

EJA em Ação Program: contribution of the radio to the weaving of curricula for/with youth and adult education

Programa EJA em Ação: a contribuição do rádio na tessitura de currículos para/com a educação de jovens e adultos

Programa EJA en Acción: la contribución de la radio en el tejido de los currículos para la educación de jóvenes y adultos

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ABSTRACT

The closure of schools during the pandemic period (2020–2021) mobilized teaching practices and gave rise to pedagogical reinventions in order to continue guaranteeing students' right to education in various stages and modalities of education. This article aims to understand how curricula were conceived and practiced during the pandemic in youth and adult education (EJA in Portuguese), based on the radio experience of the EJA em Ação program, created by the 10th Regional Board of Education and Culture in the municipality of Caicó/RN, Brazil. Using the theoretical-methodological approach of studies in daily life, the research used conversation as a working methodology, allowing for the recognition of creative curricula, subversive to the hegemonic logic of knowledge construction and potentializing multiple daily forms of knowledge of teachers and students.


Keywords: Conceived and Practiced Curricula. EJA. EJA em Ação Program. Pandemic.

RESUMO

O fechamento das unidades escolares no período pandêmico (2020–2021) mobilizou práticas docentes e suscitou reinvenções pedagógicas no intuito de continuar garantindo o direito à educação dos estudantes nas diversas etapas e modalidades educacionais. O artigo em pauta objetiva compreender como os currículos foram “pensados/praticados” durante a pandemia na educação de jovens e adultos (EJA), com base na experiência radiofônica do programa EJA em Ação, criado pela 10^a Diretoria Regional de Educação e Cultura no município de Caicó/RN. Com a abordagem teórico-metodológica dos estudos “nos/dos/com” os cotidianos, a pesquisa usou a conversa como metodologia de trabalho, possibilitando o reconhecimento de currículos criativos, subversivos à lógica hegemônica de construção de conhecimento e potencializadores de múltiplos saberes cotidianos de professores e estudantes.

Palavras-chave: Currículos Pensados e Praticados. EJA. Programa EJA em Ação. Pandemia.

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RESUMEN

El cierre de las unidades escolares en el período de la pandemia (2020-2021) movilizó las prácticas docentes y suscitó reinvisiones pedagógicas para seguir garantizando el derecho a la educación de los estudiantes en las diversas etapas y modalidades educacionales. El artículo en cuestión objetiva comprender como los planes de estudio han sido pensados y practicados durante la pandemia en la educación de jóvenes y adultos, a partir de la experiencia con la radiofonía del programa “EJA em ação”, creado por la 10ª junta regional de educación y cultura en el municipio de Caicó/RN. Con el abordaje teórico-metodológico de los estudios nosdosc com todos los días, la investigación ha usado el diálogo como metodología de trabajo, posibilitando el reconocimiento de currículos creativos, subversivos la lógica hegemónica de construcción de conocimiento y potenciadores de múltiples saberes cotidianos de docentes y estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Planes de Estudio Pensados y Practicados. EJA. Programa “EJA em Ação”. Pandemia.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Almost two years ago, during the COVID-19 pandemic,¹ schools sought to reinvent their *know-how*² so they could continue to guarantee the right to education for children, adolescents, youth, adults and the elderly.

With the closure of school institutions in 2020 and the impossibility of giving face-to-face lessons, it was necessary to consider educational alternatives supported by information and communication technologies (ICT), and the use of applications such as Facebook, Instagram and others that could assist remote classes.

The moment aggravated crises and widened inequalities, because while few had access to and familiarity with digital media, a large number of students did not have the equipment or an internet signal with the quality that could minimally support the applications and platforms that made remote learning possible.

Faced with this bleak emergency, in which unemployment, hunger and hopelessness worsened, it was estimated that there would be a higher dropout rate from youth and adult education (EJA) than in previous years.

Knowing the cultural and socioeconomic profile of the EJA students of the 10th Regional Directorate of Education and Culture (10th Direc),³ while considering interdictions and violations that contribute to ignorance about and lack of access to the right to a dignified life, and given the tradition of radio in the western Seridó micro-region of Potiguar,⁴ the radio program *EJA em Ação* [Youth and Adult Education in Action] emerged as a *viable novelty* (Freire, 2019) in the face of the situation that was shaping up based on the fear and hopelessness caused by COVID-19. New curricular possibilities were needed, since there were no prescriptions for how to deal with this situation. Woven by many hands including those of teachers, students, and staff from the 10th Directorate, and inspired by the

1 In late 2019, the SARS-CoV-2 virus spread around the world, causing COVID-19, a respiratory disease that forced school closings due to its high transmissibility and lethality.

2 Along with Oliveira (2008) we combine the terms into a single word to mark our epistemological and political choices, overcoming dichotomies and unseparating them.

3 The regional representative body of the State Secretariat for Education, Culture, Leisure and Sport, responsible for administering a group of municipalities. The 10th DIREC has 11 cities. There are a total of 16 DIRECs in the state of Rio Grande do Norte.

4 The municipality of Caicó is located in the central region of Rio Grande do Norte and is 282 kilometers from the state capital, Natal.

experiences of “radio schools” in Natal/RN, by the Grassroots Education Movement and by Freirean thinking, the *EJA em Ação* program became a far-reaching pedagogical tool to support the continuity of the education of EJA students from the 11 municipalities encompassed by the 10th Directorate.

