FORMATIVE PROCESSES, CITIZENSHIP, AND CULTURE IN ADULT EDUCATION

PROCESSOS FORMATIVOS, CIDADANIA E CULTURA NA EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS

PROCESOS FORMATIVOS, CIUDADANÍA Y CULTURA EN LA EDUCACIÓN DE JÓVENES Y ADULTOS

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How to reference this paper:

ABSTRACT: This research aimed to analyze the configuration of the field of youth and adult education (EJA) in scientific productions from the databases of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), from 2016 to 2020. Regarding the nature of the data, this is a qualitative study, corresponding to an analysis of texts and their content. Additionally, it includes a theoretical survey, a state-of-the-art type, which serves as a source for the investigation process and contributes to breaking down prejudices and promoting the rupture of preconceived ideas. The findings allowed an understanding of the meanings, significances, and interrelations between the EJA modality and social and cultural integration, making it possible to observe the historical context and the paths involving the structuring of the modality over the decades.


RESUMO: Esta pesquisa teve como objetivo analisar a configuração do campo da educação de jovens e adultos (EJA) nas produções científicas das bases da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPEd) e da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes), no período entre 2016 e 2020. Quanto à natureza dos dados, trata-se de um estudo qualitativo por corresponder a uma análise dos textos e do seu conteúdo. Tem-se, ainda, um trabalho teórico de levantamento, do tipo estado do conhecimento, que se constitui de uma fonte para o processo de investigação e contribui para a quebra de preconceitos, promovendo a ruptura de ideias. Os achados permitiram compreender os sentimentos, os significados e as inter-relações entre a modalidade da EJA e a inserção social e cultural, tornando-se possível observar o contexto histórico e os caminhos que envolvem a estruturação da modalidade ao longo das décadas.


RESUMEN: El objetivo de esta investigación fue analizar la configuración del campo de la educación de jóvenes y adultos (EJA) en las producciones científicas de las bases de la Asociación Nacional de Posgrado e Investigación en Educación (ANPEd) y de la Coordinación de Perfeccionamiento de Personal de Nivel Superior (Capes), en el periodo comprendido entre 2016 y 2020. En cuanto a la naturaleza de los datos, se trata de un estudio cualitativo que corresponde a un análisis de los textos y su contenido. Además, se realiza un trabajo teórico de tipo estado del conocimiento, que sirve como fuente para el proceso de investigación y contribuye a romper prejuicios, promoviendo la ruptura de ideas preconcebidas. Los hallazgos permitieron comprender los sentidos, significados e interrelaciones entre la modalidad de EJA y la inserción social y cultural, lo que hace posible observar el contexto histórico y los caminos que involucran la estructuración de la modalidad a lo largo de las décadas.

Introduction

Youth and adult education (EJA) has a social function in many different ways. It does not always use formal institutions, such as schools, and faces different types of obstacles. Public policies have devalued and ignored this modality. Throughout history, Brazil has gone through political, social, and educational crises, especially those offered to adults. Only from the 1930s onwards did EJA begin a process of transformation.

There is also a lack of resources, prejudices, and inadequate teacher training that weaken the modality. The implementation of public policies for education occurs in an allegorical way since it is a measure to combat illiteracy. There are divergences between the determinations in established legislation and its execution, as government officials have particular interests. There have been several advances in the areas of education and science, but it is worth reflecting on whether school teaching has accompanied these cultural changes in man in society.

The lack of implementation of public policies focused on ensuring quality education accentuates social exclusion. Reflecting on Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is recognizing the centrality of this modality in providing access to basic education. EJA should not be limited to just eradicating illiteracy or professionalizing young people and adults for the job market, but also valuing its importance for the integral development of individuals. The rates are high compared to other Latin American countries in a similar economic situation, with around 30% of functional illiterates and 6.8% of absolute illiterates, according to data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD Continua), as released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2020 and 2021.

Reducing the number of illiterates and thinking about the nation’s development is important, as well as reflecting on social inequalities and the construction of the individual. The difficulty lies in reconciling what determines the law and its execution, since the contradiction accentuates social problems. The essence of EJA is to promote the formation of students as subjects and citizens capable of making their own choices.

