

**DOSSIER**

*Literacy and Curriculum: between the establishment of meanings and the experiments that create fissures and make other ways of life possible*

## **Curriculum policies in the field of initial reading instruction in Brazil: from theoretical-epistemological-didactic advances to the contemporary blackout**

***Políticas curriculares no campo da alfabetização no Brasil: dos avanços teórico-epistemológico-didáticos ao apagão contemporâneo***

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study presented in this paper aimed at identifying conceptions of literacy in the approved version of the National Common Curriculum Base - BNCC (Brasil, 2017) and in the National Literacy Policy - PNA (Brasil, 2019). Based on theoretical discussions relating to these fields and curricular policies, it presents documentary research supported by thematic content analysis. As a result, concerning literacy in BNCC, there is a perspective based on teaching the alphabetic code and the mechanics of reading, suppressing the expression *alphabetic writing system*, so widespread in Brazilian literature. On the literacy axis, although it maintains the idea of social usage of language, based on the various textual genres, it establishes an unnecessary understanding of overcoming the *literacy of letters* and what is proposed as *digital literacy or multiliteracies*. Regarding the PNA, there was a notable step backward in literacy, whose reference is the cognitive science of reading. This document goes back to the traditional phonic synthetic method and commits conceptual and epistemological misunderstandings about alphabetic writing, spelling, and reading. It also relies on an unclear conceptualization and progression of *literacia* throughout basic schooling. It contradicts the National Education Plan, reducing the consolidation of literacy from three to one year. The study showed a clear historical-epistemological-didactic clackout of literacy.

*Keywords:* Education. Literacy. Curriculum Policies.

### **RESUMO**

O estudo que este artigo apresenta teve como objetivo identificar concepções de alfabetização e letramento na versão homologada da Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC (Brasil, 2017) e na Política Nacional de Alfabetização - PNA (Brasil, 2019). Apoiando-se em discussões teóricas relativas àqueles campos e às políticas curriculares, expõe uma pesquisa documental amparada pela análise temática de conteúdo. Como

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resultados, em relação à alfabetização na BNCC, verifica-se uma perspectiva assentada no ensino do código alfabético e na mecânica da leitura, suprimindo a expressão *sistema de escrita alfabética*, tão disseminada na literatura brasileira. No eixo do letramento, embora mantenha a ideia de uso social da língua, tendo como base os diversos gêneros textuais, estabelece uma desnecessária compreensão de superação entre o *letramento das letras* e o que é proposto como *letramentos digitais ou multiletramentos*. Em relação à PNA, verificou-se notório retrocesso em relação à alfabetização, cuja referência é a ciência cognitiva da leitura. Esse documento remonta o tradicional método sintético fônico, e claramente comete equívocos conceituais e epistemológicos quanto à escrita alfabética, à norma ortográfica e à leitura. Também aposta em uma conceituação e progressão pouco claras de *literacia* ao longo da escolarização básica e contraria o exposto no Plano Nacional de Educação, reduzindo a consolidação da alfabetização de três para um ano de duração. O estudo demonstrou um nítido apagão histórico-epistemológico-didático da alfabetização e do letramento.

*Palavras-chave:* Educação. Alfabetização e Letramento. Políticas Curriculares.

## Introduction

Literacy constitutes a multifaceted field that poses challenges to education systems to the subjects involved in didactic-pedagogical processes, especially to teachers, as well as to learning subjects. The main intention of public policies is invariably encouraging the learning of reading and writing for all students, without ignoring those from less favored socioeconomic classes. However, until the 1930s, according to Mortatti (2010), there were no national policies in this field in Brazil. Taking this situation as a reference, an analysis of curricular policies that were most recently implemented in the country is justified, focusing on the concepts of literacy that express.

Throughout the history of literacy, methods have assumed different epistemological meanings and didactic-pedagogical propositions. According to Morais (2012), when it comes to the old methods (synthetic or analytical ones), all of them have an empiricist-associationist basis, according to which the learning subject is considered a blank slate that appropriates the alphabetic system by mere association. Therefore, the complex process that the learner goes through to reconstruct this object of knowledge is ignored. Furthermore, such methods postpone children's contact at school with texts that circulate socially, replacing them with so-called *booklet texts*.

