

SEX EDUCATION, CURRICULUM, TEACHING DEGREE: WHAT DO THE RESEARCH ON THIS TRIAD REVEAL FROM A BOURDIEUSIAN PERSPECTIVE?



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore and analyze the academic production on the theme of sex education in the curriculum of Pedagogy degree courses from a Bourdieusian perspective. The analysis procedures were based on a qualitative research, of an exploratory-descriptive nature developed in 2024, based on a bibliographic survey carried out in two databases – Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations and Catalog of Theses & Dissertations of CAPES – aiming at mapping the academic productions published in the last 34 years. The analysis of the studies reveals the absence and, therefore, the need to focus on the theme of sex education in the initial training courses of licentiate students in Pedagogy aiming at the construction of fundamental knowledge on the subject, seeking to overcome the social ties found in school contexts.

Keywords: Teaching Degree in Pedagogy. Curriculum. Sex education. Pierre Bourdieu.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is a central concept in the field of education and teacher training, as it refers to a selective project of culture that reflects the values that underlie the teaching-learning process linked to extracurricular conditioning factors (GIMENO, 1994). Its precepts express the will and intentions of the State, allied with education so that, in this way, it becomes a definition and state control of what should be taught at the national level (SOUZA *et al.* 2019, p. 236).

At the level of higher education, the curriculum also imprints such interests, listing contents and theoretical approaches that are more pertinent to achieve the objectives of that particular historical moment, whether they are in federal, state, municipal or private spheres.

Due to its procedural character, the curriculum is governed by historical, political, economic, and social changes that interfere in the formulation of its proposals and the development of its actions, based on the imposition of mandatory updates on schools and teachers (SOUZA *ET AL.*, 2019)

Such updates take time and investment to be made official in the school routine, generating, in most cases, a conflicting duality between traditionalism and innovation, pointed out by Lorenzi (2017), as obstacles to the construction of effective actions in the professional field. According to the author, in addition to the mandatory nature of these changes, it is necessary that tools and investments be made available to teachers, so that they can elaborate what was proposed to them in a coherent and organized way, striving for time and the training of those involved in the implementation of the proposals.

Therefore, it can be understood that tools and investments are decisive for the success or failure of a resume. Within this system of political disputes, the school and the curriculum become instruments for the production and reproduction of social inequalities, according to Bourdieu (1998). Such mechanisms are accentuated from the production of a curriculum that selects the contents to be developed, since they are not thought of in the reality of the students, intensifying the gaps of different social fractions. That is, schools that have a high economic capital have facilities to achieve the proposed objective.

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1983), the school can be understood as a field of struggles, where different agents compete for positions and resources. In this field, power relations are structured by a system of legitimations that favors certain social groups. The *habitus*, that is, the system of enduring dispositions that individuals incorporate, influences

the way they insert themselves and act in this field. Thus, the school is not only a space for the transmission of knowledge, but also a place where social inequalities are reproduced. By valuing certain types of cultural capital, the school contributes to the maintenance of social hierarchies.

But we know that in any field we shall discover a struggle, the specific forms of which will have to be investigated in each case, between the new one who enters and tries to break the bolts of the right of entry and the dominant one who tries to defend monopoly and exclude competition. (BOURDIEU, 1983, p.119-120)

Considering that this system of legitimations is historically constructed, aiming at the interest of the people in power – as previously elaborated. The contents that are selected as relevant are also intrinsically linked with such validations. This is what happens with the teaching of sex education in schools.

The selection of content to integrate the curriculum depends on the relevance of the theme for the maintenance of the state's interests in the formation of participatory citizens. Discussions on the subject began in Brazil around the 1960s, marked by the reach and influence of the arrival of the feminist movement in the country, associated with the beginning of the commercialization of the contraceptive pill. The discussions were brief and slowed down by the arrival of the military coup of 1964.

