

Editorial:
Popular Education in the Times of Authoritarian Populism

The joy of the joy of Francisco Cleudimar.
A concrete experience of a transformative educational practice

The peer teaching methodology of the university of and for waste pickers:
How teaching is learning

Las emociones de las personas adultas ante la participación democrática

After-school activism within the state school system and within the
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Pioneer in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Policy Development

Book Reviews

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Editorial

Popular Education in the Times of Authoritarian Populism

Guest Editor:
Fiorenzo Parziale

We are in a time of war, or rather war has come directly to the West as well. It is not just externalised to the Global South as it was in the 1990s, when the Washington Consensus was at the height of its power (Chomsky 1999). The war has reached the borders of the empire of the Global North before the Russia's terrible invasion of Ukraine. The war within the West manifested itself in this last decade, while neoliberalism tended towards authoritarian populism (Geiselberger 2017). There is no space here to dwell on the ways in which authoritarianism can derive from the unfolding of capitalism (Marcuse 1934; Horkheimer 1939), even more so if the latter takes the neo-liberal form, as Freire himself (1968) suggested in unsuspected times, even before the Chicago Boys' economic recipe was tested through Pinochet's regime in Chile.

Suffice it to note here how the neo-liberal reform of the education system (Ball 2021; Apple 2015), articulated on a global scale, with rhythms and specificities differentiated according to national contexts, is in tune with the new conservative times (Apple 2013). Indeed, this reform is producing fertile ground for the spread of a civil society well disposed towards the reduction of democratic spaces: neo-liberal reform works daily on the expulsion of critical discourse (Gouldner 1979) from the education system in order to facilitate the new generations' habituation to the dominant political-economic order. Authoritarianism, which today is even peeping out in the democratic West, also draws its sap - therefore - from this education reform. At the same time, there is widespread resistance to neo-liberal policies on the part of many teachers and broadly defined educators who want to extend and enhance the democratic gains achieved by public schools in Europe.

In a nutshell, it is perhaps even clearer today that the field of education represents one of the main arenas of social conflict, not only in the global South. Indeed, it is precisely in the Global North that workers' difficulties in conducting class struggle have been partly heightened in an interclassist key by the attempt to reconstruct a fairer world through education, even the formal education practised in the officially designated schools.

As Peter Mayo (2023), however, often reminds us, education is not an 'independent variable': it can take on an emancipatory (and class) function, effectively affecting social change, when it unites and merges with the movements of struggle, today increasingly characterised by the intersection of material issues, linked to the world of work, with 'superstructural' issues based on the recognition of different forms of life. First post-structuralism, then cultural and postcolonial studies have also highlighted the intricate weave between economic, political and cultural factors, in the wake of Gramsci's reading, showing - for example - the link that has always united capitalism with racially motivated colonial oppression (Robinson 2000; Danewid 2022).

Popular Education as Alliance Between Political Movements of Global North and Subaltern ones of the Global South

New political movements reveal the nexus between racism and capitalism, especially in these last years of radicalisation of neoliberalism and its natural progeny- the twisting into authoritarianism within the West itself.

Activists are increasing, in the global North as well as in the global South: they oppose discriminatory policies towards migrants through the practice of social mutualism (Yates 2015), including in several cases the organisation of formal education courses (e.g. national language courses) for foreign adults. As regulation of migration processes by the Global North represents the litmus test of the close link between neoliberalism and authoritarianism (Hall 1996; Kundnani 2021), then popular education in these contexts takes the form of a reorganisation of subaltern people, especially migrants: popular education can activate forms of social solidarity among the subaltern themselves so that they, together with the activists of the Global North, can counter both welfare based solely on citizenship and the conservative cultural model of neoliberalism, which - precisely - denies cultures and material needs of

these very same subaltern groups. In this analytical perspective, even the teaching of the national language by social movements, if centred on transformative pedagogical practices (Giroux 2020), can take on a subversive form with respect to the tendency of migration policies to stratify foreigners into (semi-)protected workers, precarious workers and surplus labour force, i.e. marginalised in production processes and more generally in society.

Moreover, a further investigation of the racialisation operated by neoliberalism could lead us to discover how it is functional to the economic system not only to prevent contestation coming from the 'South of the South', from the geographic and social areas most peripheral to neo-liberal globalisation, but also to guarantee the extraction of surplus value through the complete stigmatisation of manual labour, not by chance increasingly delegated to ethnic minorities. Postcolonial studies could help us understand that racialisation occurs with regard to not only ethnicity, but also to its intersection with social class and capitalist relations of production.

In fact, neoliberalism - understood as the set of not only economic-institutional mechanisms (material plane) through which capitalism has been organising itself over the last four decades, but also the discourses (cultural plane) that have shaped these same mechanisms - has so radicalised the practice of individual responsibility (concealing its dependence on power relations in society) as to produce the shift from the ideology of merit (inherited from the nineteenth century), useful to the ruling class to justify its privileges, to that - current - of the self-blame of the working class: in the neo-liberal competitive schools, socially disadvantaged students blame themselves for their scholastic difficulties and thus expel themselves from participation in the formal education system. This is more so than was the case (at least in Europe) already in the decades of the expansion of the Welfare State.

Popular education today can break this process of racialisation, if it traces the power of formal knowledge back to its roots, that is, it connects the power of abstraction inherent in disciplinary knowledge (Muller, Young 2019) to the concrete problems faced by the popular classes. In fact, practical knowledge - to which the working class is most attached - is not antithetical, indeed in several cases it has been an anticipator of the disciplinary (and trans-disciplinary) knowledge that has accompanied the development of the sciences.

In this scenario, the radical form of popular education and its reformist version (Steele 2007) increasingly coexist and intermingle in the concrete experiences of social-political activism, especially in the West: on the one hand, the radical goal of the autonomous political organisation of the subaltern classes (Regmi 2016) encounters difficulties also due to the fragmentation of the public sphere (Sorice 2020; Antonucci et al. 2022) and the individualisation of labour relations (Harvey 2007); whereas on the other hand, the myriad of micro-initiatives of civil society, while risking becoming entangled in the neoliberal governance of public policies, can exercise a kind of “war of position” (Gramsci 1975) through the politicisation of social volunteering (Della Porta 2020; Bosi, Zamponi 2022).

This hybridisation of radicalism and reformism is well present in experiences in which the educational activity is first addressed to minors and then to adults, as in the case of the revival of popular schools in Italy (Zizioli et al. 2024). At the same time, such experiences try to echo, albeit in a feeble and partial form, the more structured ones in the global South, as is the case of the popular education of the Sem Terra in Brazil (Tarlau 2013).

Although spatially distant from each other, the revival of popular schools in Italy and the education carried out by the Sem Terra Movement (MST) in Brasil are characterised by a political-intellectual dialogue of almost half a century thanks to the pedagogical work of Freire, in turn anchored in Gramsci's thought.

Popular education as reconstruction of sociality and emotions subsumed under the cold neoliberal reason

Experiences such as those cited lead us to conceive of education as perhaps the privileged sphere in which the most critical part of civil society tries to re-establish sociality and the emotions that necessarily feed it, the former and the latter having been undermined by the neoliberal economic organization (Harvey 2007). In fact, the educational initiatives implemented by associations, volunteers, political activists, entire movements in many cases lead educators and students to an equal exchange, which reveals the connection between the poor quality of individual relationships and the acceleration of social rhythms (Rosa 2013) impressed by the neoliberal political-economic order. Education is becoming, in other words, a social practice congenial to the re-

appropriation of politics by some more reflective segments of civil society as well as by the most radical political movements that believe no longer in traditional political mediation, but rather in the direct participation of the subaltern in public and social life.

Popular education as a practice of recovery of sociality first and foremost by middle-class activists and students, then by adults and minors of the working class (or rather of the more peripheral fractions formed by ethnic minorities) is often being realized in an amphibious terrain, halfway between radical rupture and respect for the economic and discursive coordinates of neoliberal governance (Parziale 2024). The emancipatory potential is enormous, but so are the risks, since the progressive distance between institutional action and civil society can favor practices that fail to free themselves completely from neoliberal individualism, making any structural change in society futile. Only social research, if translated into concrete emancipatory practices, will be able to tell us what the prevailing trend is defined as progress. Moreover, it is precisely in the widespread, and unfortunately fragmented, experiences of popular education that innovative methods such as militant (auto-) ethnography (Boni et al. 2020; Cardano, Gariglio 2022; Gariglio 2025) now find space. In these cases, social research experiences aim to help the social sciences regain their emancipatory epistemological status against the expulsion of critical discourse, not only from schools but also from universities.

Research Tracks

Research experiences of this type are also reported in this issue of *Convergence. An International Adult Education Journal*. Kohan, Cirino and de Almeida present research that addresses the crucial issue of popular education, that is, ensuring that those who know how to talk also know how to write the word referring to this practice. Lorenzo Milani – an Italian intellectual underestimated in the tradition of studies on popular education, especially in English (Mayo 2013) – has made it clear that class struggle is practiced first and foremost through the gift of speech by the subaltern. With the experience of the Barbiana School, aimed at children from peasant and working-class families in a peripheral area of Italy, which cared little about the epistemological questions relating to the “restitution of speech to the last”, he ran the risk of making the subaltern speak with the language of the dominant social sectors, but then in fact he managed to find an emancipatory outlet.

In fact, the creator of the Barbiana School practiced the difficult work – at once philosophical, political, sociological, pedagogical – of building with his students a new relationship between language and reality, bringing education back to the practical problems of the working class, without ever forgetting the importance for the latter to draw from official knowledge. The latter knowledge he had chosen to renounce without relevant losses thanks to a family cultural capital that exceeded that of the school. Milani was a potential dolphin – to use the famous expression of Bourdieu and Passeron (1964) – but he uprooted himself from his class to enable his students to achieve the cultural synthesis so sought after by popular educators who refer to Gramsci, even before Freire.

Kohan, Cirino and de Almeida remind us that this transformational practice is still possible. It is embodied by Francisco. Of course, there was no concession, nor is it a mere (and just) restitution. Rather, it was a matter of Francisco valorizing his existence, marked by the condition of economic exploitation that led him to handle screws, but prevented him from writing the word “screw”. In Francisco’s biography, what sociologists call a turning point took shape: the turning point consists in becoming a “more human” being, not because he is assimilated into the middle class, but as a worker who can fulfill himself as a citizen, and cast his vote without getting his hands dirty, ready to participate fully in public life. Emancipation occurs through such a turning point, probably many other steps will have to be taken, but from Francisco’s story a collective political and epistemological potential emerges. I invite readers to read this article carefully, trying to activate a sociological imagination as Wright Mills (1959) invited us to do. The task at hand here is twofold: first situating Francisco’s childhood in the centuries-old history of exploitation of the black working class by middle-class whites; also by reflecting on the educational experience presented as transformative. This is not only for Francisco and the other students, but also for the scholars themselves. The description of the latter in fact suggests at an ethnographic work that also involves their own biography.

The experience illustrated in the article starts from a course of philosophical literacy in Rio Grande do Norte, preceded by the identification of illiterates through active research on site. The transformative experience involved, therefore, researchers and teachers. And I am referring here not to the extraordinary attempt to experiment

with principles underlying a curious and democratic relationship with the teaching of literacy, but also to the effect which the words of students like Francisco had on the researchers and teachers themselves: how much has this experience enriched them? How much do educators emerge transformed by the students, through the implementation of critical pedagogy? Very interesting research can take shape around these questions, which could lead us to find a relevant phenomenon – as seems to be the case with the experience of popular education in the outskirts of Rome, on which I have focused my attention in these years as a sociologist and activist (Parziale 2024). This is a sort of “upside-down awareness”, which makes possible precisely that uprooting by educators of the ‘bourgeois mindset’ that Milani urged for an emancipatory education aimed at the social recognition of students.

