from a Foucautian analysis, the figure of the teacher who is the director of the class implemented in schools in Ceará, highlighting its history of creation, the objectives and impact on the educational context, as well as the implications of a practice that goes beyond the circumscription of the school and the time of work. Using document analysis as a methodology, normative and legal documents were examined. The results point to a change in the understanding and scope of the teaching practice, but maintaining it as the one that is responsible for generating awareness (in the sense of moral accompaniment and discipline), operating as a life-generating entity, and that, for that, must be the first to remain in certain moral and disciplinary conditions to serve as an example, which configures a clear process of subjectivation involved in this context. In this way, the

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function of the class teacher, more than a strategy for the improvement of learning, emerges as a way of controlling consciences, behaviors and adaptation to norms, as an effective way of surveillance and control of life.

**Keywords:** Class head teacher. To do teaching. Processes of Subjectivation.

## INTRODUCTION

The figure of the Class Director Teacher (CDT) emerged in schools in Ceará, according to official documents, with the aim of strengthening the relationship between students, school and family. Its emergence is linked to the educational policies of the State of Ceará, which sought, from 2010 onwards, with official implementation throughout the education network, to establish more effective mechanisms for pedagogical and disciplinary monitoring of students (SEDUC, 2010). And it is precisely in this perspective of pedagogical and disciplinary monitoring that we see the demarcation of a pedagogical management engineering that can be understood, not only as an articulation aimed at improving learning, but as a strategic device for the control and subjectivation of teachers and students.

The central problem that arises is: to what extent is the role of the CDT limited to pedagogical functions or if, on the contrary, it is inserted within a set of discursive practices that produce and regulate conducts? To the extent that we understand, like Foucault (1979), that educational institutions are part of a disciplinary apparatus that aims to normalize behaviors and establish acceptable standards of conduct, we are also willing to inquire how the function of the CDT goes beyond simple pedagogical mediation and inserts itself as a mechanism for standardization, surveillance, control and production of school subjectivities.

In this sense, this work aims to analyze the function of the CDT in Ceará schools from a Foucaultian perspective, investigating its creation history, its declared objectives and the impacts on the educational context. The research is based on the hypothesis that this model not only expands the responsibilities of the teacher within the school space, but also positions him as a disciplinary, supervisory and, therefore, standardizing agent, which operates as a generator of moral awareness and conduct in students. In this way, it seeks to understand how this pedagogical practice extrapolates the circumscription of the cognitive and even the physical space of the school and the formal work time, imposing on the teacher a full-time "teacher" in any and all spaces, in addition to being responsible for implementing a regime of self-regulation and standardization of conducts, in which, he himself must be the first to be transformed.

The relevance of this discussion lies in the fact that, although the CDT is defended as a strategy for pedagogical monitoring, its implications for the teaching work and for the subjective formation of students still lack more in-depth and less dogmatic investigations, since the school tends to be always seen through an ontological goodness. We, however, follow the same paths of thinkers such as Veiga-Neto (2005) and Duschatzky & Skliar

(2001) who understand the school as a fundamental cog in the game of power-knowledge, and the educational devices as always operating as instruments for the production of subjectivities, defining not only what is learned, but also how one should be and act within the school institution and in the world. Thus, understanding the CDT as part of a technology of governance of conduct, in addition to allowing a more critical look at its implications in the school routine, gives a tone of rupture with the historical construction of the school as being neutral, but capable of leading men to their supposed human essence.

As a methodology, we chose the documentary analysis, examining educational norms that regulate the function of the CDT, from the Public Call of the Department of Education of Ceará (2010), in addition to official information published on the blog of CREDE 2, located in the municipality of Itapipoca – CE. The research approach is qualitative, which allows us to understand how this policy is articulated in the discursive field of school management and what are its implications for the construction of the subjectivities of the educational agents involved.

