THINKING ABOUT ASPECTS OF EDUCATION AIMED AT YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS FROM NICOLAS CONDORCET, JACQUES RANCIÉRE, MARCO RAUL MEJÍA AND PAULO FREIRE

PENSANDO ASPECTOS DA EDUCAÇÃO DESTINADA A JOVENS E ADULTOS A PARTIR DE NICOLAS CONDORCET, JACQUES RANCIÉRE, MARCO RAUL MEJÍA E PAULO FREIRE

PENSANDO EN ASPECTOS DE LA EDUCACIÓN DIRIGIDA A JÓVENES Y ADULTOS DE NICOLAS CONDORCET, JACQUES RANCIÉRE, MARCO RAUL MEJÍA Y PAULO FREIRE

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ABSTRACT: This paper, based on bibliographical sources, intends to survey aspects brought by the works of Condorcet, Jacques Ranciére, Marco Raul Mejía and Paulo Freire regarding the concept of Adult and Youth Education. This is because, it is being considered that such concerns were, to some extent, incorporated into what is now conceived as EJA in Brazil. The choice of these authors was due to the fact that they mention, in their works, the need for an education that reaches everyone and not just privileged classes. Whereas, in the first moment of the history of Pedagogy, formal education was aimed at a very specific audience, that is, whites and bourgeois from the nobility. This text seeks to bring, even if briefly, the thoughts of these four important theorists, who until today influence the conception of education aimed at young people and adults.

KEYWORDS: Adult and youth education. Emancipation. Instruction.

RESUMO: O presente artigo, embasado em fontes de natureza bibliográfica, pretende fazer um levantamento de aspectos trazidos pelas obras de Condorcet, Jacques Ranciére, Marco Raul Mejía e Paulo Freire relativos à concepção de educação destinada a jovens e adultos. Isso porque, se está considerando que tais preocupações foram, em alguma medida, incorporadas ao que hoje se concebe como EJA no Brasil. A escolha desses autores se deveu ao fato de eles mencionarem, em suas obras, a necessidade de uma educação que atinja a todos e não somente classes privilegiadas. Considerando que, no primeiro momento da história da Pedagogia, a educação formal era destinada a um público bastante específico, ou seja, brancos e burgueses oriundos da nobreza. Este texto busca trazer, mesmo que

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brevemente, o pensamento desses quatro importantes teóricos, que até os dias de hoje influenciam a concepção de educação destinada a jovens e adultos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação de jovens e adultos. Emancipação. Instrução.

RESUMEN: El presente artículo, a partir de fuentes bibliográficas, pretende sondear apspectos aportados por los trabajos de Condorcet, Jacques Ranciére, Marco Raul Mejía y Paulo Freire sobre el concepto de educación dirigida a jóvenes y adultos. Esto se debe a que se está considerando que tales preocupaciones fueron, hasta cierto punto, incorporadas a lo que ahora se concibe como EJA en Brasil. La elección de estos autores se debe a que mencionan, en sus obras, la necesidad de una educación que llegue a todos y no solo a las clases privilegiadas. Mientras que, en el primer momento de la historia de la Pedagogía, la educación formal estaba dirigida a un público muy específico, es decir, blancos y burgueses de la nobleza. Este texto busca traer, aunque sea brevemente, el pensamiento de estos cuatro importantes teóricos, que hasta hoy influyen en la concepción de la educación dirigida a jóvenes y adultos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación para jóvenes y adultos. Emancipación. Instrucción.

Introduction

When we stop to read the authors to whom we dedicate ourselves for the achievement of this article, we realize that there were, in those works, very current ideas, likely to be found in the configuration in which youth and adult education (EJA, Portuguese initials) is found as a modality of teaching in Brazil. Thus, the first author who caught our attention, for bringing an idea of the need for public policy to the population not educated since childhood, was Nicolas Condorcet⁴, and, therefore, we included him among the authors listed to compose this bibliographic research. Later we will detail how this education envisioned by this author was.

