

Teaching practices of youth and adult education: the degrees of the State University of Maranhão

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze knowledge about Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in undergraduate courses at the State University of Maranhão (UEMA) and the dimension of initial training to teach in this area of training. This is a bibliographical and documentary research, with a qualitative approach, which has as its analytical material the curricular structures, programs and teaching plans for subjects in the undergraduate courses at UEMA. In the analysis process, with the exception of the Pedagogy course, it is noted that the other degrees do not have specific curricular components focused on EJA. This modality requires the school and the teacher to reconfigure their practices, therefore, initial teacher training is understood as fundamental to meet the school specificities of EJA students, pointing to the need for restructuring in the curricula of undergraduate courses researched.

Keywords: Youth and Adult Education. Teacher Training. Degree Courses.

Práticas docentes de educação de jovens e adultos: as licenciaturas da Universidade Estadual do Maranhão

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar os conhecimentos sobre Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA) nos cursos de licenciatura da Universidade Estadual do Maranhão (UEMA) e a dimensão da formação inicial para lecionar nessa área de formação. Trata-se de uma pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, com abordagem qualitativa, que tem como material de análise as estruturas curriculares, os programas e os planos de ensino de disciplinas dos cursos de licenciatura da UEMA. No processo de análise, com exceção ao curso de Pedagogia, observa-se que as demais licenciaturas não possuem componentes curriculares específicos voltados para a EJA. Esta modalidade exige da escola e do professor uma reconfiguração de suas práticas, portanto, a formação inicial docente é compreendida como fundamental para atender às especificidades escolares dos estudantes da EJA, apontando para a necessidade de reestruturação dos currículos dos cursos de licenciatura pesquisados.

Palavras-chave: Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Formação Docente. Cursos de Licenciatura.

1 Introduction

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Under the terms of the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB), No. 9.394/96, Youth and Adult Education (EJA)¹ was constructed as a form of teaching and lifelong learning for people who did not have access to or continue their studies in primary and secondary education. Education systems were made responsible for offering educational opportunities appropriate to the characteristics, interests, living and working conditions of people in the young, adult and elderly age groups, encouraging workers to access and remain in school (Brazil, 1996).

LDB No. 9.394/96 recognized the EJA as a form of Basic Education, providing different educational opportunities for its target audience, preparing them for the job market and continuing their studies (Freitas and Mancini, 2020). In this way, courses and exams linked to the world of work and social practice began to be promoted, as tools for reducing illiteracy rates and raising the basic schooling of the country's population (Brazil, 1996).

To work as a teacher in Basic Education, the current LDB determines the need for higher education training in a full degree course, admitting high school training, in the normal modality, to work in Early Childhood Education and the Early Years of Elementary School (Brazil, 1996). In addition, the law establishes that the training of education professionals, in order to meet the specificities of the exercise of their activities and the objectives of the different stages and modalities of Basic Education, must include knowledge of the scientific and social foundations of their work competencies, the association between theories and practices through internships and in-service training (Brazil, 1996).

¹ Some Brazilian states, such as Maranhão, also use the term Youth, Adult and Elderly Education (Ejai) to include the elderly in this type of education.

The National Education Plan (PNE), Law 13.005/14, guides the implementation and improvement of educational policies to promote the quality of education and teacher training in all stages and modalities of basic education (Brazil, 2014). Preliminarily, it is understood that these documents, in prescribing that teacher training must meet the objectives of the different teaching modalities, point to the need for teacher training courses to take into account the specificities of all teaching modalities, including the EJA.

More specifically, the relationship between training and teaching in the EJA can be seen in some normative documents that establish the construction of policies and actions for the initial and continuing training of education professionals. These documents consider the investigation of problems, the development of educational practices and the use of methods and techniques that include codes and languages related to learning in this modality, consolidating the identity of teachers in their relations with the school and the students (Brazil, 2000, 2010a, 2010b, 2021, 2022).

