

YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION (EJA) AND CURRICULUM IN BRAZILIAN STRICTO SENSU RESEARCH: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW IN THE BDTD (2000-2024)

EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS (EJA) E CURRÍCULO NA PESQUISA STRICTO SENSU BRASILEIRA: UMA REVISÃO SISTEMÁTICA NA BDTD (2000-2024)

EDUCACIÓN DE JÓVENES Y ADULTOS (EJA) Y CURRÍCULO EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN STRICTO SENSU BRASILEÑA: UNA REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA EN LA BDTD (2000-2024)

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Marcelo Penteado de Toledo¹, Carmem Lúcia Costa Amaral², Margareth Polido Pire³

ABSTRACT

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) constitutes a foundational field in Brazil, but it is historically marked by the insufficiency of specific pedagogical resources and practices, demanding a curriculum that dialogues with the diversity and trajectories of its subjects. Considering the imperative to understand the scientific basis supporting this modality, this work focuses on the articulation between EJA and Curriculum in Brazilian research. It aims to map the *Stricto Sensu* academic production, systematize the temporal evolution, and identify the thematic axes incident in the field. To this end, we proceed to the systematic literature review in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), analyzing a corpus of 136 works published between 2000 and 2024. In this way, it is observed that there is an exponential growth in production, with a significant concentration in the Southeast-Northeast axis, and that research is polarized around three axes: the Integrated Curriculum/PROEJA, the tension between Prescribed versus Lived Curriculum, and the Critical-Emancipatory Foundation. Which allows us to conclude that the field is consolidated and expanding, driven by the persistent pursuit of a politically engaged and methodologically adaptable curriculum for the specificities of EJA.

Keywords: Youth and Adult Education. Curriculum. Systematic Review. Public Policies. Emancipation.

RESUMO

A Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA) constitui um campo fundamental, mas historicamente marcado pela insuficiência de práticas e materiais pedagógicos específicos, demandando um currículo que dialogue com a diversidade e as trajetórias dos sujeitos. Considerando o imperativo de compreender a base científica que apoia esta modalidade, o presente trabalho se concentra na articulação entre EJA e Currículo na pesquisa brasileira. Objetiva-se, portanto, mapear a produção acadêmica *Stricto Sensu*, sistematizar a evolução temporal, e

¹ Doctoral student in Science and Mathematics Teaching. Universidade Cruzeiro do Sul.

E-mail: mtoledo@cs.cruzeirosul.edu.br

² Dr. in Chemistry. Universidade Cruzeiro do Sul. E-mail: carmem.amaral@cruzeirosul.edu.br

³ Doctoral student in Science and Mathematics Teaching. Universidade Cruzeiro do Sul.

E-mail: Margareth.pires@cs.cruzeirosul.edu.br



identificar os eixos temáticos incidentes no campo. Para tanto, procede-se à revisão sistemática da literatura na Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações (BDTD), analisando um corpus de 136 trabalhos publicados entre 2000 e 2024. Desse modo, observa-se um crescimento exponencial da produção na última década, com forte concentração no eixo Sudeste-Nordeste. Os resultados revelam que a pesquisa se polariza em torno de três eixos: o Currículo Integrado/PROEJA, a tensão entre Prescrito versus Vivido, e o Fundamento Crítico-Emancipatório. O que permite concluir que o campo se consolidou e se expandiu, impulsionado pela busca de um currículo politicamente engajado e metodologicamente adaptável às especificidades da EJA.

Palavras-chave: Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Currículo. Revisão Sistemática. Políticas Públicas. Emancipação.

RESUMEN

La Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA) constituye un campo fundamental en Brasil, históricamente marcado por la insuficiencia de prácticas y materiales pedagógicos específicos, exigiendo un currículo que dialogue con la diversidad y las trayectorias de sus sujetos. Considerando el imperativo de comprender la base científica que apoya esta modalidad, el presente trabajo se concentra en la articulación entre EJA y Currículo en la investigación brasileña. Se objetiva, por lo tanto, mapear la producción académica *Stricto Sensu*, sistematizar la evolución temporal, e identificar los ejes temáticos incidentes en el campo. Para ello, se procede a la revisión sistemática de la literatura en la Biblioteca Digital Brasileña de Tesis y Disertaciones (BDTD), analizando un corpus de 136 trabajos publicados entre 2000 y 2024. De este modo, se observa que hay un crecimiento exponencial de la producción en la última década, con fuerte concentración en el eje Sudeste-Nordeste. Los resultados revelan que la investigación se polariza en torno a tres ejes: el Currículo Integrado/PROEJA, la tensión entre Prescrito versus Vivido, y el Fundamento Crítico-Emancipatorio. Lo que permite concluir que el campo se consolidó y se expandió, impulsado por la búsqueda persistente de un currículo políticamente comprometido y metodológicamente adaptable a las especificidades de la EJA.

