

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE  
CONTINUING EDUCATION OF FEMALE LITERACY TEACHERS

*POLÍTICAS INTERNACIONAIS DE EDUCAÇÃO: REFLEXÕES CRÍTICAS SOBRE  
FORMAÇÃO CONTINUADA DE PROFESSORAS ALFABETIZADORAS*

*POLÍTICAS EDUCATIVAS INTERNACIONALES: REFLEXIONES CRÍTICAS SOBRE  
LA FORMACIÓN CONTINUA DE LAS MAESTRAS DE ALFABETIZACIÓN*



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**ABSTRACT:** The article presents critical reflections on the continuing education of female literacy teachers in comparison with international education and literacy policies. The research aimed to know how the effects of the international organizations guidelines for education and literacy are manifested in the speech of women participating in the continuing education of the National Pact for Literacy in the Right Age (PNAIC) held in the municipality of Santa Cruz Cabrália, BA. The methodology adopted is the qualitative approach whose method is taken from a dialectical perspective, in approximation with the current of Marxist thought and the assumptions of Critical Theory. The procedure used was a semi-structured interview with women participating in the continuing education of the PNAIC. The results indicate that, if, on the one hand, the continuing education suffered the effects of the neoliberal policy that designed the PNAIC, on the other hand, the training action was associated with what schools demand in the effort to transform objective reality.

**KEYWORDS:** Literacy. Teacher training. National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age. Educational policies.

**RESUMO:** O artigo apresenta reflexões críticas sobre a formação continuada de professoras alfabetizadoras em cotejo com as políticas internacionais de educação e alfabetização. A pesquisa teve como objetivo conhecer como os efeitos das orientações dos organismos internacionais para a educação e alfabetização se manifestam no discurso das participantes da formação continuada do Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa (PNAIC) realizada no município de Santa Cruz Cabrália, BA. A metodologia adotada é a abordagem qualitativa, cujo método é tomado na perspectiva dialética, em aproximação com a corrente de pensamento marxista e os pressupostos da Teoria Crítica. O procedimento utilizado foi a entrevista semiestruturada com participantes da formação continuada do PNAIC. Os resultados indicam que, por um lado, se a formação continuada sofreu os efeitos da política neoliberal que desenhava o PNAIC, por outro, a ação formativa se associou ao que demandam as escolas no esforço de transformação da realidade objetiva.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Alfabetização. Formação de professores. PNAIC. Políticas educacionais.

**RESUMEN:** El artículo presenta reflexiones críticas sobre la educación continua de las maestras alfabetizadoras en comparación con las políticas internacionales de educación y alfabetización. La investigación tuvo como objetivo conocer cómo los efectos de las directrices de las organizaciones internacionales para la educación y la alfabetización se manifiestan en el discurso de las mujeres que participan en la educación permanente del Pacto Nacional por la Alfabetización en la Edad Correcta (PNAIC), realizado en el municipio de Santa Cruz Cabrália, BA. La metodología adoptada es el enfoque cualitativo cuyo método se toma desde una perspectiva dialéctica, en aproximación con la corriente del pensamiento marxista y los presupuestos de la Teoría Crítica. El procedimiento utilizado fue una entrevista semiestructurada a mujeres participantes de la formación continua del PNAIC. Los resultados indican que, si por un lado la formación continua sufrió los efectos de la política neoliberal que diseñó el PNAIC, por otro lado, la acción formativa se asoció con lo que demandan las escuelas en el esfuerzo por transformar la realidad objetiva.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Alfabetización. Formación de profesores. Pacto Nacional por la Alfabetización en la Edad Correcta. Políticas educativas.

## Introduction

This article presents an excerpt from the doctoral research *The skein of (inter)national education and literacy policies: threads that weave the continued training of literacy teachers*, which sought to investigate the effects of the relationship between international and national education and literacy policies on the continued training of literacy teachers, based on the 'continuous training' axis of the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (PNAIC).

