

Professor, is it to Copy? Dilemmas in the Relationship Professor-Student

É para Copiar, Professor? Dilemas na Relação Professor-Aluno

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ABSTRACT

The proposed case aims to discuss a dilemma that exists in the decision-making process of an academic manager in a university environment when faced with a conflict between a professor and his classes. From the first day of class, the class has been asking the course coordinator to remove the professor because he is too old, looks tired, and uses outdated teaching methods. In turn, the professor claims that the students are very uninterested, refuse to copy what is on the board, only take photos, constantly use their cell phones in class, and have no patience for more theoretical explanations, which are necessary for a systemic analysis required in his discipline. Due to the organizational context, the professor's removal from the discipline leads to his dismissal, even with 37 years of teaching experience and a relevant history of working in the market. This decision needs to be made by the course coordinator to guide the management of the conflict and its success, but many aspects need to be considered and the deadline is short. The case is based on theoretical knowledge about conflict management and generational conflict, covering the theoretical axis of important themes that the context of the case requires, such as teaching and learning methodologies and the challenges of the job market for senior citizens. The use of the case is recommended in lato sensu postgraduate and undergraduate courses in the area of management, in subjects such as People Management, Conflict Management, Management Skills, Training and Development, but it also allows its development in the areas of education.

Keywords: Conflict management. Active methodologies. Third Age

RESUMO

O caso proposto tem como objetivo discutir um dilema existente na tomada de decisão de um gestor acadêmico no ambiente universitário diante de um conflito entre um professor e suas turmas. Desde o primeiro dia de aula, a turma já solicita a coordenação do curso a retirada do professor por ser muito velho, com aspecto de cansado e metodologia de ensino ultrapassada. Por

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RESUMO

sua vez, o docente alega que os alunos são muito desinteressados, negavam-se a copiar o que estava no quadro, só tiravam fotos, usavam o celular constantemente em sala e não tinham paciência para explicações mais teóricas, porém necessárias para uma análise sistêmica exigida na sua disciplina. Devido ao contexto organizacional, o afastamento do professor da disciplina impele a sua demissão, mesmo com 37 anos de experiência na docência e relevante histórico de atuação no mercado. Essa tomada de decisão precisa ser feita pela coordenadora do curso para nortear o gerenciamento do conflito e o seu êxito, mas muitos aspectos precisam ser considerados e o prazo é curto. O caso é embasado nos conhecimentos teóricos sobre administração de conflitos e o conflito de gerações, perpassando o eixo teórico sobre temáticas importantes que o contexto do caso requer como metodologias de ensino e aprendizagem e os desafios do mercado de trabalho para a terceira idade. A utilização do caso é recomendada em cursos de pós-graduação lato sensu e graduação da área de gestão, em disciplinas como Gestão de Pessoas, Administração de Conflitos, Competências Gerenciais, Treinamento e Desenvolvimento, mas também permite seu desenvolvimento nas áreas de educação.

Palavras-chave: Administração de conflito. Metodologias ativas. Terceira idade.

Introduction

In the university environment, it is common for some dissatisfaction to arise in the professor-student relationship throughout the semester, which is naturally communicated to the course coordinator. As part of their role, the coordinator is responsible for managing these conflicts and seeking the continuous improvement of such processes.

However, what Michelle Xavier, the coordinator of the Bachelor of Business Administration program, did not expect was to face such a conflict on the very first day of class, at the beginning of the 2023 semester. To her surprise, before the class had even ended, Eduarda Galdino, the class representative, arrived at her office requesting, on behalf of all the students, the replacement of Professor Antenor Braga. She argued that the students disapproved of the Financial Administration professor because he was too old, appeared tired, and used outdated teaching methods.

Aware that the professor involved in the conflict was 76 years old and had recently recovered from a stroke — but also considering his more than 37 years of teaching experience and a solid professional background in the financial market -

the course coordinator realized she would need more time to better understand the real causes of the situation.

When Michelle asked Eduarda Galdino what the professor had already taught, the student replied that he had only presented his teaching plan and spoken briefly with the class. She then added: — *He seems like our grandfather, he writes everything on the board, he is very formal, and he doesn't even know how to turn on the classroom projector. He should be retired by now!*

After hearing this, Michelle realized that resolving this situation would not be easy. She knew that successful conflict management begins with open dialogue with all parties involved, followed by professional alignment with the organization's guidelines. In this case, the institution was a private university center, with the highest rating from the Ministry of Education in its institutional evaluation, operating in the market for 22 years, and recognized for its quality teaching and credibility among the public.

