

## ARTICLE

# TEACHERS' NARRATIVES ABOUT HISTORY TEACHING AT YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION: DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION AS AN ANALYSIS

ALÉXIA PÁDUA FRANCO<sup>1</sup>

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2715-3627>  
alexia@ufu.br

ALINE ALVES RAMOS<sup>1</sup>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0643-4454>  
alineamos20@hotmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia (UFU). Uberlândia, MG, Brazil.

**ABSTRACT:** This article presents excerpts from a Professional Master's Degree study developed between 2018–2020, which had as its object of study the teaching of History in Youth and Adult Education (EJA). Based on concerns about the social function of the discipline and its relations with practical human life, the text discusses the construction of the teaching process of history with young and adult students and the meaning of this discipline for their citizen formation based on experiences and views of professionals who work in this teaching modality. With Oral History as the methodological guideline, interviews were conducted with teachers, and the analyses of their narratives were recorded in a documentary, whose production process was detailed that contributes to EJA students recognizing themselves as protagonists in history and knowledge production.

**Keywords:** EJA, History teaching, audiovisual narratives, teaching knowledge and practices.

## NARRATIVAS DOCENTES SOBRE O ENSINO DE HISTÓRIA NA EJA: A PRODUÇÃO DE DOCUMENTÁRIO COMO ANÁLISE

**RESUMO:** Este artigo apresenta recortes de uma pesquisa de Mestrado Profissional, desenvolvida entre os anos de 2018-2020, que teve como objeto de estudo o ensino de História na Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA). A partir das inquietações acerca da função social da disciplina e suas relações com a vida humana prática, o texto discute a construção do processo de ensino da História junto aos estudantes jovens e adultos, e o sentido desta disciplina para sua formação cidadã com base nas experiências e visões de profissionais que atuam nessa modalidade de ensino. Tendo a História Oral como fio condutor metodológico, foram realizadas entrevistas com docentes e as análises de suas narrativas foram registradas em um documentário, cujo processo de produção foi aqui detalhado. Destaca-se a preocupação dos docentes entrevistados pelo desenvolvimento de um ensino de História que contribua para que os estudantes EJA se reconheçam como protagonistas da história e na produção do conhecimento.

**Palavras-chave:** EJA, ensino de História, narrativas audiovisuais, saberes e práticas docentes.

## NARRATIVAS DE PROFESORES SOBRE LA ENSEÑANZA DE HISTORIA EN EJA: LA PRODUCCIÓN DOCUMENTAL COMO ANÁLISIS

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo presenta extractos de una investigación de Máster Profesional, desarrollada entre los años 2018-2020, que tuvo como objeto de estudio la enseñanza de la Historia en la Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA). A partir de las preocupaciones sobre la función social de la disciplina y sus relaciones con la vida humana práctica, el texto discute la construcción del proceso de enseñanza de la Historia con estudiantes jóvenes y adultos, y el significado de esta disciplina para su formación ciudadana a partir de experiencias y visiones de profesionales que trabajan en esta modalidad docente. Con la Historia Oral como directriz metodológica, se realizaron entrevistas a los docentes y los análisis de sus narrativas se registraron en un documental, cuyo proceso de producción se detalló aquí, que contribuya que los estudiantes de EJA se reconozcan como protagonistas de la historia y en la producción del conocimiento.

**Palabras clave:** EJA, enseñanza de la historia, narrativas audiovisuales, enseñanza de conocimientos y prácticas.

### INTRODUCTION

For a long time, history teaching was based on a tradition that led students to limit their knowledge to fragmented historical events from a particular time, social group, community, or territory. Thus, many still think history is a complex collection of dates, facts, places, and characters from another time. Perhaps, for this reason, they think that the subject deals with the distant past of societies in which neither students nor educators participated and therefore has no significance for social formation.

This type of teaching does not encourage questioning or debate of the content studied in the classroom, contributing little for students to relate different times to understand the world in which they live. The author Helenice Ciampi (2003) emphasizes that the students' lack of interest in the subject is linked to positivist teaching, based on the transmission of unquestionable historical truths to be memorized and reproduced and of knowledge disconnected from the students' reality and, therefore, of little significance.

The permanences and changes in this scenario, in an attempt to understand the place and role of History teaching in Youth and Adult Education (hereinafter called EJA), was the object of study of a Professional Master's study in Technologies, Communication, and Education at the School of Education at the Federal University of Uberlândia, completed in 2020. It analyzed how the teaching process of this subject occurs and from questions such as: What is expected to be achieved by teaching history? What is meaningful, valid, and important to teach students in history classes? How, why, and what for? What is most interesting for the historical education of young and adult students who have already accumulated life, social, cultural, and professional experiences?

Based on these concerns about the social function of EJA and history teaching and its relations with practical human life, we organized interviews with male and female teachers who recounted their experiences with history teaching in the last decades. In this sense, the narratives of six history teaching teachers who teach (or taught at the time of the research) in a municipal school in the EJA modality were recorded through audiovisual resources, being three teachers of the initial years of EJA, which correspond to the 1st to the 5th year of elementary education, and three teachers of the final years, which correspond to the 6th to the 9th year. We asked: What does the teacher do in the EJA history classes? What methodologies, teaching materials, and resources do they use to develop the teaching process in History? How do they evaluate the reach of the objectives intended in this process? How do they deal with the specificities of this teaching modality? How do they approach and discuss Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture with the students? What are their main experiences as EJA History teachers?