The National Curriculum Guidelines for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers and the Common National Base for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers (BNC- Training) - Resolution CNE/CP no. 2, of December 20, 2019, and the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers and the Common National Base for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers (BNC- Training) - Resolution CNE/CP no. 2, of December 20, 2019, and the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers (BNC- Training) - Resolution CNE/CP no. 2, of December 20, 2019. The National Curricular Guidelines for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers and the Common National Base for the Continuing Education of Basic Education Teachers (BNC- Continuing Education) - Resolution CNE/CP No. 1, of October 27, 2020, reinforce that teacher training for all stages and modalities of Basic Education is a state commitment. These guidelines ensure the right of children, young people and adults to a quality education, by equalizing opportunities that take into account the needs of each student, given the specificities and responsibilities of the different teaching modalities (Brazil, 2019, 2020).

EJA classrooms are made up of people with different age groups, life trajectories, knowledge, aspirations and potential, which will require the school to discuss topics about generations, gender relations, ethnicities, technologies, the world of work, professions, etc. According to Freitas and Mancini (2020, p. 11), "in order to teach in the EJA and find new ways of teaching, it is necessary to know the origin, history, objectives and profile of the students".

This work refers to the topic of teacher training for the EJA. It aims to analyze the knowledge about the EJA in the degree courses at the State University of Maranhão (UEMA) and the dimension of initial training to teach in this area of training.

The text is structured as follows: in addition to this introduction (first topic), there are five more topics. In the second, the qualitative methodological approach is described, as well as the bibliographical and documentary research to understand and contextualize the research object. The third topic presents some of the challenges facing the EJA. The fourth analyzes aspects related to academic training for teaching in this modality, expressed in the context of UEMA's degree courses. The fifth discusses the challenges faced by teachers in the context of schools. Finally, the concluding remarks confirm the need to restructure UEMA's degree curricula in the field of teacher training for the EJA.

2 Methodology

This is a study with a qualitative approach, bibliographical and documentary research. With these procedures, it was possible to unveil the object, deconstruct and reconstruct it in a confrontational movement with its realities in the contemporary political, social, ideological and cultural context.

This confirms a proposal for qualitative analysis that considers the meaning and interpretation of the data collected. The conclusions required a review that looked at their meanings, regularities, patterns and elucidations. This demonstrates how the conclusions are credible, defensible, guaranteed and capable of supporting alternative explanations (Gil, 2008).

Bibliographical research, which consists of material that has already been prepared, such as books and journal articles with a consistent theoretical basis for delving deeper into the object of study, allows the researcher to cover a range of phenomena rather than researching them directly, including historical studies based on secondary data (Gil, 2008). Therefore, with the bibliographical research carried out, the contribution of different authors was used, such as: Arroyo (2011), Brunel (2008), Carvalho (2019), Dayrell (1996), Di Pierro (2010), Imbernón (2010), Freitas and Mancini (2020), Freire (1996), Haddad and Di Pierro (2000), Pereira and Lima (2017), Pimenta (1995), Rios (2011), Serra, Santos and Silva (2022), Silva and Cruz (2022), Silva (2023), Ventura (2012) and Vieira (2022).

In the documentary research, similar to the bibliographical research, some sources were used, considered first-hand documents, including legal bases such as laws, resolutions, opinions and plans for Brazilian education, as well as curricular structures, programs and teaching plans for subjects in UEMA's degree courses. They were read and analyzed according to the objectives of the study, as well as considering the context in which these sources were produced, the subjects involved (authors and recipients), their objectives, scope and limits (Gil, 2008).

With regard to initial teacher training in Maranhão, we chose to investigate the courses run by UEMA, an institution that has made a political and educational commitment to teacher training through degree courses, offered in person and at a distance. UEMA operates on its 20 campuses, in the Education Technology Center (Uemanet) and in special teacher training programs, such as the Ensinar Program, which offers degree courses in municipalities in the state with a high demand for basic education teachers.

A survey was carried out of the compulsory and optional curricular components (subjects and internships) of the following degree courses: Pedagogy, Languages, Mathematics, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Music. This survey was based on the curricular structures available in the Integrated Academic Activities Management System (Siguema Acadêmico).

