

Virtual edition of the third week of Africanity: possibilities and challenges

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Abstract

The goal of this article is to discuss aspects of the planning of the pedagogical practice “African Week: the mother color of all colors” that took place in October 2020, in a virtual way, in a municipal school on the outskirts of Fortaleza-CE. Although the authors are aware that the Afro-Brazilian theme must be addressed throughout the school year in a transversal way, due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation and social isolation, the activities related to this theme were concentrated in a single month in event format. The event took place in virtual format, through Conferences through the Google Meet application. It was concluded that even in the situation of remote education, it was possible to foster important reflections on the theme, with the participation of managers and teachers from different areas, strengthening the transdisciplinary perspective of the theme.

Keywords: Africanity. Ethnic diversity. Africanness week. Remote teaching.

Edição virtual da III Semana da Africanidade: possibilidades e desafios

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é discutir aspectos do planejamento da prática pedagógica “Semana da Africanidade: a cor mãe de todas as cores” que ocorreu em outubro de 2020, de maneira virtual, em uma escola municipal da periferia de Fortaleza-CE. Apesar dos autores terem conhecimento de que a temática afro-brasileira deve ser abordada durante todo o ano letivo de forma transversal, em virtude da situação de pandemia de Covid-19 e de isolamento social, as atividades relativas a essa temática foram concentradas em um único mês em formato de evento. O evento ocorreu no formato virtual, por meio de Conferências pelo aplicativo *Google Meet*. Concluiu-se que mesmo na situação de ensino remoto, foi possível fomentar reflexões importantes sobre a temática, com a participação de gestores e professores de diferentes áreas, fortalecendo a perspectiva transdisciplinar da temática.

Palavras-chave: Africanidade. Diversidade étnica. Semana da africanidade. Ensino remoto.



1 Introduction

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The 'Africanity Week: the mother color of all colors', began to be held in 2018 in a school located on the outskirts of Fortaleza-CE and is currently in its third edition, having occurred for the first time in a completely virtual way in 2020, due to the paralysis of classroom activities due to the Pandemic Covid-19.

The event consists of a series of pedagogical activities, such as: artistic presentations, lectures, debates, workshops, thematic classes, drawing, poetry and dissertation contests, among other activities. In addition, the event is based on some laws and decrees that address the valorization of Afro-Brazilian Culture.

Educational policies have been changing in the last thirty years and the changes are caused by social pressure from social movements, such as the black movement, the feminist movement, the peripheral women's movement, among others. These struggles "emerge from the streets" and impress on the school the need for dialogue, discussion, and debate about the issues presented by society.

The social context experienced is one of marked conflict, which generates several cases of physical, psychological, and symbolic violence, in addition to stimulating prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, which are materializations of the violence experienced by the black community in Brazil.

In the international context, since 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: "All are equal before the law and are entitled [...]. Everyone has the right to equal protection against any discrimination [...] and against any incitement to such discrimination (UNITED NATIONS, 1948, art. 7)".

Corroborating the Declaration of Human Rights, the Brazilian legislation also presents a set of important laws to combat the problem of prejudice and violence. Among them, we can mention law n.11.645, instituted in 2008, which was also important for making it mandatory for educational institutions to address Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture, as can be seen in the following excerpt: "The content relating to Afro-





Brazilian and Indigenous Brazilian history and culture will be taught throughout the school curriculum, especially in the areas of art education and Brazilian literature and history (BRASIL, 2008, art. 26).

The law n.11.645 aims to guarantee to the populations of Afro and indigenous origin the defense of the right to equality. Thus, the 'Africanity Week: the mother color of all colors' is an instrument for the application of the above mentioned laws in the school environment.

Another important law is the Statute of Racial Equality (Law No. 12288 of July 20, 2010). This law is aimed at guaranteeing rights and fighting discrimination against the black population. According to the Statute of Racial Equality: "The contents referring to the history of the black population in Brazil will be taught within the entire school curriculum, recalling its decisive contribution to the social, economic, political, and cultural development of the country" (BRASIL, 2010, art. 11).

The fulfillment of these laws establishes a complex debate about the reality of the Brazilian population. Thus, to insert Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture in the pedagogical construction is to comply with the law, so it is necessary to establish a discussion about prejudice and racial segregation, because the practice of bullying (acts of verbal or physical violence) and daily oppression are intolerable in the school environment.

Thus, the objective of this paper is to report the possibilities and challenges of the teaching experience in planning the first virtual edition of the III Week of Africanity.

2 Methodology

This research has a qualitative approach because according to Minayo (2015), the goal of this research is not to establish quantified data, i.e., the intention is to seek to build meanings from the data presented.