These video narratives were decouped to locate and analyze similar and different categories/themes and approaches between each narrative. Then, the most significant excerpts of each

testimony were selected and crossed into an audiovisual production — a thematic documentary.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the oral histories were recorded and edited, enabling further readings and interpretations and allowing the reader to understand what the narrators told in the interlocution with the researcher and what they wished to see transmitted to others.

Therefore, this article aims to promote the social visibility of the teaching activities in the process of History teaching in Basic Education, in the peculiarity of EJA, broaden the view of this modality and contribute to the understanding of its specificities and contribute to the appreciation of the knowledge and teaching practices as fundamental to the structuring of the teaching profession. To do so, we will initially expose the study of teachers' narratives through Oral History and specify the methodological procedures that permeated the research, such as the selection of the interviewees, the interviews, the analysis of the audiovisual narratives, and the production of the documentary. Next, we will demonstrate how the teachers' narratives and the audiovisual production allowed us to know and value the knowledge and practices of EJA teachers when teaching history. Finally, we will consider how the knowledge of the experience or practice of these professionals is important for the definition of their professional identity.

## **ORAL HISTORY AND TEACHERS' NARRATIVES: METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCES OF THE study**

The project employed the qualitative methodology of analysis and interpretation of research data as a reference, in which the concern is with one or more aspects of "reality" and not the numerical emphasis, that is, quantitative data. In other words, we do not seek only informative data but versions of experiences to understand the situation of history teaching in EJA. Among the different modalities that qualitative research contemplates, for this research, in particular, we used a methodological approach inspired by the modality of thematic oral history, which seeks, from a central theme, reports, and reflections of experiences lived by the interviewee.

In this perspective, Oral History was the methodological path for the research development. Through interviews with teachers involved with EJA, we sought to elucidate the current situation of history teaching in this modality of education, and to do so, we gave life to the teachers' narratives. Nevertheless, what is oral history? Over the past few years, many approaches have been added to the term, and little is explained and confused with interview recordings. In fact, "oral history is as old as history itself. It was the **first** kind of history" (THOMPSON, 1992, p. 45, emphasis added). It is even said that all history, before being written, went through narrative stages or other manifestations of orality (MEIHY, 2002). Thus, historically, this "very specific source-technique method" is not recent (ALBERTI, 2006, p. 18).

However, it was only in the second half of the 20th century that oral history presented itself as a potential study of social events and facts. The use of the portable tape recorder from the 1960s on made it possible to stop the testimony, which made it possible to consult and evaluate it at any time and turned it into a research source. The interviews started to have the status of a document. They became popular, "which had an impact on the very definition of what oral history work is: it is necessary to pay attention to the technical procedures of recording and processing the interview, which is of the utmost importance for the constituted collection to be open to consultation by researchers" (ALBERTI, 2005, p. 19). Thus, the oral history interview became relevant for studies in the Human Sciences area, as it allowed the comparison between different versions.

Thus, through recorded interviews, we produced narratives about the subjects' individual experiences with the history teaching in EJA, including learning situations and strategic decisions. These allowed an understanding of what happened in daily school life beyond what was foreseen in the norms and Curriculum Guidelines. The interviews were the common thread to bring the object of study closer to the people who had their History teaching practices intertwined with EJA, producing, as a consequence, consultation sources materialized by audiovisual productions, which can be used for other studies and by other researchers. In this sense, as Verena Alberti shows us, "[...] what is fascinating about an interview is the

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<sup>1</sup> Since this is a Professional Master's Degree, two audiovisual products were presented: the videos of each interview in full and the documentary. Both products are publicly available in the digital platform "*Observatório do Ensino de História e Geografia*" [Observatory of the Teaching of History and Geography] (<https://observatorioeohistoria.net.br/>), which deepens discussions on educational practices and knowledge, especially on the teaching of History and Geography.

possibility of experiencing again the experiences of the other, which one has access to by knowing how to **understand** the expressions of their experience [...]” (ALBERTI, 2004, p. 18, emphasis added).

Recognizing that we are dealing with the social experience of a subject and that his/her narrative is the foundation to approach the daily life of history classes in EJA, we emphasize the importance of the oral source, of the records of common subjects, who make and are an integral part of history, to broaden the understanding of this teaching modality and to value the subjectivity of the experiences of professionals and their trajectories in the context of Youth and Adult Education. In short, “an event or a situation experienced by the interviewee cannot be transmitted to others without being narrated” (ALBERTI, 2004, p. 77).

Furthermore, these teacher interviews, taken as historical sources, went beyond a report of a particular experience, as they provided the key to understanding the construction of the history teaching process in Youth and Adult Education. That is, the interlocution between interviewee and interviewer results in meaning because “when telling his experiences, the interviewee transforms what was experienced into language, selecting and organizing the events according to a certain meaning” (ALBERTI, 2004, p. 77) and also according to the questions posed by the interviewer to investigate her research problem. Accordingly, Meihy says that “interviews should allow, more than informative data, to understand situations proposed as problematic, with different or unknown versions of facts, occurrences or worldviews” (MEIHY, 2011, p. 12).

For P. Thompson (1992, p. 271, emphasis added), “an interview is **not** a dialogue, or a conversation”. It, the interview, concerns the interactions between interviewer and interviewee, not only based on individual interest but, above all, on respect and collective and social interest:

An interview is a social relationship between people, with its conventions whose violation can destroy it. Fundamentally, the interviewer is expected to show interest in the informant, to allow him to speak what he has to say without constant interruptions and, if necessary, to provide some guidance on what to say simultaneously. This is an idea of cooperation, trust, and mutual respect (THOMPSON, 1992, p. 271).