We argue, in the results, that the insertion of the CDT in the state schools of Ceará demarcates a certain understanding of teaching and defines the role of the teacher as a manager of people more than of educational processes, making him not only a mediator of learning, but a manager of conduct and generator of "consciences" from a perspective of governmentality of students. The requirement that the CDT know its students in depth, act in the prevention of disciplinary problems and promote moral and social values evidences its function as an operator of a mechanism for controlling consciences and standardizing conduct. In line with Foucault's reflections, we understand that the CDT not only teaches, but also regulates and disciplines, inserting itself in an educational device that goes beyond the limits of the classroom and enters the domains of the subjective and moral formation of individuals.

## THE CLASS HEAD TEACHER: GENESIS AND FIRST EXPERIENCES

The figure of the Class Director Teacher (CDT) emerges in the educational context as an attempt to respond to the demands for a more meaningful, close and personalized management of the teaching-learning process, especially in educational systems that sought to integrate the pedagogical dimension with the socio-affective one. Its origin is associated with the need for a professional who could mediate the relationships between school, students and families, in the search to integrate different actors in the school environment. The first experiences related to the CDT date back to the middle of the twentieth century, in countries such as France and Portugal, where a more holistic

perspective of education emerged as a way to reduce dissatisfaction with the school and the result it delivered to society, based on the commitment to the integral development of the student, as a way of meeting social desires and global challenges.

In the French context, the *professeur principal* (equivalent to the CDT) emerged as a central figure in the monitoring of students, especially in secondary education. Its function was to ensure the cohesion of the class, guide students in their academic and professional choices, and act as a link between teachers, the school administration and families.

According to Charlot (2000), the main teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge, but a facilitator of dialogue and the construction of life projects and is precisely the figuration of an entity that leads students to a life project, which is not free, but guided by *a priori elements* of what is legitimate within a life project to be accepted, which further demarcates the figure of the CDT as the one that leads consciences and operates in the promotion of certain legitimate ways of life in the context of the neoliberal school, sheltered by the garb of discourses that are difficult to be contested, such as the importance of the citizenship education of students and the construction of a good and prosperous future.

In Portugal, the implementation of the Class Director occurred in a more systematic and regulated way from the 1980s onwards, with the educational reform that sought to modernize the Portuguese education system. With the enactment of Decree-Law No. 115-A/98, the general guidelines for the depiction of the CDT were established, defining it as responsible for the pedagogical coordination of the class, for the individualized monitoring of students and for the articulation with school managers. This follows the perspective of Roldão (1999), who understands the teacher as a relationship manager, conflict mediator and a promoter of educational success. This conception, which is also understood in the conception of the CDT, reinforces the idea that such a teacher would not be an agent limited to a bureaucratic, pedagogical or cognitive function, but assumes an active role in meeting the historical social function of the school since its institutionalization, which is to model behaviors based on pedagogies of conduct, in response to the expectations of the functionalist spirit.

With regard to Brazil, the Class Director Teacher Project (CDT) had its first experiences from the XVIII Meeting of the National Association of Education Policy and Administration (ANPAE) – Ceará Section, held in 2007. According to records, on this occasion the experience of Portuguese public schools that worked with the performance of the figure of the Class Director was presented as successful. According to Seduc (2011), inspired by this supposedly promising perspective, educational managers in the

municipalities of Eusébio, Madalena and Canindé decided to implement a pilot project in three local schools, marking the beginning of this initiative in the state and in Brazil.

A year later, in 2008, the Project was incorporated as an educational policy and began to be implemented in 25 Professional Education Schools and expanded again the following year, expanding to 26 more units, totaling 51 participating schools. It is worth mentioning that, within the scope of the Full-time Vocational School in Ceará, the CDT was celebrated as a differential that guaranteed educational excellence.

