

O olhar dos docentes em relação ao ensino médio integrado: um estudo de caso sobre o Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina – IFSC

Teachers' perspectives on integrated upper secondary education: a case study of the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina – IFSC

Percepciones docentes sobre la educación media integrada: estudio de caso en el Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina – IFSC

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RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta resultados parciais de uma pesquisa desenvolvida nos campi Florianópolis e São José do Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina (IFSC), com foco nas concepções de docentes que atuam no Ensino Médio Integrado (EMI), considerando suas práticas pedagógicas e trajetórias formativas. O estudo de caso, de abordagem qualitativa, fundamentou-se na Análise de Conteúdo de Bardin (2016) e contou com entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas com 22 professores das áreas técnicas e de formação geral. O referencial teórico apoiou-se, entre outros, em Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2005), Ramos (2011), Sacristán (1998) e Santomé (1998). Os resultados evidenciam tensões entre a proposta curricular do EMI e sua materialização nos contextos investigados, revelando dificuldades na integração de saberes, divergências quanto ao perfil do egresso e distintas expectativas quanto à finalidade do EMI. Identificaram-se, ainda, limitações estruturais, ausência de formação específica e insuficiente planejamento coletivo, fatores que comprometem a efetivação da proposta integradora. Apesar desses desafios, destacam-se possibilidades vinculadas ao fortalecimento de projetos interdisciplinares, ao engajamento docente e ao apoio institucional. Conclui-se que o EMI, nos campi investigados, permanece em processo de consolidação exigindo maior articulação

pedagógica, espaços de reflexão coletiva e políticas de formação continuada que garantam a integração entre conhecimentos técnicos e humanísticos, orientada a uma formação humana omnilateral, que designa o desenvolvimento humano integral em suas múltiplas dimensões (intelectual, técnica, cultural, ética e social).

Palavras-chave: Ensino Médio Integrado; Currículo Integrado; Institutos Federais.

ABSTRACT

This article presents partial findings from a study conducted at the Florianópolis and São José campuses of the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina (IFSC), focusing on the conceptions held by teachers working in Integrated Upper Secondary Education (Ensino Médio Integrado – EMI), particularly in relation to their pedagogical practices and educational trajectories. The research adopts a qualitative case study approach and is grounded in Bardin's (2016) Content Analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 22 teachers from both technical and general education areas. The theoretical framework draws, among others, on Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2005), Ramos (2011), Sacristán (1998), and Santomé (1998). The results reveal tensions between the curricular proposal of EMI and its implementation within the investigated contexts, highlighting difficulties in integrating knowledge, divergences regarding the expected graduate profile, and differing perspectives on the educational purpose of EMI. Structural constraints, the absence of specific teacher training, and insufficient collective planning were also identified as factors that hinder the effective realization of the integrative proposal. Despite these challenges, the study points to possibilities associated with strengthening interdisciplinary projects, teacher engagement, and institutional support. It concludes that EMI at the investigated campuses remains in a process of consolidation, requiring stronger pedagogical articulation, collective spaces for reflection, and continuing education policies capable of ensuring the integration of technical and humanistic knowledge, oriented toward an omnilateral human formation, which refers to the integral development of the human being in its multiple dimensions (intellectual, technical, cultural, ethical, and social).

Keywords: Integrated Upper Secondary Education; Integrated Curriculum; Federal Institutes.

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta resultados parciales de una investigación desarrollada en los campus Florianópolis y São José del Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina (IFSC), centrada en las concepciones de los docentes que actúan en la Educación Secundaria Integrada (Ensino Médio Integrado – EMI), considerando especialmente sus prácticas pedagógicas y trayectorias formativas. El estudio se configuró como un estudio de caso de enfoque cualitativo y se fundamentó en el Análisis de Contenido propuesto

por Bardin (2016). La producción de datos se realizó mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas con 22 docentes pertenecientes tanto a las áreas técnicas como a la formación general. El marco teórico se apoya, entre otros autores, en Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2005), Ramos (2011), Sacristán (1998) y Santomé (1998). Los resultados evidencian tensiones entre la propuesta curricular del EMI y su materialización en los contextos investigados, poniendo de relieve dificultades en la integración de saberes, divergencias respecto al perfil de egreso esperado y diferentes perspectivas sobre la finalidad educativa del EMI. Asimismo, se identificaron limitaciones estructurales, ausencia de formación docente específica y escasos espacios de planificación colectiva, factores que obstaculizan la efectiva implementación de la propuesta integradora. A pesar de estos desafíos, se destacan posibilidades vinculadas al fortalecimiento de proyectos interdisciplinarios, al compromiso docente y al apoyo institucional. Se concluye que el EMI en los campus investigados permanece en un proceso de consolidación, lo que exige una mayor articulación pedagógica, espacios de reflexión colectiva y políticas de formación continua que garanticen la integración entre conocimientos técnicos y humanísticos, orientada a una formación humana omnilateral, que designa el desarrollo humano integral en sus múltiples dimensiones (intelectual, técnica, cultural, ética y social).

Palabras clave: Educación Secundaria Integrada; Currículo Integrado; Institutos Federales.

Introduction

This article is part of a broader investigation originating from the first author's experience as a pedagogue at the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina (*Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina* – IFSC) – São José Campus, as well as from the second author's work as a university professor in courses at Univali (Itajaí). The researchers' observations and experiences regarding teachers' difficulties in building and implementing an integrated curriculum at the investigated campuses, grounded in the conceptual possibilities and pillars of current legislation, guided the direction of this text.

The research aimed to understand the possibilities, challenges, and contradictions present at the Florianópolis and São José campuses of IFSC, within the context of the implementation of Integrated Upper Secondary Education (*Ensino Médio Integrado* – EMI). Regarding the guiding questions, the following were identified: how do teachers perceive and experience EMI? Is there any specific training for teachers

to work within this teaching modality? What are the possibilities and challenges for effectively implementing EMI on the basis of their pedagogical practices? Within the context of the social contradictions that run through Professional and Technological Education, the following questions emerge: what does it mean to effectively implement EMI in this context? How do teachers' conceptions contribute (or not) to making EMI viable, insofar as they align with the pillars and foundations that guide this educational proposal?