WITH THE CLASS

The following week, Coordinator Michelle decided to speak with the class in an attempt to better understand the students' dissatisfaction and perception of the situation. Several students voiced their concerns on behalf of the class, including young Marco Túlio, who said: — *We need to understand that this way, we don't even have the motivation to attend class. He seems tired, he gave us a lot of reading material, all theoretical, and we have to write everything down in our notebooks.*

Next, student Clara Diniz also expressed frustration, mentioning that the professor focused too much on discussing rules and deadlines in the subject, and not enough on interesting content. Finally, as class representative, Eduarda confirmed that the class remained unhappy with the professor, noting that he seemed uncomfortable with the use of cell phones during his lessons and was very traditional in his teaching approach.

While the students were speaking, Michelle recalled her recent readings, which coincidentally suggested that traditional teaching methods, centered on the transmission of knowledge by the teacher, made more sense when access to information was limited or more challenging. These texts also discussed how technological advances and the Internet have facilitated the integration of spaces and

times, allowing rapid and broad access to a wide range of information sources, and connecting the physical and digital worlds. Consequently, education faces a dilemma in response to the many changes in student profiles, access to information, and available technologies. The challenge now is to develop teaching and learning methodologies that correspond to this new scenario and its key players. Michelle found that all the knowledge she had acquired through her readings was highly relevant to her in this moment.

Additionally, Michelle knew that the Covid-19 pandemic had accelerated the use of digital tools and virtual classes, as these had become integral to the educational process, driven by the context of that period. This, in turn, led to the continued adoption of various technologies by both students and teachers, such as the use of cloud storage, shared folders, audiovisual teaching resources, and virtual gamification. However, Michelle was also aware that none of the current educational proposals completely dismissed traditional teaching methods. On the contrary, they advocated for improvements and supplements, rather than a total rejection, aiming to present content in a motivating and meaningful way.

After hearing the students' feedback, Michelle took the opportunity to highlight the professor's qualifications, presenting his extensive professional experience in the same field in which he taught. She emphasized his significant positions throughout his career, including Coordinator of the State Privatization Program, Coordinator of the Management Committee for the Local Production Arrangements Program, and Member of the Board of the State Secretariat of Planning and Management of Paraíba. Michelle also noted that the professor had never faced such resistance in a class before.

In light of these points, Michelle asked the representative and the class to remain calm and be a bit more patient, in order to give the professor a fair chance in his upcoming classes, which was accepted by all. However, her experience as a coordinator led her to recognize three important aspects: first, that the problem would not resolve on its own; second, that she also needed to hear the professor's perspective regarding the students' impressions; and third, that she was likely dealing with a generational conflict.

After all, Michelle understood that the concept of generations involves not only individuals of the same age but also those who have been shaped by a par-

ticular era and influenced by similar educational, political, and cultural contexts. Therefore, generations differ not only by birth period but mainly by the events and experiences that shape their values and life perceptions from an early age. Ultimately, the coexistence between generations fosters either learning or rejection, and understanding the peculiarities of each generation is key to facilitating interpersonal relationships and promoting healthy human development.

Moreover, it is believed that, due to rapid technological advancements, we can now consider a new generation every ten years. Consequently, the importance of understanding the distinctions between generations is growing, as more generations will coexist simultaneously in the job market. Michelle wanted to take all of this into account in order to resolve the situation.

WITH THE PROFESSOR

Another week later, during a meeting scheduled by the coordination team, Professor Antenor Braga, who arrived early and was very receptive to the invitation, expressed his perception of the situation. He claimed that the class showed little interest, refused to copy the content written on the board, relied solely on taking pictures, frequently used their cell phones during class, resisted his attempts to check their notebooks when correcting in-class exercises, and demonstrated impatience toward theoretical explanations although these were essential for the systemic analysis of a company's financial management, as required by the Financial Administration course.

The experienced professor also emphasized the importance of his methodological choices for structuring the course, asserting: — *Theoretical classes are the most appropriate for providing a solid foundation of essential concepts, such as cash flow, risk, and return. They structure knowledge systematically, contextualize historical financial theories, promote independent study skills, and foster debates that enrich learning. In short, they serve as a critical foundation for later addressing complex financial problems and practical challenges.* The coordinator could not disagree with him.

In situations where a professor does not meet the expectations of a class, it is common for institutions to replace the instructor - sometimes even with the professor's own consent. However, this case presented a unique challenge. The

coordinator was aware that no other faculty member on the team possessed the same qualifications or professional background as Professor Antenor. Moreover, the situation was even more delicate because, given that this teaching position was his only link to the institution, his replacement would likely result in his dismissal. This was particularly sensitive considering that the organization's management model valued long-term employment relationships, with several employees having been with the company since its foundation, a fact often cited as one of the reasons for the organization's positive work environment.

