


## The challenges for training in the modality of teaching young people and adults: In evidence the perception of teachers in Belo Horizonte

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### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to identify the challenges for the completion of the formative process of students enrolled in the Education Program for young people and adults, considering the perception of teachers in schools in Belo Horizonte. For the theoretical foundation of the study, the processes that seek to legitimize the core and evolution of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil were exposed, as well as to present the historical trajectory of this teaching modality, with reference to the works of Haddad (2,000); DI Pierro; Joia, Ribeiro, (2,001); the legal frameworks made available by the MEC (2003); in addition to the characterization of the profile of these students based on data from the Basic Education Census (2,020). The methodological strategy adopted as to nature, applied research with a quantitative approach, being classified as descriptive, with a case study technique. The results indicate that EJA students are workers who study and that the main challenges to conclude the training process consist of reconciling work and study; tiredness; adaptation to the heterogeneity of the classes; the structure of the rooms; and focus arising from other concerns. The study may contribute to the development of educational policy strategies focused on reducing dropout in this modality of education.

**Keywords:** Youth and Adult Education 1, EJA 2, Learning 3.

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## INTRODUCTION

The literacy process adopted for young people and adults goes beyond the focus of understanding symbolologies, involving the entire procedure of identity and social insertion, considering the inclusion of issues that involve discrimination and social inequalities. For Soares (2001), the history of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil is installed in a context that encompasses its devaluation and indifference, and that coexists with other initiatives and the materialization of many proposals.

To understand the action that aims to provide quality education for young people and adults (EJA) in Brazil, it is important to return to the period of Portuguese colonization, from the entry of the Jesuits who aimed to catechize the population, especially the indigenous people, including children and adults, in order to expand adherence to the Catholic faith associated with the educational process. However, after the arrival of the royal family and the withdrawal of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century, adult education almost ceased to exist and the responsibility for education took a back seat (STRELHOW, 2010). Friedrich et. al (2010) point out that it was only from the 1930s onwards that the adult educational process resumed when, in 1934, the government inaugurated the National Education Plan, which constituted as a duty of the State the entire training process in an integral, free, mandatory and extended way to adults as a right guaranteed by the National Constitution.

At the end of the 40s and beginning of the 50s, Brazil experienced a moment of search for progress as a result of the growth of Brazilian industry, making it necessary to promote and stimulate the education of the population so that it was possible to follow the development of the country, in view of the need to form a contingent of more qualified labor that would supply the industrial and commercial demand (SILVA, 2011). The requests of UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization cooperated for the development of different initiatives seeking the eradication of illiteracy, which corroborated the adoption of the National Fund for Primary Education (FNER). Between 1942 and 1947, Brazil established two actions focused on meeting this purpose: In 1942, the Adolescent and Adult Education Campaign (CEAA) was launched, and in 1947, the National Rural Education Campaign (CNER).

However, the two actions did not present the expected results, which culminated in the First Brazilian Congress of Adult Education, marking the beginning for the change in Brazilian pedagogical thinking (SILVA, 2011). From these reflections, Brazil began to identify that the main factors for illiteracy were centered on social and pedagogical issues. This understanding reinforces Freire's (1987) thought, who understood that educational problems have a close relationship with social issues. In the opinion of Baquero (2008), Freire idealized Adult Education associating the literacy process with an emancipatory perspective, since it understands literacy beyond exclusive



learning for the technical knowledge of coding and decoding, but as an interpretation of the world. The whole process of Adult Education suggests the crucial development of the reading of the world, which encompasses a political work of awareness. In this way, Brazil began to receive international pressure, in which UNESCO encourages the preparation of programs for adult literacy.

In Belo Horizonte, the Youth and Adult education program has been managed by the Municipal Department of Education, which adopts as a proposal for the completion of the training course six months for each year. In this way, with a year and a half, the student is able to complete high school. According to data from the Superior Electoral Court, in Belo Horizonte, more than 420 thousand people over 18 years of age did not complete high school. In general, students enrolled in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) cannot be considered "working students", but "workers who study" as well defined by Mônica Gomes<sup>2</sup>. With the cessation of face-to-face classes in the pandemic period due to the Coronavirus, she feared an increase in the dropout rate of students enrolled in this modality and points out that "in Belo Horizonte alone, dropout was 30% in 2019, according to the city hall.

In the opinion of Mônica Gomes, EJA students generally need to prioritize work, and in this sense, education is in the background. For her, some municipalities and even the State of Minas Gerais have introduced remote classes and activities, but not all people have access to the necessary resources such as the internet and computers, and even when they do, they may have difficulty operating the technologies. Another situation pointed out by her is related to the fact that in some homes the family has a single computer, and in this case, they prioritize the use for teaching their children and highlights that, despite all the advances with the use of technology, there is still the point of view that EJA students are past the time to study, which is not true, reinforcing that the school dropout of students in this modality becomes constant and that the flow of these students happens through several entrances and exits in the school environment, which harms the training process.