Furlanetto and Cunha (2014) point out the contradictory educational, and political scenario of EJA, which reveals the need for the subject to be included as an active and reflective participant. This modality receives an audience that has left regular education and can be seen as the only way to improve their lives. Returning to studies brings aspirations, from social to marketing issues. In the midst of this search for social representation, the formation of a citizen and culturally conscious subject involves guaranteeing the quality of education.
This formation of subjects begins with becoming aware of their state, recognizing their intelligence and capacity in debates, using criticality. According to Menezes and Fonseca (2018), the understanding that everyone is intelligent is the principle of emancipatory practices, added to reflective thinking, enabling social change. The citizenship of those who, for various reasons, were deprived of receiving formal education can be (re)constructed.

At the beginning of the citizenship formation process, there is still a path to be followed, being one of the first steps towards breaking the ideological discourse. Alvarenga (2009, p. 201, our translation) points out “[...] an internal movement towards the construction of a critical discourse and emancipatory practices that are capable of highlighting the contradictions that reveal their unfillable gaps”.

Breaking with prejudices and discriminatory ideologies, overcoming concerns about indices, and caring about human beings and their training with public policies focused on specific, quality education for EJA can fill gaps and absences in society. Thus, this work started from the following problem: what is the configuration of the field of EJA in the scientific productions of the bases of the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), related from the perspective of citizenship and cultural training?

It was then assumed that illiteracy, today, sometimes imposes social conditions on people that are inferior to those of right. EJA is a teaching modality that can allow these individuals to (re)construct their social representation, with the aim of making them active participants in the community as a possibility of giving new meaning to citizenship and cultural identity. To this end, the objective is to analyze the configuration of the EJA field in the scientific productions of the ANPEd bases and the Capes Journal Portal, in the period between 2016 and 2020.

In the social context, the issue of illiteracy is recurrent and signals an inferior representation of people and their conditions, reinforcing social divisions. EJA presents itself as a possibility of guaranteeing rights. This training begins with an individual eager to know and be recognized as someone capable, free from certain limitations and labels.

Regarding methodological procedures, this research, regarding the nature of the data, is qualitative as it corresponds to an analysis of the texts and, consequently, their content. According to Gonsalves (2001), this type of research seeks to understand a certain phenomenon, considering the significance given to EJA practices and relating them to the interrelationships of citizen and cultural formation.
Theoretical research was also carried out, such as a survey of the state of knowledge, aiming at “[...] identification, registration, a categorization that lead to reflection and synthesis on the scientific production of a given area, in a given space of time, bringing together periodicals, theses, dissertations, and books on a specific topic” (Morosini, 2015, p. 101).

Finally, the data and information collected were analyzed using discursive textual analysis (ATD) to identify the interrelationships of EJA’s scientific productions as a possibility for civic and cultural training.

**The research in question**

This section aims to address the methodological procedures adopted in the survey of scientific productions in the Capes and ANPEd Periodicals Portal databases. The mapped works are related to the EJA teaching modality and the formation of meanings about citizenship and culture.

The qualitative investigation process involved productions of a social nature, which sought to understand the problem, that is, they used variable methods to find a solution to the issue. In this approach, each phenomenon is a different research with its parameters. Furthermore, this work allows us to understand the problem of the configuration of EJA in the scientific productions of databases and the interrelationships with the citizenship and cultural training of students.

Regarding collection procedures, there is theoretical survey work of the state of knowledge type, which, according to Morosini (2015), constitutes a source for the production of research and contributes to breaking down prejudices, not only by monitoring the monographic process but, primarily, by promoting the rupture of ideas that the researcher carries when starting his study.

From this perspective, the state of knowledge can be understood as a methodology of knowledge for the researcher and other scholars on the subject, as it allows the verification of productions in the area of coverage and the depth of research in the field investigated. This mapping was carried out based on scientific publications relevant to EJA, particularly related to students’ civic and cultural training on the Portal Periódicos Capes and ANPEd, using the search by subject and period.

It was possible to access the available bases using the “search string”. The string was composed of essential words linked to the topic, such as finding and selecting works. Resources
such as parentheses, commas and letters were also used with the aim of establishing a relationship between the research. After the string (“educação de jovens e adultos”, “cidadania” AND “cultura”) filters were applied, such as year of publication (2016-2020), Brazilian Portuguese language, and area of knowledge focused on education to select articles that addressed the central subject of this research. The results of the survey in Table 1 emerged.