Another name that makes up this text is that of Jacques Rancière, because he defends that it is possible to stimulate in the apprentice his emancipatory capacity and, in addition, to stimulate the student to learn what the master ignores, which leads us to what this The author calls it equality of intelligences. We also include Marco Raúl Mejía, who, from a Critical

⁴ According to Santos (2007, p. 8) the Marquis de Condorcet, "[...] was one of the youngest Enlightenment philosophers and one of the most involved in the transformations that began to occur in French society in the 19th century. These transformations were social and political changes, but also changes in science itself and in the way of doing this science. He lived and participated in the philosophical revival of the Age of Enlightenment [...]. Condorcet was a student [of the most important Enlightenment philosophers – Diderot, Voltaire, D'Alambert, Rousseau], an heir who actively enjoyed the inheritances of his philosopher fathers, [...], so that after his masters died, he could carry forward some of the projects of civilization and political organization of society that these philosophers thought of. In the same man resided the mathematician (including Social Mathematics), the economist (who was minister of the Ancien Régime), the philosopher (the last Enlightenment) and the politician (deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the French Republic in the revolutionary period)."

Pedagogy perspective, will focus on youth and adult education in Latin America in a more current context.

Finally, we call the master Paulo Freire to dialogue, considering him as a theoretical framework for the foundations of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil, as we currently conceive it, and as a thinker of a Brazilian teaching methodology, which Its principle is dialogic education, as an instrument for the emancipation of the students. Thus, from these authors, a survey of the concerns expressed in their works will be attempted, considering that they were incorporated into what we now conceive as EJA. In the next section, we bring legal aspects related to this type of education.

The education of young people and adults: placing it in contemporaneity

Contextualizing to the specific reality of Brazil, Costa and Machado (2017)⁵, based on the CEB opinion prepared by Carlos Roberto Jamil Cury, no. 11/2000, make an overview of the legislation related to Youth and Adult Education, which goes from Brazil Imperial to the 1988 Constitution. Thus, we insert a clipping of this overview, so that we can associate it to the intended discussion with the aforementioned authors.

It is worth noting the fact that, since the constitution of 1824, according to the aforementioned opinion, there was already the presumption that "free primary education" was incumbent upon every citizen (Art. 179, 32) (BRASIL, 2000, p. 13) . Another point to mention is that in 1879, Decree 7,427 established a reform in education that created night courses for illiterate, free or freed male adults – it should be noted –, encompassing the same subjects offered by day courses. However, the 1891 constitution will remove from its text the issue of gratuity presented in the imperial constitution, in addition to demanding that the right to vote cannot be exercised by those who are illiterate. The document mentions that in 1925, Decree no. 16,782/A (Rocha Vaz Law, as it became known) determined that the Union should disseminate primary education, and 'evening schools of the same character could be created for adults'.

Many details of this opinion of the National Council of Education – Basic Education Chamber (CNE/CEB) – could be listed in this text, but what we want to add to the discussion here intended is that, historically, since 1934, there was already a prediction of how general education could be extended to adults, because "The 1934 Constitution [...] places primary

⁵ Na verdade, trata-se de sistematização feita por Cury, em parecer da CEB nº 11/2000.

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education extended to adults as a component of education and as a duty of the State and a right of the citizen" (COSTA; MACHADO, 2017, p. 59, our transaltion).

Other moments and documents could be mentioned to show how the trajectory that configured the EJA occurred and how it is formatted today, however, it was chosen to list the most basic and recent legislation in this regard, so it is highlighted below part of the content of Section V - Youth and Adult Education - contained in the Education Guidelines and Bases Law (Law no. 9394/96), so that, further on, we undertake discussions around this theme:

Art. 37 – The education of young people and adults will be aimed at those who did not have access to or continuity of studies in Elementary and High School at the proper age.

§ 1 - The education systems will ensure, free of charge, to young people and adults who cannot carry out their studies at the regular age, appropriate educational opportunities, considering the characteristics of the students, their interests, living and working conditions, through courses and exams.

§ 2 - The Public Power will enable and encourage the access and permanence of the worker in the school, through integrated and complementary actions.

§ 3 - The education of young people and adults should preferably be articulated with professional education, in the form of a regulation (BRASIL, 1996, our translation).