3 Youth and adult education and some current challenges

The EJA is an educational field with a long history, with relevant research, public policies and educational guidelines (Arroyo, 2011). However, it still has numerous problems and challenges, such as a lack of public investment, continuing training courses for teachers and teaching resources, etc. It is a type of education with high dropout and truancy rates, and its target audience is made up of people from degraded socio-economic backgrounds, which limits their chances of completing their studies.

It is common knowledge that the majority of EJA students are poor people from rural areas or the outskirts of cities, socially and culturally stigmatized, deprived of schooling and access to cultural goods and public services. They return to school in search of formal education in the expectation of learning that is linked to their current life context and with the desire to progress in the world of work (Silva and Cruz, 2022).

Among the problems that permeate the EJA, for the purposes of this study, we highlight the initial training of teachers who work in this modality, since, in some higher education institutions, this training process has been taking place without presenting specificities in relation to the EJA. After this stage, teachers have rare opportunities for continuing training to acquire methodologies in this area. It is clear that the EJA has a shortage of specialized teachers (Freitas and Mancini, 2020).

Some EJA teachers don't look for teaching materials suitable for the modality and don't bother to get to know their students in order to identify situations that can be incorporated into their lessons, such as the stories and living conditions of these people, their learning difficulties and their desires when they return to school.

In addition to problems related to teacher training, the schools that offer the EJA are marked by rules and routines that don't take into account the particularities of working students. These institutions have routines with rigid timetables for student entry, lack of school meals, little use of school spaces (library, resource room, laboratories and sports court), as well as a lack of technological resources and specific textbooks, etc.

There is a lack of public policies to guarantee access to school, as well as the necessary conditions for students to remain, with investments in assistance programs,

such as school transport, meals, textbooks and grants for students in situations of socio-economic vulnerability (Di Pierro, 2010). As a result of these obstacles, many people end up failing and/or interrupting their school studies, phenomena known as school abandonment and dropout. These problems have high indicators in the EJA and can have an impact on personal training, a country's economy, violence rates and the population's life expectancy (Silva, 2023).

The difficulties related to the schooling process in the EJA go beyond the internal sphere of educational institutions. Early entry into the world of work, lack of schools close to home, lack of transportation, unplanned pregnancy, unemployment and health problems can significantly affect interest in continuing to study.

It must be considered that the occurrence of dropout and evasion in the EJA is related to social, economic and cultural factors that make it difficult for students to remain in school (Arroyo, 2011). Many students have to combine work and study, which creates an overload and reduces the time available to devote to their studies. In addition, the EJA is often not valued socially, which can result in prejudice and demotivation on the part of students.

According to Giovanetti (2011, p. 245):

EJA students, as they experience the worsening of forms of segregation - cultural, spatial, ethnic, as well as economic inequalities - through social exclusion, experience every day the shaking of their sense of social belonging, the blocking of prospects for the social future.

Some people in the young adult age group, excluded from work and school, with a degrading socio-economic situation, believe that their chances of completing their studies are difficult. They also see the difficulty of entering a public university or (re)integrating into the world of work as a barrier.

Previously, the majority of students in literacy and schooling programs for young people and adults were mature or elderly people from rural backgrounds who had never had the opportunity to study. Nowadays, however, we are seeing a new social group made up of young people from urban areas whose previous school career was unsuccessful, i.e.

a growing profile of adolescents excluded from regular schooling (Haddad and Di Pierro, 2000).

This phenomenon, known as juvenilization in the EJA, is evidenced by the growing presence of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in EJA classes across the country. This is a source of concern for educators and researchers, as it is necessary to understand the specific interests of this audience, most of whom come from working class backgrounds and have trajectories marked by failure (Carvalho, 2019).

The socioeconomic and cultural diversity of EJA students needs to be recognized by teachers, as it reflects rich experiences that require a reconfiguration of the school environment and teaching practices (Freitas and Mancini, 2020). The experiences of students, especially those from working class backgrounds, must be considered and respected, since learning is built on community practice. It is important that the school discusses the relevance of this knowledge in relation to the curricular components and establishes an intimacy between school content and the social experiences that students have as individuals (Freire, 1996).