To answer these questions, the research employed a qualitative approach, using the case study technique, with the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina (IFSC) as its locus, specifically the Florianópolis and São José campuses. This text focuses on discussions and reflections on teachers' conceptions of EMI, and is part of the dissertation "*Concepções do EMI do Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina: possibilidades a partir do referencial CTS*" [Conceptions of EMI at the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina: possibilities based on the STS framework], which was also developed with students and Pedagogical Coordination Offices. This article, however, addresses only the teachers' perspective. Accordingly, we chose as our object of study the largest campuses in the state of Santa Catarina in terms of enrollment and number of staff, as well as the oldest ones. Twenty-two (22) semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers from the Technical and General Education areas.

The interpretation of the interviews was based on Bardin's (2016) content analysis, organized into thematic categories, with the support of NVivo software. The interviews are part of the data from the dissertation in question, which was approved by the affiliated university's Research Ethics Committee (*Comitê de Ética e Pesquisas* – CEP), under Certificate of Approval for Ethical Review (*Certificado de Aprovação para Avaliação Ética* – CAAE) No. 65098517.200005.547. The recording units were grouped, as were the main categories of analysis that made it possible to understand teachers' conceptions.

The choice of a qualitative approach, based on Bardin's (2016) content analysis, made it possible to identify the different narratives and patterns of perception that contextualize and outline EMI. Despite the singularity of each campus, the discourses of general education teachers resemble one another, as do those of technical area

teachers. The structuring thematic axis¹ developed in this study was: “Teachers’ perceptions of EMI”.

The analysis of the structuring thematic axis is divided into four (4) categories of analysis: Implementation, Realization, Graduate Profile, and Necessary Changes to the Course. The conceptions of the teachers working in EMI at the time of the research revealed the challenges this teaching modality has faced throughout its trajectory, and how teachers’ outlook and practice can foster its realization, in accordance with its main guidelines and legal norms.

1. Theoretical framework

Integrated Upper Secondary Education (EMI), since its implementation in 2009, has constituted a field of political and pedagogical disputes, expressed in different conceptions of educational objectives, graduate profiles, educational practices, and the purposes of the course. Understanding the connections between the different bodies of knowledge in general and technical education requires considering the objectives, directions, and worldviews that are articulated within the educational process.

The conceptual pillars that guide this teaching modality are the integration of knowledge and interdisciplinarity, starting from work as an educational principle at the center of this integration (Ramos, 2005; Frigotto, 2005; Ciavatta, 2015). Ontological work — understood as a constitutive dimension of human existence and of the production of social life — therefore lies at the core of this proposal (Lukács, 2013) and runs like a guiding thread through the practices of everyday school life. Lombardi (2013) points out that, historically, education reveals the very transformations of the relations of production, especially if we consider that “only human beings work and educate” (Saviani, 2007, p. 152). In this sense, the challenge is to conceive of a pedagogy guided by an integrated and omnilateral conception of human formation.

In the field of Professional and Technological Education, work is understood as an educational principle, constituting a central category of human formation and enabling an understanding of the social and productive processes that structure life in

society. As an example of work as an educational principle, we could point to the integrative projects developed within the Federal Institutes. From this perspective, work goes beyond its strictly economic dimension and takes on a formative character, articulating scientific, technological, and cultural knowledge (Frigotto, 2012; Ramos, 2014). This conception is related to the idea of integral or omnilateral human formation, which seeks the broad development of human capacities and the overcoming of educational models geared solely toward preparation for the labor market (Ciavatta, 2005; Ramos, 2014). It is also grounded in an understanding of work in its ontological dimension, as an activity that founds human existence and mediates the relations between society and nature. This perspective guides formative proposals that integrate general education and professional training, as in the case of EMI (Marx, 2013; Lukács, 2013).

For Santomé (1998), the rationale for developing an integrated education today lies in the fact that the world is globalized, in which everything is interconnected, both nationally and internationally, including the financial, cultural, and political dimensions. Interdisciplinarity, in its construction and practice, underpins the conception of the integrated curriculum as a globalized curriculum. According to the author, the globalized and interdisciplinary curriculum “thus becomes an ‘umbrella’ category capable of grouping together a wide variety of educational practices developed in the classroom” (Santomé, 1998, p. 27).

On the other hand, Ramos (2005) broadens this conception by understanding the integration of knowledge as going beyond interdisciplinary articulation, emphasizing its historical and social dimension. The proposal for integration should enable people to understand reality beyond its phenomenal appearance. Consequently, teaching content would not be an end in itself, nor would it be limited to the development of competencies alone. Thus, Ramos (2005, p. 114) emphasizes that content consists of concepts and theories that “constitute syntheses of the historical appropriation of material and social reality by human beings”. In this sense, two philosophical assumptions underlie integrated curricular organization: 1) the conception of the human being as a historical-social entity that acts upon nature, since

the history of humanity is the history of the production of human existence; 2) the conception that concrete reality is a totality, a synthesis of multiple relations.

In this context, integrating knowledge does not mean merely connecting bodies of knowledge in a decontextualized way, detached from their historical, spatial, and temporal determinants, thereby turning integration into watertight content devoid of relations and into fragments that make up a puzzle. Integrated formation suggests, according to Ciavatta (2005, p. 85), “overcoming the human being historically divided by the social division of labor between the act of executing and the act of thinking, directing, or planning”, that is, overcoming the reductionism of an education that merely prepares individuals for work, in an operational and simplified sense.

According to the author, what is sought is a complete education for young people, one that gives them the capacity to see the world in its totality and thus to act as citizens, integrated and inserted into society as political beings. Likewise, it is important to understand what proposal of Integrated Upper Secondary Education is being discussed, on which perspective of integration this teaching modality is based, and whether it presupposes interdisciplinarity as a condition and premise. The proposal for an education from the EMI perspective is, according to Ferretti et al. (2015, p. 11), consistent with “[...] the development of an articulated view of the world, the construction of which depends on the capacity to establish relations between different fields of knowledge produced about natural and social life”.