Thus, the LDB is responsible for regulating the provisions of the Federal Constitution of 1988 in its article 208, item I, and is the document from which the understanding of this modality can be better summarized and captured⁶. Costa and Machado (2017, p. 64) will show that youth and adult education, as a modality legitimized by the LDB and based on what CEB referee Carlos Roberto Jamil Cury said, will have a special profile and feature:

It is therefore a way of existing with its own characteristic. This feature is linked to the principle of proportionality so that this mode is respected. Proportionality, as a guide to procedures, in turn, is a dimension of equity that has to do with the detailed application of justice, which prevents the deepening of differences when they make people inferior. It prevents the growth of inequalities through the unequal treatment of the unequal, considering the concrete conditions, so that these eliminate a discriminatory barrier [...] means that EJA students must also be equal to those who have always had access to schooling and in it they could remain (COSTA; MACHADO, 2017, p. 64, our translation).

⁶ In addition to the LDB, we can mention vast documentation that deals with the issue of Youth and Adult education to understand the configuration of Youth and Adult education, including: the World Declaration on Education for All; Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action; Agenda 21 (chapter 36); Copenhagen Declaration (Commitment No. 6); Beijing Action Platform; Aman's Affirmation and United Nations Decade Plan of Action for Education in the Sphere of Human Rights, among others.

This excerpt shows what results the LDB envisions that the EJA will achieve, in practice, demonstrating its essentially reparative and equalizing function, and corroborating the principle found in the 1988 CF, "Education as a right for all and a duty of the State". In the same sense, we find in the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Y ouths and Adults, aspects that emphasize the guarantee of social rights through access to this type of education.

[...] Youth and Adult Education (EJA) represents an unresolved social debt to those who did not have access to or mastery of writing and reading as social goods, at school or outside it, and have been the force for labor employed in the constitution of wealth and in the elevation of public works. To be deprived of this access is, in fact, the loss of an essential instrument for a significant presence in contemporary social coexistence (BRASIL, 2021, p. 05, our translation).

In the following topic, we will verify the convergences of the chosen authors in relation to the characteristics of what we previously presented, in legal terms, and of what is understood today by Youth and Adult Education in Brazil.

Detecting points of convergence between Youth and Adult Education in Brazil and assumptions observed in the work of Condorcet, Rancière, Mejía and Freire

In a way, the four authors that make up this article believe that education is a path that can be followed by everyone and that includes the adult who did not receive the expected schooling during childhood and who can do so at another time. Three of them – Rancière, Mejía and Freire – will more fervently defend emancipation, as the end of the educational process.

Mejía, a scholar to whom the emergence of the first initiatives of popular education in Latin America is due, makes an overview according to which he asserts that, between the two world wars, there was an accentuated concern with the education of young people and adults, emphasizing that this was due to the problem with the unemployed and peasants who came to live in urban areas. In this way, the worker, at that moment, would need to be adapted to the technology. According to Mejía (2018, p. 40, our translation), "[...] these situations led to an infinity of people being re-educated, in the sense of adapting to new circumstances".

This author shows that in Latin America it was the Inter-American Agency for Development that brought to the (Latin) American continent "[...] the concept of adult education as defined by the age of the recipient and for developing in processes not formal education, differentiating themselves from school processes, and establishing a distinction between formal and non-formal education" (MEJÍA, 2018, p. 41, our translation). Even with the legislation and all the evolution that adult education has gone through, there are still, according to Mejía himself, those who consider adult education as non-formal.

There we see that what Mejía points out is clearly stated in paragraph 3 of article 37 of the LDB, which provides for the articulation of youth and adult education with professionalization. In addition, it is important to note that Mejía (2018, p. 18), precisely because he is an author of Critical Pedagogy, expresses in his text concerns about the *characteristics of the students*, even more so because this author believes that the student is an active actor, so he argues:

[...] a conception of education [...] has practices, methodologies, theories, approaches, pedagogies, and an ethical option of transformation. [...] is part of a project that seeks to *dignify the excluded and segregated human by educational and political pedagogical means as part of the construction of new worlds* (MEJÍA, 2018, p. 18. Author's highlights, our translation).

This perspective of Critical Pedagogy will permeate the entire work of this author and is the point that we want to highlight in relation to our education legislation aimed at adults, that is, a dignifying vision of the excluded and segregated man. An important highlight is the fact that this scholar emphasizes that popular education is not restricted to adult education, although this is a very relevant perspective in his work.