Taking a position contrary to methods considered traditional, Magda Soares (2020) highlighted the need for pedagogical work that articulates, from an early age, initial reading instruction – the appropriation of *writing technology* – and literacy – to abilities to use reading and writing in different sociocultural contexts –, to ensure learning of reading and writing for all children. In that regard, since the 1980s Magda Soares defended the interdependence of these two processes, without thereby erasing their singularities. In addition, she already assumed that initial reading instruction was not a prerequisite for literacy, which justifies her position regarding the need for teaching and learning to read and write in literacy contexts.

Although over the decades we have been evolving in the numbers obtained through large-scale assessments, it is true that this scenario, compared to other countries close to Brazil, still expresses concerns and certainty that we have a social and pedagogical commitment to improve the literacy of our children. Based on data from the latest edition of the National Literacy Assessment

(*Avaliação Nacional da Alfabetização – ANA*<sup>1</sup>), carried out in 2016 and published only in 2018, we highlight that 54.73% of Brazilian 3<sup>rd</sup> year students remained at insufficient reading levels, while 33.95% were still at unsatisfactory writing levels (Brasil, 2018a). On the other hand, in 2015, according to Soares (2020), Brazil reached the rate of 98.6% of its population aged 6 to 14 in school, guaranteeing (almost) everyone access to education. However, as the author asks, do we in fact ensure the democratization of education with this? To ensure this, access must be accompanied by success. It is in this sense that Soares (2020) emphasizes, as a condition for successful schooling, guaranteeing the appropriation of the object of knowledge, which is writing, in the first years of basic school.

Faced with this situation, the focus of the study presented in this paper is achieved: considering the intention of raising the quality of learning to read and write at a national level, by identifying unacceptable numbers of functional illiteracy, questioning the curricular policies implemented by the Government is necessary, which in the Brazilian case, do not have continuity as State policies. In a recent scenario, mandatory documents have been occupying the field of literacy, even going back to the old phonic method. Therefore, the research that this paper reports and which adopted the following objective is justified: identifying concepts of initial reading instruction and literacy in the approved version of the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (Brasil, 2017) and in the National Literacy Policy - PNA (Brasil, 2019). Alongside, there are reflexive moments on policies that preceded these prescriptions.

## On the literacy trail: some contributions from Brazilian literature

The 1980s were notable in Brazilian scenario for new propositions in the field of literacy. Until then, teaching practices revolved around the method considered most relevant to ensure learning to read and write. The issue of literacy methods was very polarized: the synthetic ones, on the one hand, and the analytical ones, on the other<sup>2</sup>. For Morais (2012, p. 27), “despite apparent differences, traditional literacy methods have a single, common underlying theory of knowledge: empiricist/associationist view of learning”. From this perspective, learners are seen as blank slates, without cognitive schemes to interact with the various objects of knowledge, such as alphabetic writing, while teachers would be transmitters of ready-made knowledge, sometimes focusing on language smaller units (syllables, letters, phonemes) until reaching the booklet texts, as the case with synthetic methods, sometimes starting from words, phrases and pseudo texts towards smaller linguistic units (analytical methods).

In line with changes announced at beginning of this section, there is inevitable emphasis on theory of psychogenesis of writing, developed by Emília Ferreiro, Ana Teberosky and colleagues (Ferreiro; Teberosky, 1985). Through contributions from genetic epistemology and psycholinguistics, the authors overturned, at least in academic and official fields, the old methods of literacy: analytical

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<sup>1</sup> The acronyms used in this paper follow the usage in Portuguese language.

<sup>2</sup> There were also analytical-synthetic (or eclectic) methods, which combined methodological principles from the two classical groups of methods.

and synthetic ones. In that regard, instead of the hitherto prevailing dyad, contributions of those who learn in their learning process were also considered. That theory has been inspiring the curricula of various education systems for decades, such as in Brazil.

Psychogenesis of writing showed that children appropriate the alphabetic system through an evolutionary process, in which they develop hypotheses about functioning of this knowledge object, until they understand that each letter or group of letters corresponds to one or more phonemes. Starting from interpretations not originally foreseen in this theory, when analyzing the relationships between phonological awareness skills and success in literacy, Morais (2019) points out the need for promoting at school, from Early Childhood Education onwards, opportunities for reflection on words as a sound sequence. According to Morais (2007) as well, after understanding alphabetic writing and mastering its conventions, children will need to master spelling, which learning will accompany their entire educational path, ensuring the progression of their teaching.