Table 1 – Survey of the productions of Periódicos Capes and ANPEd meetings (2012-2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Periodicals Capes</th>
<th>ANPEd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>06</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own authorship (2021).

The mapping was organized by year; in the period from 2016 to 2020 at Capes; and in the last five ANPEd meetings (2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019), since, since 2013, they have been biennial events and, therefore, would not cover the same period as the first base. Therefore, there were a total of 21 works that made up the corpus of this investigation. After this phase, the titles, keywords, abstracts and full texts were read briefly, with the aim of mapping the correspondence with the theme and identifying the objectives, theoretical framework, results and interrelationships.

The construction of this script made it possible to undertake a structured analysis, allowing the creation of dimensions and axes of discussion for the problem of this research. This form of analysis, called ATD, presents flexibility to different types of data and understanding of the content, organized in three stages. ATD is an analysis method that “[...] can be conceived as a self-organized process of producing new understandings in relation to the phenomena it examines” (Moraes, 2003, p. 209, our translation). This procedure goes through the following phases: a) unitarization, in which the study corpus is examined, deconstructed, and rewritten; b) categorization, where similar characteristics are brought together to define

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5 “youth and adult education,” “citizenship,” AND “culture”.

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DOE: https://doi.org/10.26843/aec.v16iesp.1.1381

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categories; c) communication of results, in which the construction of an express metatext occurs.

Considering these phases, it became possible to deconstruct the texts to highlight the elements that formed a relationship between these texts and, therefore, organize them into dimensions and themes. In the metatext stage, the understandings and ideas were rewritten, highlighting the main perspectives on the topic. The following categories emerged from the application of this analysis method: a) training processes, citizenship, and culture; and b) teacher training, curriculum, and educational practices, highlighted in the following section.

Training processes, citizenship, and culture in the education of young people and adults

This section presents the results analyzed based on the categories highlighted in the ATD process. The interrelationships between EJA and the concepts of citizenship and culture are also discussed, as well as the implications of the modality in the (re)construction of students’ identity and the contribution to breaking the current process of economic and social exclusion in everyday life.

Exclusion tends to be a product of misjudgment resulting from the capitalist social model that promotes disparity between people. EJA aims to guarantee training that includes citizens in the community of which they are part. This modality seeks the right to equality, quality education and the redefinition of values focused on people’s identity, through actions aimed at inclusion, development of skills and concepts for citizenship training.

EJA has a history built over centuries that allows for the brief contextualization of facts. The first moment was the colonial period, when educational action was developed by the Jesuits, aimed at the literacy of the adult majority as an instrument of evangelization. On the other hand, according to Veloso (2017, p. 11, our translation), “[…] education is a right […] of public relevance for all citizens, regardless of economic, cultural or social condition”.

The Jesuit religion left its functions in Brazil in 1759, leaving the empire responsible for the educational process and teaching, gaining elitist status, and limiting access to school. According to Strelhow (2010), Pombaline educational policy, in reference to the Marquês de Pombal, the person responsible for education at the time, was focused on the instruction of male and white children of the colonizers, thus excluding those who did not have such characteristics.

The first Brazilian constitution, in 1824, guaranteed free primary education for all citizens. However, even though the right to education is linked to the concept of humanity, few
individuals were considered as such, so the majority were excluded or deprived of schooling. Strelhow (2010, p. 51, our translation) states that “[...] this law, unfortunately, remained only on paper”. Furthermore, the concept of citizen in the Imperial Constitution needed revision. The poor, illiterate, women, indigenous people, and black people, slaves or not, were excluded. Only rich men and some women from the upper strata of society were considered citizens; therefore, they were covered by the law.

Another milestone for EJA was the creation of the Ministry of Education and Health to act actively in the fight against illiteracy, in 1934, with encouragement from the government, which was interested in the population’s literacy. The National Education Plan (PNE) was then created and established by the constitution. It was responsible for the development of what would become known as the EJA.

In this way, supported by the force of the law, education gained scope and allowed the poorest the right to education. Strelhow (2010, p. 52, our translation) points out that “[this] was the first plan in the history of Brazilian education that provided for a specific treatment for the education of young people and adults”. This measure was taken due to the high rate of illiteracy, mainly in the less favored sections of society.