This article highlights the pedagogical practices experienced in pandemic times that subverted the hegemonic logic of the official curriculum, highlighting creative and possible alternatives for building a more inclusive, solidary, democratic and equitable education.

NODOSCOM RESEARCH INTO EVERYDAY LIFE: NECESSARY MOVEMENTS AND CONVERSATION AS A WORKING METHOD

Throughout the world, and for decades, the field of education has been a fruitful area of research, given its complex nature. It was long believed that the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of educational systems was centered on the learners, on the *consumption* (Certeau, 2014) of school content and the efficiency or weakness of the subjects engaged in learning.

Under a perspective of modern scientific rationality, which fragments knowledge so that it can be explained, quantified, classified and hierarchized (Santos, 2011), students were labeled in a process that blamed themselves and their families for school results, minimizing the state’s responsibility, in a globalizing view of reality. The subjects, who were “boxed” into categories and had their potential underestimated, were judged by an arrogant, hegemonic gaze that sees from the top down, from a distance, with judgments typical of the dominant way of seeing (Alves, 2008).

Thus, it seems that, at school, individuals are marked and predestined to succeed or fail, judged by the social and cultural “baggage” they carry. As homogenized beings measured by the same “ruler”, their singularities are denied because the instruments used in schools simplify reality and disregard knowledge that doesn’t fit into the scientific and aprioristic precepts, delegitimizing them. As Carvalho, Silva and Delboni (2019, p. 52) point out,

current educational policies defend the idea of a centralized and standardized curriculum, accompanied by standardized assessment processes and teacher training from the perspective of a technical, instrumental and content-based rationality. However, the strength and power of collective action that is engendered in the vibrating body of the school is manifested in the search for the will of life, the collective desire that intensifies on the plane of immanence, producing difference.

In this sense, in the *nosdoscom* [inofwith] studies approach, daily life provides a powerful opportunity for understanding emerging realities, for capturing the thousand ways of being and doing of ordinary practitioners in the unauthorized creations, tactics and hunts (Certeau, 2014) that they invent as a way to resist those who oppress and dominate them, in the complex whole that is outlined in the subjectivities of what is unique and unrepeatable.

Understood as a complex, creative and rich whole, the quotidian was reduced in modern rational logic to the quantifiable, to what could be captured and explained by dominant science, characterizing it as repetition and routine which, with little reflection, was called a space of common sense, as Oliveira (2005) defined well. Daily life is replete with other forms of knowledge, woven by *practitioners* (Alves, 2008), from which *thoughtpracticed* curricula overflow, moistened with life, transcending the school walls and becoming enmeshed with many other external knowledge networks.

In this research context, networks are ways to understand reality by linking together the multiple practices and knowledge that make up the education system, including invisible practices and knowledge. To understand what these networks woven into everyday life are, we draw on Capra (2006, p. 77-78) to reaffirm that

wherever we find living systems — organisms, parts of organisms or communities of organisms — we can observe that their components are arranged in the form of a network. Whenever we look at life, we look at networks. [...] The first and most obvious property of any network is its non-linearity — it extends in all directions.

In this context, Oliveira (2016, p. 73-74) defines a network as a rhizome, in opposition to the arboreal model of teaching adopted by schools (its temporal and curricular structure). This author believes that

the notion of a woven network presupposes, unlike [the arboreal model], that the information to which social subjects are subjected only becomes knowledge when it becomes enmeshed with other threads already present in each person's network, gaining its own meaning in the process, not necessarily the one presupposed by the transmitter of the information. Knowledge is woven by subjects at every moment, through processes of permanent creation and transformation, and is therefore always new, different from before and, above all, provisional.

In horizontal relationships, networks are woven with threads (knots) to the sides and forwards, with complex meshes swollen with life, which pulsate, reinvigorate, soak in vitality and humanization. They involve the senses, sensations and feelings, forming networks of subjectivities, in the formation of identities (Oliveira, 2016), in counterpoint to the scientism and technicism with which the official observable and mathematically constructed school curriculum is invested, but that can be reinvented in everyday practice.

In research with this political-epistemological approach, it is necessary to venture deep into everyday realities, to “look for references from sounds, and be able to swallow while feeling the variety of tastes, walking around, touching things and people, and letting yourself be touched by them, smelling the odors that reality places at every point of the daily path” (Alves, 2008, p. 19), going beyond what is already known. We are not faced with an easy job, because deconstructing the way of seeing that we acquired in our education implies questioning and having feelings of insecurity that demobilize and distress, but which are necessary for taking on a new political-epistemological stance, for making visible what modern, Western logic has taught us to naturalize.

In these terms, Maffesoli (2010) questions the normality and strangeness of the sounds that emerge from public squares, reflecting the social structures based on Western rationality. Statistics, judgments and the observant — arrogant — posture inscribed in modern precepts seek to explain and analyze rather than understand, ignoring and de-signifying the life that vibrates in the quotidian, the plurality and diversity sewn into the social fabric tinged with the tone of complexity incapable of fragmentation.

