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YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (EJA) IN BRAZIL – CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE CURRICULUM AND METHODOLOGIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE LDB

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ABSTRACT

Youth and Adult Education (EJA), although provided for by Brazilian legislation as a fundamental right, still faces numerous challenges in its practical implementation, especially with regard to the curriculum and pedagogical methodologies adopted in public schools. This article proposes a critical reflection on the paths taken by EJA in Brazil, based on the legal frameworks of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) and on the experiences lived by educators and students in different territories of the country. The object of research focuses on the analysis of the curriculum and the methodologies used in the teaching-learning processes of EJA, seeking to understand how these choices influence – positively or negatively – the permanence, autonomy and critical formation of the subjects served by this modality. Thus, it starts from the following question: How do the curriculum and methodologies practiced in EJA, in the light of the LDB, contribute (or not) to an emancipatory and inclusive education? As a theoretical framework to broaden our view of EJA we used the works of Dewey (1916; 1938; 1997), Gramsci (2011), Freire (1967; 1970; 1985; 1996), Oliveira Lima (1971; 1979), Vygotsky (1978), Knowles (2005), Mezirow (1991), Brookfield (2005), Biesta (2006; 2011), McLaren (2014; 2015), Giroux (2004), Torres (2008; 2013), Saviani (2013; 2018; 2019), Abreu (2014), among others. The research is qualitative (Minayo, 2007), bibliographic (Gil, 2008) and we use the comprehensive perspective to carry out the analysis (Weber, 1949). The findings revealed that the realization of the right to EJA requires more than the existence of legal guidelines – practical, curricular and methodological demands that are consistent with the reality and diversity of the subjects. The analysis showed that, in the light of the LDB, challenges related to standardization, fragmentation and devaluation of popular knowledge still predominate. However, from a critical-emancipatory approach, it is possible to build a living, dialogical curriculum committed to social justice. Listening, participation and the link

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between school knowledge and life experience emerge as structuring axes. Thus, EJA reaffirms its political role as a space for transformation.

Keywords: Youth and Adult Education. Emancipatory Curriculum. Critical Methodologies. Educational Justice.

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YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION: CONTRADICTIONS, POTENTIALITIES AND CURRICULAR CHALLENGES IN THE LIGHT OF LDB – INTRODUCING.

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil is a field of tensions and disputes, whose current configuration is crossed by the struggles of subjects who, historically, have been excluded from formal spaces of schooling. Although marked by institutional advances, it still carries in its core the traces of a late and precarious schooling. As Abreu (2014, p. 87) expresses: "[...] the EJA aimed to provide [...] the opportunity to raise their schooling through new knowledge that could be used in different daily relationships". At the same time, Oliveira (1999, p. 93) emphasizes that "[...] the EJA subjects did not have the opportunity to attend school, or moved away from it because of work", revealing a panorama of structural inequalities that persist today.

> Youth and Adult education, as I understand it, is not simply about giving a voice to learners or including more people in existing decision-making processes. Rather, it is about creating spaces and opportunities where individuals can present themselves in a unique way – in a way that is neither predetermined nor reduced to the logic of preexisting identities or interests. This means that the education of these people cannot be fully organized from the top down or planned in advance. It depends on what individuals bring to the situation, how they respond to others, and whether they are willing and able to engage in practices of mutual recognition and dialogue. In this sense, the education of young people and adults is an open and risky practice – but precisely for this reason, it is also a significant and emancipatory practice[17] (Biesta, 2006, p. 117).

With the advent of LDB No. 9,394/96[18], EJA began to occupy a normative place in the Brazilian educational system, being recognized as a modality of basic education. This legal framework represents an important step in the attempt to overcome the historical gaps of exclusion. However, as Rummert and Ciavatta (2010, p. 94) warn, "[...] the precariousness of the provision of public education imposed on the entire working class a low degree of schooling that lasts and still lasts for almost the entire twentieth and twenty-first centuries". At the same time, the document reinforces that EJA must consider the "[...]

[17] Our translation.

[18] The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) No. 9,394/96 is the main legal framework of Brazilian education and establishes, in its articles 37 and 38, that Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a modality of basic education intended for those who did not have access to or continuity of studies at the appropriate age. By recognizing the right to lifelong education, the LDB reinforces the need for pedagogical practices to be in tune with the specificities of EJA subjects, promoting the appreciation of experience and respect for knowledge acquired outside the school space. In this way, the legislation proposes to overcome homogeneous and excluding models, stimulating the construction of a flexible, inclusive curriculum that is articulated with the world of work and social practice. See: BRAZIL. *Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996*. It establishes the guidelines and bases of national education. Federal Official Gazette: section 1, Brasília, DF, p. 27833, 23 Dec. 1996. Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9394.htm. Accessed on: 22 Mar. 2025.

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natures and specificities [...] strategies and methodologies that achieve their subjects and objectives" (Abreu, 2014, p. 104), challenging standardized pedagogical practices.

The LDB, in its articles 37 and 38[19], states that EJA should be offered to those who did not have access to or continuity of studies at the appropriate age, and should respect the characteristics of these subjects. This implies a commitment to equal opportunities and the right to lifelong learning. In this sense, "[...] the organization of pedagogical work in EJA must value the individual interests and the learning pace of each subject involved" (Brasil, 2000, p. 10). As Rummert and Ciavatta (2010, p. 94) summarize: "[...] the subject of EJA must be understood and analyzed starting with his own life experience".

> Teaching requires respect for the knowledge of the students. Common sense tells us that it is absurd and authoritarian to despise the knowledge of experience made with which students arrive at school. Socially constructed knowledge and, therefore, valuable, this knowledge of experience made, when not recognized by the school, denies education as a practice of freedom. The knowledge of the learner, as a starting point for the production of new knowledge, must be valued, not just tolerated. Respecting the knowledge of the learner is the first condition to build meaningful knowledge with him (Freire, 2014, p. 25).

It is essential to recognize the diversity present in the subjects of EJA, which range from workers and single mothers to people in situations of social vulnerability and young people who have dropped out of regular education. The subjects are "[...] from the popular segments, which bring [...] a history of experiences of social inequalities" (Rummert; Ciavatta, 2010, p. 93), and whose life stories bear marks of exclusion, resistance and the desire for transformation. As Thompson (2002, p. 13) states: "[...] What is different about the young and adult student is the experience he brings to the relationship", and it is essential to incorporate it into the pedagogical process.

However, even with the legal support of the LDB, the educational practice of EJA in Brazilian public schools still faces significant contradictions. There is an evident mismatch between legal principles and the daily reality of classrooms. Saviani (2019, p. 34) observes that "[...] the public school cannot do without the critical analysis of its social function,

[19] The LDB, in its articles 37 and 38, establishes that Youth and Adult Education (EJA) should be aimed at those who did not have access to or continuity of studies in elementary and secondary education at the appropriate age, ensuring them the opportunity to resume their school career. Such provisions reinforce the State's commitment to educational equity, recognizing EJA as an integral part of basic education and as an expression of the right to lifelong education. In addition, the articles highlight the need for curricular, methodological and organizational adaptation to the characteristics of EJA subjects, considering their social, cultural and work trajectories, which requires contextualized, flexible and emancipatory pedagogical practices from educational institutions. See: BRAZIL. *Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996*. It establishes the guidelines and bases of national education. Federal Official Gazette: section 1, Brasília, DF, p. 27833, 23 Dec. 1996. Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9394.htm. Accessed on: 22 Mar. 2025.

