

Educational Practices of Regulation and Emancipation in Youth and Adult Education

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ABSTRACT – Educational Practices of Regulation and Emancipation in Youth and Adult Education. The text analyzes part of the data produced in the context of a Master's research. It is based on the assumptions of the qualitative approach and uses interviews to produce data. To guide the realization of this study, Freire (1998), Santos (2000), Arroyo (2005), Galvão and Di Pierro (2007), Gomes (2020) and others are highlighted. The research results reaffirm the need, expanded in the post-pandemic context, for reflection on the nature and organization of pedagogical work in the schooling of young people and adults. It discusses the presence of emancipation elements characteristic of popular education of which EJA is heir to, as well as aspects of regulation, characteristic of education systems.

Keywords: Youth and Adult Education. Regulation. Emancipation. Popular Education.

RESUMO – As Práticas Educativas de Regulação e Emancipação na EJA. O texto analisa parte dos dados produzidos no âmbito de uma pesquisa de mestrado. Fundamenta-se nos pressupostos da abordagem qualitativa e utiliza entrevistas para a produção dos dados. Para orientar a realização deste estudo, destaca-se Freire (1998), Santos (2000), Arroyo (2005), Galvão e Di Pierro (2007) e Gomes (2020). Os resultados da investigação reafirmam a necessidade, ampliada no contexto pós pandemia, pós pandemia, de reflexão sobre a natureza e a organização do trabalho pedagógico na escolarização de jovens e adultos. Discute-se a presença de elementos de emancipação característicos da educação popular, de que a EJA é herdeira, assim como de aspectos de regulação, característicos dos sistemas de ensino.

Palavras-chave: Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Regulação. Emancipação. Educação Popular.

Introduction

The reflection we present is part of a Master's work (Reis, 2009), which has as its object the educational practices that young people and adults experience in the literacy process in popular education. In this article, we discuss the hallmarks of *emancipatory* pedagogical practices present in popular education movements, as well as *regulatory* ones, typically school. We analyze the *tension* that arises when Youth and Adult Education (Educação de Jovens e Adultos – EJA, in Portuguese) is “converted”, heir to the tradition of popular education, into school education. We also sought to verify to what extent this tension is perceived by students and accounts for the non-continuity of studies by these people.

The research developed is based on the assumptions of the qualitative approach (Flick, 2004). The field work was carried out in the popular education project Catholic Initiative Basis Education Movement (Movimento de Educação de Base de Iniciativa Católica – Mebic, acronym in Portuguese) in a public school in the city of Guanambi/BA (Cora Coralina¹ School). Data production elected non-participant observation, for 10 months, of the school activities of an EJA class in the municipal education network, which receives people who have graduated from Popular Education Projects for Youth and Adults. In addition to registering in a field diary, we conducted interviews with 10 students who had graduated from Mebic, who entered regular night school, and with the teacher in charge of the class.

In the text that we develop below, we intend to discuss the testimonies collected among the subjects who make a movement to seek schooling and return to Mebic. Thus, we present the reasons that, according to them, lead them to leave the project and return to it after a short period of permanence at school. We verified how students perceive the marks of regulation present in the education system, as well as the presence of emancipation elements characteristic of popular education, which EJA is heir to. These marks are responsible for the permanence of some of them in popular education, or even the abandonment of school by others.

Specificities of Youth and Adult Education

Studies on young people and adults who cannot read and write expose similar life trajectories. The adult subjects of EJA are not just any adults, they are workers, mothers and fathers, they have color/race and class. Most of the group considered in this study are from the countryside or small towns and belong to large families with precarious financial situations. Survival made work a priority in their life trajectories in relation to school. In addition, access difficulties and/or the absence of school institutions in rural areas prevented and/or limited studies in childhood and adolescence (Galvão; Di Pierro, 2007). Thus, real progress, in terms of schooling, is made as adults. Another common point

among students, whose testimonies we will present in this text, is to become literate in the popular education movement; then enter school; not adapt to it; and then return to Mebic. It is in this context that the marks of the educational practices of regulation and emancipation revealed by Isabel, Raquel, José and Pedro are situated.