Implemented in 2013, through Ordinance No. 867, of July 4, 2012, the PNAIC was coordinated by the Ministry of Education (MEC), under an agreement with States, Municipalities and the Federal District, with a view to ensuring that all children were literate by the 3rd year of elementary school.

The Program also has the following objectives: i) ensure that all students are literate in Portuguese and Mathematics by the end of the 3rd year of Elementary School; ii) improve the Basic Education Development Index (Ideb); iii) contribute to improving the training of literacy teachers, as well as defining learning rights (BRASIL, 2012a, 2012b, 2012d). The priority given to just two areas of knowledge is noteworthy: Portuguese Language and Mathematics, the same ones evaluated by Ideb, an indicator that establishes the quality standard of Brazilian education, developed based on the methodology of the International Student Assessment Program (*Program for International Student Assessment – Pisa*), therefore, connected to the principles that guide the global agenda for education.

Based on the objectives listed above, we identified the convergence of the PNAIC with structuring elements of the global agenda for education operationalized by international organizations (OI), such as: focus on children's literacy, with an emphasis on Portuguese Language and Mathematics; literacy as a right; offering continuing training; and attention to quality indicators. Thus, we observe that the aforementioned Program presents itself as a national initiative to solve a problem apparently of internal interest, conveying the false idea of autonomy of the Brazilian State, as international conditions are not explicitly mentioned, making it necessary to read between the lines to understand such a relationship. This allows us to infer that the national interest in solving the problem in question is closely related to interests external to the Brazilian context, which are directly linked to economic factors.

In this scenario, education and literacy policies in national contexts tend to converge into a space within which there is a dispute over policies relating to a nation project, but linked to distinct theoretical and ideological rationalities, within which the The national educational agenda is a field of interest for economic agents, with a view to maintaining the capitalist

system. Therefore, it is up to us to problematize the interest behind the importance that literacy has assumed in the discourses that make up the global agenda for education, with a neoliberal basis.

The convergence between international policies and national literacy policies is revealed in numerous documents and actions, such as the Declaration of the United Nations Decade for Literacy: Education for All (2003-2012), promulgated by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) on December 19, 2001, as a result of a set of actions and goals defined internationally, under the coordination of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). Among these actions, we include the PNAIC, a program developed at the end of the Literacy Decade, as a response by the Brazilian government to the agreement signed with other countries.

The recognition of national government initiatives, such as the PNAIC, which use continuing education as a central axis of their actions, in compliance with agreements signed with other countries, suggests the need to establish an investigative educational dialogue at a global level, willing to reflect critically about the scenario and context in which the policies, practices and discourses on continuing education of literacy teachers move, with which they are articulated.

To produce the results discussed here, we sought to understand the phenomena from the point of view of the subjects involved in the training action, based on their voices. By listening to them, we intend to discuss the relationship between international and national education policies in order to understand the threads that weave the continued training of these professionals, analyzing the data from a critical perspective, with a Marxist orientation.

In view of the above, this study aims to socialize the results of the aforementioned thesis with a focus on analyzing the speeches of PNAIC participants. To this end, firstly, we organize the theoretical and methodological framework that guides the research and expose the results and discussions around the categories produced in the empirical field.

### **Literacy: a question of (inter)national interest**

Historically, literacy among children, young people, adults and the elderly from poor or developing countries, such as Brazil, has assumed a relevant role in political actions of an international nature, expressed in the global agenda for education. However, the union of efforts between countries, carried out over the last few years under the aegis of OIs, has proven

incapable of meeting the proposed objective of eradicating illiteracy in the world, guaranteeing everyone, without distinction, the right to education as full human development.

Considering that low literacy rates constitute impeding barriers to the economic progress of countries, the OIs, with the help of quality indicators, construct the narrative of the learning crisis, relating it to poor management of the public education system, thus introducing the administrative and economistic vision, typical of globalization processes in education policies.