Thus, a reflective description will be made about the planning stages of the first virtual edition of the III Africanity Week, with the intention of pointing out the possibilities



and challenges of this practice, in order to contribute to the development of similar school events.

3 Description of the experience

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The main goal of the Africanity Week is: 'To stimulate social-historical reflection about the African contribution to the Brazilian society, in order to contribute to the students' awareness.

The specific objectives are I- Debate important themes for the deconstruction of racial prejudice in Brazil; II- Encourage reflection on the history and contribution of African society in Brazilian culture; III- Empower students to debate, reflect and act in the face of prejudice or bullying practices; and IV- Promote cultural actions such as capoeira, the production of masks, songs and poetry.

Holding an event such as the III Africanity Week is quite important because Brazilian society still presents reflections of a system that enslaved the black population, because as Schwarcz (2019, p. 29) states:

Such a system could only give rise to a violent society and consolidate a structural inequality in the country. Slaves faced working days of up to eighteen hours, received only one change of clothes a year, got used to little food and water, and no possessions. If literacy was not formally forbidden, it was rare for owners to grant their captives the right to attend schools, thus creating a sociability broken by customs and reality.

Thus, the school can contribute to reflect on this historical heritage and understand how inequality and racism were structured in Brazil.

In addition to the laws mentioned above, the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) also establishes the integration of this theme throughout the curriculum in a transdisciplinary way, because when establishing the Transversal Contemporary Themes (CTS), the document presents as one of the six macro areas, multiculturalism, which in turn, presents two CTS: Cultural Diversity and Education for the appreciation of multiculturalism in Brazilian historical and cultural matrices (BRASIL, 2019). Thus, the



use of projects to address the Afro-Brazilian theme is important because it allows a transdisciplinary approach to the content.

Black Consciousness Day is celebrated on November twenty and according to Gomes (2019, p. 421-422), this date: "[...] began to establish itself as a holiday in the 1990s, in a Brazil that was ending another period of dictatorship and began to discuss its own past, its roots, its character, and its myths.

However, one day is not enough to approach such a diverse theme in schools and this was one of the reasons for planning a week of activities aimed at valuing the Afro-Brazilian culture. However, it is understood that the Afro-Brazilian theme should permeate the school curriculum throughout the school year, but due to the situation of social isolation and the remote classes, it was decided to concentrate the discussions in a one-week event. It is worth noting that this event is already integrated into the school's Pedagogical Policy Project and is included as an activity in the school calendar.

The event had its origin in 2016 in another school of the Fortaleza-CE prefecture, where the first actions related to the Africanity theme occurred. The Geography teacher of the institution (main author of this article) promoted a round of conversation with a speaker (student of the Federal University of Ceará-UFC) to present his country of origin: São Tomé and Príncipe. This moment was full of curiosities and reflections about the life of Africans in Brazil.

The speaker traveled to the North Region, but indicated his friend, also a UFC student and born in Guinea Bissau, to continue the dialogue activities with the school community. Thus, in 2017 another round of conversation was held with the students of the school where the project is currently developed[The change of school institution occurred due to the organizer of the event, Professor Paulo Ferreira (main author of this work), having requested transfer to João Mendes de Andrade School].

The contact inside the University with Africans, the reports and the dialogues about racial prejudice made the main author of this work realize the real need to dialogue about the issues of the black movement in Brazil. Thus, it was these experiences that laid





the foundations for Africanity Week and became the guiding thread for the development of the pedagogical activity that is currently being carried out at the school.

Because of the complexity of the theme of Afro-Brazilian culture, it is necessary to use multiple pedagogical interventions. Thus, in the first and second edition of Africanity Week, which occurred respectively in 2018 and 2019, the event was composed of debates, lectures, film presentations, thematic classes, mask production, Afro beauty parades, and photo exhibitions. Each activity was coordinated by teachers from various areas of knowledge, in order to contemplate the importance of the theme.

The third edition of the event was entirely virtual and was carried out with the adhesion of some teachers who were responsible for conducting activities or for inviting specialists to approach the theme. The planning of the virtual edition of the event was carried out in a series of steps, as can be seen in Chart 1:

Chart 1- Africanity Week Planning

Dates	Activities	Responsible
29/10/2020	General Planning Meeting	School management and teachers
03/11/2020-06/11/2020	Organization and planning of presentation dates, activities and teaching methodologies.	Teachers, managers, coordinators and collaborators
09/11/2020-13/11/2020	Launch of event registration on the Google Classroom Platform.	Teachers
16/11/2020-20/11/2020	Launch of Drawing, Parody, Essay and Poem Contest	Teachers
23/11/2020-28/11/2020	Delivery of Activities and Africanity Week.	Teachers, managers, coordinators and collaborators

Source: Own authorship.