The 1940s and 1950s presented several government actions and programs related to adult education, which Di Pierro, Joia, and Ribeiro (2001, p. 59) mention, among other aspects, the creation of the “[...] National Education Fund Primary Education in 1942, the Adult Education Service and the Adult Education Campaign, both in 1947, the Rural Education Campaign started in 1952 and the National Campaign for the Eradication of Illiteracy in 1958”.

Efforts were aimed at reducing the high percentages of illiterates in the country, bearing in mind that, depending on the quantity, this could be understood as delayed, since in 1945, the newly created United Nations Educational Organization, the Science and Culture (Unesco) highlighted the importance of education for the development of nations, according to Haddad and Di Pierro (2000).

Strelhow (2010) understands that the actions were only developed as a result of “international pressure” for the country considered “backward” to eliminate illiteracy, using education as a means of achieving development in the post-Second World War scenario, and the guidelines came from UNESCO. Other movements and campaigns emerged, such as the “[...] National Literacy Program of the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 1964, which professor Paulo Freire attended” (Haddad; Di Pierro, 2000, p. 113, our translation). These premises allowed the recognition of the specificities of this teaching modality, which was
legitimized as such only in 1996, through Law No. 9. 394/1996, and had its guidelines defined in 2000, with the CNB resolution /CEB no. 1, of July 5th.

Education movements, influenced by Paulo Freire’s thoughts, raised the flag for education as a right for everyone, regardless of age, demanding inclusive public policies and valuing lifelong learning. From this perspective, it is worth highlighting the Brazilian Literacy Movement (Mobral), organized by the Federal Government in 1969, with national proportions, according to Di Pierro, Joia, and Ribeiro (2001). In 1971, the regulation of supplementary education emerged with the proposal to recover the “delay” by training labor for the country’s economic development.

These moments reveal, for the most part, objectives focused on eradicating illiteracy with the intention of promoting national development and equating the country with world powers, without considering the particularities of individuals and their civic and cultural construction. Contrary to the ideal, these initial projects and movements saw illiterate citizens as incapable and a problem to be solved. The lack of concern for students’ citizenship reduced the effectiveness of literacy processes.

The idea of a problem to be solved that permeates illiteracy and transmits a distorted image of individuals is reinforced when the focus is on economic development and achieving international goals. This results in a functionalist conception of literacy that can disregard the social representativeness of the subject. EJA represents the fight against illiteracy and defends the integral formation of the individual.

Therefore, it is not appropriate to open a place for young students and adults excluded from the regular system. It is necessary to offer conditions for permanence, recognition, and development of the idea of belonging. Capucho (2012) states that, in the past, young people were denied the right to education, especially one that requires specific treatment, and in the present, this is made difficult, that is, “[..] public policies need to focus on special and emergency measures with the aim of eliminating historically accumulated inequalities” (Flores, 2020, p. 7, our translation).

The illiteracy rate in 2016 was 7.2%, with the percentage of black illiterates (9.9%) more than double that of white people (4.2%). Considering the population increase, the demand for educational institutions and the quality of education are important in view of the above, because, according to data from PNAD Contínua (2019), Brazil had 11 million illiterates divided into percentages by age group, 15 years or more (6.6%), 25 years or more (7.9%), 40 years or more (11.1%), 60 years or more (18%), as released by IBGE, in 2020.
Redemocratization and the struggles of social movements influenced EJA discussions. The resumption of democracy allowed for openness to the participation and organization of civil society, strengthening education movements as a right for everyone, regardless of age. This fight sought to expand access to EJA, ensuring the inclusion and appreciation of young people and adults who did not have the opportunity to study at a regular age.

It is possible to identify the existence of present and future challenges related to EJA when we observe the increase in school places that do not correspond to the improvement in the quality of education. Faria (2017) states that EJA faces different struggles to overcome and transform society in its inequalities. Advances and improvements in education networks do not prevent the identification of historical difficulties in combining educational coverage and quality.

Studies show changes in the profile of students in EJA classrooms, the majority of whom are teenagers excluded from regular education and marked by stigma, whereas, in the past, the group was made up of elderly people who did not have the opportunity to study. According to Haddad (2007), these groups have different expectations from school, while the first has developed a conflicting relationship due to previous experiences, the second sees it as sociocultural integration. However, both fight for recognition and space for participation in society, and, given this conception, Godinho (2017, p. 3, our translation) highlights that “[t]he movement of returning to school, searching for institutional space and searching for learning education that was previously denied to them may be the way they find to participate in life in society”.