In this scenario, the conceptions, discourses, policies and practices of the educational field are informed by the Human Capital Theory, which, as Freitag (1986) argues, promotes development as a means of obtaining economic growth, ensuring the maintenance of relationships of domination and class. In effect, it projects education as a supposed source of economic benefits for individuals and societies, limiting the right to education to the right to learn with a focus on reading and writing, often associated with the functional aspects of the language.

In the tangle of threads that weave the relationships between globalization and education, we highlight the growing role of OIs, which act in prescribing guidelines to member countries with regard to what should be done, how and for whom, in terms of educational public policies, to solve the problems specific to each country. Alongside this, they hold education responsible for the social and economic prosperity of countries, denying its limits. Faced with the need to recognize the limits of educational action, we remember what Freire (2017, p 18, our translation) says: "This is how it is necessary to re-examine the role of education, which, although it does not do everything, is a fundamental factor in the reinvention of world".

It is worth mentioning that the support offered to signatory countries of international agreements aims, among other things, to implement educational reforms of a systemic nature, in order to better qualify people to face a more competitive world, in tune with market logic, which began to occur from the end of the 1980s.

In this scenario of reforms, Maués (2003) highlights that the role of education is now being questioned, considering, among other things, the negative results of school performance, which do not correspond to what is requested by the world of work. Likewise, the work of teachers is also called into question, with them being held responsible for the school's failure to teach the necessary skills to students, future workers. As a consequence, teacher training is criticized for its eminently theoretical nature, incapable of preparing professionals to perform their tasks well.

In this environment of educational reform, overcoming the historic failure of schools in terms of initial learning of written language constitutes a fundamental element of the global agenda for education, through the priority given to Basic Education in international education events, such as: the Washington Consensus and the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand.

From then on, Basic Education gained importance in the global education agenda, so that children's literacy became the central focus of policies at the national level. In these terms, according to Stieg and Araújo (2017), Brazil starts to look with interest at the literacy perspective of researcher Emília Ferreiro and her collaborator, psychologist Ana Teberosky, co-opting her principles. For the MEC's official speech, constructivism presented as a promise the objective of making children literate, avoiding school dropout and failure, in order to make them, in the future, literate and functional young people and adults, capable of the job market.

Gontijo (2014), when analyzing the centrality attributed to literacy in global education policies in the 21st century, cites the assessment of the World Education Forum in Dakar, in which it was concluded that the commitment made by the signatory countries of international movements was not translated in improvements in the quality of education, given the increase in illiteracy rates on a global scale. In these terms, says the author, from the 2000s onwards, the international community's commitment has focused on the six goals of the aforementioned document, which, articulated with literacy, should guide countries regarding objectives, strategies and deadlines to be adopted within National Education Plans, whether existing or new.

Based on the fulfillment of internationally established education goals, Shiroma (2018) comments that, in the agendas of OIs, like the World Bank, there is a consensus around the idea that the poor quality of education is due to unqualified practices employed by teachers. It is in this context that the PNAIC presents itself as a national initiative to improve the training of literacy teachers (BRASIL, 2012c).

### **The dialogue between international and national education policies: discussing results**

After reflecting on the continued training of literacy teachers, it is time to learn, through the dialogue established between the PNAIC participants and the researcher, guided by theory, the way in which, empirically, the effects of the relationship between international and national literacy policies education and literacy in the continued training of literacy teachers are

manifested in the speeches of the collaborators, attentive to the relationship between such policies and the training process and the work of these professionals. To this end, we chose a qualitative research approach, using semi-structured interviews as a methodological procedure. A total of 17 collaborators participating in PNAIC continuing education held in the municipality of Santa Cruz Cabralia, BA were interviewed: 8 literacy teachers, 5 study advisors and 4 pedagogical coordinators.

We understand that, with this, we are able to contemplate different perspectives, as a way of exploring the topic in depth. In these terms, we take discourse as a central category, paying attention to the characterization of the contexts and social practices in which political discourse is produced and materializes (CHARAUDEAU, 2006).