Along these lines, what we intend with the teacher interviews and the documentary produced based on them is to cause effects of reflection on educational practices and knowledge, especially on the teaching of History in EJA, thus allowing the building of bridges between researchers, teachers, students and society as a whole, inside and outside the school and university walls, since we cannot find this knowledge in documents of any other nature. To this end, each interview and the documentary resulting from the study will be available on a digital platform indefinitely. About this, Alberti corroborates:

An oral history interview not only provides accounts of past actions but is itself a set of actions that aim at certain effects-effects that are intended to act on the interlocutor in the interview itself, and effects that are intended to have repercussions beyond the interview relationship, on the consulting public and eventually on society as a whole (ALBERTI, 2004, p. 77).

What we seek with the narratives in the last analysis is the valorization and viability of the teaching activities in the history teaching process in EJA, as well as greater knowledge on the subject that may contribute to the understanding of the power of this teaching modality and, therefore, its strengthening.

Given the above, the study was thus in the field of Oral History, since, through interview procedures, narratives were produced about teachers’ knowledge and educational practices related to teaching History in Youth and Adult Education. These narratives were preserved in a digital repository<sup>2</sup> as sources for other studies on the theme besides our own, which aimed at producing a documentary, crossing several experiences and views on different dimensions of the subject in question. Next, we will discuss the procedures in the interviews, from the choice of collaborators to the production of the narratives, and present the analyses that permeated the documentary produced.

### **From the selection of the interviewees to the audiovisual production: producing narratives**

Between July and August 2020, we conducted interviews with six teachers involved with EJA, seeking to elucidate the situation of history teaching in this modality. The selection of potential participants in this research was made based on the research objectives, and interviewees were chosen

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://observatoriogehistoria.net.br/o-ensino-de-historia-na-eja-em-uberlandia-mg/>. Accessed on: 27 Nov. 2020.

only in the Municipality of Uberlândia (Minas Gerais State) (to delimit the researched space and potentiate the conduction of the project) and who had a certain professional experience with EJA. So, at first, the restrictions concerning gender, age, and time of professional activity were considered irrelevant because, sharing the perception of P. Thompson (1992, p. 244), “what matters is the direct personal experience that someone has, not his or her formal position.” Therefore, the choice of interviewees was guided by the position of the interviewee in the group, his availability to record the interview in the conditions possible in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of his experience among those who live, and witness the situations related to the theme and who can provide significant statements, following the qualitative criteria, not quantitative, that oral history research suggests (ALBERTI, 2005).

As far as the universe of interviewees is concerned, we defined the following elements as criteria for choosing the collaborators-narrators: being a teacher whom 1) taught in a municipal school in EJA/PMAJA (Municipal Youth and Adult Literacy Program) classes or had some professional experience in this modality and 2) wanted to narrate, share, and disseminate the knowledge related to their teaching practice with History teaching in the initial and final years of EJA.

Thus, the survey of possible people who would be interviewed was initially done randomly. After defining the criteria, we contacted managers and teachers of municipal institutions to form a group of potential collaborators. After this previous contact, the presentation of the researcher(s), and the explanation of the work, we felt an interest and the possibility of the person participating in the research.

As we were looking for singularities and not regularities, the interview with six professionals was significant enough to enable a consistent analysis to broaden the understanding of the teaching activities in constructing the history teaching process with young and adult students.

Thus, the research collaborators were those teachers willing to promote, through narratives concerning the construction of the history teaching process. This dialogue would enable the exchange of experiences with other professionals since the interviews in full and the documentary would be made publicly available on a digital platform that deepens discussions on educational practices and knowledge in history teaching, geography, and related areas. Therefore, for the collaborators who wanted to “donate” freely, their experience for wide dissemination was contemplated.<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, we preferentially invited teachers who participated in the Working Groups of the Municipal Curricular Guidelines of Uberlândia (Minas Gerais State) to be interviewed, as we believe these are professionals who are not only connected to the classroom and EJA but who were also directly involved in the preparation of the school curriculum, in the sense of contributing to the Guidelines and the production of didactic material for this segment. Therefore, we interpret that these are teachers committed to municipal education who were involved in different ways but somehow established a dialogue with EJA.

Given the prompt acceptance of the invitation, we interviewed, in relation to PMAJA, the teachers Isabel Simião Rezende, Paula Luiza Rodovalho Rodrigues, and Viviane Silva Ambrósio Souza, who were, at the time of the interview, the three professionals who were in the front line of the work developed in the Program. Involved with EJA, we interviewed the History teachers Geraldo Junio Pinheiro Santos, writer and participant of the EJA Working Group in the Municipal Guidelines, Luiz Humberto Zacharias, participant of the Working Group in Elementary II, and Gilliard Antônio Pereira da Silva, who taught in Elementary II (8th and 9th grades). We had contact with the EJA public in the year 2020, by planning and recording video lessons for remote teaching during the pandemic.

From a script based on the research objectives and the references to EJA and history teaching, we formulated questions related to the historical contents covered in the modality, the methodologies used to develop the history teaching process in this segment, the achievement of the objectives intended in this process, the specificities of Youth and Adult Education, the class planning, the approach to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture, the remarkable experiences throughout the trajectory as an EJA history teacher, all to understand the knowledge and practices of these professionals.