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because, by being neutral, it serves to maintain inequality". Similarly, Abreu (2014, p. 109) points out that "[...] the action of planning effective strategies and methodologies for the teaching-learning of EJA students requires knowledge of reality, critical sense, will and need to transform the school reality".

Added to this, another critical aspect refers to the absence of specific and contextualized methodologies that dialogue with the previous knowledge and experiences of the EJA subjects. Vygotsky (1999, p. 108) points out that "[...] teaching in EJA must consider the integration between capacity and personality [...] because the subjective equipment of the knowing subject enables learning through cognitive and formal operations". At the same time, McLaren (2014, p. 142) warns that "[...] a critical pedagogy must be born from the concrete experiences of the oppressed, linking school practice to the social reality of the subjects".

> Critical pedagogy is not only about classroom techniques or teaching strategies. It is, rather, a political and moral practice that must be rooted in the lives of students and in their communities. It requires teachers to take seriously the histories, languages, and cultural practices of those they teach. Without this rootedness, education becomes an abstract ritual, disconnected from real human needs and struggles. Thus, critical pedagogy requires a curriculum that not only informs, but transforms; that not only reflects society, but seeks to transform it[20] (McLaren, 2014, p. 167).

Therefore, this research is justified by the ethical and political imperative of understanding the curricular and methodological challenges faced by EJA in times of intense social, cultural and political transformations. As Biesta (2011, p. 18) warns: "[...] education is not only a process of acquiring knowledge or skills, but a space for the ethical and political formation of the subjects". In the same sense, Giroux (2004, p. 45) argues that "[...] the curriculum is always a terrain of dispute, where the interests of different social groups confront each other".

EJA, in addition to being a compensatory educational modality, is a device for promoting social justice and the right to active citizenship. In this sense, Freire (2014, p. 91) states that "[...] teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its own production or construction". In addition, Brookfield (2005, p. 43) argues that "[...] a critical pedagogy for adults requires a commitment to liberation and empowerment through learning."

[20] Our translation.

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That said, the objectives that guide this research consist, firstly, of analyzing the main challenges and perspectives of the curriculum and methodologies in EJA in the light of the LDB. It also seeks to understand how the legal guidelines dialogue with the concrete practice in school spaces. According to Saviani (2013, p. 117), "[...] the construction of an emancipatory curriculum requires clarity of the educational objectives and the concrete reality of the students". Likewise, Dewey (1938, p. 27) states that "[...] the curriculum must start from the student's experience and contribute to the intelligent reconstruction of their environment".

In addition, this study investigated whether the legal frameworks – especially articles 37 and 38 of the LDB – have been effectively incorporated into the educational practices of EJA, considering the subjects in their diversity. As Knowles (2005, p. 39) points out: "[...] Adults learn best when they see direct meaning in what they are learning and when that knowledge relates to previous experiences." This finding converges with that of Torres (2008, p. 52), for whom "[...] EJA should be thought of as a strategy of resistance in the face of the curricular standardization imposed by neoliberal policies".

Thus, this article intends to offer theoretical contributions that support the construction of critical methodologies and a truly emancipatory curriculum. McLaren (2015, p. 63) points out that "[...] radical pedagogy must connect theory and practice in an educational action that liberates". Mezirow (1991, p. 7) adds that "[...] transformative learning occurs when adults re-examine previously unquestioned assumptions and construct new meanings."

In view of this, the following problem-question was formulated that guides this investigation: How are the principles and guidelines of the LDB (or not) incorporated into the curricular and methodological practice of EJA, considering its subjects and specificities? The answer to this question requires, as Biesta (2006, p. 45) points out, that "[...] recognize education as a deliberate, intentional practice situated in the world". In consonance, Dewey (1916, p. 67) reaffirms that "[...] education is a process of living, not a preparation for the future life."

METHODOLOGICAL PATHS FOR CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF EJA: LISTENING, READING AND INTERPRETATION IN THE LIGHT OF LDB –

As the challenges of EJA were identified, a qualitative approach was chosen, of a critical-comprehensive nature, based on the perspective of Minayo (2007), which

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understands research as an interpretative process aimed at understanding the meaning of human actions. To this end, the investigation was guided by a comprehensive look, allowing us to capture the complexity of the relationships between the subjects of EJA, their paths and the meanings attributed to schooling.

> Qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes. This set of phenomena is understood as part of reality, which cannot be reduced to operational variables. Interpretation, in this type of approach, is the central axis of the researcher's work. Reality is constructed from the interaction between subjects and, therefore, does not exist apart from the gaze of those who study it (Minayo, 2007, p. 21).

At the same time, the research was outlined as bibliographic, anchored in the systematization and analysis of academic texts, legal documents and theoretical productions that deal with EJA, the curriculum and pedagogical methodologies. Gil (2008) argues that "[...] bibliographic research seeks to explain a problem based on theoretical references published in documents" (p. 44), allowing for a historical contextualization of the object investigated. Likewise, Stake (2005) highlights that "[...] qualitative research is an interpretative and inductive process aimed at understanding singular situations" (p. 23), which reinforces its relevance to this study.

Since the objective was to critically understand the curriculum and methodologies in EJA, documentary analysis was also used as a complementary technique, especially to examine the LDB (1996), Resolution CNE/CEB No. 1/2000 and other normative opinions. As Minayo (2007) points out, "[...] documentary analysis allows us to unveil the political, historical and pedagogical intentions inscribed in the legal texts" (p. 226), enabling the articulation between legislation and educational practice.

In order to enrich the critical reading of EJA, a theoretical repertoire was used that includes classic and contemporary authors of education, critical pedagogy and philosophy of education. Among them, Freire (1996) stands out, who states: "[...] it is essential that the teacher teaches based on the concrete experience of the students, respecting their autonomy and their trajectory" (p. 31), and Dewey (1997), for whom "[...] education is a social process, and the school is a form of community life" (p. 89).

> The theoretical framework represents the set of concepts, categories and propositions that support the analysis of the object of study. It should not be seen as a simple citation of authors, but as the construction of a critical dialogue with different views, allowing the researcher to position himself in the face of the various interpretations of the investigated phenomenon. The appropriate choice of reference is what gives density and rigor to the analysis (Gil, 2008, p. 45).

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Likewise, authors such as Biesta (2011) and Brookfield (2005) were mobilized to discuss the dimensions of adult learning and education for emancipation. Biesta (2011) emphasizes that "[...] the purpose of education should not only be the qualification, but the subjectivation of the subjects and the possibility of their engagement in the world" (p. 84). Brookfield (2005) completes by saying that "[...] the role of critical pedagogy is to allow students to problematize reality and become agents of its transformation" (p. 29).

Although many studies adopt a purely normative approach, this work chose to articulate theory and practice, listening and legislation, in order to produce a more situated and responsive analysis. To this end, the comprehensive perspective of Weber (1949) was used, who understands that "[...] social action can only be interpreted when we consider the meanings attributed by the subjects themselves" (p. 88), enabling a greater approximation with the concrete contexts of EJA.

At the same time, this methodology required a systematic organization of the analyzed material, with a file, selection of categories and construction of interpretative links between authors, legislation and educational reality. Minayo (2007) reinforces that "[...] qualitative research does not separate subject and object, but understands the interaction between both as a key to analysis" (p. 45). This allowed the study to maintain the commitment to listening to EJA subjects, even if mediated by written sources.

> The process of analysis in qualitative research requires the researcher to systematically immerse himself in the collected material, which includes the identification of categories, the construction of meanings and the articulation between empirical data and theoretical references. It is not a mere classification, but a work of interpretation that considers the context, historicity and subjectivity of the subjects (Minayo, 2007, p. 47).