After verifying that the project achieved certain objectives and that it was viable as a mapper of the students' behaviors, the Secretary of Education of the State of Ceará (SEDUC) decided, in 2010, to extend the Project to the Regular Education Schools of the state public network. This expansion occurred through an adhesion process, in which schools could choose to implement the CDT in the classes of the 1st year of High School and the 9th year of Elementary School (in the case of schools without high school offers). After the publication of the Public Call for Adhesion to the Project on the SEDUC website, 474 schools joined the initiative, involving 2,988 classes and 2,118 class principal teachers, being expanded once again, to the other high school classes, from 2011, officially reaching 530 schools some time later (SEDUC, 2011). This is an intense educational movement, in the name of controlling students, their behaviors, dreams and perspectives for the future.

## **THE FIGURATIONS AND SPECIFICITY OF THE PDT IN THE EDUCATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF CEARÁ**

As mentioned earlier, the Class Director Teacher Project (CDTP), as the CDT institutionalization project became known, in Ceará has its roots in the Portuguese experience, being introduced as an educational public policy aimed at pedagogical monitoring, but also disciplinary and moral monitoring of students.

The CDTP proposal was designed with the objective of creating an instance of mediation between students, teachers, families and school management. Its main configuration consisted of the choice of a teacher, who should also meet certain prerogatives, at first referred to as competencies, to act as responsible for monitoring a class. This teacher should promote periodic meetings with the students' guardians, organizing individual records on the academic and behavioral/moral performance of the students, in addition to articulating pedagogical actions among the different teachers in the class (SEDUC, 2010). In this way, the CDTP presented itself as a possibility to strengthen the bond between the school and the community, preventing situations of school dropout and contributing to the improvement of student performance.

To assume the role of Class Director Teacher, the teacher was expected to present a specific profile, which included management, leadership and conflict mediation skills. Such expectations about teachers undoubtedly generate a movement of self-reflection and teacher self-analysis about competencies and skills that would make them distinct and more appropriate to the interests of the school: in addition to teaching regular classes, the PDT should demonstrate the ability to involve parents and guardians in the educational process, have autonomy in solving problems and organize the class "dossier" with detailed records about each student (Leite, 2016).

The choice of the CDT, since its origin in the pilot experiences, did not occur randomly; school principals and pedagogical coordinators were looking for a teaching profile of leadership and competence to manage the dynamics of the classroom and interpersonal relationships within the school environment (Sá, 1997). A kind of reliable model for such a humanizing function and guarantor of the school's expectations of success.

In this context, some challenges arose and were reported, both by school principals and by the teachers who worked as CDT. Such challenges were related to the complexity of the demands required by the function and the lack of theoretical and technical preparation to handle them (EX-SEC, 2017). The expectations about the function of the CDT in the context of the experience in Ceará, began to weave an almost "extraterrestrial" teaching profile, expecting that the teacher would be able to deal with multiple responsibilities at the same time (idem). On the other hand, some views argued that the CDT function should be accessible to any teacher, as long as there was commitment and continuous development of the necessary skills (idem). This discussion evidenced the challenging nature of the function, which demanded from the teacher not only pedagogical skills, but also emotional and organizational skills, conflicting, in a way, different visions of education, and the very function of the CDT and of the teaching practice itself.

When one reflected/reflects on the aspects that touch on teaching professionalism, it is impossible not to think about the intensification of the teaching work which, in the figure of the CDT, is not circumscribed either to the space or to the pedagogical time. The CDT would be so at all times and in all spaces, so much so that it would also have to be attentive to what the students did on weekends, who they hung out with and what places they frequented. Class directors began to accumulate pedagogical, administrative and social attributions, often without proper preparation, much less compensation in terms of time or remuneration, which characterizes the mischaracterization and precariousness of the teaching work (Nóvoa, 2009). In addition, the CDTP's link to policies such as the



Management Circuit and the Development of Socio-emotional Competencies reinforced the managerial character of the function, attributing to the CDT a central role in the achievement of educational goals and indicators established by the state government (Ceará, 2014), which brings this educational policy to the center of the neoliberal model for education and its model of managing subjectivities.

## **METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH**

This research adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach. This is a documentary research, with Foucaultian discourse analysis in the production of data about the investigation of discourses and practices associated with the Class Director Teacher Project (CDT) in schools in Ceará.