Once the interviews were fully recorded, the recording file was made available to the

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<sup>3</sup> The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee under Opinion No. 3.849.015 and Project No. CAAE 23203819.6.0000.5152. All the interviewees signed an Informed Consent Form, agreeing to cede, in an identified manner, the image and sound produced in the interviews after a final review of the material produced.

collaborators so that they could access the content produced and give feedback confirming whether the material could be released to the general public or communicating whether they would like to remove some parts or excerpt. Some teachers asked to remove small parts that they considered problematic or dispensable. After that, each of the interviews was decouped to find the themes and analysis categories that stood out in the various narratives and allowed us to cross-reference them to produce the documentary. As this was an Oral History project, the documentation derived from orality was privileged; that is, the attention was focused on the narratives of the collaborators; however, consulting other sources was not dispensed with. In this path, these narratives were combined with photographs collected from the interviewees to better understand the scenario of History teaching to EJA and PMAJA students. The possibility of comparing the narratives of each interviewee was also not ruled out to understand different positions on the theme, having as a counterpoint what existing studies on the subject.

Based on the analysis of some similar audiovisual productions, we produced a documentary with 1 hour, 44 minutes, and 52 seconds.<sup>4</sup> To arrive at this production, a long and complex path was traveled. We started by watching the interviews, writing down the themes addressed in each recording, and recording the minutes corresponding to these themes. Thus, for each interviewee, we wrote down all the themes contemplated in the interview (based on the script and even others that emerged during the conversation) and the correlated minutes. Initially, the themes raised were:

- Why teach History in EJA/PMAJA;
- The changes in EJA and the experiences of history;
- Selecting the historical content;
- Methodologies/resources/educational materials;
- Planning for EJA/ PMAJA classes;
- Achievement of the proposed objectives;
- Striking experiences/ overcoming difficulties;
- Changes in the teaching trajectory;
- The specificities of EJA/PMAJA;
- Municipal Curricular Guidelines;
- Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture;
- Teacher training;
- Paulo Freire in practice, among others.

From these initial individual records, we began to draft a first script for the documentary, which covered all the themes and the minutes of each narrator's speech. We then listened to the selected excerpts to make sure, from the annotated minutes, that the speech corresponded to the theme in which it was inserted, to examine if the selected part could be moved to another theme, if there were similar assertions, and also to evaluate if the excerpt could be removed without harming the approach to the theme, the message conveyed, and our analysis of the narratives.

Once these adjustments were made, we designed a new script. We analyzed the themes that should be included in the documentary, the order in which they would need to be in order to be coherent, and those that could be removed without harming the purpose of the audiovisual product, which was to explore the knowledge and teaching practices involved in the process of teaching history to young and adult students. Bearing this in mind, as well as the production time (which could not be too long, as this would make it difficult, for multiple reasons, for the viewer to watch the documentary from beginning to end), we removed some themes, such as “changes in the teaching trajectory” and “teacher training.” We left only those common to all the interviewees and more relevant to the approach to the subject. In this sense, the documentary was divided into parts, separated by a title and subtitles that give visibility to the themes addressed. The subtitles correspond to the themes explained, and defined after the analysis of the interview set. In all, ten subtitles are shown in the production:

- The changes and permanences of EJA and its relation to the subject of History;

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<sup>4</sup> The documentary is available at: <https://observatoriogehistoria.net.br/o-ensino-de-historia-na-eja-em-uberlandia-mg/>. Accessed on: 27 Nov. 2020.

- Demystifying the teaching of History in EJA;
- The re-reading of the historical content based on the students' reality;
- How to deal with the specificities of EJA?
- Improving teaching strategies;
- Organizing the best path for EJA classes;
- How to evaluate the student's growth path?
- Municipal Curricular Guidelines: the experience transposed to paper;
- The experiences that stood out... and
- Contemplating the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures.

After elaborating on the third script, which had already defined the themes, the order in which they would be shown, and the excerpts of what each teacher talked about, the documentary began to materialize since this script was passed to the video editor, and the decoupage began. As each topic and the respective scenes were returned, we started to cross-reference the narratives (i.e., to interweave the different speeches), analyze the average number of scenes within each topic, the number of speeches of each teacher, the average time of each topic, think about the choice of title and subtitles (which was made based on the analysis of the narrators' speeches, in a way that encompassed several dimensions of the historical teaching process with young and adult students), and select photos and the moment of insertion of each of them.

After this step of crossing the different narratives — which seek to complement the meaning, the coherence of the ideas among themselves, and even to counterpose different positions — we planned the insertion of other details, such as a soundtrack (thought to establish a dialogue with the imagetic world and provide enrichment concerning the narratives), opening photo (to translate the representativeness of the EJA audience, in dialogue with History teaching), the identification of the collaborating narrators (so that the viewers can discern who is speaking, the description of some specific terms mentioned by the teachers (such as BNCC and PNLD, among others), so that the reader who is not from the educational area could get used to the theme and understand what was being said, and the final credits and acknowledgments. Finally, among the various comings and goings that permeated the editing process, we made a documentary that brings the assertions of teachers who work in the early years (1st to 5th grade) and the final years (6th to 9th grade) on the teaching of history in EJA.

In addition, the production features:

- As a preliminary part, a preamble introduces the purpose of the documentary and shows that it will present scenes and memories of teaching. In this line of reasoning, short excerpts were selected from each of the six interviewees that reveal the specificities of EJA and of working with this public;
- A short text after the effective beginning of the documentary to contextualize the reader that the products presented here result from a Professional Master's study and to register other important information, such as where the interviews will be available in full. And, in this opportunity, we invite these readers to learn more about the theme; and
- A final part entitled “It's a lot of love involved in this...,” to conclude the audiovisual production shows the teachers' speeches that convey a positive message and value the teaching practice, the experiences, the EJA, and its public.