Since the 1980s, the concept of literacy has been expanded, so that in addition to meaning the appropriation of alphabetic writing system and its properties, it also expresses social usage of reading and writing. In that regard, in the 1990s in Brazil, the phenomenon of literacy gained prominence, considered a distinct but interdependent facet of initial reading instruction (Soares, 1998). This perspective has imposed new challenges on literacy practices, which imply an inevitable articulation between the different axes of language teaching at school. On the other hand, people began to think that it would no longer be necessary to systematically teach the properties of alphabetic writing, since the learner would do so through immersion in literacy events and practices. Therefore, we agree with Perfeito and Oliveira-Mendes (2019, p. 103), when the authors highlight that it is urgent “recovering a systematic and progressive process of learning the alphabetic writing system”, what Soares (2003) called *reinvention of literacy*.

In summary, we corroborate the importance of literacy using methodologies and methods that break with traditional perspectives, assuming the perspective of teaching through *literacy* (Soares, 2020). This process demands different pedagogical strategies and mediations carried out by teachers using their agency power (Santos; Leite, 2020; Melo; Almeida; Leite, 2023), that is, in which teachers mobilize decision-making powers to adapt ways of pedagogical work and in which options are always decided based on the unique teaching and learning situations and the contexts in which they work professionally.

### **Literacy curriculum policies in Brazil: what to say? What paths are we taking?**

It is important to highlight that continuous education policies for literacy teachers gained notoriety following the Law number 11.274/2006, which expanded Elementary School to nine years and made it mandatory for children to enroll at six years old (Brasil, 2006). In this legislative scenario, it is important to highlight the role played by the National Education Plans (2001-2010 – 2014-2024) as well, which boosted literacy programs development, such as those launched by the federal government of Brazil, as well as by municipalities (Brasil, 2001a; 2014).

Moving forward the timeline, it is crucial to understand that design of continuing teacher education policies gained greater legitimacy and national reach through the Decree number

6.755/2009, which established the National Education Policy for Teaching Professionals (Brasil, 2009a). From then on, with an interest in investing substantially in teacher education, some policies began to be proposed in Brazil: Continuing Education Program for Literacy Teachers (*Programa de Formação Continuada de Professores Alfabetizadores* – PROFA - Brasil, 2001b); Pro-literacy (*Pró-letramento* - Brasil, 2007); *Praler* (Brasil, 2009b); and National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (*Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa* – PNAIC - Brasil, 2012). Subsequently, a curricular policy was promulgated: the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC (Brasil, 2017). After two years, the National Literacy Policy was established (Brasil, 2019), which gave rise to the Teacher Education Program: Time to Learn (*Tempo de Aprender* - Brasil, 2020).

Aiming at overcoming the school failure installed in Brazilian schools, especially in literacy, the Literacy Teacher Education Program was implemented – PROFA (Brasil, 2001b), justified by the intention of proposing different literacy methodologies, based on knowledge about how learning processes of reading and writing take place based on constructivist theory of psychogenesis of writing (Ferreiro; Teberosky, 1985).

Continuing the timeline, in 2005 the Pro-literacy Program was created (Brasil, 2007), addressed to teachers working in the initial years of Elementary School in Brazilian public schools. This curriculum policy focused on the language and mathematics areas. Regarding the first area, the material was organized into eight issues in literacy and language field, covering aspects such as planning, evaluation, playfulness, textbooks, among others.

Corroborating the principle of discontinuity and instability in curricular and teacher education policies, in 2009, the Ministry of Education - MEC, the Secretariat of Child Education and Elementary School – SEIF, the Department of Educational Policy - DPE, School Strengthening Fund - Fundescola, and other educational investment policies in the initial literacy cycle created the Reading and Writing Support Program – *Praler* (Brasil, 2009b). It is important to highlight that the text of this policy pointed, once again, to work with reading and writing. This Program lasted one year and included the distribution of the General Education Manual and twelve booklets of activities to support student learning (Brasil, 2009b).