The first moment of the planning of the III Week of Africanity was the presentation of the project to the school management, for discussion and improvement of the proposal. However, there was a dilemma: "Was it better to carry out the activity for a small number of students, because of the period of remote classes and the lack of virtual access that it provided, or not to carry out the activity?" After a joint reflection, it was decided that since Africanity Week can raise awareness and contribute to the discussion of relevant themes, it would be important to hold the event, even if with a small number of students.



The second step was to discuss with the teachers of the different areas of knowledge the pedagogical activities to be carried out and the schedule of activities. After contacting the lecturers and defining the corresponding dates, the virtual posters were made and the activities were presented to the students.

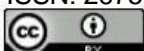
The biggest challenge of the planning was the access to the platforms, groups and virtual meeting applications by the students, and the dimension of the event, because ten formative moments were organized, which required a lot of organization and articulation to accomplish the presented demands. On the other hand, the school's teaching staff is very capable and committed, which made it possible to overcome the challenges.

The planning of the III Week of Africanity stood out for having a great adherence of teachers and managers, because a week of activities was set aside for this theme and some teachers actively participated in the lectures as mediators or speakers.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that most of the speakers in the virtual edition were professors with master's and doctorate degrees who carry out activities in universities or people who are part of black and indigenous movements. This fact is important because it promotes a well-founded discussion about Afro-Brazilian culture and promotes a broader view of the theme.

According to Santos, Junior, and Zoboli (2000, p.7): "It is necessary to establish resistance and organization of history in another direction, which is: to recognize that monuments of culture are also monuments of barbarism [...]." In this way, building space for discussion and dialogue inserting another historical, social and political perspective in the debate is primordial to organize a new history, the one told by those who suffered from the "civilizing" process.

There was also the participation of professionals from other states, so the group of collaborators was enlarged and there was a greater diversity of themes. In addition, for the first time the indigenous movement was included in the discussion (Indigenous culture: historical process of violation of rights, with Benício Pitaguary).





The activities were applied in a virtual classroom during the week, from November 23rd to 28th, 2020, from 9:30am to 11am and from 2pm to 3:30pm. The event was aimed at all the school's students, being advertised to the 4th to 9th grade classes of the Elementary School and to the Youth and Adult Education classes (EJA). The schedule was made available on a virtual poster, in the school's virtual groups and platforms (Chart 2).

Table 2- Schedule of the III Week of Africanity: the mother color of all colors

Day	Morning	Afternoon
Second 23/11/2020	Presentation of the african week and dialogue about the life of Carolina de Jesus (school teacher: Paulo Ferreira).	Lecture, Black youth: prison and public policies for social protection (Psychologist Adriana Martins-Unifor).
Tuesday 24/11/2020	African Masks and Silencing Workshop (Prof. Ms. Jarir Pereira).	Racism in Sport (Profa. Dr. Cristiane Sousa).
Fourth 25/11/2020	Poetic narrative round "black lives matter" (Profa. Dr. Kassia Mota).	Umbanda: typically Brazilian religion, its origin and history (Prof. Cecilia Renata).
Farm 26/11/2020	Turban workshop: the construction of the feminist struggle in the black movement (Prof. Andréa furtado, Coordinator of the Nucleus for Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture studies at UniJuazeiro)	Historical review of the laws that impact black life in Brazil (School teacher: Evilene).
Sixth 27/11/2020	Indigenous culture: historical process of rights violation (Benício Pitaguary).	Violence against black people in the peripheries of Fortaleza (Prof. Ms. Jarir Pereira).

Source: Own authorship.

Finally, Table 2 reveals the diversity of topics that were addressed at the event and the organizers' intention is to expand these discussions in future editions of the event, given the importance of the debate on issues related to Afro-Brazilian culture. It is worth mentioning that regarding the black movement and its contribution to education Costa, Souza and Silva (2020, p.7), state that: "The black movement in Brazil has an essential role in Education, and in the struggle for equity in black education, providing an important role in the sphere of informal education".





Thus, we highlight that the whole event was built and deliberated by mediations of the black movement, guided by speeches, documents or legal instrumentalizations.

4 Final considerations

The first virtual edition of the III Africanity Week allowed teachers and school management to reflect on the importance of discussing the theme of Afro-Brazilian culture even with all the difficulties imposed by remote classes.

Thus, the goal of the next event is to involve more teachers in the production of the Africanity Week and advance the work on indigenous issues and make the school more plural and diverse.

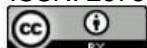
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