In the EJA modality, in 2022, there were approximately 150 thousand students enrolled in the state network and another almost 10 thousand in the municipal network of Belo Horizonte, according to data provided by the IBGE (2020), including adolescents who did not complete their school journey within the allotted time to elderly people who are starting the literacy process. In Minas Gerais, there are at least 1 million people over the age of 15 who are illiterate, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2020). These data reinforce the importance of always maintaining the discussion on the subject in order to propose effective actions and public policies to conduct and conclude this training process.

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<sup>2</sup> Mônica Gomes is coordinator of the Minas Gerais Forum for Youth and Adult Education (FOMEJA).



In view of the context presented so far, **the objective of the research is to identify the challenges for the completion of the formative process of students enrolled in the Education program for young people and adults, in the perception of teachers, working in schools in Belo Horizonte. To answer the question, the study has the following specific objectives: to describe the profile of EJA students in the researched schools; to identify the dropout rate of students enrolled in the Youth and Adult education program in the schools surveyed; to analyze the challenges for the conclusion of the training process from the perspective of the teachers who work in the EJA modality in the schools researched.**

The study of the theme is justified from a personal point of view by the researcher's interest in the subject, combined with the need to develop the study as a mandatory criterion for completing the teaching degree course in pedagogy. It is also justified as a contribution to the development of public policies with a view to promoting greater engagement in studies for those individuals who were unable to complete the training process within the expected time, which will allow them better training for life and the world of work. The article is structured in four sections. The first addresses the literature review and the theoretical foundation of the theme, presenting the historical trajectory of EJA and the legal frameworks of education, in addition to the characteristics of the student of this modality in the Brazilian context. The second chapter presents the methodology adopted to carry out the study and the third deals with the presentation and discussion of the results. The fourth chapter presents the final considerations.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The chapter dedicated to the theoretical framework exposes the processes that seek to legitimize the core and evolution of Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in Brazil. The historical trajectory of this teaching modality is presented, as well as the legal frameworks and the characterization of the profile of these students.

## **HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF EJA – YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION IN BRAZIL**

Reflecting on the schooling process in youth and adult education (EJA) implies considering a plural and heterogeneous flow. Throughout the history of Brazilian education, there have been changes in public policies aimed at serving the public of this category of education, including collective initiatives of a community nature by social organizations. However, the success of this process did not occur in full. Studies carried out by (Paiva, 1987; Haddad; Di Pierro, 2000) suggest that the emergence of EJA in Brazil occurred with the arrival of Jesuit priests in 1549. In that time frame, signs of the practice of teaching adults were mixed with the story of the arrival in Brazil by the Portuguese. The authors report that 15 years after the landing of the Portuguese colonizers in



Brazilian lands, the Jesuit priests arrived to begin the educational process and installed the first school on Brazilian soil, with the objective of disseminating the Catholic faith among the indigenous people who lived here. In addition to religious issues, the teaching process also involved the objective of teaching good manners, since the indigenous natives were considered uncivilized, which demanded, in the understanding of the colonizers, a civilizing process. However, the objective of achieving greater adherence to the Catholic faith met the challenge of language. Thus, Fausto (1995) points out that the Jesuit priests understood that it was necessary to promote the literacy of the indigenous people, and that the literacy action was later extended to slaves in adulthood.

After the independence of Brazil, D. Pedro I approved free primary education for all citizens<sup>3</sup>. Although guaranteed by the Constitution, this right reached a minority of the population, since it excluded a considerable portion that in that context did not have citizenship, represented by black slaves, indigenous people, and the majority of women (HADDAD (2.000); DI PIERRO; JOIA, RIBEIRO, 2.001). The authors point out that the limitations to reach the population in the process of adult education, present in the first constitution, are repeated in the constitution in 1891, not ensuring the right already granted by the First Constitution of 1824 to free primary education to all, removing it from the text of the new Constitution, as it conditions the right to vote to the literate population (Art. 70, Paragraph 2). In the twentieth century, especially in the decades between 1920 and 1930, little progress was made with regard to the process of adult schooling. In any case, the country develops the bases for educational public policies focused on this type of education. At that time, it is noted that Brazil maintained agriculture as the basis of its economy (FAUSTO, 1995). This author points out that the period of Brazilian industrial ascension, which demanded qualified labor, was one of the stimuli for strengthening educational policies aimed at adult education.

With regard to labor, there were problems in the supply of specialized workers, but there was no shortage of low-skilled workers. They were recruited from among the poor population, for whom Rio de Janeiro was a pole of attraction" (FAUSTO, 1995, p. 286-287).

As highlighted by Fausto (1995), the illiteracy of young people and adults constituted an obstacle to the country's economy, which began to offer night schools to serve the working class, and the commitment to develop a pedagogical plan in which literacy was guaranteed within one year was consolidated. The importance of carrying out this historical retrospective is emphasized in order to allow a greater understanding of the theme, which facilitates the analysis of the practices and policies currently implemented, many of them subsidized by a previous process that was not very egalitarian with regard to attention to the modality of schooling of young people and adults. Next, the

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<sup>3</sup> (Art. 179, XXXII) of the First Brazilian Constitution of 1824.



educational legal frameworks that can contribute to the understanding of the bases of the implementation of EJA in Brazil will be presented.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

This session presents a synthesis of the legal frameworks that have blurred Brazilian education from the 1930s to the present day, according to data made available by MEC – Ministry of Education (2023).