In alignment with the National Education Plan (2014-2024), on its goal 5, which states that every child must be literate by the age of eight (Brasil, 2014), from a partnership with the Center for Studies in Education and Language - CEEL of the Federal University of Pernambuco - UFPE, through the Ordinance number 867/2012, the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age– PNAIC (Brasil, 2012) was created, which essentially aimed at continued education of literacy teachers. Once again, due to discontinuity in policies, PNAIC had its last edition in 2018. With a broad scope and a robust didactic-epistemological proposition, its assumptions, according to Vasconcelos, Mendes and Lins (2019), are present in several Brazilian classrooms.

Establishing a relationship with previous political moments, it is worth remembering that, since the Federal Constitution of 1988, there was the intention of creating a National Curriculum Base. In the article 210, this document highlighted: “Minimum contents will be set for elementary school to ensure common basic training and respect for national and regional cultural and artistic values” (Brasil, 1988). Later, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (Brasil, 1996a), in art. 8, item IV, mentioned the need for

establishing, in collaboration with the States, the Federal District and the municipalities, competencies and guidelines for early childhood education, elementary school and High School, which will guide the curricula and their minimum contents to ensure common basic education (Brasil, 1996a).

Subsequently, in 2014, the National Common Curricular Base was defined as a goal of the National Education Plan (Brasil, 2014), triggering conferences and several debates to this end. Therefore, there was a broad discussion in academia, associations, and federation units to construct the first Base proposal and consolidate reports on contributions from public debates held, both delivered to the National Education Council (CNE). Not ignoring the criticisms surrounding some of these policies (Macedo, 2014; Lopes, 2019), they are not considered in the study presented here, since the objective is to identify conceptions of initial reading instruction and literacy that have supported such policies.

In 2015, the preliminary version was once again made available for public debate and mobilization, mainly by school institutions across the country give their opinion and incorporate contributions to improve the document. A similar path was adopted in relation to the Common National Curriculum Base, second edition, unlike the third, promulgated in 2017.

In this reflection, we must consider the More Literacy Program (*Programa Mais Alfabetização* - Brasil, 2018b), justified by the intention of raising the quality of learning to read and write in the first two years of Elementary School, aligned with the idea proclaimed by the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC, that literacy should be consolidated in two years. It is worth noting that, while PNAIC focused on the continued education of literacy teachers, More Literacy Program was limited to ensure pedagogical support for teachers through hiring Literacy Assistants, made possible with resources granted by the Direct Money at School Program (*Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* – PDDE). More Literacy came to integrate the National Literacy Policy (*Política Nacional de Alfabetização* - PNA - Brasil, 2019) as one of the support arms to implement this ideology through the Time to Learn Program (*Programa Hora de Aprender* - Brasil, 2020).

According to Morais (2020), the scenario of political dispute, constant changes and instability of MEC coincided with the construction of a document entitled National Literacy Policy (*Política Nacional de Alfabetização* – PNA), that violates education as a fundamental social right, opening space for a utilitarian vision of school, suited to the interests of the capitalist system and the control strategies of the so-called “education merchants” (Morais, 2020, p. 5). As has been argued, this situation threatens education, subjecting it to neoliberal logics and business groups (Ball, 2001; Dale, 2010; Laval, 2004). With the change of government and severe criticism of the literacy curriculum policies highlighted here, the National Literacy Policy – PNA was therefore imposed through the Decree number 9.765/2019 (Brasil, 2019), presented with the aim at guaranteeing the quality of literacy and, therefore, combating illiteracy through research anchored in *scientific evidence*.

The slogan is always the same: raise the quality of teaching reading and writing and, with this, in fact ensure the reduction of illiteracy. What is possible to learn in the case of PNA, however, is a clear setback. In terms of time, this document reduces the literacy process to one year and, arbitrarily, imposes the phonic method, which breaks with what we have been defending for approximately four decades in literacy field in Brazil.



## Methodology

In line with the objective of the study previously stated (identifying concepts of initial reading instruction and literacy in the three versions of the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC – and the National Literacy Policy – PNA), documentary research and content analysis were carried out (Bardin, 1977).

In this study, relying on Laville and Dionne (1999, p. 168), we adopted the perspective that documentary-based research involves “gather documents, possibly describe or transcribe their content and perhaps carry out an initial information ordering to select those that seem pertinent”. In other words, this process implies, as highlighted by Bardin (1977), transforming the primary (raw) document into a secondary one.