The resumption of discussions takes place in the period of redemocratization, especially through the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of 1996 and, mainly, the National Curriculum Parameters, volume 10, of 2000, the book is entitled "Cultural plurality and sexual orientation: Transversal themes". However, advances were limited from the 2010s onwards, with the growth of the conservative movement and the evangelical bench in Brazil. Such groups spared no effort to abhor the teaching of sex education in schools. In 2015, with the approval of the first version of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), which establishes – so far – the guidelines for teaching throughout the country, gender and sexual orientation issues were included from its first version. However, the social pressures exerted by such conservative groups culminated in the removal of several terms that were considered "sensitive" referring to the teaching of sex education. The contrary initiatives made it difficult to address the subject in the curricula, since the theme is still treated as taboo, according to Ribeiro (2013) "sexuality is repressed and not accepted, which leads us to infer that, for these sectors opposed to sex education, by denying sexuality it is as if it could be removed from school contexts" (p.11).

According to Benites (2006), the lack of dialogue only accentuates the distance between teacher and student, since situations pertinent to sexuality are present in the students' daily lives – whether they want to or not.

Thus, in terms of social relevance, we start from the principle that sex education constitutes an important space for the implementation of concrete proposals for action in which discrimination, prejudice and sexual violence, both symbolic and real, are combated, and that it is essential to include diversity and gender issues in the training of teachers in sex education (RIBEIRO, 2013, p.11)

In this way, the emergency need to focus on the theme in school curricula also reinforces the priority of discussion in the curricula of Teaching Degree courses aiming at a qualified training for the future teacher.

In this sense, we defend the relevance of the approach to sex education in initial training courses, with a focus on the training of the pedagogue, with a look at the academic production and what it reveals to us in relation to this theme in the last thirty years.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis procedures were based on a qualitative research, of an exploratory-descriptive nature (SELLTIZ et al, 1965), developed in 2024, based on a bibliographic survey (ROMANOWSKI AND ENS, 2006) carried out in two databases - Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD) and CAPES Catalog of Theses & Dissertations - aiming at mapping academic productions published in the last 30 years.

For the collection of data in the BDTD, the search process took place, in which 6 procedures were carried out, including the indication of the following descriptors: 1) "Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Pierre Bourdieu"; 2) "Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"; 3) "Degree in Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum". The process involved changing the descriptors and the search screening, aiming to find the works that could be relevant to the research.

The following table shows the descriptors and the selected screens, along with the results of each search:

Survey of research in BDTD				
Quest	Descriptors	Sieve	Findings	Forwarding
1	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Pierre Bourdieu"	"All fields"	48	Analysis

2	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Pierre Bourdieu"	"Title"	0	Disposal
3	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	"All fields"	358	Discard due to excess results
4	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	"Title"	2	Analysis
5	"Degree in Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	"All fields"	56	Analysis
6	"Degree in Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	"Title"	0	Disposal

Source: The authors, 2024.

During this process, 106 works were surveyed, which were inserted into an Excel spreadsheet for future in-depth analysis.

The same process was repeated in the CAPES Catalog, the results found are in the following table:

Survey of Research in the CAPES Catalog

Quest	Descriptors	Refinement	Findings	Forwarding
1	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Pierre Bourdieu"	No refinement	0	Disposal
2	"Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	Program Name: Education	45	Analysis
3	"Degree in Pedagogy"; "Sex Education"; "Curriculum"	No refinement	5	Analysis

Source: The authors, 2024.

In the CAPES catalog, 50 theses and dissertations were found that touched on the proposed theme. All the works found were placed in the same previous Excel spreadsheet, so that the analysis could be done together.

For this spreadsheet, the 156 entries found were manually exported, which contained: the name of the authors (A), the year of publication (B), the title of the thesis or dissertation (C), the state (D), the university (E) and the sector (F) – public or private – from which these works originate.

After organizing the spreadsheet, the results obtained were filtered in order to check for duplicate results. We select the "C" column where the titles were described and, in the "format>conditional formatting" menu, within the C1:C range, a "new rule" was established

to "format only unique or duplicate values", we selected "format all: 'duplicate values' in the selected range", to assist in the visualization of duplications, we entered "preview>'format...>'>fill> background color > reddish", This way, all titles that appeared twice (or more) would be highlighted in red.

