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### Conversation circles in Childhood Education: a bibliographic mapping

Kátia Lanuce Morais Noronha Doronha

Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, Mossoró, RN, Brasil

Maria Margarita Villegas<sup>ii</sup> (D

Universidade Federal Rural do Semiárido, Mossoró, RN, Brasil

Marcelo Bezerra de Morais<sup>iii</sup>

Universidade do Estado Rio Grande do Norte, Mossoró, RN, Brasil

#### **Abstract**

This article aims to present a survey of productions on the "conversation circles in childhood education". Searches were made in the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Brasil* (CAPES) and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) journal portals; in the theses and dissertations database of the *Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações* (BDTD), and in the CAPES Theses and Dissertations Catalog. The theoretical contribution was based on the concept of the state of knowledge in Ferreira (2002) and Romanowski and Ens (2006). The methodology was the research of the state of knowledge type, which aims to collect data on the knowledge produced about a certain topic. The results indicate a low number of productions on the subject and the need to carry out research based on the perspective and knowledge of educators who carry out conversation circles.

**Keywords:** State of Knowledge. Conversation Circles. Childhood Education.

### A roda de conversa na Educação Infantil: um mapeamento bibliográfico

### Resumo

O presente texto tem o propósito de apresentar um levantamento das produções sobre a "roda de conversa na educação infantil". As buscas se deram nos portais de periódicos da Capes e SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online); nos bancos de dados de teses e dissertações da Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações (BDTD), e no Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações da Capes. O aporte teórico se deu a partir do conceito do estado do conhecimento em Ferreira (2002) e Romanowski e Ens (2006). A metodologia foi a pesquisa do tipo estado do conhecimento que tem como finalidade levantar dados sobre o conhecimento produzido a respeito de determinado tema. Os resultados apontam um volume baixo de produções sobre a temática e, a necessidade da realização de pesquisas partindo do olhar e dos saberes dos educadores na realização da roda de conversa.

**Palavras-chave:** Estado do Conhecimento. Roda de conversa. Educação Infantil.

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232 https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo

ISSN: 2675-519X

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### 1 Introduction

Within the context of Early Childhood Education, the conversation circle is one of the activities that contributes effectively to learning, presenting itself as a dialogic space, where teacher and student have the opportunity to both speak and listen, where language is developed and interaction and socialization take place. Due to its relevance, this theme needs to be studied, offering subsidies to educators to develop this activity in their classrooms in a way that contributes to the effectiveness of learning, as well as the cognitive, social, and affective development of the students.

Given the relevance of the proposed theme, this study aims to carry out a survey of the productions about the "conversation circle in early childhood education", in the Capes and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) journals and in the theses and dissertations databases of the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), and Capes' Theses and Dissertations Catalog, in order to analyze the investigative trends on the theme; and to carry out approximations and distancements among the works produced.

The choice for the state-of-knowledge research was made because it allows a collection of the knowledge produced on the topic, enabling an overview of what has already been published in the area. It also makes it possible to identify the focus of this research, the methodology used, the results obtained, and possible gaps that will point to paths that still need to be traveled. The main theoretical references that supported this research were Ferreira (2002) and Romanowski and Ens.).

The body of the work presents the following structure: theoretical contributions that discuss the state of knowledge and its importance for scientific research. The methodology applied in this study. Next, we bring the results and discussion that presents the description of the selected studies, followed by the similarities and differences between them. And finally, the final considerations, where the reflections obtained from

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232

https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo

ISSN: 2675-519X

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the study are expressed. Next we invite you, in the light of Ferreira (2002), and Romanowski and Ens. (2006), to understand what characterizes a state of knowledge.

## State of Knowledge

According to Romanowski and Ens (2006), the intensification in the number of publications generated in recent years, also raises the interest for the type of study called "state of the art", this, aims to identify the works developed in certain areas of knowledge, as well as; analyze them, categorize them to find out what are their approaches and perspectives. Following Romanowski and Ens's line of reasoning, the present work is a state of knowledge, because:

The studies carried out from a systematization of data, called "state of the art", receive this denomination when they cover an entire area of knowledge, in the different aspects that generated productions. For example: to perform a "state of the art" on "Teacher Education in Brazil" it is not enough to study only the abstracts of dissertations and theses, it is necessary to study the productions in congresses in the area, studies on the publications in periodicals of the area. The study that addresses only one sector of the publications on the theme under study has been called "state of knowledge". (ROMANOWSKI and ENS, 2006, p. 39 and 40).