Thus, this documentary was our analysis of the teachers' narratives, and our interpretation of them; in other words, it was our look at the collaborators' assertions about teaching history in EJA. It reflects more than just an audiovisual record; it reflects the way the research results were presented, that is, it is the result of the movement of the research conducted. In addition to the documentary, the interviews of each collaborator are available individually on the digital platform “Observatory of History and Geography Teaching,” in the tab “Our Research - Database,”<sup>5</sup> as a source for other research and productions.

Below, we share some of the analyses that the teachers' narratives, at cross-purposes with writings from previous research and with legal documents, have made possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://observatoriogeohistoria.net.br/pesquisas/>. Accessed on: 27 Nov. 2020.

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FROM TEACHER NARRATIVES

### The changes and permanences of EJA and their relationship with history teaching

As already pointed out in various studies, it was in the 1980s that the Constitution took an important step toward a new conception of Youth and Adult Education. Item I in Article 208 determines that the duty of the State concerning education is made effective through the guarantee of free Basic Education from 4 to 17 years of age, “making it available free of charge to all those who did not have access to it at the appropriate age.”

The Law of Directives and Bases for National Education (LDB) reiterates this commandment and determines the offer of regular school education for youth and adults utilizing a modality appropriate to their needs and availability, guaranteeing, to those who are workers, the conditions of access and permanence in school. Therefore, since EJA became a constituent part of the LDB, it has become a modality of Basic Education and is recognized as a subjective public right.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, despite some small historical antecedent marks that refer to EJA, it was only in the last decades of the twentieth century that we noticed that the pedagogical thought and the policies for youth and adult school education acquired their own identity and format, valuing this educational modality.

This was because, for years, the government's central concern was only to alphabetize the population that had never been to school or had only attended school infrequently. In proposing national campaigns for youth and adult education, the main objective was to qualify rural migrants to guarantee the use of the labor force necessary to sustain industrial production growth. However, with the National Curricular Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education, in effect since the year 2000, the function of Youth and Adult Education has changed, and it has become a modality that goes beyond “supplementary education,” that is, to supply lost schooling.

Hence, at least in the formal plan, EJA has been constituted as a significant opportunity to improve living conditions, overcome exclusion, rebuild the experiences acquired throughout life, re-signify and articulate the knowledge obtained inside and outside of school, in short, overcome the barriers that prevented young people and adults from having access to schooling at the proper age. Moreover, given all this, it becomes increasingly important to know the professionals who work in EJA today to understand the transformations and continuities in this scenario.

Through the interviews, it was possible to verify the modality's changes and permanence and understand its path through the various legislations. One of the changes emphasized in the interviews concerns that today, young people who are repeaters can go to EJA to catch up on their schooling. The teachers interviewed emphasized that the Youth and Adult Education of 20 years ago, as a rule, was aimed at working adults, but that in the last decade, it started to attend a more heterogeneous public, with young people, adults, and the elderly. As pointed out by Prof. Geraldo Santos, who worked with classes containing, on average, 40 students, the youngest being between 20 and 30 years old:

EJA now, in the last 10 years, has changed a lot, mainly because there is a series of laws that oblige students who have been repeating grades several times to be taken to EJA to catch up on their education, according to their age. Thus, EJA today is a mishmash, a mixture. One usually has classes with 25, 30 students, of which you find mostly young people (between 15 and 20 years old), two in their 30s and, at most, 10 gentlemen over 50 or 60 years old. So today's EJA is not that EJA of the late 1990s and early 2000s, but it still has the same burden as the past, which is the possibility of working with people who have a life experience, who come from other backgrounds, from another education, from a time when history was based mainly on Positivism, of praising heroes and reproducing what the teacher said (SANTOS, 2020).

This shows that today's Youth and Adult Education has a different format and brings people of different ages, genders, cultures, schooling, life, and work experiences into the classroom, which clearly proves the diversity that Youth and Adult Education carries. Among these students, some believe that learning

<sup>6</sup> According to Haroldo de Resende (2010), a subjective public right means that every Brazilian citizen has the prerogative to demand that the government immediately fulfill its obligation. Cury (2000, p. 575) explained that, in practical terms, this means that individuals who do not have access to compulsory education now have legal instruments in their hands to enforce this right if they are denied it. CURY, C. R. J. A educação como desafio na ordem jurídica. In: LOPES, E. M. T.; FARIA FILHO, L. M.; VEIGA, C. G. 500 anos de educação no Brasil. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000.

History is intrinsically related to the act of memorizing civic dates, names of heroes, and political facts (FONSECA, 2009), as emphasized by the author Helenice Ciampi (2003), who links the students' lack of interest with the subject to positivist teaching which is based on transmitting indisputable historical truths and knowledge disconnected from the students' experience, memorizing and reproducing what the teacher taught, in short, “automatic” teaching, with restricted possibilities of critical interference and, therefore, with little meaning for the student.

The study of Maurício José Adam (2016) demonstrated how this weakness in history teaching remains in the 2010s. In his analysis of the students' interest in knowledge of history as a curricular component and the contributions of the knowledge produced by this component in the students' daily lives and in their practices of orientation in time, he identified that this interest is mostly out of simple curiosity and that the students do not understand the present as the result of past events and end up not understanding the meaning of history in their life trajectories.

## Demystifying the teaching of History in EJA

As a result of this thought, we proposed the following question: “Why teach History in EJA?” The teachers were categorical in saying that we need to demystify the teaching of this subject in the modality, meaning it is necessary to undo this prejudice that many students still have regarding the study of History, deconstruct and overcome this school culture of past decades that believes that the subject is limited to studying historical facts and commemorative dates (FERNANDES, 2009). According to what Professor Isabel Rezende said:

We often get stuck on questions of facts, dates, and getting to know other places [...]. So, first of all, when you work with these students in EJA, you must understand that the student already brings a large historical baggage that must be respected. And little by little you create bonds and break this barrier of prejudice in relation to the teaching of history (REZENDE, 2020).