The article by de Carvalho Vallin, da Silva and Gutberlet also focuses on social recognition through a case of popular education, again in Brazil. The authors analyze the UNICATA project, consisting in the establishment of the University for and of waste pickers also through partnerships with other traditional universities. This is a truly interesting project that, launched in 2023 in the state of São Paulo, involved the National Movements of Waste Pickers: based on the method of peer education and learning by teaching (shades of Vygotsky), this project made waste pickers share and integrate their knowledge, also as educators, collaborating with technicians in this sector and university professors.

The knowledge of waste pickers has been recognized, valued and developed thanks to the encounter with the disciplinary knowledge of technicians and academics who deal with waste disposal from a more holistic point of view. The development of this point of view makes it possible for workers in the sector to escape the alienation of the capitalist division of labor, thanks to the acquisition of suitable tools to bring their precious knowledge back to the issues of organizational management, on the one hand, and the management of what the West defines as “sustainable development policies”, on the other hand. The hybridization of practical and theoretical, operational and managerial, technical-scientific and social knowledge is not the result of a mere transfer from some more ‘expert’ actors to others, but of a new translation that strengthens all the actors in the field. Given some similarities with the experience of the factory councils of the red two-year period (*biennio rosso*) in Italy, this type of project could lead to the

contestation, and possible reformulation, of the waste disposal process and the related global policies. These are today characterized by outcomes that are at the very least contradictory (see Saito 2024).

In any case, what is most interesting about this research experience is the method of “learning by teaching”: educators of waste pickers develop new skills and understandings by sharing knowledge. This method makes use of psychological, pedagogical and sociological knowledge that can be derived from Vygotskij’s theory of the zone of proximal development (already hinted at), Kolb’s experiential learning cycle and Freire’s pedagogical perspective. The authors meticulously analyze the different phases that characterize the UNICATA project, reconstructing the salient aspects of the method indicated. The results of their analysis show how waste pickers become real social and political agents. This is an extraordinary change. In fact, workers involved in this experience are not reserved the mere recognition of being employed in a task of high social utility, an expression often useful for hiding the actual low status conferred on this occupation. Rather, workers participate in an educational activity through which they reappropriate their work, modifying their concrete position in the production process: they are no longer in the condition of “instrumental workers” (Gramsci 1975), as the capitalist division of labor would have it, but they become agents in possession of the knowledge to manage the entire production process. This would seem to be the outcome of an education that virtuously breaks down the rigid distinction between teachers and students.

Education in this case directly affects the reflection on the production process, creating a learning context in which waste collectors recognize themselves first and foremost not only as *homines[sic.] fabri*, but also as *homines[sic.] sapientes*. This dichotomy, historically and ideologically present also in the capitalist mode of production, is concretely called into question in the context analyzed. Equally interesting is that the conjunction, hoped for by Gramsci with respect to the two anthropological categories, is also experienced in the microcontext of the UNICATA project by those who generally occupy a social position at the antipodes of that attributed to waste collectors: technicians and even more so academics.

If Francisco conquers the hearts of academics, waste collectors conquer their minds. Minds and hearts of evidently anti-authoritarian people: there is nothing more anti-authoritarian, and therefore genuinely and

profoundly democratic, than political-pedagogical experiences such as the Brazilian ones illustrated in the first two articles of this issue.

The article by Martí-Puig, Vidal-Prades and Cerveró Carrascosa shows the central role of emotional education as a practice that contrasts with authoritarianism. There is perhaps no better antidote than this type of education since it manages to contrast the neoliberal corruption of the soul in a transversal manner to different generations. Starting from an examination of the articulation of the Spanish adult education system, the authors focus on research conducted in four schools for adults in Valencia where an educational intervention on democratic participation was carried out.

For different reasons, education for democratic participation encounters difficulties in different generations. In fact, the older ones do not consider the possibility of expressing one's opinion or making decisions valid. They seek consensus, they are constructive, but not very critical. This is at least the risk for some of them. On the contrary, the younger ones reveal a nihilistic attitude, or in any case one of distrust. This reflects disenchantment and social disaffection in the face of conflicts, hence the indifference.

Indifference is today's great malaise as it goes hand in hand with the egocentric anxiety of young people called to maximum performativity in the world of work and in schools.

This research shows how adult education centers can play a crucial role in ensuring a more inclusive, ethical and participatory society. The training of educators presupposes central skills to express emotions freely and at the same time with respect for the Other.

Education for the love of life makes possible social mobilization that would lie at the heart of a substantive democracy. Popular education today represents a social practice that, even when it is embedded in institutions, causes a subversion with respect to the rigidities imposed by the political/economic order. The ability to decode reality must be nurtured every day through informed participation capable of replacing cold calculability with a full rationality that opens up to emotions. This approach is meant to recover the sociality undermined by neoliberalism, latter tending tend to commodify every area of life.

Incidentally, I suggest readers consider the article by Martí-Puig, Vidal-Prades and Cerveró Carrascosa together with the work by Denys, Gartenschlaeger, Hinzen and Hust, proposed in the miscellaneous section because it is more relevant to the institutional side of adult education.

The joy of the joy of Francisco Cleudimar. A concrete experience of a transformative educational practice

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First words: the scenario

It is usually very difficult to find examples of very concrete practices showing the effect of what some would call transformative educational research. It is not easy because, among other things, it is not so usual to find a concrete example of “transformation”, specially when it has to do with a subjective transformative process. But when the example comes, the joy invade us. This is what happened in the story we’ll narrate in this article.

The pedagogical setting is the city of Pau dos Ferros, Rio Grande do Norte, the little princess of western Rio Grande do Norte. 5 hours by car to Natal, more than 2 to Caicó or Angicos we are in the middle of the Serido. It's hot, very hot! The clouds in the sky announce rain, but it doesn't rain. The air we breathe is regionally known as “stuffy”. Looking at the open horizon, you get the impression that the air is shaking. Inside the crowded auditorium of the Federal Rural University of the Semi-Arid (UFERSA), we (nefianes) and the people present are crossed by the comfort of the air-conditioning, but also by the beauty and uniqueness of the events that unfold there: glances that shine, trembling voices ... they all face the challenge of narrating the event, the impossibility of being the same after an educational experience that has left indelible marks on their bodies.

This isn't the first time we've been to Pau dos Ferros, but this time we've come for the Pedagogical Day 2023, which has the theme "Potiguar Education on the Move: articulated planning for successful learning", organized by the 15th Regional Directorate of Education and Culture (15th DIREC) of the Rio Grande do Norte State Secretariat for Education, Culture, Sport and Leisure (SEEC/RN). We are at the start of the 2023 academic year.

Once again we are welcomed, cared for by the loving affection that reveals to us the meaning of being among (pedagogical) friends, as Aparecida expressed, moved after hearing Diná Mendes sing the Brazilian national anthem: we recognize each other as (pedagogical) friends because we suffer, worry and dream together, worried about the same (pedagogical) challenges and puzzles...

Maria Aparecida Vieira Diógenes is the Regional Director of Education for the 15th Direc, an admirable educator who coordinates public policy in this region with her heart and her whole body, involved... In Aparecida, anyone can feel the sense, the dream and the invitation to build an emancipatory education on a daily basis, like the arid horizon of the hinterland of the upper west of Rio Grande do Norte, trembles and makes our bodies tremble... We've come here with an invitation to invent other ways of inhabiting school time, school... An invitation to inhabit a childlike time, to seek beginnings every day... This is Aparecida's body-invitation... The collective quest to recover childhood in the school of adults...

One experience of philosophical literacy in Teacher Education in Rio Grande do Norte

This time, on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, the Pedagogical Day of the year in question began. The day was programmed around three face-to-face meetings at the UFERSA campus in Pau dos Ferros. We arrived early on 02/02/23 and spent the whole day taking part in a memorable day full of affection, hope, love, dialogues, encounters, beginnings, questions, concerns... The program also included an invitation, and what an invitation it was! It was the graduation of literacy students from the "Supera Rio Grande do Norte (RN)" program..., which is part of RN's Policy to Overcome Illiteracy, involving 120 (one hundred and twenty) municipalities and a total of 687 (six hundred and eighty-seven) classes. In all, according to SEEC/RN data, the program involves more than 10,000 literacy students. Based on the principles of diversity, corporeality

and inclusion, as fundamental rights guided by SEEC/RN, each region in RN created its own project. In Pau dos Ferros, it was called “Supera RN” (Rio Grande Do Norte 2022).



Image 1: auditorium of UFERSA, Campus Pau dos Ferros, 2/2/2023

There we were once again, face to face with “Supera RN” ... We say “once again” because we were also present at the launch of this program in Pau dos Ferros in June 2022, when, at the invitation of the director of the 15th Directorate, Aparecida Vieira, we gave the program's mediators a 40-hour formation course in what we called “philosophical literacy”, inspired by the 40-hour literacy course for young people and adults coordinated by Paulo Freire in Angicos/RN in 1963 (see Lyra 1996). The formation in “philosophical literacy” had as its inspiring principles: lovingness, questioning, listening, thinking with others, collaborative work, critical resistance, equality, respect for differences, and childhood.

We were moved to tears, overflowing with joy, especially at the reunion with the teachers who, in the intensity of the welcoming embrace, in their emotion-filled voices, told us that the experiences they had during the formation period mediated by NEFI/UERJ continue to reverberate in their work in the relationship and search for connection with their literacy students.

The event was also attended, among other authorities, by Professor Maria do Socorro da Silva Batista, RN's secretary of education, Professor Liz Araújo, RN's sub-coordinator for Youth and Adult Education, and many municipal secretaries of education from the surrounding towns that are part of the jurisdiction of the 15th Direc, which in a total of twenty schools, have joined the "Supera RN" program..., school principals, educators, students from different places, both rural and urban. ... beautiful to see and feel that we were there, inspired by the experiences of the search to find a way of "making school", discovering in each literacy student "a schoolchild". The UFERSA auditorium was packed. UFERSA, it must be said, was created in 2005, as one of the 18 (eighteen) public universities created by President Lula's federal government. Specifically, the Pau dos Ferros campus was created in 2012 and is part of the 181 (one hundred and eighty-one) campuses that make up the policy of internalizing higher education. It's a beautiful, open, popular university... you can hear birds, you can breathe the atmosphere of study, it's inhabited with commitment and seriousness.

In the morning, the program proposed a dialogue entitled "Time and Movement in Potiguar Education", in which we peppered the auditorium with questions from those present in search of that condition of "inhabiting the beginning" which is so characteristic of the educating task (Horton & Freire 1990); while in the afternoon, at the beginning of the program, we were welcomed by Professor Priscila Cybelle's invitation to stillness, to look at oneself, to listen to one's own breathing. Priscila drew our attention to the fact that in the hectic everyday life of the world, we must find space for the need to stop, to slow down, to put our attention on ourselves so that we can perceive the other. The next panel on the program was "Philosophical literacy: amorousness in equality", which was mediated by the EJA sub-coordinator, Liz Araújo. Breaking with the theme's proposal, Liz spoke about the lack of love that permeates the school ground and which has excluded a significant part of the Brazilian population throughout history. Liz said that the current literacy students in Pau dos Ferros, who, for different reasons, have taken a lifetime to gain access to school, have been excluded and "unloved" by the school system.

As an example, she brought up a banner fixed to the front of a school announcing certain times and days, as well as a list of documents so that the EJA student could enroll. Our attention was drawn to the fact that the main criterion for returning to school is the will and desire to study. However, it is well known that, even though this is a right expressed in the Brazilian National Education Guidelines and Bases Law - LDB, Law

No. 9.394/96 (Art. 22), it is still a difficult reality for students to attend school due to the bureaucratic conditions imposed on them.