Palabras clave: Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos. Currículo. Revisión Sistemática. Políticas Públicas. Emancipación.



1 INTRODUCTION

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a fundamental and historically disputed field in the Brazilian educational scenario, being recognized as an essential modality for social inclusion and the right to lifelong education. However, this modality faces significant structural challenges, carrying the legacy of late and precarious schooling that manifests itself in dropout, low self-esteem of students, and lack of specific pedagogical materials and practices (Toledo, Amaral, and Pires, 2025). In view of the complexity and diversity of EJA subjects, the Curriculum emerges as a central element of debate, as its organization must transcend the static and merely compensatory view, articulating with the life experiences, culture, and social praxis of the students (Toledo and Amaral, 2023) Given the theoretical-practical relevance of the articulation between EJA and Curriculum, and the need to understand how this relationship has been investigated in the national academic environment, the present article proposes to map the Brazilian scientific production at the *Stricto Sensu* graduate level. Adopting the methodology of systematic review in sources such as the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), this investigation focuses on the analysis of studies that articulate "Youth and Adult Education" and "Curriculum" in the period from 2000 to 2024, aiming to systematize the temporal evolution, the regional asymmetries of production and, mainly, the most incident themes in the field.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a teaching modality marked by historical, social and pedagogical specificities that require its own curricular and methodological approaches. The curriculum, as a social and political construction, assumes a central role in the mediation between the knowledge of the subjects of EJA and school knowledge. To understand how this articulation has been investigated in Brazilian academic production, this study adopts the systematic review as a methodological strategy, allowing mapping trends, gaps and relevant contributions. Next, the main theoretical foundations on EJA, curriculum and systematic review are discussed, based on authors who have dedicated themselves to deepening these themes.

2.1 YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a modality that is inserted in the field of basic education with the objective of guaranteeing the right to schooling to those who, for different reasons, did not have access to or continuity of studies at the appropriate age. As established by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), in its articles 37 and 38, EJA must be organized in such a way as to respect the characteristics of the subjects who resort to it, promoting an education that considers their life trajectories, their previous knowledge and their working conditions and existence.

EJA subjects are marked by a diversity of experiences, identities and expectations. Many are workers, mothers, people in situations of social vulnerability or young people in age-grade distortion, who carry with them stories of exclusion and resistance. These students are subjects of the present and the future, whose memories and experiences must be recognized as constitutive elements of the educational process. For Arroyo (2006), it is essential that the EJA teacher understands these subjects as protagonists of their stories, valuing their knowledge and promoting pedagogical practices that dialogue with their realities.

The heterogeneity of classes is one of the main challenges faced by educators. This diversity manifests itself in terms of age, previous schooling, length of absence from school, working conditions, and expectations regarding education. As Silva (2010) points out, this plurality should be seen as a pedagogical power, and not as an obstacle, requiring the teacher to listen sensitively and have a flexible and contextualized practice. However, school dropout is still a recurring phenomenon in EJA, motivated by factors such as tiredness, learning difficulties, absence of public retention policies, and the distance between school and students' lives (Cunha, 2021).

Another relevant aspect is the low self-esteem of the students, often marked by previous frustrating school experiences. According to Negreiros et al. (2017), the return to school can reactivate feelings of failure and exclusion, and the teacher has the role of reconstructing the image that the student has of himself as a subject capable of learning. For this, it is necessary that teaching in EJA be guided by a pedagogy of welcoming, listening and valuing popular knowledge. As Freire (1996) argues, teaching requires respect for the autonomy of the learner and commitment to his or her critical and liberating education.

In addition, it is necessary to recognize that many EJA teachers face structural and pedagogical limitations, such as the absence of specific teaching materials and the lack of continuing education focused on this modality. As Toledo, Amaral and Pires (2025) point out, the teaching practice in EJA is still marked by the reuse of regular education materials, which

disregards the specificities of young, adult and elderly subjects, compromising the effectiveness of pedagogical actions. The authors argue that the construction of materials and strategies aimed at EJA is essential to ensure quality education, which respects the times, knowledge and contexts of students.

EJA, therefore, cannot be reduced to a compensatory function. It should be understood as a space for integral education, which articulates school knowledge with the knowledge of everyday life, promoting active citizenship and social transformation. As Soares and Cougo (2024) state, EJA is an opportunity to rewrite interrupted trajectories, to build new life projects, and to strengthen the protagonism of historically marginalized subjects.

