

## **Teachers' Social Representations in Relation to EJA: affectivity and teacher training**

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**ABSTRACT – Teachers' Social Representations in Relation to EJA: affectivity and teacher training.** The aim of this article is to present Youth and Adult Education – EJA teachers' social representations, concerning their teacher training and affectivity in the teaching-learning process. The participants were teachers who work at the Youth and Adult Education Center – CEJA and the Youth and Adult Education State Center – CEEJA. Data were collected using the Words Free Association Test (TALP) and interviews. We can infer that the teachers' social representations are actualized in their daily practice through their commitment with the students, and are based on the affective perspective, in which love and responsibility are more significant than technical competence, teaching practice and pedagogical training.

**Keywords: Social Representations. Affectivity. Teacher Training. Youth and Adult Education. Teaching-Learning Process.**

**RESUMO – Representações Sociais de Docentes da EJA: afetividade e formação docente.** O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar as representações sociais dos professores da EJA sobre sua formação docente e a afetividade no processo de ensino-aprendizagem. Participaram do estudo professores que atuam no Centro de Educação de Jovens e Adultos – CEJA e Centro Estadual da Educação de Jovens e Adultos – CEEJA. Os instrumentos de coleta de dados foram: Técnica de Associação Livre de Palavras (TALP) e entrevista. Podemos inferir que as representações sociais dos professores objetivam-se na prática cotidiana por meio do compromisso assumido com os alunos e se ancoram na perspectiva afetiva, posto que o amor e a responsabilidade são mais significativos do que a competência técnica e a formação didático-pedagógica.

**Palavras-chave: Representações Sociais. Afetividade. Formação de Professores. Educação de Jovens e Adultos. Processo de Ensino-Aprendizagem.**

## Introduction

Even in modern times, there is no consistent governmental policy that can support quality education, financially and structurally, to people who attend EJA (Youth and Adult Education) classes, as well as an adequate training for the education professionals who work for the program. After performing a bibliography review, we acknowledged that few research papers articulate the themes of social representation, affectivity and EJA, which opens a fruitful field for new research. That said, our goal was to analyze the social representations of EJA teachers about their teaching training and affectivity in the teaching-learning process.

The present study is significant because it integrates three large fields of knowledge: EJA – Youth and Adult Education, Affectivity and the Theory of Social Representations in the context of a city in the countryside of São Paulo state, in which EJA has been officially established since 1985, both in the scope of municipal and state Education Departments.

Since implicitly there are in the several governmental educational instances a somehow rejection/denial of EJA and its professional workers, which justifies the fact that the deprived parts create a protection mechanism to defend the viability of their function, which are also supported by their social representations.

For this reason, we chose the Theory of Social Representations, postulated by Moscovici (1976; 1978; 2001; 2003), and his Structuralist Approach - Central Core Theory (Abric, 1984; 1994b; 2000; Sá, 1995; 1998) as the main theoretical reference to base our investigation in search of comprehending these complex relations between teachers and their daily routines in the context of EJA.

According to Jodelet (2001, p. 22), social representations “[...] interfere in many different processes such as the propagation and assimilation of knowledge, group and individual development, the definition of social and personal identities, group expression, and social transformations”.

Based on results from researches that articulate affectivity and teaching-learning process, we can infer that the development of an affective environment influences in a qualitative manner in the construction of knowledge and in the process of teaching (Galvão, 2003; Mahoney, 2003; Tassoni, 2008; Leite, 2006; 2013; Almeida, 2012).

We verified the need of new studies that aim to investigate the teachers' knowledge about these dimensions as well as analyze the relations between affectivity, cognition and social context so as to contribute to the identification and analysis of the social representations of EJA teachers.

To comprehend social representations about affectivity, it is also necessary to analyze the teachers' daily perceptions, experiences and actions related to their training in order to act in this context, which also support social representations about teacher training.

According to Jodelet (2001), the relations between the social context and ideology also contribute for structuring social representations. Thus, we can infer that the representations about teacher training and affectivity are structured and combined in the affective and cognitive teacher-student relations, involving knowledge objects, the historical and cultural context, orienting their daily pedagogical practice.

## **Method**

### *Objective*

Considering the problem and context highlighted above, the aim of this article is to present the EJA teachers' social representations in relation to their teacher training and affectivity in the teaching-learning process, characterizing it as a qualitative study, even though it presents quantitative data at some pertinent points (Triviños, 1992).

### *Participants*

The first phase of data collection had the participation of 67 teachers who work at the Youth and Adult Education Center – CEJA, the institution responsible for EJA elementary school – cycle I, and at the Youth and Adult Education State Center – CEEJA, the institution responsible for EJA elementary school – cycle II and high school. In the second phase of data collection, 11 teachers from both institutions were interviewed. It is relevant to mention that the selection of these two institutions is justified by the fact that they are responsible for providing and administering formal education to young, adult and senior students.