**1930** - Creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health Affairs with the function of dealing with matters related to teaching, public health and hospital care (Decree No. 19,402, of November 14, 1930). It encompassed as a responsibility of the ministry, in addition to education, also activities related to health, sports and the environment.

**1931** – Creation of the National Council of Education (CNE), an advisory body to the Ministry of Education and Public Health related to teaching issues (Decree No. 19,850, of April 11, 1931). It corresponds to the current CNE, a collegiate body that is part of the MEC, established by Law 9.131, of November 25, 1995, which aims to contribute to the formulation of the National Education Policy, exercising normative, deliberative and advisory actions.

**1932** – The Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education is created, suggesting a free, mandatory public school system for everyone up to the age of 18. The document was signed by educators and intellectuals, who defended the reconstruction of the broader and more popular educational system, with the aim of meeting the needs of an industrializing Brazil.

**1934** – The Brazilian Constitution determines that education will be the right of all Brazilians and foreigners domiciled in the country, under the joint responsibility of the family and the Public Powers. However, according to Article 150 of the 1934 Constitution, this educational process guaranteed access and free access only to comprehensive primary education.

**1937** - Law No. 378, of January 13, 1937, is born, which constitutes a reform and structuring of the Brazilian educational system, starting with the name of the then Ministry of Education and Public Health, which changes the designation to Ministry of Education and Health. The same law creates the University of Brazil from the union of the University of Rio de Janeiro and the Federal Technical University. New schools emerge to promote professional education, as well as the National Institute of Pedagogy, currently called the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep), a name adopted since 1938; and the National Book Institute (Decree-Law No. 93, of December 21, 1937), with the objective of encouraging the production and distribution of works of cultural or didactic interest.

**1942** - Organization of industrial education (Decree-Law No. 4,073, of January 30, 1942) and secondary education (Decree-Law No. 4,244, of April 9, 1942), which founded the three-grade



educational system in Brazil, with higher education governed by the Statute of Brazilian Universities (Decree-Law No. 19,851, of April 11, 1931). The education corresponding to the first grade consisted of primary education of four or five years, being compulsory for children from 7 to 12 years old and free in public schools. The second grade, after the first, called high school, aimed at young people aged 12 and over.

**1947** - The National Campaign for Adult Education is disseminated, with the participation of all states and the Federal District, which resulted in the installation of 10 thousand classes of supplementary education for adults.

**1948** - Commission composed of different spheres of education that creates and forwards to the Chamber of Deputies, by consignment of the National Constituent Assembly of 1946, a suggestion for a statute for education, which remained as a reference for the Bill of Guidelines and Bases of Education promulgated 13 years later.

**1953** – Law No. 1,920, of July 25, 1953, which changes the name of the Ministry of Education and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), the name currently adopted.

**1955** – The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) is created under the name of School Lunch Campaign (Decree No. 37,106 of March 31, 1955) and from 1995, its decentralization occurs through the process of municipalization.

**1959** - Decree No. 47,251, of November 17, 1959, the Adolescent and Adult Education Campaign, the Rural Education Campaign and the National Campaign for the Eradication of Illiteracy are launched. The latter aimed at the improvement and development of common primary education in the municipalities and the verification of the socioeconomic validity of the methods and processes of primary education, basic education and rural education in force in the country in order to know the most efficient means of eradicating illiteracy.

**1961** - On December 20, 1961, Law No. 4,024 is approved, which establishes the Guidelines and Bases of National Education. The first LDB, as it became known, guaranteed the right to education with State resources and generated didactic, administrative and disciplinary autonomy for autarchic universities or foundations. With the LDB, the Federal Council of Education is created, with the responsibility, among others, of deciding on the operation of federal and private higher education establishments and the recognition of universities through the approval of their statutes and higher education establishments. With the first LDB, there was a decrease in the centralization of the MEC and state and municipal bodies gained autonomy.

**1962** - The first National Education Plan (PNE) is approved, a contiguous set of quantitative and qualitative goals to be met within eight years. It was not the result of a bill, but of an initiative of the Ministry of Education already in force of the LDB of 1961.



**1964** – Emergence of the National Literacy Program (PNA), based on the Paulo Freire method (Decree No. 53,465 of January 21, 1964). Its objective was to promote mass literacy, with national mobilization that included the involvement of student and professional corporations, sports associations, organized civil society groups, religious entities, civil and military government organizations, employers' associations, private companies, dissemination agencies and teachers.

**1965** - The Statute of Higher Education (Law No. 4,881, of December 6, 1965) is approved, which established higher education inseparable from teaching and research in universities for the purpose of transmitting and expanding knowledge.

**1967** - Foundation of the Brazilian Literacy Movement (Mobral) (Law No. 5,379, of December 15, 1967). It focused on financial and technical assistance with the objective of promoting nationally, the compulsory teaching in the age group of 7 to 14 years, extension of schooling to the 6th grade, with the inclusion of educational assistance to illiterate people of any age or condition attainable by audiovisual resources in programs that ensured measurement of results, functional literacy and continuing education for illiterate people aged 15 and over, through special, basic and direct courses, equipped with all possible resources, including audiovisual, with an expected duration of nine months.