Agreeing with this author, we believe that the movements and processes of capturing what is lived give us theoretical and methodological clues, despite the uncertainty and anguish that this journey brings, which are necessary for *nosdoscum* [inofwith] research of everyday life, with a different gaze from the one we commonly use to see, in an incessant search to curiously know beyond what is already known, removing from their invisibility other, delegitimized, forgotten and marginalized forms of knowledge. Regarding this political, epistemological and methodological approach, Teixeira, Oliveira and Campos (2011, p. 24) affirm

the use of this methodology assumes a break with the idea that everyday life and routine are the same thing and that this would be the *space-time* of common sense and, therefore, of the absence of political and epistemological reflection on reality, its conditioning factors and processes — as well as the consequences of this on the

capacity for political and social action of the subjects immersed in it. This requires progress in understanding what the quotidian is and what it can represent, as a complex totality in which the different dimensions of social life are present and enmeshed, and the ways in which the practitioners of daily life [...] act in it, always in a singular and unique way, due to the very dynamism intrinsic to living, which permanently changes the networks of subjects, knowledge and values and, therefore, of social practices.

Alves (2008) helps us with this task, reflecting on the need to surrender to what he calls a *sense of the world*, made possible by immersing ourselves with all our senses in the daily life of schools, where we fight against our prejudices and constructed ideas that judge and point out errors, without being willing to learn from the diversity of knowledge emerging from everyday complexity. Therefore, we have taken on a pluralistic view to make other educational paths visible, in addition to those already traveled, risking ourselves amid the fears and uncertainties that the unknown gives us, in a constant movement of de-invisible everyday events and feelings immersed in the complexity translated into the subjectivity and singularity of the subjects and their stories that are entangled with their *knowhow*, as Oliveira (2016, p. 57) helps us to understand.

[...] studies in/of/with everyday life allow de-invisibilizing these quotidian processes of creating knowledge and establishing relationships between them and their producers. And, in doing so, they make a decisive contribution to social thinking and practices aimed at social emancipation, since making these processes invisible allows questioning the hegemony of the hierarchical relationship between theory and practice and perceiving the *thinkingpractitioners* of schools as producers of multiple and articulated knowledge, valuing different ways of knowing and being in the world and the relationships between them, as well as their possible importance for weaving relationships of solidarity and mutual recognition between pieces of knowledge and their producers.

To carry out this research, we anchored ourselves in Andrade, Caldas and Alves (2019), to assume movements that enable the creation of *knowledge networks* — which are woven, rewoven and interwoven — but which recognize the diversity of knowledge and question modernity constructed certainties. These movements, which by their fluidity accept new reflections and changes, have had their meanings broadened and create other movements.

In this sense, we have taken up the movements of the theoretical-methodological approach of *nosdoscom* [inofwith] studies with the everyday feelings of the world, always going beyond what is already known, creating conceptual characters, narrating life and literaturizing science, Ecce Femina⁵ and the circulation of *knowledgemeanings* in research, using conversations as a device for these quotidian captures.

By immersing ourselves with all our senses in the daily life of the *EJA em Ação* program and in the various educational *spaces*, in the narratives of practitioners and in the artifacts created to allow planning that leaves room for improvisation, we were able to understand the coexistence of many curricula, other than the formal one, which are *practicedcreated* and negotiated in daily school life, but which are delegitimized.

It is these curricula that we are investigating, with the complexity and dynamism inherent to them, as well as the emancipatory and collaborative possibility that constitutes them in the radio field and spreads into school practices, transgressing what is imposed and prescribed, breaking with the hegemonic paradigm.

5 Alves (2008) proposes the name of this movement in reference to Nietzsche and Foucault, which means in Latin: “behold the woman”, to refer to the majority of women in the teaching profession in Brazil.

Inspired by previous experiences of school radios, in which practices approximate and distance themselves from what is already known, we seek to understand what is repetition and what is creation in what we are doing, dialoguing with the *practitioners* and the experiences that come from, for example, the basic education movement (MEB) and what Paulo Freire inspires us with in his vast literature.

In this adventure, called *nosdoscom* research with everyday life and not *about* it, daily *conversation* became a powerful procedure for capturing the points that enmesh the networks of knowledge and subjectivities, expressing creative curricular practices by practitioners in schools, beyond the repetitions and routines that happen in a plural way.

The *networks of conversations* are woven from the dialogues carried out in various contexts and *spacetimes*, both inside and outside the school environment which we venture to know. Discussions by Ferraço and Alves (2018, p. 52) enabled us to understand the strategy of approaching the “other” to establish horizontal and dialogical relationships, in which we politically assume the condition of “thinking *with* them and not *for* or *about* them”. The research partners — the teachers with whom we share our anguish, affections and build projects — weave multiple networks with different threads and perspectives, in the construction of the curricular fabric in the schools.

In this sense, the radio program provided us approximations, *knowledgespowersdoings* and challenges that each of us assumed when dealing with the educational prohibitions faced by EJA students and other factors arising from the deepening crises in the uncertain and life-threatening pandemic times.

At the same time as we *practicethinkpractice* the curricula that we enmesh, drenched in/by the creativity aroused by our intellectual, affective, social and other movements, which are implicated in our vital experiences, we also educate ourselves in solidarity, sharing, negotiating and authorizing ourselves to listen to the multiplicity of voices that exist in the daily life of the EJA modality.

