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CHALLENGES FACED BY EJA TEACHERS IN THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE: A LOOK AT THE MUNICIPAL TEACHER SCHOOL NAIR DUARTE

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to promote a discussion about Youth and Adult Education, with a focus on teaching. Its main objective is to understand the main challenges faced by EJA teachers at the Nair Duarte Municipal School and, as specific objectives, to outline the profile of EJA teachers, identify aspects of teaching practice and main challenges faced by teachers; and, to investigate the alternatives found by teachers to deal with the challenges. The methodologies that supported this work were: bibliographic research, deepening studies on the EJA, consisting of books, articles and theses on the subject; field research, which included the use of questionnaires intended for teachers. From the data collection, it was possible to identify aspects of the pedagogical practice of teachers, among them, the planning, resources used, but mainly it was possible to perceive that one of the greatest difficulties faced by the teachers is the attendance of the students. Finally, it is believed that this study can contribute with an academic environment and society, promoting a reflection among the professionals of Education on the role of the teacher of the EJA. Through continuous improvement of pedagogical practice, better teaching and learning conditions can be provided.

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INTRODUCTION

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a teaching modality supported by law that guarantees the right to school for everyone who did not have access at the appropriate age. This is the result of social demands, given the challenge of contributing to equal opportunities for young people and adults. However, the country still lives with a large portion of the illiterate and illiterate population, without access to their full citizenship. EJA students correspond to those people who for some reason interrupted their studies, returning to school outside the age considered appropriate. The reasons that led these students to interrupt their studies are diverse, among them: difficulty to reconcile with work, family problems, learning difficulties, lack of stimulus to study. Thus, this study is relevant to the academic environment, as it shows Education

professionals, trained and in training, that the teacher needs to be prepared to be a teacher at EJA, as he will find young people, adults and even the elderly who work during the day and at night they feel tired. Given this situation, it is necessary to rethink the education of young people and adults. The school must meet the students' learning needs, providing better teaching and learning conditions through continuous improvement of pedagogical practice. And the EJA teacher, due to the students' difficulties, also faces challenges every day in his teaching practice. Thus, the search to understand the situations and challenges faced by these teachers, delimits the theme of this study. The choice of this theme is justified by the experience of the researcher, who for five years worked as a teacher at EJA. With that, he realized the difficulties faced in the classroom, from difficult moments in which it was necessary to think and develop strategies to arouse the interest

of students in participating in classes and attending school. Thus, the central problem of this research is presented as: What are the biggest challenges faced by teachers of Youth and Adult Education during their teaching practice at the Municipal School Professora Nair Duarte?

Therefore, the general objective of this study is to understand the biggest challenges faced by the teachers of the EJA of the Municipal School Professora Nair Duarte, and from this the specific objectives are presented: To outline the profile of the teachers of Youth and Adult Education; Identify aspects of teaching practice and challenges faced by EJA teachers and investigate the alternatives found by teachers to deal with challenges. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a field research was carried out in a school in the municipal public network of Araguatins through a quali-quantitative approach. In addition, a questionnaire directed to teachers was used as a data collection instrument. The proposed study was structured in five chapters: the first being this Introduction; the second is the theoretical framework, subdivided into two secondary sections; the third, the methodological procedures; the fourth, results and discussions and finally the final considerations.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the problems that exist in the education of young people and adults, especially the challenges faced by teachers in the exercise of their pedagogical practice, a bibliographic research was initially carried out through readings to deepen the theoretical questions about the theme investigated. After this theoretical deepening, a field research was carried out, of the descriptive and exploratory type, with a quali-quantitative approach. As a result, the instrument used to obtain the data was a questionnaire, as well as it was chosen for the agility and practicality of the process.

According to Gil, the questionnaire consists of:

[...] investigation technique composed of a set of questions that are submitted to people with the purpose of obtaining information about knowledge, beliefs, feelings, values, interests, expectations, aspirations, fears, present or past behavior etc. (GIL, 2008, p. 121).