The present article makes a cut, researching the productions about the "conversation circle in early childhood education" in periodicals, theses and dissertations. Books and annals of events were not included, therefore, it is called state of knowledge. Such bibliographic studies are fundamental before carrying out a research, because they point out what has already been produced, thus avoiding repetition and also showing the existing gaps related to the researched theme.

Ferreiro (2002) states that the state of knowledge has the "challenge of mapping and discussing a certain academic production in different fields of knowledge, trying to answer which aspects and dimensions have been highlighted and privileged in different times and places [...]" (FERREIRO, 2002, p. 258). In other words, the state of knowledge provides an overview of certain themes, where they are being built, and how these productions are happening. And yet, it offers the researcher the opportunity to get to

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know what has already been produced, to then, lead him to address the existing gaps in his object of study.

Based on this premise, this work aims to obtain an overview of the productions in two portals of journals (Capes and SciELO) and two databases of theses and dissertations (BDTD and Capes Catalog), about the conversation circle in early childhood education. The results obtained will make it possible to follow the evolution of the theme in the educational field, perceive the way other researchers look at the theme and point out paths that still need to be followed.

## 2 Methodology

The methodology applied involved the following steps: a) survey of the works from periodicals; b) survey of the works from databases of theses and dissertations; c) analysis of the documents found and selected in the databases. We emphasize that, during the research on the productions, we always opted for an open search, since early childhood education, officially regulated as the first stage of basic education is something fairly new, which implies in results of recent works in this area.

### a) a) Survey of works from periodicals

At the beginning of the research, we used several descriptors to make sure that we would find all the available works on the theme. At first, the search was conducted in the Capes Periodical Portal and in the SciELO periodical because they are virtual libraries that have a large amount of collections and referential bases.

So, on June 2nd, 2020, we searched the Capes Periodicals Portal using the following descriptors: "saberes docentes" AND "roda de conversa" AND "educação infantil" and found no results. When searching with the descriptors "roda de conversa" AND "educação infantil", we found 15 documents. When we

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used the descriptors "saberes docentes" AND "roda de conversa", we obtained only one result, and in it the "roda de conversa" appeared as a research methodology and not as an object of study. When we put the complete phrase in quotation marks "roda de conversa na educação infantil", we did not get any results.

On June 7, still in the Capes Periodicals Portal, we searched using the descriptors "educação infantil" AND "roda de conversa", and we found the same results (15 documents). However, when we read the titles and abstracts we found that 12 studies used the conversation wheel as a research methodology, 1 article dealt with early childhood education, but did not focus on the conversation wheel. Thus, only two articles were in fact related to our theme. When we searched the SciELO databases, using the same descriptors, we obtained 4 results, 2 related to the conversation circle as a pedagogical activity in early childhood education and 2 that used the conversation circle as a research methodology and not as an object of study..

## b) Survey of works from theses and dissertations databases

The databases of theses and dissertations used in the search were: the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD) and the Capes Catalog of Theses and Dissertations. When we searched the BDTD, using the same descriptors "roda de conversa" AND "educação infantil", we obtained 70 results. However, when we read the titles and abstracts, we verified that, similarly to what happened with the journals, most of them dealt with the wheel of conversation used as an instrument to carry out the research and not as a work methodology in early childhood education.

So, we found that only 7 works, 6 dissertations and 1 thesis, were in fact related to the theme. Of the 7 works, 1 dissertation was not analyzed, because it had already been contemplated in one of the selected articles; another was discarded because when we read it, we verified that it was in fact a science circle, and not a conversation circle, leaving 5 selected documents. Later, more precisely in March 2021, we searched again and found another dissertation that had been defended in 2020 on the theme in question.

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232

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Searching the Capes Catalog of Theses and Dissertations, with the same descriptors, we found 41 results, 33 dissertations and 4 theses. Of these, 32 dealt with early childhood education, but did not focus on the conversation circle. 4 dissertations and 1 thesis were the same contemplated by BDTD, leaving 4 dissertations. Of these, 1 was not analyzed because it was not available.

## b) analysis of the documents found and selected from the databases

At first, we perform a descriptive analysis of the documents found in the journals. Then, we make the approximations and distances between the documents and relate them to our study theme, which is about the knowledge mobilized by early childhood education teachers when mediating the conversation circle. We proceeded in the same way in relation to the documents in the theses and dissertations databases.