We will briefly introduce these people.

Raquel is 49 years old, separated, mother of 6 children and of these, 3 are in Elementary School and 3 have interrupted their studies due to work. She did not attend school as a child, living in the interior of Palmas de Monte Alto/BA. After separating from her husband, she migrated to Guanambi with the intention of looking for a job and getting her children into school. She has worked for 15 years as a maid in the same family home. She studied at Mebic for 4 years. Encouraged by the project coordination, she went to study at Cora Coralina school, but he did not adapt. After 4 months of classes, she returned to the project, where she regularly attends classes.

Isabel is 55 years old, married, has 7 children and 6 grandchildren. Only 2 of the children attend school. She did not go there when she was a child, living in the interior of Palmas de Monte Alto, from where she migrated, aged 22, to Guanambi, to work as a maid. She has been attending Mebic for 8 years and, at her teacher's insistence, she enrolled at Cora Coralina school. There she remained 4 months. She returned to the popular education project, in which she attends the post-literacy class.

José, 46 years old, is married and the father of 7 children; of these, 3 are in elementary school and 4 have interrupted school due to work. Before moving from Ibicaraí to Guanambi, he was a carpenter. He currently works as a bricklayer. His first study experience was at Mebic, aged 39. He enrolled at Cora Coralina school and, 1 year later, returned to the project. He attends the post-literacy class.

Pedro, 58 years old, is married and the father of 6 children; and of these, 3 study in Elementary School and 3 in High School. He lived his childhood in the interior of the municipality of Guanambi. After the children reached school age, he went to the city so they could start school. Initially, he worked at a contract construction firm. During the renovation of a bank branch in Guanambi, he was hired by the branch to work as a general services assistant. He mentioned the joy of having his work permit. The manager of that place advised him to study, at the time (2004); and so a person from the evangelical church he attended took him to Mebic. He and his wife enrolled and this was their first study experience. Afterwards, they entered the Cora Coralina school but, in 1 year, they returned to the popular education project. They attend the post-literacy class.

When we asked respondents about the reasons that led them to return to Mebic, they indicated that they did not find what they expected at school. We realized that, for them, school is not the place where they would only seek some learning; this space, in their view, should

go beyond school knowledge. Isabel, when narrating her experience at Cora Coralina school, showed some resistance to the teaching proposal of the public school. According to her, contrary to her feelings at Mebic, in the classroom, she felt insecure, did not actively participate in activities, was afraid that her lack of knowledge would be discovered, that classmates would make fun of her, etc. For her, the classroom environment should be a place of tenderness and acceptance. Although she recognizes that the teacher taught, Isabel noticed that the school did not speak her language. The following excerpt from his interview expresses a positive view of the coexistence provided in the environment of popular education:

I left the school 'Cora Coralina' it's not because it was bad, it's good there, the teacher teaches right, some subjects like that are very difficult. I left there because my head couldn't learn these things anymore, and I don't want to break my head over it; I'm past the age of that [...]. I went back to Mebic because here the teacher and classmates speak 'our language'. At school, I was shy, because I didn't understand things properly, then my head would come home in a bad state. Vou pra escola pra descansar, esquecer os problemas [...]. I go to school to rest, forget about problems [...]. Here, the mood of the students is different. We study, talk and even go to the old people's forró. Not to mention São João, which is beautiful. It's a family, community party, where everyone helps and has fun (Isabel, 55 years old).

So, according to Isabel, school didn't provide that *dosage of enthusiasm*. It is important, for her, the space for pleasure, participation and rest from work and personal and family difficulties. She stated that she found, in Mebic, a healthy socializing environment.