To close the day, we had the launch of the book *Uma viagem de sonhos impossíveis* (A journey of impossible dreams), which recounts the dreams of a traveler and his hosts on a 15,000 km journey, traveled over 100 days on the roads of the Brazilian Northeast, including Pau dos Ferros, to commemorate Paulo Freire's 100th birthday through exercises in a "childlike pedagogy of the question" (Kohan 2022). In order to reconstruct the memory of this very significant stage of the "journey of impossible dreams", the team from the 15th Direc. selected and presented fragments of scenes in which Walter Kohan interacted with educators on October 15, 2021, teacher's day, and as Aparecida said: "the presence of Professor Walter was the gift to the educators of Pau dos Ferros"; also scenes of moments in connection with the local community, in the sugar cane milling with the alfenim pullers on the Melancia farm.

This detailed account was read by an emotional Aparecida, while we watched the videos, through a text she wrote that was published in the book that recounts the trip (Kohan 2022). In one of the fragments of her narrative, she brought us a fragment from Paulo Freire to express what this "journey of impossible dreams" meant: "Wherever there are women and men, there is always something to do, there is always something to teach, there is always something to learn." (Freire *apud* Diógenes, 2022, p. 185).

A unique event in a philosophical literacy experience

In RN, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE, there are 372.000 (three hundred and seventy-two thousand) illiterate people. The "Supera RN" program, run by the 15th DIREC in Pau dos Ferros, registered 937 (nine hundred and thirty-seven) literacy students, of whom 512 (five hundred and twelve) received their certificates on February 2, 2023.

As we said earlier, we went to Pau dos Ferros, a group of Nephians, in June 2022, for a philosophical literacy course that was the start of the "Supera, RN" program to combat illiteracy in Rio Grande do Norte, the same program that is now finishing a stage with the graduation of the first literate students. That initial philosophical literacy course for literacy teachers was preceded by rigorous work by the pedagogical team of the 15th DIREC to identify illiterate people through active on-

site searches; to invite them to participate in the program, trying to reawaken the desire that had been dormant due to the disenchantment of exclusion and the impossibility of studying; to select and prepare the literacy teachers and to create the conditions for the program to be effective. That week of philosophical formation for the literacy teachers was extraordinary in its attempt to experience principles that are sensitive to a curious and democratic literacy teaching relationship: we carried out exercises in asking questions, listening, thinking together, among equals, in a present time; we built a community of meaning for the “Supera, RN” project! The formation work continued, the specific stage of the literacy process began after the formation period, and in the ceremony graduated those literacy students who had reached the end of this stage.

It was a very exciting journey, the kind that gives you the strength to keep going and also makes you think a lot about what you do. How do we inhabit the school ground? As always when we are here in Pau dos Ferros (since 2021 we’ve been at least four or five times), there was the music and art of Diná Mendes... the infinite hospitality of Aparecida, the commitment of her work team to welcome people lovingly... and the emotional and moving joy of the alphabetizers and alphabetized of the Supera program, who came on this hot afternoon, also with their hearts warmed by Freire's hope and his political commitment to: “[...] the renegades, denied, forbidden to read the word, rereading the world” (Freire & Pelandré 2014, 14).

On February 2, 2023, the UFERSA Campus in Pau dos Ferros was filled with alphabetizers and alphabetizandos, coming from various points in the 20 (twenty) municipalities that make up the 15th region to take part in the Jornada and, in the case of the alphabetizandos, to receive their course completion diploma. There were various activities, conversations, and we collected many concerns, curiosities, questions... like, for example, an elderly man who said: “I never studied because in my day, studying was worthless”; or another who said with pride: “Now when I go to vote, I don't have to get my hands dirty anymore”.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was the intervention by one of the literacy students, Francisco Cleudimar. Francisco Cleudimar Bessa did his literacy training at the 04 de Setembro State School, in the municipality of Pau dos Ferros, RN, with the literacy mediator of the class, Adriana Batista, and Francisco Sormangem Damião de Assis, coordinator of the Literacy Mediators of the Supera program in Pau dos Ferros. All three were present at the handing out of diplomas. Francisco

Cleudimar introduced himself as a “screw” worker who is now literate... he said he had already mastered the screw, now he just needs to learn how to write the word “screw”.

He had mastered the screws of machines; he wants to master the screw of writing. He added that until now he had only been invited to the university to fix the screws on broken machines and that on graduation day, on the contrary, he was proud to be there, because he had been invited as a student; he was speaking to a crowded auditorium, something that was now possible for him because he obviously feels capable: “I am a student”, he said enthusiastically to the plenary. His broad, intense, genuine smile infected everyone with an overflowing joy. He received his diploma like someone receiving recognition, an opportunity and also an invitation to continue inhabiting a world that had hitherto been closed to him (and so many others in his class). He spent the whole ceremony smiling: he was enjoying a genuine day of celebration. While greeting Francisco and giving his diploma, Carlineide Almeida (Nefian) heard the following words from him: “Young lady, look where I am! One day I'm going to be a doctor.” To which Carlineide replied: “You're already a doctor! We're all doctors of something.” He smiled and happily said: “It's true.”

A short while later we discovered that Francisco is a doctor of screws and that soon we'll become a doctor on words.



Image 2: Francisco Cleudimar Bessa, one of the students of SUPERA, RN, talking to the full auditorium of UFRSA, 2/2/2023

We also felt overflowing with joy. We were already happy before the diplomas were handed out to the literacy graduates. The pedagogical week of the 15th DIREC had welcomed us with love and taken care of every detail, as always. We had the opportunity to open the second day in the morning, in a conversation that was delighted with the questions raised by the participants. We were moved by the words of Aparecida, the regional director of education, and Socorro, the secretary of state for education. And those of Liz and Priscila. However, Francisco Cleudimar's presence and words were particularly moving. He sounded like a child who was beginning a new life. He spoke like a child, from his heart. His words deserve to be listened to with care and love.

Let's pay more attention to them. Francisco Cleudimar presented himself as someone who has mastered the screws. He knows about them and can operate them to repair machines that don't work. What is a screw? Something that, if tightened, gives firmness, stability, security and that, if (loosened), releases, loosens, opens, gives freedom, lightness, movement. Francisco Cleudimar knows how to handle screws. He knows when to tighten them and when to loosen them. However, he doesn't know how to write the word "screw". Life has taught him how

to handle screws, but has prevented him from writing the word. He was thrown into one world at the same time as being expelled from another.

What does the joy of Francisco Cleudimar teach?

That's why Francisco Cleudimar spoke like a child, with the strenght of a child, in the time of a child, at least in the words of Mia Couto: "Childhood is not an age but the time when it's not too late." (Couto 2009, 103). This is the time that Francisco experiences, which overflows in his whole body... In his glowing eyes, in his generous smile... A childlike time... This is Francisco's time: an ever-present time, the discovery of a condition that he realizes is his own, that cannot be denied to him. It is not too late. It is never too late. At the end of his speech, Francisco says in the midst of his cheerful prose with the teachers: "Now I want to know which school I'm going to enroll in so I can keep learning..." Fortunately, Francisco's childhood is very much alive: it will no longer be too late to learn anything... to begin. His childhood in letters will no longer be taken away from him.

Francisco Cleudimar's joy is the joy of recovering a world from which he was excluded because of his class and color... so his entry into that world with all its honors is an act of reparation, justice, reparation... Francisco Cleudimar enters the world of letters with his lack of literate knowledge, but with his enormous knowledge of the things of the world... especially with his intense desire to know how to write the word screw, when he already knows almost everything about screws themselves... and also with this knowledge that he knows he doesn't know what he wants to know and it is his right to know. He knows what he already knows and he knows what he doesn't know and needs to know. And he knows that now he will no longer be excluded from the knowledge he always dreamed of having. He knows that his mutilated presence at university is finally over; the technical use that the university has made of his knowledge until now is no longer his single connection with the University; now he will go to university and school as a student, to learn something that visibly demonstrates desire, enchantment, and not just to make machines work. He will no longer go just as a worker, but as a student worker or as a worker student.



Image 3: Francisco Cleudimar Bessa showing his literacy diploma

What Francisco celebrates is also the possibility of experiencing another kind of time at school, close to its Greek etymology, the time of *skholé*, free time, freed from the social requirement of productivity. Before, Francisco Cleudimar's time was timed and measured according to the marks of a productivist society; he had to be efficient in the use of his labor power. He was paid for this. Now, as a public school student, he will enjoy unproductive study time, time to learn to read and write and also time to ask questions, think about the world and dream of other worlds.

What we are all celebrating with Francis is a transformative educational practice that opens the school's pedagogical doors to all those who have been excluded from them. We celebrate that Francisco and so many others can finally participate in a world that has excluded them without right. We also celebrate his joy, his curiosity, his desire to feel equally capable of learning as any other human being. We commemorate his desire to learn, his feeling like a student, and his conviction that the

public university is also his place. We commemorate Francisco's childhood and what an adult education that is sensitive to the strengths of childhood can do with people of all ages.

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The joy of the joy of Francisco Cleudimar. A concrete experience of a transformative educational practice

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Abstract. In this text, we present the effects of a philosophical literacy experience in a concrete and tangible case of subjective transformation through an educational practice. First, we introduce the context and the

main elements of a philosophical literacy experience of formation carried out in the context of the “Supera RN” Program developed by the Regional Directorate of Education and Culture (15th Direc), as part of the state government’s policy to eradicate illiteracy in Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil. Next, we present the emergence of Francisco Cleudimar, one of the students in this philosophical literacy process. Finally, we draw some political-pedagogical lessons from this unique emergence.

Keywords: philosophical literacy; teacher education

La joie de la joie de Francisco Cleudimar. Une expérience concrète d'une pratique éducative transformatrice

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Résumé. Dans ce texte, nous présentons les effets d’une expérience d’alphabétisation philosophique dans un cas concret et tangible de transformation subjective à travers une pratique éducative. Premièrement, nous présentons le contexte et les principaux éléments d’une expérience de formation en alphabétisation philosophique réalisée dans le cadre du programme « Supera RN » développé par la Direction régionale de l’éducation et de la culture (15e Direc), dans le cadre de la politique du gouvernement de l’État visant à éradiquer l’analphabétisme à Rio Grande do Norte (RN), au Brésil. Nous présentons ensuite l’émergence de Francisco Cleudimar, l’un des étudiants de ce processus d’alphabétisation philosophique. Enfin, nous tirons quelques enseignements politico-pédagogiques de cette émergence singulière.

Mots clés: alphabétisation philosophique; formation des enseignants

La alegría de la alegría de Francisco Cleudimar. Una experiencia concreta de una práctica educativa transformadora

Walter Omar Kohan, Maria Reilta Dantas Cirino, Carilineide Justina de Almeida

Resumen. En este texto presentamos los efectos de una experiencia de alfabetización filosófica en un caso concreto y tangible de transformación subjetiva a través de una práctica educativa. En primer lugar, presentamos el contexto y los principales elementos de una experiencia de formación en alfabetización filosófica realizada en el ámbito del Programa “Supera RN”, desarrollado por la Dirección Regional de Educación y Cultura (15ª Direc), como parte de la política de erradicación del analfabetismo del gobierno estatal en Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brasil. A continuación, presentamos el surgimiento de Francisco Cleudimar, uno de los estudiantes de este proceso de alfabetización filosófica. Finalmente, extraemos algunas lecciones político-pedagógicas de esta emergencia singular.

Palabras clave: alfabetización filosófica; formación docente

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The peer teaching methodology of the university of and for waste pickers: how teaching is learning

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Introduction

Popular education is an approach to learning that prioritizes the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of marginalized or disadvantaged groups. With strong historical roots in Latin America and in social justice, this educational framework aims to empower individuals and communities by promoting critical thinking, social awareness, and active participation in social and political change. Unlike traditional education models, which often emphasize a top-down, formalized transmission of knowledge, popular education focuses on dialogue, collective learning, and the recognition of learners as active subjects in the educational process. It has been widely applied, from adult literacy programs to political training initiatives, always seeking to raise awareness and transform communities. For Paulo Freire ([1970] 1996a) a Brazilian pedagogue, popular education is a political act aimed at unveiling and overcoming the conditions of structural oppression that perpetuates inequality. Therefore, the aim of popular education is to contribute to building a more just and equitable society, breaking with the hegemonic logic of exclusion and acting as a practice of freedom that challenges power structures by recognizing the oppressed as historical subjects, capable of transforming their reality (Freire [1970] 1996a).