As Ferraço, Piontkovsky, Gomes and Gomes (2019, p. 69) ponder about conversations in everyday life: “in our view, it is in the negotiations, the uses, the narratives of the doing-knowledge of the subjects who practice everyday school life that *curricula-education* becomes enmeshed and simultaneously produces educational policies”.

It is in these encounters, with or without an appointment, with a planned location, or in the corridors and improbable spaces that allow escaping surveillance, that the conversations that interest us take place. Our political positions and beliefs reverberate in the construction of pedagogical practices that follow and at times subvert the officially prescribed and regulated curriculum policy.

The narratives were captured in conversations that took place at different times and in different places: at school, at the 10th Regional Directorate of Education and Culture and in other planned or emerging places. They were scheduled meetings that were intended to begin with themes related to the practiced curricula, but which took other paths, with the unpredictability typical of everyday life and its uncontrollable power to always be different and without constraints. They established networks that encountered and were constituted with other threads, weaving the curricular fabric practiced by the research partners and students, with the collaboration of other weavers who also expressed their *art of making* (Certeau, 2014), modifying what is pre-structured, in a constant self-formation.

FROM CONVERSATION TO CONVERSATION THE UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION CURRICULA EXPANDS: EDUCATORS AS CURRICULUM CONVERSATIONALISTS

Conversation permeates us and presents who we are, because it externalizes what we think about and how. To converse is to enter into a connection with the other, in a movement of listening

and speaking, interacting, recognizing our differences or a synchronicity of opinions, ways of being in the world that coexist and are built in a free, detached way, which may even hold disagreements and alterities, but always in a respectful way. The unpredictability of the paths that were lived, experienced and shared in the daily life of the *EJA em Ação* radio program reveals the richness of what was woven: curricula, friendships, affections and future propositions, imprinted on the subjectivities that ended up being woven into the *discursive networks* (Ribeiro, Souza and Sampaio, 2018).

The dialogues with the teachers took place in September 2021 and April, May and July 2022, in conversation circles that were recorded and transcribed according to the availability of the *interlocutors*, in different *spacetimes*, imprinting their opinions and perceptions on the issues suggested or unpredictably discussed. The conversation circles were permeated by collegiality, a sense of collaboration and a political-pedagogical commitment to EJA, which resulted in an attentive listening to what had to be said about the feelings that affected each participant, what was produced and what was learned and taught through the experience.

In this movement, teachers A, B and C met us in conversation circles at the 10th Regional Directorate of Education and Culture, and teacher D opted, according to her availability and interest, to talk to us at the school where she works, on previously scheduled days.

The themes of the conversation circles were designed in four categories: (i) life stories of the *participants*; (ii) feelings emerging from the pandemic; (iii) the *EJA em Ação* program in 2020; and (iv) the *EJA em Ação* program in 2021, portraying different moments according to the perspectives of the participants, which were sewn together and produced the *nosdoscom* [inofwith] research in the daily lives of the radio program in which we ventured to plunge. The virtual conversation circles for planning, training, and evaluation, the meetings in the studios of Rádio Rural or Rádio Educacional Lucinete Costa (in the 10th Directorate), the “off-air” conversations during the program and in a WhatsApp group became fertile places for reminiscing, which was conducive to the cultivation of the feelings expressed in the conversations.

The feeling of fear was present in the accounts when the participants recalled the uncertainties represented by the pandemic, not just in relation to deaths or absences, but to the fear of change, of abandoning a previously safe place, of reinventing practices and of encountering these memories. These fears emerged from power relations that produce submissive, silenced people, but also transgressors. As an ontological condition, Freire and Shor (2021) remind us of the human condition, of the normality of feeling fear when dreaming of social transformation, but also explain that this feeling must be controlled and have clear limits, so we can launch ourselves into new experiences without this causing immobility, but rather creation.

For me it was distressing, desperate in every sense, not just as a professional, but as a mother, as a Brazilian citizen. [...] as a history teacher, I found myself in a context that I know from books, that of 1918 and the Spanish flu epidemic, and so I tried to protect myself as much as possible. It was so distressing that I soon began to suffer many anxiety attacks. (Conversation with teacher D on 19/04/2022)

Thinking about [...] the program initially came in the context of a lot of insecurity, a lot of fear. The fact that [there was] a very strong initial desire on the part of the teachers to do something, and a lot of fear of facing the microphone, because it's also recorded. You're not just on the radio, you're on social media: Facebook, Instagram [...] YouTube and it's recorded. (Conversation with teacher B on 20/04/2022)

As we delved into the excerpts from the conversations, we realized that the *EJA em Ação* radio program called for collaborative work, taking risks over the airwaves, reducing the fear of

not being alone (Freire and Shor, 2021). Despite the global epidemiological severity, the anguish and unpredictability about what could happen and the production of alternatives were creatively mobilized for and with EJA students, allowing them to continue their studies, considering their precarious socio-economic and cultural situation and their insertion into the digital world, which is indispensable for participation in remote education.

The first moves were made to bring people and experiences together, in the dialogical and collaborative act of thinking-doing together, as in Freire's own words (2020a):

An education that would enable people to courageously discuss their problems. Their insertion in this problematic. One that warns them of the dangers of their time, so that, aware of them, they will gain the strength and courage to fight, instead of being led and dragged to the doom of their own "self", subjected to the prescriptions of others. An education that puts them in constant dialog with others. That would predispose them to constant revision. To critical analysis of their "findings". A certain rebelliousness, in the most human sense of the term. That identifies them with scientific methods and processes. (Freire, 2020a, p. 118-119)

The education that the group of teachers wanted to experience had the opportunity to be put into practice and, despite these teachers having little or no radio experience, they embarked on the adventure of *thinkingpracticing* curricula, as Professor B confides.