Youth and Adult Education (EJA), as an essential modality of the education system, has the potential to promote the social (re)insertion of marginalized people. In this way, it becomes an option for those who wish to return to school for various reasons, as well as for students in age-grade distortion situations, and for those who, due to the circumstances of life and society, wish to attend school for the first time, a space that was denied to them in the past.

Students returning to school follow this path for numerous reasons. They range from overcoming illiteracy, obtaining a diploma, and achieving personal satisfaction to advancement in the job market. However, these needs are not enough to bring young people and adults back to the educational institution, shame and low self-esteem are also obstacles. According to Fernandes (2013), thinking about EJA is idealizing a proposal that makes it possible to transcend the traces of inequality and the educational model of the dominant class and capitalism.
At the beginning of the third millennium, EJA is the subject of international discussions on three agendas, according to Di Pierro and Haddad (2015, p. 200, our translation), namely: “ [...] the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [...] ; the Education for All (EFA) goals [...] ; the Hamburg Declaration (Germany) and Agenda for the Future signed in 1997 at the V International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA).” Between objectives and targets, according to the authors, Brazil is far from achieving them, despite presenting advances and expansion in the educational process. The pressure from international organizations related to education is notorious, as it is linked to the economic development of nations.

On national agendas, EJA was also present among plans and strategies with an emphasis on the agreement that made the modality available to those deprived of liberty, which for Veloso (2017, p. 2, our translation) is somewhat complex, as “[thinking] about the right to education for young people deprived of liberty is not a simple task in a contemporary society marked by globalization and exclusion”.

According to Alves, Oliveira, and Santos (2016), the EJA modality has established itself and survived the system but remains linked to exclusion regarding students, teachers, schools, and public policies. Faced with this situation, EJA members strengthen themselves through struggles and debates that reflect on their specificities.

Another relevant factor, from this perspective, was the need to break the prejudices faced by EJA in the educational field. Those who are part of the modality “ [...] are strengthened in the debates and struggles that generate reflection on the student and teaching profile, reworked curricula and didactic forms focused on the specificity of these groups served by EJA” (Alves; Oliveira; Santos, 2016, p. 900, our translation).

Considering the social demands and the market in relation to the mastery of reading and writing, groups that, historically, are marginalized in their social environment, find themselves excluded when they do not have an education. The lack of opportunity to study represents an additional difficulty, placing barriers to improving quality of life. It is necessary, however, to remember that dignity and citizenship are not restricted to the market or the individual rights of the citizen.

According to Candau (2002), it is necessary to understand the exercise of citizenship not only in the restricted sense of legal rights, but also the right to an idea of citizenship linked to the concept of culture. In other words, it is an education that aims to value, dialogue, and respect, in addition to fighting and doing justice against all forms of generic standardization and all inequalities.
EJA allows subjects to attend or return to studies in order to acquire conditions to exercise their role in social practices. When this modality is seen as an important form of contribution to building the citizenship identity of students, an instrument for the struggle and development of popular critical consciousness emerges. Through EJA, it is possible for “forgotten” individuals to conquer a space that can guarantee or provide the prospect of better living conditions.

It is understood, therefore, that citizenship is a right for every human being. Subjects can integrate into the world of work and society, however, education and EJA must not focus solely on meeting the interests of the market, as it can be seen that it is still common, the educational system must constitute an agent to guarantee the fight against inequality and the search for better opportunities for everyone indiscriminately.

Teacher training, curriculum, and educational practices

This section also presents the results analyzed based on the category “training, curriculum, and educational practices” highlighted in the ATD process. The interrelationships between EJA and the concepts of citizenship and culture are discussed here, however, from the perspective of the school and the teacher. It is understood here that the teacher’s work at EJA involves social change based on the transformation of reality in an emancipatory process of teaching and learning.

It is common to discuss the need to value and enhance education, especially in EJA, however it is necessary for this process to begin in teacher training, after all, being a teacher means contributing to citizenship. Investing in teacher training for this modality is essential for quality teaching. Victoria (2019, p. 1, our translation) writes that

[Thinking about] teacher training from the perspective of intercultural education is a complex task. If there are multiple realities, if our country stands out for its cultural diversity, we do not identify with major proposals that insist on presenting themselves as – the answer – to questions relating to the formation process, often hiding their submission to hegemonic culture.