The units of analysis were organized into five categories, constructed from information produced in dialogue with the empirical and theoretical field, namely: 'continuing education: the siren's song'; 'conception of literacy: the official discourse'; 'curriculum narrowing'; 'large-scale national assessment'; and 'result obligation'. It is worth highlighting that the themes covered in each constructed category have movements of approximation, often mixing as if one were born from the other, which demonstrates that the processes of globalization work in such a way as to make the specific policies of each country converge towards the interests of the global agenda for education, coordinated by the OIs, tying everything together without leaving room for opposing forces. Next, we will move on to presenting the discussion of the data within the scope of the categories produced.

### **Continuing training and the siren song**

In the interviews, there was unanimous recognition of the relevance of PNAIC's continued training, as well as all initiatives of this nature, as a central strategy to achieve the objective of teaching all children to read and write by the 3rd year of Elementary School, in the face of a world in Constant change. As the main contributions of the PNAIC training action, the participants highlighted the updating and expansion of knowledge, the qualification of pedagogical practice, the appreciation of the teaching career, as well as the exchange of experiences between peers.

We understand that the collaborators demonstrate that they have been seduced by the siren song when they defend the idea of continued training as a central strategy for increasing the quality of education. The recognition of the importance of teacher training for improving

education cannot fall into the siren song, whose great power of attraction leads people to believe, without resistance, in continued training as the only way to qualify education, and in the teacher as the responsible for achieving this objective.

This understanding leads us to infer that continued training is appropriate, on the part of OIs, as a strategic element to forge teacher competence (SOUZA, 2006). In other words, it is not the training itself, but what they do with it, how they manage their speeches, how they mean it within policies. It has to do with the co-optation of the idea of training to forge the discourses of capital and serve its interests.

In line with the discourse on the need for professional updating and renewal as an element to improve the quality of education, P1<sup>3</sup> told us the following: “*I thought it was really cool, because it enriched our career. This takes our gaze away from just literacy, sameness! I saw a new North like this, new proposals*”.

To the argument of the need for professional qualification, incorporated in the employees' discourse, is added another, that of the concept of lifelong training. This, based on the idea that teacher training does not end at graduation, continuing in the classroom, that is, throughout life, brings with it continued training as a value capable of producing economic development, professional and personal (BRASIL 2012a). The speech of the literacy teacher illustrates the incorporation of this idea into the teaching discourse:

*I think it's important, because we can't stop, stagnate in one place. We have to have a constant process of evolution. Whether the teacher likes it or not, he needs to go through this type of recycling, training, because we have this tendency to stay in the same place [...]. (P2, our translation).*

The concept of lifelong training, which is linked to the paradigm of lifelong education, is incorporated into the teaching discourse as a fetish and understood, as Rodrigues (2011) explains, as a prerequisite for the subject's access to “global modernity”, that is, as a condition for subjects and countries to respond to the new demands of the knowledge society, “one of the keys to the 21st century”. All of this contributes to the legitimization of training actions without problematization, as if all training were good, so that the objectives contained between the lines are not easily perceived.

In these terms, the speeches reveal that the collaborators tend to establish a direct relationship between continued training, improvement in the performance of teachers and

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<sup>3</sup>To maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of research collaborators, they will be identified by the following codes: P – literacy teacher, C – pedagogical coordinator and O – study advisor.



students and the quality of education. Within this relationship, there is the transfer of responsibility for the success of the school from the spheres of government to the literacy teachers, who, supposedly well trained, are responsible for finding ways to produce good results. In this context, observes Shiroma (2011, p. 2, our translation), “[...] the success or failure of the institution is attributed to the competence of the teachers”.

The idea underlying the statements of most collaborators, such as those mentioned above, is that the quality of teaching depends exclusively on good teachers, more than on good training or adequate working conditions and salaries. According to Souza (2006, p. 488, our translation), “Problems are experienced as individual problems that also require individual measures, with those teachers who cannot deal with their classes being labeled as incompetent”. In the individualization of the problem, we see the erasure of the adversities faced by the school on a daily basis, reinforcing the narrative of teacher responsibility for the school's failure, to the extent that good work would only depend on the teacher, his effort, his dedication and his commitment. A question of merit.