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2013), seeks to understand and deepen the phenomena from the perceptions and experiences of the subjects, enabling an investigation of the social, cultural and symbolic dimensions that shape the reality studied. As for the exploratory nature of the research, it allows the phenomenon to be examined without the need for previous hypotheses, opening space for the identification of new elements and interpretations about the function and role of the phenomenon studied (Gil, 2008).

The perspective of documentary analysis was chosen because it enables the exploration of information and discourses in primary sources that guarantee access to the movements and genuine initial understandings, and their intentions in the context of educational policies and practices. According to Minayo (2010), documentary analysis is a systematic procedure for the study of official and unofficial documents that enables the reconstruction of historical contexts and the understanding of the discourses present in social practices. For the present investigation, two relevant documents were selected: (a) the "Public Call for Adhesion to the Class Director Project", issued by the Department of Education of Ceará (SEDUC, 2010), which establishes the guidelines, objectives and criteria for the implementation of the project; and (b) the blog about the CDT of the 2nd CREDE of Itapipoca, which brings together the performative characteristics of the CDT, reports, testimonies and reflections on the experiences and configurations of the project at the local level.



## DATA ANALYSIS: THE CLASS DIRECTOR TEACHER AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS IN CEARÁ SCHOOLS

We will take as the first element of analysis the presentations contained in the blog of the 2nd CREDE, regional coordination located in the city of Itapipoca – CE. This blog brings characterizations and definitions of the Class Principal Teacher Project (CDTP) and points to the ways in which it is inscribed in a neoliberal management logic for education, operating mechanisms of biopolitics, governmentality and modes of subjectivation typical of contemporaneity.

Although the central objective of the project, presented in the blog, appears under a rhetoric of promoting the engagement of various entities for the benefit of an educational achievement, stating that what is sought is "to favor the articulation between teachers, students, parents and guardians, seeking to promote cooperative work, specifically, between teachers and students, in order to adapt strategies and work methods", what can be perceived, in the general articulation (when looking at the attributions of the CDT), is a movement of convening different actors so that a network of inspection of the students' conduct is installed. Although the students figure in an apparently horizontal way in this relationship, they are, in fact, the central entities, to which all the looks, inspection techniques and interests of becoming turn and are built under these multiple looks.

This way of operating takes us back to the control model of Disciplinary Societies, based on an apparatus of power that, at the same time that it intends to create an environment that removes punishment, implements modes of surveillance and disciplinarization, which, through the cooperation of various entities, makes the model more specialized and effective for the production of effects of rigid parameters of conduct of the subjects (Foucault, 1979; Rose, 1999), which ends up being the target of the CDT's practices.

When we take the item that touches on the "Mode of execution", the project is presented as simple execution, in which "a teacher who teaches any subject in the class, assumes the commitment to take responsibility for the students", although it is not expressed, what is installed is a regime of accountability, surveillance and control where the absence of delimitation is the very expression of the scope of the CDT's doing, which should, to perceive all the areas in which it can and should act in the monitoring and control of the students' life experiences. The responsibility of the teacher follows the molds of a governmentality of the youth that gains, in the school territory, a sinuosity from the government of the individualities that are seen, at all times, by many eyes, with the CDT

being a kind of prism that reflects (denounces and/or reports), to the other entities, what happens to the student who is registered and the object of reports.

Little by little, the CDT was and is becoming a sacred figure, in such a way that the nuances of the Class Director Teacher Project go unnoticed. But this is part of engineering, since, as Foucault (1979) will tell us, the practices of discipline are not limited to external imposition, their main objective is to be internalized by the subjects, transforming them into self-vigilants. In this context, by designating the teacher as "Class Director Teacher", which gives the direction, the direction of existence, the project not only delegates administrative and pedagogical functions, but induces the teacher to assume a posture of self-regulation and constant monitoring of students. This dynamic of self-subjection is characteristic of the devices of power that operate through knowledge, as pointed out by Foucault (1991).