The quality of teaching is linked to teaching practice, therefore, teacher training must be integral to active action in the development of the educational process of young people and adults, citizens exposed to the margins of society. Teachers need to be trained to work with these students, who did not have the opportunity to study in regular education and go to school in search of knowledge about life and the world.
In view of this, the need for EJA professionals to have differentiated training to work with an audience in different ways and with different stories is highlighted. This specific perspective helps to avoid a possible infantilization of methodologies and, mainly, the confusion or mere “adaptation” of literacy in the early years with that of young people and adults.

EJA teachers must be aware of the importance of rethinking their pedagogical practice, so that they can seek knowledge and reflective knowledge about the quality and results in the teaching and learning processes.

Educational practices at EJA lack well-trained professionals during graduation, but above all, professionals who believe in continued training in order to re-signify teaching curricular contents. Furthermore, the methodologies specific to this modality help EJA students continue studying. After all, it is necessary to “[understand the] complexity of the educational system, [...] where permanence and dropout are two sides of the same coin” (Fernandes, 2013, p. 15, our translation).

Throughout the history of education in Brazil, much of what is related to modalities outside of regular education tends to be relegated to the background, and EJA is no exception. For Victória (2019, p. 2, our translation), “[the] specificities [of EJA], however, are not always elucidated in teacher training processes, [and as a result] this reality becomes distant, even from those who live in it”. In other words, it is common for teaching training professionals working in EJA to suffer from mischaracterization, lack of resources, and didactic and financial support.

Different concepts and strategies are highlighted in discussions about initial and continuing training that encourage teachers to reflect and problematize the educational process. For Belém (2004), whatever the sphere, the objective that teacher training incorporates is to express a conception, a specific way of seeing the world, and, consequently, education. It is up to the EJA teacher to know the particularities of the modality that requires so much competence and knowledge to carry out the activity, that is, it lacks scope and depth on the complexities and distinctions of EJA, with a view to training focused on the field of citizenship and cultural identity. And as Sichelero (2015) states, through the richness and strengthening of cultural diversity, the “world becomes a world,” and in differences, “the world looks at itself” to develop transformations in society.

Dantas (2019) highlights the importance of specific training for EJA teachers, especially taking into account the particularities that require attention from educators due to diversity. Furthermore, among the many challenges of working at EJA, the non-obligation, in initial
training, of curricular components for teaching at EJA highlights a significant obstacle in implementing proposals addressed in the teaching and learning processes.

It is necessary to highlight the methodological foundations of teaching and educational practices in the qualified and specific training of EJA educators, which need to be developed and executed in the action-reflection-action process. Therefore, it is essential that teacher training, whether initial or continuing, is worked on in the field of reflection and restructuring of praxis. This training, combined with the curriculum, implies the way in which pedagogical practices are planned and executed in the classroom.

The curriculum area is the basis of teaching and one of the main foundations of quality education. It is filled with ideas and concepts permeated by the people’s culture, definitions, and components encompassing traditional matrices. The curriculum is a space for discussions, representations, and the formation of culture and citizenship. According to Barbosa (2017), understanding the aspects that affect the training process of subjects and knowledge-forming methodologies can promote possibilities for curricula suited to the experiences and demands of young people and adults, respecting their knowledge and contributing to quality education.

Thus, considering that the curriculum cannot and should not be a closed, generic, and exclusionary space, EJA is responsible for a curricular proposal based on dialogue with the specificities of the target audience in order to reach the diversities of stories and subjects within the classroom, respecting differences. This means,

[…]

that although the main characteristic of the curriculum is to guide teaching work and practices, it must be in favor of student experiences, taking into account their realities, expectations, and desires, and to this end, it must be flexible in order to also address these aspects of more sociocultural dimensions (Miranda, 2018, p. 4, our translation).

EJA must have a differentiated curricular proposal, which adapts to each situation. This curriculum can start from a common action presented by the State, but it must bring concepts and programs that suit the modality and go further within the reality of each school. Since, according to Fernandes (2017, p. 16, our translation), “[it is] necessary to consider EJA as a modality of education that demonstrates that it is possible to change the social direction of our country”.