This means understanding the social relations shaped by diverse factors, thereby providing a critical understanding of reality and its contradictions. Kuenzer (2009) highlights the centrality of praxis as an epistemological and methodological foundation for the political-pedagogical projects of Upper Secondary Education. The concept of praxis refers to the unity between action and reflection in the transformation of social reality and is widely discussed within the Marxist tradition (Sánchez Vázquez, 2011) and in Freire’s (1987) critical pedagogy. Praxis in EMI is not simply practice, but action anchored in critical reflection, which brings about the transformation of reality. In understanding the concrete totality, the centrality of praxis requires the articulation of fields of knowledge through inter- and transdisciplinarity. From this perspective, the category of work emerges as the structuring axis of integrated formation.

1.1. Guiding documents of EMI: directives and inducing conceptions

The integrated form, which establishes a single enrollment and offering at the same educational institution, does not by itself guarantee curricular integration. According to the literature review, what guarantees curricular integration are conditions of collective work, planning, allocated workload, and continuing education capable of preparing the different subjects who work within this teaching modality. Curricular integration can be developed through different strategies, such as integrating themes, integrative projects, technical visits, the integration of research, teaching and extension, cells within formative pathways (Piunti et al., 2017), a polytechnic nucleus (Sobrinho, 2017), and an articulating nucleus (Silva; Virote, 2017). The inducing documents and guidelines do not limit these possibilities for integration but rather point to the philosophical and political conceptions that should guide the EMI curriculum.

In this way, the guiding conceptions of Resolution CNE/CEB¹ No. 6 of 2012 (Brazil, 2012b) still shed light on the path EMI needs to follow, even though other legislation has since been enacted. After Resolution CNE/CEB No. 6 and the Inducing Guidelines of CONIF – the National Council of the Federal Network Institutions of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (*Conselho Nacional das Instituições da Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica*) – (2018), two important pieces of legislation were enacted: Law 14,945/24, which revokes parts of the 2017 Reform, and Resolution CNE/CEB No. 2/2024, which establishes new post-reform Guidelines. This demonstrates that EMI has remained a field of disputes and resistance within the Federal Institutes since the moment of its implementation.

However, despite subsequent regulatory changes, Resolution No. 6/2012 remains in force and presupposes integral and unitary human formation, which can be developed through work and research as educational principles. Work, from the

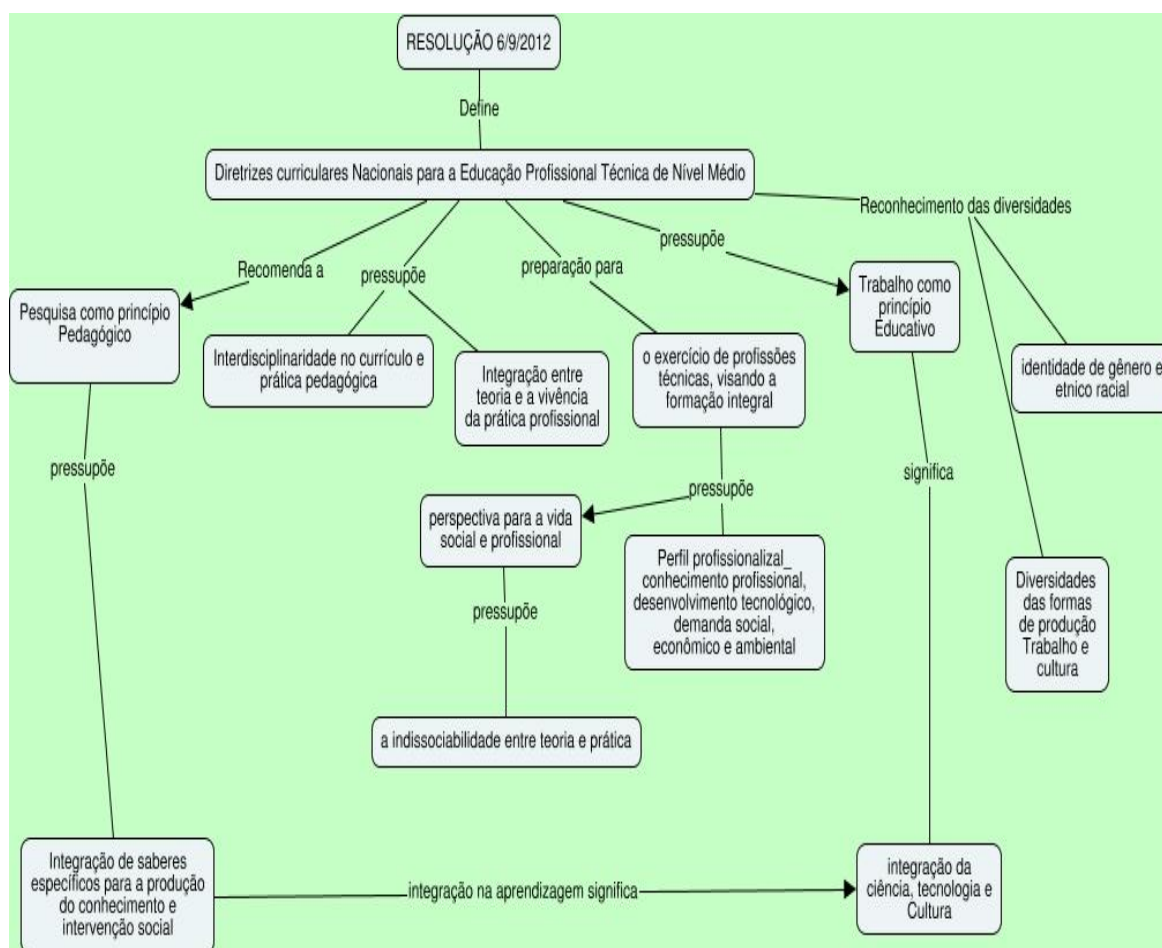
¹ **Translator's note:** National Council of Education / Basic Education Chamber (*Conselho Nacional de Educação / Câmara de Educação Básica – CNE/CEB*).

perspective of an integral human formation, is foundational to the construction and formation of the human being, and therefore an element that guarantees an education geared toward the working class.