### *Instruments for Data Collection*

The elaboration process of data collection instruments, and the further analysis, demanded some specific criteria for such research, as recommended by Sá (1998). All the process must be elaborated based on the Theory of Social Representations and the Central Core Theory. Besides having a questionnaire to access free evocations (TALP), it is essential to perform interviews, which “currently still is an indispensable method in any study on representations” (Abric, 1994b, p. 61 apud Sá, 1998, p. 82).

The Questionnaire – *Técnica de Associação Livre de Palavras* [Words Free Association Test] – TALP, was used as a primary instrument of data collection. As Souza Filho claims (1995), the initial associations are more spontaneous, while the subsequent ones are more rational, which explains why we chose to use such instrument for data collection. The evocations were submitted to the EVOC<sup>1</sup> software for the identification of the central core and peripheral elements that compose the social representations.

For the second phase of data collection, we used the interview, which was based on the reference and nature of the qualitative investigation. The questions were prepared to meet the objectives of the research and relevant information was identified in references that address the theme. The semi-structured interview intended to allow the participant teachers to express their knowledge and perspectives.

Through the interview, it is possible to access the "reports contained in the speech of the social actors" (Minayo, 2002, p. 57) and to allow the access to the senses and meanings of these reports when associated to appropriate methods of analysis, revealing important aspects of the subjectivity of these actors and their contexts of integration and performance.

It is interesting to mention that the use of free word associations, questionnaires, interviews are significant and consistent instruments in the study about social representations in the educational field, as we can observe in the research performed by Sousa; Villas Bôas; Novaes; Duran (2011); Sousa; Villas Bôas; Ens (2012); Placco; Villas Bôas; Sousa (2013).

### *Data Collection Procedures*

Primarily, Data Collection Procedures occurred with the elaboration of letters addressed to the CEEJA's Director and to the Municipal Education Department. With the permission granted by the two managers, the researcher reached them to verify which was the due course to accomplish the data collection, primarily, by means of the TALP questionnaire.

The research project that resulted in the present article was submitted to the Ethics Committee in Research of the Medical Sciences School/UNICAMP, via *Plataforma Brasil*, and was approved under the number 710.462 and the CAAE number 32078814.8.0000.5404.

The Informed Consent Form was filled and signed individually by the participants and the TALP Questionnaire was also responded by CEEJA and CEJA's teachers, during the ATPC meetings that took place in the morning and in the afternoon. The TALP Questionnaires include items of participants' identification: gender, work field, grade levels, subjects that they teach, training, work time and requests about the evocation of words.

After filling the first items, teachers should respond separately the following requests (stimulating terms): 1) Write 5 words that come to your mind when you read the expressions *Teacher Training for Youth and Adult Education; Affectivity in the Teaching-learning process*; 2) Among the words you wrote, draw a circle around the two that you think define better *Teacher Training for Youth and Adult Education; Affectivity in Teaching-learning process*.

Evocations about "Teacher Training for the EJA" and "Affectivity in Teaching-learning process" were requested separately. Evocations

about “Training” were raised, written and returned to us. Thereafter, evocations about “Affectivity” were also requested, written and returned.

It is important to mention that 5 evocations were requested for each one of the questionnaires to the participants, responding to the methodological guidelines regarding the evocation method or free association method (Abric, 1994c). After writing the words, teachers were requested to read and circle those words that better defined what was being requested, according to Vergès’ methodological guidelines (1992), regarding one of the variants of the method of ranking items. The two methods used for data collection were referenced as the most appropriate when the theory used to investigate the social representations is the central core (Sá, 2002).

Interviews with 6 CEEJA’s teachers and 5 CEJA’s teachers were performed, totaling 11 participants in this second phase of data collection. As this study’s approach aspects are associated with the affective dimension and social representations, teachers’ interest and availability to participate in this study were used as criteria for participation in both the TALP Questionnaire and the interview. “Affecting and being affected is an inherent condition to human interactions, and the interview situation does not escape from this condition” whereby “[...] feelings, prejudices, values and expectations can be sources of biases to the interview context and climate” (Szymanski; Almeida; Prandini, 2011, p. 89 e 94).

All the interviewed participants signed the Informed Consent Form. The interviews were accomplished individually in professional or residential settings, recorded with permission and the audio files were transcribed and converted in Word files.

The interview script was formed of 5 parts that include questions about the identification and the initial training path, acting contexts, continuous training path, detailing of teaching practices in EJA, focusing learning elements, affective elements and final remarks.

