

## Curricular integration of extension in higher education: curricularized pedagogical dynamics

ARTICLE

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### Abstract

The Principle of Inseparability between Teaching, Research, and Extension, as expressed in the Federal Constitution, is a guideline for the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). However, Extension still needs to advance administratively and academically within educational institutions, whether due to difficulties in securing a place in their administrative structures or the fragile position it finds in various academic trajectories. In the context of this debate about the need to value Extension in HEIs, as well as the necessary connection of Institutions with society, the National Education Plan (NEP) has provided for the mandatory integration of extension actions in the curriculum of undergraduate courses. Therefore, this study aims to present a pedagogical dynamic of curricularization of extension in higher education that enables the development of interactivity, connectivity, and interdependence among all cultural phenomena, being understood and presented as a permanent dialogue with the world of work.

**Keywords:** Curriculum. Extension. University education. Pedagogical. Education.

### Integração curricular da extensão no ensino superior: dinâmica pedagógica curricularizada

### Resumo

O Princípio da Indissociabilidade entre Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão, expresso na Constituição Federal, é uma diretriz para o funcionamento das Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES). Entretanto, a Extensão ainda precisa avançar administrativa e academicamente nas instituições de educação, seja por dificuldades na conquista de espaço em suas estruturas administrativas ou pelo lugar frágil que encontram nas diversas trajetórias acadêmicas. No contexto desse debate acerca da necessidade de valorização da Extensão nas IES, bem como da necessária conexão das Instituições com a sociedade, foi previsto no Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE) a obrigatoriedade da integração de ações extensionistas no currículo dos cursos de graduação. Posto isto, este estudo pretende apresentar uma dinâmica pedagógica da curricularização da extensão no ensino superior que possibilite desenvolver a interatividade, a conectividade, a interdependência existente entre todos os fenômenos da cultura, sendo compreendido e apresentado como diálogo permanente com o mundo do trabalho.

**Palavras-chave:** Currículo. Extensão. Ensino Superior. Pedagógica. Educação.

## 1 Introduction

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Article 207 of the Brazilian Federal Constitution (FC) of 1988 deals with the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension as a guideline for the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): "Universities enjoy didactic-scientific, administrative and financial and asset management autonomy, and will obey the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension" (Brasil, 1988, online). Although the FC only refers to universities, after Law 11.892/08, which established the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (RFEPCT), this principle also became valid for Federal Institutes (FI). According to this law, the FIs are "institutions of higher, basic and professional education, multi-curricular and multi-campi, specialized in offering professional and technological education in the different teaching modalities" (Brasil, 2008, online). In this sense, the Brazilian Federal Constitution guarantees this triad in the academic training of Brazilians.

In this research-teaching-extension relationship, extension stands out due to its contribution to the social function of the Higher Education Institution. As its name suggests, it extends the HEI beyond its walls, seeking interaction with the community and aiming to exchange knowledge, with the aim of contributing to society's demands. This takes place inseparably from teaching and research, since extension, acting in isolation, becomes a purely welfare action, in which participants are not active subjects. In this scenario, there is no dialogue, exchange, awareness or relationship with the training process and the production of knowledge, an idea refuted by Paulo Freire (1983, p. 28), who states that:

The moment social workers define their work as welfare work and, despite this, say that it is educational work, they are actually making a mistake with dire consequences, unless they have opted for the "domestication" of men, in which case they are being consistent and not mistaken.

In this context, the three dimensions of teaching, research and extension are expected to go hand in hand, complementing each other. However, extension still needs to advance administratively and academically in order to gain a foothold in educational institutions, whether due to management characteristics or the fragile place it occupies in the various academic trajectories (Gonçalves, 2015). In this sense, Gonçalves (2015, p. 1232) points out that:

The practices and process of institutionalizing Extension permeate universities both in the administrative sphere, the result of processes of disputes and tensions to legitimize this function, whether through space in their Councils, in their administrative structure (such as Pro-Rectories and Coordinating Offices), in their regulations, or in practice, in which teachers from different areas of knowledge and training have experienced different emphases and perceptions of Extension or have had no contact with it in their academic career (initial or continuing), which results in their habitus, and hence their practice, whether of disinterest, cautious or partial adherence (some principles), or effective insertion in their pedagogical and research action.