The conception of integral formation calls for overcoming the human being historically divided by the social separation of labor. Furthermore, research as a pedagogical principle and work as an educational principle, as set out in Resolution CNE/CEB No. 6 of 2012 (Brazil, 2012b), provide a formation that goes far beyond meeting market demands, considering that work is both ontological (constitutive of human existence) and historical.

It is therefore possible to demonstrate the various relations among the concepts intrinsic to the guiding conceptions of Resolution CNE/CEB No. 6 of 2012 (Brazil, 2012b). One of the important concepts that appears in the guiding documents is work as an educational principle. Understanding this concept sheds light on the EMI proposal and distinguishes it from a reductionist vocational education geared solely toward the labor market.

Figure 1 - Guiding conceptions for Technical Professional Education at Secondary Level – Resolution CNE/CEB No. 6/2012



Source - Reproduced from PADOIN (2020, p.109)

Another guiding document is the Inducing Guidelines for the Offering of Technical Courses Integrated with Upper Secondary Education within the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (*Diretrizes Indutoras para a oferta de cursos técnicos integrados ao Ensino Médio na Rede Federal de Educação Profissional Científica e Tecnológica*) (CONIF, 2018). The document aims to guide and align the offering of technical courses integrated with upper secondary education across the Federal Network.

The EMI formative proposal carries a broad conception of work, as Frigotto (2005, p. 76) states: “Its relationship with the world of work should therefore not be confused with the immediacy of the labor market, nor with productive labor.” The proposal seeks to recover the onto-creative and historical nature of work, articulating

it with scientific and technological changes. The Federal Network's resistance to the so-called "New Upper Secondary Education" ("*Novo Ensino Médio*") can be understood in light of its incompatibility with the guiding principles of EMI, particularly with regard to integral formation. Nevertheless, according to Sobrinho and Bonilha (2020), the theoretical concepts set out in the Curricular Guidelines for Upper Secondary Education and upheld by the Federal Institutes (*Institutos Federais* – IFs), such as integral education, end up appearing in the introduction to the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* – BNCC). However, "[...] the possibilities opened up by the reform under Law No. 13,415/17 (Brazil, 2017) and by the BNCC, organized according to the logic of skills and competencies, may prevent the effective realization of those principles and foundational concepts necessary to sustain the defense of public education as a state policy" (Sobrinho; Bonilha, 2020, p. 247)².

In addition, each Federal Institute has its own institutional regulations on EMI, generally formulated on the basis of CONIF's Inducing Guidelines and the National Curricular Guidelines (*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* – DCN) for Professional and Technological Education (*Educação Profissional Tecnológica* – EPT) and for Upper Secondary Education. It is not the purpose of this article to address the impacts of the New Upper Secondary Education. It is important to understand, however, that CONIF's guidelines end up reinforcing the guiding proposals of EMI. Even with the reform, EMI courses grounded in EPT, such as those offered by the IFs, continue to be governed by their own DCNs and have not been replaced by this reform. Currently, according to the Ministry of Education (Brazil, [n.d.]), there are 34 IFs spread across the national territory, comprising approximately 680 units/campuses.

According to Araújo (2022), few Federal Institutes adopted the Reform. The author analyzed the Course Pedagogical Project (*Projeto Pedagógico de Curso* – PPC) of 380 units distributed across the 34 IFs between 2019 and 2022. The research revealed a partial and uneven adoption of the Reform: some IFs adapted their PPCs,

² **Original:** "... as possibilidades abertas pela reforma com a Lei nº 13.415/17 (Brasil, 2017) e a BNCC organizada na lógica das habilidades e competências podem impossibilitar a concretização efetiva daqueles princípios e conceitos basilares para a manutenção da defesa da educação pública como política de Estado" (Sobrinho; Bonilha, 2020, p. 247).

while others resisted or negotiated the regulations. Many PPCs make no reference to, and do not engage with, the Reform/BNCC regulations, that is, more than 80% (325/380) did not adjust their workloads as stipulated in the legislation. This demonstrates a process of institutional political resistance by EMI to the Reform within the Federal Institutes. These reflections contribute to understanding and contextualizing teachers' conceptions, since they show that adherence to this teaching modality is not homogeneous across the federal network.

For this article, a literature review was carried out based on searches in the CAPES Journal Portal (*Portal de Periódicos da CAPES*), as well as in scientific journals in the fields of Education and Professional and Technological Education, prioritizing articles published between 2021 and 2025 on teachers' conceptions of EMI.

The recent literature on EMI points to different interpretations of its implementation within the Federal Network. Studies indicate that EMI constitutes a **field of conceptual disputes**, in which perspectives associated with integral human formation, preparation for work, and the continuation of studies coexist (Arantes et al., 2023). Within this scenario, the **centrality of teachers' conceptions** stands out, as they directly influence pedagogical practices and the possibilities for curricular integration (Costa; Coelho, 2023). However, research also reveals **gaps between the principles of the integrated curriculum and its realization in everyday school life**, often marked by the persistence of fragmented disciplinary practices or isolated integration initiatives (Immianovsky, 2025; Carvalho; Bastos, 2024). In addition, part of the literature highlights **tensions arising from recent educational policies**, which pose challenges to the consolidation of EMI's formative project (Acaui; Campos, 2025; Milliorin, 2024; Cecco; Canci; Moll, 2025). Despite these contributions, **gaps remain in the scientific production**, particularly with regard to the limited number of empirical studies centered on teachers' conceptions and the scarcity of comparative studies among different campuses of the Federal Network. In light of these gaps, this study analyzes teachers' conceptions of EMI at two campuses of the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina.