I'd never been in a radio studio before. [...] I think that when we think of the program and think of Freire, we think of his contribution. He used to say: "You can even improvise one day, but afterwards you have the obligation to reflect on it". And that's what I did [...], but we know how to do education, we've done a lot of beautiful things. [...] Thinking from an aesthetic perspective, from the perspective of art, based on Freire's idea [of] this dimension of the sensitive in education, and that's a beautiful thing. What do you bring to a program? When you arrive [to do] a program, you take all the baggage, all that reading, all those experiences, that sensitive look you have for the other, those possibilities. (Conversation with teacher B on 20/04/2022)

As we can see, the pedagogical courage and boldness expressed in teacher B's statement give us clues to emancipatory curricular practices based on her *knowhows* (Oliveira, 2016). The teacher inaugurated the practice of inviting artists (*cordelistas*, *brincantes* [who present popular literature and folk culture], poets, musicians and others) to participate in the program as a way of encouraging and expanding the cultural movement, creating spaces to give visibility to and increase appreciation of popular culture, typical of the popular education movement. Practices were reinvented without prescriptions, since there had been no instructions until then, except for the role that each person could play in the radio project, which was also defined according to their lived experiences. In this mobilization, the feeling of collaboration emerged as a driving force, provoking transdisciplinarity.

When we came up with the idea [of the radio program], we sat down to work on it and see what possibilities there were for entering without any knowledge of radio, of communication, in that sense. But that was a challenge we accepted, and I was even the coordinator of the field. In this movement I met my friend here [pointing to teacher A, who was with us in the conversation]. We met through the EJA, and since then we have been exchanging experiences, and that was it! It really started with the feeling that one day we were lost, but I think it's like that in education in every sense... (Conversation with teacher C on 11/04/2022)

I arrived like any good newbie: “with a lot to say”, eager to work. [...] You arrive one day, the next week report to school, and the next the pandemic starts... I was lost. What do I do? [...] Everything shut down! Fear, obviously, because I have a comorbidity. But I’ve always been one to do my part [...] And then, as my colleague C mentioned in this story, the *EJA [in Action]* began and I said: let’s go for it, I want to work. I began, and incredibly [it seems] because I’m from the field of physical education, from the area of language, I should have been included in their group, which I was, but I ended up being embraced by the people from the area of the hard sciences and there we created the little story of the Seridó family. Thank God, we worked very well in that first moment when, at the height of the pandemic, [the creation of the program] was a great facilitator for the schools because [they] were also lost, they didn’t know how to deal [with the situation] and we had greater support. (Conversation with teacher A on 11/04/2022)

The excerpts captured from the conversation circle with the teachers revealed the feeling of collaboration, solidarity, of being with the other and not alone, to the extent that they showed availability, surrender, acceptance, openness to the weaving of joint knowledge and not just helping peers, as the term cooperating suggests.

Teacher A, a newcomer to the state school system, proposed to work in various groups and not just the one related to his area of languages, expressing his acceptance of the natural and hard sciences group in which he decided to work more. The “little story” of the Seridó family, mentioned by the teacher, refers to the methodology created by the natural and hard sciences group, in which they raised problem situations experienced by a typical Seridó family that were solved by using scientific knowledge, in an attempt to bring this knowledge closer to the reality of EJA students, their daily experiences, as a means of promoting dialogue/communication (Freire, 2020b), the exchange of learning and the recognition of multiple forms of knowledge.

The idea for the story came from teacher A. When we began our meetings, we were concerned about how we were going to talk to this audience, so that it would arrive differently than how we work today. [...] I was concerned that the content should be approached [...] from situations that involved the student’s day-to-day life, such as using a clay pot to explain phenomena in physics, for example. And how are we going to do this? We’re going to make a story about a family from our Seridó region. So we’re going to create the Seridó family! We’re going to create characters with names that are characteristic of our region, who go through common situations that we go through and that families in this region go through. (Teacher C on 27/04/2022)

Teacher B then reflects on the action:

You are talking and I am going through this dialogue in my head, through the way the group did its work. Thinking about Freire again, I ask myself, do I need to read and know everything about Freire to do this program? Do I really need to read his work in such depth to do popular education? I say this because what we see most are people who have mastered the theory, but who don’t have the practice. And these things must go hand in hand. In this example of “C”, we saw the popular mixed with the scientific, that’s what he did. What is more common than a clay pot? There’s other knowledge there in the pot that sometimes I don’t realize and he rescued this knowledge, he accessed this knowledge, mobilized this knowledge in a very simple way, and then we reach the end of the conversation, that is, the popular approaches the scientific, the systematized knowledge, we move towards what we want, which is the emancipation of the subject. (Professor B on 27/04/2022)

It is possible to infer from teacher C's narrative that the pedagogical practices developed in the *EJA em Ação* program translate into *thoughtpracticed curricula* (Oliveira, 2016), which overcome the idea of a colonialist, prescriptive and disciplinary curriculum and move towards solidarity and emancipation. Like Oliveira (2007a, p. 10), we understand that colonialism creates objectification, that is, "the non-recognition of the other as a subject". The dialog established between different types of knowledge challenges these hegemonic curricular convictions, linking multiple types of knowledge and cultures in plural *spacetimes*, by weaving horizontal networks.