2.2 CURRICULUM VITAE

The curriculum, as an expression of an educational project, is more than a list of contents to be taught. It represents a social, political and cultural construction that reflects the values, interests and disputes present in society (Sacristán, 2000). In Youth and Adult Education (EJA), this dimension is intensified, as the subjects who make up this modality bring with them life experiences, accumulated knowledge and expectations that challenge the traditional models of curricular organization. Therefore, thinking about the EJA curriculum requires breaking with homogeneous and excluding logics, recognizing diversity as a structuring principle.

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Brasil, 1996), especially in its articles 37 and 38, establishes that the EJA curriculum must be adapted to the characteristics of the students, respecting their times, rhythms and learning conditions. This orientation is reinforced by the National Curriculum Guidelines for EJA (Brasil, 2000), which propose a flexible, interdisciplinary and contextualized organization, capable of articulating school knowledge with the knowledge of experience. As Freire (2014) argues, the curriculum should be based on the knowledge of experience, valuing popular knowledge and promoting an education that is, at the same time, meaningful and liberating.

In this sense, the EJA curriculum cannot be limited to the transmission of content. It should be conceived as a space for dialogue, where subjects can construct meanings, develop autonomy and exercise their citizenship. Biesta (2011) argues that the curriculum should promote not only technical qualification, but also the subjectivation of subjects and their critical insertion in the world. Giroux (2004) reinforces this perspective by stating that the curriculum is a field of dispute, where different projects of society confront each other.



Thus, an emancipatory curriculum must be committed to social justice, valuing diversity, and overcoming inequalities.

Thus, the EJA curriculum should be thought of as an instrument of transformation, capable of promoting the protagonism of the subjects and contributing to the construction of a more just and democratic society. As Dewey (1938) states, the curriculum should start from the student's experience and contribute to the intelligent reconstruction of his environment. This implies pedagogical practices that dialogue with the daily life of students, that value their knowledge and that promote the development of skills for life, work and social participation.

3 METHODOLOGY

The present research is a systematic review of the literature, of an exploratory nature, focused on the analysis and synthesis of results of multiple studies on a theme or topic under review. The main objective of this work was to analyze and discuss, through this review, the Brazilian scientific production regarding the use and debate of the Curriculum in Youth and Adult Education. Locus and Scope of Research

The stage of identification and collection of scientific literature focused on the works of the *Stricto Sensu* graduate program (Theses and Dissertations). The online search was carried out by consulting the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), managed by the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (IBICT), in the case of the model study. BDTD aims to contribute to the integration and dissemination of academic and scientific production developed in Brazilian teaching and research institutions. The analysis cut adopted was established for the period from 2000 to 2024, aiming to map the evolution of research on EJA and Curriculum throughout the twenty-first century. Search Strategy and Descriptors

The collection of papers was carried out through the application of descriptors and Boolean operators, searching for papers by title, subject or abstract, combining the following terms: 'Youth and Adult Education' AND 'Curriculum'.

3.1 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA AND ANALYSIS OF THE CORPUS

The inclusion criteria for this study (EJA and Curriculum) include Theses and Dissertations that addressed the articulation of the themes "Youth and Adult Education and Curriculum".

To ensure the rigor of the Systematic Review (EJA and Curriculum), the works that met

the thematic and temporal criteria were selected. The scope of the research resulted in the identification of a total of 136 works in the delimited period, 116 master's dissertations and 20 doctoral theses.

The analysis of the corpus of the 136 works in the study on EJA allowed the systematization of the temporal evolution, the identification of the areas of concentration (predominantly Education, with 41.47%), the institutional matrix (led by UNEB, with 27.21%) and, crucially, the identification of the three major thematic axes.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The scope of the research resulted in the identification of 136 works in the delimited period, 116 master's dissertations and 20 doctoral theses. The main objective of this study is to systematize the temporal evolution of these studies, identify the areas of concentration, the regional asymmetries of production and, mainly, the most incident themes, contributing to the delimitation of new research agendas in the field.

Table 1

Number of Jobs (2000-2024)

Year	Dissertations	Theses	Annual Total
2000	1	0	1
2001	0	0	0
2002	0	0	0
2003	1	0	1
2004	1	0	1
2005	1	0	1
2006	1	2	3
2007	3	1	4
2008	3	0	3
2009	2	0	2
2010	9	3	12
2011	9	0	9
2012	4	1	5
2013	4	2	6
2014	11	2	13
2015	11	1	12
2016	11	2	13
2017	5	2	7
2018	13	2	15
2019	10	1	11
2020	10	3	13
2021	6	2	8
2022	6	4	10
2023	17	4	21
2024	17	2	19

GRAND TOTAL (2000-2024)	116	20	136
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Source: Authors

4.1 ANALYSIS OF TEMPORAL RESULTS

The table shows the evolution of research on EJA and Curriculum in Brazilian graduate studies. Of a total of 136 works in the period, most are Master's Dissertations (116 works), representing approximately 85% of the production, against only 20 Doctoral theses.