According to the narrative of Professor Viviane Souza (2020), the students “have experiences of life, of work, but sometimes they don't see themselves, don't think they are part of this history, and the heroes, the stories in the books are something very distant for them”. From this and other statements, it was possible to see that the teachers try, with the teaching of History, to make the students aware of their rights and duties, of their role as critical and constructive subjects of history, of mutual respect, of the fight against prejudice, to get to know the history that surrounds them, making them realize that they were and are part of history. As reported by Prof. Gilliard da Silva,

It is important [to work with History] as a context of citizenship; I always like to work on this issue with my students. Of citizenship, of their rights and duties, of understanding themselves as historical subjects. I show them that there are no heroes, nor those who call themselves heroes or were placed as heroes; they had help from people, and there was a whole historical, social and political context (SILVA, 2020).

These ideas align with the concepts presented by authors Selva Guimarães Fonseca (2009) and Elza Nadai (1992-93). The former stresses that History has an “important role in education: it helps us understand the world, time and space, the human experience. History helps us in this task. It is fundamental for the formation of the student's historical consciousness, for the formation of the citizen” (FONSECA, 2009, p. 16). The second highlights History's function in helping us understand ourselves, the other, the place we occupy in society, and the historical duty.

In addition to these ideas, Wilian Bonete (2013), through a study that sought to investigate the meaning of historical knowledge for students and the influence of history teaching on the formation of critical and reflective thinking about oneself and the contemporary world, indicates that history, far from being a simple school subject or a heap of meaningless things, is, for young people and adults, a form that makes it possible to interpret and understand reality, the present, and personal life as part of the changes occurring in society. Finally, while there are teaching experiments that fail to help EJA students realize the relevance of historical knowledge to their lives (ADAM, 2016), others succeed.

From this perspective, educational professionals seek to contemplate in their History classes issues related to historical facts and ethics, values, culture, economy, and politics, showing that History is essential to understanding society and changing it, making it fairer. In a broad sense, and still in the words

of Prof. Gilliard da Silva (2020), “History helps to understand life,” as highlighted by Fonseca (2009) and Ciampi (2003), who emphasize the important role of the subject in education, to understand the world, time/space, human experience, and for the formation of citizenship and historical consciousness of the student.

In addition, they address the critical side of History even to help the student to understand the existence of EJA, what cooperated so that he did not study regularly, and the social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics that led him to make decisions such as interrupting his studies and then resuming them. Here, it is interesting to reinforce the valuable role of the History teacher in this scenario of discoveries, reflection on the policies for youth and adult schooling, of critical, political, and social development in relation to EJA in the context of the right to education, which went through a long path of normatization until it was consolidated as a modality of Basic Education, to be recognized as a subjective public right, and to enjoy its specificity.

Thus, it is hoped that the analyses and experiences presented so far will contribute to new research on the teaching of history in EJA since a bibliographic survey carried out in 2019 in the database of the Institutional Repository of the Federal University of Uberlândia<sup>7</sup> of ProfHistória - Professional Master's Degree in History Teaching,<sup>8</sup> of the Capes Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations,<sup>9</sup> and IBICT - Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology<sup>10</sup> shows that, despite a great quantitative and qualitative growth of research in history teaching in the second decade of the 2000s, the specificities of the teaching of history in EJA are still little studied. This means there is still little production aimed directly at Youth and Adult Education and its relationship with history teaching, knowledge, and teaching practices.

### **Re-reading the historical content based on the students' reality**

Regarding the historical contents covered in the classes, it was possible to apprehend that these are worked in an interdisciplinary way, interconnected with the students' particularities. As Professor Isabel Rezende (2020) narrated, “the student already brings a history”. When working in an EJA classroom, the teaching practice needs to value this knowledge brought by the students. From this perspective, we realize that the life story of these subjects is prioritized so that the teaching becomes more specific to their interests because, as some teachers said, if the approach is too theoretical, decontextualized, or infantilized, the students lose interest in their studies, which results in their dropping out of school. These aspects are in dialog with the main normative legislations in effect, such as the CNE/CEB Opinion n° 11/2000, which underlines that the specific pedagogical model for EJA classes needs to consider and respect in the pedagogical practice of the students' life history, the knowledge accumulated by them, their needs and expectations.

Thus, we understand that it is fundamental to reread the historical contents based on the student's reality and transform the teaching practice, turning it more to the specificity of the EJA student and considering the contents that are more relevant to him. However, as Prof. Luiz Zacharias (2020) pointed out in his narrative, one should not limit oneself only to the teaching of practical contents, related to the student's experience; the notion of time and space, the articulation between past and present, which characterize the teaching of history, should also be contemplated.

### **Improving Didactic Strategies**

Concerning the methodologies and didactic materials used to develop the teaching process in History in EJA and PMAJA, we found that the teachers use expository lessons (blackboard, chalk/brush, posters), textbooks, and books available in the school library, texts, images, audiovisual resources

<sup>7</sup> More detailed information available at: [https://repositorio.ufu.br/?locale=pt\\_BR](https://repositorio.ufu.br/?locale=pt_BR). Accessed on: 19 Sep. 2019.

<sup>8</sup> ProfHistory is a *stricto sensu* graduate program recognized by Capes/MEC that aims to provide continuing education for Basic Education History teachers, with the objective of providing certified qualification for the exercise of the profession, contributing to improving teaching quality. More information can be found at: <https://profhistoria.ufrj.br/>. Accessed on: 19 Sep. 2019.