Raquel pointed out that since she was a little girl, she felt the desire to study. At one point in the interview, she pointed out that she had stopped studying at Cora Coralina school due to the difficulty of reconciling the different activities of her work and study routine, depending on the schedule. The following excerpt highlights this regulatory mark present in the school: school times are rigidly fixed. Faced with the impossibility of combining the need to work as a maid and the desire represented by school, she dropped out of school. She recognizes the importance of learning and the role it plays in her life:

[...] since I was a little girl, I've wanted to study, so I joined Mebic and already learned a few things. Then I went to study at 'Cora Coralina' school, which is my youngest children's school, but it didn't work out, because I get home late from work and the class time there is too much for me, so I couldn't stand it. I was afraid of staying there and embarrassing myself, of others laughing at me [...]. So I went back to studying at Mebic, in the post-literacy class. [...] For me, it doesn't matter if I'm going to pass the year, I go to Mebic because I want to learn to read over the top, to read quickly so I can read my boss's messages, read recipes for cakes and food [...]. I want to write without missing lyrics or putting too much [...]. I am very nervous, shy, stressed, Mebic calms me down. I feel that my head and body are lighter when I return from there. I think it's the conversations with my friends (Raquel, 49 years old).

Raquel also revealed the feeling of embarrassment that she carried in the school environment. When she feels that she is among equals, welcomed and respected, she feels motivated to stay in Mebic. In addition, she signaled that she wants to read and write for different purposes. Unlike many, she does not believe that she can rise socially through schooling. She knows, however, the development of new skills both in the family and professional spheres: “[...] after school, I am more united with my children”; “[...] I know how to talk more with my bosses, my children and their friends”; “[...] I find out about other things”; “[...] here everyone is equal in difficulties”.

Unlike Raquel, Pedro and José reported the satisfaction of studying at Cora Coralina school. Before this experience, in public school, they understood what was offered by Mebic as insufficient. Experiencing, in the period of one year, schooling helped them to value more the learning previously acquired and reduced the distance from school. They recognize that the teacher’s ways of teaching and the students’ way of learning at school are different, but they assessed that they are neither better nor worse than in the popular education project. The excerpts from the interviews shown below show regulatory marks present at the school (schedules, times) that, once again, make it impossible to combine work and study schedules, leading José not to stay at school and return to the project:

At Mebic, there are many good students; if you go to school, they’ll put on a show! Before, I thought it was a herd of losers. Now I’m not afraid to study at school anymore, I just didn’t stay there because I couldn’t reconcile work and school schedules. I can only go to school on alternate days and it’s kind of complicated there, you have to go every day, otherwise I won’t get the tests right. There are many subjects, and the student cannot miss them so as not to lose track of the subject [...]. As soon as I can, I go back to school. [...] at Mebic, when I need to be absent, I let the teacher know, and she sends me activities to do at home on the weekend, then my children help me and explain things that I don’t understand on my own. [...] I think that if you ask the school teacher, she does the same thing, but when I studied there, I never asked because I was afraid; but I’m used to the teacher at Mebic (José, 46 years old).

Pedro, when addressing school times, indicated the difficulty of adapting to the pace of classes:

When I went to the College, I thought it was very strange, very big, with too many people. [...] I liked the school, the teacher is good [...]. I went back to Mebic with my wife, because we feel better here. She and I have to read and write and we want to see if we pick up the pace a little more, so that we can go back to school later. Our biggest difficulty at school was copying from the blackboard to the notebook; it was too much stuff, and hard hands aren’t much help. I told my wife that we’re going to soften our hands and then we’ll go back to school (Pedro, 58 years old).

Going to school, for José and Pedro, allowed awareness of the progress achieved in learning in the previous stage, experienced in Mebic. Although they indicated the desire to go to school, Isabel, Raquel,

José and Pedro also perceive this space as a place of discomfort and intimidation. The testimonies point to the need for the school to invest efforts in the quality of pedagogical interaction, in the exchange of knowledge with the context of young people and adults. The relationships of affection, complicity and solidarity built in Mebic mark a collective project, in which students and educators are involved in the act of learning and teaching.

The testimonies collected assume greater importance in times of strong regulation by the school, as they allow us to understand that the permanence of young people and adults increases when there is a good adaptation to the new reality, when the teacher-student relationship is positive, when students believe in their own success and when they feel involved and valued by the institutions in which they study².