On October 18, the letter of introduction (ANNEX A) was delivered to the school management, requesting authorization to conduct the research. On October 24, 2018, the forms were delivered and collected on October 29, 2018. The questionnaire (APPENDIX A), consisting of 16 questions, was divided into three blocks of questions, with each block seeking to meet one goal. The first block presented the questions that sought to outline the profile of EJA teachers; the second, composed of closed questions aimed at investigating aspects of teachers' practice and their difficulties; and, finally, the block composed of an open question that presented reports on how teachers face daily difficulties. The data from open questions consisted of a qualitative analysis, seeking to interpret the main focus of the research through the established objectives. To understand the other questions, quantitative data were presented from graphs and charts. The location of the research was the Municipal School Professora Nair Duarte, an educational institution of the municipal public network, which serves students from the 1st to the 6th year on day shifts. In the evening, in this case, it offers the Youth and Adult Education

(EJA) modality. The students enrolled in EJA correspond to a total of 136 students, of which there is a class from the 5th year, one from the 6th, one from the 7th year and two classes from the 8th year (second segment of elementary school). The population of this research is the eight teachers who work in the EJA classes at night, obtaining as a sample seven teachers. It should also be noted that under no circumstances will the names of the teachers be revealed, being identified only as R1, R2 and so on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of eja Teacher: In this section, the results of the first block of questions are presented, consisting of eight questions that aimed to identify who are the teachers who work at EJA at the Municipal School Professora Nair Duarte. The questions verified: sex, age, time working in the teaching profession, time working in EJA, education, training course, discipline they teach in EJA, specialization in EJA. Of the 07 teachers surveyed, three are men and four are women, which represents a percentage of 57.1% female and 42.9% male. It appears that the average experience of teachers in EJA is 9 years, and the teacher who has had less experience, has worked for 4 years and who has more time in this modality has 18 years of experience in Youth Education and Adults. The average age of teachers is around 42 years, with the youngest teacher being 37 years old and the oldest 63 years old. With regard to teaching, teachers are reasonably experienced ranging from 35 to 10 years of experience. From the data collected, it was noticed that 57.1% of respondents are specialists and 42.9% have only a degree. In other words, all teachers have higher education. Of the seven respondents, two did not identify their background; two are trained in Pedagogy and teach Portuguese; a graduate of Normal Superior and works in the disciplines of Geography and Art. Only two professors teach the specific subjects of their graduation (R3 and R7). Despite the results showing that four teachers have specialization, only one has a specialization in the area of EJA.

Aspects of teaching practice and difficulties in eja: In this section, the results of the second block of questions will be presented and discussed, consisting of 06 closed questions and one open question, which aimed to verify aspects of teaching practice and to identify the main difficulties faced by teachers. In the first question, respondents were asked what other printed teaching materials they used in addition to the textbook, and, in the case of other resources, they were asked to mention which ones. They could score more than one alternative, so the result exceeds 100%. Regarding printed teaching materials, it was found that 42.9% do not use the textbook; 57.1% use handouts prepared by themselves, using material taken from the Internet.

Based on the above, in the graphic above it appears that the teacher seeks other materials, not being limited to the textbook. For Cardoso & Passos (2016):

Didactic materials / procedures - books, newspapers, electronic devices or even a conversation wheel - should serve students as a reference to make comparisons and analyzes, correct concepts and stimulate students' interest, participation and autonomy (CARDOSO & PASSOS, 2016, p. 12).

The second question asked what motives motivated these teachers to work in Youth and Adult Education. There was an

agreement of 71.4% of the respondents to affirm that they work with EJA due to their availability to work at night and 28.6% admitted that they identify with the modality. The third question investigated how teachers carry out the planning of activities. In this question, in this case, they could check more than one option, so the sum of the result exceeds 100%.