Data generated through document analysis were treated with the support of content analysis, which still in accordance with Laville and Dionne (1999, p. 214), “consists of dismantling the structure and elements of that content to clarify its different characteristics and extract its meaning”. Adopting the perspective by Bardin (1977), we carried out a thematic content analysis using the following steps: material pre-analysis, analysis (coding and categorizing information), treatment of results, inference, and interpretation.

## Conceptions of initial reading instruction and literacy in BNCC and PNA: what scenarios are designed?

Regarding BNCC, third edition, we emphasize that it continues to defend the conception of language present in previous editions, specifically in relation to what National Curricular Parameters recommend (Brasil, 1996b). This link is clearly expressed:

The enunciative-discursive perspective of language is assumed here, already assumed in other documents such as the National Curricular Parameters (PCN), for whom language is a form of interindividual action oriented towards a specific purpose; a process of dialogue that takes place in the social practices in a society at different moments in its history (Brasil, 2017, p. 67).

The text continues to assume centrality in BNCC, third version (Brasil, 2017), “relying on [...] a conception that sees language as enunciation, discourse, [...] which, therefore, includes the relationships of language with those who use it, with the context in which it is used, with the social and historical conditions of its use” (Soares, 1998, p. 59). However, in the literacy area, it emphasizes explicit teaching of code, not the alphabetic writing system. In this case, we understand that it simplifies the complex process of learning that object of knowledge, as shown in the following excerpt:

In this process, students need to know the alphabet and the **mechanics of writing/reading** – processes that aim for someone to become literate, that is, to be able to ‘**code and decode**’ the sounds of language (phonemes) into graphic material (graphemes or letters) [...] (Brasil, 2017, p. 89-90, our emphasis).

Terms such as *code*, *encoding*, *decoding*, according to Morais (2005; 2020), denote a reductionist and mistaken perspective of learning the alphabetic writing system, setting back to the empiricist-associationist conception, and hiding the alphabetic system complexity and its appropriation process by learners. Furthermore, we found that BNCC (2017) approved version presents, elsewhere, a mistaken conception of literacy, reducing it to the appropriation of spelling:

[...] **literacy is working with student's appropriation of spelling of written Brazilian Portuguese**, understanding how this (long) process of building a set of knowledge about the phonological functioning of the language by the student takes place (Brasil, 2017, p. 88, our emphasis).

Thereby, when defending literacy as the appropriation of spelling, BNCC (2017) seems to confuse alphabetical writing and orthographic norms, while defines this process (*appropriation of spelling*) as the "construction of a knowledge set about phonological functioning of language" (Brasil, 2017, p. 88). In the previous quotations, we therefore have a series of conceptual misunderstandings about what literacy, alphabetic writing system and orthographic norm mean.

Regarding the literacy field, the document emphasizes digital literacies or multiliteracies, establishing a game changer with previous versions. On this subject, it highlights:

the greater space in this introductory section dedicated to **new literacies and digital culture** is due solely to the fact that their articulation with the curriculum is more recent and still unusual, contrary to the consideration of already consolidated literacies of letters. The skills tables below also attest to the primacy of writing and oral (Brasil, 2017, p. 69, footnote, our emphasis).

We understand that there is an attempt to overcome the concept of literacy widely proclaimed in Brazilian literature. The emphasis on digital dimension, multiliteracies, cannot take away from what has been highlighted by Soares (2020) and other authors, such as Tfouni (1986; 2006), since the 1980s, that in addition to appropriate the alphabetic writing system, the learning subject needs to make social use of reading and writing, that is, to effectively participate in literacy events. The document establishes a distinction between "literary literacy" and "digital literacy" under the argument that "digital culture permeates all fields, giving rise to or modifying genres and practices" (Brasil, 2017, p. 85). By giving consistency to the expression *letter literacy*, it establishes an unclear break with *digital literacy* when, in our understanding, inserting the learner in the social use of language through new technologies is a literacy *arm*, and not another trend.