2. Methodology

The investigated campuses are located in the Greater Florianópolis region and stand out for their historical relevance within the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education. These units display institutional consolidation reflected in the diversity of courses offered, the number of enrollments, and the composition of their teaching staff, and are recognized as among the largest campuses in the state of Santa Catarina. Their institutional origin dates back to the municipality of Florianópolis, where the unit that today constitutes a century-old campus was established. It was between the 1970s and 1980s, however, that a significant expansion of the formative offer took place, a period in which various courses were structured and the process of institutional expansion was consolidated, which would later culminate in the creation of the São José Campus in 1988. Subsequently, with the Federal Network's expansion policy implemented from 2008 onward, new units were established in different regions of the state of Santa Catarina, currently totaling 22 campuses. Regarding their formative offer, the Florianópolis and São José campuses provide technical courses integrated with Upper Secondary Education, organized in line with the guidelines of Professional and Technological Education and with the institutional regulations of the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina (*Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina – IFSC*) (IFSC, 2024).

At the time of the research, the Florianópolis Campus offered five technical courses integrated with Upper Secondary Education (Building Construction, Electrotechnics, Electronics, Chemistry, and Sanitation), while the São José Campus offered two courses (Refrigeration and Telecommunications). This is a qualitative, interpretive study, whose data were collected through 22 (twenty-two) semi-structured interviews, subsequently examined through Content Analysis (Bardin, 2016). Participants were selected through purposive sampling, considering their relevance to the research objectives, and not aimed at statistical representativeness.

The number of participants was defined based on the principle of theoretical saturation, that is, reached when the data began to show recurrence — when testimonies began to reiterate previously identified categories without adding new analytical elements. Thus, the decision not to use quantitative sampling is justified by

the central purpose of the study, which does not aim at generalizing the results, but rather at gaining an in-depth understanding of the meanings attributed by the subjects investigated.

In addition, we sought to include at least one teacher from each area — technical and general education — at each campus, resulting in 10 (ten) interviews conducted at the Florianópolis Campus (6 from the technical area and 4 from general education). At the São José Campus, conducting the interviews was facilitated by the first author's prior professional involvement in that institutional context, which made the participation of 12 teachers (5 from the technical area and 7 from general education) convenient to arrange. In total, the 22 interviews carried out across the two campuses comprised 11 teachers from the technical area and 11 from general education.

2.1. Interviews with teachers: perspectives on Integrated Upper Secondary Education

The structuring thematic axis analyzed in this article is axis one (1): Perceptions of Integrated Upper Secondary Education – EMI:

Figure 2 - Thematic Structuring Axis 1 and Categories of Analysis



Source - Adapted from PADOIN (2020, p. 146)

This structuring thematic axis aimed to understand the perceptions of the interviewed teachers regarding EMI, considering their professional practice and

trajectory. One of the assumptions of the investigation is that teachers' area of practice can influence their adherence to, or resistance against, the pedagogical proposal of EMI, whether due to a lack of understanding of what Integrated Upper Secondary Education is, or due to political choices. Accordingly, four categories of analysis were established: Implementation, Realization, Graduate Profile, and Necessary Changes to the Course (Figure 2).

2.2. Results: Categories of Analysis

2.2.1- Implementation, Realization, Graduate Profile, and Necessary Changes in EMI

The purpose of choosing these categories of analysis was to understand, from the narratives of the interviewed teachers, how the process of implementing EMI took place at the different IFSC campuses. It should be noted that not all of the teachers interviewed took part directly in the EMI implementation process, either at the São José Campus or at the Florianópolis Campus. Teacher 1S did take part, but his testimony only emphasized that the implementation took place halfway through the school year and, therefore, that it occurred at a moment considered inadequate ("at the wrong time"), which resulted in strong rejection on the part of general education teachers and the community.

It came as an imposition from the Rectory. When the Rectory came here – we were actually expecting it to happen in 2010 and when we were forced to do it as early as 2009 – we had to rush the project and, at the same time, deal with something that was imposed on us. It always creates a certain resistance when those in power come and tell you to do something. (Teacher 1S – São José Campus – research data, 2020, p. 148).³

Given the small number of teachers who directly experienced the implementation, this category presents analytical limitations and was not explored in

³ **Original:** "Veio por uma imposição da Reitoria. Quando a Reitoria veio aqui, inclusive nós esperávamos que fosse para 2010, e quando fomos obrigados a fazer em 2009 ainda, a gente teve que apressar o projeto e ao mesmo tempo trabalhar com uma coisa que era imposta, sempre cria uma certa resistência quando vem o poder mandando fazer alguma coisa." (*Professor 1S – Campus São José - dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.148*).

depth, in accordance with one of the steps indicated by Bardin (2016). It is nonetheless considered that this category ends up being complemented by the other questions asked, hence its relevance to the research. Accordingly, the category of analysis “Realization” takes on centrality in the investigation, since the literature review points to a gap between what is advocated in official documents and legislation and what has been consolidated in practice.

The perception of teachers and managers at the São José Campus indicates that integration between the technical and general education areas occurs in an incipient or partial way, materializing, in some cases, through still-embryonic projects. The realization of curricular integration, as advocated in official documents, requires the construction of proposals sustained by collective planning and articulation among the different institutional subjects. The accounts, however, reveal weaknesses in this process, especially with regard to collective construction and alignment between the areas.

I don't think so. Like, we don't have that much collective work among teachers. I mean, you might have it within the general culture area and within the technical area, but these two areas work somewhat in isolation from each other. (Teacher 11 S – São José Campus, research data, 2020, p.150).⁴

So, I think that integration does exist partially, as I told you before, an integration that works as a kind of support. First, the student sees that they need a foundation to apply the following semester, not simultaneously. And that's the extent of it. (Teacher 9 S – São José Campus, research data, 2020, p.150).⁵

The Florianópolis Campus, on the other hand, offered five integrated courses at the time of the research. All of the courses included integrative projects in the first and last stages. However, because it is the largest campus in Santa Catarina, communication between areas faces structural and logistical obstacles. For a good

⁴ **Original:** “Eu acredito que não, assim. A gente não tem esse trabalho muito coletivo entre os professores, assim tu podes até ter dentro da área da cultura geral e dentro da área técnica. Mas essas duas áreas, elas trabalham um pouco isoladas.” (Professor 11 S – Campus São José, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.150).

