

A formação do/a educador/a de Jovens e Adultos na Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais: ontem, hoje e amanhã¹

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Resumo

Este artigo deriva dos resultados de duas pesquisas que, ao todo, escutaram 130 egressas da habilitação em Educação de Jovens e Adultos do curso de Pedagogia da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, questionários e fóruns de discussão. Objetiva-se discutir a formação inicial de professores/as de jovens e adultos a partir da reconstrução histórica da formação de educadores para Educação de Jovens e Adultos nesse curso. As pesquisas evidenciaram que a Educação de Jovens e Adultos ainda precisa ganhar mais espaço nos cursos de Pedagogia, entretanto, isso só vai acontecer quando for mais reconhecida no âmbito das políticas públicas de educação. Além disso, ficou evidente que a formação específica para a Educação de Jovens e Adultos impacta positivamente a atuação dos professores, mas o campo de trabalho ainda não efetivou essa demanda.

Palavras-chave: Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Formação de Professores. Formação Inicial. Pedagogia.

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Training of youth and adult educators at the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Minas Gerais: yesterday, today and tomorrow

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Abstract

This article is based on the results of two studies that interviewed 130 graduates of the Pedagogy program at the Federal University of Minas Gerais with a qualification in Youth and Adult Education (YAE), through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and discussion groups. This paper examines the initial teacher training of youth and adult educators based on a historical reconstruction of the YAE teacher training qualification offered by the aforementioned institution. The studies have shown that Youth and Adult Education still needs to conquer more space in pedagogy programs, however, this will only take place when it is more recognized by educational public policies. It was demonstrated that specific training for Youth and Adult Education has a positive impact on teachers' performance, but there has not been a demand for professionals with this specific qualification yet.

Keywords: Youth and Adult Education. Teacher training. Initial teacher training. Pedagogy.

La formación del educador de jóvenes y adultos en la Facultad De Educación de la Universidad Federal De Minas Gerais: ayer, hoy y mañana

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Resumen

Este artículo deriva de los resultados de dos investigaciones que escucharon a 130 egresadas de la carrera de Pedagogía de la Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais con habilitación en Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas, por medio de entrevistas semiestructuradas, cuestionarios y ateneos de discusión. El objetivo es examinar la formación inicial de docentes de jóvenes y adultos a partir de la reconstrucción histórica de la formación de educadores para la Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas ofrecida por la institución mencionada. Los estudios han demostrado que la Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas todavía necesita conquistar más espacio en los cursos de Pedagogía, sin embargo, esto solo sucederá cuando sea más reconocida por parte de las políticas públicas educativas. Se evidenció que la formación específica para la Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas impacta positivamente en el desempeño de los docentes, pero en el campo del trabajo aún no se ha producido una demanda por profesionales con esta habilitación específica.

Palabras clave: Educación de Personas Jóvenes y Adultas. Formación de profesores. Formación inicial. Pedagogía.

Introduction

Theorists in the field recognize that an educator who attends to the specificities of Adult Education (EJA) serves as a differentiating factor both in their practice and in the struggle for the right to education for the excluded (VÓVIO, 2010; SOARES, 2008; ARROYO, 2006a; GIOVANETTI, 2006; RIBEIRO, 1999). The National Curriculum Guidelines for EJA highlight that the preparation of a teacher for this field should include, in addition to the formative requirements for any teacher, those related to the differential complexity of this mode of education. Teacher education institutions are encouraged to offer this qualification, so that bachelor's degrees and other qualifications for teaching professionals must consider the reality of EJA in their programs (SOARES, 2002).

There is noticeable convergence between academic and political discourse on the need to train educators for the specificities of Adult Education and its professionalization. However, little progress has been made in this area (DI PIERRO, 2010b).

The discussions that motivated the research resulting in this text address the issue of the initial training of EJA educators, more specifically, that conducted in a university undergraduate course, which Diniz-Pereira (2006) coined as academic-professional. The EJA qualification in the Pedagogy course at UFMG opened its first class in 1986. Since the graduation of the first class (in 1990) until today, there have been changes both in the course and in public educational policies. We worked with the hypothesis – which was confirmed at the end of the research – that the political scenario of Adult Education can influence the training processes and, consequently, the practice of EJA educators.

In the literature review, we found few works discussing this theme compared to other more studied topics in the field of EJA. When the object of study is the qualification/emphasis in EJA of Pedagogy courses, this becomes even more limited, especially when the research is developed with graduates.

Research has shown the limited space dedicated to the field of EJA in Pedagogy courses at Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (IES). Although specific training is foreseen in the Pedagogical Political Projects of the courses, it is mostly addressed through theoretical or practical mandatory/optional courses that approach the topic in a generalist manner (SOARES, 2017).

This article is the result of two research studies: one funded by the Universal Call of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the other a master's thesis that

interviewed graduates⁴ of the EJA qualification in the Pedagogy course at UFMG, former teachers, course coordinators, and the director of the Faculty of Education (FaE) at UFMG. The goal was to answer the following questions: Who are the graduates of the Pedagogy course who chose the Complementary Training (FC) in EJA? Why did they choose it? What do they have to say about it? In what spaces are they working? To what extent did the Pedagogy course, with this emphasis, contribute to their insertion and professional practice? Did the graduates face difficulties working in the EJA field?