The document goes on to detail that the "methodology of execution of the Project favors the Class Director Teacher to develop an articulation that allows him to reach a detailed knowledge of each of the students in the class", which points to the movement of specialization and scrutiny of disciplinary processes, and follow in the flow of operation of power that is exercised through the production of knowledge about the bodies and behaviors of individuals. For Foucault, the act of observing, categorizing and recording behaviors constitutes a form of control that makes subjects subject to precise interventions. By emphasizing the importance of "arriving at detailed knowledge", the discourse points to the desire to discipline and standardize the school experience, aligning itself with the logic of biopower, where the management of populations – in this case, the students – becomes central (Foucault, 1979; Rose, 1999).

Another relevant fragment concerns the convening of regular and frequent meetings, as well as the preparation of "dossiers" in order to monitor the performance and behavior of students. This set of practices compose an apparatus of surveillance and continuous evaluation, which, according to Foucault (1991), is characteristic of the disciplinary devices and gears of modern institutions, with great legitimacy in schools. By instituting regular meetings for the "qualitative and quantitative appreciation per student", the project transforms the school space into a field of constant evaluation, where each subject must conform to previously established criteria, thus reinforcing the idea that individual freedom is built – and limited – within a regime of truth, control and standardization.

In addition, the blog highlights that the Project is based on the premise of "Educating in the perspective of demassification", pointing to what we talked about earlier when we indicated a movement of detailed knowledge of the behaviors, thoughts and feelings of students, justified under the rhetoric of singularities – as individuals who "learn, laugh, cry,

get frustrated..." – dialoguing with the promise of a humanizing education. However, this promise is inserted in a paradoxical context: at the same time that the singularity of the subject is defended, the institutional discourse directs practices that aim to standardize behaviors and conducts, through rhythms and behavioral rules thought a priori and originating from moral and social parameters that shape and normalize behaviors based on certain codes of truth. This duality – that of promoting individuality while imposing a set of norms – refers directly to Foucault's reflections on how power operates by producing subjects who internalize normative devices (Foucault, 1979; Rose, 1999).

The characterization brought by the blog of the 2nd CREDE of Itapipoca, although it makes an effort to disguise the CDTP as committed to the well-being and success of students, what it does, between the lines, is to foster an articulation in the production of certain subjectivities through disciplinary modes, linked by the neoliberal logic of education management. By understanding that the teacher must assume the commitment to take responsibility for the students, the document shows that the function of the Class Director is understood as a mechanism of surveillance and control, in order to conduct subjectivities – which, for it to occur successfully, the CDT itself has to be the first to be subjectively molded, becoming this entity that watches from a model that it itself must impregnate. This practice is imbricated in the idea that efficiency and school results depend on constant vigilance and the meticulous management of behaviors, which is characteristic of the governmentality described by Foucault (1979).

Although it seems to seek an education that combines reason and emotion, the proposal for the performance of a PDG is, in practice, structured around mechanisms of control, monitoring and production of knowledge about the subjects, in order to better control them. This discursive apparatus reflects the influence of neoliberal management models, which emphasize efficiency, measurement of results, and individual accountability, while operating processes of biopolitics and governmentality that lead to the subjectivation of the actors involved in the school environment. In this way, the implementation of the CDTP reveals, through its practices and narratives, the contours of a modern disciplinary device, in which social control and standardization are present in a subtle way, but with great effectiveness in the modes of production of subjects.

When we take for analysis the Public Call for Adhesion to the Class Director Project (2010), we see the officiality of the tones of governmentality and biopolitics in the educational context, in order to make us understand that what the CREDE 2 blog expressed is the result of this discursive movement under the aegis of an emerging truth that promises results and success. Since its introduction, the document emphasizes the

role of the Class Director Teacher (CDT) as responsible for a "deep and systematized knowledge of the student", highlighting that the teacher must have detailed information about the life history, interests, attitudes and values of the students. A kind of scrutiny of the individual that is mapped and known to be contained and guided. This type of monitoring reflects the Foucauldian logic of disciplinary power, in which continuous observation and the production of records become central to the regulation of conduct and to the subjectivation of individuals (Foucault, 1979).