⁵ **Original:** “Então, parcialmente eu acho que existe essa integração, como eu disse para ti antes, uma integração numa forma de suporte. Primeiro ele vê que ele precisa de uma base para aplicar no semestre seguinte, não simultânea. E nesse ponto.” (Professor 9 S – Campus São José, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.150).

part of the Florianópolis Campus teachers, Integrated Upper Secondary Education exists only partially, often taking the form of a juxtaposition of disciplines rather than an effective curricular integration. The presence of integrative projects in the curricular matrix, therefore, does not by itself guarantee the realization of an integrated curriculum. What contributes to its realization are teachers' conceptions and foundations, collective work, and the connection between bodies of knowledge, translated into pedagogical practices. "Integration itself does not occur, and is not found, in the way the curriculum is organized, but in the teaching and learning process that unfolds from it" (Sobrinho, 2017, p 106).

So, personally, I see a lot of simultaneity and little interdisciplinarity. I actually prefer the earlier methodology, from before I did my own high school, where the technical subjects were extremely well developed, and there were just a few very basic upper-secondary subjects to give you a minimum general grounding. (Teacher 2F – Florianópolis Campus, 2020, p.150).⁶

I believe that, in a way, it is integrated, we have all the core curriculum subjects, we have the technical area... I think the core curriculum should be reduced a little and the technical area valued a bit more. (Teacher 5F – Florianópolis Campus, 2020 p.151).⁷

Analyzing all the responses, it can be observed that most teachers at both campuses understand curricular integration as occurring only partially. Those who answered affirmatively understand integration based on the possibilities they experience in their daily practice, pointing to interdisciplinary moments and spaces in which teachers from different disciplines interact and exchange experiences, such as class councils or informal exchanges among educators, for example, in the teachers' lounge.

Although the institutional guidelines presuppose common objectives, the data reveal that such purposes are not shared homogeneously among teachers, as set out

⁶ **Original:** "Então, particularmente, eu vejo muita simultaneidade e pouca interdisciplinaridade. Eu gosto mais da metodologia anterior, lá de antes de eu fazer o meu ensino médio, onde tinha disciplinas do técnico extremamente bem trabalhadas, e apenas algumas disciplinas do ensino médio extremamente básicas, para te dar formação mínima." (Professor 2 F – Campus Florianópolis, 2020, p.150).

⁷ **Original:** "Eu acredito assim, de certa forma é integrado, nós temos todas as disciplinas do núcleo comum, nós temos a área técnica... eu acho que deveria reduzir um pouco a área comum e valorizar um pouco mais a área técnica." (Professor 5 F – Campus Florianópolis, 2020 p.151).

in the guidelines and conceptions found in the Course Pedagogical Projects (*Projetos Pedagógicos de cursos – PPCs*), such as the graduate profile. According to Pereira et al. (2016, p. 153), “what is sought is the formation of a critical, reflective, participatory, and autonomous subject, able to work collectively, seeking their cognitive, affective, and social development, regardless of the teaching modality attended”.

The results of the interviews, however, revealed divergent and, in some cases, antagonistic views in relation to what is envisaged in the EMI guidelines. While a large part of the technical-area teaching staff aims for the completion of the technical course and the graduate’s entry into the labor market, general education teachers prioritize preparing students for entry into higher education (the *vestibular* and ENEM)⁸. In this context, the need for alignment between the graduate profile and the theoretical conceptions underlying EMI, as discussed in the theoretical framework, becomes evident. The interviews show that the two areas connect very little with one another, and that the graduate profile is far removed from the conception of Integrated Upper Secondary Education, in the sense pointed to by the theoretical framework:

This places integral human formation and work as an educational principle at the center of this form of upper secondary education. It thus suggests that Integrated Upper Secondary Education should provide a formation that considers the human being in their integrality and that highlights human potential to transform reality within an ontological conception of work. (Marçal; Ribeiro, 2017, p. 242).⁹

Based on the responses of the interviewed subjects, it was possible to identify, within teachers’ discourses, three purposes for EMI formation and to outline different graduate profiles. The responses of the 11 technical-area teachers were concentrated in Profile 2, and four General Culture teachers also pointed to formation for the labor

⁸ **Translator’s note:** *Vestibular* refers to the entrance examinations traditionally administered by individual Brazilian universities, while ENEM (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio*) is the standardized National Secondary Education Examination used for admission to most public and many private higher education institutions in Brazil.

⁹ **Original:** “Este coloca a formação humana integral e o trabalho como princípio educativo como algo central dessa forma de ensino médio. Assim, sugere que o ensino médio integrado proporcione uma formação que considere o ser humano na sua integralidade e que destaque o potencial humano de transformação da realidade dentro de uma concepção ontológica de trabalho.” (Marçal; Ribeiro, 2017, p. 242).

market. However, the general education teachers who indicated the labor market also mentioned other profiles in their narratives.

Profile 1 – A formation that contributes to the student's life and citizenship (cultural formation, critical awareness of technology);

Profile 2 – A formation that enables the student to enter the labor market;

Profile 3 – A formation that enables the student to enter higher education.

Figure 3 - Teachers' views on the graduate profile



Source - Adapted from PADOIN (2020, p.152)

The distribution of these profiles reveals the coexistence of different conceptions of formation within EMI, exposing tensions between a perspective of integral formation and more instrumentalized approaches geared toward the labor market or access to higher education. Decree-Law No. 5,154/04 was one of the historical milestones of professional education, since it opened up the possibility for workers to receive an integral education and build a critical trajectory in relation to the world of work. The Decree-Law points toward an integrated curriculum and envisions a professional education integrated with different forms of education, work, science, and technology, leading individuals to also develop aptitudes for productive life, and demonstrates that the integration of professional education has a broader meaning than merely the format of reified labor. In this sense, when analyzing the discourses of the teachers surveyed regarding the graduate profile, their stated purposes may diverge from what is proposed for EMI.