We aim to unveil the profile of the EJA educator trained by FaE/UFMG, the motivations for choosing training in the EJA field, the meanings attributed by the graduates to their training, as well as their insertion into the job market and the relationship between this insertion and their initial training. The time frame referred to in this article covers the period from 1986 to 2013.

We characterize the research as predominantly qualitative, with an initial quantitative phase for data collection and the application of questionnaires. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews and discussion forums were conducted with the graduate⁵.

By researching the archives of the Teaching Section of the Faculty of Education, we totaled 230 people who completed the Complementary Training in EJA in the Pedagogy course at UFMG until 2013. We were able to contact 189 individuals. We sent out a questionnaire with questions about themselves, their training at the university, and their insertion into the job market. We received 130 responses. Based on the questionnaires, a profile of the subjects was created, and a sample was selected for the interviews. A total of 26 graduates, 1 former director, 2 coordinators, and 4 teachers who worked in the course were interviewed. Additionally, we conducted document analysis⁶ and discussion forums where issues related to the academic and professional trajectories were discussed, with the participation of the research subjects.

This text is organized chronologically, starting with a historical reconstruction from the creation of the Pedagogy course, culminating in the most recent period, which addresses the training of the EJA educator in higher education, supported by the documents, meeting minutes, and files analyzed throughout the research. This section is named 'Yesterday.' The following section, titled 'Today,' presents the data collected throughout the research based on the testimonies of the graduates about

⁴ Throughout the text, referred to as 'graduates' to mark the gender of the research participants, with the vast majority (more than 85%) being female.

⁵ Following ethical guidelines of anonymity, we did not reveal the identity of the research participants and used fictitious names.

⁶ We analyzed meeting minutes, curricular proposals, student records, and important documents in order to understand the history of the qualification within the context of UFMG.

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the course and their professional practice. We conclude the contributions of this article in the 'Tomorrow' section, where we offer some final considerations regarding the training of EJA teachers, aiming to contribute to the debate on the construction of the profile of this educator.

Yesterday

In order to demonstrate the relationship between the Pedagogy course and the training of EJA educators, we begin this article with a historical reconstruction of this course. Supported by the documents, meeting minutes, and files analyzed throughout the research.

In 1926, the then-President of Minas Gerais⁷, Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada, created the University of Minas Gerais (UMG)⁸ with the aim of improving and expanding education in the state. In 1929, he also created, through decree No. 8,987, the School of Improvement, which offered post-normal level courses 'intended to train an elite of teachers who, in the state, would occupy positions of greater power' (BIANCHI, 2014, p. 81). The School provided teachers for the Pedagogy and Psychology courses at the Faculty of Philosophy of Minas Gerais (FAFI-MG)⁹, created ten years later.

The Pedagogy course was created in Brazil as a consequence of concerns regarding the preparation of teachers for secondary schools. It was initially regulated by Law No. 1190/39, in which the course, responding to a professionalizing university proposal of the time, was defined as a place for the training of education technicians (bachelor's degree) and teachers for secondary and normal schools (teaching degree) (SCHEIBE; AGUIAR, 1999). The Pedagogy course at the then University of Minas Gerais originated at FAFI-MG in 1941, with courses in Didactics; Anglo-Germanic Languages; Physics; Chemistry; and Natural History:

All of these courses led to the title of Bachelor's degree after 3 years of study, and after one year of didactic training, they would earn the title of Teaching Degree, which would grant holders of the permanent license the right to teach in secondary and normal education (BIANCHI, 2014, p. 84).

⁷ The title of governor only existed from 1930 onwards.

⁸ UMG was established as a private institution subsidized by the state, originating from the union of the four higher education schools that existed in Belo Horizonte at the time (Faculty of Law, Free School of Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine, and the School of Engineering). UMG remained within the state sphere until 1949, when it was federalized. However, the current name – Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) – was only adopted in 1965. (Source: https://www.ufmg.br/conheca/hi_index.shtml).

⁹ In 2015, the master's thesis defended in 1988 by Maria de Lourdes Amaral Haddad (retired professor of FaE/UFMG) was published, which aimed to recover the history of FAFI-MG. The root of many units of UFMG, including FaE. HADDAD, M. de L. A. *Faculdade de Filosofia de Minas Gerais: Seeds of the University Spirit*. Phorum Consultoria: Belo Horizonte, 2015.

Due to the centralized and authoritarian system of the time, regulated within the scope of national education by Decree-Law No. 1190, the curriculum of the courses followed the model of the National Faculty of Philosophy. Therefore, the curriculum of the Pedagogy course was organized as follows:

1st Year: Mathematics Supplements, Educational Psychology, Biological Foundations of Education, Sociology, and History of Philosophy.
2nd Year: School Administration, Educational Statistics, Educational Psychology, Sociological Foundations of Education, and History of Education.
3rd Year: School Administration, Comparative Education, Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, and History of Education (BIANCHI, 2014, p. 85).

With the same curricular structure, the Pedagogy course became part of the Faculty of Education at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, newly created by Decree-Law No. 62.317 of 1968 (BIANCHI, 2014).