### 3 Results and Discussion

Through the analysis of the theme "roda de conversa na educação infantil", researched in four different databases, we reached the result of 13 documents. In the table below we can have a better perspective of the productions carried out in this area.

Table 1 - total volume of selected documents

Title	Author(s)	Year	Document Type	Database
Freinet Pedagogy and the school in the 21st century: humanizing perspectives for the pedagogical work	SILVA; LIMA; VALIENGO.	2017	Article	Capes Periodicals
Reflections on the Conversation Rounds in Early Childhood Education	VARGAS; PEREIRA; MOTTA	2016	Article	Capes Periodicals
Regulatory forms and child participation: marks of mismatches in the moments of the wheel in Early Childhood Education	SIMÃO; REBELO	2019	Article	SciELO
The development of the activity "conversation circle" in	PAIVA; ARAÚJO; CRUZ	2019	Article	SciELO

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232

https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo

ISSN: 2675-519X



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kindergarten classes				
The participation of children in the conversation circle: possibilities and limits of educational and pedagogical action in early childhood education	SILVA	2015	Dissertation	BDTD and Capes Catalog
The conversation circle in early childhood education: analysis of its formative aspects with children from three to five years old	BERTONCELI	2016	Dissertation	BDTD and Capes Catalog
No descomeço era o verbo: an invitation to Manoel de barros for the conversation circle in early childhood education	OLIVEIRA	2015	Dissertation	BDTD and Capes Catalog
Interactional marks in conversation wheels in early childhood education	MEMMEL	2018	Dissertation	BDTD and Capes Catalog
The "Conversation Wheel" in Early Childhood Education: A Critical-Collaborative Approach to Knowledge Production	RYCKEBUSCH	2011	Thesis	BDTD and Capes Catalog
The wheel in children's school learning the wheel learning to talk	BOMBASSARO	2010	Dissertation	Capes Catalog
Child participation in everyday school life: children with voice and turn	BASTOS	2014	Dissertation	Capes Catalog
The teacher's view on listening, authorship and protagonism of children in a municipal school of early childhood education in the city of São Paulo: achievements and challenges.	ALBOZ	2016	Dissertation	Capes Catalog
The conversation circle in dialogue with the culture circle in early childhood education: a teacher's pedagogical practice.	SOARES	2020	Dissertation	BDTD

Source: own elaboration.

## **Capes Periodicals**

Silva, Lima and Valiengo (2017) have as objective of their study, perform an analysis of educational practice based on teaching techniques of Freinet Pedagogy from

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232 https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo

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the pedagogical implications of Cultural-Historical Theory. One of the techniques used by Freinet is the conversation wheel, which is presented as a moment for dialogue and that enables learning to listen and speak. The discussion was based on a doctoral thesis (SILVA, 2016), where the teacher-researcher used the conversation circle with children from two classes of early childhood education in the city of Cubatão/SP. Data generation occurred through active participation, observation and recording of the educational practice. The results indicated that such techniques contribute to a fuller and more harmonious development in childhood.

Vargas, Pereira and Motta (2016) also present the conversation circle as a favorable moment for dialogue, where one learns to talk, respect the other, it is also seen as a space full of life, where knowledge is shared. The article aims to understand the meaning that three Kindergarten teachers from E.M.E.F Cidade do Rio Grande - CAIC/FURG give to the conversation rounds and what they say about this activity that is part of the daily routine of Kindergarten. The approach was qualitative in nature and data was generated through semi-structured interviews. They conclude that, for its relevance and for the contributions it offers to children and teachers, the conversation circle is an indispensable element that must be explored by teachers in their pedagogical work. Both articles are similar, as they point to dialog as an important element in the implementation of the conversation circle.

#### **SciELO**

Simão e Rebelo (2019) presents the contributions of a research developed at the master's level and that had as problematic, the investigation of regulatory forms of a public institution of Early Childhood Education. Methodological procedures from ethnography were used with a group of children from three to five years old. From the empirical analysis it was evident that there was a mismatch between the children's right to participate and the existing rules of the institution, and this mismatch was more evident at the time of the conversation circle held by the teachers. To carry out the analysis, the

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232

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authors made use of studies from the Sociology of Childhood, which led them to realize that although the conversation circle is seen as an activity that favors the participation of children in decision making in the school environment, it still needs to be studied and discussed taking into account the way it is carried out in the school routine.