Thus, the methodological option for a qualitative, bibliographic and documentary approach enabled the intertwining between the legal bases of EJA, the challenges faced by its subjects and the theoretical proposals that point to a fairer and more meaningful curriculum. According to Gil (2008): "[...] the qualitative methodology is especially effective in capturing subjective, symbolic and situational aspects" (p. 62), which proved to be essential for the analysis undertaken.

Thus, this research was guided by a critical and emancipatory commitment, dialoguing with diverse theoretical references and based on a methodology that prioritizes

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interpretation, listening and contextualized understanding of youth and adult education in Brazil.

YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (EJA) IN BRAZIL: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE CURRICULUM AND METHODOLOGIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE LDB

At first glance, Youth and Adult Education (EJA) seems to figure prominently in Brazilian legislation, especially since the enactment of LDB No. 9,394/96. However, a deeper analysis reveals that, although provided for in articles 37 and 38, its implementation faces concrete challenges. As the official LDB document points out, "[...] the education of young people and adults will be aimed at those who did not have access to or continuity of studies in elementary and secondary education at the appropriate age" (Brasil, 1996, p. 163). However, as the UNESCO Declaration points out[21], "[...] adult education is more than a right: it is the key to the twenty-first century" (SESI; UNESCO, 1999, p. 19), which requires that Brazilian educational policies are not restricted to standardization, but are materialized in transformative practices. According to Saviani (2013, p. 143):

> Youth and adult education has come to be considered an integral part of the Brazilian educational system. However, its insertion remained subordinated to a compensatory and assistentialist conception, evidenced in the precariousness of its curricular organization, in the fragility of teacher training and in the discontinuity of public policies. This reveals that, although formally recognized, EJA is still treated as an appendix of regular education, which compromises its effectiveness as a right of citizenship and as an instrument for overcoming social inequalities.

As established in article 37 of the LDB, education systems must guarantee, free of charge, adequate educational opportunities, respecting the characteristics, interests and living and working conditions of the students. However, this commitment has not yet materialized as it should. The CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000[22], which supports the EJA

[21] The UNESCO Declaration on Adult Education emphasizes that "[...] adult education is more than a right: it is the key to the twenty-first century" (SESI; UNESCO, 1999, p. 19). This statement reinforces the understanding that EJA should not be treated as a compensatory or residual policy, but as an essential part of the construction of democratic, sustainable and socially just societies. Recognizing the centrality of adult education for active citizenship, human development and social inclusion, UNESCO proposes a broader perspective of lifelong education, committed to overcoming structural inequalities and valuing popular knowledge and lived experience. See: SESI; UNESCO. *Adult education: the key to the twenty-first century – Report of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education*. Brasília: UNESCO, 1999.

[22] The CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000, which is the basis of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education, recognizes the specificity of this modality and proposes that the educational process considers the life trajectory of the subjects as a constitutive element of the curriculum. The document advises

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guidelines, recognizes that "[...] this modality must perform specific functions: repairing, equalizing and qualifying" (Brasil, 2000a, p. 5). At the same time, UNESCO's Jacques Delors report reinforces that "[...] we have to learn throughout our lives and some knowledge penetrates and enriches others" (UNESCO, 1996, p. 89 apud Brasil, 2000, p. 11), pointing to an expanded and continuous conception of the right to education.

Since the LDB consolidated EJA as an integral modality of basic education, several complementary documents have been created to clarify its nature and objectives. According to CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1/2000[23]: "[...] this Resolution covers the formative processes of Youth and Adult Education as a modality of Basic Education in the stages of elementary and secondary education" (Brasil, 2000b, p. 2). On the other hand, the EJA Pedagogical Notebook itself[24] indicates that "[...] it is important to highlight that we assume here the expanded conception of EJA, recognizing education as a fundamental human right" (UDESC, 2014, p. 120), reinforcing the need for an educational approach that goes beyond the legal aspect. According to Dewey, EJA is a fundamental and permanent right:

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that the pedagogical practice in EJA be based on respect for diversity, valuing the knowledge acquired outside the school and promoting the autonomy of students. In this sense, he highlights that "[...] it is essential to recognize EJA as a legitimate space for human formation, which values the experience, resistance and knowledge of its students" (BRASIL, 2000, p. 14), reaffirming its social, political and emancipatory role within the Brazilian educational system. See: BRAZIL. National Council of Education. Chamber of Basic Education. *CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000*, approved on May 10, 2000. National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education. Federal Official Gazette: section 1, Brasília, DF, 15 Sept. 2000. Available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br/cne/arquivos/pdf/CEB1100.pdf. Accessed on: 22 Mar. 2025.

[23] Resolution CNE/CEB No. 1/2000, of July 5, 2000, establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education (EJA), recognizing the specificity of this modality and guiding that the educational process considers the life trajectory of the subjects as a constitutive element of the curriculum. The document emphasizes the need for pedagogical practices based on respect for diversity, valuing knowledge acquired outside school and promoting the autonomy of students. In this sense, it highlights that it is essential to recognize EJA as a legitimate space for human formation, which values the experience, resistance and knowledge of its students, reaffirming its social, political and emancipatory role within the Brazilian educational system. See: BRAZIL. National Council of Education. Chamber of Basic Education. *CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1, of July 5, 2000*. Establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education. Federal Official Gazette: section 1, Brasília, DF, July 13, 2015. 2000. Available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br/cne/arquivos/pdf/CEB012000.pdf. Accessed on: 22 Mar. 2025.

[24] The *Pedagogical Notebook of Youth and Adult Education (EJA)* is an essential tool for educators who work in the literacy of young people and adults, offering contextualized activities aligned with the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC). Developed from the research "Signifying to conquer: challenges of literacy for Youth and Adults", carried out in the Professional Master's Degree in Basic Education Practices at Colégio Pedro II, in Rio de Janeiro, the material aims to diversify classes and facilitate the teaching-learning process, respecting the specificities of EJA students. The preparation of the notebook had the collaboration of literacy teachers from different Brazilian states, who participated in conversation circles and contributed with suggestions for activities, making the content closer to the reality of the students and pedagogical practices. This didactic resource seeks to overcome the shortage of specific materials for EJA, promoting a more inclusive and meaningful education for the subjects involved. See: FERREIRA, Karoline Guimarães Castro; MORAES, Jorge Luiz Marques de. *From EJA to life: pedagogical notebook*. 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Imperial Editora, 2022.

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> Education is a necessity of life. It is the reconstruction or reorganization of experience that adds meaning to the experience itself and that increases the ability to direct the course of future experiences. [...] The educational process does not have an end that is beyond itself; it is an end in itself. Therefore, it is the very process of living and not a preparation to live in the future. Education, therefore, must be conceived as a continuous reconstruction of experience; so that the process and the object of education are one and the same.

However, despite the legal advances, the data show that the realization of the right to EJA is quite limited. According to the Pedagogical Notebook, "[...] in the letter of the law the right to education is assured, but in practice only 3,980,203 people were enrolled in this type of education in 2011" (Udesc, 2014, p. 23). Thus, this reality reveals a split between norm and practice, because, as Saviani (2019, p. 86) warns, "[...] the maintenance in the text of the law of the provisions of the fifth article [...] constitutes an important advance, although not enough, since secondary education was left out of the subjective public law". Therefore, it is urgent to transform the legal provision into concrete action.