### *Data Analysis*

The words collected through the TALP questionnaire were organized in an *Excel* table and afterwards submitted to the EVOC software (Vergès, 1994). This procedure allowed the access to the possible constituent elements of the social representation, i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> quadrant (top left chart) refers to the central core; the 2<sup>nd</sup> (top right chart) refers to the “close periphery”. The 3<sup>rd</sup> (bottom left chart) and the 4<sup>th</sup> (bottom right chart) quadrants refer to the peripheral elements (peripheral system). The words mentioned were organized according to the frequency (F) and average evocation order (AEO)<sup>2</sup>.

The quadrants help to comprehend the complex structure of a social representation. “[...] In the bottom left quadrant, there are the elements of contrast, which are harder to interpret, and that are able

to indicate a change in the course of representation or the existence of sub-groups" (Alves-Mazzotti; Maia, 2012, p. 75).

The dual system: central and peripheral, just as Abric says, "allows us to comprehend one of the basic characteristics of representations: they are, simultaneously, stable and unstable, rigid and flexible" (Moreira; Oliveira, 2000, p. 34). Alves-Mazzotti and Maia (2012) help us to understand how the central and peripheral systems form social representations:

[...] representation is seen as a socio-cognitive particular system, formed by two sub-systems: the central core (CN) and the peripheral system (PS). The first, formed by a reduced number of elements, is responsible for the meaning and for the organization of the internal representation, as well as for its stability, resisting to changes and in this way assuring the permanency of the representation. It forms the common representation base, the one that results from the collective memory and the norms system of the group. On the other hand, the PS, composed by the other elements of representation, has a great flexibility and responds to the following functions: (a) it elaborates the representation of actual and understandable terms, anchored in the immediate reality; (b) it adapts the representation to the context change, integrating new elements; (c) it allows individual modulations related to the life story of each individual; (d) being a scheme, it allows the operation of the representation as an instant guide to the reading process of a given situation; (e) it protects the CN, absorbing and reinterpreting the changes in actual situations (Abric, 1998, 2003 apud Alves-Mazzotti; Maia, 2012, p. 74).

Choosing the interview as the instrument of data collection for the study of social representations, language has been favored as a very significant manifestation in this research context. The language is characterized as "a form of expression that is specifically human. It is a distinct attribution of the human being in comparison to other animals. The language is also social", and because of that, it is an essential element of analysis for the comprehension of the social representation (Farr, 2002, p. 41).

To better understand the teachers' social representations, it was proposed, through a semi-structured script, questions that focused on the teachers' daily educational actions and others encompassing their personal and professional history, comprising basic training and the continuous training in the attempt of "[...] correspondence between the social thought – in other words, the representation – and the social practice of the studied population" (Sá, 1998, p. 49). Because of that, we also chose to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with some EJA teachers.

According to Jodelet (1997), Abric (1994b), Souza Filho (1995) and Sá (1998), semi-structured interviews are recommended for investiga-

tions that intend to study social representations. Szymanski, Almeida and Prandini (2011) also emphasize the importance of the interview and the care of the researcher in preparing the triggering questions.

The process of elaborating the script for the interview was structured considering the readings that base the teachers' training; EJA; affectivity and the Theory of the Social Representations. It is essential to acquire knowledge about the reality one intends to research by means of "[...] the gathering of symbolical material related to the socially situated topic, person or object [...] one seeks to establish the first contact with the psychosocial reality that is intended to be studied [...]" (Souza Filho, 1995, p. 115; Szymanski; Almeida; Prandini, 2011).

As for the interview, besides being an important instrument for data collection, no matter the theoretical and methodological precept of each research, it allows a reflexive process and a "[...] continuous exchange between the meaning and the system of beliefs and values permeated by emotions and the feeling of the protagonists", in a way that "a continuous adjustment of actions and emotions" is processed. (Szymanski; Almeida; Prandini, 2011, p. 14 e 11).

The data collected in the interview were analyzed and categorized through content analysis, following the guidance of Bardin (1977) and Franco (2005).

## Results

The presentations of collected data were disposed through intersections between quadrant analysis (central core and peripheral system), resulting from evocations submitted to the EVOG software, content analysis of evocations and interviews, as well as the analyses of the processes of anchoring and objectification identified in the interviews.

Moscovici makes some considerations about the accuracy of the study analysis, explaining how the representation is composed:

Every representation is composed of pictures and socialized expressions. In conjunction, a social representation is the organization of pictures and language because it emphasizes and symbolizes acts and situations which are or become familiar to us. Observed in a passive way, it is understood as a reflection, in the individual or collective consciousness of an object, of an idea system which is external to it. The analogy of brain-housed captured photograph is fascinating; the delicacy of a representation is, therefore, compared to the definition level and optical clarity of an image. In this way, we frequently refer to the representation (image) of the space, of the city, of the woman, of the child, of the science, of the scientist, and so forth (Moscovici, 1978, p. 25).