However, even though the collaborators, seduced by the siren song, took a while to recognize them, they ended up identifying a set of other elements that contribute to quality being achieved. They highlighted that continued training cannot be the only strategy capable of contributing to improving the quality of education offered by schools, nor to solving difficulties relating to learning to read and write, so that one cannot leave aside the need for other important actions, such as a decent salary, good infrastructure conditions in schools, guarantee of time dedicated to studying, adequate materials, a favorable environment for learning and career. And, in this sense, they do not feel, in the end, that they are solely responsible for the results of education.

### **Concept of literacy: the official discourse**

The historical dispute over the conceptions of literacy, that is, the dispute for the hegemony of saying what literacy is and how, has resulted in fluctuations in the conceptions chosen to base policies in this area, meaning that, at each moment, a facet of literacy became hegemonic in the official discourse of the MEC, which is materialized in continuing training programs for literacy teachers. In this regard, Gontijo (2014, p. 76, our translation) argues that “[...] the need to control what is taught has influenced the concepts adopted by governments and international organizations throughout history”.

Taking into account the course of history, we sought to know the collaborators' view regarding the theoretical basis assumed by the PNAIC's continued training, interested in identifying in their speeches whether they had identified any relationship between the theoretical perspective mobilized by the continued training of the PNAIC and the guidelines contained in international education policies, coordinated by the OIs. In a succinct, often simplified way, demonstrating a certain difficulty in identifying theoretical bases, insecurity or even vague memories, the answers revolved around the designation of the term, with variations between constructivism, literacy and literacy, demonstrating difficulties in conceptualization, as we can read in the statements of collaborators P1 and C1, respectively: “ *I understood more that it would mean literacy through literacy, the use of text to teach literacy and literacy* ”, “ *I think it was constructivist* ”.

The answers obtained during the interviews are in line with the theoretical study proposed by the PNAIC's continuing education, which considers literate children to be capable of interacting through written texts in different situations, as well as reading and producing texts to meet the most diverse purposes (BRAZIL, 2012d). The Program, at the same time that it chose constructivism, highlighted literacy studies, also bringing the role of the teacher and systematic teaching, aligning itself, at times, with sociointeractionism<sup>4</sup>, as well as the contributions of the cognitive science of reading and studies of phonological awareness.

What we can say, based on the collaborators' speeches, is that they identify these perspectives as those validated by the MEC and, therefore, as paths to literacy, without, however, identifying the relationships they have with the guidelines emanating from the OIs.

Stieg (2012) argues that the presence of reconciliations between literacy perspectives in Brazil allows us to think that, in times of literacy adopted by the MEC's official discourse, the teaching of reading and writing began to be co-opted as a commodity, which is explained due to the country's alignment with the global economy's intentions regarding national education. Given Brazil's need to achieve Ideb goal 6, one of the main elements of the neoliberal agenda, literacy is appropriated by the official discourse as a way to meet this objective, since the aim is to minimally train readers and writers, enough to that can make assessments that could put Brazilian businesspeople in the spotlight in discussions about the world economy.

Faced with the flow of forces that dispute the concept of literacy validated within politics, what is observed is undue co-optation of such a concept on the part of OIs, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> Sociointeractionism is based on the studies of Lev Vygotsky. Fragments of this author's historical-cultural conception were integrated into constructivism, sometimes referring to this amalgam as socio-constructivism.

national educational policies, which seek to link learning to read and write to the exercise of a professional activity of an individualizing nature, for economic purposes. However, this mechanism does not reach the level of teaching discourses, which are unrelated to such alignments.

### Curricular narrowing

The PNAIC's main objective was to ensure that all students were literate in Portuguese and Mathematics by the end of the 3rd year of Elementary School (BRASIL, 2012a). Combined with this logic, the continued training of the PNAIC focused its actions on learning to read, write and calculate, which, for Freitas (2014, p. 51, our translation), “[...] prevents other areas of development of children are exercised (artistic, creative, affective, bodily)”.