With the values and organizational culture internalized, Michelle was concerned about how to resolve the situation, preserving the teacher's job and not neglecting the recognition of so many years of contribution to teaching and in his area of expertise. Without denying the possible difficulty that an elderly person would have in reentering the job market while at the same time demanding that he meet the expectations of his students, after all, it was a compromise of the role he performed.

As part of the coordination's attempt to solve the problem, the teacher accepted the invitation and dedicatedly participated in training on active methodologies, received constant feedback on the evaluation of his students, and a teacher from the area, much younger and in her first job, was invited to exchange teaching experiences and plan lessons in partnership with Antenor. At the same time, the class was closely monitored by the institution's psych pedagogical support department.

None of these measures were enough to mitigate the students' dissatisfaction. The teacher, although he made a notable effort, was unable to master the technological means available in the classroom or comfortably use more contemporary methods or apply interactive tools (Kahoot!, Mentimeter, Padlet, etc.) in his subject.

ON THE BLACKBOARD

The Brazilian population is aging rapidly. In 2015, Brazil had approximately 24 million people over the age of 60, and by 2050, this number is expected to reach 64 million. "We will become a country as old as the oldest country in the world, Japan. This is the future that awaits us in thirty years," warned Alexandre Kalache, President of the International Center for Longevity in Brazil, in an interview for the article "Brazilian population ages and creates a challenge for public health", published in Exame Magazine.

In 2024, according to the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the number of Brazilians aged 60 or over who remain active in the labor market reached 8 million—almost double the 4.9 million recorded in 2012. This growth, over just a little more than a decade, is attributed primarily to population aging and pension reform, which raised the minimum retirement age. Nevertheless, the predominance of low-skilled jobs among these workers, coupled with a high informality rate of 53.5%, suggests that, despite their increased participation in the labor market, many older workers remain in vulnerable and unrecognized conditions (AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2019).

It is also well established that professional activity, when associated with personal satisfaction and fulfillment, has positive impacts on the elderly. Employment enhances daily engagement and self-esteem, which are essential components for healthy and active aging. However, low hiring rates by companies, resistance or lack of acceptance from younger generations, and limited family support are among the challenges faced by older workers. This scenario can be even more hostile for professionals aged between 50 and 64 who are neither employed nor retired, according to information published on the *Administradores* website (2019).

The 2024 Generational Diversity Survey, conducted by PwC Brazil in collaboration with the São Paulo School of Business Administration (FGV EAESP), analyzed data from professionals in 117 companies. The research was carried out in two phases: a quantitative stage involving 93 companies, and a qualitative stage that included interviews with managers and five focus groups with employees. The findings revealed that 65% of companies had not yet implemented initiatives to promote generational inclusion, and 86% lacked career plans for professionals over the age of 40.

Conversely, 95% of the survey participants acknowledged that valuing generational diversity fosters engagement, drives innovation, and strengthens organizational culture. The results indicate that, given the rapid aging of the population, intergenerational practices are both urgent and essential strategies for the longevity and competitiveness of organizations (PWC BRASIL, 2024).

BREAK TIME

The semester was still underway, but the professor remained in the classroom at the insistence of the coordinator, who believed that, with the training provided

and the natural course of classes, the relationship between students and Professor Antenor would gradually adjust - despite some ongoing dissatisfaction.

That evening, while having lunch in the common area of the university center, the coordinator reflected on what to do about Professor Antenor's situation. After all, the academic year was coming to an end, and a more decisive action on her part would soon be inevitable.

Michelle's attention was caught by Eduarda, the class representative, approaching. Since she always maintained a cordial relationship with the students, they naturally sat down to eat together, soon joined by others. Why not? Michelle thought, deciding to once again bring up the topic of dissatisfaction with Professor Antenor - even at the risk of being heavily criticized for her decision to keep him in the classroom thus far. Recalling all the conflict resolution and negotiation strategies learned in management courses, Michelle subtly introduced the subject:

— *This is a great conversation, but tell me something: after all this time, and considering Professor Antenor's vast professional experience, surely, he has some positive qualities as a teacher, wouldn't you agree?*

— *Well, he really has made an effort this semester to improve. The classes are still monotonous, but I have to say that he created some amazing spreadsheets for financial control, break-even point, fixed and variable costs fantastic tools for us. I even saved them on my drive because I'm sure they'll help me in my professional life, and I'm already using them at work,* said Alan, a morning student celebrating his 20th birthday with friends.

— *I admit it wasn't very nice of us to complain on the very first day, but honestly, we were right. Most of the semester has passed, and almost everyone has lost interest in learning the subject. Now, we're mainly worried about just passing the class,* said a night student.

— *He's too old to be in the classroom. He knows a lot, but his teaching style is outdated and overly demanding. After working all day and dealing with life's nonstop rush, we want teachers to make our learning easier - not harder,* added Sérgio proudly.