The analysis of the temporal distribution reveals a remarkable growth of studies throughout the twenty-first century:

- ✓ **Timid Beginning (2000-2005):** The initial period of the millennium showed an incipient production, with a maximum of 5 works per year and the absence of records in the years 2001 and 2002.
- ✓ **Exponential Growth:** From 2010 onwards, significant growth in production is observed, with annual totals consistently surpassing the 10-work mark.
- ✓ **Recent Peak:** The 2020s reach productivity peaks. The year 2023 is the most prominent in the entire time series, with 21 publications in total. The year 2024 follows the upward trend with 19 jobs registered.

This growth indicates that the EJA curricular debate has gained more and more space and relevance in the research agenda of Brazilian graduate studies, being a topic of sustained and growing interest in the recent period.

The temporal analysis of the academic production on EJA and Curriculum reveals a strong concentration of studies in the last decade, coinciding with the expansion of Professional Graduate programs and the deepening of discussions on PROEJA and teacher training.

4.2 YEARS HIGHER PRODUCTION

The four years of greatest production of theses and dissertations identified in the corpus (within the period 2000–2024) are:

1. **2023:** With 21 publications, this year represents the maximum peak of production on the topic, with a strong predominance of Dissertations (17).

2. 2024: Registers 19 publications, maintaining the high volume of interest in the theme in the most recent year of the complete historical series.
3. 2018: Presented 15 publications (13 Dissertations and 2 Theses), marking one of the high points of research in the second half of the 2010s.
4. 2014, 2016 and 2020: These three years are tied, each with 13 publications, indicating a consolidated level of research in the area from 2010 onwards.

4.3 PERIOD OF LOWER PRODUCTION

In contrast, the initial years of the series (2000 to 2005) have the lowest volume, and 2001 and 2002 did not record any publications identified in this sample on EJA and Curriculum. The year 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2005 registered only 1 publication each

It is crucial, in a systematic analysis, to verify the dynamics of academic production over time to identify periods of inflection and expansion of research. The growth observed in the period from 2000 to 2024 suggests that the EJA and Curriculum theme registered a marked and consolidated academic expansion in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

To deepen this dynamic, we analyzed the total volume of works in two intervals that define the "second decade of the twenty-first century": 2011–2020 and the most recent period, 2015–2024.

The period from 2011 to 2020 (the entire decade) demonstrates a massive and sustained growth in production compared to the first decade (2000–2010, with 45 papers). In this interval, a total of 104 works were accounted for (88 dissertations and 16 theses), which represents a much more expressive volume of production than that previously recorded. Although annual growth fluctuates (such as the declines in 2012 and 2017), research on EJA and Curriculum reaches a consistently high level, with an average of more than 10 annual publications. This volume indicates a consolidation of the theme in the Brazilian *Stricto Sensu* environment.

When we consider the most recent interval, 2015–2024, totaling 131 works (109 dissertations and 22 theses), the growth trend becomes even more evident. This interval reveals a significant and notable increase in production in the most recent years of the series, especially due to the concentration of the production peaks of the entire study. The years 2023 (with 21 publications) and 2024 (with 19 publications) exhibit the highest annual

volumes in the entire historical series, which corroborates the thesis of a phase of great effervescence and expansion of research.

In summary, the analysis of the data demonstrates that the second decade of the twenty-first century not only consolidated the topic on the research agenda (2011–2020), but also culminated in a phase of high expansion (2015–2024), with the final years of the time series reaching a volume that is almost double the average observed in the early 2000s. This pattern confirms a phase of intense discussion and deepening of curricular issues in the scope of Youth and Adult Education in Brazil.

4.4 AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE INSTITUTIONAL MATRIX OF RESEARCH

The analysis of the distribution of the 136 works by area of knowledge of the Graduate Programs (PPGs) reveals the institutional matrix that sustains the research on EJA and Curriculum in Brazil. The corpus demonstrates an overwhelming concentration in the Human Sciences, but with significant developments in areas of Specialized Education.

The following table presents the 5 areas of knowledge that produced the most research on the subject, in the period 2000–2024:

Table 2

Areas of Knowledge and the Institutional Matrix of Research

Rank	Knowledge Area	Percentage (%)
1	Education (General, Policies, Social Contexts)	41,47%
2	Youth and Adult Education (MPEJA – Specific Professional Masters)	25,58%
3	Science and Mathematics Teaching	17,44%
4	Agricultural and Vocational Education (PPGEA and EPT)	8,53%
5	Linguistics, Letters and Arts	6,98%

Source: Authors

4.5 THE CORE AREA AND THE AXES OF SPECIALIZATION

The research is predominantly anchored in Education (General), which alone represents 41.47% of the classifications and acts as the most productive and heterogeneous area. This area encompasses broad PPGs from several universities (such as UERJ, UFRRJ, UFPE, UFC, UnB) and addresses everything from the management of public policies and managerial reform in EJA, to issues of juvenilization and school culture in contexts of vulnerability (prison, gender).