**1971** - The Guidelines and Bases for the Teaching of 1st and 2nd grades, the so-called New LDB (Law No. 5,692, of August 11, 1971), are established, with the objective of providing students with the necessary training to develop their potential, qualification for work and preparation for the exercise of citizenship. Collaboration with companies, through agreements, gave rise to the possibilities of professional internships. Education becomes compulsory from 7 to 14 years old with the provision of a common curriculum for the 1st and 2nd grades and a diversified part, depending on regional differences.

**1974** - The National Council of Graduate Studies is founded (Decree No. 73,411, of January 4, 1974), to support measures for the execution and updating of the National Policy for Graduate Studies.

**1985** - The objectives of the Brazilian Literacy Movement (Mobral) are redefined with a focus on expanding opportunities for access to and return to school. Mobral is now called the National Foundation for Youth and Adult Education (Educar), with a view to promoting and implementing literacy and basic education programs for those who did not have access to school or left school before completing their entire school career (Decree No. 91,980, of November 25, 1985).

**1995** - TV Escola is created, through the Technical Cooperation Protocol No. 1, signed between the MEC, the Ministry of Communications and the Secretariat of Social Communication of the Presidency of the Republic. The main objective was to promote the improvement of teaching,





using open, continuing and distance education, through the radio and television stations of the Roquette Pinto Foundation.

**1996** - The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394, of December 20, 1996) is enacted, which regulates the entire educational system, from early childhood education to higher education, in addition to disciplining Indigenous School Education. The new LDB replaces Law No. 5,692 of 1971 and provisions of Law No. 4,024 of 1961, which dealt with education. The LDBEN of 1996 was a reference in the trajectory of Youth and Adult Education. Compared to the previous LDBs (1961 and 1971), the 1996 LDBs included the public of young people and adults in a specific way. From that moment on, education for young people and adults has legal support, being supported by the most relevant law in the country that governs education.

**1998** – The National High School Exam (Enem) is born as a tool for evaluating the performance of students and schools.

**1999** - The National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education are approved (Opinion No. 14/99, of September 14, 1999 of the Chamber of Basic Education of the National Council of Education).

**2001** - The National Education Plan is instituted (Law No. 10,172, of January 9, 2001), with a duration of 10 years, with the States and Municipalities from then on being responsible for preparing the corresponding ten-year plans. The Union is responsible for establishing the National Evaluation System, colluding the necessary mechanisms to monitor the goals contained in the PNE. The Higher Education Student Financing Fund (Fies) was established, proposed to grant financing to students regularly enrolled in non-free higher education courses and with a positive evaluation (Law No. 10,260, of July 12, 2001).

**2003** – Emergence of the Literate Brazil Program (Decree No. 4,834, of September 8, 2003), with the purpose of requiring literacy for young people over 15 years of age and adults out of school before learning to read and write. The priority in the transfer of resources to states and municipalities encourages students to remain in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) classes.

**2004** – The National System for the Evaluation of Higher Education (Sinaes) is created with the objective of strengthening the national process of evaluation of higher education institutions, undergraduate courses and the academic performance of their students (Law No. 10,861, of April 14, 2004). Incoming and graduating students are evaluated through the National Student Performance Exam (Enade). The University for All Program (ProUni) is designated, which grants scholarships (partial and full) to low-income young people (Law No. 11,096, of January 13, 2004). The program defines that a percentage of the scholarships must be allocated to the implementation of affirmative policies for access to higher education for people with disabilities or self-declared indigenous and black.



**2006** - Established 9-year elementary education, with mandatory enrollment at six years of age (Law No. 11,274, of February 6, 2006). The National Program for the Integration of Professional Education with Basic Education is created, in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (Proeja) and through this program the student learns a profession while completing elementary or high school (Decree No. 5,840, of July 13, 2006).

**2010** - Designated by Normative Ordinance No. 2, of January 26, 2010, the Unified Selection System (Sisu), a digital system managed by the Ministry of Education that allows public and private institutions to offer vacancies for their undergraduate courses to candidates who participated in the previous edition of Enem.

**2011** - National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (Pronatec), seeking to expand the offer of Professional and Technological Education courses, through programs, projects and technical and financial assistance actions (Law No. 12,513, of October 26, 2011).

**2012** - Founded by Law No. 12,711, of August 29, 2012 (Quota Law), the reservation of 50% of vacancies in undergraduate courses in federal institutions of higher education to students who have completed their high school education in public schools. Within this percentage, they prioritize students with lower income and self-declared black, brown, and indigenous people, as well as people with disabilities.

**2014** - The National Education Plan (Law No. 13,005, of June 25, 2014) is confirmed, with guidelines, goals and strategies for education for the period of 10 years.

**2015** – The National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) is launched, a note that defines the group of essential learning in the course of basic education.