Picture and signification are elements which form the representation. Picture is related to the object or phenomenon of the social world

and signification is the value or the significance given by the subject to this picture or image. When this phenomenon or object is represented, it goes through a reconstitution and modification process because this object representation process is different from the object itself. By the time this object is represented, it receives a meaning, *a status* (Moscovici, 1978).

The elaboration and the operation of social representation occur through two processes of formation referred by Moscovici as objectification and anchoring (focalism). These are primary concepts to access and understand social representations. Objectification is the process through which the object goes from an abstract condition to an actual condition, materializing itself by means of the word. The anchoring process is formed by assigning value to objects of the social relations, transforming science into an accessible and important knowledge to everybody. "Objectification transfers science to the *being* domain and anchoring delimitates it to the *doing* domain to bypass the communication interdict" (Moscovici, 1978, 174).

### **Social Representations concerning Teacher's Training for EJA**

Through the stimulating term *Teacher's training for EJA*, 131 evocations expressed by 73 different words were collected.

After concluding the evocation analysis by means of the content analysis technique, we subsequently observed the resultant quadrants from words submitted to the EVOC software and it was possible to observe a congruency between words and the dimensions in the two analysis procedures.

By submitting evocations to EVOC software, the 51 words mentioned only once were disregarded, which corresponds to 70% of the total sample. We considered only the words mentioned more than twice to a maximum of five times. This way, it was considered as a representation of the central core only the words with a higher frequency than 5 and position order lower than 1.5, as it is shown in Table 1.



**Table 1 – Frequency and Evocation Order of the Free Associations Related to the Stimulating Term *Teacher's Training for EJA***

Frequency >=5 Evocation Average Order (EAO) >= 1.5 Rang Moyen – 1.5							
	Words	Freq.	EAO		Words	Freq.	EAO
1 <sup>st</sup> Q U A D R A N T	commitment	10	1.200	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q U A D R A N T	love	9	1.556
					patience	5	1.600
					persistence	5	1.660
					responsibility	6	1.667
CENTRAL CORE ↑				1 <sup>st</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑			
	Words	Freq.	EAO		Words	Freq.	EAO
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q U A D R A N T	ability	2	1.000	4 <sup>th</sup> Q U A D R A N T	learning	3	2.000
	capacity	2	1.000		competency	2	1.500
	dedication	4	1.250		engagement	2	1.500
	challenge	3	1.333		humanism	2	2.000
	didactics	4	1.000		investment	2	1.500
	nonexistent	2	1.000		necessity	3	1.667
	maturity	2	1.000		perspective	2	1.500
	research	2	1.000		practice	4	1.750
T	overcoming	3	1.333	T			
2 <sup>nd</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑				3 <sup>rd</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑			

Source: Author's elaboration.

Just the word *commitment* composes the central core. It refers to the involvement of teachers in their work performance, which is independent of previous information or orientation about how to work with young, adults and seniors in the EJA's context.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quadrant, we verified the words equal or more frequent than 5. These are words which represent *love* and *responsibility* for the profession, despite the mishaps and problems related to specific training for EJA performance. Teachers must have *patience* and *persistence*.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quadrant, we verified words with frequency equal or greater than 2 and less or equal to 4, categorizing words which indicate that the *didactics* for teaching EJA students demands *dedication*, *capacity*, *maturity* and *research* by the teacher. This indicates daily challenges and *overcoming* difficulties, since initial training is *nonexistent*.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> and last quadrant, less-frequent words are shown, indicating that with *practice*, if there is *necessity*, the teachers will master their *learning* according to specificities of this education modality, and that the only way to reach technical *competences* and *humanism* is through *investment* and *engagement*.

Concomitant with the development of the free association analysis by means of the content analysis and the submission to EVOC, we also conducted the content analysis of the interviews. It is interesting to observe that the results of the interviews support the data from the free avocations, complementing each other, as well as intensifying the

results related to social representations of teacher's training and affectivity in the teaching-learning process.

Of all interviewed teachers, six of them affirmed that they dreamed about becoming teachers since childhood, attesting they used to teach their friends with easiness in relation to doubts regarding the school contents on test days and received significant feedbacks in relation to their teaching methods and to the incentives to following a teacher's career.

It is interesting to observe that some teachers opted for following teaching as a career, despite facing an initial resistance, due to not so pleasant experiences in relation to the occupation since graduation until they had their first experience as teachers, but they did not give up, and gradually started involving themselves in the process and kept on teaching after feeling pleasure for doing it.

When asked about the fact of having chosen to act in EJA, all the teachers reported having made an option for this modality because they were identified with this field.

The biggest difference between the regular school environment and the EJA's was something that stood out on the teachers' reports. They commented about the yelling, the lack of politeness, the pressure, the indiscipline, the student's lack of respect in the regular school environment in contrast with EJA schools, in which they reported having silence, respect, discipline and, mainly, the student's consideration towards the teachers and to the whole teaching-learning process.