In 1968, there was a university reform in the country, regulated by Federal Law No. 5.540/68, in which the principles of rationality, efficiency, and productivity in higher education prevailed. From then on, the relationship between higher education courses and professions was emphasized. In the context of the time, these courses were expected to be aligned with the demands of society, both regarding the training of professionals for its various work sectors and the needs related to national development. In this way, Opinion No. 252 of 1969 – authored by councilor Valnir Chagas – regulated the Pedagogy course. The opinion was incorporated into Resolution No. 2/69 of the Federal Council of Education (CFE), which set the contents and duration of the course, including four qualifications for the training of education specialists: Educational Guidance, Administration, Supervision, and School Inspection. These regulations remained in effect until the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB) in 1996 (SILVA, 2006).

In the 1980s, with the re-democratization and expansion of access to education, and in light of the new forms of education generated by civil society, the training of pedagogues as specialists/non-teachers no longer fit the social landscape of that time¹⁰. “The emphasis on the qualification of specialists led to the loss of a synthetic and holistic view of the educational phenomenon.” (FaE/UFG, 1985, p. 5).

Starting in 1979, seminars and assemblies of teachers and students were held at the Faculty of Education at UFG to discuss the curriculum. Several aspects were questioned, and some principles for the reorganization of the course were established. The need to open the course to other priority

¹⁰ The Pedagogy course faced criticism and was involved in controversies and debates regarding the fragmentation of the training offered, the identity of the trained professional, and their field of practice.

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subjects was highlighted, such as: early years of elementary education, non-formal education, education for work, preschool education, and adult education (FaE/UFMG, 1985). Thus, the new curricular proposal (approved in September 1985) was developed based on two basic guidelines:

1. The conception that the social function of the education professional fundamentally passes through the teacher, without, however, being exhausted in the teaching function;
2. The connection between theory and practice, privileging social practice as the source of theory and theory as the expression that clarifies the practice that generates it (FaE/UFMG, 1985, p. 6).

In the mid-1980s, other universities also reformed their curricula in order to ensure that every pedagogue would also be a teacher. It is in this context that the qualifications in Adult Education (EJA) begin to appear in the curricula of Pedagogy courses. The first Brazilian university to create a specific qualification in Adult Education in the Pedagogy course was the University of the State of Bahia (UNEB, em 1985¹¹). The following year, the Faculty of Education at UFMG created the qualification in Adult Education in the Pedagogy course, 'as a possibility for the pedagogue to work with social movements and popular education.' (SOARES e SIMÕES, 2004, p. 29).

It is important to emphasize that the qualification initially focused, as its original name expresses, on the adult audience, and only later did it incorporate the issue of young people into its training. The first configuration of the qualification was established by the introduction of five subjects: Foundations of Adult Education, Didactics, Organization and Curriculum of Adult Education (EDA), and a 60-hour internship, which could be carried out both in the school setting and in other spaces (SOARES e SIMÕES, 2004, p. 29).

From then on, the student would obtain two full qualifications: they would be required to take the Teaching qualification – with the option to choose between becoming a teacher of pedagogical subjects for secondary education (normal course) or for the early years of elementary education. In addition, the student could choose one of the other five existing qualifications¹² (BOX 1).

Box 1 - Qualifications of the Pedagogy course at UFMG until 1990

YEA	Subjects of the Qualification in Adult Education (AE)	Other Qualifications of the Course
1969	..	. School Administration . School Supervision . School Guidance . School Inspection

¹¹ The research by Cunha-Júnior (2017) surveyed the Pedagogy courses in Bahia that offered training for the YAE and, currently, UNEB's is organized into formative nuclei. The Core of Basic Studies (NEB) acts as the course's articulating axis, directing two subjects towards the theme of the EJA: Youth and Adult Education (a 60-hour compulsory subject, offered in the 4th semester) and Supervised Internship IV (compulsory, with a 90-hour workload), which may or may not be carried out in EJA classes according to the student's interest.

¹² Curriculum of the Pedagogy course/UFMG, version 1986/1 (mimeo).

1986 – 1989	Fundamentals of AE	5th sem.	60h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Primary School Teaching . Teaching the Pedagogical Subjects of the 2nd Level . Primary and Secondary School Administration . 1st and 2nd Grade School Supervision . Educational Guidance . Pre-school Education / Early Childhood Education (from 1989)
	Organization of AE	6th sem.		
	Supervised Internship in AE I	7th sem.		
	Curricula and Programs for AE	8th sem.		
	Didactics: Alternatives in AE	8th sem.		
	Supervised Internship in AE II	8th sem.		
1990	Organization of AE	7th sem.	60h	
	Supervised Internship in AE I			
	Foundations of AE			
	Curricula and Programs for AE	8th sem.		
	Supervised Internship in AE II			
	Supervised Internship in EA			

Source: SOARES, 2017.

Valnir Chagas' regulation (considered technicist and pragmatic in relation to the role of education professionals) remained in effect until 1996, the year when the new National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9394) was enacted, having been in force for nearly three decades. "During this period, from a legal standpoint, the pedagogy degree program was aimed at two main objectives: training teaching staff for normal schools and training specialists to work in primary and secondary schools" (SCHEIBE; DURLI, 2011, p. 94), even though other qualifications, such as Adult Education at UFMG and UNEB, were also in place.

In response to social demands, the issue of working youth was incorporated into the program's focus, as proposed in Law No. 9394/96, given that more and more young people were attending educational programs aimed at adults. In the post-dictatorship period, the need to train professionals to work in school settings also stood out, "as a result of the struggle for the democratization of access to education" (SOARES; SIMÕES, 2004, p. 30).