In this way, it is understood that specific teacher training to teach classes in the EJA, whether during graduation or on an ongoing basis, including in-service training, in which it is also possible to attend to the daily specificities that occur in the school environment, needs to be taken on as a priority (Pereira and Lima, 2017).

Teaching requires security, professional competence and commitment. Teachers must take their training seriously and study continuously in order to be up to the task of teaching. They must contribute to an education that is committed to reversing the situation of social exclusion, which is often already naturalized by social inequalities (Freire, 1996; Giovanetti, 2011).

Without initial and continuing training that includes the knowledge needed to teach in the EJA, some teachers choose to work in this modality. Situations such as the need for a salary and/or the fact that night time hours offer flexibility at work may be related to this choice.

The teacher, who in some cases is a professional with other occupations during the day, may end up making the EJA their most comfortable, flexible and irrelevant job, sometimes repeating content, methodologies and assessments applied in regular education, contributing to the disqualification of this modality (Pereira and Lima, 2017).

4 Initial training for teachers of youth and adult education

Professionals with a degree who wish to work as teachers in basic education can be sent to regular education, the EJA, among other teaching modalities. Legally, working in the EJA does not require any other prerequisite than this training. However, the commitment to working with people who have specific and different identities and life contexts requires specific knowledge about the subjects served.

Teachers working in the EJA need to be open to personalized listening, taking into account the age of the student, their financial situation, their dreams, their fears, their working conditions and their position in the family, whether as a child, grandchild, father, mother or spouse, in order to understand their speech (Brunel, 2008).

During undergraduate studies, it is common to emphasize the role of the school in its commitment to qualifying students for work and preparing them to enter university. Teacher training is assumed to work with children and adolescents whose aspirations corroborate these perspectives.

By understanding that EJA students build their school trajectory differently from the standards of regular education, the teaching and management teams must be prepared to effectively meet the needs of these students. When it comes to the juvenilization of the modality, for example, considering the diversity of the subjects, there is a need to understand who these young people are (Carvalho, 2019). This knowledge should be presented during the undergraduate course and complemented continuously, in accordance with Brazilian educational legislation, which recommends initial and continuing teacher training for all stages and modalities of basic education.

Among the courses surveyed, it was found that only the Pedagogy degree course offers a compulsory subject focused on the EJA, called "Fundamentals and Methodology of EJA", with a workload of 60 hours. The syllabus for this subject covers the history, theoretical and legal foundations, curriculum proposal, methodology, planning and evaluation that support this type of teaching. Among the other undergraduate courses at UEMA, no specific subject was identified for the EJA.

Another subject offered in the Pedagogy degree course, called "Literacy and Literacy", has as one of its objectives to demonstrate the theoretical knowledge and methodological procedures related to the adult literacy process. In addition, other subjects in the Pedagogy course, such as "Education and Cultural Diversity", "Popular Education and Social Movements" (elective), "Didactics", "Brazilian Educational Policy", "Educational and School Planning", "Organization of Pedagogical Work" and "Teaching Methodology", as they are pedagogical subjects, bring simplified discussions related to the EJA. Among the subjects mentioned are "Didactics", "Brazilian Educational Policy" and "Teaching Methodology", which, together with the subject of "Planning and Organization of Pedagogical Action", are offered in the other undergraduate courses at UEMA.

With the attention given to EJA in the Pedagogy Degree Course, it should be noted that this course trains teachers for Early Childhood Education and the Early Years of Primary Education. Therefore, the work of the Pedagogy graduate only takes place in the EJA in the early years of elementary school. In the other degrees, which train professionals for the final years of elementary school and secondary school, knowledge about teaching in the EJA is invisible. There are no specific subjects that address how future teachers should work in the EJA, and in some cases, this discussion is only superficially touched on during some pedagogical subjects.