7 duplicate titles were found. From these titles, a new process was made to clear them: "Data > advanced > filter > the 'C' range > only unique records > clear". The resulting data was allocated to a second tab in the spreadsheet, excluding duplicate jobs.

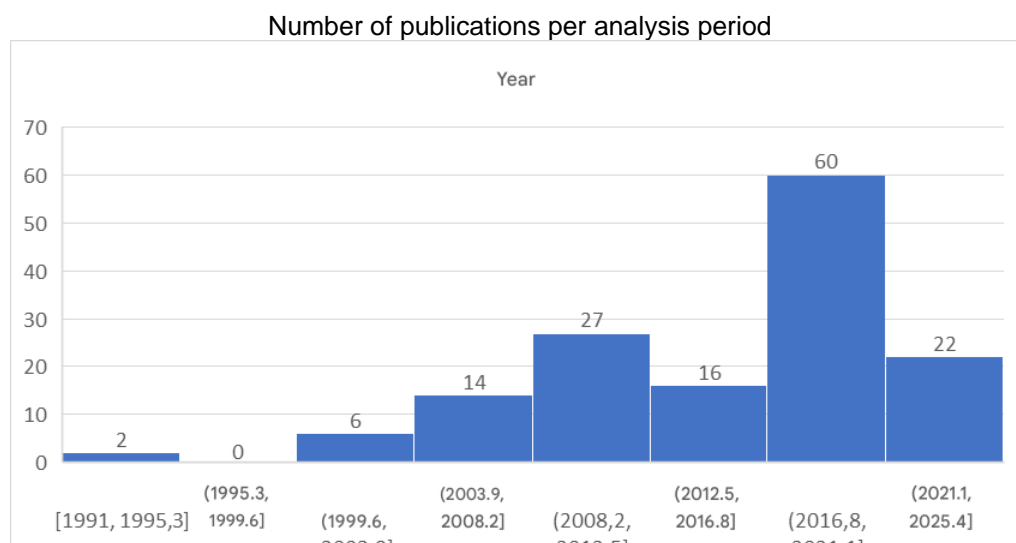
Of the 149 titles, from a quick recognition, one more title was noticed that was duplicated, being removed manually. As a result, 147 theses and dissertations were selected for the next step of the analyses. One of the studies resulting from the research came as: "title not available", not bringing information about the author or the year of publication, and for this reason it was excluded from the analysis. However, it is still present in the spreadsheet, demarcated with a bluish tone for easy identification.

RESULTS

To deepen the data, it is necessary to analyze the space and time in which these works are inserted. Regarding the years of publication, there are works dating from 1991 to 2024. In the 1990s, when the subject began to be addressed, there were few publications that focused on the subject. From the 2000s onwards, there was a considerable increase in the number of researches.

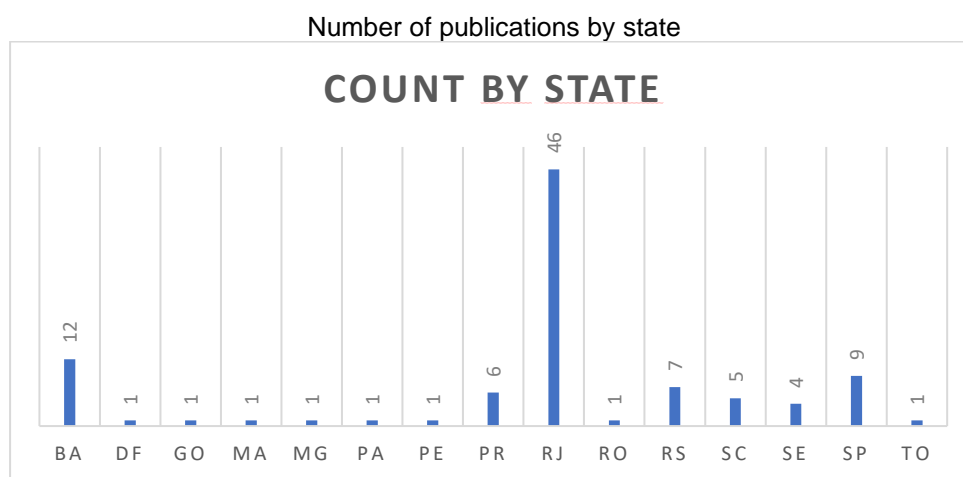
It is important to highlight that in this period, research on Sexuality and Sex Education advanced a lot, both quantitatively and qualitatively, given the process of expansion of graduate studies in the country, having added to this movement fundamental data related to the advances promoted. (MALAGI, 2023, p. 8-9)