In 2000, the curriculum of the Pedagogy degree program at UFMG was revised, and the Adult Education Qualification was renamed as the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education. This Complementary Training constitutes an opportunity for students to deepen their studies in areas of interest during the final three semesters of the Pedagogy program at UFMG¹³ (BOX 2).

¹³ In addition to the FC in EJA, there are four other options available to students: (i) Educational Sciences, which focuses on training researchers in the field of sciences applied to education; (ii) Administration of Educational Systems and Institutions, aimed at deepening the study of topics related to pedagogical coordination, school management, and the administration of educational systems; (iii) Social Educator, which prepares students to work in non-formal educational programs and projects, generally targeting individuals in situations of marginalization or social risk; and (iv) Open Complementary Training, consisting of specific learning pathways proposed by students, with the guidance of a professor or group of professors, and developed in collaboration with the program's academic board (UFMG, 2013).

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Box 2 - Complementary Training Tracks of the Pedagogy Program at UFMG up to 2016

ANO	Courses in the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education (EJA)		Other Complementary Training Tracks of the Program
2001	Supervised Internship in EJA I	7º sem	60h . Pedagogical Training . Literacy, Reading, and Writing . Early Childhood Education . Open Track
	Monograph inEJA		
	Mathematics Education for Youth and Adults	8º sem	
	Supervised Internship in EJA II		
	Organization of EJA		
	Didactics: Alternatives inEJA		
Tópicos Especiais em EJA (optativa)			
2002	Organization ofEJA	7º sem	60h
	Mathematics Education for Youth and Adults		
	Supervised Internship in EJA I	8º sem	
	Supervised Internship in EJA II		
2003	Organization of EJA	7º sem	60h . Educational Management and Pedagogical Coordination . School Inspection . Preschool Education
	Mathematics Education for Youth and Adults		
	Didactics: Alternatives in EJA	8º sem	
	Curricular Internship in EJA		
	Monograph in EJA (elective)		
	Special Topics in EJA (elective)		
2009 -2016	Public Policies, Social Movements, and Citizenship	7º sem	60h . Administration of Educational Systems and Institutions . Social Educator . Educational Sciences . Open Track
	heoretical and Methodological Foundations of Popular Education	8º sem	
	Organization of EJA	9º sem	
	Practice in EJA		
	Literacy Methodology for Youth and Adults		
	Topics in EJA (optativa)		

Source: SOARES, 2017.

Starting with the 2001/2 curriculum version, the monograph was included as an option for Pedagogy students (TABLE 2). From the defense of the first monograph (July 13, 2004) until 2013, eleven monographs were presented on the topic of Youth and Adult Education (BOX 3). Of these, five were authored by graduates who had completed the Complementary Training (FC) in EJA.

Box 3 - Survey of Monographs on EJA - Pedagogy Program at UFMG (2004 a 2015)

Year	Student	Title	Advisor	Committee	FC in EJA
2004	Fernanda Maurício Simões	The Perceptions of Youth and Adults in Schooling Processes Regarding Their Reading and Writing Practices	Leôncio Soares	Maria da Conceição Fonseca	Yes
2005	Camila Cristina F. Costa	Work Relations and Everyday Life in Youth and Adult Education in the Lower Secondary Education Project (ProEFIL)	Antônia Vitória Soares Aranha	Maria Amélia Giovanetti	Yes
	Shirley Pereira Raimundo	The Life and Educational Trajectory of Black Youth and Adults Who Graduated from the Palmares Alternative Preparatory Course	Nilma Lino Gomes	Leôncio Soares	No
	Natalino Neves da Silva	Cultural Diversity, Racial Issues, and Youth and Adult Education: Reflections on the Continuing Education of Teachers	Nilma Lino Gomes	Maria Amélia Giovanetti	No
2008	Paula Cristina Silva de Oliveira	School Dropout in EJA	Carmem Eiterer	Leôncio Soares	No
	Clarice Wilken de Pinho	Those Who Have Much to Tell Cannot Remain Silent: Challenges for Youth and Adult Education	Lúcia Helena Álvarez Leite	Leôncio Soares	Yes
	Ludimila Corrêa Bastos	Women and Youth and Adult Education: A Reflection on Female Educational Trajectories	Carmem Eiterer	Francisca Pereira Maciel	No
2012	Elisabette Leo Gonçalves Cipriano	The Agreement in the Context of the Collaboration Regime as a Means of Ensuring the Right to Education in Youth and Adult Education: A Local Construct	Daisy M. Cunha	Analise de Jesus da Silva	No
2013	Leandra Beatriz de Rezende	The Representations of Youth and Adult Education Students Regarding Education as a Right	José Raimundo Lisboa da Costa	Pablo Luiz de Oliveira Lima	No
	Carla Marusa Pereira Santos	Training of Youth and Adult Education Professionals: Teaching as an Effective Practice	Analise de Jesus da Silva	Lúcia Helena Álvarez Leite	Yes
	Eliana Bernarda Ciriaco	Report of an Experience of Reading Appropriation in Youth and Adult Education	Analise de Jesus da Silva	Ademilson de Souza Soares	Yes

Source: SOARES, 2017.

It was not possible to observe a direct relationship between the monograph topic and the Complementary Training completed, as six students who pursued other Complementary Training tracks developed their monographs on Youth and Adult Education. This was due to the students' professional engagement, as not necessarily those who did not complete the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education refrained from working in that field.