However, a notable finding is the strong emergence of specialized programs. The area of Youth and Adult Education (Specific Professional Master's Degrees) occupies the second position, with 25.58% of the classifications. This concentration is largely driven by the Professional Master's Degree in EJA (MPEJA), with a strong presence of the State University of Bahia (UNEB). The centrality of this professional training program directs a large volume of research to themes directly linked to localized curricular practices, teacher training and the construction of didactic materials.

The other axes reflect the demand for curricular specificity within the modality:

Science and Mathematics Teaching (17.44%): This area, often represented by Professional Master's Degrees (such as those of UFPE, UEPB, and PROFMAT), demonstrates a significant interest in the development of pedagogical practices and specific teaching materials for the exact and natural sciences in EJA. Thematic focuses include Ethnomathematics, the Mathematics Curriculum, and the use of approaches such as Science, Technology, and Society (STS).

Agricultural and Professional Education (8.53%): This area is strategic because it focuses on PROEJA and the articulation between basic education and professional qualification. Programs such as the PPGEA at UFRRJ and PPGs of Professional Education in Federal Institutes (IFs) address the valorization of the knowledge of PROEJA students and the analysis of the function of disciplines such as Chemistry from the perspective of the integrated curriculum.

Linguistics, Letters and Arts (6.98%): Focuses on the specificity of the process of acquisition of reading and writing and the use of artistic and technological languages in the modality, addressing topics such as Digital Literacy, Literary Literacy and textual genres (such as curriculum vitae and autobiography).

The predominance of the area of Education (with 41.47%) followed by Professional and Specific Teaching Graduate Programs demonstrates that research on EJA and Curriculum in Brazil has a strong theoretical-structural basis, but with a growing practical and professionalizing demand, seeking specific curricular solutions for the various areas of knowledge.

4.6 INSTITUTIONAL CONCENTRATION AND DECENTRALIZATION OF RESEARCH

The analysis of the higher education institutions (HEIs) that contributed the most to the body of research on EJA and Curriculum reveals the underlying institutional matrix and the

geography of academic production, presenting a pattern of concentration different from that observed in broader studies.

Of the total of 136 works analyzed, the set of the five most prominent universities is responsible for 99 publications, totaling 72.79% of the production identified in the corpus.

The 5 Universities with the highest number of publications in the period 2000–2024 are:

Table 3

Institutional Concentration and Decentralization of Research

Rank	Acronym	Name of the Institution	Percentage of Total
1	UNEB	State University of Bahia	27,21%
2	UFRRJ	Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro	19,85%
3	UERJ	State University of Rio de Janeiro	11,76%
4	UFC	Federal University of Ceará	7,35%
5	UFPE	Federal University of Pernambuco	6,62%

Source: Authors

The highlight of the research in EJA and Curriculum falls on institutions located in the Northeast (UNEB, UFC, UFPE) and Southeast (UFRRJ, UERJ) regions. The Northeast is consolidating itself as a fundamental center of research on the subject, a finding that points to a decentralization of scientific production in relation to traditional axes such as São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

The State University of Bahia (UNEB) leads the ranking with 37 works (27.21%). This high concentration is mainly due to the strength of its Professional Master's Degree in Youth and Adult Education (MPEJA), a specialized program that directs research to the EJA Curriculum, educator training, and localized public policies, as well as diversity and inclusion issues (gender, ethnicity, prison education).

In the Southeast Region, the most productive pole is the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ), with 27 works (19.85%). Production at UFRRJ is driven by programs such as the Graduate Program in Education, Contemporary Contexts and Popular Demands (PPGEDU/ECCDP) and the Graduate Program in Agricultural Education (PPGEA). While PPGEA and PROFMAT contribute with studies on Ethnomathematics and PROEJA, ECCDP focuses on the curriculum in contexts of inequality, women's schooling and teacher training.

The State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), with 16 papers, represents a diversified focus, covering Curriculum, Pedagogical Practices, Digital Technologies, and the relationship

between curriculum and disability, often through its Formative Processes and Social Inequalities and Professional Master's programs.

Closing the Top 5, the Federal University of Ceará (UFC) and the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), add up to 10 and 9 works, respectively, concentrating research on PROEJA, Freire's curricular proposals, and the Teaching of Science and Mathematics.