In the National Literacy Policy (PNA - Brasil, 2019), a clear example of imposition and authoritarianism is identified, particularly in the way the document was implemented. As highlighted by Morais (2022), there was no debate about the construction of the document, and for this reason, it is a policy that those who debate and study the topic clearly oppose. Contributions to this document formulation were made by a selected group of researchers affiliated with a specific literacy perspective, among which, interestingly, are authors of books and teaching materials linked to the phonic method, such as João Batista Araujo e Oliveira, Fernando Capovilla, and Alessandra Seabra, among others who have programs developed by private institutions for commercialization in public schools, as highlighted by Mortatti (2019).



PNA imposition clearly expresses a discontinuity of policies in our country, which is recurrent in the recent history of curricular policies focused on the literacy field, as we have highlighted throughout the text, but without assuming the imposing and unilateral tone of PNA. On this matter, Mortatti (2019, p. 45) asserts:

Reduction to cognitive sciences as the only and authoritatively consensual valid theoretical foundation for literacy [...] aims at the symbolic destruction of an extensive body of knowledge about literacy (and its complex multifaceted) built by Brazilian researchers, especially in the 20th century second half, in different research areas and fields, and whose contributions are recognized, for instance by funding agencies that finance them and qualified national and international journals in which the results of these researches are published.

In addition to consider literacy as the acquisition of a code, which is expressed explicitly not only through the use of terms such as alphabetic *code*, *decode*, *encode*, but also due to the associationist conception of learning it assumes, PNA eliminates the term *literacy* and ignores the scientific evidence in this theoretical field, as well as those from other fields not affiliated with the *cognitive science of reading*, such as the psychogenesis of writing. Instead of the term *literacy*, already consolidated in Brazilian academic and pedagogical literature, it adopts the expression *literacia*, whose concept is ambiguous and very inaccurate in the Brazilian context. According to the document, "*literacia* consists of teaching and learning reading and writing skills, regardless of the writing system used" (Brasil, 2019, p. 18). Elsewhere, this same concept is defined as

the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to reading and writing, as well as their productive practice. It may encompass multiple levels: from the most basic, such as emerging *literacia*, to the most advanced, in which the person who is already able to read and write makes productive, efficient, frequent use of these abilities, employing them in acquisition, transmission, and therefore, in the production of knowledge (Brasil, 2019, p. 21).

As already announced in this paper, PNA reduces the literacy process from three to one year. It clearly aims at aligning with what has been proclaimed especially by Portuguese-speaking countries, and by opting for this path, in our opinion, it makes several mistakes. It places in the same context what it calls "emerging/basic *literacia*" (preschool and 1st grade), characterized by learning vocabulary and phonological awareness, with those skills "acquired during literacy, that is, the acquisition of reading (decoding) and writing (coding) skills" (Brasil, 2019, p. 21). The document, based on the "cognitive science of reading", reduces phonological awareness to "systematic phonics instruction" (Brasil, 2019, p. 32), following a catastrophic path for the Brazilian education system and going back, in the case of literacy, to the phonic method. There is clearly an option for the "literacy remethodization", as pointed out by Mortatti (2010, p. 332).

The document suggests, *before formal literacy*, introducing reading and writing skills that are *crucial* to ensure successful schooling. Further up, quoting the *National Early Literacy Panel* (2009), it makes the family responsible for this task, placing this institution in the same context as the school: "during early childhood, whether in preschool or in the family, literacy already begins to emerge in the child's life, still at a rudimentary level, but fundamental for literacy" (Brasil, 2019, p. 22). At no point does it assume the understanding of literacy defended by Brazilian researchers. Let's see what the document highlights:

the child is introduced to different oral and written language practices, hears stories read and told, sings, recites poems and stories, becomes familiar with printed materials (books, magazines, and newspapers), recognizes some letters, their names, and sounds, tries to represent them in writing, identifies graphic signs around them, among other activities of greater or lesser complexity (Brasil, 2019, p. 22).

Established stages are closed, so that in this phase that precedes the formal literacy process, the skills learned *would be the roots*. Only when acquiring “oral fluency, understanding texts, writing according to spelling rules and with good handwriting, would be the growth” (Brasil, 2019, p. 22). The document, in an odd way, continues to state: “the plant grows in the elementary school 1st grade, and the flowers bloom from the 2nd grade onwards” (Brasil, 2019, p. 22). At the same time that makes the family responsible for teaching the skills that precede the formal literacy process, it points out that those who did not have access to this knowledge will be favored by the school (Brasil, 2019), imposing direct mediation of families in the process of learning to read and write and making secondary the role played by school, the main body responsible for teaching didactics.