Other teachers reported how acting in EJA classes proved to be the best context for personal and professional development, since they had the chance to get involved in this field and this provided them satisfaction, pleasure and accomplishment.

The interweaving between the affective, cognitive and social dimensions was significant for teachers to remain working with EJA, although they had not received, initially, any orientation on how to act with young, adult and senior students (Maturana, 1995; Wallon, 1978; Vygotsky, 1998), being possible to determine the development of emotion, thinking and will, intensifying "the volitional process" (Molon, 2011, p. 91).

Although they claim to enjoy teaching EJA classes, the interviewees used more negative than positive elements to represent the differences of acting as teachers for adult and senior students in comparison to working with students from regular classes in elementary school, junior high school and high school.

Based on the interviews, it is possible to notice that the teachers emphasized a lot the treatment aimed to young, adult and senior students, in which affection, attention, understanding and respect must be intensified. A very big appreciation of the teachers regarding the affective dimension was observed, which is very important. However, balancing the affective dimensions with the cognitive and political dimensions is necessary.

A few elements referring to the teacher's ethical and political commitment were mentioned by some teachers, besides aspects such as cordiality, respect and humanization that must always substantiate the relationship between teacher and student. It is not claimed that the teachers do not fulfill their didactic and pedagogical chores as well as their political commitments linked to the teaching activity; however, in EJA's context, it can be noted that it could be intensified.

It is necessary to consider, in the school context, the social, affective, cognitive and political dimensions that constitute the relationships and actions in this physical space, as well as outside of it. Overestimating the affective dimension in detriment of the cognitive dimension is not convenient, because "[...] the technical-scientific competence and the rigor of which the teacher must not waive in their job development are not compatible with the necessary lovingness to educational relationships" (Freire, 2013, p. 12).

According to Freitag (1980, p. 42), an increasing and continuous process of the current educational policy has been delineating itself with the objective of defending the "interests of the dominant class" in detriment to the needs of lower classes, creating "[...] conditions for individuals from subordinate classes to choose their options in an apparently free manner".

In a more recent perspective, Ball (2010) denounces the development process of a performative society. The individuals' performances in different social and professional instances are increasingly becoming regulated and inauthentic.

'Performances – from single individuals or organizations – serve as productivity measures or results [...]. They mean, encapsulating or representing a value, the quality or value of an individual or of an organization within a judgment field'. [...] The service commitments have no value or meaning anymore, and the judgment becomes subordinate to demands of the performativity and of the market, although there is obviously an essential element of cynical compliance in operation in the individual and institutional manufacturing processes (Ball, 2010, p. 38-50).

As there are no specific courses, EJA teachers themselves need to find strategies to work with the students and anything they do is somewhat implicit as being "great", bearing in mind the lack of structural subsidies and an educational policy for the training and for the execution of their pedagogical work.

Each one's history and the group history are interwoven and help structure their social representations about the EJA teacher's training and about the affectivity in the teaching-learning process.

According to Moscovici (1978), the social representations are elaborated and work based on the processes of objectification and anchoring. Based on the analysis carried out until now, it can be inferred that the EJA teachers' social representations about their training rely on the daily practice by means of the commitment assumed with the students.

They are anchored in the affective perspective, in which love and responsibility are more significant than technical competence and didactic and pedagogical training, bearing in mind that the initial specific training is nonexistent and the continuous training is insufficient to meet all the specificities of the process of development and learning of young, adult and senior students and for the social, economic and political complexities of this teaching modality.

Next, the evocation analyses and the teachers' interviews regarding affectivity in the teaching-learning process are presented, in order to know their actions in their daily routines, affections and reflections *about* the daily duties and their social representations about the intersection of these themes.

### **Representations concerning Affectivity in the Teaching-Learning Process**

By means of the stimulating term *Affectivity in the Teaching-Learning Process*, 134 evocations, expressed in 58 different words, were collected.

Giving continuity to the analysis of evocations, it was held, at first, the content analysis and later the analysis of the resulting quadrants of the submission of words to the EVOC software, being possible to determine a congruence between the words in the two analyses procedures.