However, the curriculum, in many school realities, is still a generic, familiar, and secondary figure, a document kept in a drawer, a project presented to teachers in an arbitrary, fixed, and immutable way. This situation is presented by Arroyo (2011, p. 34-35, our translation) as an imposed curriculum in which “[t]he content, assessments, the ordering of
knowledge in disciplines, levels, sequences fall on teachers and managers like a burden. Like something inevitable, indisputable. Like something sacred.”

In this way, the curriculum will become alive and legitimate, bringing together school content and the experiences and knowledge of those in the school and the community, training students to build their citizenship with social bonds and cultural identity. From this perspective, according to Stecanela (2013), the curriculum will promote a departure from traditional education models focused on the transmission of knowledge, to strengthen contextualization and dialogue with social reality.

The joint process of creating and executing the EJA curriculum breaks with the archaic teaching methodology that aims to transmit memorized content from teacher to student. It is argued that collective work allows the reframing of knowledge and experiences, promoting learning with meanings and meanings. As a result, EJA now has the opportunity to be guided by a curriculum that values experiences from an inclusive perspective and social representation, not to mention attractiveness to the school community.

Although EJA is a territory of opportunities for socio-educational enrichment, it is still a modality relegated to the supporting role in the teaching and learning processes, being considered a path to achieving basic education. It is believed that EJA is not an appendage of education but a possibility with its character, paths, and achievements and, therefore, should give the right to a curriculum that legitimately serves the subjects and answers the main questions of the educational development process of the students (Secult, 2010).

In the field of educational practice, any relationship between teachers and students in the classroom involves reflection on the content covered. Thus, the teacher continues to be an indispensable agent for the educational process, assuming the role of a democratic educator guided by the need to reinforce and stimulate students' critical and reflective capacity, aiming at the (re)construction of new knowledge and reframing of knowledge. Furthermore, the professional needs to be a researcher who actively listens and knows how to value students' life experiences.

Libâneo (1994) argues that educational practice considers the different ways of knowing brought by the collective, through intersocial relationships inside and outside the classroom. Neves et al. (2019) also add that, in EJA, practices must be developed in order to create in the student the restlessness and criticality of their place in society, avoiding shaping themselves in a negative way in the face of the adverse conditions of the community. This is a phenomenon that goes beyond the individual sphere, not limited to an individual, but
presupposes relationships between teachers, students, and other actors who are in the school space. Therefore, educational practices deal with coexistence in society. Thus, from the dialogical and problematizing perspective of EJA

[...] There is a concern about the development of political consciousness through collective work and the appreciation of the social practice of the subjects of the educational process. Thus, literacy continues to be the acquisition of a conventional pattern of writing, reading, spelling, etc., but it also becomes the search for the interpretation of the ideological contents that involve words and speech. Likewise, continuing studies is a way of moving toward the practice of human emancipation (Souza, 2011, p. 114, our translation).

The need for practices to value the student’s daily life and their experiences is defended. According to Faria (2017, p. 12, our translation), “[the] public policies, particularly those aimed at the field of [EJA] still do not truly and truly contemplate the rural subject as a protagonist in the development process”. Furthermore, the author states that despite the wealth of diversity and social singularities expressed and experienced by students, educational proposals and practices on the part of the State do not dialogue with the demands of EJA.

The importance of valuing and respecting this distinction and diversity is made clear by Faria (2017, p. 5, our translation) when stating that the subjects of EJA are, in large part, “[women] and men who have journeys of back and forth, advances and setbacks, falls and relapses; generally, of choices without defined horizons, but also struggle, resistance and persistence”. Furthermore, experiences, memories, and everyday life are also forms of teaching and knowledge-building.

It is up to the school and, in particular, the teacher to develop classes that provide students with contact and the establishment of relationships between the content learned in the classroom and their daily lives, escaping the bubble of school and textbooks. According to Neves et al. (2019), the reframing of knowledge and respect for the diversity of concepts promote quality education. Students can take ownership of their citizen role and cultural identity, being guided by the school, the mobilizing agent of this process. Like this,

[the] issue of cultural identity, which includes the individual and class dimensions of students whose respect is absolutely fundamental in progressive educational practice, is a problem that cannot be ignored. It has to do directly with the assumption of ourselves by ourselves. This is what pure teacher training does not do, getting lost in the narrow and pragmatic view of the process (Freire, 2004, p. 19, our translation).
In this configuration, it is argued that students, EJA's target audience, need autonomy so the teacher can reflect on the results of their methodologies, whether they are contributing to students' learning, and whether they are respecting the freedom of each of their student's individuals in the classroom.