The document reinforces this logic by stating that the CDT extension "enables him to act as a mediator between students, the other teachers in the class, parents or guardians and the school's management nucleus, in order to minimize conflicts and unforeseen events common to school dynamics". This movement, which takes advantage of the vulnerabilities of parents and guardians in the face of the many attractions available in the social fabric and that can seduce young people, is actually configured as a proposal for the internalization of a governmentality device, since the teacher starts to operate as a guarantor of deliverance from the evils of contemporaneity. That is why Rose (1999) tells us that in the context of the New Public Management, the teaching function is reformulated to meet the demands of control and efficiency, molding subjects who internalize the normative values established by the State and educational policies.

The biopolitical perspective can also be identified in statements as "education of reason and emotion", which emerges as an appeal to a certain model of a controlled, balanced subject made for a certain logic of normality. Even when a school perspective is fostered that sees students in constant transformation and that "values their specificities" but, at the same time, one has to know in order to control everyone, what is actually seen is a process of normalization and regulation of behaviors along the lines of how biopower operates, which does not act only on individualized bodies, but over entire populations, managing behaviors and promoting adaptation to certain norms. Thus, what we have is the legitimization of an educational entity, the CDT, which is at the service of the control of the young student population, legitimizing and sanctioning their ways of life, including recording these lives in Dossiers. Thus, we understand that one of the main functions of the CDT is to feed detailed profiles of each student, with photographs, records of behavior and mapping of their difficulties, interests and actions, along the lines of panoptism in education, since the student experiences himself from the understanding of always being under the continuous surveillance of the PTD.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The figure of the Class Director Teacher and his evocation to act in the face of the students' life experience, is made in the molds of the discourse that articulates biopolitical and governmentality devices for the production of regulated and disciplined school subjects. To the extent that the CDT 's function goes beyond the pedagogical dimension and is inserted in a logic of surveillance and normalization, they end up marking the experience of themselves, being the first to make such an experience from the discourses that also capture it. The project of institutionalization of this function, while promising autonomy and citizenship education, institutes a series of control mechanisms that guarantee the adherence of subjects to institutional norms, reaffirming the role of the school as a space for the regulation of life and conduct.

In this way, the CDT operates as a device of knowledge-power that exceeds the declared intentions of integration and humanization of teaching, fostering, in the school environment, a proposal for the production and regulation of subjectivities, where discourses on autonomy and citizenship coexist with practices of monitoring, evaluation and standardization.

In this way, we understand and affirm that, along the lines of what was designed by the functionalist ideals for the modern school, education in Ceará in contemporary times not only teaches content and develops skills, but also disciplines bodies and regulates conducts under the model of constant vigilance and compliance with legitimate ways of life. We emphasize that tensioning this project does not imply denying possible contributions to the improvement of learning rates, but we understand that it is essential to problematize the effects of the technologies of power that permeate its implementation, generating fissures that allow the construction of educational practices that escape the trap of disciplinary normativity.

It is no exaggeration to say that the CDT assumes the role of guide of consciences, figuring as the Jiminy Cricket of Pinocchio's story. Just as in Collodi's narrative, in which Pinocchio's conscience is not in him, it does not belong to him, but is generated through the internalization of external rules, the CDT operates as a device that forms and guides the students' conscience based on discourses and practices of truth that foster the incorporation of legitimate and normalizing norms. It is a process of subjectivation in which the school subject begins to regulate himself based on institutionally established parameters, becoming at the same time the object and subject of the discipline that is imposed on him. The CDT, in this configuration, not only teaches, but also leads and conforms, ensuring that the conduct of the subjects is aligned with the values instituted by



the project, reinforcing docilization and governability as central mechanisms of disciplinary power.

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