Seizing the moment and the friendly atmosphere, Michelle took the opportunity to address another important point:

— *You also need to understand that, in Financial Management, sometimes it's necessary to use more traditional methods like reading and lectures. After all, each*

discipline has its own specific objectives. We can't always compare it to Marketing, for example.

At that moment, Alba Luz, a highly engaged and active student, made a point to share her thoughts:

— Yes, the professor is strict. But maybe if he weren't, we wouldn't be so committed to doing the financial exercises properly. Still, sometimes we feel discouraged, struggling to understand the content while also feeling pressured by deadlines. It actually made me wonder whether I was judging the professor only as a student or if it was time to start thinking like a manager too. After all, that's what we're studying for, right? In a company, would I fire someone just because of age-related weaknesses? It's important to think about this, especially since what we learned in our Human Resources Management course also applies here.

This comment prompted the students to recall what they had learned about investment in human capital and HR practices, such as training, professional retraining, and retention strategies (salary, benefits, recognition) - all of which contribute positively to organizational performance.

They also pointed out that firing highly qualified employees involves not only financial costs but also a loss of accumulated knowledge and experience within the organization - something that new hires often take time to acquire. On the other hand, studies also showed that very low turnover rates might lead to stagnation, resistance to innovation, and a lack of new ideas - while bringing in new employees could foster cooperation, innovation, and long-term benefits.

Everyone paused, reflecting on Alba's words and the knowledge she had brought into the conversation. As the break ended, the students returned to their classrooms, leaving Michelle deep in thought.

She pondered not only the financial implications of possibly dismissing Professor Antenor but also the potential negative impact on the university's image and organizational climate - especially if perceived as an act of ageism, a term that refers to discrimination or prejudice based on age. Not to mention the significant costs involved in terminating such a long-standing employee, which would require approval from other department heads. "And that's about it!", Michelle thought to herself, using a popular expression among the younger generation to ironically sum up the overwhelming amount of information she needed to process in order to solve the problem.

TIME TO LEAVE

After her shift ended, Michelle headed to her office, planning to gather her belongings and go home. From a distance, she noticed some unusual activity in the coordination area: a group of excited and anxious students. Let me fight! Michelle thought to herself, recalling a jovial expression that referred to personal commitment and effort in overcoming one's own challenges, as she made her way to the office. As soon as she arrived, the look on her secretary's face said it all. It was a silent, almost secretive message - one that only Michelle could decipher. She immediately invited everyone to her office to hear them out.

The truth was, having worked at the company for five years, with fifteen years of experience in higher education and having coordinated ten undergraduate courses at various institutions, Michelle understood that the situation was quickly evolving into a preconceived notion among the students about Professor Antenor. And it was confronting her directly. Her management philosophy, which emphasized a multidimensional approach, made her believe that a thorough evaluation of both individual and contextual factors was just as important as the objective aspects of the problem in making an assertive decision.

Michelle firmly believed that management skills involved more than just technical decision-making. They also encompassed behaviors shaped by professional experiences, which were influenced by her values, beliefs, and culture. However, she also knew that these considerations didn't necessarily matter to the students. So, in that moment, sitting in her office, Michelle made herself available to listen to the future class of the Financial Administration course.

The reality was that the semester would end poorly for Professor Antenor. Even before the new semester began, the students already uncertain and fully aware of what had transpired expressed their concerns through their representative's words: — *We are worried, and we want to know who will be our finance professor.*

Michelle took a deep breath, asked if anyone wanted a coffee, and went to get it.

ALONE

Despite her numerous reflections, Michelle was aware that such considerations did not, in themselves, resolve the situation nor eliminate the possibility of

dismissal - an outcome she had endeavored to avoid. Nevertheless, she remained committed to her professional responsibilities within the institution. For her, the issue extended beyond merely terminating, relocating, or recruiting a new professor; it involved recognizing the importance of human capital development and the multiple benefits that intergenerational diversity could contribute to the academic environment.

At that point, however, the situation had already escalated. A petition signed by the evening students had been formally submitted to the coordination office. Additionally, grievances had been registered through the university's ombudsman channel, alongside several in-person meetings requested by students eager to voice their dissatisfaction directly. The recurrent themes across all complaints referred to the professor's advanced age, outdated teaching methods, formal demeanor, and limited proficiency with technological tools in the classroom.

Confronted with this complex scenario, coordinator Michelle found herself increasingly restless. While preparing coffee for the students, she engaged in self-reflection, formulating critical managerial questions:

- Have traditional pedagogical methodologies entirely lost their relevance in contemporary education?
- Have technological resources become indispensable for effective teaching practices?
- Should aging professionals be perceived primarily as obsolete, or rather as invaluable sources of knowledge and experience?
- Are younger generations adequately prepared to handle situations where their expectations are unmet?
- Do the strengths and contributions of previous generations not outweigh their perceived limitations?
- Should student satisfaction be the predominant metric guiding managerial decisions in higher education?