Thus, we inquire that these people need not only the guarantee of access, but also the commitment to the permanence and completion of the educational path, as are the principles established in the LDB. According to article 3, equality of conditions for access and permanence must be observed at all levels of basic education (Brasil, 1996, p. 32). As well as pointed out in CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000: "[...] the strategies and methodologies used in EJA courses should consider the worker's time and his physical and emotional condition" (Brasil, 2000a, p. 10), evidencing the need to respect the singularities of its subjects.

Although EJA is foreseen as a modality with its own right, its curricular inclusion does not always contemplate the experiences accumulated by its subjects. According to CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000: "[...] the use of previous experiences of the students should constitute a didactic and political principle" (Brasil, 2000a, p. 9). Likewise, the text of the LDB determines that "[...] the knowledge and skills acquired by students through informal means will be measured and recognized through examinations" (Brasil, 1996, p. 164), reaffirming the principle of valuing extracurricular knowledge.

> Teaching requires recognizing that education is ideological. That there is no neutral education. That the knowledge of the students, as rudimentary as they may seem, is socially constructed knowledge and must be respected. To refuse this knowledge is to deny the historicity of the subject, it is to break with dialogue and with the possibility of meaningful learning. The progressive educator must start from what the student already knows, from his reading of the world, and with it build new knowledge. Only in this way will the school cease to be a space of domestication to become a space of liberation (Freire, 1996, p. 32).

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Likewise, article 38 of the LDB provides for the performance of supplementary exams, however this strategy has been used as a simplified way to "meet" adult education. Since the certifying logic often replaces a consistent training process, this legal provision must be interpreted critically. As the EJA Teacher Training Notebook warns: "[...] the action of teaching cannot be reduced to preparation for tests, but must promote autonomy and critical awareness" (MEC, 2006, p. 21). Therefore, it is essential to rescue the humanizing and emancipatory function of EJA.

At the same time, the EJA curriculum needs to dialogue with the world of work, culture and citizenship. According to the LDB, "[...] school education should be linked to the world of work and social practice" (Brasil, 1996, p. 29). Given that its subjects carry diverse experiences, it is essential to break with the traditional school logic. Therefore, as indicated by Resolution CNE/CEB No. 1/2000: "[...] the curricular proposal of EJA must be built from the reality of the students, considering the generative themes[25] that emerge from their daily lives" (Brasil, 2000b, p. 6).

> Education must be contextualized culturally and politically. Curricula cannot be conceived as neutral or technical realities, but as social constructions that must be connected with the needs, aspirations and experiences of learners. Particularly in the context of adult education, it is essential that pedagogical processes are rooted in everyday life, the world of work and citizen participation. Critical pedagogy requires that the curricular content be directly linked to the ways in which students experience and interpret the world in which they live[26] (Torres, 2008, p. 91).

In addition, the educational legislation states that EJA should act as an instrument of social justice, contributing to the reduction of historical inequalities. The LDB establishes as the purpose of education "[...] the full development of the student, his preparation for the exercise of citizenship and his qualification for work" (Brasil, 1996, p. 20). To this end, according to the MEC publication, "[...] training in EJA must be committed to human rights,

[25] The generating themes constitute one of the main methodological axes of Paulo Freire's pedagogical proposal, being conceived as significant contents that emerge from the concrete reality of the students and that, when problematized, enable the construction of critical and contextualized knowledge. This approach is based on active listening and investigation of the subjects' vocabulary universe, allowing learning to dialogue with their experiences, needs and aspirations. According to Freire (1985), the generating themes are not chosen arbitrarily by the educator, but "[...] extracted from the daily life of the students, from their way of being, their doing and their thinking about the world" (p. 79), thus constituting a powerful path for dialogical and emancipatory pedagogy. See: FREIRE, Paulo. *For a pedagogy of the question*. 6. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1985.

[26] Our translation.

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democracy and the appreciation of diversity" (2006, p. 29), orienting the curriculum towards ethical and political commitment.

However, the implementation of these guidelines faces the challenge of precarious supply conditions, the absence of specific teacher training and the discontinuity of public policies. As the CEALE publication points out, "[...] EJA is a modality marked by discontinuities, advances and setbacks, which directly impact its social legitimacy" (CEALE, 2013, p. 38). On the other hand, UNESCO insists that "[...] lifelong learning must be guaranteed as a basic principle for a more just and supportive society" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 11).

Thus, the legislation that guides EJA in Brazil, although it brings fundamental principles and noble objectives, still lacks an effective materialization that guarantees real conditions of learning and permanence for the subjects of this modality. In summary, it is not only a matter of ensuring the formal right, but of guaranteeing the lived right. As stated in CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11/2000: "[...] it is essential to recognize EJA as a legitimate space for human formation, which values the experience, resistance and knowledge of its students" (Brasil, 2000a, p. 14). With this, EJA will be able to fulfill its social, political and emancipatory role in the context of Brazilian educational policies. Based on the work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire (1970), he accurately substantiates the need to transform the "formal right to EJA" into a "lived and emancipatory right", according to his paragraph:

> Liberating education, as a practice of freedom, cannot be imposed. It requires a permanent effort to critically understand reality and to overcome the contradictions in which men are involved. It cannot be reduced to the simple transmission of contents, but must start from the concrete situation of the students, their life, their history, their sufferings and their hopes. Only in this way does education become an act of knowledge, an act of creation, an act of freedom (p. 52).

As EJA consolidates itself as a modality of basic education, its curricular organization still carries legacies of fragmentation and school technicism, stressing the idea of an emancipatory curriculum. As Neves (2008) argues: "[...] the Opinion produced National Curriculum Guidelines whose content evidences an active adherence to the international social project" (p. 24). Likewise, the text highlights that "[...] literacy is a primordial skill and one of the pillars for the development of other skills" (SESI; UNESCO, 1999, p. 23). Thus, the construction of a critical curriculum requires overcoming such historical limits.

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As Henry Giroux points out, "[...] the curriculum is an arena of ideological and political dispute that is never neutral, but always crossed by dominant values" (2004, p. 68). At the same time, the theoretical documents on EJA propose a curricular reorganization centered on the social reality of the subjects, as a form of articulation between knowledge and social practices. In this sense, "[...] it is important to plan, seeking strategies and methodologies that take into account historical, economic, political, cultural and social processes" (UDESC, 2014, p. 111). This means understanding the curriculum as a situated and living practice. As quoted by Gert J.J. Biesta (2011, p. 21):

> What is at stake is not simply a question of effectiveness, but of purpose, direction, and meaning. If education is reduced to measurable results, we lose sight of the fact that education is also about what we value, what we consider desirable, and what we hope to achieve. So education should not be shaped primarily by the language of accountability, but by ongoing democratic conversations about what constitutes a good education in the first place[27].

Since the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) was instituted, debates about its applicability to EJA have multiplied. Although it is proposed as a national reference, the BNCC "[...] it is silent about the specificities of EJA and ignores the age, cultural and formative trajectories diversity of these subjects" (UDESC, 2014, p. 120). On the other hand, Saviani warns that "[...] the issue of the curriculum cannot be reduced to the selection of contents, but to the definition of the purposes of education in a class society" (2013, p. 190). Therefore, thinking about the EJA curriculum is also thinking about the purposes of the public school.