In the years between 2016-2021, it was the period with the highest incidence of results. According to Malagi (2023), antisocial and conservative discourses that questioned the teaching of sex education in schools were one of the factors that contributed to the increase in interest in the topic.



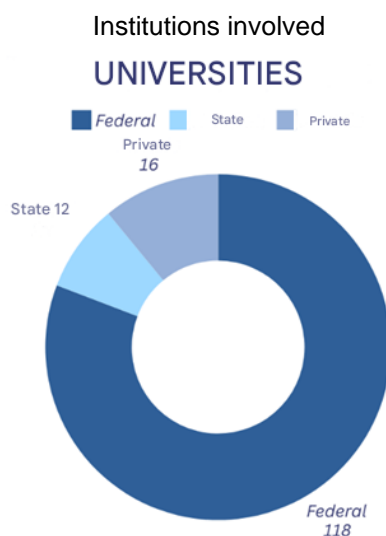
Source: The authors, 2024.

Regarding the space of production of these researches, the impressive incidence of Rio de Janeiro in the publications stands out. The university responsible for this mark is the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, the works are from the most diverse areas: human, biological, exact; with great contributions from the Institute of Education, Agronomy and Human and Social Sciences, mainly.



Source: The authors, 2024

As for the Institutions involved (Graph 3) in the production of the research, it is possible to observe the Federal Universities with the highest incidence on the theme surveyed, while Private and State Universities appear with a similar incidence.



Source: The authors, 2024

From the selection of the 147 works, the titles of the remaining works were analyzed, so that we could select the most pertinent to the investigated theme. A total of 25 works, including theses and dissertations, were selected for the reading of the abstracts.

The perception, based on the analysis of the titles, is that gender and sexuality emerge as the most recurrent themes in titles related to sex education, both in the school context and in teacher training. Therefore, it was considered important to read such abstracts, for a greater perception of what was being addressed. Mostly, the deepening of the themes "sexuality and gender" are treated in a transversal way, criticizing heteronormativity and the binarism present in the curricula of schools and universities, concerned with the production and "inadequate" reproduction of the proposed concepts, in the education of children and adolescents. Universities, in turn, adopt the same traditional theory when preparing the curriculum for teachers in training. The criticism, as pertinent as it is, does not fit with what we are looking for with regard to the theme of "sex education".

As we narrowed the searches, we resulted in 6 theses and dissertations that covered the theme discussed here, namely: Benites (2006); Brazil (2009); Costa (2012); Lorenzi (2017); Malagi (2020) and Martin (2010). Coincidentally, they are productions by 6 authors. The research shares the obstacles found, sometimes in the University, sometimes in the school, for the insertion of sex education in the curriculum. Some works were produced in less nebulous times, such as the 2000s, when the debate was at its peak. Later, with the gradual emergence of conservatives, the polls take on a fighting content, claiming the return of the achievements of yesteryear.

DISCUSSION

Brasil (2008) weaves a dissertation addressing the struggle for an emancipatory sex education, that is, the intentionality in the teaching-learning of the theme, through the continuing education of teachers, since they leave the universities with gaps in how to work on the theme with their students.

Benites (2006), in turn, agrees with this statement, because the precarious initial training of teachers would lead to a distance between teacher and student. The author also found that learning about sexuality occurred informally, in the social life of individuals, thus relating this form of learning to Pierre Bourdieu's habitus, as the transmission of this knowledge routinely led to the family – directly or indirectly – thus, both teachers and students built their knowledge from an informal education, full of values of judgments, traditionalisms and lack of information necessary to fully develop the citizen.