According to the results of the study, 42.9% of the respondents carry out the planning fortnightly and individually; 42.9% weekly and jointly with other teachers; 14.3% fortnightly and with other teachers; 14.3% weekly and individually. Analyzing, it is clear that the number of teachers planning with other teachers or alone is balanced. About planning as a collective act Pellegrini highlights that team discussion integrates experiences, avoids repetition, routine and, when participating in collective planning, the teacher stops being a mere executor to be a participant in the process (PELLEGRINI, 2002). For Lopes (2016, p. 4), the planning is "Reflecting is the act of resuming, reconsidering the available data, revising, searching in a constant search for meaning. It is to examine carefully, pay attention, analyze carefully".

The fourth question asked how to exchange experiences with other EJA teachers.

The demonstrated that 42.9% of the teachers exchange experiences in the pedagogical meetings and 57.1% in the intervals of the classes. Gadotti (2006) highlights the importance of exchanging experiences between peers, through reports of experiences, workshops, work groups, collective learning, we can share old and new evidence, information and seek solutions with each other. This exchange of experiences paves the way for good practices to be shared and important problems to be tackled with the collaboration of all. In the fifth question, it was verified what are the pedagogical resources the teacher uses in the classroom. In the proposed question, respondents could check more than one alternative, so the result exceeds 100%. Regarding the pedagogical resources used by teachers, it is noted that 85.8% (six teachers) said they used the textbook, and one of them emphasized that he rarely uses it. Another relevant data is the number of teachers, who use the blackboard / whiteboard and media projector, being 71.5% (five teachers).

It is appropriate to point out that teachers look for other resources, a practice that is extremely necessary, as it reflects the importance and responsibility of the teacher's work, although these resources still seem very limited. Therefore, it becomes evident the need for teachers to be more engaged, in order to pay attention to the real need for good planning, to seek diversified teaching strategies, innovative methodologies, resulting in a more pleasant and engaging.

In the sixth and last closed question, the main difficulties faced by teachers in the exercise of teaching practice were verified. In this question, participants could check more than one option, so the sum of the result exceeds 100%. When the participants were asked what the greatest difficulties faced by the teachers were 100% of the respondents stated that the students' attendance is the greatest difficulty. In the course of this study, advances in the field of EJA were noted, but it is clear from the information collected that there is still much to be discussed. The CNE / CEB Opinion (2000) addresses the particularities of EJA and teacher training:

[...] the permanence in the school via teaching with contents worked in a different way with methods and times intended to the profile of this student. Also, the didactic treatment of contents and practices cannot be absent neither from the specificity of EJA nor from the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary character of the curricular components (BRASIL, 2000, p. 58).

The open question aimed to collect information or reports from teachers about their practices, finding out in what ways EJA teachers have been looking for alternatives to face the daily difficulties in the classroom. Of the seven teachers participating in the research, only six answered the proposed question. In the report of teachers R2 and R7, it is possible to show that they present in their speeches the use of different activities and seek to give special attention to students who have greater difficulties. In this sense, Horn and Staker (2015) draw attention to the fact that individuals do not learn at the same rate, as well as their needs are not the same. It is pointed out that the EJA teacher should always look for suitable methods for the target audience. Thus, it is important to know the students, what they expect from the school and their needs. As stated in the Curricular Proposal on Education for Youth and Adults (BRASIL, 2001): "your expectations, your culture, the characteristics and problems of your surroundings and your learning needs". Therefore, the teacher will have to use teaching methods that can contribute to the students' learning, since EJA students learn at a different pace from the others. In addition, teachers need to be patient with these people who, for some reason, have not had the opportunity to study at the appropriate age.

Teacher R3 clarifies that he seeks educational materials to make up for the absences at school. With this thought in mind, the teacher should always use different methods to promote quality teaching. Based on what was previously discussed, the EJA teacher has to be able to enter the world of young people and adults, looking for teaching strategies that involve them all during classes. It is also noted in the speech of this teacher his opinion about the textbook, which, as he evidenced, is extremely outdated.