Paiva, Araújo, and Cruz (2019) presents a paper that is a cutout of two researches (Araújo, 2017; Paiva, 2016) about the "conversation wheel" in Early Childhood Education. The central objective of the work is, "to describe and analyze how this activity has happened in kindergarten and preschool classes in two Centers for Early Childhood Education of the municipal public network of Fortaleza (Ceará, Brazil)" (p. 73). Both researches elected the qualitative methodological approach, observation and interviews with a preschool educator and one from a daycare center were the instruments chosen for data production. The theoretical foundations were as follows: Vygotsky (2008) and Wallon (2007, 2008) contributing on the importance of interactions and language in the construction of thought and development of the child; Rinaldi (2017), Oliveira-Formosinho (2007) and Oliveira-Formosinho and Araújo (2013) bringing the focus on the importance of listening and participation of children in the school space. The results indicate the need for initial and continuing education that provides educators with the opportunity to reflect on the importance of children's active participation in all moments experienced in the classroom, including in the implementation and decision-making that take place during the activity of the conversation circle.

The two articles found in the SciELO database provoked many reflections. When we chose our object of study, aiming to understand what is the knowledge mobilized by the teachers of early childhood education to guide their pedagogical practice in the implementation of the conversation circle, we had in mind a conversation circle that enables interaction, dialog, as well as a space that enables the concretization of learning in its different aspects.

However, when we read the articles we come across a different reality, where the conversation wheel is even pointed out as having become a regulatory instrument (SIMÃO & REBELO, 2019). Paiva, Araújo, and Cruz (2019) found a gap between the

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<u>ISSN: 2675</u>-519X



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discourse and the practice of educators, where they seem unaware of other possibilities for the teacher to act in the conversation circle, other than a centralizing role.

Thus, some questions arise that will certainly serve to reinforce our object of study, and among them are: what is the knowledge that the teachers use when they carry out the conversation circle? Are they just following a routine, or do they have a purpose in providing this moment? Is the dialog actually happening? Such questions can be considered gaps in the theme addressed, and point to paths that still need to be walked.

## **Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD)**

Silva (2015) brings as object of study the participation of children in conversation rounds in the context of early childhood education, aiming to recognize elements and strategies that enable and/or limit the participation of children in these moments. Its theoretical framework was based on authors such as Gaitán, Hart, Fernandes, Espinar, Sarmento and Coutinho. In the field research it was used the observation of four (4) year old children in the moments of conversation circle, and semi-structured interviews with the teachers, this happened in five (5) Municipal Centers for Children Education - CMEI - in the city of Goiânia. After the analysis of the results, the author said it was possible to verify that the conversation circle was used more as a ritual, where the dialogues were conducted by the teachers and the children were only responsible for answering what was asked, thus evidencing the centralization of the adult.

Bertonceli (2016) discusses in her research, especially, regarding the development of language in the moments of the wheel. She describes her objective as follows: "to analyze the formative aspects of the educational practices with verbal language, in the Conversation Rounds held with a group of children aged three to five years, in three public institutions of Early Childhood Education, in the city of Francisco Beltrão, in 2014" (p.09). The studies were based on Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology and Bakthin's dialogical perspective of language. The work is qualitative and ethnographic in nature. We analyzed curricular documents, audio recordings, and semi-

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structured interviews with three teachers from the institutions that were part of the research context. Based on the information produced, it was possible to realize the need to break with guidelines that are characterized by the rigidity of educational practices, bringing children's voices to the center of these practices.

The work of Oliveira (2015) aimed to expand the reflection on the praxis of the conversation circle in Early Childhood Education, and had as a source of inspiration the poetic work of Manoel de Barros. The work aimed to: "collaborate with the construction of (re)significations of the wheel in the field of Early Childhood Education" (p.6). The methodological base used was Gonzalez Rey's qualitative epistemology, which has a constructive-interpretative and dialogical character. The instruments chosen for the construction of information were: the reading and analysis of the Political and Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the school chosen for the research context; participant observations in the classroom; the writing of a field diary; the realization of 4 workshops, where the author, in a playful way, introduced the poetry of Manoel de Barros and semi-structured interviews with the teachers. The research sought to bring to evidence the conversation circle as a privileged activity of meeting children with their peers and with adults.

Memmel (2018) discusses the teacher/student interaction during the conversation circle, aiming to understand the conversation circle from the interaction that happens between teachers and students in early childhood education. Its theoretical contributions are based on Preti (2010), Marcuschi (2001) and Jubran (2015). The research was conducted in a public school of Early Childhood Education in the city of São Paulo, in two different classes, one of Infant I and the other Infant II. We collected audiovisual records and interviews with teacher A, who was also the teacher of both classes. The data analysis indicated that the teacher, by using certain strategies such as repetition and paraphrasing, assumed the condition of mediator of the interaction.