I don't know if, ideally – but perhaps a somewhat older view would be that a good part of these graduates would leave here with this technical course and go on to practice as technicians; I think that, in an integrated technical course, that would be the goal. We could consider it a first level of success if students leave here and go into telecommunications engineering, and that would be the first, ideal level of success. (Teacher 3S – São José Campus, research data, 2020, p.155).¹⁰

According to Sacristán (1998, p. 129), the first step in understanding a curriculum is to grasp its “external practical context”, that is, the exercise of political, economic, and social practices that determine curricular decisions, since the curriculum is the product of choices made within this context.

Look, I believe the profile should be of someone willing to work in the technical area, who would normally have the means to do so, because what happens a lot here today is that students end up using the integrated program as preparation for entering higher education. That much is clear, a large share of students in general have no affinity with the technical area and just want to leave here to enter a university, partly for the convenience, partly because of the strong education the institute offers, and partly because, coming from a public school, they can still claim the right to compete as a public-school student. This happens quite often. (Teacher 9F – Florianópolis Campus, research data, 2020, p.155).¹¹

The dissonant objectives between the two areas may therefore present weaknesses for integration within this teaching modality, which presupposes overcoming duality, achieving interdisciplinarity, and establishing a shared pedagogical conception between the areas (Ramos, 2011; Frigotto, 2005). On the other hand, from the perspective of the dialectical and contradictory relations of

¹⁰ **Original:** “Não sei se idealmente, mas talvez uma visão um pouco mais antiga seria que boa parte desses egressos saísse daqui com esse curso técnico e fosse exercer a profissão de técnico, acho que, num curso técnico integrado, esse seria o objetivo. A gente pode considerar o primeiro nível de sucesso assim que os alunos saírem daqui e irem pra engenharia de telecomunicações, e isso seria o primeiro nível de sucesso em nível ideal.” (Professor 3 S – Campus São José, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.155).

¹¹ **Original:** “Olha, eu acredito que o perfil deva ser de alguém disposto a trabalhar na área técnica, normalmente teria meios de fazer isso, porque o que acontece muito hoje aqui é que os alunos acabam usando os médios integrados como preparatório para entrada no superior. Isso aí é claro, os alunos em geral, uma parte grande deles, não tem afinidade com área técnica e só querem sair daqui para entrar numa universidade por conta da facilidade, uma por conta da formação positiva que o instituto oferece e outra por ser de uma escola pública e ainda poder ter esse direito de concorrer como aluno de escola pública, isso acontece bastante.” (Professor 9 F – Campus Florianópolis, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.155).

historical materialism, it can be understood that we are making our way toward an emancipatory and unitary education, insofar as we experience these proposals within a capitalist society (Ramos, 2005). This movement, however, is not static and emerges from different social spheres. It is understood that educational institutions are spheres of mediation, and that research in education is not disconnected from the social, political, and economic context in which it is embedded (Azanha, 1992).

There is, however, a dialectical movement among the different social spheres that make up the work of school mediation. What can be observed is that the Federal Institute of Santa Catarina, during the period of the research, did not open up spaces for dialogue or for reflection on the conceptions and initiatives aimed at strengthening Integrated Upper Secondary Education ¹¹, as envisaged by CONIF's guidelines (2018). This is reflected in teachers' discourses and in the conceptions of the managers of the campuses analyzed, giving rise to narratives disconnected from EMI's proposals and to a reductionist, terminal view focused solely on the labor market. EMI has its foundations and conceptions anchored in work as an educational principle, which leads to a broader approach than market-oriented formation, given that work is intrinsic to human beings. A graduate profile with a reductionist bias, focused solely on the labor market, constrains the possibilities of EMI and may distort its purpose,

I think that a graduate should leave here as a professional qualified to work within the field, and within that field there are several lines of work they could pursue. So, in theory, the ideal graduate for us would be one who serves society through the course we are offering. If they came looking for a course in Telecommunications or Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, they should leave here ready to serve that market... We lose sight of the institution's purpose, which is to serve society so that the graduate can find a place in a company. (Teacher 4S – São José Campus, research data, 2020, p.155).¹²

¹² **Original:** “Eu acho que ele tem que sair daqui um profissional capacitado para trabalhar dentro do ramo, e dentro do ramo tem essas várias linhas que ele poderia estar atuando. Então, em tese, o egresso ideal para nós era estar atendendo a sociedade com o curso pelo qual a gente está dando à disposição. Se eles vieram procurar um curso de Telecomunicações ou de Refrigeração ou Climatização, que saísse daqui para atender esse mercado... A gente perde o fim da instituição, que era atender a sociedade para que ele arranje um local de empresa.” (Professor 4S – Campus São José, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.155).

What the subjects think regarding the changes that should take place in the course also reveals the conception and perception they have of EMI and ends up connecting with other categories of analysis. Considering teachers' responses, it was possible to verify that, at both the São José and Florianópolis campuses, suggested changes centered mainly on school time, that is, on the workload set out in the PPCs, the course duration, teacher training, integrative projects, and teacher planning. Another suggestion that appeared frequently at both campuses researched was greater appreciation of the technical area, whether through incentives for the area or through the offering of places at the expense of higher-education courses, a focus on the public interested in pursuing a technical career, and an increase in exact-sciences content,

I would extend it to three years, preferably with a heavier course load within the same shift, because of the difficulty students have in spending more time in the city where we live, with commuting, transportation, and food, which is expensive. I would increase the Portuguese and Mathematics course loads and try to work more on this integration I've been talking about, in terms of integrative projects. (Teacher 11S – São José Campus, research data, 2020, p.156).¹³

While teacher 11S, from the Technical Area, suggests increasing the mathematics course load, teacher 1S, from General Education, suggests reducing it. This alone demonstrates the disharmony between the areas and a field of disputes within the curriculum. Regarding the controversies between fields of knowledge within the curriculum, Miguel Arroyo points out that no one remains on the sidelines of these disputes, since "in the spatial construction of the school system, the curriculum is the nucleus and the most structuring central space of the school's function" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 13). For Arroyo, the proof lies in the sheer volume of curricular guidelines produced by education, encompassing regulations, school times, and school spaces.