In the Latin American context, marked by profound socio-economic disparities, popular education has been essential for the formation of social movements that seek the structural transformation of society (Zitkoski 2017). One example is the National Movement of Waste Pickers of Brazil (MNCR), created in 2001, which has promoted training for waste pickers based on popular education. This training has helped leaders stand out and promote the defense of waste pickers throughout Brazil, achieving important victories such as public policies and access to funding (Alves 2016). Despite this, access to resources depends very much on the political will and interest of the government in place. Waste pickers' main demand is for municipalities to contract out the provision of the service so that they can have adequate working conditions. This is why constant training and capacity-building for waste pickers is important, as it allows them to understand their rights, create cooperation networks and organize themselves to defend their agendas and transform their realities.

The University of and with waste pickers (UNICATA) was created in 2023 in São Paulo (Brazil) as a collaborative project between representatives from the national waste pickers movement (MNCR) and academics. UNICATA is a training proposal based on popular education and is founded on counter-hegemonic thinking and practice for critical action (Freire [1970] 1996a). UNICATA's general objective is to promote access to and sharing of academic and popular knowledge, providing opportunities for reflections for those who are often vulnerable and excluded. In addition, UNICATA seeks to prepare waste pickers to act as service providers in waste management, recycling and environmental education.

The design of the UNICATA course was supported by research carried out with waste pickers from 12 cooperatives in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, to define the topics of interest. Based on the results, the course was divided into 6 modules, each with 56 hours of in person classes. The modules are: 1. Introduction to the course; 2. History, political education and the waste picker as a social subject; 3. Administration and management of cooperatives; 4. Regulatory and legislative aspects; 5. Sustainability and health at work; 6. Research practices focused on waste management. During the final module students conduct a research project, like an Honours project. Throughout the other modules students are also encouraged to do research and to present their results at the end of each module. By 2024, four classes had graduated from module 1 and

two classes from module 2 in São Paulo and Brasília, 54 waste pickers have completed the module one, 32 women and 22 men. Of the total number of students, 70% come from cooperatives and associations, 28% are self-employed waste pickers and 2% work exclusively in social movements. Of the 37 students from São Paulo, 34 carry out their collections in the city, 23 of whom work in the districts classified as the poorest in the municipality.

Teaching at UNICATA is grounded in a hands-on, collaborative approach, where classes are co-facilitated by experienced waste pickers in partnership with academics or technicians. The methodology is inspired by the pedagogical principles of peer teaching (Rubin and Herbert 1989), an approach also applied by the National Movement of Waste Pickers through their method "from Catador to Catador". This approach emerged from a desire to promote the agency of waste pickers, to challenge the overabundance of technical interventions that have alienated them, and to foster deeper engagement and participation. It emphasizes the use of accessible, everyday language to facilitate understanding and inclusivity (Alves 2016). The practice is important because it reflects on the self-esteem of the students, since "it is another waste picker like them who is talking, who knows the difficult reality of their work and brings these experiences to the training environment" (IPESA 2013, 116).

Waste picker educators work independently or belong to a cooperative or may be representatives of the MNCR. Technical or academic educators can be faculty members or graduate students from any of the partner universities or technical professionals who work as consultants and have worked with waste pickers for many years. This methodology strengthens the bond between academics and waste pickers and is a powerful tool for hands-on training with the result of strengthening the waste pickers who are in the role of educators. Freire ([1970] 1996a) emphasizes that the act of teaching is intrinsically linked to the act of learning. When teaching, the educators reflect on their practice, confront their own understandings and opens themselves up to new learning, also becoming a learner in the process. This article analyzes UNICATA's paired teaching methodology and seeks to understand how waste picker educators develop when they take on the role of instructor.

The first section of this article introduces the theoretical foundation upon which it is based, highlighting the concepts of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

(1984). This is followed by a description of the methodology employed in the development of the article. Next the results and discussion of the empirical data collected on the paired methodology and the role of waste pickers as educators at UNICATA are presented. Finally, the article concludes with a set of final considerations.

Theoretical Review

Paulo Freire's [1970] 1996a) critique of traditional education, particularly his concept of "banking education", describes the traditional, top-down model of hierarchical education, of passive knowledge transmission by the teacher, which disregards the experiences and previous knowledge of the students. In its place, Freire proposes a dialogical and problematizing education, in which dialogue is the central axis, allowing educators and students to actively participate in the construction of knowledge. Educational practice in this context is oriented towards conscientization, a process that helps individuals recognize the structures of oppression in their lives and where they become agents of their own liberation (Freire [1970] 1996a). In summary, the principles of popular education are: (a) horizontality, which emphasizes equality between educators and learners, promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge; (b) active participation, which implies the active involvement of participants in defining the themes and methods of learning; (c) contextualization, which considers the importance of relating the content to the local reality and the issues faced by the community and; (d) dialogicity, which encourages critical dialogue and collective reflection as a way of constructing knowledge (Feitosa 1999).

Authors such as Vygotsky (1978) and Kolb (1984) developed theories in dialog with popular education and that contribute to the pedagogical popular education framework. Vygotsky (1978) developed a socio-interactionist theory that highlights the central role of social interaction in cognitive development. One of the most influential concepts of this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the distance between what an individual can achieve on their own and what they can achieve with the guidance of a mentor or through the collaboration of more experienced peers. For Vygotsky, learning takes place within this zone, through a process of scaffolding, in which the mediator offers temporary support to help the learner master new skills or knowledge, gradually withdrawing this support as they become more independent (1978).

The concept of ZPD allows educators to identify latent learning potential in their students, valuing the repertoire of knowledge acquired in everyday life and work. Furthermore, Vygotsky's emphasis on the mediating role of the educator resonates with collaborative and dialogical teaching practices, where the educator acts as a facilitator of learning, rather than simply transmitting knowledge.

In adult education, ZPD can be applied to support learning in areas where adults do not yet have complete mastery but can make significant progress with the right support. The idea is that the most effective learning occurs when the student is challenged with tasks that are beyond their immediate capacity, but within their ability to accomplish with the help of a guide or tutor (Brusilovsky 2007). This is particularly relevant in popular education, where participatory and collaborative methodologies are widely used to encourage critical development and autonomy. In addition, this approach challenges the traditional view of teaching centered only on independent performance, valuing social interaction. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of social interaction mediated by cultural artifacts in the psychological development of individuals. These artifacts range from simple objects, such as a pen or a spoon, to more complex elements, such as language, beliefs, customs and cultural practices. These tools not only facilitate everyday activities but also play a fundamental role in the construction of knowledge and in the way, individuals interact with the world around them (Vygotsky 1978).

Kolb (1984) also believes that concrete experience and collaborative reflection are fundamental to meaningful learning. The author developed the theory of Experiential Learning, the core of which is the Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC), which describes learning as a dynamic process involving four interrelated stages: 1) concrete experience, in which the individual experiences a specific situation; 2) reflective observation, when the learner reflects on the experience, analyzing it and recognizing patterns; 3) abstract conceptualization, the learner transforms these reflections into concepts or theories that explain the experiences and; 4) active experimentation, when the learners apply these concepts in new situations, testing and improving what they have learned. This cycle is continuous and flexible, allowing learners to move between stages depending on situation and context. The reflection and conceptualization stages allow adults to integrate their previous knowledge with new learning, while active experimentation allows them to test their theories

in real situations, promoting meaningful and contextualized learning. These stages are interdependent and help create a continuous and dynamic learning environment. By following this cycle, the educator enables students to become autonomous learners, capable of applying what they have learned in an effective and reflective way (Yardley, Teunissen and Dornan 2012).

Constructivism is not a method but a conception of knowledge. From this perspective, one can understand that there are similar principles between constructivism and popular education, such as the dialectical perspectives and the understanding that people are producers of culture and subjects who produce knowledge. In this way, it is understood that integrating the theories of Freire ([1970] 1996a), Vygotsky (1978) and Kolb (1984) provides a solid basis for promoting participatory, critical and transformative learning. The Freirean approach, centered on dialogue and problematization, emphasizes the role of the subjects in the collective construction of knowledge based on their concrete realities (Freire 2005). Added to this process is Vygotsky's concept of ZPD, which highlights the importance of social interaction in learning and cognitive development. By understanding the ZPD, educators and students can build knowledge together, respecting previous knowledge and exploring new possibilities for collaborative learning (Vygotsky 1978). Finally, Kolb's ELC makes it possible to think of the aspects presented above in stages, connected in a cycle that allows the learning experience to be constructed in a fluid and continuous way (Kolb 1984).

Methodology

This article is grounded in an experience report, a qualitative methodology that values subjectivity and the researchers' active engagement in the contexts under study (Gil 2008). According to (Freire [1970] 1996a), educational and social practices must be constantly revisited through critical reflection. In this regard, the experience report not only describes experiences, but promotes a critical reading of reality, providing opportunities for social and educational transformations. This perspective underscores the report's potential to move beyond mere description, engaging in interpretation and offering insightful propositions (Daltro and Faria 2019). Despite some criticism, the experience report has become a well-established methodology for knowledge production, especially in areas that value reflective practice and the analysis of individual and collective experiences (Daltro and Faria

2019). This approach allows for the articulation of theory and practice, shedding light on narratives that emerge from specific contexts—narratives often overlooked in conventional research paradigms. Therefore, the experience report, when based on consistent theoretical reflections, becomes a powerful methodology for narrating, analyzing and problematizing lived practices. It responds to the need for methodologies that integrate theory and practice, recognizing the subjects and their experiences as central agents in the construction of knowledge (Daltro and Faria 2019).

To achieve this, we employed the stages of participant observation (Spradley 1980). This method involves the researcher actively engaging with the environment or community under study, allowing data to be collected through direct interaction with the participants. Such an approach generates rich, contextually grounded insights that can be systematically organized and presented as an experience report. Participant observation values a close look at practices, discourses and social dynamics, bridging the gap between descriptive accounts and critical interpretation (Minayo 2010). When combined with experience reports, this methodology strengthens the reflexivity and legitimacy of the narratives, transforming lived experiences into structured, scientifically relevant knowledge.

As primary data, we analyzed records from UNICATA classes, including accounts of the waste pickers' experiences and reflections on the classroom documented in the field diary. This was complemented by data gathered through questionnaires, evaluations, notes and testimonies recorded during the meetings. In addition, classroom activities were captured through audio and visual recordings, enabling us to revisit the materials and validate the results. The primary data were organized in spreadsheets and then systematized and analyzed qualitatively. Two structured interviews were also conducted with waste pickers who served as educators.

Results and Discussion

UNICATA's paired methodology begins with a series of workshops designed to prepare the educators. Three workshops were conducted, each one prior to a module offered in São Paulo. These workshops focus on aligning the theoretical, pedagogical, didactic and methodological foundations, to ensuring that educators adopt a democratic, inclusive and

participatory approach in their classes. To this end, the workshops introduce tools to support lesson planning, alongside practical activities that promote participatory methodologies. Drawing on Paulo Freire's ([1970] 1996a) framework, it is believed that only through such hands-on experimentation can educators be fully engaged in adopting this pedagogical perspective in their classrooms and fostering student-centered learning.