The narrow space allocated to the other curricular components, such as Arts, Geography, History, Sciences and Recreation, covered in an interdisciplinary way, displeased the collaborators, who viewed with concern the emphasis given to learning Portuguese and Mathematics, to the detriment of other knowledge, which, for them, are of great importance for the education of children. Collaborator C1, when asked about the fact that continuing education focused on the areas of Portuguese and Mathematics, commented: *“It was a mistake too, because it should have been an interdisciplinary thing, something that the teacher could use all the disciplines in his planning.”* Let’s see what another contributor said:

*I think it's not correct, because Geography is important, Science. [It's ] very important that we start visualizing ourselves, working. And they left that forgotten. Their focus is reading, writing and Mathematics, focused on fun. Which is extremely important, yes, but it could also work on Sciences, History, Geography, Physical Education, Recreation, Art too. I think the other subjects are important. (P3, our translation).*

Based on the statements above, we infer that the narrowing of the curriculum directed work in the classroom towards learning Portuguese and Mathematics, areas that are central to promoting economic competitiveness and ensuring that Brazil occupies better positions in national and international *rankings*. In many moments, the collaborators' work focused on the knowledge valued in large-scale national assessments, to the detriment of other areas of knowledge, equally necessary for full human development, as literacy teachers recognize. Freitas (2012, p. 389, our translation) warns: “[...] evaluations generate traditions. They direct the gaze of teachers, administrators and students. If what is valued in an exam are reading and mathematics, they will dedicate their privileged attention to that.”

The narrowing of the curriculum, aimed at these two areas of knowledge, was designed so that these were the knowledge valued in the educational process. But the perspective of these professionals was beyond the guidelines, even though it was directed to that end. The data shows that the collaborators were not convinced that this was the best way forward. And this is revealing a resistance to important ideas defended by mercantile logic. The information produced shows that they do not easily accept this orientation, which points to a resistance movement.

In defense of the right to education, understood as full human formation, we reaffirm the need for a training proposal that, even focused on the appropriation of written language, enables the establishment of powerful and multidisciplinary relationships with the different areas of knowledge and languages, considering aspects of creativity, affectivity, corporeality, arts and culture, but without hierarchizing them. We cannot forget that the right to learn reading, writing and calculation skills is just one of the components of the right to education. In these terms, we need to oppose training processes that serve so-called quality indicators, defending them as a space for reflection, recreation and re-signification of knowledge, in order to contribute to a critical and socially referenced literacy process.

### **Large-scale national assessment**

As a corollary of this movement of convergence between policies, we identified in large-scale national evaluations the character of a structuring/regulatory element of public literacy policies. Inserted in the context of the Global Education Reform Movement (*Global Education Reform Movement – Germ*), large-scale national assessments promote a standardized curriculum and decentralization, as well as the accountability of educational systems (VERGER; PARCERISA; FONTDEVILA, 2018) for the low quality of education. Therefore, it is worth returning here to one of the objectives of the PNAIC, in the words of P3: “[...] *it was for Ideb to be well up there [...]*”, in conjunction with the definition of global goals, mediated by internationalization processes.

During the interviews, we sought to know what the literacy teachers thought about large-scale national assessments as an auxiliary factor in the literacy process, to which P4 replied that it was the “ *only error of the Program* ”, justifying “ *it is not the reality that certain schools and municipalities have* ”. Guided by a critical-reflective stance, which expressed security in

relation to the work carried out in the classroom, the collaborators' work is accompanied by a permanent process of questioning:

*There is Ana [National Literacy Assessment], Provinha Brasil, they are far from our reality. I do it, I follow it with the boys and so on, but for my practice even as a literacy teacher, they contribute very little. It increases the vision of how my student is doing, I will see that, in that part there, he didn't get it right, but then I reflect: why didn't he get it right? Was it because I didn't work? And why didn't I work on that subject in that little section? Because our reality is different. (P5, our translation).*

Despite the criticism made of large-scale assessments, we observed that literacy teachers are led to teach what would be required in the tests, engaging in an assessment process that they themselves reject. With this, they begin to monitor students' performance levels in an attempt to identify errors. It is important to emphasize that, even reproducing guidelines by imposition, we identify in their impressions and opinions on the subject a countermovement at the micro level, which tensions the policy.