It is observed in the speech of Professor R6 that he has willpower, but it is not enough. "Never a teacher who is lightened or motivated only by good will or by idealistic volunteering, but a teacher who is nourished by the general and also by the specificities that qualification as a systematic training requires" (PARECER CNE / CONEB, 2000, p. 56).

Above all, it is necessary for educational leaders to provide training courses, teaching materials appropriate to the modality in question. When the teacher proposes activities that relate to the student's reality, he is bringing subjects that the student knows into the classroom, making a connection between their daily lives and what is proposed in the curriculum.

To corroborate this discussion, Gadotti's speech follows:

It is up to the teacher to encourage these students to recognize in education the bridge to freedom, for their intellectual development before society. The educator must obtain didactic resources adequate to the reality of these students, using his praxis that for Paulo Freire was

understood as “action + reflection” (GADOTTI, 2006, p. 48).

R5 drew attention to something essential, which is the fact that it encourages students, which is extremely important, especially because they are EJA students, who constantly need to be encouraged to stay in school. The teacher demonstrates that one should not only have techniques and theories, it is necessary to show students that completing their studies is worthwhile. The main objective of youth and adult education is to help the individual to move forward, to become what he has the capacity to be, with just a stimulus, an incentive from the teacher (GOMES, 2011). The role of the educator in EJA is mainly to help the adult to understand the world around him and understand issues of his daily life more clearly. The R7 presented in its report the investment in its formation, with the intention of better attending the students. In this sense, it reinforces the essential idea that the teacher must always seek professional qualification and improvement through continuous training. With this, “the educator's training must be permanent and systematized, because the practice is done and remade” (GADOTTI, 2006, p. 59). In view of all the information collected, it is worth reflecting here that changing is necessary, changing attitudes, postures, whether from more daring planning, more attractive classes, an innovative project, that is, all forms of changes that contribute to student involvement are valid. Following this line of thought, Zabala (1998, p. 29) adds: “It is necessary to insist that everything we do in class, no matter how small, has a greater or lesser degree in the training of our students”.

Conclusion

As presented in the course of this work, Youth and Adult Education has expanded in recent years and has achieved some achievements. However, despite all of them and the paths taken by EJA, it is identified that there is still much to be overcome and achieved. It is necessary to move forward in the construction of public policies aimed at EJA, so that governments are aware of the importance of this modality, as well as it is essential to invest in the continuing education of teachers so that they develop specific skills regarding teaching practice in EJA. Other difficulties faced by teachers were also pointed out, among them: precarious pedagogical resources, lack of students' interest, lack of investment in teacher training and students' learning difficulties. As alternatives and possible solutions, teachers reported that they seek to promote diverse activities and encourage students. In view of the discussions and reflections developed, data drew a lot of attention, 71.4% of teachers pointed out as a reason to work at EJA the availability to work at night and not the fact of identifying with the modality. From these results, it was noticed that many times, within the school, good professionals with great intentions are unable to develop a meaningful work for the teaching of EJA. It is believed that this deficiency in teaching practice is the result of a non-specific initial training for EJA, as well as the lack of actions and continued training directed to teachers who work in this modality. Faced with a new attitude of teachers, students would be more interested in classes, increase their worldview and feel valued with the knowledge they bring from their life experiences, experiences as important as any knowledge.

Such changes would result in greater student interest and, consequently, reduce school dropout and absence from school. This is not to say that teachers are to blame, on the contrary, they also suffer the consequences, often of a delayed or unspecified initial training for EJA. However, the EJA teacher, in addition to believing, must have initiative and above all not be waiting for changes, or for management initiatives. He himself must perform actions on the part that belongs to him, although such actions may initially appear as "small drops in an immense ocean". Finally, the relevance of this theme is justified once again, due to all the discussion and contributions that this work can bring to academia, as well as to EJA professionals, pedagogy students, in short, to students and society. After all, a well-prepared teacher, aware of his role, with innovative methodologies, which involves the student in his classes, captivates him, encourages him, makes all the difference in the school life of these young people and adults and, consequently, contributes to a quality education.

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