During the workshop, educators select the classes they will teach, which also serves as the moment when educator pairs are formed. In the first module offered, all the waste picker educators were experienced, having either led other training programs, served as leaders within their cooperatives or the MNCR, or accumulated over fifteen years of experience in waste picking. Multiple student reports highlighted the profound impact of the waste picker educators' involvement, with one particularly emphasizing the value of the paired methodology: "I really enjoyed listening to G.C.'s story, I think there needs to be more experienced waste pickers talking and bringing their life story" (S.H, self-employed waste picker). "I experienced the same thing that M.M.S said, but I had never thought about it in the way she did" (A.S, cooperative waste picker).

I feel that UNICATA helps as a kind of training for debating because people speak and listen without any problems. For me it's the closest thing to an academic education because I don't have time to go to college and study, so in the time I have, UNICATA gives me that opportunity. It's a space that enriches me a lot, it's a school without walls that I think we must take to everyone, waste pickers and non-waste pickers alike. (V.C, cooperative waste picker).

During the classes, the exchange of experience and dialogue between the educators and the students are central, bringing the social and cultural realities of the waste pickers closer together, which is essential for the internalization of new knowledge and for transforming the student into an active agent in the educational process, as V.C. mentions, teaching them how to debate ideas. In this way, waste picker educators act as cultural and social mediators who not only share knowledge but also speak the "language of the waste pickers", breaking down communication barriers and creating a relationship of trust. This interaction allows students to approach their ZPD more quickly and learn new content (Vygotsky 1978).

In all the modules, multiple waste picker educators expressed interest in teaching, leading to several sessions being co-facilitated by two waste picker educators and a technician. This expanded dynamic of educator participation, which was not initially anticipated, proved to be highly effective. Experienced waste pickers, particularly those with skills such as public speaking, provided support to their peers – those with significant experience in waste picking but no prior teaching background. As a result, a process of mutual support, development, and learning unfolded organically among the waste picker educators themselves. For instance, more experienced waste pickers with strong public speaking abilities encouraged others to step into teaching roles, inviting them to co-deliver classes. This invitation offered reassurance and support to those who were initially uncertain about their ability to participate. One of the waste pickers mentioned: "I don't know how to speak in public, but I know I have to, if I want to do environmental education, I have to know how to speak, and if V.C. is going to help me, then I will [become an educator]" (M.A.R, self-employed waste picker).

Vygotsky (1978) points out that learning takes place more effectively when learners are supported by more experienced mediators who offer support within the PDZ, allowing them to carry out tasks initially beyond their individual capabilities. In the case of UNICATA, the more experienced waste pickers fulfill this role by encouraging and supporting peers who are still developing the skills to become educators. M.A.R.'s account clearly demonstrates the social and emotional mediation that the encouragement of the experienced waste picker had, allowing her to accept the challenge of becoming an educator because she had the support. During the planning and execution of the class, the more experienced waste picker continued to stimulate, teach and support, which led to the development of capacities within the ZPD of the waste picker learning to become an educator.

The technical educators, on the other hand, played a central role in conducting the lesson planning process, acting as a mediator so that the content of the lesson was defined, elaborated and shared jointly. Additionally, the technical educators suggested materials, activities, and information that the waste picker educators could incorporate into their lessons, facilitating in-depth research, content synthesis, and mastery. This process enabled the waste picker educators to effectively present the material in the classroom. Consequently, the waste picker educators

underwent a learning process before delivering the lessons, not only in terms of concepts and content that complemented their lived experience, but also in the development and planning of the lessons themselves. These forms of support illustrate how technical educators help to expand the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of waste picker educators, enabling them to internalize new knowledge and skills in a collaborative, incremental manner.

Just as the technical educators contribute to the development of the waste picker educators, the reverse is also true. Waste picker educators teach technicians how to translate academic knowledge into accessible language, suggest more effective teaching strategies and introduce content, such as political developments, events and facts, that the technicians may not be familiar with. Thus, the process is understood as a simultaneous reciprocal development within four distinct Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this framework, the novice waste picker educator learns from their more experienced peer; the waste picker educators gain insights from the technical educator; the technical educator learns from the waste picker educators; and, finally, the students benefit from the combined expertise of the educator pairs (Figure 1).

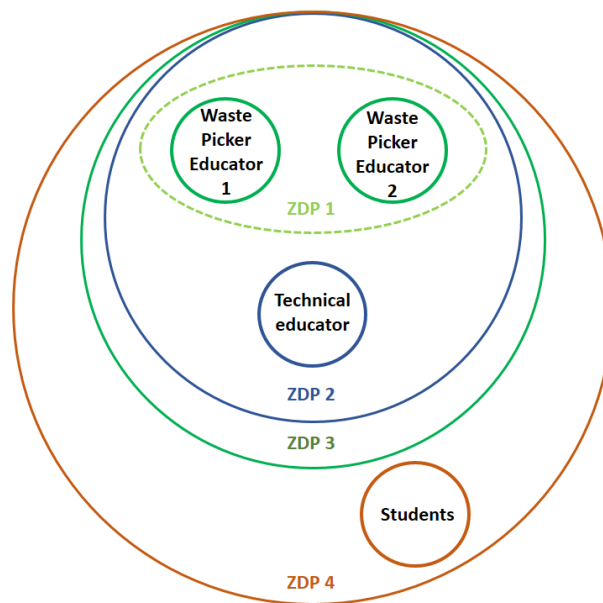


Figure 1. The ZPD in the relationship between waste picker educator, technical educator and UNICATA students. Source: prepared by the authors

Vygotsky does not explicitly discuss the idea that ZPD mediation works in a bidirectional way, meaning that the educator also learns and develops their skills through the process of mediation with the student. However, his theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and dialogue in the construction of knowledge, which indicates that both the educator and the student can benefit from this process, although in different ways. From Paulo Freire's perspective ([1970] 1996a), learning is dialogical: "Those who teach learn by teaching, and those who learn teach by learning" (Freire 1996b, 23). Freire argues that the educator must respect the students' previous knowledge and be willing to learn from their experiences and worldviews. This process is fundamental for an emancipatory education, as it creates a space for collective learning where both educator and student become active subjects in the construction of knowledge (Freire 1996b). In this sense, it is understood that the technical educator learns not only through the act of teaching, but also through a process in which the waste picker educator becomes a mediator of knowledge. By acting consciously, the waste picker educator helps develop the technical educator's ZPD, as they introduce practices, languages and information that the technical educator is unfamiliar with - knowledge that only waste pickers possess.

An example of this can be seen in the comment made by L.H, a waste picker leader: "You're a good educator, you spoke in a way that everyone understood, but you have to give the waste pickers more space to speak. I thought M.A.R. could have said more". This statement indicates the waste pickers' attentiveness to the process of conducting the classes and their representativeness. It also highlights the challenge of the methodology, as some waste pickers, who are still learning to be educators, often prefer to speak less. Mediating the participation and protagonism of waste pickers, while respecting their development time, requires attention, respect and dialog. For this reason, clear and open communication between educator pairs is crucial, enabling them to collaboratively make informed decisions about how to conduct the classes most effectively. By establishing an environment of dialog and respect, the technicians can learn how to improve their role as mediators to strengthen the role of waste pickers, and the educator pairs can learn together how to overcome the challenges of the process. This is essential to ensure that the core principles of the paired methodology are preserved. It also reflects the idea that social interaction, when well mediated, promotes cognitive and social development (Vygotsky 1978).

Continuous evaluation of the pedagogical process is a core principle of UNICATA, as it enables critical reflection that identifies key areas for improvement and offers insight into the waste pickers' perspectives on their learning process. The evaluation allows for reflection on various aspects of class planning and delivery, such as the selection of activities, their appropriateness, the time allocated to each task, and the effectiveness of the teaching approach. Additionally, it provides participants with the opportunity to offer open-ended feedback. The evaluation also encourages waste pickers to reflect on how they might approach the class if they were the educators themselves. This process serves as a form of sensitization, helping them to imagine themselves in teaching roles and, ultimately, motivating them to consider taking on that role in the future. Educators, in turn, record their impressions of the class, offering an opportunity for self-reflection and the identification of potential adjustments for subsequent sessions. At the conclusion of each module, a final evaluation workshop brings all educators together for a collective reflection on the challenges encountered and the potential for future improvement in the classes taught.

UNICATA encourages students to become educators, which is why active methodologies also functions as a public speaking exercise, helping students build confidence in public speaking and, ultimately, preparing them to step into teaching roles. In this context, the final research project of the course plays a crucial role, requiring students not only to conduct research on a specific topic, but also to present their findings publicly. Through this process, even waste pickers who are early in their careers, but who have completed the classes and acquired knowledge and skills, evolve into experienced practitioners. They become capable of taking on the role of educators themselves.

A notable transformation is observed in the way students express themselves: those who initially refrained from participating in debates or did so hesitantly gradually gained confidence throughout the process. By the end, they presented their research with enthusiasm and engagement, and many went on to take on educator roles in subsequent modules. One MNCR leader said: "I was delighted with our classes. I was very surprised by E.C. who said she was shy, and it was incredible, it was chilling to see E.C. teaching" (M.M.S, waste picker leader). The waste pickers also reflected on their own transformation:

My achievement as an educator is a process that continues, overcoming inhibition. (E.C, artisan waste picker).

My greatest achievement as an educator has been to lose the shame of speaking in public, today being able to speak in any environment without fear, carrying the waste picker's voice in some positive way, showing that we are qualified and can provide environmental services in various ways, because we also have the knowledge of the practice. I want to continue being an educator because I believe I can contribute to my category. (L.A.S, self-employed waste picker).

UNICATA's methodology is also in line with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC), especially because it values practice and critical reflection as part of learning. Kolb (1984) proposes a practical model for structuring dynamic and participatory educational processes. For his part, Paulo Freire ([1970] 1996a) values critical reflection as a political and emancipatory act, emphasizing that learning must be rooted in the students' reality and geared towards transforming that reality. Thus, UNICATA seeks to reconcile these approaches and structure the moments of critical reflection and practical action, which promote the protagonism of the students and social transformation as a continuous process. You can see the moments of engagement of the waste picker educators with the phases of the ELC, as shown in the image (Figure 2):

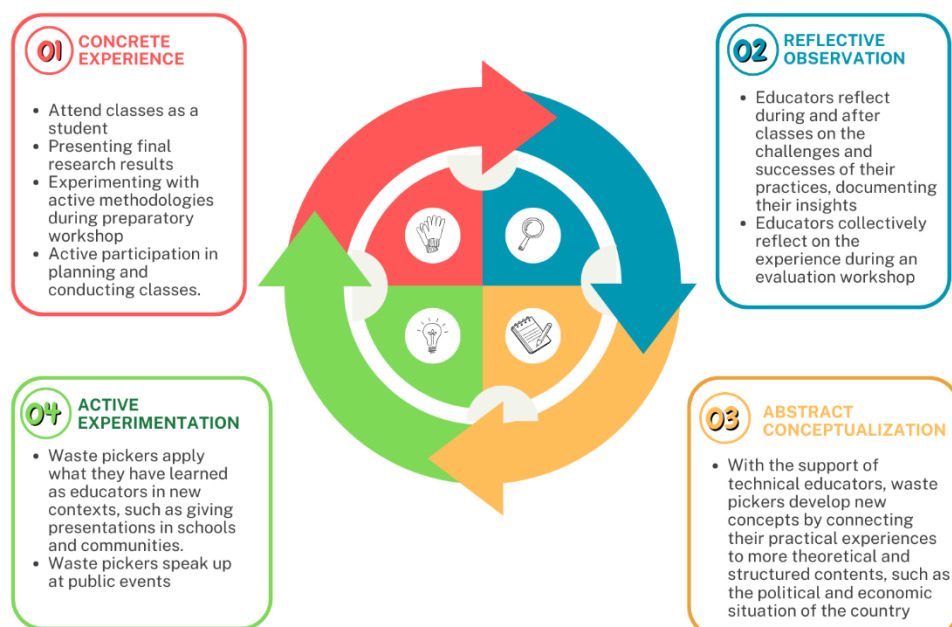


Figure 2: The phases of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in the learning process of UNICATA's waste picker educators. Source: prepared by the authors.