**2017** - Approved the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) by Ordinance 1,570, of December 20, 2017.

**2018** - The Support Program for the Implementation of the National Common Curricular Base (ProBNCC) is instituted to support States and Municipalities in the process of reviewing or preparing and implementing curricula aligned with the BNCC (Ordinance No. 331, of April 5, 2018). The More Literacy Program (PMALFA) is established, which seeks to support school units in the literacy process of students regularly enrolled in the 1st and 2nd year of elementary school (MEC Ordinance No. 142, of February 22, 2018).

According to data published by the MEC regarding the theoretical frameworks of education, it is noted that the regulations aimed at the adult training process are much less expressive and most were elaborated with a focus on service aimed at the labor market.



## CHARACTERIZATION AND PROFILE OF THE EJA STUDENT

The illiteracy rate of the Brazilian population among adults over the age of 15 is estimated at 6.6%, corresponding to approximately 11 million people. Even though this is a high number, this means a reduction of 0.2% in the total number of illiterate people compared to 2018 (BRASIL/MEC, 2020). The percentages are different when analyzed by Brazilian regions, with the Northeast and North being 13.9% and 7.6% of its population made up of illiterate people, respectively, while the Central-West region has 4.9%, and the Southeast and South regions both bring 3.3% (IBGE, 2020). The elderly population aged 60 and over has grown rapidly in recent years and today represents 15.7% of Brazilians, with about 32.9 million identified in the National Household Sample Survey (PNADC Educação), carried out in 2019 (IBGE, 2020), a percentage higher than that of children up to nine years of age, which is 12.8%. Also, according to the IBGE (2020), in 2019, the existence of elderly people aged 60 and over who were not schooled or literate corresponded to a large part of the non-literate contingent (18%), that is, about 6 million, while the illiterate between 15 and 24 years old corresponded to 6.6% and, between 25 and 40 years old, there are 7.9% of illiterate people.

According to data made available by the National Preparatory Base Document for the VI CONFINTEA (BRAZIL, 2008), distinguishing EJA students constitutes analyzing with and in diversity. This diversity is characterized by the differences that mark the students from each other (black, white, indigenous, yellow, mixed-race; women, men; young people, adults, the elderly; quilombolas, farmers; workers or unemployed; of urban or rural origin; living in the seat of a municipality or in a district; free or deprived of liberty because they are incarcerated; people with or without disabilities). A diversity that constitutes Brazilian society and that comprises different ways of being, living and thinking. People who seek EJA establish different ways of being Brazilian, between conflicts and different ways of building their social, ethnic-racial and citizenship identity. They are diverse individuals who seek spaces to dialogue with each other or, at least, seek to negotiate, based on their differences, places and rights guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution (BRASIL, 1988).

The Youth and Adult Education (EJA) modality represents a teaching modality that encompasses different levels of basic education, and that strengthens the concept of democratization of access to education in the public network. In this way, young people, adults or the elderly, who for different reasons did not or did not complete their training process in a conventional way and at the corresponding age, can finish their basic training. In this aspect, the profiles of EJA students are, in a different way, diversified in terms of age, social conditions, among others. While a certain number of these students already work in the labor market in different segments, others remain unemployed and see EJA as an opportunity to improve their qualification and professional growth or reinsertion (MARREIRO, 2021).



Data exposed by the Basic Education Census (2022), pointed out that there were approximately 2,800,000 students enrolled in the Youth and Adult Education modality in the country. The number of EJA enrollments reduced by 21.8% between 2018 and 2022, reaching 2.8 million in 2022. The drop in the last year was 6.3%, occurring unevenly in the elementary and secondary level stages, which showed a reduction of 1.9% and 12.5%, respectively. In elementary level EJA, 72.3% of enrollments are in the municipal network, followed by the state and private networks, with 23.3% and 4.4% respectively. In the secondary level, the state network accounts for 86.3% of enrollments, followed by the private and municipal networks, with 10.7% and 2.1% respectively, and the elementary level concentrates, proportionally, the largest number of enrollments in rural areas (29.3%) (BRASIL, 2022). Based on these data, it is evident that in Brazil elementary education still provides a shared mode of enrollment distribution. It is known that article 11 of the Laws of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) provides for this collaborative resource between the state and the municipalities. With regard to the age group in this type of education, it is noted that it is composed of students under 30 years of age, who represent 50.3% of enrollments. In this same age group, male students are the majority, 55.0%. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the enrollment of students over the age of 30 is predominantly female, 58.9% (BRASIL, 2022).

In terms of color/race, it is observed that students identified as black/brown represent 77.5% of the EJA at the elementary level and 69.3% at the secondary level. Students declared as white represent 20.2% of the EJA at the elementary level and 29.2% at the secondary level (BRASIL, 2022), reinforcing what is established in Article No. 10 of the LDB, which ensures that it is the responsibility of each federative unit to ensure "[...] high school to all who demand it [...]" (BRAZIL, 1996). In the opinion of Marreiro (2021) after analyzing the data released by the 2020 School Census, it becomes clear that for many students in this modality, this represents the last opportunity to complete the training process, since it was not possible to complete elementary school at the age of approximately 15 years, and high school close to 18 years old. Census data show that in 2019, more than one million students took the National Exam for the Certification of Youth and Adult Skills (Encceja), which demonstrates the great difference and inequality that still persists in our country.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this work was to identify the challenges for the completion of the formative process of students enrolled in the Education program for young people and adults, in the perception of teachers, working in schools in Belo Horizonte. This section presents the methodology adopted to achieve the objective of the study.