The reflections raised by teacher B strengthen this perspective. By evoking Freire's thinking to understand what has been done, he hints at the emancipatory consciousness impregnated in practice, in which creation is opposed to prescription, subverting the mere extension of knowledge, in a daily construction of theory-practice.

Talking about the beginning of the radio activities, teacher D recalls how she worked in the virtual *culture circles*, in the humanities program. The teacher emphasized her concern to contextualize and problematize current and historical events, expressing the right of EJA students to form their own opinions based on this dialogue and the reflections made collectively.

I learned a lot both from being behind the scenes building the *script* [of the program], and as a teacher who was in the *circle of culture* on the radio, because [...] when I took part in developing the *script*, I always said: let's try to get away from what the textbook brings us, this content-based view, because, for example, I can be working in the context of the Cold War [...] in the context of the pandemic. [How?] We had those who were in favor of the vaccine, those who made science a priority, and those who were against the vaccine, the deniers. So we had a bipolar world at that time, ideological bipolarity, and I could bring this issue into the classroom, from the moment I got tired of studying: ah, the Cold War! But I'm no longer in that context. What does history have to do with it? We're always in context, because [this is how] I can relate a concept. So I've always tried to make these connections. [...] With this situation in mind, I started to produce my history texts breaking totally with this textbook paradigm, and yes, it's not that I abolished the textbook, I made the textbook just an appendix and not the essential element, not fundamental. It was just something that would complement [my practice], never the essential. (Conversation with teacher D on 03/05/2022)

The way of thinking about the *scripts* gives us indications of the curricular weaving practiced in the humanities programs, organized based on the reality lived and experienced in the world and locally, relating it to the syllabus of the textbook, which seems to have facilitated the pedagogical processes. Oliveira (2007b) contributes to our reflections by pointing out the need to enhance student learning by linking school knowledge to social meanings. This leads us to believe in the possibility of curricular organizations that are alternatives to the curricular model proposed by the state, since the knowledge produced in various socio-cultural contexts dialogues with formal content, giving it meaning as it is problematized.

Agreeing with Santos (1996), we believe that in order to embark on emancipatory paths it is necessary to remember the past by (re)constructing a historical journey taken by humanity, which produced social ills, human suffering and the destruction of ecosystems so that, through these *destabilizing images*, it is possible to "recover our capacity for astonishment and indignation and, through it, to recover our non-conformity and rebellion" (Santos, 1996, p. 17).

The emancipatory project to which Santos (1996) refers restores our capacity for non-conformity in the face of situations of oppression, human degradation and the degradation of nature, awakening a sense of ethics, social commitment and choice so as not to repeat the present in the future, like the past that is replicated in the present.

In this context, we felt the teachers' commitment not only to the curricular proposals that were being developed in solidarity, but mainly to the EJA students, with a concern about how to reach them without conquering them over, which would be a domesticating practice (Freire, 2020a) through simple persuasion, devoid of reflection. The radio became a practical alternative as the pandemic dragged on. This prevented the return of face-to-face classes, burdened the lives of the EJA students, many of whom had children at home, without the food they normally received at school, and who were struggling to survive, while it was impossible to continue school activities.

Immersed in this universe of concerns and plunged deeply into the program's dialogical-reflective context, we could see the collaborative climate that was forming between teachers, students and other daily actors, which was conducive to collective curricular creations, and diverse thinking that was emerging from practices that reinvented themselves.

The conversations weaved together different connections, with threads of affection, life and professional experiences, allowing the participants to be tinted with the colors that each day inspired, sometimes agreeing with each other, at other times needing to negotiate without precisely reaching consensus. Curricular conceptions emerged in the conversations, in which the teachers exposed their feelings and understandings about what they had produced during the program and which is now being built pedagogically, in the post-pandemic context.

I was very concerned about the curriculum, because I understand it as this place of dispute, of narrative construction, as a space that is political, that has a direct relationship with choice, with autonomy. [...] There was a period when I became very attached to these questions in my field: how do I create, how do I build the art curriculum? What is important? And then I think the community is fundamental! I think we have everything in the community. That's why I was very concerned, for example, to invite the puppeteers and the cultural figures who, for me, were very special, because they bring other knowledge that is just as important as scientific knowledge. I don't see one knowledge as being above the other, I see knowledge that has to dialog. And when we think that the whole project was based on Freirean foundations, I think that we actually did the *culture circles*. Of course, it wasn't face-to-face, it was in a very atypical way, but that's what happened. The panel included mediators who had previously talked to other teachers and who were dialoguing with guests from a horizontal perspective: there was no such thing as greater knowledge and lesser knowledge. (Teacher B on 27/04/2022)

It's worth noting that planning of the program started from the *generating theme* chosen by the students and teachers using *Google forms*, in an incessant search for democratizing movements. As a result, the dialog among the teachers, some students who were willing to join the groups and other professionals produced the *script* that developed the theme, according to the area of knowledge being worked on. Everyday events challenged the curriculum *thinkerspractitioners* to create according to their political-epistemological choices. It can be seen that the conversation circles present in the programs, and as a research methodology, led to negotiations, the sharing of knowledge and new weavings in which practices were socialized and other knowledge enmeshed.