The accounts of two waste pickers further exemplify several stages of the ELC, as demonstrated in the following statements:

At first, I started teaching [at UNICATA] to get other waste picker students interested in handicrafts, then I got involved in the subject, which is intrinsically linked to the country's political situation. And this has given me more pleasure in staying and being able to transform the vision of preserving nature, given that we are going backwards with the process of destroying the planet. There is a force opposing the progress that was being made. And that motivates me. (E.C, artisan waste picker).

After UNICATA, I started giving talks in various places, especially schools. I showed my diploma to a principal, and she invited me to talk to the children. (M.A.R, self- employed waste picker).

The comments reveal how the waste pickers have experienced the different stages of the learning cycle. An example of the abstract conceptualization phase is given by a waste picker who was able to connect her work with the political and environmental context of the topic she presented in class. This not only broadened her understanding of the subject but also became a source of motivation for her to continue as an educator. The active experimentation phase is reflected in the experience of a second waste picker, who, after her time at UNICATA, began applying her learning in new contexts, such as giving talks in schools. She translated her reflections and insights into concrete actions, thereby expanding her role as an educator.

In summary, the students' stories highlight how experiential learning, structured by Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984), intersects with the dialogical and emancipatory principles of Freire's popular education (1970). Together, these frameworks contribute to a pedagogical process where educators not only internalize new knowledge but also become agents of change within their communities. This integration reinforces the idea that education — when rooted in practice, reflection, and action — can profoundly transform both individuals and social contexts. As demonstrated here, the act of teaching itself is also a transformative process for those who teach.

Final Considerations

The analysis of the paired teaching methodology developed by UNICATA illustrates how pedagogical practices grounded in dialog and shared experience can transform both teaching and learning processes. Rooted in the principles of popular education and recognizing the pivotal role of waste pickers, this methodology transcends the transmission of technical knowledge. It fosters the collective construction of knowledge, deeply respecting the lived experiences and realities of students. The analysis of the teaching evaluations reveals that waste picker educators not only share their expertise but also engage in reciprocal learning, enhancing their own knowledge in the process.

UNICATA's methodology serves as a compelling example of how pedagogical practices, informed by constructivist theories, can address the transformative demands of popular education. The pedagogical framework employed by UNICATA aligns with the theories of Vygotsky and Kolb, demonstrating how learning can be mediated through peer interactions (Rubin and Herbert 1989) and organized into a cycle of concrete experiences, critical reflection, theoretical abstraction, and practical application. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development provides a valuable lens for understanding how the interaction between more experienced waste pickers and their novice counterparts fosters mutual learning. In parallel, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle conceptualizes pedagogy as a dynamic process of continuous practical and conceptual transformation.

The findings indicate that the paired methodology not only contributes to the professional development of waste picker educators but also strengthens their identities as social and political agents capable of effecting community-wide transformation through education. By bridging theory and practice, this pedagogical approach enhances the potential for collective and emancipatory learning, underscoring the importance of educational practices that engage with the social and cultural contexts of students. Ultimately, the UNICATA experience reaffirms the potential of popular education as a tool for social change, while offering a pedagogical model that can inspire similar initiatives in other popular education contexts.

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The peer teaching methodology of the university of and for waste pickers: how teaching is learning

Isabella de Carvalho Vallin, Felipe Palma da Silva, Jutta Gutberlet

Abstract. This article examines the paired teaching methodology employed by the University of and for Waste Pickers, a notable example of popular education in Brazil. It focuses on the learning processes that emerge through the pedagogical practice between educators. The methodology emphasizes the role of waste pickers, fostering the collective construction of knowledge rooted in their lived experiences. The practice of 'learning by teaching' is central to this model, showing that waste picker educators share knowledge and develop new skills and understandings. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development illuminates how educators act as mediators, supporting the development and knowledge of other educators. Additionally, the pedagogical practices are structured around the stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, which in conjunction with Paulo Freire's theory, operationalizes the educational experience in a critical and continuous way. The findings show that this methodology strengthens waste pickers' identities as social and political agents while reaffirming the transformative potential of popular education as an instrument for emancipation and social change.

Keywords: Popular Education, Paired Teaching Methodology, Zone of Proximal Development, Experiential Learning Cycle, Waste Pickers.

La méthodologie d'enseignement par les pairs de l'université de et pour les ramasseurs de déchets : comment l'enseignement est l'apprentissage

Isabella de Carvalho Vallin, Felipe Palma da Silva, Jutta Gutberlet

Résumé. Cet article examine la méthodologie de l'enseignement pairé employée par l'Université des et pour les récupérateurs de déchets, un exemple notable de l'éducation populaire au Brésil. Il se concentre sur les processus d'apprentissage qui émergent à travers la pratique pédagogique entre les éducateurs. Cette méthodologie met l'accent sur le rôle des récupérateurs de déchets, favorisant la construction collective du savoir ancrée dans leurs expériences vécues. La pratique de "l'apprentissage par l'enseignement" est centrale dans ce modèle, montrant que les éducateurs récupérateurs de déchets partagent des connaissances et développent de nouvelles compétences et compréhensions. La Zone de Développement Proximal de Vygotsky éclaire comment les éducateurs agissent en tant que médiateurs, soutenant le développement et l'acquisition de savoirs chez d'autres éducateurs. De plus, les pratiques pédagogiques sont structurées autour des étapes du Cycle d'Apprentissage Expérientiel de Kolb, qui, en combinaison avec la théorie de Paulo Freire, opérationnalise l'expérience éducative de manière critique et continue. Les résultats montrent que cette méthodologie renforce l'identité des récupérateurs de déchets en tant qu'agents sociaux et politiques, tout en réaffirmant le potentiel transformateur de l'éducation populaire comme outil d'émancipation et de changement social.

Mots clés: éducation populaire, méthodologie en binôme, zone de développement proximal, cycle d'apprentissage expérientiel, récupérateurs de déchets.

La metodología de enseñanza entre iguales de la universidad de y para recicladores: cómo enseñar es aprender

Isabella de Carvalho Vallin, Felipe Palma da Silva, Jutta Gutberlet

Resumen. Este artículo examina la metodología de enseñanza en pareja empleada por la Universidad de y para los Recicladores de Residuos, un ejemplo destacado de educación popular en Brasil. Se centra en los procesos de aprendizaje que emergen a través de la práctica pedagógica entre educadores. La metodología enfatiza el papel de los recicladores, fomentando la construcción colectiva del conocimiento basada en sus experiencias vividas. La práctica de ‘aprender enseñando’ es central en este modelo, demostrando que los educadores recicladores comparten conocimientos y desarrollan nuevas habilidades y comprensiones. La Zona de Desarrollo Proximal de Vygotsky ilumina cómo los educadores actúan como mediadores, apoyando el desarrollo y el conocimiento de otros educadores. Además, las prácticas pedagógicas están estructuradas en torno a las etapas del Ciclo de Aprendizaje Experiencial de Kolb, que, junto con la teoría de Paulo Freire, operacionaliza la experiencia educativa de manera crítica y continua. Los resultados muestran que esta metodología refuerza la identidad de los recicladores como agentes sociales y políticos, al mismo tiempo que reafirma el potencial transformador de la educación popular como un instrumento de emancipación y cambio social.

Palabras clave: Educación Popular, Metodología de Enseñanza en Pares, Zona de Desarrollo Próximo, Ciclo de Aprendizaje Experiencial, Recicladores.

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Las emociones de las personas adultas ante la participación democrática

The emotions of adult citizens regarding democratic participation

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Introducción

La Segunda Guerra Mundial marcó un cambio en las políticas educativas globales con la creación de la UNESCO en 1945. Las reuniones mundiales sobre la educación de personas adultas (EPA) han fomentado la colaboración con este organismo desde 1949, abordando temas como la educación compensatoria, la educación permanente, la democratización, la preparación para la participación social y cultural, y la igualdad de género y la equidad. De hecho, la participación, la inclusión y la equidad son esenciales para los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) de la Agenda 2030 de la UNESCO. En España, la EPA es un pilar educativo según la Ley Orgánica de Modificación de la Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOMLOE) de 2020. En particular, la Comunidad Valenciana destaca por la participación activa de personas adultas mediante programas de educación permanente. En este contexto, el presente estudio analiza la percepción del alumnado de la EPA sobre cultura democrática, participación ciudadana y emociones, utilizando un enfoque mixto para identificar sus emociones, que desempeñan un papel relevante en las decisiones individuales y colectivas, y resultan cruciales para la formación ciudadana en este grupo mayoritariamente proveniente del fracaso escolar.

La UNESCO y la Educación de Personas Adultas

La UNESCO, creada en 1945 como organismo especializado de las Naciones Unidas, cuenta entre sus propósitos la colaboración global en educación, ciencia y cultura para promover el respeto universal a la justicia, la ley, los derechos humanos y las libertades fundamentales. En el seno de las Conferencias Internacionales de Educación de Adultos (CONFINTEA), que se celebran aproximadamente cada 12 años desde 1949, se reconoció la educación de adultos como derecho fundamental en 2009. La CONFINTEA VII en 2022 resaltó áreas clave tales como la política, la gobernanza, la financiación, la participación, la inclusión, la equidad y la calidad. La educación de adultos se puede considerar esencial en los 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la Agenda 2030, ya que esta formación respalda la igualdad de género y se considera un derecho humano fundamental. Así pues, la educación de adultos, parte integral del aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida, requiere del compromiso político y de iniciativas intersectoriales que garanticen el derecho a la educación y promoción del desarrollo sostenible.

Agenda 2030, ODS y EPA

En las aulas de educación de personas adultas (EPA) es esencial fomentar una cultura democrática mediante la implementación práctica de competencias y habilidades que promuevan la reflexión y el pensamiento crítico en los estudiantes adultos (Consejo de Europa 2018). La promoción de la participación, la inclusión y la equidad de todas las personas implica la responsabilidad de reconocer, escuchar y valorar la voz de aquellos tradicionalmente excluidos, como aquellos que asisten a centros de EPA por razones culturales, económicas, de género, orientación sexual o formación, entre otras (Freire 1975). Trabajar hacia la consecución de estos objetivos puede contribuir a que todas las personas adultas tengan la capacidad de participar plenamente, sentirse incluidas y ser aceptadas con todas sus diferencias.

Estructura del Sistema Educativo Español

El sistema educativo español abarca la educación infantil, la educación primaria, la educación secundaria obligatoria (ESO), el bachillerato, la formación profesional (FP), la educación de personas adultas (EPA), las enseñanzas universitarias, y las enseñanzas de idiomas, artísticas y deportivas (consideradas de régimen especial) (BOE 2020). La EPA incluye diversas enseñanzas ofrecidas por distintas administraciones educativas y laborales, dirigidas a personas mayores de 18 años o,

excepcionalmente, a mayores de 16 años trabajadores o deportistas de alto rendimiento, impartidas en centros ordinarios o específicos para adultos.

El Aprendizaje a lo Largo de la Vida en España (ALV)

En España, el concepto de ALV ha experimentado una evolución significativa. Inicialmente, en los años 70, se centró en designar la obtención de titulaciones básicas para, posteriormente, centrarse en los años 90 en la adquisición de habilidades que permitieran a las personas adultas aprender de manera autónoma y adaptarse a las demandas cambiantes de la sociedad del conocimiento (Medina 2020). Este enfoque integrador se alinea con directrices europeas como la Estrategia de Lisboa (2000), la Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE) de 2006 y la Ley Orgánica de Modificación de la LOE (LOMLOE) de 2020.