Soares (2020) brings as research object the conversation circle in dialogue with the culture circle in early childhood education. The study was conducted in a Municipal School of Early Childhood Education (Emei), located in the east side of São Paulo, with

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4-year-old children and the class teacher as subjects. The study was qualitative in nature. The instruments used to collect information were: participant observation, photographs and audio recording of the conversation rounds. The theoretical basis was based on Paulo Freire's ideas in dialog with authors of childhood studies. The results pointed out that there is a possibility of working the conversation circles in dialogue with the crop circles, given that the practice of the pedagogical actions of the collaborating teacher emphasizes the importance of listening and values the closeness with the children in moments of dialogue.

In her thesis Ryckebusch (2011) analyzes the conversation circles she recorded as a teacher-researcher in a private early childhood education classroom in the city of São Paulo. Her goal was "to analyze, in order to critically understand, the discursive organization of students and teacher in the activity of conversation wheel" (p.13). The theoretical basis was discussed from authors such as: Vygotsky; Leontiev and Engestrom; Bakhtin/Volochinov and Magalhaes and John-Stemer. The methodology is anchored in critical collaborative research. The production of the information was based on recordings made during the roda, which were later transcribed. The data analysis allowed us to verify that, by creating collaborative and reflective contexts during the conversation circle, there were transformations in the students' and in the teacherresearcher's ways of acting.

From the above described works, we verified that three works (SILVA, 2015; MEMMEL 2018 and SOARES 2020) discussed the interactions during the activity of the round of conversation. One sought to analyze the development of language, (BERTONCELI, 2016). Another, in a poetic way, sought to contribute to possible (re)significations of the wheel, based on the poetic work of Manoel de Barros (OLIVEIRA, 2015). And Ryckebusch (2011), sought to analyze, in order to understand the discursive organizations of the students and the teacher-researcher in moments of conversation circle.

### **Capes Theses and Dissertations Catalog**

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Bombassaro (2010) conducted her research in a class of 5-year-old children in a private early childhood education school in Porto Alegre. She presents the wheel as content-language, in the perspective of Junqueira Filho (2005) and aims to investigate what structure and rules of operation exist in the meetings between teachers and students through the conversation wheel. The methodological instruments used were: participant observation, field diary, semi-structured interviews and conversations with the children. The data analysis gave him possibilities of identifying meanings about the structure and rules of functioning of the conversation rounds.

On the other hand, Bastos (2014) was a teacher-researcher, in a study that aimed to understand the ways of participation of a group of children in routine school moments, aiming to identify the moments that children felt they participated and how they meant these moments. The theoretical framework used was from the perspective of the sociology of childhood (SARMENTO, 1997; 2000; 2007, CORSARO, 2011 and DELGADO, 2004; 2007). The methodological tools chosen for the investigation were observation, records, children's drawings, listening and their speeches. In the analysis of the data obtained, one of the categories of analysis was the children's participation in the conversation circle, which was configured as a dialogical space/time of everyday life, but still quite linked to the strong presence of the adult supervisor.

The work of Alboz (2016) aimed to "understand how educators of the "Ciranda" school listen to children and transform their educational practice, aiming to ensure children's participation and authorship" (p. 21). The fieldwork was carried out in a public school in the municipality of São Paulo, using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The theoretical support was provided by authors of the sociology of childhood and publications of the Ministry of Education and the Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo. The study revealed that one of the principles that consolidate the dialog, indicated by the school is the conversation circle as a daily work methodology.

In the three dissertations, the conversation circle is presented as a place to talk, dialogue, talk and listen. In the last two, the intention of the research was not to study about the wheel; however, in the data generation, the wheel appears as a place where

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children participate and where they are listened to, thus contemplating the proposed theme. As far as our object of study is concerned, they are close when they see in the conversation circle an opportunity for dialogue, as well as a moment to speak and be heard, but they are distant when they do not aim at understanding the knowledge mobilized by the educators when they carry out this moment of great learning that is the conversation circle.