It was adopted as a methodological strategy, as to the nature of applied research with a quantitative approach. As for its objective, it is classified as descriptive, since, according to Cervo, Bervian and Da Silva (2007) the study used observation, registration, analysis, seeking to correlate facts or variables without manipulating them. Andrade (2010) points out that descriptive research is characterized by unification in terms of data collection, so that this can be carried out by applying questionnaires or through observation. The technical procedure used in this research was the case study, which according to Cervo, Bervian and da Silva (p. 62, 2007) consists of a strategy of "research on a certain individual, family, group or community that is representative of their universe, to examine various aspects of their life." According to Prodanov and De Freitas (2013), the case study can be used because it addresses contextual conditions, controlled in laboratories or even situations in which collections and analysis of characteristics are necessary in order to collect data for investigation in the contemporary context.

The research was applied to teachers of the Youth and Adult teaching modality working in three schools in the city of Belo Horizonte, seeking to identify the challenges for the completion of the formative process of students in the perception of these teachers.

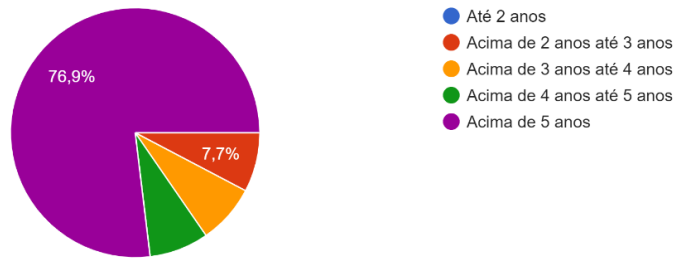
For data collection, the instrument used consisted of a structured questionnaire applied online using google forms as an instrument. The link was sent accompanied by an invitation letter by email to the public schools that offer the EJA modality in Belo Horizonte, and was available for responses between 08/02/2023 and 09/10/2023, having obtained the return of three schools. The questionnaire applied to the teachers (Appendix 1) consisted of two sections. The first sought to identify structural aspects such as time working in the modality; weekly workload; and school and classroom structure; characteristics of the EJA students and in the second, it was a matter of identifying the motivation to return to school and complete their studies, in addition to identifying the reasons and percentages of dropout in each of them.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

This study is composed of a sample of 13 teachers who work with Youth and Adult Education in three schools in Belo Horizonte. The demographic data of the participants indicate that 76.9% have been teaching in the EJA modality for more than 5 years, and the remaining 23.1% have been working in the modality for between 3 and 5 years, as shown in graph 1.

Graph 1 – Time of work in EJA

Tempo de atuação docente no EJA  
13 respostas

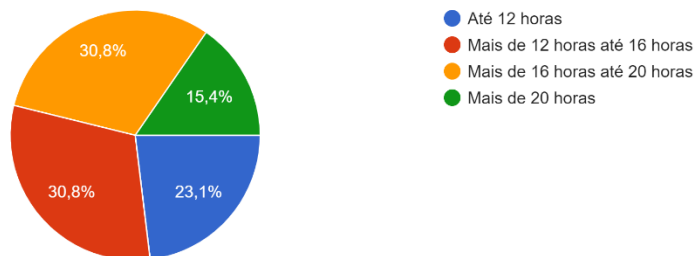


Source: Survey data

Regarding the weekly teaching workload of work in the EJA modality, the data indicate that for the surveyed sample, 61.8% have a weekly workload between 12 hours and 8 pm. 23.1% of the sample has a workload of less than 12 hours and 15.4% have a workload greater than 20 hours per week, as shown in graph 2.

Graph 2 – Weekly workload with EJA classes

Carga Horária semanal com as turmas EJA  
13 respostas

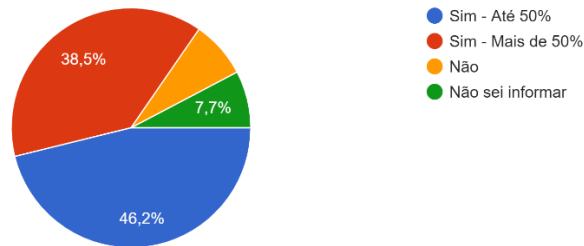


Source: Survey data

Regarding the availability of structure, 100% of the sample stated that in the school where they work there is a specific room for EJA classes. However, when asked about the existence of an appropriate structure in the classroom for adults, 30.8% of the sample said that this structure does not exist. Regarding the profile of the students, with regard to the identification of their performance in the labor market, 46.2% of the sample stated that, on average, 50% of their students are people who work in the labor market, and for 38.5% this percentage represents more than 50% of the students in this condition. Only 7.7% stated that their students do not work and the same percentage for those who could not inform, as shown in graph 3.