In addition, an important element presented by Mejía's work is interculturality, that is, the fact that listening to the other cannot be disinterested so that later one can say what is right. Thus, popular education does not aim to overcome knowledge, but to start from different cultures, respecting them. It is up here, once again, to associate this idea with what is provided for in article 37 of the LDB: the promotion of "[...] appropriate educational opportunities, considering the characteristics of the students, their interests, living and working conditions [...]." (our translation)

Thus, popular education, as Mejía shows us, considers the level of subjective development in which the group with which we are going to work is, in order to escape from unique methodologies. Another highlight is the fact that the Latin American paradigm focuses its proposal on a critique of modernity, aiming to make visible the pedagogies of the south, which can be characterized as "[...] as a terrain of differences and the need for education to build critical actors, promoters of the transformation of their realities." (MEJÍA, 2018, p. 61, our translation). Once again, the contextualized and transforming proposal is reinforced, a character with which all education should be covered.

In Condorcet, we will see that it is believed that the teaching of the various subjects he defends as fundamental (art, rural economy, physical and moral education) should be taught after elementary school. Thus, he argues that adults restricted to the first education would not be able to seek their education in books. Thus, Condorcet (2008) argues that, for these adults,

Teaching is still necessary for them. It could therefore be established that the teacher in charge of this first instruction would be the same one in charge of giving, every Sunday, a class to which children, young people of both sexes, fathers and mothers of families would be admitted. Because it is still necessary here to avoid separating men from women (CONDORCET, 2008, p. 172, our translation).

For this thinker, the day of rest of these men who are busy, mainly with physical work, should be a day of study, which would be dedicated to instructive occupations, and thus, the day would be used in a useful way that was not that of ordinary work. This would result in a form of service to society, according to Condorcet himself. This excerpt shows the embryonic idea of an alternative way for the working student to have access to education, which makes us associate with the night courses of the current legislation that aim, precisely, to provide these students with access to school. From this reading of Condorcet, it appears that he proposes not a properly emancipatory education, as we will see in Rancière, Mejía and Freire, but a way for adults to be better educated, even though the formalization of this education is not very well outlined in his proposal.

According to Boto (1996, p. 127, our translation), "In Condorcet, perfectibility [...] would be threatened, if vigorous efforts were not made to eradicate ignorance." This is why Boto (1996) argues that:

Condorcet manifests an amplitude for instruction that intends to cover *all ages of life*, so that the knowledge acquired at school could be revived and even updated by a project of continuous and permanent formation. All discursive intersections converge, in this sense, to the belief, always retaken, of a development of the social fabric through the eradication of popular obscurantism (BOTO, 1996, p. 121, author's highlights, our translation).

For this reason, according to Boto (1996), the preamble of the report of the Condorcetian proposal, presented to the Legislative Assembly by the French Public Instruction Commission (18th century), contains the objectives of leading individuals to achieve well-being, become conscientious defenders of their rights and capable of fulfilling their duties, even capable of performing the social functions to which they would be naturally designated to be called.

Regarding this last aspect, there is a belief in a kind of social separation due to natural abilities. In this way, not everyone would be destined to occupy all the roles they wanted, since the individual would only be able to develop "[...] completely the talents he received from Nature". Santos (2007) shows that, concerning the debate on public education at the time when Condorcet prepared the report, as already mentioned, after the French Revolution, it was possible to make several considerations

[...] such as the degree of priority of education, who should take charge of it is a very important question that concerns the model of education itself: on the one hand, some said that it would be necessary to form strong, enlightened and virtuous men and on the other hand they asserted that men should be instructed until they could enlighten themselves. The diversity of the philosophical debate on public education revolves around the question of the anthropological model that should represent the new man, the one that emerged in the Revolution; it is a debate around both the idea of citizenship and the idea of human rights. This new man, as a free citizen, is no longer a subject, he is now a citizen who shares equality with all other citizens. The problem with the educational model appears, therefore, around the idea of citizenship, on its extension. In the debate on the definition of citizenship, two conceptions occur: the first concerns the dependence of the citizen on the State and the second concerns the freedom of the citizen to constitute the State, because this State is the result of a founding will (SANTOS, 2007, p. 92-93, our translation).