El ALV pretende proporcionar una educación que abarque conocimientos y competencias básicas y permite combinar estudio y formación con la actividad laboral. Entre sus objetivos figuran la reincorporación de adultos al sistema educativo, el ofrecimiento de educación a personas en riesgo de exclusión social, el fomento de la cultura de la formación permanente y la participación ciudadana en políticas relacionadas con el ALV, incluyendo la Educación de Personas Adultas (EPA).

En España, la EPA ha pasado a ser una etapa educativa de referencia para abordar los diferentes desafíos actuales y ocupa lugares destacados en la legislación educativa vigente. (Rumbo-Arcas 2020). De hecho, la Ley Orgánica 3/2020 (LOMLOE) establece objetivos para la EPA, destacando el desarrollo de capacidades personales, la participación en la vida social, política y económica, y la resolución pacífica de conflictos, de forma que se persiga la igualdad de género.

La oferta formativa está regulada por el Ministerio de Educación en Ceuta y Melilla y por las Comunidades Autónomas en sus ámbitos de gestión. En la Comunidad Valenciana, la EPA es competencia de la Generalitat Valenciana desde 1985. La Ley 1/95 de EPA regula esta etapa en esta comunidad, asegura el derecho a la educación y contempla programas que van desde la alfabetización hasta la obtención de titulaciones oficiales.

Los centros públicos municipales de EPA en la Comunidad Valenciana, establecidos desde 1988, son fundamentales para adaptarse a los cambios sociales y ofrecer un enfoque integrador y social en el aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida. La EPA desempeña un papel clave no solo en mejorar competencias laborales, sino también en transformar vidas y mejorar el

futuro de las personas adultas. En la presente investigación, se incluyen participantes de los dos ciclos y los consiguientes niveles de EPA, como muestra la Tabla 1.

Ciclos de Educación de Personas Adultas y niveles

Ciclo	Niveles	
Ciclo I	Alfabetización-neolectores	
	Nivel I	Pregraduado
Ciclo II	Nivel II	Graduado en educación secundaria (GES)

Tabla 1

En el Ciclo I de esta etapa educativa, predominantemente dirigida a personas mayores de 65 años jubiladas, el enfoque se centra en el crecimiento personal y el establecimiento de nuevas relaciones sociales para envejecer de manera activa. El objetivo no es obtener una titulación académica oficial, sino desarrollar la creatividad, mejorar la participación social y cultural, y establecer nuevas relaciones personales para una jubilación enriquecedora.

En el Ciclo II nivel I, que aborda el nivel pregraduado para personas de 18 a 45 años con bajo nivel académico, la motivación inicial suele ser la presión familiar. A pesar de la desconfianza inicial en el sistema educativo debido a experiencias pasadas de fracaso escolar, a lo largo del curso se logra mitigar esta desconfianza y despertar un interés genuino en la educación. Es crucial proporcionar apoyo y acompañamiento para fomentar la motivación y el desarrollo personal.

En el Ciclo II nivel II, dirigido a personas de 18 a 65 años con un nivel académico medio, la motivación está impulsada por la necesidad de mejorar sus perspectivas laborales. Aunque estas personas muestran baja motivación inicial, están interesadas en desarrollar habilidades laborales y adaptarse a las nuevas tecnologías. Cabe destacar que estos programas educativos abordan estas necesidades específicas y proporcionan

herramientas para mejorar la empleabilidad. Asimismo, generan un ambiente de soporte emocional y motivación.

Emociones, participación e inclusión en EPA

La educación de personas adultas debe considerar el desarrollo emocional como parte integral del proceso educativo, como sugiere Andrés (2005). Es importante impulsar actitudes positivas, habilidades sociales y empatía para mejorar las relaciones interpersonales. De acuerdo con Triglia *et al.* (2016), las emociones son respuestas fisiológicas y neuroquímicas que desempeñan un papel crucial en nuestras vidas. En el contexto de la participación ciudadana, las emociones son relevantes ya que influyen en nuestro razonamiento y acciones, como sostiene Morgado (2012). Asimismo, las emociones también condicionan la participación y la inclusión, siendo fundamentales para promover la igualdad y la no discriminación, tal como indica Arnaiz (2003). En la educación de adultos, las emociones y los sentimientos son inseparables del proceso de razonamiento.

Así pues, las preguntas de investigación que se han planteado en el presente estudio son las siguientes:

PI1: ¿Cuáles son las percepciones del alumnado de EPA respecto a la participación democrática y la resolución de conflictos?

PI2: ¿Cuáles son las percepciones del alumnado de EPA respecto a su desarrollo profesional y personal futuro?

Metodología

El presente artículo analiza las emociones y reflexiones de diversos grupos de alumnado de cuatro centros de EPA en una intervención didáctica sobre la participación democrática, la resolución de conflictos y su desarrollo profesional y personal. Se utilizó un enfoque mixto cuantitativo-cualitativo (Gorard 2012). Los datos cuantitativos provienen de las repuestas a un cuestionario sobre las emociones que les suscitó la implementación de la intervención didáctica a través de un cuaderno de trabajo. Las reacciones expresadas en los cuestionarios de respuestas abiertas forman el corpus de datos cualitativos que ilustran las tendencias observadas en las figuras que aparecen en la sección de resultados y discusión.

Participantes

En la investigación participaron ciento cuatro (N=104) alumnos y alumnas de centros públicos municipales de EPA de una provincia de España. Un total de setenta y dos (N=72) eran mujeres (69%) y treinta y uno (N=31) eran hombres (31%). Cabe destacar que estos datos están en la línea de los ofrecidos por el informe Datos y Cifras del curso escolar 2022/2023 del Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional sobre alumnado matriculado en Educación de Personas Adultas el curso 21/22, en el que el 63% de los matriculados en Enseñanzas de Carácter Formal eran mujeres.

Diseño e Instrumento

El presente estudio podemos describirlo como un método mixto secuencial exploratorio, siguiendo la importancia de la combinación de la estadística exploratoria con el análisis de datos cualitativos (Huber *et al.* 2018). Para el análisis del contenido nos centramos en estudiar de forma sistemática y detallada, como proponen Quivy y Van Campenhoudt (2007, 220), “la elección de términos utilizada por el locutor, su frecuencia y articulación, la construcción del discurso y su desarrollo”, y así poder interpretar los datos, asunciones y significados (Lune y Berg 2017).

Los datos obtenidos y analizados proceden de la intervención didáctica descrita en el procedimiento y que incluye una actividad de respuesta abierta y otras cuatro de respuesta cerrada. De la primera, obtenemos relatos y los categorizamos para poder compararlos con los datos obtenidos de las respuestas cerradas para ilustrar la relación entre sus opiniones y sus emociones a la hora de tomar decisiones.

Codificación de las aportaciones cualitativas

El alumnado participante estaba matriculado en 4 centros docentes de la Comunidad Valenciana en España y, a cada uno de ellos, se le asignó una letra: A, B, C o D. La codificación de la muestra se ha llevado a cabo siguiendo, en primer lugar, el ciclo en el que está matriculado, en segundo lugar, la inicial de la localidad, y, en tercer lugar, el orden de respuesta recogida. En la tabla 2 se muestran diferentes ejemplos de respuestas categorizadas, en las que las siglas indican el nivel educativo y la localidad. Así, CIB-2 significa Ciclo I, la B es la letra asignada al centro y, el número, la posición que ocupa el participante en la plantilla de respuestas; CII-IID-8 significa Ciclo II, Nivel II, la D corresponde al centro

educativo y es el participante número 8. Se ha elegido esta tarea porque pretendemos conocer la percepción que tiene el alumnado sobre la forma de proceder ante los conflictos.

Procedimiento

La presente instrucción se cumplimentó dentro del horario lectivo. En algunos casos, y debido a las características del alumnado, con la ayuda de los docentes. El tiempo medio empleado en su realización ha estado determinado por el nivel formativo en el que se ha llevado a cabo y osciló entre los 10 y 20 minutos por tarea.

Tarea 1

Para la realización de la primera tarea de este estudio se seleccionó una imagen en la cual un grupo de niños y niñas levantaba la mano en un aula ordinaria de educación primaria. Se preguntó al alumnado de EPA qué pensaba que el grupo de alumnado de la imagen hacía. Contaban con cinco opciones de respuesta cerrada, que aparecen en la Figura 1. Esta tarea se seleccionó para averiguar si el alumnado de cada ciclo educativo de EPA tiene una percepción diferente de la imagen.

Tarea 2

La segunda tarea programada proponía una reflexión sobre qué se puede hacer cuando no se puede resolver un conflicto. Contenía una parte de respuesta abierta y otra parte en la que se determinaron tres posibles respuestas, como aparecen en la Figura 2.

Tarea 3

La tercera tarea que se implementó guardaba relación directa con los sentimientos o experiencias personales del alumnado sobre cómo se sintió en situaciones de desacuerdo con otras personas. La consecución de la tarea implicó la respuesta a una pregunta cerrada en la que se eligió uno de los seis emoticonos que representan las diferentes categorías que aparecen en la Figura 3. Esta tarea tenía como propósito averiguar qué emociones influyen a las personas participantes a la hora de tomar decisiones (Ortega-Sánchez 2021).

Tarea 4

La cuarta tarea realizada supuso un ejercicio de reflexión emocional de respuesta cerrada y pretendía identificar cómo se sienten las personas participantes al pensar en su desarrollo personal y profesional futuro. Investigaciones anteriores (Cabrera *et al.* 2019; Choi y Calero 2013; Calero *et al.* 2010; Marchesi 2003; Autor 2010) enfatizan la importancia de identificar las perspectivas de futuro del alumnado de los centros de EPA atendiendo a sus características y a la introducción de estudios sobre la percepción de su futuro, ya que provienen de situaciones de fracaso escolar.

Tarea 5

La quinta y última tarea que forma parte de este corpus de datos tiene que ver con la percepción general sobre las experiencias futuras y contó con una parte de respuesta cerrada, como aparece en la Figura 5, y otra abierta que respondió a la pregunta: ¿Cómo crees que será el futuro? Su pertinencia se estimó en virtud de su vinculación con la anterior tarea. Así pues, las respuestas dan cuenta de la existencia de la relación que las personas participantes perciben entre cómo será su futuro y el sentimiento que les provoca, en línea con estudios anteriores (Casadellà *et al.* 2022; Gallardo *et al.* 2009; Garcés 2020; Lekue 2010; Santisteban y Anguera 2013; Servigne y Stevens 2020).

Asimismo, la intervención didáctica tuvo como objetivo la contribución a la consecución de varias metas contenidas en los ODS (Naciones Unidas, 2020), particularmente el número 4 relacionada con la Educación de Calidad, el 5 relativa a la Igualdad de Género y el 16 que hace referencia a la Paz, Justicia e Instituciones Sólidas. En todos ellos la participación ciudadana juega un papel destacado, las metas observadas en esta intervención didáctica se recogen en la Tabla 2 a continuación:

ODS observados en la intervención didáctica

ODS	Meta	Descripción
4 Educación de calidad	4.4.	Aumentar considerablemente, para 2030, el número de jóvenes y adultos con habilidades relevantes para el empleo, el trabajo decente y el emprendimiento
	4.5	Eliminar las disparidades de género en la educación y garantizar el acceso igualitario a todos los niveles de enseñanza y formación profesional para las personas vulnerables, incluidas las personas con discapacidad, los pueblos indígenas y los niños en situaciones de vulnerabilidad
	4.6	Asegurar que todos los jóvenes y una proporción considerable de adultos, hombres y mujeres, estén alfabetizados y tengan conocimientos básicos de matemáticas
	4.7	Garantizar que todos los estudiantes adquieran los conocimientos teóricos y prácticos necesarios para promover el desarrollo sostenible, incluyendo la educación para el desarrollo sostenible y la adopción de estilos de vida sostenibles, derechos humanos, igualdad de género, cultura de paz y no violencia, ciudadanía mundial, diversidad cultural y contribución de la cultura al desarrollo sostenible.
5 Igualdad de género	5.5	Asegurar la participación plena y efectiva de las mujeres y la igualdad de oportunidades de liderazgo en la adopción de decisiones políticas, económicas y públicas a todos los niveles.
16 Paz, justicia e instituciones sólidas	16.7	Garantizar decisiones inclusivas, participativas y representativas que respondan a las necesidades a todos los niveles.