Although the BNCC brings with it the promise of an egalitarian education, its curricular standardization tends to disregard the processes of knowledge production proper to EJA. Peter McLaren, when discussing critical pedagogy, states that "[...] the curriculum needs to be reinvented as a practice of resistance, incorporating the experiences and contradictions lived by the students" (2014, p. 67). Likewise, the theoretical texts state that "[...] the organization of teaching must consider the study of reality, the organization and application of knowledge in articulation with social practice" (UDESC, 2014, p. 117). In this way, the curriculum is no longer a closed plan and becomes a field of dialogue and transformation.

> Liberating education consists of a knowing and, therefore, creative act. It is not the transfer of knowledge from one subject to another, but the encounter between

[27] Our translation.

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> subjects who recognize themselves as unfinished. Knowledge emerges from the action-reflection of men on the world, as they transform it. This conception of education requires that the syllabus be elaborated together with the students, based on the investigation of their concrete reality. The curriculum, in this sense, is no longer imposed and starts to be constructed in dialogue with lived experience (Freire, 1970, p. 96).

At the same time, to think of the EJA curriculum as a political practice is to recognize its historical, cultural and ideological dimension. For Giroux (2004), "[...] the school curriculum should be understood as a space of dispute for meanings, where the forces of domination and resistance are articulated" (p. 89). Likewise, McLaren (2014) warns that "[...] a critical curriculum must destabilize the certainties of established knowledge and create spaces for the voice of the silenced" (p. 71). Thus, the EJA curriculum cannot be merely a reproducer of the traditional school logic, but must emerge as a project of emancipation.

On the other hand, when a homogeneous curriculum matrix such as that of the BNCC is imposed, the power of the curriculum as a collective and plural construction is reduced. Saviani (2013) points out that "[...] the curricula proposed by contemporary educational reforms tend to empty the critical content, prioritizing functional and pragmatic competencies" (p. 194). Peter McLaren (2014) points out that "[...] the dominant curricular structure serves more to conform than to form, by keeping the subjects tied to predetermined roles" (p. 83). Therefore, rethinking the EJA curriculum is also resisting models that deny the complexity of its subjects.

Although many curricular proposals claim to respect diversity, in practice they reproduce a linear, decontextualized and technicist logic. Edward Lindeman, as early as 1926, recognized that "[...] in adult education, the curriculum should start from the situations experienced, and not from abstract disciplines" (p. 9). In addition, Oliveira (2014) states that "[...] experience is the richest source of adult learning; the methodological center is the analysis of experiences" (p. 2). Thus, a curriculum consistent with EJA needs to emerge from the real experiences of its students.

> Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning can satisfy, so the most effective motivations are internal, not external. Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered; Therefore, the appropriate units to organize adult learning are life situations, not disciplines. [...] Experience is the richest source of adult learning; therefore, the central methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience[28] (Knowles, 2005, p. 39).

[28] Our translation.

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Since the concept of curriculum began to be understood as a cultural and political construction, criticism of its neutrality has become fundamental to rethink its social function. Giroux (2004) stresses that "[...] the curriculum must be conceived as a political text, crossed by power relations and concrete social interests" (p. 99). And Saviani (2019) adds that "[...] the problem of the curriculum is directly linked to the project of society that is intended to be built" (p. 92). With this, it is reaffirmed that the EJA curriculum must be guided by social justice, criticism and dialogue with the lived reality.

Since the curriculum is understood as a discursive practice, it becomes evident that it not only organizes school content, but also selects and legitimizes certain knowledge to the detriment of others. As Henry Giroux (2004) points out: "[...] the school becomes a space in which meanings are produced, negotiated and, often, imposed" (p. 111). Similarly, Apple (2006) observes that "[...] official knowledge is always someone's knowledge – it is neither neutral nor universal" (p. 42). In this way, discussing the EJA curriculum is also unmasking the interests behind its organization.

Thus, in order to build a curriculum that is truly committed to the reality of EJA subjects, it is necessary to recover the ethical and political dimension of education. As Saviani (2019) points out: "[...] a curriculum coherent with historical-critical pedagogy[29] must assume the function of mediating the active appropriation of the elaborated knowledge" (p. 98). And, as Brookfield (2005) states: "[...] adult education must challenge the assumed forms of knowledge and put the structures of domination in crisis" (p. 62). Therefore, the curriculum needs to stop being a mechanism of control and become an instrument of freedom.

However, this curricular transformation is only effective if educators are also conscious and critical subjects of the pedagogical process. For McLaren (2015), "[...] teaching is a political act and the curriculum is the field where cultural hegemony is disputed" (p. 37). Likewise, Biesta (2006) warns that "[...] the true value of education is not

[29] The historical-critical pedagogy, formulated by Dermeval Saviani, proposes an education committed to social transformation, starting from the analysis of the concrete conditions of reality to promote the formation of critical and conscious subjects. This pedagogical conception understands that school knowledge must be systematized and socially relevant, contributing to the overcoming of inequalities and alienation. For Saviani (2013), "[...] school education aims at the appropriation, by students, of the systematized knowledge accumulated historically, allowing them to understand and intervene in reality" (p. 25). Thus, historical-critical pedagogy breaks with spontaneous and technicist views, defending an intentional educational practice that is rigorously articulated with the struggle for human emancipation. See: SAVIANI, Dermeval. *Historical-critical pedagogy: first approximations*. 11. ed. Campinas, SP: Associated Authors, 2013.

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in the content transmitted, but in the possibility of emancipation that it offers" (p. 27). With this, it becomes urgent to break with authoritarian models and offer EJA students a curriculum that dialogues with their history and their projects for the future.

> Teaching requires the embodiment of words by example. Teaching requires respect for the autonomy of the student's being. Teaching requires security, professional competence and generosity. Teaching requires knowing how to listen. Teaching requires availability for dialogue. Teaching requires loving the students. Teaching requires humility, tolerance and struggle in defense of the rights of students. Teaching requires understanding of reality. [...] The education of the educator must be based on the principle that he is also a subject in permanent formation, who needs to be committed to the transformation of the world (Freire, 1996, p. 63).

In summary, the EJA curriculum cannot be understood as a technical or neutral document, but rather as a political-pedagogical project that articulates knowledge, subjects and contexts. Given that this modality deals with historically marginalized subjects, it is essential that the curriculum values their knowledge and enhances their autonomy. As hooks (1994) puts it: "[...] teaching is an act of hope, of openness to others and to transformation" (p. 13). And, as Freire (1996) emphasizes: "[...] no one educates anyone, no one educates himself, men educate each other, mediated by the world" (p. 80). With this, it is reaffirmed that the EJA curriculum should be a tool for awareness, resistance and emancipation.

Thus, as we reflect on the specificity of EJA subjects, it becomes evident that traditional methodologies do not account for its complexity. Therefore, thinking about emancipatory pedagogical practices requires going beyond the transmissive logic. As Paulo Freire states: "[...] teaching is not transferring knowledge, but creating the possibilities for its production or construction" (2014, p. 47). Likewise, Brookfield observes that "[...] critical teaching practice is rooted in the challenge of exposing and resisting the ways in which power operates in classrooms" (2005, p. 91). In this way, teaching young people and adults is also listening to their trajectories and transforming the school space into a place for the reconstruction of meanings.

Since the idea of a ready-made curriculum is abandoned and the pedagogy of listening is invested[30], the school routine in EJA becomes a fertile space for the construction

[30] The pedagogy of listening is an approach that values sensitive and active listening as the foundation of the educational process, recognizing the voices, knowledge and experiences of students as a starting point for the construction of knowledge. Inspired by dialogical practices and respect for childhood, youth and cultural diversity, this perspective breaks with the transmissive and hierarchical logic of traditional education,

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of knowledge. The initial embracement, for example, is not restricted to formal calling, but to active listening to life stories. Lindeman points out that "[...] in adult education, the student helps in the formulation of the curriculum; under democratic conditions, the authority belongs to the group" (1926, p. 166). Likewise, Mezirow states that "[...] transformative education starts from experiences that require critical reinterpretation" (1991, p. 14), which imposes on the educator the need to mediate, and not dominate, the teaching process.