In this scenario of debate about the need to value extension in Higher Education Institutions, as well as its necessary connection with society, highlighting its social role, the National Education Plan (PNE) (2001-2009) was published in 2001, approved by Law No. 10,172. This plan includes the following text among its goals for Higher Education:

To implement the University Extension Development Program in all Federal Institutions of Higher Education in the four-year period 2001-2004 and to ensure that at least 10% of the total credits required for graduation in higher education in the country will be reserved for the performance of students in extension actions (Brazil, 2001, online).

However, the proposal was not implemented in the decade 2001-2009, but was maintained in the new PNE, valid for the period 2014-2024, approved by Law No. 13.005/2014, which provides in its goal 12, strategy 12.7: "ensure at least 10% (ten percent) of the total curricular credits required for graduation in university extension programs and projects, guiding their action, primarily, to areas of great social relevance" (Brasil, 2014, online).

In the meantime, the National Education Council published Resolution No. 07/2018 - CNE/CES, regulating the guidelines for making the curricular integration of extension into the curriculum of undergraduate courses compulsory throughout academic training. This measure enables transformative interaction between higher education institutions and other sectors of society, through the production and application of knowledge, in permanent articulation with teaching and research (Brazil, 2018). In view of the above, the study boldly intends to present a pedagogical dynamic for the curricularization of extension in higher education.

## 2 Development: Theoretical Basis

Understanding that omnilateral education contributes to the individual's life and, consequently, to their relationship with the world of work, enabling a broad, critical and participatory education, it is necessary for curricula to include actions that promote dialogue with society. The aim is to stimulate social awareness among students, taking them outside the walls of the school and detaching them from the content limited to the classroom.

In this context, it is possible to understand the importance of extension linked to teaching and research, in an inseparable way, promoting the integral formation of the student, since the relationship that extension establishes with society provides students with direct contact with real problems, the awakening of a critical sense about their reality and the possibility of contributing directly to the solution of important demands of society. Araújo, Jucá and da Silva (2019, p. 4) conclude:

Thus, it is possible to see the importance of the role of technological extension in strengthening the teaching and research activities of institutions, since the activities developed in it benefit not only the external community, but the entire academic community involved, in order to contribute to the critical, contextualized and meaningful training of students.

Thus, extension contributes to the student's education, brings the educational institution closer to society and society closer to the educational institution and, through

articulation with teaching and research, enables not only the strengthening of academic education, but also the solution of real problems in the region in which it is inserted, contributing to its development and transformation (Araújo, Jucá and Da Silva, 2019).

However, the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension, despite being provided for in the Federal Constitution, still finds it difficult to materialize in Higher Education Institutions. Paula (2013, p. 6) explains:

In fact, the conceptual and practical difficulties of a fair understanding and implementation of university extension stem largely from the fact that extension raises complex issues, both because of its political and social implications and because it requires an intellectual stance that is open to inter- and transdisciplinarity and values dialogue and otherness. To put it simply, university extension is what permanently and systematically calls on the university to deepen its role as an institution committed to social transformation, which brings the production and transmission of knowledge closer to its effective recipients, taking care to correct, in this process, the interdictions and blockages that make the social appropriation of knowledge, sciences and technologies asymmetrical and unequal.

In order to implement this constitutional principle, goal 12.7 of the National Education Plan 2014-2024 stipulates that 10% of the total number of curricular credits in all higher education courses must be allocated to extension activities, with priority given to areas of great social relevance (Brazil, 2014). The process of planning, implementing and enforcing extension activities as a compulsory dimension of undergraduate courses at higher education institutions, in order to meet the PNE target, has been called the curricular integration of extension, or the curricularization of extension, or even the accreditation of extension.

The idea of integrating extension activities into the curricula of undergraduate courses is not new; there was already a similar goal in the 2001 - 2009 PNE, but it was not implemented because it was never regulated. In the case of the goal set out in the current PNE, it was regulated in 2018 through Resolution 07/2018 of the Ministry of Education (MEC), the National Education Council (CNE) and the Chamber of Higher Education (CES). According to article 3 of this resolution:

Extension in Brazilian Higher Education is an activity that is integrated into the curricular matrix and the organization of research, constituting an interdisciplinary, political, educational, cultural, scientific and technological process that promotes transformative interaction between higher education institutions and other sectors of society, through the production and application of knowledge, in permanent articulation with teaching and research (Brasil, 2018, online).