<sup>9</sup> More information can be found at: <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses/#!/>. Accessed on: 21 Sep. 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Called RIDI - Institutional Repository of the Brazilian Institute for Information in Science and Technology. More information can be found at: <https://ridi.ibict.br/>. Accessed on: 23 Sep. 2019.

(movies, games) in the computer labs (despite reports of difficulties, such as internet access and quality of the equipment), music, field trips (museum trips, movies) to explore out-of-school spaces and stimulate the students' interest in the subject and in the content. Based on this, it is possible to see that the practices related to history teaching are not supported only by textbooks and that, based on the resources available, the teachers constantly seek to improve the didactic strategies for the classes.

Specifically, in the Municipal Youth and Adult Literacy Program, we found that all the material is produced by the teachers, based on meetings with their peers and together with pedagogical support. And they described that they explore Paulo Freire's methodology, which uses dialog, words from the students' daily life/interest, and their socio-historical demands to develop the literacy process. In this way, one can note that these teachers are concerned with producing specific material for EJA and that the contents are presented to the students, in the words of Prof. Isabel Rezende (2020), "in such a light way that the classroom becomes a space of freedom and not of oppression," exactly the way Freire saw education, as a form of emancipation and awareness.

Given these assertions, we notice that many teachers want to teach History in a meaningful way to EJA students, even in face of the limits and challenges presented in the schools' routine; that is, teachers still look for other ways to enable a historical and critical formation through teaching in which the student is respected and placed as the protagonist of history and of the learning process.

Through the teachers' narratives, we also noticed that they emphasize the importance of the debate of opinions in the classroom, of the provocation of ideas, of conflicts, which are so relevant in the teaching of history and in the construction of the student's critical sense. These issues, sometimes, end up changing the teacher's practice and making the methodology flexible, and adaptable to this context. Therefore, as Professor Isabel Rezende (2020) has well stated, "there are other ways of learning, not only the classroom, notebook, brush, blackboard and the teacher just talking."

### **Organizing the best path for EJA classes**

Regarding the planning of the classes, as pointed out by the teachers, EJA did not have a specific curriculum proposal for a long time, and each teacher adapted the contents in the classroom. Regarding the teaching of History, with the process of changes that the subject has gone through, we affirm that it is not possible to teach a History class for EJA in the same way as it is taught in Elementary I and II levels and in High School, that is, and following the words of Prof. Luiz Zacharias (2020), "there has to be a particularism for them," and, in this sense, we understand how essential it is to think projects and ways to adapt History to Youth and Adult Education.

In this vein, we identified that recently, the projects, lesson plans, and teaching actions are guided by the municipal curriculum guidelines collectively developed between 2018 and 2020, which express the experiences narrated and accumulated by teachers working in EJA for over 10 years. They meant the transfer to paper of the experience (of students and teachers), the classroom practice, the experiences that worked, and the knowledge and practices that professionals believed (and believe) to be significant for the EJA classes. Based on the reports of some teachers, we understand that with the implementation of these Guidelines, the way to work with the content and organize the best path for the EJA classes became even more "pleasurable" (RODRIGUES, 2020), because they actively participated in the preparation of the document. And we could also capture that the planning of PMAJA classes is flexible, not fixed, which allows teachers to work relevant and current content, without being stuck only to the thematic units or the objects of knowledge covered in the guidelines.

Given this, it was clear that it is necessary to change the language and adapt the planning of EJA/PMAJA classes to the context of the students, the levels and forms of learning, the reality of the school and the neighborhood because there are reports of teachers who teach in schools located in peripheral neighborhoods, where there is more violence (sexual, domestic, etc.), consumption and drug trafficking, and these elements can interfere with the teaching action. It is, therefore, a process that involves actions by the Board, teachers, students, parents so "planning is not only the teacher's job" (SILVA, 2020). We may conclude with the words of Prof. Luiz Zacharias (2020): "we must always be rethinking what we do at school, what we do historically, and how we work in History."

### **Contemplating the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous cultures**

Regarding the approach to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture, the narrators stated that they discuss these contents within the thematic axes (encompassing racism, prejudice, discrimination, values, respect, etc.) with EJA and PMAJA students. They carry out specific projects and discuss these issues “not only to comply with the Law” (SOUZA, 2020), although Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008 are not explicitly included in PMAJA's history curriculum. For instance, projects on Afro culture and the figure of the black woman are carried out in each of the classes and, in the end, a cultural show is held, organized by the teachers in order to show the result of what was done with the classes and give meaning to what was worked. With this, each student can see what was done in the other classes to interact and socialize their knowledge and the productions they built. We noticed, however, that teachers have some difficulty in working with these issues, for some reasons: religious prejudice, and lack of approach to Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture in academic training and teaching materials, among others.