Teaching distributed content and ready-made concepts from the textbook is a mechanical task that only serves the interests of the market. The important thing for the quality of education at EJA involves encouraging students to take the path of critical and transformative learning. Therefore, the school can take the initial step in respecting the diversity of thoughts and contextualization with the daily life of the social environment in which it finds itself to guarantee equity and legitimacy in the construction of citizenship.

Final considerations

Education in Brazil is still seen as a problem for some of the government since it presents itself as a way of criticizing social problems, the excesses and neglect of the State, the attack on the poor, and the protection of the rich. It cannot be denied that actions to encourage education were promoted in Brazil's historical process, however it is also undeniable that the least favored class was, for the most part, the least benefited by public policies. A small project, of low quality and aimed at the elite, generated a wave of illiteracy, functional or not, which still expresses its results today.

The documents and texts on the history of EJA reveal an educational process used as a form of control and alienation of the poorest sections of society. Brazil is still experiencing a low illiteracy rate compared to previous periods, however a number of more than 10 million people is still significant for a country of such considerable size and wealth.

The mapping of scientific productions in the field of EJA highlighted a relevant modality for promoting learning opportunities with access to formal education during youth. This type of education promotes social inclusion and strengthens community ties, contributing to the full exercise of citizenship and promoting a fair and democratic society.

Furthermore, EJA supports the appreciation and preservation of cultural diversity, allowing students to recognize and experience their identities. This strengthens the feeling of belonging, respect, and tolerance between different ethnic, religious, and social groups. Thus, the relationship between EJA and the formation of citizenship and cultural identity is close and essential for the integral development of individuals and society as a whole.
In view of this, the research portrayed that EJA, as suggested by national law, is the inclusive teaching modality for citizens who were and are historically excluded from school and/or society. It is possible for these young people and adults to once again be part of the educational system and play an active and recognized role in their social environment. It is understood, therefore, that EJA and the recognition of subjects' citizenship must be an unquestionable right for all people, being part of the process of forming individuals' identities.

This teaching modality is part of formal education and contributes to the recognition of citizenship as a mediating condition for the insertion, transformation, and social representation of its actors. The findings in the productions also showed that a specific educational model for young people and adults who, due to numerous factors, had to abandon the regular education system, must have the right to construct and value their citizenship and cultural identity. In this sense, the curriculum and educational practices must be present in activities that promote recognizing and appreciating the diversity of groups and knowledge that are part of the school and social community.

The research also showed that EJA must specifically pay special attention to those groups relegated to secondary positions in the formation of society and formal school education. In other words, EJA can encourage practices that respect the diversity of the curriculum, value experiences, and reframe knowledge between students and different cultural expressions, aiming to build emotional bonds that affirm the idea of belonging of individuals in their community.

The perspective of the mapped texts also explains that teaching is relevant in the process of inclusion and retention of students in EJA classes, with this professional being an agent capable of identifying the potential for learning in collaborative networks. In view of this, EJA can enable the transformation and development of education and the lives of individuals included in it. To this end, institutional accountability must offer structural conditions, specific and continued training for educators, resignification of the curriculum itself, and valorization of the experiences of life.
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**CRedit Author Statement**

**Acknowledgements:** None.

**Funding:** None.

**Conflicts of interest:** None.

**Ethical approval:** Not necessary.

**Data and material availability:** The data and material used in the work are available for access in the databases researched.

**Author’s contributions:** This study was developed in the first author’s Course Conclusion Work, entitled “EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS: estudo das produções científicas na perspectiva cidadã e cultural (2012-2020), in the Pedagogy course of the Department of Education of Itabaiana, from the Federal University of Sergipe, under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Marilene Batista da Cruz Nascimento. Alex Lima Santos – conception and design, production and interpretation of data, writing of the article, approval of the version to be published; Marilene Batista da Cruz Nascimento – monitoring data analysis, critical review of intellectual content, approval of the version to be published; Wagner dos Santos Guimarães – review and organization of the structure, approval of the version to be published; Nathalie Paes Lima – review and organization of the structure, approval of the version to be published.