Among those interviewed, only one teacher (Teacher 4S) highlighted the need for teacher training, and only one subject (Teacher 6S) mentioned the need to align

¹³ **Original:** "Eu o passaria para três anos, de preferência com uma carga horária maior no mesmo turno, por causa da dificuldade dos alunos ficarem mais tempo na cidade que a gente vive, com deslocamento, transporte e alimentação, que é cara. Aumentaria as cargas de português e matemática e tentaria ver mais essa integração aí do que eu estou falando, em termos de projetos integradores." (Prof. 11S – Campus São José, dados da pesquisa, 2020, p.156).

conceptions within the curriculum. This shows that, for most teachers, the understanding of curriculum is reduced to workload, a focus on the labor market, and subjects. However, as Sacristán (1998) points out, *the curriculum is predominantly a letter of intentions*, one that normally contains the conceptions and guiding directives of teaching praxis.

The curriculum, however, is not only a field of controversy but also a social construction; and, according to Gentil and Sroczynski (2014), drawing on Goodson (1999), this shows that the curriculum is a dialectical social construction operating on two levels, “[...] first at the level of prescription itself, but afterward also at the level of process and practice” (Goodson, 1999, p. 67 apud Gentil; Sroczynski, 2014, p. 53). At the Florianópolis Campus, which has different particularities from the São José Campus, suggestions for changes to the course were likewise centered on keeping pace with market changes, giving priority to the technical area, and valuing the public interested in pursuing a career in it.

Let's put it this way: there's a reasonable share of the population that maybe doesn't want to – I don't know if they don't want to or can't – go on to higher education. Okay. That share, I don't know how significant it is percentage-wise, but maybe they aren't getting access to these technical-course places, which end up being taken by students who won't make the most of the technical course. A concomitant track,¹⁴ or I don't know, but you'd be obliged to do the integrated program somewhere else, so it's pointless. (Teacher 2F – Florianópolis Campus, research data, 2020 p. 160).¹⁵

CONCLUSIONS ON TEACHERS' VIEWS REGARDING EMI

Along the paths traced by this research, it was possible to reveal teachers' perceptions at the investigated campuses regarding EMI (Thematic Axis 1). Regarding the categories Implementation and Realization of EMI, what can be observed, at first,

¹⁴ **Translator's note:** The teacher is referring to *Ensino Médio Concomitante* (“concomitant” upper secondary education), a modality in which the technical course and regular upper-secondary schooling are taken separately and simultaneously, often at different institutions, rather than through a single integrated curriculum as in EMI.

¹⁵ **Original:** “Digamos assim, existe uma parcela razoável da população que talvez não queira, não sei se não queira ou não possa ir para o nível superior. Ok. Essa parcela, não sei até que ponto ela é percentualmente importante, talvez ela não esteja tendo acesso a essas vagas de curso técnico, que estão sendo cobertas por alunos que não vão aproveitar o curso técnico. Um concomitante ou, sei lá, mas que tu obrigatoriamente terias que fazer o integrado em outro lugar, então não adianta nada.” (Professor 2 F – Campus Florianópolis, dados da pesquisa, 2020 p. 160).

is that the realization of EMI involves political disputes and distinct conceptions of Professional and Technological Education, which are reflected in experiences with integrative projects or connections between bodies of knowledge. It is not possible to state categorically whether a course is fully integrated, since the existence of integrative projects, provided for in the PPCs, does not guarantee dialogue between general and technical area teachers. The structure and architecture of an educational institution may contribute to bringing teachers together, but they do not guarantee the exchange and construction of interdisciplinary knowledge.

Through content analysis, the research was able to shed light on significant discrepancies in teachers' perceptions regarding EMI's conceptions. Most teachers, however, recognize that integration between the areas remains partial, materializing in isolated initiatives and embryonic projects. The realization of the integrative proposal, grounded in the conceptual foundations and specific guidelines for EMI, follows a contradictory and limited path, since it unfolds within a capitalist society.

Furthermore, teachers identified the reduction or reorganization of workload, the revaluing of the technical area, teacher training, and greater articulation between the areas as priority changes. Few, however, mentioned the need to discuss conceptions of curriculum or knowledge integration, and the results point to a partial realization of EMI at the campuses analyzed.

Moreover, teachers' perceptions reveal the need for continuing education, spaces for reflection, and stronger institutional commitment to EMI's guidelines. The conception of integration needs to be (re)signified, moving beyond the mere simultaneity of disciplines. In this respect, the analysis carried out here contributes to broadening the debate on the challenges and possibilities for consolidating Integrated Upper Secondary Education within the Federal Network, which presupposes an integrated and omnilateral education.

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Notes

^I Structuring thematic axis: the analytical categories, related to the objectives of the research (the thesis in question), were organized and distributed into 5 structuring thematic axes: 1. Perceptions of EMI (Integrated Upper Secondary Education); 2. Curriculum and integrated formation; 3. Teacher training; 4. Retention and dropout; 5. Technology and its relations with Society. Each axis addresses its own categories of analysis. This article, however, addresses only structuring thematic axis 1: Teachers' perceptions of EMI and its four categories of analysis: Implementation, Realization, Graduate Profile, and Necessary Changes in EMI.

^{II} In 2017 and 2018, CONIF organized the First Seminar for Strengthening Integrated Upper Secondary Education, in partnership with the Federal Institute of Brasília. The Seminar aimed to provide a collective analysis of the challenges that emerged following the enactment of Law No. 13,415, of February 16, 2017, which established the new Upper Secondary Education. Its central objective was to initiate a reflection on the main challenges facing Integrated Upper Secondary Education, within the context of the recent changes in Brazilian educational legislation. The Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul (*Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Sul-rio-grandense* – IFSul) also organized three seminars to strengthen Integrated Upper Secondary Education.