Regarding the State's decision to measure literacy in Brazil through national assessments applied on a large scale, Gontijo (2014) relates this fact, on the one hand, to international events, such as the aforementioned Dakar Forum, which, as a whole its six goals provide for the need to measure student learning in literacy, calculation and essential life skills. And on the other hand, with regard to the national initiative, there is the report prepared by the Working Group (GT) of the Chamber of Deputies, which, in line with international guidelines, points to the need to evaluate literacy.

For all these reasons, it is important to know how school knowledge is evaluated, as well as for whom and against whom educational policies are being formulated. For Goulart (2014), implicit in the proposal for large-scale external evaluation are school proposals guided by market logic, which contribute to the precariousness of the teaching profession. In this sense, it is necessary to value training experiences designed as a collective, based on reflection and the human nature of training, so that subjects are not made invisible in the evaluation and training process.

## Results orientation

Associated with the category of 'large-scale national assessment', the category 'results orientation' highlights the neoliberal character of international policies and further reveals the concerns of research participants with this dimension of training and teaching action, oriented towards measurable results.

Given the global interest for countries to raise the quality of their education systems, the obligation to deliver results presents itself as a strategic political technology in the global education agenda. An instrument of transnational regulation in education, the obligation to achieve results, for Normand (2015), is seen as a technology capable of managing schools and also governing education systems, through the notion of *accountability*, which integrates accountability policies for non-compliance with prescribed objectives, as well as accountability, which, aligned with qualitative data, regulate education by numbers.

The collaborators recognized the results produced by students in large-scale assessments as a frequent topic at PNAIC continuing education meetings. The discussion around this issue promoted a stressful environment for the participants, as P4 reported: “[...] *there was a lot of talking and suffering a lot with the results*”. Following this reasoning, P6 added that the work focused on Ana's result and ended by characterizing the PNAIC as a course that trained teachers to guide students to reach the level of this test.

The way in which the results were discussed in the training meetings was also described by the collaborators. Based on their reports, the guidance revolved around more objective work, which was based on student errors, that is, their performance in large-scale assessments, with the objective of making literacy teachers more effective. In the search for better results, the recommendations focused on what and how to do to improve student performance, which aroused distrust in relation to the work carried out by teachers in their classrooms. In these terms, the obligation to deliver results was not only related to large-scale assessments, but also to the pedagogical work assessed based on them. Let's see what collaborator C2 said about the orientation towards results in PNAIC training meetings:

*Once they asked the teacher to create, based on the result, a lesson plan, a didactic sequence to work on those skills that were low in the result. (C2, our translation).*

The obligation to produce results subjected those involved in the PNAIC's training activities to a feeling of constant anguish in the face of the urgency of being accountable, as literacy teachers found it increasingly difficult to exercise their autonomy. Urged to provide

transparency to society about the results produced by large-scale assessments, PNAIC's continued training sought to raise awareness among literacy teachers about the need to improve the municipality's results in the Ideb, considered the indicator of excellence in literacy. The role of study advisors was transformed due to the responsibility of ensuring control of efficiency and effectiveness, with the objective of applying prescriptions as a way of guaranteeing improved student performance, which promoted tension in the training environment. It is worth highlighting that the focus on results depends greatly on the agencies in the municipalities where the PNAIC training actions were carried out.