This resolution set a deadline of four years for the adaptation of all the pedagogical projects of undergraduate courses, but, due to the pandemic, this deadline was extended until December 18, 2022 (Brasil, 2020, online).

However, this is not a simple process for Higher Education Institutions, as previously, extension was still seen as something discretionary and only a few students experienced extension experiences in their academic career. As of December 19, 2022, it will become compulsory, and what previously remained on paper will now need to be put into practice. Ribeiro, Mendes and Silva, in an analysis of the process of implementing curricular integration of extension at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte, explain:

There are many dilemmas inherent in the process of inserting extension into curricula, further highlighting the distance between what is said and what is, that is, even though the principle of inseparability is a discursive part of the Pedagogical Projects of Undergraduate Courses at Brazilian universities, the reality is different, since inseparability, a constitutional precept, is still not part of many students' training (Ribeiro, Mendes and Silva, 2018, p. 336).

The number of hours allocated to extension, in all courses and periods, is frightening, given that these activities are carried out with the external community. This necessarily means a change in methodology, a review of formats and concepts, taking students and teachers out of their comfort zone (Cunico and Spessato, 2022).

The initial deadline for implementing curricular integration of extension was December 2021, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline had to be extended, in accordance with Resolution 01/2020 - CNE/CES, with a new deadline of December 19, 2022. As a result, the need for a formal provision for the inclusion of extension activities in curricula, which has been raised for more than 20 years, will now be mandatory for students' education, and must be included in the Pedagogical Project

for Higher Education Courses (PPC). In this way, extension will no longer be something experienced by just a few students and will now be part of all of their academic lives.

Within the scope of the Federal Institutes, the National Council of Institutions of the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (CONIF) released a document with guidelines for the implementation of curricular integration of extension in the Federal Network of Professional and Technological Education (RFEPCT). This document defines concepts, objectives, principles, strategies and stages to be followed (CONIF, 2020). The stages set out in this document are: awareness-raising, in which there must be a broad debate with the academic community, both internal and external; implementation, in which there must be, among other actions, changes to the PPCs, formalization and registration of curricular extension activities; and, finally, implementation, which also includes, among other actions, continuous training of staff, monitoring of graduates to verify the impacts of curricular integration of extension and discussion of the results (CONIF, 2020).

This document seeks to "deepen the debate on curricularization, understood in the dimension of integral training and inseparability with teaching and research, in order to subsidize and guide the work developed in each RFEPCT unit" (CONIF, 2020, p. 1). They made the following determination for the Federal System:

It should be noted that extension activities are interventions that directly and dialogically involve communities outside educational institutions, and must be linked to the student's training, according to their own institutional rules. In the case of public education institutions, such as those in the RFEPCT, extension activities must be developed with the active participation of civil servants and students (CONIF, 2020, p. 2).

However, even with supporting documents, the process of implementing curricular integration of extension in Higher Education Institutions will not be simple. Each HEI has the autonomy to discuss and articulate initiatives on the subject in accordance with the provisions of the Institutional Development Plans (PDI), Course Pedagogical Projects and other normative documents. Therefore, each institution will encounter its own challenges and seek its own ways of minimizing them. From this

perspective, we can highlight the statement by Oliveira, Tosta and Freitas (2020, p. 124):

Curricularization practices, i.e. the way in which extension activities and/or subjects can be included in course curricula, in accordance with the rules, can be different for each course according to its specific characteristics, as each educational institution must write its own story, i.e. find ways to involve teachers, students, technicians and management in the commitment and materiality of extension.

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According to Gadotti (2017), the curricular integration of University Extension will involve bringing the educational institution closer to the major challenges facing society, basic education, social movements and public spheres. Ribeiro, Mendes and Silva (2018, p.335-336) emphasize that:

Even though we are aware of the historic achievement of more qualified, humanized and inclusive training in universities, many dilemmas arise due to the new and the unexplored: how to curricularize extension? What is the profile of a teacher to propose/do extension activities? How can so many students take a leading role in extension activities? How will the students on the courses, who work long hours during the day, be able to do extension work? What is the structure for moving students to other educational spaces/time? How can we avoid making extension just another subject in the curriculum? And what about distance learning undergraduate courses in this scenario? Should they also carry out extension activities?