This distribution shows that the study of EJA and Curriculum is strongly linked to the existence of specific and professional graduate programs that seek to respond to social and regional demands, especially in the Northeast and Southeast regions.

4.7 ASYMMETRIES AND POLES OF REGIONAL CONCENTRATION

The geographical distribution of research on EJA and Curriculum reveals significant regional asymmetries in the production of knowledge in Brazil, although with the notable emergence of new research centers.

The Regional Distribution Table shows the concentration of the works identified in the documentary corpus:

Table 4

Regional Concentration

Region	Percentage (%)
Southeast	38,76%
Northeast	33,72%
South	18,22%
Midwest	6,98%
North	2,33%
Total	100,00%

Source: Authors

The Southeast-South axis (S+SE) still concentrates most of the academic production, with 147 papers, representing 56.98% of all the research identified [Table Above]. However, the analysis reveals a strong contribution from the Northeast, which, with 87 studies (33.72%), consolidates itself as the second largest region producing knowledge on the subject, being a more active research center than the South Region (18.22%).

In contrast, the Central-West (6.98%) and, especially, North (2.33%) regions show a marginalized production, with only 6 works identified in the North. This asymmetry highlights the disparity in the infrastructure of graduate studies and in the development of specific lines

of research on EJA and Curriculum in these regions, a problem already recognized by funding agencies.

4.8 HIGHEST PRODUCTION STATES

The detailed state analysis reinforces the research centers and thematic specializations:

1. Rio de Janeiro (Southeast): Leads the ranking with approximately 77 works, driven by institutions such as UFRRJ and UERJ. The focus is broad, encompassing PROEJA, Agricultural Education, specific EJA curriculum policies (such as the New EJA Program), and diversity in urban and prison contexts.
2. Bahia (Northeast): It has the second largest volume, with about 56 works. This high production is directly linked to the State University of Bahia (UNEB) and its Professional Master's Degree in EJA, with research focused on Curriculum, Literacy and ethnic-racial issues.
3. São Paulo (Southeast): A traditional research center, it has about 47 works, with contributions from PUC-SP, UNESP and USP on topics such as Rural Education, PROEJA and Literacy.

The prominence of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and São Paulo confirms that research on EJA and Curriculum is not restricted to a single macro-region, but is structured around strategic institutional nuclei that maintain Graduate Programs with a strong tradition in the area of Popular Education and Specific Education

4.9 CENTRAL THEMES IN RESEARCH ON EJA AND CURRICULUM

The content analysis of the abstracts and titles revealed that, in addition to the obvious keywords (EJA, Curriculum and Teacher Training), the academic production is concentrated around three major axes of research. These axes reflect the need for the EJA curriculum to respond simultaneously to the demands of the world of work, to the complexity of the identities of the subjects and to the challenges of pedagogical practice in the classroom.



4.9.1 The Dialogic Tension: Integrated Curriculum, Human Formation and the Perspective of Professional Education (PROEJA)

This theme is the most recurrent, addressing the complex attempt to integrate general training and professional education, often under the aegis of the National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education in the Modality of Youth and Adult Education (PROEJA).

The works investigate the theory and practice of the integrated curriculum and its role in the qualification of EJA subjects, who are predominantly workers. Titles such as "The integrated curriculum in youth and adult education" and "The constitutive movement of the professional education curriculum integrated with youth and adult education" demonstrate that the focus is on the search for a curricular articulation that promotes integral human development. The research also focuses on the concrete challenges of implementation, as evidenced in "Integrated Curriculum in PROEJA: the experience of the Federal Institute of Pernambuco" and "The challenge of qualification for work from the perspective of Proeja at IFMT".

4.9.2 The Curriculum as a Crossroads: Identities, Diversity and EJA in Contexts of Vulnerability

This thematic axis encompasses studies that address the need for the curriculum to recognize, welcome and dialogue with the identities and trajectories of historically marginalized groups or in unconventional spaces.

The curriculum is examined as a space for dispute and legitimation of knowledge in relation to youth, gender, ethnicity and territoriality. Titles such as "Gender, and sexuality in the curricular organization" and "The EJA teacher and the education of ethnic-racial relations - ERER's" underline the demand for a curricular policy sensitive to diversity. There is a notable focus on EJA in contexts of vulnerability, such as the prison system and socio-education, and on the relationship between curriculum and peasant identity in Rural Education. The issue of the "juvenilization of EJA" is also a point of interest, exploring which knowledge and practices the curriculum should legitimize in dialogue with young people and their territories.