In summary, the PNA document presents a pyramid in which, initially, work with **emerging/basic literacia** (preschool and 1st year) is advocated, characterized “by fundamental literacy skills, such as decoding and knowledge of high-frequency words, which underlie virtually all reading tasks. It includes family literacia, emergent literacia, and literacy” (Brasil, 2019, p. 21).

Then, PNA indicates **intermediate literacia** (2nd to 5th grade), stage in which “generic strategies to understand texts, common words meanings, spelling knowledge and oral reading fluency” are prioritized (Brasil, 2019, p. 21). Where is the axis of written text production? The document clearly ignores it! Finally, **subject literacia** (6th grade to High School), whose emphasis, according to PNA, lies on “specific skills for different subjects, such as history, science, mathematics, literature and art” (Brasil, 2019, p. 21).

This block is closed, albeit provisionally, considering the scope of a paper, highlighting that, from BNCC third version to PNA and its developments, we have been going through a moment called in the title of this study a theoretical, epistemological, and didactic blackout in the literacy area. As curricular policies, we are witnessing political-ideological disputes that blatantly disregard the literary contribution in this area and impose a clear setback on the country in teaching processes.

As we point out in this study, the discontinuity of teacher education policies for literacy has had the effect, in the curriculum field, of arbitrary official propositions and a timid discussion among researchers, teachers and society in general. In our understanding, these aspects have prevented concrete advances in Brazil in terms of literacy. By analyzing the different axes of language teaching, we expose inaccuracies and epistemological inconsistencies in the progression of teaching reading and writing, in the curricular policies focused on this study: BNCC and PNA.

Retrieving the epigraph of this section: what scenarios are designed? We suggest the urgency of recovering the path we have been following (teaching from a literacy perspective) to concretely comply with the assertion by Magda Soares (2020), that *every child can learn to read and write* in our country!

## Some final reflections

In the study covered by this paper, we learned concepts of initial reading instruction and literacy in the approved version of the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC (Brasil, 2017) and the National Literacy Policy - PNA (Brasil, 2019). It was possible to observe substantial changes between these curricular policies. In the field of literacy, when reporting to BNCC, we verified a perspective that seems to be based on the teaching the alphabetic code, on the mechanics of reading, using expressions that do not reach the richness and complexity of teaching, nor the epistemology of these objects of knowledge. In the literacy area, although the document maintains an understanding of social usage of language based on different textual genres, establishes a distinction between *letter literacy* and *digital literacies* or *multiliteracies*, suggesting understanding of overcoming what is already stated in Brazilian literature regarding this field.

Following a catastrophic path for the literacy area in our country, PNA assumes, as a salvationist standard, literacy anchored in the cognitive science of reading. Thereunto, returns to old methods, such as the phonic one, making conceptual and epistemological mistakes regarding spelling, alphabetic writing and reading. It takes away from the scene the vast literature on literacy in Brazil, importing the term *literacia* from other countries, whose conceptualization is mistaken and reductionist. It bets on a confusing progression of literacy in basic school, setting the trap and arbitrariness of family assuming what this initial stage of literacy would be. Thus, it clearly exempts the State from assuming the guarantee of quality education and effective literacy for all Brazilian children.

In temporal aspect, it imposes inconsistencies with the National Education Plan, considering, above all, that in our country we still do not have universalization of Early Childhood Education. Furthermore, there are conflicts to be considered regarding teaching the alphabetic writing object at this schooling stage, with groups of scholars in the area who understand it as *readiness for literacy*, as expressed in the PNA. We assume that reducing the educational apartheid is necessary, as highlighted by Morais (2012), in Brazil, to contemplate this work with reading and writing in a playful perspective already in the transition from Early Childhood Education to Elementary School, without, as a result, being in tune with the idea of *readiness for literacy*.

The study also showed that, in our country, the establishment of State policies linked to literacy is necessary to ensure curricular stability and flexibility, and to guarantee the effective participation of the main segments involved, since the historical-epistemological-didactic blackout of production that preceded BNCC and PNA was notorious.

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