Faced with so many issues that need to be widely debated, it is necessary to involve the entire academic body. In order to achieve the correct integration of extension into curricula, it is necessary to interfere in the institutional conception of all those involved in it, since, even if the obligation is imposed in documents, if it is not understood as a formative process, it may not be properly implemented and may not even happen (Silva and Kochhann, 2018).

Specifically, at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN), extension has taken shape through projects, courses, events, service provision, internationalization activities, as well as technical visits at all 22 of the institution's campuses throughout the state, always seeking to advance in association with teaching and research. This process of building the curricularization of extension is



being discussed and articulated by the Dean's Offices for Extension and Teaching and has been seeking the participation of all the categories involved. In 2020, the central committee and thematic committees were formed by academic degree (Bachelor's Degrees, Higher Technology Courses and Engineering) with representation from students, teachers, course coordinators, extension managers and technical-pedagogical staff. These committees are conducting the implementation in accordance with CONIF guidelines and are currently completing the Implementation stage.

### 3 Methodology

In order to comply with Resolution 7 of December 18, 2018, it is necessary and urgent to discuss some terms and conceptual assumptions that will provide us with theoretical and methodological support for the implementation of curricular integration of extension. These include: education, interdisciplinarity, culture, technology, dialogic interaction, intercultural society, work, the environment, territory and territoriality, among others. These concepts will provide the theoretical-methodological comfort for effective curricularization.

In this way, we will be able to understand the pedagogical processes and the paths to be taken, with comings and goings, without breaking the bridges we pass, and thus make a significant impact on the academic/professional lives of young Brazilians. For a better view of these processes, we present Figure 1, which in essence depicts Resolution No. 7 of December 18, 2018:

Figure 1: Extension Curriculum Integration Pathway



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Source: Author.

The pedagogical dynamics of integrating the extension curriculum in higher education require interdisciplinary action so that every semester the curricular components can engage in dialogue with each other and generate community intervention projects. This allows teaching to be combined with research and extension, favoring the generation of knowledge and preparing young people for their future professional career, while social responsibility becomes evident in the process. Another important point is that the curricular integration action also feeds the intersections with the course's curricular matrix.

In this pedagogical dynamic, it is necessary to have an introductory dialog that deals with community intervention methodology, including its conceptual aspects and

strategies for professional action in communities. This includes discussions on planning, executing and evaluating proposals and projects in communities and others that can provide knowledge support for intervention.

They will also be able to develop the skills and abilities to prepare and present university extension projects from an interdisciplinary perspective. This includes developing interpersonal skills, collaboration, leadership, communication, respect, as well as learning to listen and be listened to. In addition, the aim is to develop the ability to intervene in experimental community projects in reality. By developing these skills and abilities, it is expected that they will result in technical and/or technological products for the benefit of the learning society.

## 4 Conclusions

As Instituições de Ensino Superior precisam permitir que seus currículos sejam desenvolvidos a partir de interatividade, de conectividade, de interdependência existentes entre todos os fenômenos da cultura, sendo compreendido e apresentado diálogo permanente com o mundo do trabalho e que permita um olhar para o horizonte na forma de pensar e agir no mundo. Sabendo que um currículo em aberto reconhece a ação do sujeito em interação com os outros, com o meio ambiente, com a cultura e o contexto, constituindo-se um currículo em ação, permanentemente negociado e renegociado com o que acontece nos momentos de ensino e aprendizagem.

É pensar o currículo nessa perspectiva, que a integração curricular da extensão vem dar uma dinâmica de movimento/ação na formação acadêmica no Ensino Superior brasileiro. E que possamos a partir de referenciais disponibilizados nos periódicos científicos nos estabilizar teoricamente e começar a atuação nas ações educativas da curricularização, e pensando assim, o conhecimento como uma teia de conexões e existência de uma totalidade indivisível que nos traz uma nova consciência de nossa relação consigo e com o mundo, nos permitindo mais significados para a vida.

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