Every time I come to a conversation circle, I learn a lot. [...] I also think it's very important, and I've let go of this rigid curriculum for a while now, especially when I work with the EJA, I am concerned about what's going to be significant for that student, within that world of knowledge that I have in my area of training. I think about what I can contribute to improve the student's daily life, so this is my curriculum, especially for the EJA. When we began the program in 2020, everything

was very turbulent, because we had little time to plan, we had to respond. One very interesting thing I found in the program was this multidisciplinary that in the hard sciences program we worked on with the people from culture, physical education and other areas. The idea for the story came up because it was something very relevant, especially for the EJA, the people who are more concentrated in rural areas, you know? (Teacher C, discussion circle at the 10th Direc, 27/04/2022)

When discussing his perception of the curriculum, teacher C talks about the learning that emerges from these moments of sharing experiences, supporting what Reis and Oliveira (2018, p. 67) affirm: “We understand that these narratives and the conversations that emerge from them simultaneously promote the continuing education of teachers and a greater dialog between the different forms of knowledge in interlocution.” Therefore, the *conversations* provide reflections on diverse practices and conceptions, producing more ecological relationships and the legitimization of the knowledge of the equally important “other”, woven horizontally, collaboratively.

In this sense, the *EJA in Action* program was developed in 2020, building curricula without any major interventions or control by the State Department of Education and Culture (SEEC) to change what was being done, despite the first norms and other regulations published. The program was closely monitored by the SEEC staff, and secretaries and undersecretaries often participated — and eventually Governor Fátima Bezerra too — on the Rural Education Radio panel and on social media chats.

The work being done was in line with the manual published by the Superintendency for EJA in August 2020, with pedagogical guidelines in the context of the pandemic. It served as inspiration for other regional directorates, which also created radio initiatives to serve EJA students, according to their experiences, expectations and objectives.

Aware of what was being experienced in the face of the health crisis and the impossibility of an immediate return to classroom lessons, the SEEC began to guide the organization of pedagogical work to guarantee the minimum workload schools should meet with flexible school days, in accordance with the report CNE/CP 05/2020 (Brasil, 2020).⁶ Based on this guidance, the SEEC published ordinance 184, which expressed a concern about the school calendar and recommended that “non-classroom activity plans” be drawn up for as long as the health restrictions lasted. As a result, other ordinances and decrees were published that year in an attempt to comply with the prerogatives of the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN [Brasil, 1996]), considering the 2021 school calendar, since the 2020 calendar would overlap into the following year.

Therefore, the schools began to require teachers to draw up “non-face-to-face activity plans” to calculate the workload and monitor possible learning, in which the program’s activities were not always evident, since adherence was voluntary and only activities carried out directly with students were considered valid in this count. Schools produced other practices and alternatives for serving the students and, simultaneously to this movement, they also had to work on drawing “plans for resuming face-to-face classes”, in accordance with the health safety guidelines issued by the government’s scientific committee. With regard to this issue, the *conversation participants* reflected on what had happened, making important revelations during the conversation held on April 27, 2022:

Teacher A: Over time, the program lost a certain strength, but also because the schools began to structure themselves towards the middle, towards the end of 2020, the schools began to structure themselves in terms of their own practice and then, unfortunately, that proposal that we wanted the [...] EJA teachers to embrace was not embraced by many.

⁶ This report addresses the reorganization of the school calendar and the possibility of recognizing non-classroom activities for the purposes of fulfilling the minimum annual workload, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher B: We need to consider that many teachers are in the EJA, and I'm talking about this because it happens in the field of art, they're there to complete their workload, but they don't create bonds and they don't have a commitment to the modality.

Teacher D's reflections are in line with the reports above, when she states that:

The EJA has returned to a place of marginalization. It took center stage because the other school institutions, in the municipal and state networks, didn't know how to work during the pandemic and a modality that was so excluded, so silenced, reinvented itself and its reinvention forced others to reinvent themselves and, when the others, who occupied their positions reinvented themselves, we will put the EJA where it should always be, in its own corner. It's just to supplement the teachers' workload. I'm sorry to tell you this, because I know your concern for the EJA, I know the affection you have for the EJA, but I'm on the school ground and that's what I feel, unfortunately. (Conversation with teacher D on 03/05/2022)

The issues raised by the teachers express old problems, already known from our plunges into the modality: teachers who don't identify with EJA, who are only interested in completing their workload, and the feeling of control, in which the game of power hierarchizes and submission immobilizes. After all, it was necessary to be clear about which pedagogical activities would be considered valid for calculating the workload, according to the 10th Directorate's guidelines, which came from the Secretariat itself. This could partly explain the teachers' initial adherence to the program, since there seemed to be no other possibilities, but it is also possible to understand why some of them continued the activities on the radio, those who were genuinely involved in issues of the modality and its subjects.