Teacher Ester, from Cora Coralina, considers the absence of the student to be a failure of hers: "Every time the night students start to give up, I feel like a failure and responsible for the emptying of the classroom, for the students' lack of interest and for the reactions of dissatisfaction to the activities I propose in the classroom". However, it is not a question of blaming teachers, as we see that school dropout rates in EJA, even when more flexible models are adopted, they attest to the difficulty of reconciling personal trajectories on the edge of survival with the rigid logic in which the school system is structured. To ensure that the rights of young people and adults are realized, it is necessary to understand that "[...] their lives are too unpredictable, requiring a redefinition of the rigidity of the public education system" (Arroyo, 2005, p. 47).

The Trajectories Lived

The abandonment of studies, even if temporary, occurs due to lack of motivation; difficulties in reconciling work and school; health problems; and challenges in adapting to routine, rites and the school environment. In order to address this element, we dialogue, in this section, with two other Mebic graduates who have not yet been presented: Tomé and Madalena. We quote below a statement from Tomé, who, when talking about his experiences, also pondered his previous view of the institution and found that he can adapt. He, however, questioned the schedule of the school offer, as shown in the excerpt below:

First I studied at Mebic, but I was always very curious to know what it's like to study at school, then, when the teacher saw that I was able to go to school, I went, because that's what I wanted. I thought school was a place for the smart; after I got there, I saw that it wasn't quite like that. I had to see it to believe it. Mebic, for me, was more than a school and now I just need to study to learn these things that students learn during the day and that Mebic didn't teach me [...]. But, at the moment, what I know is enough to get by, [...] I dropped out of school because I had to have a cataract operation and I also had rheumatism. Now I have to take a quiet break inside the house, because, at my age, I don't have the disposition of younger people, especially at night. [...] For me to study, it has to be dur-

ing the day, at night it's not possible and since there's no day school here, I can't study (Tomé, 66 years old).

Tomé's report expresses that the phenomenon of non-permanence can be understood, both from an individual and institutional point of view. In fact, dropping out of a course may represent, at the individual level, difficulties (in his case, health) outside the school. The same phenomenon, at an institutional level, reveals the need to rethink supply times, rhythms and organization of pedagogical work.

Furthermore, his statement reveals the images he constructed about the school; the expectation and evaluation of it as a place of knowledge. The statement makes us consider that the adult (not educated or even with little education), to attend the school environment, faces a range of labels. Such labels integrate their self-concept, reducing the possibilities for these people to perceive themselves as cognitively capable of understanding more complex issues; to undertake and create. They feel less capable and carry with them the responsibility for their inadequacies. We verified, as stated by Fonseca (2005, p. 33), how much the meritocratic school model unfairly attributes to a personal failure the consequences of an unequal social condition:

Attributing the reason for the interruption of schooling to a personal failure is a procedure marked by the ideology of the school system, still strongly defined in the paradigm of merit and individual aptitudes. The school system itself and the socioeconomic model that sustains it are justified, exempting them from the responsibility they have for denying the right to school. The injustice of the relations of production and distribution of cultural and material goods is masked in a shadow play assumed by the subject himself condemned to the situation of exclusion who, taking responsibility for dropping out of school, would feel less victimized and powerless in the face of an unfair and discriminatory structure.

We see that the school institution, when receiving these students with truncated school trajectories (Arroyo, 2005), completes the work of exclusion instead of welcoming them, guiding them, teaching them to organize themselves and relate information that they already have with those they are acquiring; to encourage them to ask questions about what they want to learn. The way in which the school operates communicates to the person *their inability*, shows their lack of understanding of school procedures and language far from their reality, their difficulty in interacting, in reasoning in the way recommended by the school. Thus, devoid of a bridge that connects their knowledge to that of the school, students end up giving up. From this framework, a perverse judgment results, which circulates in the assessment carried out by the school: the EJA student is often considered cognitively incapable; those with great learning difficulties, very serious memory problems, exaggerated slowness of reasoning, etc.