By submitting evocations to EVOC, the 40 words that were mentioned only once were excluded, which corresponded to 69% of the total sample. We considered only the words mentioned more than twice to a maximum of five times. This way, it was considered as a representation of the central core only the words with a frequency higher than 5 and position order lower than 1.5, as it is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Frequency and Recall Order of Free Associations for the Stimulating Term *Affectivity in the Teaching-Learning Process***

Frequency > = 5 Evocation Average Order (EAO) > = 1,5 Rang Moyen – 1,5							
	Words	Freq.	EAO		Words	Freq.	EAO
1 <sup>st</sup> Q U A D R A N T	dedication respect	7 20	1.429 1.300	2 <sup>nd</sup> Q U A D R A N T	love	12	1.583
					self-esteem	5	1.600
					understanding	7	1.571
					commitment	5	1.800
					patience	12	1.500
CENTRAL CORE ↑				1 <sup>st</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑			
	Words	Freq.	EAO		Words	Freq.	EAO
3 <sup>rd</sup> Q U A D R A N T	humanism recognition sensibility	2 2 2	1.000 1.000 1.000	4 <sup>th</sup> Q U A D R A N T	friendship	2	1.500
					competence	2	1.500
					education	2	2.000
					empathy	3	1.667
					involvement	3	1.667
					incentive	2	1.500
					professionalism	2	2.000
fulfilment	2	1.500					
bond	3	1.667					
2 <sup>nd</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑				3 <sup>rd</sup> PERIPHERAL ↑			

Source: Author's elaboration.

The core was made only by the words *respect* and *dedication*, which shows the consideration that teachers have for their young, adult and senior students.

In the second quadrant, we ascertained the words that have a frequency equal to or higher than 5. These are words that show *love*, *patience* and *understanding* regarding the history of life and the particularities of each student. Teachers are *committed* to contribute to raising the *self-esteem* of these students.

In the third quadrant, we ascertained the words that had a frequency higher or equal to 2 and lower or equal to 4, listing words that indicate that the teacher needs to be *sensitive* and show *recognition* in relation to the progress of the student in the teaching-learning process, even if these are small. *Humanism*, that is, the human dimension must be valued, especially in situations in which students make mistakes.

In the fourth and last quadrant, words with later and less frequent frequencies appear, which denote the *bond*, *empathy* and *involvement* that take place between teachers and students. The *friendship* between students and teachers and among students themselves is an *incentive* to attend classes and to carry out the activities in the classroom. It is interesting to observe that the words *competence*, *professionalism* and *education* will appear among the elements considered to be peripheral representations with reduced frequency, that is, mentioned with certain fragility by teachers.

It is possible to observe that no words with negative connotations were found in any of the quadrants, making it possible to ascertain that teachers have a positive view about the stimulating term *Affectivity in the Teaching-Learning Process*, being completely unaware that studies on affectivity in educational settings also cover negative elements of the relationship, that is, aversive aspects that can distance students, teachers, knowledge objects etc. and can also compromise negatively the processes of teaching and learning, as shown by studies of Leite (2006; 2013); Gazoli (2013); Barros (2006; 2013); Barella (2013); Falcin (2006), Leite and Tassoni (2002).

This approximation or distancing in the relationship of teachers with knowledge objects was clearly verified. When asked about which disciplines are easier or more difficult in terms of class elaboration and development, all participants replied that the content they can more easily develop are precisely those which they like and that consequently are related to their initial education. They assert seeking ways, through individual study, dialogue with teaching partners and courses, to work with the contents which they do not master very well.

Authors such as Dantas (1992), Snyders (1993), Freire (1994; 1999), Maturana (1999), Vygotsky (1998) and Wallon (1978) argue that reason and emotion are integrated with the development of human beings. This relationship between disciplines and the affinity of the teachers interviewed also show the relationship between the cognitive and the affective dimensions in the formation of professional identity, also in mediating the teacher during the presentation of contents. It is possible to infer that there is a teaching practice likely to value the area of knowledge with greater control and greater proximity.

It is possible to subtly realize that interviewees end up devoting a longer time to the development of activities they enjoy at the expense of the activities that they do not master very well and/or with which they do not have such an affinity. Another feature that stands out is the fact that the activities are different for the young and the seniors. It is important to have this adjustment and integration between the school curriculum and daily knowledge; however, the quality of education should not be compromised.

Throughout their teaching practice, some teachers start realizing the value of some subjects and the processes of devaluation of others. Aware of this difference, they try to find ways to adjust the time dedicated to work in each discipline, for example, developing projects that integrate different disciplines and value the one that was in the background.

This process of prioritizing a discipline, but not developing appropriately the other, generates a fragmentation in the process of teaching, and consequently in the process of learning, becoming increasingly difficult for a student to integrate the different knowledge areas with daily experiences.

Through the data collected, it is possible to see that teachers seek strategies for working with the students. There are some processes in

the elaboration and development of classes which are similar and others that vary according to the characteristics, the social representations of each teacher and institutions to which he/she is linked.

According to Freire (2013, p. 53), it is essential for the teacher to be in a constant process of research that will enable new discoveries and improvement in his/her teaching practice. The participation in research is something also intrinsically linked to the emotional dimension of the teacher, because if he/she does not like this investigative process, he/she will not be involved with the search (Leite, 2013).