Martin (2010), as well as Brasil (2008), notes the abyss left by universities and exalts the need for continuing education for teachers. The author argues that the teaching of sex education is a complex and dynamic field, shaped by the political, ideological and economic forces of each era.

From a school-oriented point of view, Costa (2012) investigates the factors that compromise the involvement of public schools of basic education when it comes to sex education, the author describes the scenario she found:

[scenario] of little commitment and adherence to the theme of HE (Sex Education), which were our unfavorable indicators of conservatism, traditionalism, lack of affinity, restriction to the theme, among others (COSTA, 2012, p. 173).

Therefore, conservatism and traditionalism evidently present the greatest barriers to the materialization of a sex education that is truly emancipatory.

As a solution, Lorenzi (2017) proposes teacher training that instigates critical thinking in the face of the information provided, so that, in this way, the strictly biological view of sex education teaching can be set aside – a limiting view that leads to the propagation of deterministic ideals – thus being able to take into account the complexity of human realities.

Finally, based on the legislation that touches the teaching of Sex Education in schools and universities, Malagi (2020) finds that 45% of the courses (analyzed by the author) do not present curricular proposals for the training of sex education, as well as the absence of the terms "sex, sexuality and their approaches" in the Pedagogical Political

Projects (PPP) and Course Pedagogical Projects (PPC), thus, criticizing the Teaching Degree courses in Pedagogy for not preparing future educators adequately to address sex education in schools. The author concludes:

In this brief overview of studies that problematize the curriculum of the initial training of the pedagogue with regard to Sexuality and Sex Education, it is evident, in addition to other cuts, the need for new studies that can produce and explain data on how Sexuality and Sex Education is conceived, studied and guided by the Teaching Degree courses in Pedagogy of the Brazilian Federal Public Universities, especially if we consider the curriculum as something alive, which is in a constant process of construction of the subjects and fostered by educational policies (MALAGI, 2020, p.28).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the studies reveals that the debate on the inclusion of sex education in the Brazilian school curriculum gained momentum with the possibility of its insertion, provided for in the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases, in the National Curriculum Parameters and in the National Common Curricular Base. Based on this legal framework, graduate researchers dedicated themselves to deepening the discussion and proposing different approaches to the theme. However, these debates did not advance in the curricula of schools and teacher training courses.

According to the sociological approach of Pierre Bourdieu (1983), the inclusion of sex education in the curricula of Pedagogy contributes to the formation of the *teaching habitus*, providing future educators with tools to address this theme in a critical and equitable way. Thus, initial training must be comprehensive, covering all aspects necessary for qualified professional performance.

In this sense, supported by the research analyzed, we highlight: the need to include the theme of sex education in schools, because, in order to form fully capable citizens, reduce social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1983) and educate critical individuals, it is essential that education be complete, contemplating all the fundamental areas of development, sexuality being one of them; the importance of building fundamental knowledge on the subject, in the initial training courses of licentiate students in Pedagogy through a critical and transformative reflection, seeking to overcome the social ties found in school contexts; and, finally, the understanding that the gaps that exist today with regard to the teaching of sex education in schools and universities, exist due to a political, historical and conservative movement, which offers resistance to addressing this theme in the field.

It is noticeable that the theme of sex education has historically faced a boycott caused by deniers who believe that not addressing the subject is a way to make it disappear. However, research shows the opposite, that this theme is present in the daily lives of students and teachers and that it is necessary to review the curricula of both Teaching Degree courses and basic education schools, promoting awareness and the transformation of attitudes and mentalities regarding issues related to public health prevention, gender intolerance and protection against various forms of sexual violence.

The way to reach the emancipatory ideal to which we intend is political participation aimed at the curricular restructuring of universities, in the Teaching Degree courses, specifically, in the Teaching Degree in Pedagogy, in a way that is integrated with the needs of Basic Education and not determined by capitalist and repressive ideology (LORENZI, 2017, p.185)

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