It is not difficult to understand why school is seen by Tomé and Madalena as the opposite of what they wanted. It is a school that pressures, that discards, that does not see the student in their individual

trajectories, beyond the regimental school time and space. In contact with this feeling of neglect, they define themselves as unimportant, inadequate for that place, someone who is not needed, who has nothing to contribute. Madalena's testimony referring to affective bonds is remarkable. She pointed out the sense of community and distinguished the popular education environment from the school environment:

[...] I missed the friendship at the school, I don't know if it's because in Mebic the students and the teachers are very close... Everything there works on the basis of unity: cleaning, parties, snacks [...]. Already at school, it seemed that one was afraid of the other. [...] I think that in Mebic it's more of a community thing [...], at school, it's different. It happened, many times, [that] I met schoolmates in places outside the school and they didn't even greet me (Madalena, 32 years old).

In addition, we heard the teachers Ester and Lídia, from Cora Coralina school. They reiterated that the abandonment of EJA students to school increases when there is no support from the educational institution, colleagues and family members; students' belief in their own performance; involvement with the school; and valuing the institutions where classes are attended. Also, the teachers underline the family influence as something important in the students' decision to interrupt their studies. This is what we see in Madalena's report, which describes the challenges she faced in the family context:

Just because I went to school, my husband separated from me. I told him: 'When I was a child, my father didn't let me study, now another man [husband] won't stop me'. For my husband and father, it was more important that I learn to use my hands than my head. Because I didn't just use my hands, that is, washing, ironing, cooking, etc., my husband thought it was bad and left me with two children [...]. In the school of life, I already learned a lot, now I just need to use my head to learn to read and write properly, just like the teacher teaches, like the people studied do to receive approval (Madalena, 32 years old).

Madalena showed that, faced with the interdiction imposed by her partner, she refused to remain in submission. This is another aspect that crosses the trajectories of EJA students, the asymmetries in gender relations, often translated into marital violence, sexual abuse, inequalities of opportunities and finances.

Madalena highlighted another aspect in relation to popular education: volunteering often results in intermittent experiences. Youth and Adult Education in Mebic is marked by donation, a mission driven by solidarity, conceived from the perspective of helping the poorest, charity towards the disadvantaged, etc. However, the student recognizes the consolidation of Mebic in its 11 years of history, teaching young people and adults and qualifying the educators who work there: "It is not a project that starts and, when we are starting to like it, it ends". In addition, he highlighted the education of the educators: "They are all educated and well educated; in addition to subjects, they also know how to teach in a good way that we learn". Her statement highlights the quality of the educators' work.

This perception is in line with that of Fávero, Rummert and Vargas (1999) when they recommend that youth and adult educators not only know the contents that pervade reality, but also understand the strategies used in their construction and transmission. This is the only way to understand how these processes, built outside the school, interfere in the way of learning. Similarly, Moll (2005, p. 17) recommends, in schools for adults, the search for balance between experiential knowledge and that of the curriculum legitimized by different academic areas:

Becoming a teacher of adults implies willingness for approximations that permanently transit between constructed and legitimized knowledge in the field of sciences, cultures and arts and experiential knowledge that can be legitimized in the reunion with the school space. It is in the balance between these two that school is possible for adults.

The comparison of pedagogical practices aimed at Youth and Adult Education in the two researched experiences, Mebic and Cora Coralina school, indicates tensions between the regulatory forces and those of emancipation that characterize them. On the one hand, a set of educational actions emerges, permeated by theoretical principles that combine literacy with the popular organization movement. On the other hand, there is the institution with times and rhythms governed by the education system. In this conception, the educational process is seen as emancipating as it promotes solidarity, encourages its organization and autonomy. In addition, government proposals contribute to stiffen the organization of pedagogical work, placing EJA [...] within the rigid curricular, methodological, time and space references of the school for children and adolescents, interposing obstacles to the flexibility of the school organization necessary to attend of the specificities of this group” (di Pierro, 2005, p. 1117).