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Some students who were working as teachers or pedagogical coordinators in the University's Extension Projects ¹⁴, such as the Youth and Adult Lower Secondary Education Project (ProEF 1, ProEF 2) and the Youth and Adult Upper Secondary Education Project (Pemja), for example chose other Complementary Training tracks. In such cases, the reverse was also true: students who completed the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education defended monographs on topics unrelated to this field. Thus, it becomes evident that professional experience was not always the determining factor in choosing a Complementary Training track. The desired professional path after graduation also played a significant role in the students' decision-making process.

In 2002, the curriculum of the program underwent another reform, based on the University Reform guided by the flexibilization of academic pathways. However, this change did not directly affect the Complementary Training tracks, but rather the curriculum as a whole (ProGrad/UFMG, 2016). In 2003, the faculty initiated a debate to evaluate the nature of the qualifications, given concerns that they might extend beyond a strictly school-based approach.

Although the Adult Education qualification had been available to Pedagogy students since 1986, not all emphasis options were consistently disclosed to students, which at times led to students not choosing it simply because they were unaware of its existence.

Between 2003 and 2005, the Seminar for the Presentation of Complementary Training Tracks was created and continues to this day. At the time, the coordination team of the academic board developed a project with former students of the program. Entitled the Student Development Project (PAD), it involved data collection from a sample of Pedagogy graduates across all Complementary Training tracks between 2003 and 2005 (GOMES; EITERER, 2009). It was found that students were not fully informed about all the Complementary Training options available to them, and the Seminar was the solution implemented to make these options known.

With the curricular reform brought about by the creation of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Pedagogy programs (in 2006), the former qualifications were discouraged, and students were instead encouraged to deepen their studies in a specific area or modality of education, which from that point on would be evidenced through the courses listed on their academic transcript. Students would graduate qualified for all duties pertaining to the pedagogue profession, no longer in a specific area (qualification), as established in Article 10 of the program's Guidelines: "*The qualifications*

¹⁴ The Youth and Adult Education Extension Projects at UFMG began in 1986, the same year in which the Adult Education qualification was created within the Pedagogy program.

currently offered in Pedagogy programs shall be phased out starting from the academic term following the publication of this Resolution” (BRASIL, 2006). Thus, in order to identify the area in which a student had deepened their studies, it would be necessary to examine their academic transcript.

Since 2009, UFMG's Pedagogy program has followed a new curricular proposal, revised to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum Guidelines. The Youth and Adult Education qualification was not eliminated but rather adapted to the current legislation. Students could choose the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education, through which they would take five courses on the topic during the final three semesters of the program out of a total duration of four and a half years—with certification recorded on their academic transcript. The Curricular Internship in Youth and Adult Education was replaced by the course *Practice in Youth and Adult Education* (TABLE 2), which does not constitute a formal internship but rather a curricular component involving practical activities, in accordance with Resolutions CNE/CP No. 01 and 02/2002.

In 2016, a reconfiguration of UFMG's undergraduate curricula was initiated, aimed at reducing the effects of what the university's Office of Undergraduate Studies (ProGrad) termed “early student mobility,” a phenomenon that has become more common since the introduction of the Unified Selection System (Sisu). That is, upon entering the university and realizing a greater interest in another field, the student changes their academic path, resulting in vacant spots in programs. According to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Ricardo Takahashi, 7% of incoming students change their program every year. A potential change in course selection after admission “can represent a significant cost, both for the student and for the institution” (ProGrad/UFMG, 2016, p.2).

The proposal was to implement an *Interdisciplinary Bachelor's Degree* model at UFMG, which already exists in some American, European, and Brazilian universities. “This model, already regulated by the National Council of Education (CNE), corresponds to a bachelor's degree program of an interdisciplinary, generalist, and introductory nature that leads to its own diploma and provides access to traditional degrees (ProGrad/UFMG, 2016, p. 6).

In 2016, the Pedagogy program began a process of discussion aimed at reviewing and redesigning its curricular structure. A Pedagogy Program Reform Committee was established, composed of current and retired professors, current students and alumni, as well as university staff. The meetings lasted for two years, during which the possibility of opening the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education to students from other teaching degrees was considered, as well as the idea of including a mandatory Youth and Adult Education course in the program prior to

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the Complementary Training. However, there was not enough time to negotiate the inclusion of this course in the early semesters of the program. The committee's work reaffirmed the importance of continuing the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education.

Today

This section presents data developed throughout the research based on the testimonies of female graduates regarding the program and their professional practice.

Based on the questionnaires applied during the research, it was possible to outline the profile of graduates from the Pedagogy program at UFMG. They are mostly women between 20 and 40 years of age who self-identify as mixed-race (parda) or white, completed most of their basic education in public schools, were born in Belo Horizonte, and work in professions related to the field of education.

Some of them worked in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) at some point after graduation, whether in NGOs, school or non-school projects, semi-liberty facilities (*Casas de Semiliberdade*), or in public or private education systems, highlighting the diversity of EJA settings in Brazil. This fact reveals much about the identity of the field and helps explain the complexity involved in understanding teacher education processes.

In this sample, the significant number of female students stands out, an aspect that corroborates the historical trend of the teaching profession and the findings of studies on the profile of Pedagogy students in Brazil (GATTI; BARRETO, 2009; GATTI, 2010; VARGAS, 2016; NOGUEIRA; FLONTINO, 2014).