With regard to Pedagogy professionals, it is important to highlight their involvement in EJA programs implemented in Maranhão. Programs such as "Brasil Alfabetizado"

(Literate Brazil) and "Sim, eu posso!"² (Yes, I can!), which guarantee literacy to the population aged 15 and over, and which should be an exclusive gateway for these professionals to work, open up the possibility for people with only secondary education to work as literacy teachers, disregarding the possibility of literacy for young people, adults and the elderly through properly qualified literacy teachers. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Maranhão ranks 4th in illiteracy in the country.³

When analyzing the curricular structures of the other degree courses at UEMA, as previously mentioned, it was found that no subjects are offered for teaching in the EJA. Under the terms of the General National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education - CNE/CEB Resolution No. 4, of July 13, 2010, elementary school and evening high school courses must present methodologies appropriate to the ages, maturity and learning experiences of EJA students (Brasil, 2010b). Therefore, teacher training courses for basic education must prepare teachers to work in the EJA.

Another result of this research, which has already been pointed out, was that the pedagogical subjects offered in the other undergraduate courses at UEMA, in an analysis of the syllabuses and/or teaching plans, fail to present the EJA in its entirety. Superficial content is described, without the proper foundations and methodologies that underpin this type of teaching, reinforcing the invisibility of this type of basic education in most of the degrees offered by UEMA.

Supervised teaching internships in Basic Education can be carried out in the EJA, since there are no guidelines or impediments related to the modality in which the student will be doing the internship, inferring that the choice will be agreed between the supervising teacher and the student intern. However, as there are no specific guidelines for students to do their internships in the EJA, it is inferred that it is convenient for them to do their

² Promoted by the Maranhão State Government, in partnership with the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), to teach literacy to young people, adults and the elderly in municipalities in Maranhão with low social indicators.

³ IBGE Demographic Census 2022.

internships in the regular daytime school. During the day, there are few schools that offer the EJA, since, in Maranhão, this type of education is primarily offered at night.

Theory and practice are inseparable in teaching, and the supervised internship is a curricular component of teacher training, essential for acquiring professional practice, especially the practice of teaching (Pimenta, 1995). Therefore, the EJA should be encouraged by the supervising teachers as a field in which to carry out the internship. However, Resolution No. 1264/2017 - CEPE/UEMA, in its §2 of Art. 4, limits that the internship in elementary school in the final years must be carried out in the morning and afternoon shifts (Maranhão, 2017), allowing an exception only for the high school internship, which can be carried out in the evening shift, when EJA classes operate in the state of Maranhão.

According to Ventura (2012, p. 74):

Rarely do undergraduate courses reflect on their pedagogical practice in the context of the schooling of young adults; the majority of teachers reproduce the molds of the schooling of children and adolescents, materialized in actions that reflect the supplementary perspective of the school curriculum.

On completing their initial training, teachers are qualified to work in the EJA, even without specific knowledge of the modality and with few opportunities for further training in the area. They are able to integrate the EJA educational universe and work with methodologies, resources and assessment tools just as if they were working in regular education. However, if they don't carry out a diagnostic assessment at the start of the school year, they end up considering EJA students as if they were the same age group as regular school students, whose identities, routines, desires, emotions and behaviors differ from young, adult or elderly students, and often workers.

The reform of the curricular structures of UEMA's degree courses, implemented in 2017, took into account Resolution 1264/2017 - CEPE/UEMA, which creates and approves the Curricular Guidelines for UEMA's Degree Courses. This resolution was drawn up based on CNE/CP Resolution No. 2, of July 1, 2015, which defines the National Curriculum

Guidelines for initial training at higher education level (degree courses, pedagogical training courses for graduates and second degree courses) and for continuing training.

During the construction of the aforementioned institutional resolution and the reform of undergraduate curricular structures, some specificities were taken into account, such as the inclusion of the following subjects: Curriculum, Special and Inclusive Education, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), Technologies Applied to Teaching, Distance Education, Education and Ethnic Racial Relations, Educational and School Management, as well as Supervised Internship in Management.