> In democratic classrooms for adults, teachers don't simply impart knowledge; they learn from students by jointly exploring the assumptions that shape their understanding of the world. Teaching becomes a process of mutual inquiry, where power is shared and meaning is constructed through dialogue. [...] Listening becomes a central pedagogical act, which affirms the lived experience of the learners and opens space for critical reflection. Such a posture requires teachers to decentralize their authority and embrace vulnerability as a condition for authentic learning[31] (Brookfield, 2005, p. 124).

As the good practices of EJA demonstrate, cultural mediation is an essential strategy to ensure that students' knowledge is not denied, but valued in the educational process. For Freire (2014), "[...] education is an act of love, therefore an act of courage" (p. 69). Likewise, Fontes observes that "[...] educational policies aimed at EJA must consider the forms of sociability proper to the working class" (2010, p. 292). Not only the content, but the way in which teaching and learning is done, must be committed to transforming the living conditions of the students.

At the same time, the school that welcomes the working adult must recognize the importance of autonomy and individual rhythm. According to Kerka, "[...] planning with adults requires negotiation of objectives and strategies of mutual evaluation" (apud Anzorena, 2010, p. 122). On the other hand, Rubisntein (1985) states that "[...] the capacity for learning is made up of two dimensions: the operational and the procedural" (p. 19). With this, we realize that listening, more than technical, is a political attitude in the context of EJA.

Not only that, but also the construction of life projects requires the educator to master methodologies that favor the active participation of students. According to Ireland, "[...] Effective literacy starts from the recognition of the social practices of language present in the daily life of the learner" (2008, p. 25). Mezirow (1991) reinforces that "[...] transformative

promoting a horizontal relationship between educator and student. According to Rinaldi (2002), "[...] listening is much more than listening; it is an act of openness, of acceptance and of responsibility in the face of the word of the other" (p. 85). Thus, the pedagogy of listening is constituted as an ethical and political practice, aimed at the formation of critical and participatory subjects. See: RINALDI, Carlina. *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: listening, researching and learning*. Porto Alegre: Penso, 2002.

[31] Our translation.

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learning happens when we change the schemes of meaning that structure our understanding of the world" (p. 12). In this way, pedagogical activities must start from concrete and everyday themes.

> The most important attitude that can be formed is the desire to continue learning. This desire is not the result of an external imposition, but arises from the recognition that knowledge is connected to the problems and experiences of everyday life. [...] The curriculum must therefore emerge from the student's own life and be linked to his or her environment. It is only by relating the content to the real experiences of the learner that education can become a process of growth (Dewey, 1916, p. 48).

At first glance, it seems simple to propose a work with generative themes. However, it is in the process of listening to and investigating the vocabulary universe of students that Freire's pedagogy is structured. "It is necessary to learn to listen in order to then teach" (Freire, 2014, p. 78). Likewise, Vygotsky observes that "[...] the teacher becomes an organizer and facilitator of knowledge, and not its exclusive transmitter" (1999, p. 108). The choice of themes such as health, work and housing, for example, brings the content closer to the reality experienced.

However, it is important to remember that dialogical methodologies are not reduced to free debate. They require intentional and critical planning. According to Freire (2014), "[...] dialogue is a loving encounter of men, who, mediated by the world, pronounce it, that is, transform it" (p. 45). Knowles (2009) adds that "[...] the essential characteristic of andragogy[32] is its flexibility [...] the starting point and the strategies depend on the situation" (p. 156). Thus, dialogue becomes an instrument of awareness and action.

Since an andragogical approach is adopted, the role of the teacher in EJA is no longer that of "transmitter" and becomes that of partner in the process. For Anzorena (2010), andragogy "[...] emerges as a new science imposed by historical circumstances that force us to think about the formation of adults in a planned way" (p. 10). Similarly, León (1977) defines andragogy as "[...] designation of the set of methods and means for the

[32] Andragogy is the theory and practice of adult-oriented education, based on the understanding that mature subjects learn differently from children, through the appreciation of their life experiences, autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Unlike traditional pedagogy, andragogy recognizes the adult as an active subject, capable of guiding his or her own learning process. Knowles (2005) states that "[...] adult education must be based on the principle that they are autonomous, self-directed and that their learning is more effective when it is based on real everyday problems" (p. 64). This approach has been fundamental for the development of more contextualized and meaningful practices in Youth and Adult Education (EJA). See: KNOWLES, Malcolm S.; HOLTON, Elwood F.; SWANSON, Richard A. *The adult learner: the definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. 6. ed. Burlington: Elsevier, 2005.

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recycling of adults" (p. 4). With this, a co-learning environment is created where everyone builds knowledge.

> In the andragogical model, the role of the teacher is redefined as that of a facilitator of learning, and not as a transmitter of content. The teacher becomes a resource, a guide and a co-learner. Adults bring with them a vast baggage of experience, which constitutes the richest source for learning. Therefore, learning activities should involve students in the planning and evaluation of their own teaching. The andragogical classroom is based on mutual respect, where learners are seen as self-directed individuals, capable of actively contributing to the learning process (Knowles, 2005, p. 64).

In the same way, the construction of situated practices requires that planning be flexible and coherent with the times and meanings of the students. Rummert and Ciavatta (2010) state that "[...] the centrality of history as a process and method is a fundamental principle for pedagogical practice with young people and adults" (p. 93). Rubisntein (1985) reinforces that "[...] the learning process in EJA must consider previous knowledge as a key to access new knowledge" (p. 19). This means that the methodology must start from concrete reality to achieve abstract reflection.

In addition, the pedagogical practice in EJA needs to deal with the challenges of evasion and low self-esteem, which requires affective and respectful methodologies. According to Oliveira (1999), "[...] the subjects of EJA face fatigue, deprivation and historical abandonment, which makes the welcoming environment even more necessary" (p. 99). And as Scoz (1994) reminds us, "[...] learning problems must be understood within social, pedagogical and affective articulations" (p. 22). Therefore, recognizing and welcoming these needs is the first step towards effective teaching.

Therefore, when thinking about methodologies for EJA, it is necessary to combine welcoming, listening and criticality. Ireland states that "[...] Youth and adult education needs to integrate public policies, teacher training and a pedagogical project anchored in the reality of the subjects" (2008, p. 31). And as Freire (2014) endorses: "[...] teaching requires courage to fight for a less ugly world" (p. 121). In other words, teaching in EJA is, above all, an ethical commitment to the transformation of the subjects and the social structures that cross them.

As EJA is recognized as a right and not as compensation, the need to understand its subjects in their plurality and complexity emerges. EJA students carry trajectories marked by inequality, and it is on them that the educational process must be built. As the official document states: "[...] pedagogical practice [...] will develop intellectual autonomy and

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critical thinking in EJA students, aiming to form citizens capable of fighting for their rights and appropriating the knowledge transmitted by the School and in social practice" (Abreu et al., 2014, p. 107). At the same time, the LDB itself advises that "[...] school education should be linked to the world of work and social practice" (Brasil, 1996, art. 1, §2).