We emphasize that the research results gain greater relevance in the context of intolerance that is now expanding widely in Brazilian society, generating conflicts of religious and political values, etc., which directly affect the pedagogical work of the educator in the EJA in the classroom³. In addition to this scenario, it is worth highlighting the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on the most impoverished population in society, which greatly expands the contingent of population excluded from any form of access to school. The population out of school, without completing the course of basic education, adds up to a total of 77,364,447 in 2021 (Cruz; Monteiro, 2021). Of these, enrolled in EJA were 3,002,749 in 2020 and became 2,948,511 in 2021 (Cruz; Monteiro, 2021). That is, the educational situation for this portion of the population, during the health crisis experienced in the period, became even more fragile. We are, therefore, called to, from a look at the past, reflect on the conditions for the possibility of offering EJA schools in the present and in the future.

We defend the importance of the school for these male and female students; however, we claim a character of displacement of positions of

rigidity that characterize education systems. Turning our eyes to the experience of the subjects, moving away from assimilationist positions, we intend that EJA come to unveil and make explicit practices that reiterate exclusion, in order to distance itself from them and promote acceptance of the other in its diversities.

We turn here to Santos (2000) to focus our lens on the notions of regulatory and emancipatory knowledge. The first wants to reduce all differences to the same pattern and order. The second is revealed in the ecology of knowledge. While the first operates through guardianship, within the scope of colonialism, the second operates through autonomy within the scope of solidarity.

Joining Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Nilma Lino Gomes (2020, p. 227) denounces the maintenance of the primacy of Eurocentric colonial standards of world and scientific knowledge in the school curriculum:

Coloniality is the result of an imposition of power and colonial domination that manages to reach the subjective structures of a people, penetrating his conception of the subject and extending to society in such a way that, even after colonial rule, its ties persist. In this process, there are some spaces and social institutions in which it operates with greater force. Basic education schools and the field of scientific production are some of them. In them, coloniality operates, among other mechanisms, through the curriculum.

In the same direction, Vera Candau (2011), dealing with the regular school, highlights the presence of a democratic defense of education for all as a value disseminated in the teachers' discourse. However, as she points out, this discourse proves to be homogenizing when it intends to standardize the procedures and processes adopted from a univocal perspective of didactics, curriculum, evaluation, etc. The author, in order to lead us to rethink these elements, emphasizes that the performance of school education as a device for cultural homogenization is perceived since the formation of Latin American national states and plays "[...] a fundamental role, with the function to spread and consolidate a common Eurocentric culture, silencing or making voices, knowledge, colors, beliefs and sensibilities invisible" (Candau, 2011, p. 242). The silencing highlighted by the author is characterized by the execution of symbolic death. It operates in the production of subjectivities, by erasing epistemologies other than the colonizing one.

Sueli Carneiro (2005, p. 96) relies on Boaventura de Sousa Santos to say that epistemicide constitutes "[...] one of the most effective and lasting instruments of ethnic/racial domination, due to the denial it undertakes of the legitimacy of forms of knowledge; knowledge produced by dominated groups". Epistemicide not only denies the character of knowledge to the knowledge of the other, not inserted in the accepted epistemological model, but also denies the very capacity of the other to produce knowledge. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (apud Carneiro, 2005, p. 96) points out that this phenomenon, epistemicide, constitutes the

modus operandi of the colonial enterprise: a global apparatus for the destruction of bodies, minds and spirits, which makes it possible to “[...] apprehend this process of destitution of rationality, culture and civilization of the other”.

In the direction of overcoming epistemicide, Nilma Gomes (2020, p. 224-225) indicates that decolonizing the curriculum means not thinking of subjects as ignorant to be civilized. From there, the author defends the inclusion of other epistemologies, hitherto ignored, made invisible by the school, in order to achieve a public, secular, anti-racist and truly democratic education. In this way, the school, and especially the EJA, benefits from a more emancipatory vision of knowledge. Miguel Arroyo (2005, p. 25-28) also emphasizes how the heritage of popular education invites the school to expand its conceptions, broaden its modes of understanding and functioning, breaking with its narrow logic, typical of the regimental regulatory modes of the education system:

We have to recognize that many EJA experiences accumulate a very rich heritage in understanding this plurality of formative processes, times and spaces. They learned methodologies that dialogue with these other times. They incorporated human dimensions and knowledge into the curricula that forced the narrowness and rigidity of the school curriculum. [...] All of this was possible because these bold proposals were off the grid, without the ghost of verification, of taking advantage of studies, of curricular sequencing, series, of fulfilling workloads by discipline, area, etc. The logic was different.