In the analysis of the curricular structures of the degree courses surveyed, no progress was identified in the field of EJA. This points to the need for a new restructuring of the institution's degree courses, with the inclusion of subjects that address the EJA modality, considered essential for teachers to meet the quality standards of public education (Pereira and Lima, 2017).

Among UEMA's efforts to qualify teachers for the EJA, we highlight the pioneering project of the Specialization Course in Youth, Adult and Elderly Education, offered only in 2014 at the Centres of Açailândia, Bacabal, Balsas, Caxias, Codó, Imperatriz, Santa Inês, São Luís and Timon, serving 450 teachers and managers of Basic Education (Serra, Santos and Silva, 2022). However, as Vieira (2022, p. 3) points out, "the lack of solid initial training leads to a lack of theoretical knowledge in the pedagogical field in which the teacher will work. These deficiencies are not remedied by continuing training alone".

When analyzing the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers, some important points were identified. CNE/CP Resolution 2, of July 1, 2015, determines teacher training for all stages and modalities of basic education:

Art. 2 The National Curricular Guidelines for the Initial and Continuing Training at Higher Level of Teaching Professionals for Basic Education apply to the training of teachers for the exercise of teaching in early childhood education, primary education, secondary education and the respective modalities of education (Youth and Adult Education, Special Education, Professional and Technological Education, Field Education, Indigenous School Education, Distance Education and Quilombola School Education), in the different areas of knowledge and with integration between them, and may cover a specific and/or interdisciplinary field (Brazil, 2015, p. 3).

This resolution establishes the initial and continuing training of teaching professionals to meet the specific needs of the different stages and modalities of basic education, specifying the EJA and other teaching modalities in its textual content. The aim is to ensure the production and dissemination of specific knowledge, with a view to guaranteeing, with quality, the rights and learning objectives of students (Brazil, 2015).

Also in the aforementioned resolution, with regard to the principles of the Training of Teaching Professionals in Basic Education, the sections of § 5 of Art. 3 stand out, which emphasize the preparation and development of professionals for the EJA:

I - teacher training for all stages and modalities of basic education as a public commitment of the state, seeking to ensure the right of children, young people and adults to quality education, built on solid scientific and technical foundations in line with the National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education;

II - the training of teaching professionals (trainers and students) as a commitment to a social, political and ethical project that contributes to the consolidation of a sovereign, democratic, fair, inclusive nation that promotes the emancipation of individuals and social groups, attentive to the recognition and appreciation of diversity and, therefore, opposed to all forms of discrimination;

[...]

VII - a training project in educational institutions based on a solid theoretical and interdisciplinary foundation that reflects the specific nature of teacher training, ensuring the organic nature of the work of the different units that contribute to this training;

[...]

IX - articulation between initial training and continuing training, as well as between the different levels and modalities of education (Brazil, 2015, p. 4).

CNE/CP Resolution No. 2 of July 1, 2015 stands out:

Art. 8º Graduates of initial training courses at higher education level should therefore be able to:

I - act with ethics and commitment with a view to building a fair, equitable and egalitarian society;

II - understand their role in the education of basic education students based on a broad and contextualized conception of teaching and their learning and development processes, including those who did not have the opportunity to attend school at the right age;

III - work to promote the learning and development of subjects at different stages of human development in the stages and modalities of basic education;

[...]

VIII - demonstrate awareness of diversity, respecting differences of an environmental-ecological, ethnic-racial, gender, generational, social class, religious, special needs and sexual diversity nature, among others (Brazil, 2015, p. 7-8).

Analyzing the guidelines established in 2015, one can understand the visibility given to the EJA in the text of the resolution. However, even though this resolution served as a reference for the construction of institutional curricular guidelines in the curricular reform of UEMA's undergraduate courses, there was no inclusion of curricular components (subjects and internships) aimed at the EJA. Subsequently, changes were implemented that defined CNE/CP Resolution No. 2, of December 20, 2019, with new National Curricular Guidelines for the Initial Training of Teachers for Basic Education and establishing the Common National Base for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers (BNC-Formação), with reference to the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) - Basic Education. This new resolution removed the objective focus given to EJA in the previous guidelines.