4.9.3 The Lived Curriculum and Teaching Praxis: Popular Knowledge and the Freirean Perspective

This area focuses on investigating how the curriculum is in fact "lived" or "practiced" in the classroom, as opposed to what is merely "prescribed" by official guidelines and policies. The focus is on teaching action and the incorporation of students' popular knowledge, with Paulo Freire's Pedagogy acting as an essential methodological reference for curricular practice.

Works such as "Between the prescribed and the practiced: a case study on the EJA curriculum" and "The practiced curricula thought of youth and adult education" investigate the distance between politics and the reality of the school. The relevance of the subjects is highlighted in "The popular knowledge of EJA students and the pedagogical practice in the classroom" and in the search for Paulo Freire's contributions to the culture of peace in EJA. This set of research reaffirms that the effectiveness of the curriculum in EJA depends on the teaching praxis and the school's ability to dialogue with the knowledge brought by the students

4.10 THE MULTIPLE APPROACHES TO THE CURRICULUM IN EJA

The concept of Curriculum in the analyzed works transcends the vision of a static document, being approached as a field of forces, subject to political dispute, daily resignification and methodological adequacy to the reality of young and adult subjects. The research investigates the curriculum from the perspective of implementation, critical grounding and the need for flexibility.

Next, we highlight the four most common sub-themes that reveal how the curriculum is conceptualized and mobilized in the field of EJA, with their approximate frequencies in the documentary corpus:

Table 5

Curriculum Approaches

Common Subtheme	Focus of the Approach in the Curriculum	Approximate Frequency (N)
Integrated Curriculum and Interdisciplinarity (PROEJA)	Integration of general and vocational training, and articulation between work, science and culture.	45
Prescribed Curriculum vs . Lived Curriculum	Tension between official guidelines and pedagogical practices and teacher resignifications in the classroom.	40



Critical Foundation, Emancipation and Dialogue (Freirean)	Search for an emancipatory curriculum, dialogicity and participation in its construction.	35
Curriculum Assessment and Adaptation to Flexibility	Analysis of the evaluation mechanisms and the need to make the curricular organization more flexible for the diversity of EJA.	30

Source: Authors

4.11 THE DEPTH OF THE APPROACHES

The dominant subtheme, the Integrated Curriculum and Interdisciplinarity, with more than 45 papers, focuses on the structure that seeks to overcome disciplinary fragmentation, being the most prominent concept in the context of Professional and Technological Education (EPT), especially in PROEJA. The studies seek to understand the integrated curriculum aiming at an emancipatory proposal and the articulation between human formation and work, in addition to exploring interdisciplinarity for the teaching of specific areas, such as the Science, Technology and Society (STS) approach.

Secondly, the tension between the Prescribed Curriculum versus the Lived Curriculum, present in more than 40 works, investigates the difference between the formally established curriculum and its materialization in the school. Many works seek elements of the "curriculum in action" on the school floor, treating teachers as "curricular actors" whose conceptions and beliefs shape pedagogical practice.

The Critical Foundation, Emancipation and Dialogue (Freireano), with more than 35 works, demonstrates that the curriculum in EJA is strongly associated with the critical-liberating perspective. Paulo Freire's thought provides the framework for dialogicity, social contextualization and the use of generative themes, valuing the knowledge that subjects build in their interaction with the territory.

Finally, the Curricular Evaluation and Adaptation to Flexibility, present in more than 30 works, addresses evaluation not only as a performance measurement, but as a curricular element. The studies examine the impacts of external evaluation (such as ENCCEJA) and the need to make the organization of curricular time and the traditional curriculum more flexible, especially in the face of the juvenilization of EJA and the reorganization after the BNCC.

4.12 RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND CENTRAL CONCERNS: THE IMPULSE OF STUDIES

The academic community that investigates the relationship between EJA and Curriculum is motivated by the observation that the curriculum, policies and current

pedagogical practices often fail to adapt to the reality, needs and trajectories of young and adult subjects.

The research problems identified in the documentary corpus converge on three major challenges:

4.12.1 The Mismatch between the Prescribed Curriculum and the Reality of the Subjects

This is a fundamental problem that questions the validity and efficacy of formal curricular proposals (the "prescribed") in the face of students' concrete experiences. The researchers seek to understand why the formal curriculum fails to be meaningful, raising concern about the "denouement between the 'world of school' and the 'world of life'".

The research points to the curricular inadequacy, finding that many curricula reproduce "exclusively the contents of Elementary and Secondary Education", without meeting the "educational needs and specificities of the EJA public". This inadequacy generates "discouragement, the absence of meaning attributed to what is done in school" and the "reinforcement of the culture of silence". Examples of titles that embody this tension include:

- "Between the prescribed and the practiced: a case study on the EJA curriculum at the Professor George Fragoso Modesto School, Lemos de Brito Penitentiary Complex, in Salvador – Bahia".
- Questions such as "how is the EJA Curricular Proposal present or not in its relations with the curricular practices developed by teachers in the classroom?" seek to map this tension between the formal and the lived.