Now, despite the debate on the two proposals mentioned above, Condorcet's idea of favoring that man, through an instruction that fit him (for working adults, as is the focus of this article), was clear to achieve their freedom and autonomy. Thus, this author defended that, as pointed out by Boto (1996), "[...] virtues and talents would be the only legitimate sources of social distinction". Another highlight that the Condorcetian proposal deserves is that it was essential that the people, through education, could know their rights, so that they would feel consulted when drafting laws. Therefore, taking them out of ignorance and making them aware of their rights would be the way to achieve this objective.

We include Jacques Rancière (and his Jacotot⁷) in this brief discussion due to the fact that his work "The ignorant master: five lessons on intellectual emancipation" presents a proposal for a teacher and education, capable of emancipating intelligences, considering that there is no " ignorant" who does not know an infinity of things. In this way, he believes that it is on this knowledge, on this capacity in action, that all teaching should be founded. As a result, we selected this author to think about what from this perspective can be captured in current youth and adult education.

⁷ Jacotot, representative of a kind of utopian avant-garde of pedagogy of his time.

For Ranciére and his perspective of equality of intelligences, "[...] if equality is not established as a starting point, that is, placed at the beginning of the process, nothing can be done to achieve it." Thus, the stultification, which he opposes to emancipation, does not affect the people merely because of a lack of education, but the fact of believing in the inferiority of their own intelligence. The emancipation of the student, in turn, is understood within what he calls the 'circle of potency', in which "[...] the ignorant will learn by themselves what the master ignores, if the master believes he can, and obliges you to upgrade your capacity". Furthermore, he believes that anyone who recognizes that every man was born to understand what any man has to say has understood what intellectual emancipation is.

Reflecting on Rancière's perspective, - when he says that emancipating at least one man is already a victory and a guiding thread for the change of structures - it is also worth mentioning, from Paulo Freire, that teachers should not teach by transferring knowledge, but creating conditions and possibilities for the construction that emerges, this because teaching is not disconnected from learning. That is why this assumption can be observed in the LDB, considering that this law determines that "[...] appropriate educational opportunities must be observed, considering the characteristics of the students, their interests, living conditions".

Paulo Freire has always expressed his concern with forming critical citizens, capable of reflecting on reality, of discovering themselves as a "person" and recognizing themselves as a transforming agent of society. We must seek the construction of subversive educators, question/create and not reproduce knowledge. For Freire, utopia is a possible dream, his pedagogy is based on autonomy.

However, Freire understood his thinking more as a Theory of Knowledge than as a teaching methodology, for him his work meant much more a method of learning than a method of teaching. The Paulo Freire method consists of a proposal for adult literacy that carried out a critique of the traditional system, which used the "Cartilha" as a central didactic tool for the teaching of reading and writing, as this tool taught through the repetition of single words or forcibly created phrases.

The Freirean Method is concerned with the literacy of students, enabling their insertion in the history of humanity, helping them through education, in the analysis of the problems of the local and national community. Students "open their eyes" because they begin to understand life in a different way. The use of dialogue, sharing of knowledge make learning significant and configure basic strategies for the development of the teaching-learning process. This, even without building senses and meanings for their actions, emotions and thoughts, loses the sense of being, because the human being dies, even physically.

According to Carlos Rodrigues Brandão (1991), the stages of the Freirean Method are structured in moments that, due to their dialectical nature, are not watertight, but are interdisciplinary linked to each other.

In the first stage – called "The generative words" – Brandão states that the Freire Method corresponds to a process that begins with the constant investigation of the vocabulary universe of the students and the study of the ways of life of the population and its locality. Through informal conversations, the educator observes the words most used by the students in order to carefully choose those that will serve as the basis for the lessons. The number of words or generator words can vary between 18 and 23, approximately. This immersion in the student's life will enable the educator to emerge from the reality of the class-group that is being investigated, giving him conditions to surrender to the process, helping him to define his starting point. After composing the universe of generative words, they begin to exercise them through discussion on the theme generated by them. "Words are the smallest unit of research, just as the phonemes of words will be the smallest unit of the method. But here, words are not just an instrument for reading the language; they are also instruments of collective re-reading of the social reality where language exists" (BRANDÃO, 1991, p. 30, our translation).