Although the text of the new resolution, instituted in 2019, ensures teacher training for all stages and modalities of Basic Education as a commitment of the State, guaranteeing the right of children, young people and adults to quality education and equalizing opportunities that consider the needs of each and every student (Brasil, 2019), any objective mention of teacher training in the field of EJA, as mentioned in the previous resolution, was removed. It can be seen that Resolution CNE/CP No. 2, of December 20, 2019, makes the EJA invisible, since the reference made in the text is vague, limited to the term "modality".

This opens up the possibility of discussing the EJA only peripherally in other pedagogical subjects offered during initial training. It is important to note that UEMA opposed this new resolution and adhered to the previous one. However, when it comes to the EJA, the university has not been providing the necessary knowledge in teacher training courses.

The political context surrounding these resolutions is closely related to the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (Secadi), created in 2004 to pay attention to groups historically excluded from the basic schooling process, including young people, adults and the elderly. In 2015, when Resolution CNE/CP No. 2 of

July 1, 2015 was instituted, during the government of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), the subfolder responsible for diversity and inclusion actions, linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC), was still in force.

Secadi was abolished by the government of President Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022) at the start of his term in 2019. With the drafting of the new National Curriculum Guidelines for the Initial Training of Teachers for Basic Education, through Resolution CNE/CP No. 2, of December 20, 2019, topics such as human rights, ethnic-racial education and diversity were no longer covered, and various initiatives against inclusion in education were implemented.

Even in a scenario marked by the exclusion of minority groups from school, aggravated by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been no speculation about the sub-portfolio being recreated in the Bolsonaro government. Secadi was recreated in 2023, with the start of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's administration, taking back responsibility for educational policies guided, among other issues, by the generational condition, which is one of the situations that favors social and school exclusion.

Despite the criticism of the constant changes in the new National Curriculum Guidelines for Initial Teacher Training for Basic Education, another aspect deserves to be questioned. When UEMA began implementing curricular reforms in the undergraduate courses offered, CNE/CP Resolution 2 of July 1, 2015 was still in force. This resolution served as a reference for the construction of Resolution No. 1264/2017 - CEPE/UEMA, which determined the provision of 11 pedagogical training subjects, in addition to the possibility of including other pedagogical subjects related to the course's training area in the curricular matrices of the course projects (Maranhão, 2017).

There were already legal principles and bases that govern and support the EJA, such as CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1 of July 5, 2000, which establishes National Curriculum Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education. However, UEMA has made progress in other specifics in the field of initial teacher training, but has not included any curricular component aimed at the EJA in its degree courses.

5 Challenges faced by teachers working in youth and adult education

Every day, EJA teachers are faced with students who have a history of failing grades, leaving school and dropping out, as well as an apparent lack of motivation towards school and themselves. This requires recognizing that these people have individual and creative abilities that can lead them to regain a sense of belonging to the school environment (Brunel, 2008).

Nowadays, the entry of increasingly younger students into the EJA points to the need to analyze the consequences that this process brings to both the modality and the subjects who are part of it, given that the EJA has been receiving a significant number of young people with an age range compatible with regular education, in this case, young adolescents between 15 and 17 years old (Carvalho, 2019).

Classes in the EJA should include knowledge that helps motivate these students who come to school late. Given the heterogeneity of EJA classes, teachers are faced with a diversity that includes, in addition to age groups, ethnic, gender, religious and desire issues. These are everyday challenges that need to be understood by the educator in order to meet, with quality, equity and specificity, the wishes of those who are in school outside the regular age.

It is necessary to understand the EJA public as sociocultural subjects, overcoming the homogenizing and stereotyped view of the notion of student, giving them another meaning and understanding them in their differences, as individuals who have a historicity, with world views, scales of values, feelings, emotions, desires and projects, as well as their own logics of behaviour and habits (Dayrell, 1996).

Just as important as the teacher's competence in the classroom is their affectionate attitude and respect for the EJA students' previous knowledge, because when they are listened to, the students understand school as a pleasant and meaningful place in their lives (Brunel, 2008).

