

What is the future of Education in Brazil?

Afiliada à



The editorialist of *Veja* magazine, in issue 2693 of July 1, 2020, began the editorial with the following text:

"Educate children, and it will not be necessary to punish adults," wrote the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras (570 B.C.-495 B.C.), in a phrase that spanned millennia without ever losing its disturbing relevance.

This phrase reminds me of the founding of the Escola de Minas, on October 12, 1876, and consequently, its founder: Henry Gorceix. In fact, Gorceix thought the same way as Pythagoras because he immediately perceived the deplorable situation in which primary and secondary education encountered in Brazil. Without the quality of these teachings, he wrote, Brazil would have no engineers or useful homes for the country, and as a solution, he proposed to teach classes to teachers, which was rejected by educators in the Province of Minas Gerais.

Gorceix was passionate about his work, and he defended it in every way, including against counterattacks coming from Parliament, not only because he was French, but also enjoying the esteem of Emperor D. Pedro II. The refusal to accept the registration of a former student, for the chair of Mineralogy and Geology at the Polytechnic School, claiming that his diploma of engineer was insufficient for the competition, led Gorceix to write to the Minister of the Empire: *In the current conditions of the country, I do not believe that there is a professional who can best fulfill these functions; in any case, the petitioner only wants to show in public the evidence of his qualifications before judges, the competence of which I myself could discuss ...*

And he ended: *I understand anyone who repels our students: they are afraid of the light!*

Years later, Decree nº 7628 was published on February 14, 1980, which recognized the graduates of the Escola de Minas and in article 4 it said that this diploma enabled students here to fill positions at the Polytechnic School of Rio.

One hundred and forty-eight years have passed, and the deplorable situation found by Gorceix has hardly changed. I participated in a project, as a volunteer, together with Professor Glória Guiné (Federal University of Ouro Preto), who was taking a course for literacy teachers from most Brazilian states. The project lasted about ten years and proved that education has long ceased to be a priority in the development of Brazil, both from past and current governments.

And I conclude, summarizing the *Veja* editorial: *Education is undoubtedly the best thermometer to measure the progress of any society, a long road connecting the past, the present and the future of civilizations.*

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