Moreover, the identity of the EJA educator is reaffirmed at several points in the interviews, as many of the respondents even those working with children describe themselves as Youth and Adult Education teachers:

i usually say that I'm an EJA teacher, I'm an EJA teacher, so much so that, for me, it's extremely difficult to do those things for regular education full of drawings, because they're things I'm not used to. And then you stop and think—me, as a literacy teacher, I had a really hard time working with first grade; they're very different things, a completely different audience. It was as if I were entering a classroom for the first time, and it's not because I lack experience because I do have experience it's a matter of audience, of speaking to different people (...) it's very different, two different realities, two different worlds (interview with Anny, 2016).

This aspect highlights the importance of specific training, as well as the need to recognize this particularity in selection processes. Regarding the professional activities of the graduates while still

enrolled in the Pedagogy program, opportunities for work included Extension Projects, Teaching Initiation Programs, and Scientific Initiation Projects in the field of Youth and Adult Education (EJA).

We also observed that those who focused their training solely on research continued their academic careers in graduate studies after completing the program, even if they did not remain engaged with Youth and Adult Education as their research topic this varied depending on each one's area of professional focus. The job market and professional challenges influenced graduates in both their pursuit of further qualifications and the topics they chose for graduate studies. A significant number of them pursued some form of postgraduate education.

Prior experience with Youth and Adult Education was one of the reasons given for choosing the Complementary Training in EJA. In addition, the desire to explore and deepen theoretical reflections particularly those concerning the social issues addressed in the program was also mentioned by the graduates as a reason for choosing EJA. There were even cases of students who were influenced by peers already interested in enrolling in EJA, and who employed strategies to persuade classmates in order to ensure that the Complementary Training would be offered to their cohort:

i was the one who had to take the lead to form an EJA group, right? I really wanted to do the EJA training, but most people were interested in the Management or Early Childhood Education tracks, so I went after the girls to put together the group of five people. It was really hard to get the five, because we had four and there was always one going "I will, I won't," it was pretty complicated (participant "F" at the Alumni Meeting, 2016).

Another factor that influenced the choice was the Seminar on Complementary Training Tracks. Since the topic of Youth and Adult Education was not addressed in other parts of the program, this strategy proved effective, as some graduates, upon becoming interested in the field, decided to choose it.

Over time, Adult Education has been reconfigured, and this transformation directly impacts teacher education. The testimonies revealed uncertainty regarding the existence of the EJA qualification in the Pedagogy program prior to the enactment of the LDB, which formally recognized it as a modality of Basic Education. Before that, it was characterized by informal or supplementary teaching, and the role of the pedagogue as a teacher was not clearly defined.

The graduates pointed out the lack of practical content in the Complementary Training courses. According to them, theoretical components predominated throughout the Pedagogy program. Nevertheless, participation in the University's EJA Extension Projects stood out as a distinctive element in their training. The involvement of Complementary Training students in these Extension

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Projects is particularly noteworthy, as those who had the opportunity to work in them were more easily able to relate theory to practice.

The memories shared by the graduates regarding the courses and classes in the Complementary Training focused on specific aspects of EJA teacher education, such as assessment practices and differentiated methodologies used in the classroom. They associated their classroom experiences during the Complementary Training directly with the affective dimension and the welcoming of diversity, viewing their university classes as a model to be followed in youth and adult education settings.

The graduates suggested that the Pedagogy curriculum should include a mandatory general course on Youth and Adult Education, covering the field's fundamental issues and offered to all students in the program. In addition to this, the Complementary Training in Youth and Adult Education would remain available at the end of the program for those interested in deepening their knowledge. In this way, discussions on Youth and Adult Education would not be limited solely to the Complementary Training phase.

They reported that some students graduate from the Pedagogy program without ever becoming familiar with what Youth and Adult Education entails, as this topic is not necessarily addressed in other courses within the curriculum. Whether or not to include it is left to the discretion of each professor. Furthermore, they mentioned that they learned about EJA only sporadically, in a few subjects before the Complementary Training. It was noted, however, that the professors who incorporated EJA-related discussions into their classes tended to have a connection with the field of popular education.

According to Ana, one of the graduates, "training is necessary not only initial training, but I believe the initial phase makes all the difference in wanting to enter the field in the first place." (interview, Ana, 2016). We identified cases in which having completed the EJA emphasis was a decisive factor for professional placement for example, in Ana's case, who participated in a selection process to teach the Youth and Adult Education course in the Pedagogy program at a private university:

But this girl is totally from EJA, there's no way!" (laughs) Then they [the recruiters] said, "we're trusting you to teach Youth and Adult Education because you have a lot of experience in EJA this will be kind of a test, since you don't have experience in higher education."(interview with Ana, 2016).

Even without prior teaching experience in higher education, her professional and academic background contributed to her selection. Previous studies have shown that the field of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) had yet to reach a consensus on the need for specifically trained professionals to perform in this role. Conceptions of EJA varied depending on the context in which it was offered (SOARES, 2008).