> The pedagogy of the oppressed, which implies a task of liberation, cannot be elaborated by oppressors. It must be done with the oppressed and for them, in the incessant struggle to recover their humanity. [...] This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes the object of reflection of the oppressed, from which they will become aware to engage in the struggle for their liberation. And this struggle begins with a critical understanding of the reality in which they live (Freire, 1970, p. 47).

At the same time, EJA welcomes subjects whose routines are crossed by exhausting work, family responsibilities and the urgency of survival. Thus, among the students, we find single mothers, young precarious workers and people in vulnerable situations. Maciel and Santos point out that "[...] the education of young people and adults must take into account the social, economic and cultural conditions of the students and the concrete difficulties they face in their daily lives" (2020, p. 120). And Rummert and Ciavatta point out that "[...] EJA students come from popular segments, who bring a history of experiences of social inequalities, being historical-social subjects" (2010, p. 93).

Not only the stories of school dropout are repeated, but also the reasons that lead to the discontinuity of the training path. According to Rummert and Ventura, "[...] the reasons for interrupting studies are generally related to economic, social, cognitive and cultural factors" (2007, p. 38). And Silva and Souza record that "[...] many of them, when in the ideal age group, dropped out of school because they could not learn" (2020, p. 97). Therefore, to understand the subjects of EJA is to welcome the challenges that they face.

> The school should be seen as a place where different social groups have the possibility of developing their own conception of the world. When this possibility is denied to them – whether due to economic inequality, cultural exclusion or ineffective pedagogical methods – the training process is interrupted. [...] The pedagogical function is, therefore, a political function, since hegemony is also built through education or is lost by its absence[33] (Gramsci, 2011, p. 55).

From the moment it is understood that each student carries with him or her own repertoire, the EJA classroom becomes a space for listening and valuing experience. The national document reinforces that "[...] the experience lived by the students should be the starting point for the construction of knowledge, especially in EJA" (Brasil, 2000, p. 115).

[33] Our translation.

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And Bourdieu reminds us that "[...] each student has an accumulation of cultural capital" that cannot be ignored (Bourdieu, 1979, apud Rummert & Ciavatta, 2010, p. 94). In this way, the daily life of the subjects becomes legitimate content of pedagogical practice.

Although EJA represents an opportunity to resume schooling, many of its students still face difficulties in accessing digital, precarious transportation, and strenuous working hours. According to Fernandes, "[...] the potential number of EJA students in Brazil is over 70 million, but only 3,980,203 people were enrolled in this type of education in 2011" (2012, p. 90). And Saviani warns us that "[...] school education is capable of changing the conditions of the current system, but it depends on access and permanence" (Saviani, 2008, p. 97).

Not only access, but also study time is one of the biggest barriers encountered by EJA subjects. As the data show, many attend school in the night shift, after a full day of work or family care. For Oliveira, "[...] young and adult subjects are compelled to change their daily routine [...] leaving aside chores or even moments of rest" (1999, p. 99). And he adds that "[...] individuals learn in different ways and at different times, because they are influenced by the environment and by other individuals" (p. 98).

> One of the fundamental assumptions of andragogy is that adult learners accumulate a base of life experiences and knowledge that can include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. [...] Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They need to have the freedom to conduct themselves and need learning to be adapted to accommodate their life limitations, such as time, fatigue and personal obligations (Knowles, 2005, p. 44).

Given that experience is the raw material of the educational process in EJA, the educator needs to learn to listen and translate the knowledge of the subjects into meaningful school content. Freire reinforces that "[...] the more passivity is imposed on them, the more naively, instead of transforming, they tend to adapt to the world" (2014, p. 77). And according to the EJA Curriculum Guidelines: "[...] the reparative function is related to social inequality, received as an inheritance from a past history, which deprived a significant portion of the population of civil rights from the graphocentric society" (Brasil, 2000, p. 10). Thus, the method is anchored in everyday life and in the context.

At the same time, the motivational challenges are intense. Many students report fear of not being able to follow the activities, shame of making mistakes or distrust of their own ability. Silva and Souza clarify that "[...] when you arrive at EJA, you will come across young people and adults who have been out of the classroom for many years and, with a lot of

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incidence, students who have never attended a classroom. Learning to read and write for them is a great challenge" (2020, p. 97). Oliveira, on the other hand, recalls that "[...] one cannot start a pedagogical work without considering what contextualizes the subject: work, housing, food, health, motherhood and cultural manifestations" (2012, p. 98).

On the other hand, the diversity of ages and trajectories that make up a single class can be seen as an obstacle or as pedagogical richness. According to Abreu, "[...] different situations are found, such as working students and students of different age groups at the same stage of education" (2014, p. 88). And for Rummert and Ventura, "[...] this heterogeneity is a historical expression of the unequal distribution of material and symbolic goods" (2007, p. 38).

> It is precisely by respecting the differences between students – cultural, class, gender, age – that the progressive educator can build a democratic practice. The school that does not recognize this diversity closes itself in a single model, which excludes and silences. [...] Teaching requires the recognition that each subject is the bearer of his or her own knowledge, which should be considered a starting point for the collective construction of knowledge (Freire, 1996, p. 34).

With the purpose of valuing the trajectory of the subjects, the school must create spaces for speaking and listening where daily life becomes the starting point for learning. As the pedagogical text states: "[...] the organization of pedagogical work in EJA must value the individual interests and the learning pace of each subject" (Abreu et al., 2014, p. 107). And the BNCC recommends "[...] educational actions that recognize cultural practices and the diversity of popular knowledge" (Brasil, 2000, p. 11).

Therefore, the challenge is to break with homogeneous pedagogical models and propose methodologies that consider the identity of the subjects as a pedagogical condition. As Abreu et al. point out, "[...] the school has historically been marked by a logic that consecrates hegemonic knowledge and silences popular knowledge" (2014, p. 97). And Saviani recalls that "[...] the desire to make the subject of EJA emancipated must be on the horizon of any and all pedagogical action" (2008, p. 97).

In this way, the subjects of EJA are not "exceptions" or "backwards", but workers, mothers, migrants and young people in search of dignity. Therefore, it is urgent that the school recognizes their experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge and that it builds with them a critical and solidary formative project. Freire states: "[...] the knowledge that ceases to be a 'made experience' to be a narrated or transmitted experience imposes passivity, annulling the creative power of the learners" (2014, p. 75). And Abreu et al.

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reinforce: "[...] learning in EJA must consider experience, independence and autonomy as fundamental principles of development" (2014, p. 93).

As critical perspectives are consolidated as pillars of emancipatory education, it becomes essential to understand the curriculum not as a mere list of contents, but as a field of symbolic and political dispute. As Giroux (2004) points out, "[...] The curriculum represents a battlefield in which different ideological interests are confronted." (p. 39). Likewise, Biesta (2011) reinforces that "[...] education should not be reduced to the production of measurable results, but should make room for subjectivation and the unexpected" (p. 84). Therefore, the insurgent curriculum is guided by a logic that values human incompleteness and the permanent reconstruction of knowledge.

> Education is a political act and, therefore, never neutral. [...] Educational practice cannot be limited to the transmission of contents, but must start from the curiosity of the students, from their insertion in the world. Knowledge is something that is built in the movement of the question, in the boldness of doubt, in the awareness that we are unfinished beings and, therefore, educable (Freire, 1996, p. 98).