It can be inferred that the training path of each teacher influences significantly the way he/she relates to knowledge objects, that are EJA, students, the contents to be taught and the teaching and learning spaces. These positive affective relations are promoters of an efficient teaching-learning process and proper mediation on the part of the teacher.

The teachers' attitudes are mediated by the positive affective relationship established by them with these knowledge objects and these relationships will be improved through the teacher's experiences, but mainly because of the integration of these experiences in systematized moments of knowledge acquisition (Leite, 2006; Mahoney; Almeida, 2011).

According to Leitão (2004), the self-training processes of EJA teachers are quite significant, but it is necessary to provide spaces for them to share their findings and experiences, integrating their experience-based knowledge with formal educational knowledge, with EJA, with their field of knowledge, and this is a great strategy to deepen the relations between practice/theory/practice.

It can be inferred that teachers attempt to provide to the students an enjoyable environment and activities, in such a way as to soothe the unpleasant situations that the students have been through throughout their existence (objectification) and by providing this pleasant environment, they are indirectly making the classroom and EJA welcoming environments for them too (anchoring).

Based on the analyses, it was found that there are many difficulties in EJA, derived from social, political and economic exclusion experienced by most of the students, and others derived from each student's characteristics and realities. Within this context, teachers try to overcome them through their perspicacity, their daily experiences and by sharing their experiences with fellow teachers, but not because they received any kind of training to learn how to face these challenges, that is, teachers are devoid of a process of specific initial training and continuous education on which to base their actions.

It is possible to verify that, despite the problems, the interviewed teachers relate well to the professional field they chose to be in and that motivates them to keep going. Their social representations about affectivity during the teaching and learning process, which solidify positively, based on the dedication to the profession and respect to the students were also highlighted in the central core of representations.

The words identified by means of submission to the EVOC software represent emotions/actions/reflections that can be traced during the teachers' interviews, clearly confirming their social representations.

Based on the interviews analyses, all teachers claimed having a good/great relationship with the students and point out how much they feel valued by them. When questioned about what they do to diminish the students' absence, drop-out or evasion, the interviewees stated that they try to know what it is happening through several mechanisms, highlighting the how important attendance is during the classes.

They declare that are varied reasons that drive the students out of the school, such as: close relatives who are sick, changing jobs, difficulty to conciliate work and school time, housewives who need to take care of their children, feeling ashamed about attending classes and difficulty in dealing with some school subjects.

Based on the data, it can be inferred that this process of rescue, persuasion and support of teachers in relation to the students is underpinned on two sides of the same coin. One side is related to the concern they have of contributing to the continuous schooling of young, adults and seniors (objectification). The other side is linked to the teachers' job maintenance, because if the students do not attend to the EJA classes, it does not justify keeping these jobs, which would then lead to the school closing and the teacher's deployment (anchoring).

It was possible to verify that only 3 interviewed teachers claimed to have a clear understanding of the benefits of balancing between the affective and cognitive dimensions in the learning and teaching process. They described that the pedagogical practice needs to be based on a good relationship between teachers and students, but mainly on the ethical and political commitment on the teacher's part.

Freire (2013, p. 140) assumes that "the educational practice is all of that: affectivity, joy, scientific capacity, technical mastering to the service of a change [...]". The other interviewed teachers highlight the important attitudes that indicate the creation of bonds between teacher and student that are essential to the EJA existence, but it is not clear in the excerpts the "methodical rigor" that must also be in the essence of the teaching and learning process.

It is necessary to find a correlation between the knowledge resulting from experience-based knowledge of students and teachers and those formal knowledge from different fields of knowledge.

It is also necessary to overcome this knowledge to create new knowledge that may provide to the students, besides specific qualitative changes, such as the increase of self-esteem, the expansion and improvement of social relations, the refinement of reading, writing and calculation skills, which will, in turn, allow for a better understanding of the power relations that permeate human, social, political and economic relations in a society.



Aware of these relations and the bases that sustain or undermine their pillars, students can choose to keep themselves in a condition of “oppressed”, or they can try to mitigate it or even overcome it. This process of instigating students’ awareness is also part of the mission of the teacher and the school (Freire, 1987).

The professional of education will only be capable of developing spaces and critical reflections with the students, contributing to this process of raising awareness, if he/she is prepared for such purpose. In other words, if the processes of initial and continuous training also prepare them to implement such attitudes, like Gatti and Garcia (2011) state.

According to the objectification and anchoring processes postulated by Moscovici (1976), it is possible to identify that the teachers try to communicate with the students because they believe it is their function to contribute for the students return to school. This permanence needs to be detached from any discomfort (objectification) and they anchor this practice in in the rescue of the students’ and their own self-esteem, that perhaps knowledge can bring, this way contributing to the students’ attendance, the permanence of EJA and, consequently, of their jobs.