Paiva and Fernandes (2016) reflect on the potential demand for professionals qualified to work with the specific audience of EJA. However, the job opportunities are often not aligned with this demand, due to the reduction and consequent merging of EJA classes. This is illustrated in the testimony of graduate Anny: “And then, at the end of every year, it’s always the same thing: will there be EJA next year? Will there be enrollment? (...) so it’s a daily struggle, and every year ends with that question: Will it happen? Won’t it? That uncertainty...” (interview, Anny, 2016). This scenario has worsened in recent years due to the dismantling of specific national EJA policies—such as literacy programs—particularly following the dissolution of the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity, and Inclusion (Secadi) in 2019.

This reality was a recurring theme in the participants’ statements. “*EJA from the margins*” was a term used by one of the graduates during the meeting to describe this instability and insecurity. EJA is present in schools, but often on the margins, as it is not always fully integrated into the school’s structure. This marginalization influences whether students in the Pedagogy program choose the Complementary Training in EJA, given the difficulty of finding stable work in the area. Another aspect raised was that EJA requires daily effort and teacher activism. This perspective is supported by Freire (1996) and Arroyo (2006).

Youth and Adult Education occupies different spaces depending on the institutional context. According to the interviewees, EJA holds a marginal position within the Pedagogy program; however, in municipal schools, it is viewed as a privileged and valued area:

EJA is completely hidden, right? I think so I even think that social education, when it shows up like that, I’m not sure if it helps or gets in the way more (...) at least in my class, Social Educator and EJA were the least chosen; very few people picked them. The groups were the smallest so small, in fact, that there were courses that didn’t get enough students and had to be merged with something else. That kind of thing happened, you know? Because there were so few people.” (interview with Bárbara, 2016)

“At night, the City Hall no longer assigns permanent placements. Night shifts are only filled through extra-duty assignments. At both schools where I work, the evening classes already have ‘owners’ people who’ve been there for years. And even when they take leave, there’s already someone lined up to take their place.” (participant in the Pedagogy Alumni Meeting, 2016).

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At first, when I started working for the City Hall, I was really frustrated because I got there and they just shut me down: “ Not interested!” I was about to defend my thesis, right? I said, “ I’m about to defend in EJA; I’ve dedicated my whole life to EJA. Now that I finally get into City Hall, I can’t teach EJA?” “ Sorry, too bad!” “ There’s no permanent placement, only extra duty.” I was really frustrated at the time! I said, “Damn! We do everything in one field, and when we get here, we’re thrown into working with children!” Even though there was demand, right? There were classes (interview with Ana, 2016).

Working as a teacher in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is a privilege that few are able to attain. The adult learner is often perceived as someone who is not undisciplined, who is there out of genuine interest, and who tends to hold an appreciative view of the teacher’s role. However, teachers are not hired exclusively to work in EJA due to the high dropout rates throughout the academic year. Many schools already anticipate this factor when forming their classes, which begin the year full and gradually empty out over time (SILVA; SOARES, 2021). In 1991, the Minister of Education, José Goldemberg, pointed out that:

the major problem of a country is the illiteracy of children, not of adults. The illiterate adult has already found their place in society. It may not be a good place, but it is their place. They will become bricklayers, building guards, garbage collectors, or pursue other professions that do not require literacy. Teaching adults to read and write won’t change their position in society much and it might even cause disruption. Let’s concentrate our resources on educating the young population. If we do that now, illiteracy will disappear in ten years”(statement by José Goldemberg, Minister of Education, 1991 (GOLDEMBERG, 1991, n.136, p.4).

This discourse still persists implicitly today, and it is possible to observe that the Complementary Training, within the scope of the Pedagogy program, reflects the very status of the EJA field occupying a marginal place in public policy as well as the population it serves, which has fewer opportunities to enjoy its rights (ARROYO, 2019).

However, when compared to other higher education institutions where EJA holds an even more peripheral position the field of Youth and Adult Education at the UFMG School of Education has had its space recognized, particularly by those who also participated in the university’s Extension Projects:

There was a movement, a prominent place, just like History of Education and now, just the fact that it had three extension projects, that alone already gives you a sense that it [EJA] had more momentum, right? Because there were a lot of scholarship students; I think it was the project with the most scholarship recipients at the time though I don’t know about today.(interview with Catarina, 2016).

Depending on the path the student took during their initial training, they perceive Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in different ways. At the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), EJA

is represented across various fronts, such as the Extension Projects (ProEF 1, ProEF 2, Pemja, and the Intensive Course for the Preparation of Industrial Labor – CIPMOI¹⁵), the Youth and Adult Education Center (Neja) at the School of Education (FaE), and in the research lines of both the Academic and Professional Graduate Programs at FaE.

All indications suggest that the creation of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Pedagogy programs (2006) did not directly affect the structure of the EJA emphasis at FaE/UFGM, which continued in the same format (with minor adjustments) even after the final version of the document was approved in 2006. We also observe that the number of students interested in the program, as well as their reasons for choosing it, have remained consistent.

The most influential factor in students' interest in Complementary Training is the prospect of a more attractive job market (GOMES; EITERER, 2009). In the case of the EJA Complementary Training, the predominant motivation has been the desire to gain a deeper understanding of the field—an indicator of the absence of EJA in UFGM's mandatory Pedagogy curriculum.

Graduates who completed this Complementary Training leave the program with a stronger understanding not only of the EJA field but also of the broader field of Education. They often point to specific elements of the training that contributed to their professional practice—even outside the EJA field:

I think it would be important for all Pedagogy students to experience Youth and Adult Education, because it gives you a different perspective on anyone you work with. I'm currently in [Elementary] Education, but I have children in my class that I can see I need to look at considering the environment they live in not just as a child like any other. I think that's what Youth and Adult Education gave me: a different perspective on the human being I'm working with. (participant "F" at the Pedagogy Alumni Meeting, 2016).