Graph 3 – Students working in the labor market

Seus alunos, são profissionais atuantes no mercado de trabalho?  
13 respostas

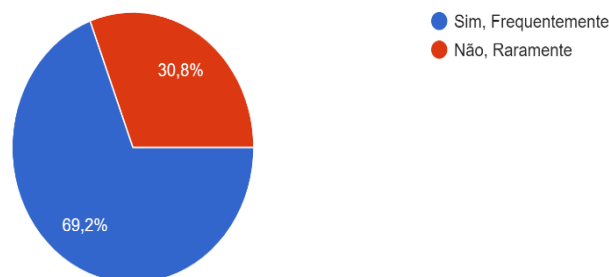


Source: Survey data

The analysis of these data corroborates the argument defended by Mônica Gomes when she states that EJA students should be considered not as working students, but as workers who study. Next, we sought to understand other factors that could cause concern to the student, and for this issue, the result showed that 69.2% of the sample receives complaints from students regarding problems that concern them, as shown in graph 4.

Graph 4 – Problems you need to solve, that worries you

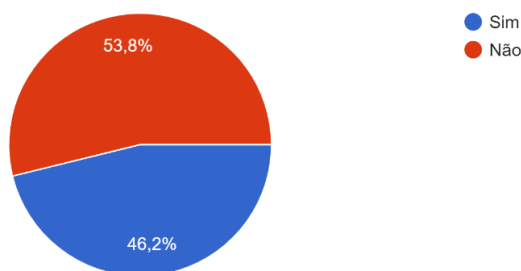
De modo geral, seu aluno, costuma externar problemas que precisa solucionar, que o preocupa?  
13 respostas



Source: Survey data

These data confirm that, for the EJA student, educational problems have a close relationship with social issues, reinforcing Freire's understanding, cited by Baquero (2008). Another aspect addressed by the research was to understand the student's participation during the entire class period, and in the perception of the teachers, 53.8% do not remain participative until the end of the class time, as shown in graph 5.

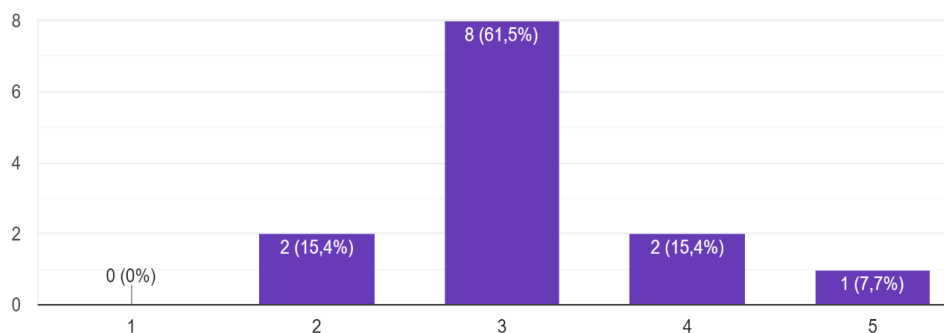
Graph 5 – Participation until the end of class time  
 Seu aluno, geralmente, participa das aulas até o fim do tempo?  
 13 respostas



Source: Survey data

Regarding the perception of sleep in students during class time, 53.8% of the sample stated that they noticed this state of sleepiness in students. Regarding the student's disposition at the time of classes, it is noted that for 69.2% of the professors the students are in a good mood. These results seemed contradictory, since most of them were sleepy during classes, it was expected that most of them would be less willing because of this factor. It was also sought to identify the motivations for completing the formative process of the students of this modality. To measure these questions, a Likert scale of 5 factors was adopted, with 1 being less motivated and 5 being very motivated. Regarding the motivation to learn basic content, in the opinion of the teachers, only 15.4% are really motivated, a different result when specific content is addressed in which the level of motivation was 30.8%. We also sought to identify the level of motivation of the students to interact with the class, which in the perception of the sample only 23.1% had a satisfactory degree, with a score higher than 4 as shown in graph 6.

Graph 6 – Motivation to interact with the class  
 Qual o nível de motivação dos seus alunos para interagir com a aula?  
 13 respostas



Source: Survey data

It is verified that the motivation of his students to interact with their colleagues presents a different result. In this case, 92.3% of the students had a score equal to or greater than 4 in the level of motivation, as shown in graph 7.

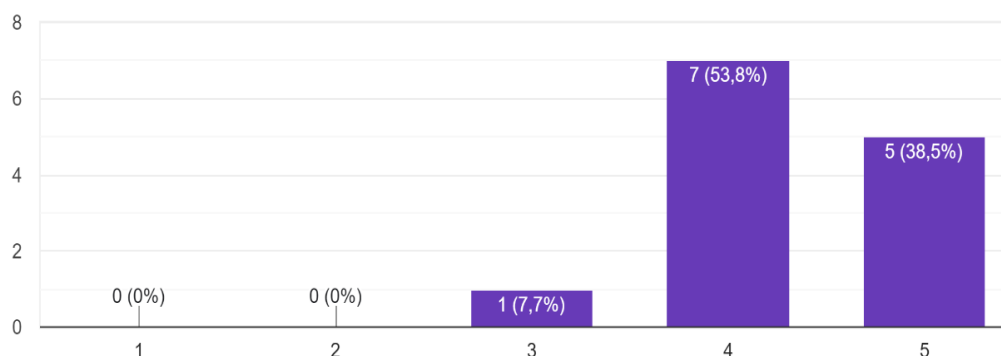




Graph 7 – Motivation to interact with colleagues

Qual o nível de motivação dos seus alunos para interagir com os colegas?