The objectification and anchoring processes identified during the analyses of the interviews can also be certified through the analysis of evocations presented. The words respect, dedication, patience, love, sensibility and professionalism are highlighted in the composition of the core and peripheral system of the teachers’ social representation concerning affectivity in the teaching and learning process.

The social representations slowly structure themselves in the contexts, experiences, interactions, daily communications and can be noticed through actions and verbalizations of the subjects included in this reality. For this reason, it is important that the EJA educational and managing staff understand the educational representations of the teachers, their training process and affectivity in the learning and teaching process.

## **Conclusion**

It was possible to verify that the aspects related to the technical competence seem weak in the teachers’ social representations concerning their training process. This observation is worrying, because the referred dimension is very important for the constitution of the identity of this education professional.

Consistent processes related to teacher initial and continuous training need to be implemented to better support future and current teachers working in EJA. Government policies, the institutions’ management groups, and the State and Municipal Education Departments have the responsibility to give financial and structural conditions to improve teacher education.

Through the evocations and interviews, we could acknowledge that no word with a negative connotation was used. Therefore, we can assume that the teachers have a positive perspective of affectivity in the teaching-learning process; however, they do not know that the human being affective dimension also incorporates negative aspects built in the academic space, which can significantly compromise both teaching and learning.

We demonstrated that teachers develop many strategies to keep the students in the classroom and are constantly trying to rescue them, in case the students prioritize demands not related to school. Therefore, we can infer that the teacher feels responsible for these permanence and rescue processes, which must take place without any moment of tension or discomfort for the students (objectification). However, situations of anxiety and insecurity are intrinsic to the research process and to the search for new knowledge. Teachers anchor this practice in the constant work of elevating the students' and their own self-esteem, aiming to contribute to the students' attendance and the permanence of EJA.

It is possible to verify that, for most of the interviewees, a thin line divides a paternalistic posture from a political, progressive and ethic posture. Some teachers express themselves with clarity about the difference between these two guiding forms – having a posture during classes and, also, relating with the students with lovingness, without losing the methodological rigor and the political and emancipatory objective of the teaching activity.

Teachers need to systematize their knowledge concerning affectivity and the teaching practice directed to students in order to significantly mediate their relations with the objects of knowledge, developing a liberating pedagogy.

The improvement of pedagogical practices could be possible through systematic courses aimed to expand the knowledge on: developmental and learning psychology; andragogy; gerontology and geriatrics; affective and cognitive dimensions of the human being and their positive and negative influences in the teaching-learning process; Paulo Freire's theory.

Systematic and planned courses aimed at the EJA teachers, which could be integrated by sharing their experiences, may enable opportunities to reflect on the practice/theory/practice (Leitão, 2004), which would provide new experiences and prospects, new insights on EJA, and changes in the teachers' social representations on teacher education and on the affectivity in the teaching-learning process.

The planning of courses related to EJA, intended for practicing teachers is imperative: it must be consonant with the specific needs of these professionals, taking into consideration their reality and their daily experiences.

Specific courses on adult education offered by the State and Municipal Education Departments should not be guided by specific mo-

ments in a given period of the year. Instead, they should be offered periodically and create moments for deep reflection and help raise awareness in the teachers. The day-to-day in class can only be modified if there are “external” changes in the structure and “internal” changes in the teachers.

Teachers’ social representations may be modified if a process of action-reflection-action (praxis) occurs constantly in their teacher education and in their affectivity in the classroom. Teachers will be able to develop qualitative changes in the affective, cognitive, political and social dimensions, which are part of their human and professional training, if there are situations to make praxis feasible.

Teachers need to feel stimulated by the change: they need to be involved and motivated, feel valued and connected emotionally with it. First, we must work with the affective dimension and, then, with the cognitive dimension of teachers – preferably integrating all the dimensions that constitute this “professional being” and “human being”.

Social representations are complex manifestations in constant change. They characterize the actions, expressions and daily readings of the individuals who constitute the society and certain social groups (Arruda, 2014). Therefore, we conclude this article here, but our investigations continue with reflections and analyses about social representations and the reality that influences and is influenced by the protagonists that constitute Youth and Adult Education.

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## Notes

- 1 “[...] The Set of Programs for Evocations Analysis - EVOC aims to enable the identification, from an ordered list of free evocations, of the central and peripheral elements of the representation as defined by the central core theory [...]” (Sant’ana, 2013, p. 96).
- 2 “The frequency (F) of an evocation is the sum of its frequencies in distinct positions; the average frequency (AF) is the arithmetic means of the different frequencies obtained by the evocation. The average evocation order (AEO) is calculated through the weighted mean obtained through the attribution of different weights to the order with which, in each case, a given evocation is announced” (Alves-Mazzotti; Maia, 2012, p. 75).

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