For these reasons, it is increasingly important to develop work such as that of researchers Carina dos Santos (2016), Eline Santos (2018) and Maria Joana Resende (2022). The first one, seeking to overcome the challenges and limits of the articulation of education with the teaching of these themes, prepared an orientation material for EJA teachers and managers to contribute to implementing the ethnic-racial diversity policy in the school unit. Eline's study, in turn, showed, because of the significant transformations in the perception of the students in relation to the relevance of black women in society, that there is still a great need to resize the History curriculum so that it contributes to breaking the stereotypes and prejudices that are still directed to the black female presence in society. In this line, Maria Joana produced a proposal for the teaching of History, approaching issues related to the history of Africa and Afro-Brazilian culture from the perspective of ethnic-racial relations, to contribute to the citizen formation of these students and value their previous knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

### **How to evaluate the student's growth path?**

Regarding the evaluation of the student's learning/growth path intended in the history teaching process in EJA/ PMAJA, we concluded that the teachers can evaluate this aspect in several ways: through diagnoses made daily with the class, self-evaluation, reports, text production, active and critical participation in the classroom, and through the students' facial expressions and posture, since they are young people and adults they are already able to clearly show if the reception of the class was successful or not. Moreover, we noticed that most of the teachers criticized the paradigm that some students still have, especially the older ones, of associating the grade with learning success, or in the words of Prof. Gilliard Silva (2020), “our evaluation methods are still stuck on tests.”

### **The experiences that stood out...**

As for the accounts of the experiences of teaching history in EJA that marked the teaching career, we noticed that the narrators unanimously praised the willpower of these young adults and elderly students, who overcame (and still do) several barriers to be in school — such as the criticism and prejudice that other people have towards them. After becoming adults, they can go back to school and take advantage of this opportunity to reestablish their school trajectory, to update their knowledge, to show their skills, to exchange experiences, in short, to enjoy everything that EJA has to offer and to add to human life. We can synthesize these experiences with the narrative of Professor Gilliard da Silva (2020): “we say that it is never too late to learn, and it really is not, even if it is outside of school time.”

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This article presented excerpts from a Professional Master's study completed in 2020 that focused on the knowledge and practices of teachers who teach history in Youth and Adult Education

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<sup>11</sup> The teaching proposal, entitled “*Por uma educação antirracista: um estudo sobre a História da África, cultura afro-brasileira e relações étnico-raciais*” [For an anti-racist education: a study on the History of Africa, Afro-Brazilian culture, and ethnic-racial relations] was in the format of a digital course and is available in a virtual learning environment.

(EJA) classes. The study problem was formulated from the concerns about the social function of History and its relations with practical human life. In this sense, we questioned the professionals involved with the modality: How, for what, and why teach History? What does the history teacher do in the classroom? What methodologies, teaching materials, and resources do they use to develop the teaching process in History? What interests young and adult students the most? How does one evaluate the attainment of the objectives intended in this process?

In search of these answers and going through the methodological field of Oral History, we registered, through audiovisual resources, the narratives of six history teachers who teach in a municipal school in the EJA modality in relation to the construction of the teaching process with young and adult students. From these records, we produced a documentary, which, more than an audiovisual record, is the language we chose to express our analyses of the collaborators' narratives.

By presenting the production process of the narratives and the documentary, and what they enabled to know and value the knowledge and practices of teachers of Youth and Adult Education, this article intended to contribute to the understanding of the specificity of History teaching in this segment and to broaden the view on it. It is known that there is still a portion of the population that is functionally illiterate, that is, there are people who, even though they decode letters and numbers minimally, do not understand simple texts and have not developed the ability to interpret texts and do mathematical operations. Furthermore, through the interviews with teachers, we came across the challenges and efforts of teachers to develop specific material for EJA students and adapt the curriculum and pedagogical practices in dialogue with the needs and interests of these students, despite the little visibility that is given to the modality and municipal programs, such as PMAJA - Municipal Youth and Adult Literacy Program.

The study recorded in this article demonstrated the importance of guaranteeing young people and adults an education that ensures adequate conditions to keep them in school and assures them the right to learn regardless of age. Specific to didactic and pedagogical practices, the process of teaching history in EJA, the teachers' narratives brought the prerogative of contextualized teaching, which starts from the experiences and knowledge of the students to broaden/make other knowledge effective. Teaching that seeks to contribute to the student's perception of himself as a protagonist of history so that he can understand changes and permanence between past and present, understand the meaning of history in his life trajectory, in the exercise of citizenship, in the construction of ethno-racial, political, and democratic social relations.

Through the reports of the male and female teachers, this article aimed to contribute to the appreciation of the knowledge and skills that constitute teaching and the social visibility of the teaching action in the history teaching process in Basic Education, in the peculiarity of Youth and Adult Education. Despite the vast academic production on Youth and Adult Education, the reflection on the teaching action in the teaching of History in this modality is still scarce and little addressed in the academic literature. Thus, the research carried out proved to be an important work to deepen the reflections on history teaching in this modality, which is sometimes neglected by public policies.

Furthermore, the audiovisual production in a Professional Master in Technologies, Communication and Education and its use for the affirmation and valorization of the teaching of this subject in Youth and Adult Education proved to be relevant to get to know the professionals who work in the municipal EJA nowadays and to understand the transformations and permanences regarding this segment. Thus, among a set of knowledge (the curricular, the pedagogical, and the experiential), we found out that the knowledge of experience or practice has a fundamental importance in defining the professional identity of the EJA teacher. In addition, the work showed that teachers and their students play an important role in producing knowledge.

As these narratives will remain on the digital platform "Observatory of History and Geography Teaching" for an indefinite period, they will be preserved as sources for other research on the theme, enabling further readings and interpretations, in addition to our own that analyzed through audiovisual language, these sources, crossing several experiences and visions about different dimensions of the subject in question. Therefore, the unique sensibility of the narratives and our documentary is an invitation to reflect for readers who wish to research more about how the teaching of History in EJA is presented, and, with this, we inaugurate a work that will extend for many years, with no prediction of ending.

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## DECLARATION OF THE AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author(a) 1 - Project coordinator, active participation in data analysis and review of final writing.

Author(a) 2 - Data collection, data analysis, and text writing.

## DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.

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