These were profound questions, yet definitive answers remained elusive. As office hours came to an end and the evening advanced, Michelle anticipated that the immediate tension with the students would likely subside after a few moments of conversation. Thus, she served the coffee, attentively listened to their perspectives

once more, and, with strategic skill, steered the conversation toward less contentious topics - aware that she required additional time to reach a well-considered decision. Nonetheless, Michelle recognized that time was running out. The approaching academic semester would soon demand a definitive resolution. Ultimately, the central managerial dilemma persisted: What would be the most appropriate decision to address the conflict in the forthcoming semester? Would it be justified to dismiss the professor?

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Teaching Notes

In view of the case presented, the following are the educational guidelines and suggestions for its application, with the description of the proposed teaching and learning objectives, guidance of the methodological steps for its use and the suggested questions, with their response parameters and their respective theoretical approaches considered.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The case emphasizes dilemmas in the teacher-student relationship and the discussion on the management challenges experienced in the academic environment, providing learning objectives such as:

- Identifying situations that require conflict management and interpreting their possible causes.
- Analyzing the characteristics of a generational conflict and evaluating the management challenges involved.
- Solving complex problems and proposing strategic decision-making.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The narrative is designed to be used in graduate and undergraduate courses in the management field, such as Administration, higher technology courses in Commercial Management, Human Resources Management, Management Processes, and similar areas.

Its application is recommended for subjects such as People Management, Conflict Management, Management Skills, Training and Development, but it also allows its development in the education field.

DATA SOURCES

The case is based on a real situation. Therefore, the name of the professor and other characters was changed to protect their identities and to avoid professional labeling of their images, and the name of the higher education institution where the event occurred was also omitted. However, characteristics such as the size of the company, its culture and organizational climate, the professor's area of

activity, technical information about the team and the work environment, as well as other important details that would bring the contextualization of the case as close as possible to reality were maintained, as long as the identity of all those involved was protected. To construct the text, the narratives of those involved were used and some thematic supports were based on the case's bibliographical references.

METHODOLOGY FOR APPLICATION

The proposed application of this case for teaching suggests three stages:

- **Stage 1: Prior reading**

The text of the case for teaching should be passed on to students before discussing it in class. Preferably in the previous class, the teacher should guide them to read the case and the questions in detail, with personal notes on what they consider most important or intriguing. This preparation helps in the quality of the discussions and better use of the class time allocated to analyzing and resolving the case, considering that students will already have their own impressions and reflections on the dilemma.

- **Stage 2: Analysis and group discussion (50 minutes)**

On the day the case is applied in class, the class should be divided into small groups to share their personal impressions of the text and, by consensus, resolve the proposed questions.

- **Stage 3: Presentation, discussion and closing in the large group (50 minutes)**

The answers to the questions defined in the small group should be shared with the large group, where the teacher will encourage students to present their answers, strategically leading debates and counter-arguments between the groups to encourage analysis of the case from different points of view and, whenever possible, making references to the theoretical content that supports the case.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The suggested questions are organized in a methodological sequence that seeks to stimulate student reflection on the case, while their sequential resolution

will promote a more analytical view of the situation narrated for decision-making in the face of the final dilemma.

- **Suggested questions for small groups**

1. Analyzing the case and the positioning of those involved, characterize the factors that generated the conflict in the teacher-student relationship?
2. The generational conflict is considered one of the dilemmas of the teacher-student relationship. Therefore, point out parts of the text or other examples, as long as they are based on the case, that characterize the generational conflict indicated in the case.
3. Cite at least two positive and two negative results that the conflict experienced by the characters can generate for the organization.
4. Now, distance yourself from your position as a student and imagine yourself in Michelle's management position. Would you fire Professor Antenor? (Justify your answer)

- **Suggested questions for discussion in plenary session**

1. Why is the classroom a place prone to conflicts? Where do conflicts arise?
2. Generational conflict is one of the dilemmas present in the classroom. What are the main differences in behavior and attitudes perceived between generations?
3. How are interpersonal skills important in conflict resolution?
4. What aspects should predominate in managerial decision-making?

RESPONSE PARAMETERS AND MAIN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Question 1 - *Analyzing the case and the positioning of those involved, characterize the factors that generated the conflict in the teacher-student relationship?*

The first question is an opportune time for the teacher to start a dialogue with the class, which will serve as an icebreaker, preventing students from becoming tense during the activity, which sometimes occurs due to the feeling of being evaluated. Thus, the teacher can start, in a conversational tone, with reflective questions about

what are the most common conflicts that occur in the classroom? Have they ever experienced a very tense conflict between teacher and student? Do they believe that a good interpersonal relationship between teacher and student makes a difference in the learning process? The important thing is that during this conversation, the teacher suggests that the fact be shared, but that the names of those involved be preserved for ethical reasons. Therefore, the teacher returns to the case, introduces the first question and now directs the students' participation to their respective answers to the exercise.