In summary, the documents analyzed can be divided into the following thematic blocks:

Table 2- Division of the documents into thematic blocks

Blocos temáticos	Autor, ano			
5 works highlight the importance of	PAIVA, ARAÚJO, CRUZ, (2019);			
dialogue, of giving voice and more space for	BERTONCELLI, (2016); OLIVEIRA, (2015);			
children's participation	SIMÃO E REBELO, (2019) e SOARES,			
	(2020).			
4 point out the importance of the	SILVA, LIMA, VALIENGO, (2017);			
conversation circle for development and	VARGAS, PEREIRA, MOTTA, (2016);			
learning.	RYCHEBUSCH, (2011) e ALBOZ, (2016).			
4 indicate the centrality of the adult in	SILVA, (2015); MEMMEL, (2018),			
conducting and controlling the conversation	BOMBASSARO, (2014) e BASTOS, (2014).			
circle, not giving the children opportunities				
for dialogue among peers and even with the				
teacher himself.				

Source: own elaboration.

#### 4 Final considerations

The study allowed a survey and analysis of the corpus formed by 13 documents, being 4 articles, 8 dissertations and 1 thesis. The documents were extracted through an open search in the Capes Periodical Portal (02), SciELO Periodical Portal (02), BDTD (06) and Capes Theses and Dissertations Catalog (03).

Regarding the proposed theme "conversation circle in early childhood education", it is noticeable a still small number of productions in the area, one of the probable reasons can be given to the fact that early childhood education only became official as the first stage of basic education in 1996, with the Law of Directives and Bases of



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National Education (LDBEN). Thus, all the national studies on the subject are subsequent to this date, which characterizes them as recent research.

In the analysis it became evident that the conversation circle is seen by the researchers as a privileged space for the occurrence of dialogue, interaction and favoring of children's learning; however, some works pointed out a gap between the theory and practice of this methodology, among which we highlight: the predominance of adult speech, pedagogical rigidity, exaggerated control preventing interaction among peers and even between teacher/student. These mismatches make it even more viable the search for understanding about the knowledge mobilized by educators when they carry out the conversation circle in their daily school routine.

On the contrary, we hope that this "state of knowledge" may become a starting point for a "state of the art" involving the theme, in which event annals and books are also contemplated. And that more research be carried out on the conversation circle, since the theme is of fundamental importance not only for early childhood education, but also for all stages of education, since a quality basis expands the possibilities of building a successful school career for the students.

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### Kátia Lanuce Morais Noronha, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4775-0488

Universidade do Estado Rio Grande do Norte, Universidade Federal rural do Semi-Árido, Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte.

Possui graduação em Pedagogia (2006) e especialização em Gestão do Sistema de Ensino (2008) pela Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Norte – UERN. Mestranda em Ensino pelo Programa de PósGraduação em Ensino (POS-ENSINO – UERN/UFERSA/IFRN).

Contribuição de autoria: escrita do artigo

Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/6885849094609639

E-mail: katialanuce@gmail.com

## ii Maria Margarita Villegas, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4965-2291

Universidade Federal Rural do Semi- Árido, Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador Professora da Universidade Federal Rural do Semiárido (UFERSA). Professora Aposentada na Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador – UPEL, Núcleo Maracay - Venezuela. Doutora em Educação pela Universidade de Carababo, Venezuela.

Contribuição de autoria: orientação e supervisão do artigo.

Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/1304644589149103

E-mail: margaritavillega@hotmail.com

### iii Marcelo Bezerra de Morais, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4563-822X

Universidade do Estado Rio Grande do Norte, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ensino (PosEnsino – UERN/UFERSA/IFRN), Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho".

Professor da Faculdade de Educação da Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte (UERN) e do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ensino. Licenciado em Matemática pela UERN e Mestre e Doutor pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em educação Matemática (PPGEM), da Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (Unesp – Campus Rio Claro).

Contribuição de autoria: orientação e supervisão do artigo.

Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/2878861519191477

E-mail: marcelobezerra@uern.br

Editora responsável: Cristine Brandenburg

Especialista ad hoc: Karla Raphaella Costa Pereira

## Como citar este artigo (ABNT):

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022 DOI: https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232 https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo

ISSN: 2675-519X

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NORONHA, Kátia Lanuce Morais; VILLEGAS, Maria Margarita; MORAIS, Marcelo Bezerra. A roda de conversa na Educação Infantil: um mapeamento bibliográfico. **Rev.Pemo**, Fortaleza, v. 4, e47232, 2022. Disponível em: <a href="https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232">https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v4.7232</a>

Received October 17, 2021. Accepted on March 19, 2022. Published on March 20, 2022.