In line with the democratic foundations of education, we understand by drawing on Oliveira *et al.* (2009) that it is necessary to overcome hierarchies, to involve everyone in decision-making processes and to establish equitable relations, to transform power relations. Thus, with the passage of time and the appropriation of other instruments that emerged during the pandemic, some schools chose to follow their own paths. With the return of face-to-face classes, normality was established and, undoubtedly, the pedagogical practices undertaken during the pandemic were transformed according to the needs of the moment, putting the radio program into disuse.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: TURNING OFF THE RADIO TEMPORARILY

The pandemic, experienced more intensely in the years 2020 and 2021, represented a personal passage for us from a comfortable and known place to another one, full of challenges and uncertainties and which required reinventions for us to survive, including to survive our own fears. The history, affections, friendships and solidarity that emerged during these times made us dream with eyes open about the viability of possible forms of education, achievable utopias legitimately committed to social transformation, the democratization of education, and the construction of a better, diverse and plural world.

The seeds of popular education in the arid yet fertile soil of the Seridó, sown by the radio schools of Natal, Rio Grande do Norte and the Grassroots Education Movement, germinated and flourished in a time of crisis, politically empowering EJA in the development of curricula led by its own *thinkerspractitioners*. As we immersed ourselves in the *EJA em Ação* program, in the discourses of the *conversation participants* who enmeshed, intertwined and networked with each other and with their/our life stories, we perceived the tortuous paths they traveled in those two years (2020–2021).

We saw that, given that they felt they had the autonomy to create, they became protagonists of an education with democratic and emancipatory traces, which could be transposed to classrooms, in the communities where they work and share *spacetimes*, affections and learning. State regulation, personified in bureaucracy and prescriptions of what should be done, has imposed insurmountable obstacles which, among other factors, have weakened the movement that seemed strong, pushing EJA to the margins, a place it has historically occupied, according to teacher D (2021), with whom we agree.

The *conversations* made it possible to delve into the daily lives of the program and its *practitioners*, revealing feelings and perceptions that made this experience unique and unrepeatable, in which this theoretical-methodological apparatus helped us to understand the quotidian details found on the margins, which could have gone unnoticed by an inattentive or careless look. The epistemological curiosity that drove the research focused on understanding how the *EJA em Ação* radio program contributed to *thinkingpracticing* other curricula in/of the modality in times of a pandemic, a question that we answered during the research, in teachers' creations and reinventions that we witnessed taking place.

We believe that this experience makes visible what takes place in everyday school life, in which teachers and students discuss and establish connections between subjects and content, from the popular to the scientific, to the realities experienced, weaving *networks of knowledge and subjectivities*. The feeling of collaboration produced a desire for integrality, in which it was possible to reflect on compartmentalization and the possibility for interdisciplinary pedagogical work.

The challenge of making the discourses of *conversation participants* visible as voices that have an echo in daily life, that this research took on, has brought to light unique curricular practices that transgress what has been prescribed, creatively reinventing the school in an attempt to open it up to plurality, which has been traditionally denied and marginalized by modern precepts. We found traces of emancipatory practices in the context of the *EJA em Ação* radio program. In this way, we can see the power of collectivity and collaboration in the weaving of possible and dialogical cultural practices, of cultivation in the school field, overcoming the compartmentalization of knowledge, punitive evaluations and the exclusion of what is "different" or "beyond the norm" that the school monoculture imposes.

The *culture circles* formed on several occasions expressed horizontality, inclusion and respect for multiple knowledge, in a counter-hegemonic movement in the weaving of dynamic curricular networks. However, changes were necessary in the dynamics of the program, which, as in any living organism, becomes more flexible, attentive to daily demands, and objectives become transformed along the way, in a permanent movement of *reflection on action* (Freire, 2019).

The paths were trodden as the research progressed, even with insecure steps, often lost, but replete with learning and emotions, drenched in solidarity and hope. Unpredictably, we confronted a sense of fear that permeated us and produced different understandings: a fear that mobilized collectively (in the making of the program); a fear of the new (we became immersed in the world of digital technology and needed to learn quickly); a fear that introverts (in contact with the microphone, which exposed what we did not know, but learned to do: communicate); and a fear that subordinates (that distances from the dream or invites transgression).

The radio program has been turned off to be turned back on soon, as the research continues, because there are clues to what should and can be revealed and interpreted; traces of an education that we not only dream about, but already practice in small daily actions, which at times go unnoticed due to their clandestinity in the midst of institutionalized and instituting practices.

The *EJA em Ação* radio program was also featured by students and many people who, in a spirit of solidarity and collaboration, joined this popular education movement that resisted and

insisted on taking place in a time of crisis and suspension of life, but which was conducive to the creation of dreams, possible utopias that, as Paulo Freire teaches us, are viable and powerful.

It is possible to work from a transdisciplinary, multicultural perspective, as highlighted by teacher D (2022). The day-to-day practice constructed in the program's thematic groups gave us the perception that we have to travel along all the paths, and not just the one that is modernly known, as if it were the only one that existed or was right in the teacher's imagination, because there are roads yet to be explored. Traveling "outside the box" was one of the lessons that Professor A (2022) gave us, though the courage and pedagogical daring that ventures into unknown and fruitful terrain.

Multiple types of knowledge exist and come from many places and cultures that invade us like songs and dance with our emotions and desires for emancipation and social justice, and that dwell in *ordinary* people (Certeau, 2014), because we also recognize them as producers of knowledge based on individual and collective social experiences.

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