Not only does it oppose the prescriptive and technicist curriculum, but it also seeks to integrate the daily life of the subjects, their struggles and hopes. Carlos Torres (2008) emphatically states: "[...] a transformative curriculum must be rooted in the lived realities of students" (p. 91). Likewise, Biesta (2011) points out that "[...] The goal of democratic education is not to mold conforming individuals, but to foster the ability to act ethically and politically" (p. 112). In order to promote this transformation, the school urgently needs to resignify its social function based on historically silenced voices.

On the other hand, an insurgent curriculum is not constituted without valuing dissidence and resistance as epistemological foundations. Giroux (2004) observes that "[...] critical pedagogy is a form of political intervention that seeks to denaturalize power" (p. 52). And Torres (2008) warns: "[...] education is not neutrality; it is a profoundly political act that can liberate or oppress" (p. 67). In other words, the curricular insurgency demands ethical courage to break with the reproducibility of colonial and neoliberal standards.

Although many educational policies still operate with meritocratic and individualistic logics, the democratization of curriculum management in EJA proposes another path: that of active listening and sharing of decisions. Biesta (2011) argues that "[...] it is not a matter of giving voice to the student, but of creating conditions for him to speak and be heard" (p. 124). Likewise, Giroux (2004) stresses that "[...] democracy needs to be learned and

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practiced in school spaces as a way of life and pedagogy" (p. 61). Therefore, democratic curriculum management is, above all, a pedagogy of the common.

> Democracy is more than a form of government; it is, above all, a way of living in association, of experience communicated together. The school, as an institution of learning, should be a reflection of democratic life, where freedom and responsibility are practiced and where individuals learn to participate in common endeavors through shared inquiry and mutual respect (Dewey, 1916, p. 87).

As the understanding of EJA as a space of emancipation advances, the importance of its curricula being built in dialogue with the territories is also evident. Torres (2008) emphasizes: "[...] schools need to assume an organic function in their communities, being interlocutors of popular knowledge" (p. 104). And Biesta (2011) adds: "[...] education must be open to the world, not as something to be mastered, but as something to be responded to responsibly" (p. 56). With this, the curriculum is no longer imposed and starts to be woven collectively.

As long as the school recognizes itself as situated in a specific historical and geographical context, it can open itself to the knowledge of peoples and to the complexity of life. Giroux (2004) asserts that "[...] the curriculum must be an arena for the production of meanings that challenge the status quo" (p. 88). And, in turn, Torres (2008) reiterates: "[...] the ethical commitment of the critical educator is to cognitive justice and epistemic inclusion" (p. 79). In this way, the articulation between school and territory is concretized as an act of pedagogical justice.

Not only the contents need to be rethought, but also the methodologies and modes of evaluation so that they dialogue with the times and rhythms of adult life. According to Biesta (2011), "[...] it is necessary to shift the focus of education from excellence to relevance and from effectiveness to significance" (p. 102). And Giroux (2004) argues that "[...] learning must be linked to the experiences and concrete social contexts of the students" (p. 69). With this, pedagogy becomes humanized and becomes politically situated.

At the same time, the curricular insurgency requires a break with the hierarchical logics of knowledge. Giroux (2004) warns that "the school cannot continue to be the place where dominant knowledge is only reproduced" (p. 112). And Biesta (2011) insists that "the challenge of education is to allow new forms of life to emerge, without reducing them to pre-established norms" (p. 90). Thus, the insurgent curriculum acts as a constant provocation to the coloniality of knowledge.

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> Banking education, instead of communicating, makes communications and deposits that students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. [...] Instead of communication, the communion of the authority of knowledge is imposed, denying students the right to be subjects of knowledge. This type of education serves the interests of domination, because it adapts the oppressed to the logic of the oppressor, preventing them from developing a critical awareness of reality (Freire, 1970, p. 58).

Given that EJA is made up of subjects with intense trajectories, often marked by exclusion and invisibility, it is essential that pedagogical listening is horizontal and affective. Torres (2008) explains that "[...] Listening in popular education is not a technique, but a political and ethical position" (p. 87). Likewise, Giroux (2004) states: "[...] affectivity and listening are crucial dimensions of any critical pedagogical project" (p. 101). Therefore, the emancipatory curriculum is made in active listening to the subjects and their stories.

However, resisting neoliberal logic is not simple, as it infiltrates everyday discourses and practices, even when disguised as innovation. Biesta (2011) criticizes that "[...] the discourse of quality in education often masks the imposition of standards alien to the educational context" (p. 78). Giroux (2004) agrees, saying that "[...] neoliberalism transforms education into a commodity and students into consumers" (p. 83). Thus, when it arises, the curriculum needs to be able to unmask these subtleties of capital.

In order to ensure that EJA fulfills its social and political role, it is urgent to reposition the curriculum as a mediation between "school knowledge" and "knowledge of life". Torres (2008) observes that "[...] the insurgent curriculum is the one that allows students to reread the world from their own experience" (p. 108). And Biesta (2011) points out that "[...] the school must be a place where the new can happen, where students can become subjects of the world" (p. 99). In this way, the curriculum becomes an act of insurgency and also of welcoming.

> There is no teaching without research and research without teaching. These quehaceres meet in each other's bodies. While I teach, I continue to search, research. I teach because I seek, because I inquired, because I inquire and I inquire myself. I research to verify, verifying, I intervene, intervening, I educate. I research to know what I don't know yet and communicate or announce the news. [...] Education is not neutral. It is a political act, an act of courage, an act of welcoming the other in the common construction of knowledge (Freire, 1996, p. 30).

In this way, the construction of a counter-hegemonic curriculum in EJA is not limited to criticism, but extends to the proposition of collective, ethical and democratic paths. Giroux (2004) concludes by stating: "[...] critical pedagogy is a project of hope that feeds on action and solidarity" (p. 119). And Torres (2008) concludes that "[...] the role of the

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emancipatory school is to open horizons and affirm the dignity of those who have historically been denied" (p. 115). With this, we understand that an insurgent curriculum is, above all, an act of love for justice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis undertaken throughout the article, it is possible to affirm that the curriculum and the methodologies practiced in EJA, in the light of the LDB, still face significant contradictions between what is prescribed and what is done. As legislation and official documents recognize the right to education as a fundamental principle, it is observed that the realization of this right, in the daily life of schools, remains conditioned by exclusionary practices, curricular standardizations and the absence of specific methodologies that respect the uniqueness of young people and adults.

However, throughout this research, it became evident that it is possible to reverse this situation. As has been demonstrated, pedagogical practices based on active listening, valuing experience and the collective construction of knowledge have proven to be powerful in confronting educational inequalities. In addition, the incorporation of popular knowledge, local realities and the world of work expands the meaning of schooling beyond certification, giving it ethical and political density.

At the same time, the analysis revealed that counter-hegemonic curricula and critical methodologies are central elements for the promotion of educational justice in EJA. To this end, it is necessary that schools break with the logic of silencing and courageously assume the commitment to build formative projects with the subjects, and not for them. Therefore, the pedagogy of dialogue, problematization and listening emerges as a necessary path.

That said, despite the legal advances represented by the LDB, the institutional mechanisms that guarantee a truly emancipatory EJA are still fragile. However, when based on pedagogical practices committed to human rights, inclusion and social transformation, curriculum and methodology cease to be just technical instruments and become devices of emancipation.

Thus, it is reaffirmed that EJA needs to be understood as a space of resistance and creation. To this end, educators, managers and public policy makers must be called upon to rethink their practices, in tune with the subjects that make up this modality. With this, youth

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and adult education can, in fact, fulfill its social function of repairing inequalities, promoting the right to lifelong learning and strengthening democracy.

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