Among the graduates, we identified elements that reveal traces of the EJA educator profile, such as sensitivity to social inequalities, the practice of otherness in situations of oppression, empathy with the life stories of others (students), and a desire to contribute to social change through resistance and persistence in the teaching profession. It became evident that this training contributes to the development of a particular sensitivity for working with the specificities of Youth and Adult Education, as it brings to light the historical context marked by the unique circumstances of its learners.

¹⁵ Youth and Adult Lower Secondary Education Project at UFGM – 1st segment; Youth and Adult Lower Secondary Education Project at UFGM – 2nd segment; Youth and Adult Upper Secondary Education Project at UFGM; and Intensive Course for the Preparation of Industrial Labor, respectively.

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According to Arroyo (2006a), we still do not have a well-defined profile for Youth and Adult Education (EJA) educators, as EJA itself and, consequently, its educators is still in the process of being shaped and reconfigured. In light of this ongoing development, Vóvio (2010) outlines several challenges and dilemmas involved in addressing the training of EJA educators. According to the author, it is essential to clarify the purposes of this education, its identity, the diversity of its educators, and the specific characteristics of its learners, in order to define which educational actions should be included, which actors can be involved in teaching, and for whom this education is intended.

Drawing on the EJA qualification and research at the UFMG School of Education (FaE/UFMG), Maria Amélia Giovanetti outlines 13 Guiding Principles of Youth and Adult Education¹⁶:

1. A search for understanding the relationship between education and society;
 2. A concern with placing the educational phenomenon within historical processes;
 3. Dialogue with the Social Sciences (Sociology and Anthropology);
 4. Openness to capturing the dynamics of society;
 5. Recognition that educational processes occur not only within school institutions;
 6. Belief in the potential of collective reflection and work;
 7. Understanding learners as subjects of history;
 8. Political commitment to popular sectors;
 9. Deconstruction of perspectives marked by negativity toward popular sectors;
 10. Sensitivity to understand the harsh realities in which popular sectors live;
 11. Indignation in the face of social inequalities;
 12. Belief in transformative processes aimed at overcoming structurally ingrained inequalities;
 13. Predominance of qualitative approaches in research.
- (GIOVANETTI, Maria Amélia. Pedagogy Alumni Meeting, 2016).

The principles listed above serve as a foundation for developing a training proposal for EJA educators, one marked by the intentional goal of supporting the social transformation of learners, grounded in the principles of Popular Education. To achieve this, it is essential to conceive of youth and adults from marginalized social groups as subjects that is, to believe in their ability to overcome the challenges inherent to their condition of social exclusion. It is also crucial to seek dialogue with philosophy and the social sciences (GIOVANETTI, 2006), since, as the author puts it, “the social sciences opened the windows of the school and made it possible to discover that beyond its walls, there was a social dynamic at play (ARROYO, 1982, p. 108).

¹⁶ These principles were outlined in a presentation by Professor Maria Amélia Giovanetti during the Pedagogy Alumni Meeting, held as part of the research project in 2016 at the School of Education of UFMG, in Belo Horizonte.

Tomorrow (Final Considerations)

We conclude the contributions of this text in this final section entitled “*Tomorrow*”, where we offer some closing reflections on the training of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) educators and point to the need for further studies aimed at better understanding the field in which youth, adult, and elderly educators operate.

Although the potential demand for Youth and Adult Education in Brazil is high around 60 million Brazilians have not completed primary education access to educational services remains insufficient. As a result, job opportunities in the field of EJA teaching are scarce. This situation is further aggravated by the lack of specific regulations regarding the training of EJA teachers. In public school systems at both the state and municipal levels, teacher recruitment follows the general criteria established by current legislation, which does not account for the specific characteristics of EJA. With few exceptions, only a handful of municipalities have conducted dedicated competitive examinations for this teaching modality¹⁷.

Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is among the responsibilities assigned to any pedagogy graduate, regardless of whether they hold a specific qualification or emphasis in the field. At the same time, it is important to recognize a certain flexibility in incorporating the full historical trajectory of this field, which has its roots in popular education and in non-formal, community-based learning spaces.

As Haddad (2007) points out, it is necessary to balance both sides of this equation in order not to lose the identity of Youth and Adult Education, while also aiming to integrate the positive aspects of formal education. According to Arroyo (2006), “if we do not yet have clearly defined policies for the training of EJA educators, it is because we also still lack clearly defined policies for Youth and Adult Education itself” (ARROYO, 2006, p. 18).

The research has shown that EJA still needs to gain greater presence within Pedagogy programs. However, this will only happen when it is more widely recognized within the framework of public education policy. Moreover, it became clear that specific training for Youth and Adult Education has a positive impact on teachers’ professional performance though the labor market has not yet responded adequately to this demand.

Further studies are needed to assess the impact of this training on the teaching and learning processes of youth and adult students, as well as to deepen the understanding of the identity and

¹⁷ São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, and Ribeirão das Neves, Minas Gerais, for example..

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professional profile of EJA educators. Such research is essential to further qualify and strengthen teacher education proposals that are better suited to the realities and needs of the learners they serve.

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