In this sense, despite the objective of improving the Ideb having been one of the purposes of the PNAIC, the orientation towards results expressed more of a local interference, via municipal education management, in the PNAIC training proposal developed in Santa Cruz Cabrália (BA), primarily concerned with the Ideb, and not so much with the training proposal itself, as P5 pointed out: “[Ideb performance] *was not a topic within the PNAIC, but there was a lot of discussion*”, which leaves no doubt that it was a demand caused by municipal education management, which sought to “govern through numbers” (GREK, 2016).

As observed in the collaborators' speech, the obligation to produce results had negative effects on their training processes. However, it was possible to observe, in many moments, disobedience to what was demanded of them, that is, a way of relating contrary to what the policies want, contrary to individualism, betting on solidarity and collective work.

### Final remarks

The information produced, analyzed and problematized during the interviews indicates the convergence of international and national education and literacy policies, with indirect effects on the continued training of literacy teachers. This is because policies are not implemented, nor are they adopted by countries, educational institutions and the subjects involved with the same principles, meanings and intentions with which they were designed.

The implementation of a policy is crossed by other discourses and contexts, that is, it is interpreted and recontextualized at all times by the different subjects involved, in dialogue with the local culture and at each of the different stages of the training process, ranging from the university to the classroom, recontextualized at each layer. It is in the space in which politics materializes that we locate both the production of principles that align with what is prescribed

in the global agenda for education and the production of movements of resistance and (re) existence, betrayal, creation, and authorship.

Literacy teachers, due to the requirement, established globally, to fulfill the objective of increasing reading and writing rates, were urged to carry out the PNAIC, taking care of training students to respond to large-scale national assessments, which disregard the working conditions in which learning takes place. The expectation was that the students would perform well, as they would be charged for it, however, we saw that the collaborators did so against their will, demonstrating that they did not agree with this.

The collaborators demonstrated a desire to continue studying, recognized the importance of training actions such as the PNAIC to qualify their work and, like a fetish, came to believe that all training is good. With this, we say that, even without knowing it, even without having the same principles, by valuing training, they end up affirming values and interests included in the global agenda for education, since the notion of continued training is co-opted by these discourses. Therefore, the challenge remains to institute training processes that integrate teaching knowledge and authorship with what is experienced in the classroom, that go hand in hand with teaching valorization policies and assume continued training as a collectively constructed and socially referenced right, in addition to consider teaching and learning conditions.

Therefore, the collaborators' speeches cannot be directly associated with the interests and values placed on the global education agenda. Seduction by the siren song occurs in a skewed way, not directly. By valuing training, sometimes for humanist, sociopolitical and 'noble' reasons, they end up echoing this illusory discourse, which places continued training as the sole determinant of the quality of education. It is, therefore, a superficial and even naive discourse, inscribed in common sense. Recognizing the relevant role of continuing education does not necessarily mean taking it as the sole or primary determinant. Accountability and meritocracy policies are, therefore, surreptitious.

Learning to read and write, as an important part of the right to education, therefore presupposes the existence of public literacy policies as a common good, critically based and socially referenced, equally committed to social justice and willing to problematize teaching of those who “saw the grape” (In Portuguese, *quem viu a uva*) and those who profit from it.



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**Ethical approval:** The research considered the ethical principles indicated by ANPEd (2021), based on the British Educational reference document Research Association – BERA, from the British Education Research Association (2022), as this document defines ethical principles aimed at research in Education (Link <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/diretrizes-eticas-para-pesquisa-em-educacao>).

In accordance with the ethical precepts contained in the aforementioned document, the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, taking into account the need to ensure a reliable transcription of the interviewees' reports. We also note that the interviews were carried out after consent from the interviewees. To this end, we prepared the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE), delivered to the collaborators in two copies, for signature. It is worth mentioning that there was guidance for reading, clarifying and signing the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE), for all participants, and the ethical precautions indicated both for access to documents (documentary part) and for interviews. We guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of the information produced, only with the identification of general attributes, which define the social place of the interviewees. As a way of keeping the identity of the participants confidential, we used fictitious names chosen by the collaborators themselves.

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