To link this to theory, the teacher can address the idea that conflict arises from antagonism of ideas, objectives, personality, interests, among others. It is important to remember that it is linked precisely to situations of disagreement, divergence and dissonance, where one of the parties involved necessarily makes a deliberate interference, either actively with confrontational actions or passively, through omission. Thus, conflict should be understood as a process that begins when one of the parties realizes that the other affects or may negatively affect something that the first considers important (Robbins, Judge & Sobral, 2012; Chiavenato, 2010).

The question allows for some factors as an answer that can be indicated in general or taken directly from the text, as shown in the examples in the table below:

Example of Factors that Cause Conflict	
General aspects	Examples taken from the text itself
Age difference between professor and students	"He seems like our grandfather [...] He should be retired by now!"
	"students disapproved of the Financial Administration professor because he was too old, appeared tired"
	"He's too old to be in the classroom"
	"In a company, would I fire someone just because of age-related weaknesses?"
Discrepancy in the use of technologies	"he doesn't even know how to turn on the classroom projector"
	"we have to write everything down in our notebooks"
	"he seemed uncomfortable with the use of cell phones during his lessons"
	"relied solely on taking pictures, frequently used their cell phones during class"

Divergences in the use of teaching and learning methodology	“outdated teaching methods” “the class remained unhappy with the professor [...] and was very traditional in his teaching approach”. “demonstrated impatience toward theoretical explanations although these were essential for the systemic analysis of a company’s financial management” “He knows a lot, but his teaching style is outdated and overly demanding”
Noise in communication	“the professor focused too much on discussing rules and deadlines in the subject, and not enough on interesting content” “the class showed little interest, refused to copy the content written on the board”
Frustration of goals	“that this way, we don’t even have the motivation to attend class” “resisted his attempts to check their notebooks when correcting in-class exercises” “everyone has lost interest in learning the subject. Now, we’re mainly worried about just passing the class” “we want teachers to make our learning easier - not harder”
• Other factors may be cited and, if substantiated in the case, may be accepted. • If the student cites up to two factors causing the conflict, the answer may be considered partially complete, corresponding to up to 70% of the score. When three or more factors are cited, the answer may be considered completely satisfactory, reaching 100% of the score.	

Question 2 - *Generational conflict is considered one of the dilemmas of the teacher-student relationship. Therefore, point out parts of the text or other examples, as long as they are based on the case, that characterize the generational conflict indicated in the case.*

In this question, the teacher can take the opportunity to review the different characteristics that are linked to each generation, thus reviewing the main generations that currently work in the job market and not just those that will be considered in the answer itself.

It is interesting to reinforce the generational theory developed by Strauss and Howe (1991), which states that generations are shaped by their degree of parental

interaction, as well as by the main social, political and historical movements that occur during their period. Today, several generations meet in the workplace and intergenerational conflict as divergences arising from different values, beliefs, perspectives and behaviors among these generations emerge frequently, reinforce Ozan, Gayretli, Arpinar and Ali (2024), who even developed a scale on the perceived level of generational conflict in the workplace.

Thus, each generation can be determined from the group of people who developed and received a set of knowledge that perpetuates common values and behaviors, which can be called “generational feeling” or even “generational consciousness”, as Batista (2010) points out.

In view of this, a new generation emerges when new and major historical events or, more frequently, “when slow and non-catastrophic economic, political and cultural processes make the previous system and the social experiences related to it meaningless” (Feixa & Leiccardi, 2010, p. 191).

Therefore, it is understood that the beginning of a generation is marked by important, but until then dominant, discontinuities in a given historical and institutional era (Mannheim, 1993). To differentiate generations within the class, the teacher must consider that the literature categorizes them through their sets of thoughts and behaviors, presenting five existing generations, described by Sodré (2013) based on several authors (Batista, 2010; Lafuente, 2009; Malacrida, 2011; Santos, 2011; Tapscott, 2010):