The method proposed by Paulo Freire also uses "culture circles", a term that replaces the conventional classroom, that is, as the name itself indicates, they all form a circle so that the literacy teacher (initiator of debates) can coordinate work focused on dialogue. As for being "culture", it is because it is a collective production where everyone learns word for word that are part of the literacy students' experience since the content of the dialogue refers to the programmatic content of education.

For Freire, the liberating educator must seek the content in the student's culture and in the awareness he has of it, after that, return this content in an organized and structured way. This method, because it is dialogic, allows the individual to be aware of the themes, participate and investigate their own universe, admiring it, being able to criticize it and transform it. Contrary to the "banking" educator, who defines the content even before the first contact with the student and only deposits it in the student.

According to Paulo Freire, the basis of Pedagogy is dialogue. This premise is present in different situations between the educator-student and the object of knowledge between nature and culture. Freire believed that education should have as its object the promotion of the expansion of the student's world view and this would only be possible through the mediating action of the dialogue that should start before the pedagogical situation itself. The second stage would be the "Syllabation" - after the identification and selection of the generating words, their study began through the syllabic division, in this sense, similar to the traditional method: each syllable unfolds in its respective syllabic family, by changing the vowel (part that changes in each family), the syllables are read and repeated by everyone, who can even write. After this phase, the educator makes use of the discovery form that contains the families and that serves him in several moments of the process: repetition, separation of families and copying. Here it will be important to show the student the articulation between the sound values of vowels to facilitate the recognition of syllables.

The third stage is called by Brandão (1991) as "The new words". Using the syllabic families, now known, the "group" forms new words. Here, the educator does not insist that the student write or recreate words, he only encourages him, and he can do it himself. This work will only be interrupted when the educator deems it convenient. It is important to emphasize that the words constructed by the group will also be read by them. The difficulties will be presented and discussed. Later, through incentives, students begin to form short sentences and/or periods.

Finally, the fourth step would be "Awareness". For Freire, literacy cannot be restricted to the processes of encoding and decoding. Thus, the objective of adult literacy is to promote awareness of everyday problems, understanding of the world and knowledge of social reality. Thus, the contents (created from generating words) are the result of a dialogic methodology. In this sense, it is necessary to know the student as an individual inserted in a social context. Political reflection, one of the aspects of this method, provides awareness and culminates in cultural transformation, with politicization occurring through organized actions.

Final considerations

We begin these final words with the Condorcetian work, very striking because it is a very revolutionary public education policy, since it arises in a post-French Revolution context, and systematized, it manifests a dual character, since its universalism comprised an equality that would make possible the professionalization of the poor and maintain the educational elitism of the rich. This leads us to think that the current configuration of what is established as EJA still manifests this bias of accommodation to the "natural place" and talent that that citizen would be designated to occupy.

It is also important to highlight the importance of Latin America for Freire's work, as well as for Mejía, with an emphasis on the South as a symbol of resistance. Through dialogic education and the impression of decolonial thinking existing in his work, Paulo Freire meets the various forms of oppression in relation to knowledge – symbolizing struggle and resistance – towards emancipation at different levels of society. With this, this emblematic thinker breaks with the coloniality of being and preaches the decolonization of minds.

If on the one hand Rancière brings Universal Teaching as a teaching method capable of accelerating the process of popular instruction, Freire proposes a dialogical teaching method, which seeks to emancipate men through education. The Freirean Method has as its guiding principle literacy aiming at liberation that does not occur only in the cognitive field, but mainly in the social and political fields.

Glimpsing Rancière's perspective, we want to believe that EJA, as a modality and even educational policy - and contrary to what Condorcet presupposed - wants to provide the student with the means to take more distant flights and not be limited to what the class and the social environment theoretically would expect them. Thus, it is expected, according to the conception brought by Mejía, that an education in fact contextualized is increasingly effective, assuming that "the educational act [must have] a deep respect for the knowledge of the students [and] encloses in itself the need for ongoing formation and critical investigation of the practice itself" (MEJÍA, 2018, p. 197, our translation).

Thus, as we have already mentioned above, after approaching some aspects of Mejía's work, it is expected that the EJA will reach and effect the dignification of the "human excluded and segregated by educational and political pedagogical means as part of the construction of new worlds", and do not act as a mere policy of maintenance of the current social order, in a merely literacy bias. That the letter enacted in law can be a transforming and emancipatory reality for the citizens who need it and resort to it.

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