13 respostas



Source: Survey data

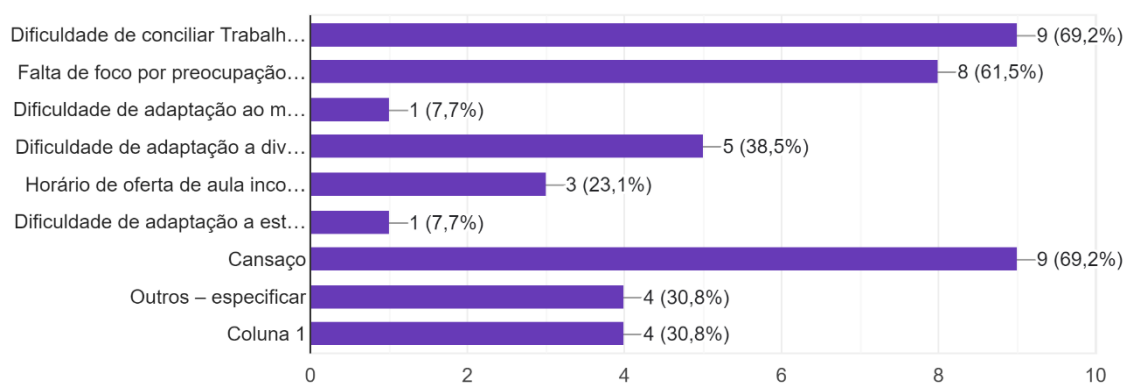
It is noted that the motivation for interaction with colleagues is greater than the interaction with the classes themselves, this reinforces the understanding defended by Baquero (2008), citing Freire who argues that Adult Education consists of an emancipatory perspective, and is a learning process understood as important for the interpretation of the world. Regarding dropout, we sought to identify the dropout percentages during the year, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to student dropout. With regard to the dropout percentage, for the surveyed sample, 61.6% of the students have dropout percentages between 40% and 60% of the class during the year. Regarding the factors for this dropout, the teachers were asked to point out, in order of importance, up to 5 main factors.

It is observed that the main reasons pointed out were fatigue and difficulty in reconciling work and studies with 69.2%; lack of focus due to concerns with 61.5%; difficulty in adapting to the diversity of the class appears at 38.5%. Graph 8 shows these results. This result corroborates the data made available by the Basic Education Census (2022), which pointed to a reduction of 21.8% between 2018 and 2022 in the number of enrollments.



Graph 8 – Reasons for dropout  
Marque os 5 motivos principais de evasão, na sua opinião.

13 respostas



Source: Survey data

It is understood that the main reasons pointed out by the teachers for dropping out in the EJA modality are aspects related to the need to remain employed, since the vast majority are workers who study, as pointed out by Mônica Gomes, and another factor that drew attention was the difficulty of adapting to diversity. The Basic Education Census (2020) pointed out that EJA classes are made up of very heterogeneous students in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, among other factors that can contribute to this difficulty in adapting some students.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this research was to identify the challenges for the completion of the training process of students enrolled in the Education program for young people and adults, in the perception of teachers, working in three schools in Belo Horizonte. The data collected through the electronic questionnaire applied to a sample of thirteen teachers who work in the EJA modality in the schools surveyed indicate that most students are people active in the labor market and who need to reconcile work activity with studies. This was even one of the most representative factors of the reasons pointed out by the professors as a contribution to the dropout of students in this modality. Another point that deserves to be highlighted concerns the importance of the formative process for social relations, considering that the data pointed to less interaction with classes and greater interaction with classmates, showing that the pedagogical process cannot be designed disconnected from social issues.

Regarding the contents covered, it is noted that the motivation for specific contents is more attractive to students than the basic contents. These results may be associated with the fact that he is a more experienced student with greater experience, which makes him a person with a more critical view of the world. Another point that drew attention refers to the school's structure to receive students in this modality. Although the teachers signaled the existence of a specific room for the EJA



student, they also reported that in part of the schools the room has the same structure for the other classes, which makes the environment unattractive and motivating to an adult student. As a form of contribution, it is suggested that other studies be carried out, and that the perception of the student be investigated, perhaps through a comparative study, which in this study did not have this focus.

Some limiting factors deserve to be mentioned, being the time factor, associated with the little involvement of the schools in participating in the study and asking the teachers to answer the questionnaire.

It is important to highlight the main contributions of the study that the data collected here may have as a contribution to thinking about more effective strategies for retaining students in the EJA modality, as well as providing a specific structure for this audience, in order to increase the level of satisfaction and engagement with the training process.



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