- **Veteran Generation:** represented by those born between the 1920s and 1940s, this group is attracted by security and stability, as they began working in large companies or for the State, but experienced the Great Depression and World War II. They stand out for being extremely formal and rule-abiding, they care for tradition and wisdom, and they venerate discipline and the chain of command in an organization. Their main characteristics are:
 - They like consistency and uniformity;
 - They are disciplined and loyal;
 - Committed to duty and order;
 - They appreciate things on a large scale.
- **Baby Boom Generation:** represented by those born from 1944 to the 1960s. This is a generation that during their youth witnessed different crises of

moral values through military dictatorships, wars, educational and political crises, which led to a climate of revolt. However, this generation also saw the first man on the moon, the rise of the women's rights movement and the strength of student activism, which is why they value the spirit of participation, companionship, human relationships and the construction of fair and equal opportunities for all. Baby boomers are also characterized by placing great value on individual and economic independence, which helped to form a more autonomous individual and less dependent on family and society. This group developed an obsession with hard work and dedication and received this name because it was the second largest current generation, a consequence of the baby boom, the result of the period of cessation of wars. Their main characteristics are:

- They believe in economic and social progress;
- They are optimistic, competitive and ambitious;
- They respect hierarchies;
- They search for the meaning of life in a repeated and obsessive way.
- **Generation X:** represented by those born between 1965 and mid-1970, people from this generation lived through a climate of large layoffs caused by the reengineering of large companies, which is why they are a group that distrusts hierarchy and values authority derived from merit. They are concerned about balancing family and professional life precisely because they were raised away from their parents, who were obsessed with work, and many of them experienced divorce in the family environment. The characteristics of this generation are:
 - They meet objectives and not deadlines;
 - They are averse to authority;
 - They are self-confident, but skeptical;
 - They want to spend more time with their children and less at work.
- **Generation Y:** this group was born between the end of the 1970s and 1993 and is made up of people who have a great desire to learn and do not adapt to hierarchical situations, but tend to value group work. They want to have economic control over their lives and a job that provides pleasure and meaning to their lives. They are individualistic when it comes to achieving

their goals and, above all, they are in a hurry to advance professionally. Their creativity and quick thinking are admired by previous generations, but their impatience and infidelity are annoying. They are also characterized by:

- They have learned to master and keep up with technology;
 - They appreciate their parents’ way of being;
 - They accept diversity of races, religions and environments;
 - They demonstrate a desire for work and learning.
- **Generation Z:** These are those born from 1993 to the present. This generation was born immersed in technology; their world has always included the Internet, e-mail, and cell phones, and the pace dictated by technological innovations is decisive in shaping the personality of these individuals. This generation can only understand itself through the digitalization of life, and this digital speed is transferred to real life, which characterizes this generation as impatient, worsening the impatience already present in the Y generation that preceded it.
 - They want freedom in everything they do
 - They are natural collaborators, but through digital means;
 - They want innovative, modern products that provide them with new experiences;
 - They require entertainment in all areas of their lives, because interactive experiences stimulate this constant search for pleasure.
 - Given the attributes by generation presented in the literature and based on the characters’ speech and the narrative of the case, it is possible to identify characteristics between the teacher and the most expressive part of the class that configure the generational conflict:

Feature	Teacher	Classes
Generation	Baby Boom Generation “Aware that the professor involved in the conflict was 76 years old”	Majority Generation Y and Z “including young Marco Túlio” “celebrating his 20th birthday with friends”

Lifestyle	Commitment always comes before leisure. “Professor Antenor Braga, who arrived early” “Well, he really has made an effort this semester to improve”	They are immediate and require entertainment in everything they do. “I admit it wasn’t very nice of us to complain on the very first day” “demonstrated impatience toward theoretical explanations although these were essential”
Technology	Resistant and uncomfortable with technologies. “he doesn’t even know how to turn on the classroom projector” “he made a notable effort, was unable to master the technological means available in the classroom”	They are digital natives and love innovation. “he seemed uncomfortable with the use of cell phones during his lessons and was very traditional in his teaching approach” “he created some amazing spreadsheets for financial control [...] I even saved them on my drive”
Work and Commitments	Obsession with hard and dedicated work. “37 years of teaching experience and a solid professional background in the financial market” “the teacher accepted the invitation and dedicatedly participated in training on active methodologies”	They are attracted to work that provides pleasure and meaning to their lives. “After working all day and dealing with life’s nonstop rush, we want teachers to make our learning easier” “, he really has made an effort this semester to improve. The classes are still monotonous”
Relationships	They respect hierarchies. “during a meeting scheduled by the coordination team [...] was very receptive to the invitation” “the class showed little interest, refused to copy the content written on the board”	They prefer group work and resist hierarchy. “mentioning that the professor focused too much on discussing rules and deadlines in the subject, and not enough on interesting content” “resisted his attempts to check their notebooks”

- Other factors may be cited and, if substantiated in the case, may be accepted.
- Based on two characteristics of generational conflict perceived in the case and indicated in the response, it is possible to consider it completely satisfactory, reaching 100% of the score. Only one characteristic indicated must correspond partially, reaching only 30% of the score.