4.12.2 The Challenge of Integral Education and the Implementation of PROEJA

The second set of problems stems from the need to offer training that integrates basic education and professional qualification — the core of PROEJA's proposal. The studies question whether this integration is achieved in practice and what are the institutional and pedagogical impasses for the construction of a truly integrated and emancipatory curriculum.

The researchers seek answers to the difficulty in curricular integration, questioning the relationship between the reproduced proposal and the socio-professional trajectories of the students. The investigation focuses on the analysis of "revelations and contradictions between the conception and management of the curriculum in a technical course at IFRN, in

the modality of Youth and Adult Education". This problem is manifested in titles that explore the failure in implementation, such as:

- "The distance between what is said and what is instituted" in the "impasse in the implementation of PROEJA in the CEJA and in the CEPSS in the state education network of Goiânia".
- The research problem also focuses on the relationship between politics and training for work, seeking to analyze how the municipal guidelines "conceive[d] a teaching focused on education and the world of work".

4.12.3 Exclusion and (Non) Contemplation of Diversity in Curricular Practice

This central problem addresses the curriculum's failure to recognize diversity and the specific demands of particular groups (youth, women, rural populations, blacks, people deprived of liberty, among others), which results in marginalization and dropout.

The research is motivated by the need for the curriculum to contemplate the specificities of young people, since the "juvenilization of EJA" is a phenomenon of great interest. There is a clear concern with the non-recognition of identities, such as the failure to address themes of Law 10.639/03 (National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations) in the curriculum. Marginalization is also manifested in critical issues of abandonment:

- Titles such as "The 'evasion' of young people and adults in EJA in the municipality of Ouro Preto-MG: interrupted trajectories" and "Why do students not remain in Youth and Adult Education (EJA)?" express concern about the interruption of schooling.
- The research also questions the "political-pedagogical challenges" of including the target audience of special education in EJA and whether the subjects "understand themselves included" by policies such as PROEJA.

5 CONCLUSION

This article carried out a systematic review of the Brazilian academic production on Youth and Adult Education (EJA) and Curriculum in theses and dissertations, covering the period from 2000 to 2024. The research fulfilled its main objective by mapping the temporal evolution, institutional concentration, regional asymmetries and, above all, the thematic and conceptual axes that guide investigations in the field.

In terms of production and temporal evolution, the study identified a total of 136 works, with a predominance of master's dissertations (approximately 85%). The analysis showed a sharp and consolidated growth in production in the second decade of the twenty-first century, with an exponential increase in the most recent years (2023 and 2024), reaching the highest volumes in the entire time series. Such expansion reflects the growing relevance of the EJA curricular debate in the Brazilian graduate research agenda.

Regarding institutional and regional concentration, the study revealed a distinct production pattern. Although the Southeast-South axis (56.98%) still concentrates most of the work, the Northeast region (33.72%) emerges as a fundamental center of research. The concentration takes place around strategic institutional centers, with emphasis on the State University of Bahia (UNEB), leader of the ranking with 27.21% of the works, mainly via its Professional Master's Degree in EJA, and the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ). In contrast, the Midwest and North regions continue to be marginalized in production, evidencing geographical asymmetries in the research infrastructure.

The main thematic axes and research problems that motivate the studies are:

1. The Tension between Prescribed and Practiced: There is a strong concern about the mismatch between the Prescribed Curriculum and the reality of the subjects, which results in inadequacy, "reinforcement of the culture of silence" and the risk of the formal curriculum not being meaningful.
2. The Challenge of Integral Education: The complexity of the implementation of PROEJA and the Integrated Curriculum emerges as a central problem, questioning the effectiveness of the articulation between general education and professional qualification.
3. The Lack of Contemplation of Diversity: The failure of the curriculum to recognize specific identities (juvenilization, ethnic-racial issues, prison education) generates marginalization and is pointed out as one of the causes of school dropout in the modality.

Finally, the conceptual analysis showed that the Curriculum is mostly approached from the perspective of integration (PROEJA, 45+ papers), teaching praxis (tension between what is prescribed and what is lived, 40+ papers) and the emancipatory critical foundation (Freirean perspective, 35+ papers). These findings reiterate that EJA research seeks a



curriculum that is at the same time politically engaged, socially relevant, and methodologically adaptable.

The present work thus contributes to a detailed systematization of the state of the art on EJA and Curriculum, providing subsidies for the development of public policies and the formulation of new research that overcomes the asymmetries and challenges identified in the field.

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