Thus, the data presented here corroborate the statement by Sérgio Haddad (2007, p. 18), when he identifies the tension for the flexibility of times, spaces and curriculum in the dialogue with the subjects and the world outside the school. For the author, the tension is located between flexibilization and institutionalization in the search to build a proper way of doing EJA. He points out that adequately attending to the modality involves questioning the traditional school, mirrored in the education of children:

With the recognition of the right to youth and adult education as a public offer, the tension between institutionalization, through the model of accelerated regular education, and the creation of another model that seeks flexibility, inspired by the guidelines of Popular Education, is a permanent feature of this search for a way of doing EJA. The fight for the right to school reveals characteristics in the imagination of the population and educators that are mirrored in the regular elementary school focused on teaching children and adolescents. The challenge for the constitution of a model of service itself involves questioning the traditional school, without neglecting its successes and findings (Haddad, 2007, p. 17).

Therefore, the testimonies we present invite the school to question its practices and curriculum, to support its actions in the broadest

(democratic) dialogue. Teaching, understood as humanizing process – especially in adult education – is called upon to overcome a monocultural curriculum, to make times and spaces more flexible and to overcome hierarchies of knowledge, race, gender, generation, religion and geographic origin. Thus, by eradicating fear and suffering, becoming a space for “living together”, the school could become a space for cultivating the joy and enthusiasm of learning together.

Final Considerations

The desire to overcome constraints and experiences of discrimination experienced in the school environment and in society; the conquest of communication through several languages for the use of the standard norm of the language; the possibility of accompanying and better educating the children; the formulation of personal and collective projects, the desire to fully exercise citizenship – all of this contributed to these subjects joining Mebic. We found that the legacy of popular education remains current. Arroyo (2005, p. 47) suggests recognizing this legacy and proposes building a dialogue with the school system to think about EJA from this heritage. We believe that popular education can significantly contribute to the formulation of public policies, offering pedagogical concepts; experiences of organizing curricula, times and spaces, oxygenating the school system.

We observed the tension between emancipatory and regulatory pedagogical practices when young people, adults and elderly people who graduated from popular education, upon entering school education, were treated in homogeneous ways. The selective intransigence of the school system also generates tension, manifested in the organization of pedagogical work and in the rigidity of times and spaces in the face of the different conditions available to men and women with little schooling to resume the trajectory of interrupted schooling. This is due to forgetting that “[...] the EJA has always come to collect those who could not follow the selective and rigid logic of our school system” (Arroyo, 2005, p. 48).

Finally, we believe, like Paulo Freire (1998), that thinking about practice is the way to learn to think correctly. We also join Santos (2000) in warning about the harm that waste of experience entails. Therefore, we consider that this study brings elements to rethink education and schooling in the conflicting times we face.

Translated by Sabrina Mendonça Ferreira

Received on August 24, 2021
Approved on January 13, 2023

Notes

1 We used a fictitious name for the institution as well as for the subjects. The research included the signing of the Free and Informed Consent Term (Termo

de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido – TCLE, in Portuguese). The investigation was carried out in the period prior to the covid-19 pandemic.

2 Different studies corroborate these findings, including those by Paula Cristina Silva (2011) and Marcus Macedo da Silva).

3 The school is, in general, at the heart of conflicts of radicalized values, questioned from movements such as *Escola Sem Partido*, whose banners denounce both the alleged “Gender Ideology” and the so-called “indoctrination”. These movements intend to say, from a place outside the school institution, what the legitimate curriculum and teaching should be.

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Availability of research data: the dataset supporting the results of this study is published in this article.

Editor in charge: Luís Henrique Sacchi dos Santos