Question 3 - *List at least two positive and two negative results that the conflict experienced by the characters can generate for the organization.*

This question is important for the teacher to reinforce, together with the students' answers, the current administrative approach to the beneficial contributions that can exist behind organizational conflicts and their correct management. After all, conflicts were initially seen as something negative and harmful in organizations during the 1920s to 1940s. It was only with the Theory of Human Relations those conflicts began to be seen as something acceptable and inevitable in human interactions, and then knowledge about how to manage these conflicts became an object of interest for the social sciences. In the late 1970s, the interactionist approach not only considered the emergence of conflicts in organizations to be natural, but also began to believe that their absence could mean complacency, apathy, and stagnation (Feixa & Leccardi, 2008).

The teacher must address the extent to which every conflict has constructive forces that lead to innovation and change, and destructive forces that lead to wear and tear and opposition, as stated by Chiavenato (2010). Therefore, for the author, correct conflict management is what will determine its results, which can be:

- Positive and constructive results:
 - Awakening feelings and energy in group members, stimulating interest in discovering creative, innovative solutions and effective ways of carrying out tasks.
 - Stimulating feelings of identity in the group, increasing intragroup cohesion;
 - Drawing attention to existing problems, functioning as a correction mechanism to avoid more serious problems.
- Negative and destructive results:

- Blocking individual and group efforts, developing feelings of frustration, hostility and tension, which consequently harms task performance and people’s well-being;
 - Winning the conflict becomes more important than the work itself, concentrating much of the energy of those involved in the conflict itself, which compromises the productivity of other work.
 - Hostility, competitiveness or accommodation take the place of cooperation, harming the functioning of the organization and altering the nature of the relationships that exist between people and groups.

Furthermore, the article by Appelbaum et al. (2022) examined the causality between generational differences and conflicts that usually occur in the workplace and, considering Morton Deutsch’s conflict process model, suggests that, although generational differences can contribute to conflicts in the professional environment, it is essential to consider other underlying factors that can also play a strong role, thus avoiding oversimplification of the problems raised.

In view of this, the question allows for several answers as positive and negative results generated by the conflict in the case. The theoretical perspectives presented above serve as a guide for possibilities, in addition to the examples in the following table:

Examples of Positive Results	Examples of Positive Results
Retraining and retraining of teaching staff in new teaching methodologies.	Formation of a prejudice against older teachers.
Greater didactic collaboration among teachers.	Poor organizational climate.
Innovation in the assessment processes of the discipline.	Disapproval of course management.
Familiarity of students with the challenges of the job market for the elderly.	Students’ feelings of hostility toward the teacher.
Improvements in communication and relationships between teachers and students.	Decrease in students’ academic performance.

To get 100% of the score for this question, the respondent must present four results for the conflict, two positive and two negatives, as required by the statement. Any less than this will be considered insufficient.

Question 4 - *Now, step back from your position as a student and imagine yourself in Michelle's managerial position. Would you fire Professor Antenor? (Justify your answer)*

The question allows for a “yes” or “no” answer, with justifications being consistent with the positioning of the answer that makes it assertive or not. Therefore, the teacher must pay attention not only to the student's position, but mainly to the harmonious presentation between his/her decision-making and the arguments used.

If the answer is no – I would not fire Professor Antenor – the respondent must present the results he/she believes this managerial decision will achieve. The justification allows for arguments based on literature as well as those pointed out in the case itself, such as crediting the personnel development process; the positive relationship between employee retention practices and the performance of its collaborators for the company's results; consideration of the high costs involved in dismissing a qualified professional, including the loss of intellectual capital and alignment with the organizational culture, and the knowledge that innovative educational proposals do not completely discard traditional teaching methods.

In the case in which the answer is yes – I would dismiss Professor Antenor – the respondent must present the results that he believes he will achieve with this management decision. The justification allows for arguments based on literature as well as those indicated in the case itself, such as generating satisfaction among students who expressed their dissatisfaction with the teacher through various means (ombudsman, in-person complaints, petitions), stimulating an environment of innovation and cooperation brought by new employees, seeking professionals capable of presenting content in a motivating and meaningful way, avoiding stagnation of the workforce and resistance to new ideas and learning due to low turnover.

Alabay's (2023) proposes several activities to address and resolve intergenerational conflicts in the workplace, highlighting the importance of workshops and training sessions that improve communication between different generations, as well as

mentoring initiatives that enable the transfer of knowledge from more experienced employees to younger ones. It also suggests carrying out team-building activities to promote collaboration, creating open dialogue forums so that employees can express their opinions and concerns, and establishing feedback mechanisms to detect and resolve intergenerational problems early. Finally, it mentions the introduction of cultural awareness programs and specific conflict resolution training as strategies to foster respect and understanding between different generations in the corporate environment.

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COMPLEMENTARY

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