Another situation in EJA classes that deserves to be assessed is the teaching resources and equipment used by teachers. It is important to develop, enrich or adapt the

teaching material for EJA students according to their daily lives, through news reports and everyday events, making them reflect on their reality and the role of each Brazilian in society (Freitas and Mancini, 2020).

The use of technological resources is also important, both for those who find it easy to use them and for those who don't have access to them or have difficulties using them.

Teaching classes to young people, adults and the elderly requires a different approach. In adulthood, people are looking for better ways to achieve certain goals, while children and teenagers are still building their life goals. If EJA students feel that the school doesn't provide these paths, they'll drop out! They look for ways to achieve these goals outside of school. If the teacher has a different teaching proposal to the one they envision, they lose the will to go to school and drop out too (Brunel, 2014).

Teachers are introduced to the EJA field without specific training to enable them to approach the aspects inherent to the modality. Often, there is an insistence on making these professionals transpose their pedagogical practices developed in regular education, disrespecting the particularities of the students that the EJA aims to serve (Vieira, 2022).

It is important to know the identities of EJA students in order to develop methodologies, content selection and assessments appropriate to them. We need to break away from the stigma that EJA students only go to school to get a school leaving certificate. Some EJA students are not in school strictly because their employer has demanded the certificate or because they need it to take a technical and/or higher education course. Although some EJA students believe that studying can guarantee better living conditions, some of them also go to school to update their knowledge, develop skills, exchange experiences and gain access to new forms of culture.

The EJA has been developed in an improvised way, with isolated successful actions. Teachers and students in the EJA, rather than seeing the reality, need to understand it, not in order to adapt, but to contribute to promoting significant changes. The teaching-learning processes must value the knowledge acquired in various life situations, breaking the distance between school content and everyday knowledge (Vieira, 2022; Ventura, 2012).

6 Conclusions

There are gaps in UEMA's degree courses when it comes to tackling the complex field of teaching in the EJA. With the exception of the Pedagogy course, the other degree courses do not offer any curricular components aimed at this modality. This highlights the need for investment in continuing teacher training, which is still rather precarious and lacking in relevance to the EJA.

Supervised teaching internships in the EJA can also contribute to linking theory and practice in this modality. Programs such as the Institutional Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBID) and the Pedagogical Residency also serve to strengthen the dialogue with the EJA, minimally filling the absence of subjects and internships in the area.

It's important to note that the MEC, through the National Education Council (CNE), recently published Resolution CNE/CP No. 4/2024, which defines new National Curriculum Guidelines for Initial Training at Higher Level for Basic School Education Teaching Professionals, updating the legal provisions of 2015 and 2019.

This points to the need to amend UEMA's specific resolution (Resolution 1264/2017 - CEPE/UEMA), restructuring the curricula of undergraduate courses. This restructuring should include the ability to recognize the specificities of EJA students, in addition to building methodologies and resources that enrich, stimulate and promote the learning of these people, in opposition to CNE/CP Resolution No. 2, of December 20, 2019, since the new national regulation highlights the importance of EJA in undergraduate courses by defining the guarantee of offering training for all stages and modalities of Basic Education as a public commitment of the State (Brazil, 2024).

Teachers and the working conditions offered to them are the fundamental core of innovation in educational institutions. Therefore, teacher training is an important element of professional development, although it is neither the only one nor the decisive one (Imbernón, 2010). Universities, education management bodies and educational institutions

need to encourage continuing training in the area of EJA, consolidating the foundations laid during initial teacher training.

Good teacher training and working conditions and the transformation of teaching practices are necessary to ensure that students learn with quality and responsibility. This is essential in order to provide for the full development of young people, adults and the elderly who (re)enter school with different objectives in order to complete basic schooling.

The emancipatory perspective of education brings us closer to the ways in which EJA students build their lives. This implies educational action that recognizes students in this type of education as producers of knowledge, history and culture (Ventura, 2012). Therefore, teacher training should include reflections on what the EJA is and what kind of citizen we want to build with this type of education.

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