Tabla 2

Resultados y discusión

En la presente sección, se analizan los datos obtenidos para responder a las preguntas de investigación y, a continuación, se da cuenta de las percepciones del alumnado de EPA respecto a la participación democrática y la resolución de conflictos relacionados con las tres primeras tareas de la intervención implementada.

Por lo que respecta a las respuestas obtenidas en la realización de la Tarea 1 – respuestas a la pregunta “¿Qué crees que hacen?” al ver una imagen de niños y niñas alzando la mano en un aula de educación primaria–, los resultados revelan que la mayoría de la muestra considera que los niños

y niñas está haciendo preguntas. En segundo lugar, que está opinando, en tercer lugar, no saben o no contestan y, en último lugar, que se están poniendo de acuerdo, como aparece en la Figura 1.

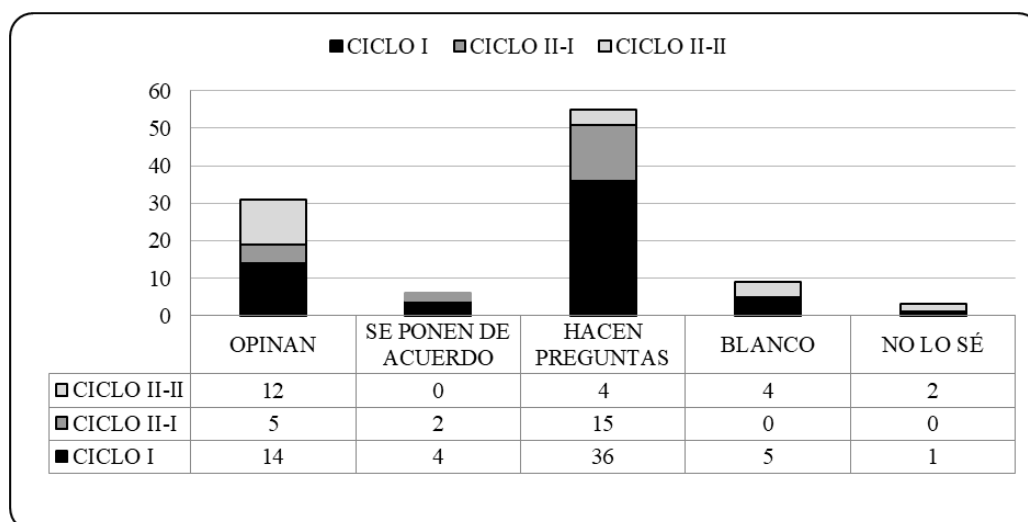


Figura 1: Qué crees que hacen? Fuente: elaboración propia

Estos resultados responden a la tipología de la muestra en la que el alumnado recientemente egresado del sistema educativo (Ciclo II-II), y mayoritariamente procedente del fracaso de la educación secundaria obligatoria, está más habituado a expresar opiniones que el alumnado del Ciclo I que son mayoritariamente personas adultas procedentes de un sistema educativo memorístico predemocrático y dictatorial, caracterizado por una educación marcadamente autoritaria que, como resalta Sonllevea (2019, 1), “ influye negativamente en las biografías de todas aquellas personas que la sufrieron durante su infancia”. Este alumnado, en ningún momento fue interpelado para expresar su opinión; de ahí que considerara mayoritariamente que los niños y niñas de la imagen están haciendo preguntas. Su participación en la EPA le posibilita desarrollar los ODS 4.4, 4.5 y 4.7 de Educación, el 16.7 de Calidad Institucional, referente a garantizar la adopción de decisiones inclusivas y representativas que respondan a las necesidades de todos los niveles, así como los objetivos 3, 4 y 7 de la LOMLOE.

Las respuestas a la pregunta de la Tarea 2 sobre las actitudes respecto a la resolución de conflictos revelaron que una amplia mayoría del alumnado de EPA se decanta por la búsqueda del acuerdo como vía de resolución de desacuerdos, como se muestra más abajo en la Figura 2. Este sentir

mayoritario se refleja en la contribución de la persona participante CIB-2, cuando apunta a la resolución del conflicto a partir de “juntarnos y pensar un poco y resolverlo lo mejor posible y resolverlo entre todos”, o la persona CII-IID-8, quien sugirió que es necesario “empatizar y escuchar”. Asimismo, otras aportaciones abogaron por “dejar que las cosas se enfrién y dejar que el tiempo decida”, como propuso CII-IIB-2.

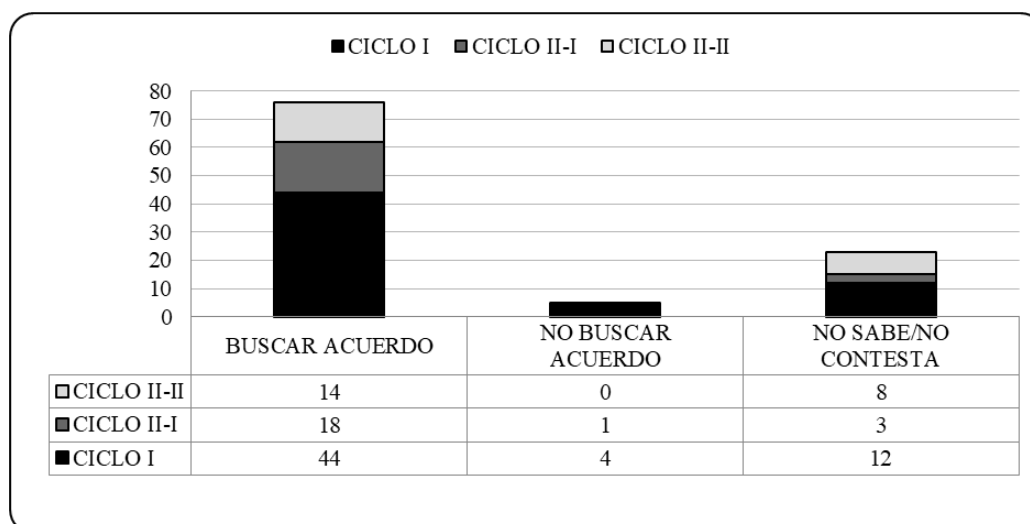


Figura 2: ¿Qué podemos hacer cuando no podemos resolver un conflicto
Fuente: elaboración propia

Es destacable cómo el alumnado del Ciclo I presenta una mayor incidencia en esta categoría, debido, en parte, a su mayor experiencia de vida respecto al alumnado procedente de secundaria, que demuestra desencanto y desafección con una sociedad que no responde a sus expectativas, y que lo ha abocado al fracaso escolar y social. Como aseguran Cabrera *et al.* (2019), la repetición de curso genera desafección escolar, incide de forma negativa en sus expectativas de futuro e incrementa el abandono escolar temprano (Calero *et al.* 2010; Choi y Calero 2013). El riesgo de padecer marginación tanto social como económica, como manifiesta Marchesi (2003), aumenta para este colectivo de jóvenes que egresan del sistema educativo sin la titulación básica, por lo que no se adaptan a las crecientes exigencias laborales. Así pues, esta parte de la intervención atendería al ODS 4.6 y los objetivos 3, 4 y 7 de la LOMLOE.

La Tarea 3 planteó una pregunta sobre participación democrática: ¿Cómo te sientes si no estás de acuerdo con otras personas? Los resultados que

nos ofrece, reflejados en la Figura 3 a continuación, están marcados por la edad y la experiencia de vida que parecen tener una influencia decisiva en la aparición de emociones y sentimientos ante la falta de acuerdos en las relaciones sociales.

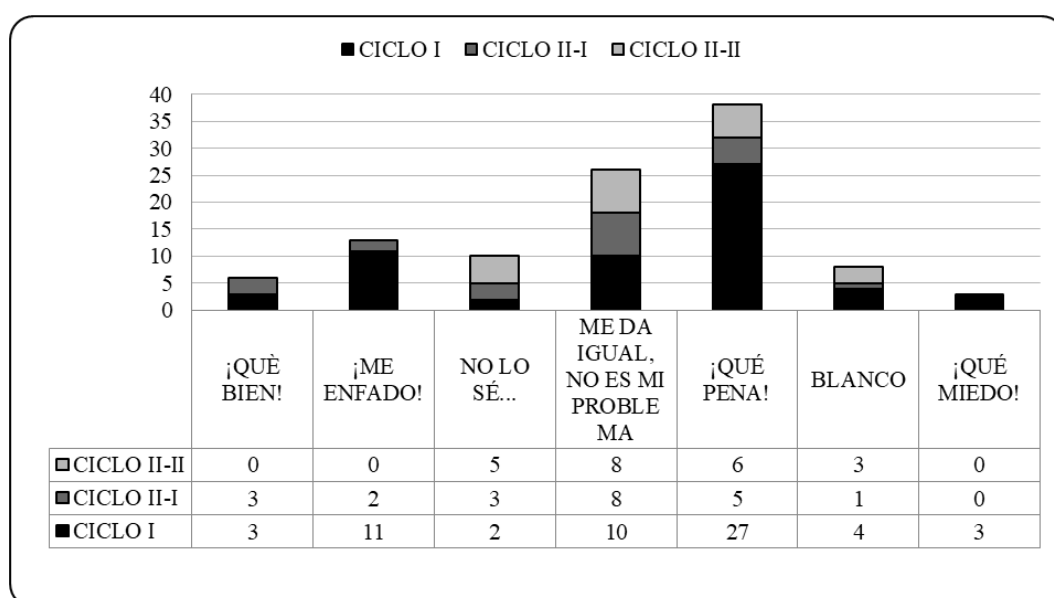


Figura 3: ¿Cómo te sientes si no estás de acuerdo con otras personas?
Fuente: elaboración propia

Así, el sentimiento de pena es el más destacado en este colectivo, mientras que el pasotismo y la indiferencia es el que muestra mayores índices en el alumnado más joven, y mayoritariamente adolescente, del Ciclo II-II, que demuestra indiferencia y falta de compromiso social ante una sociedad que le ha fallado y discriminado por sus malos resultados académicos.

Es destacable que las personas adultas del Ciclo I presentan mayores niveles de enfado que las personas adultas más jóvenes del Ciclo II-I, al interpretar la falta de acuerdo como un fracaso personal, y haber vivido durante la dictadura, ejemplo de política impuesta, en la que el diálogo, la negociación, y el entendimiento están ausentes frente a la imposición, la disciplina y el autoritarismo. Como señaló una de las personas participantes, el distanciamiento está en este imaginario. De hecho, una de ellas, la CII-IA-7, propuso “separarse o alejarse de la persona con la que tienes el conflicto”, otra de ellas, la CII-IA-6, abogó por “dejar que el tiempo decida”. Todo ello está relacionado con un sentimiento de miedo del colectivo de mayor edad, por la propia experiencia de vida.

El colectivo del Ciclo II-II ofrece mayores resultados en las respuestas del “No lo sé” que el resto de los grupos debido, en parte, al desencanto social por formar parte de los índices de fracaso escolar que los estigmatizan y que tiene como consecuencia un autoconcepto académico y personal bajo. De hecho, Autor (1995) encontró que los adultos que participan en actividades de centros de EPA se caracterizan por tener baja autoestima educativa y desconfianza en el sistema educativo que les ha conducido al fracaso escolar y a tener bajas expectativas de futuro. Estas personas se encuentran en una situación precaria que dificulta su integración plena en la sociedad, ya que carecen de los elementos necesarios para enfrentarse a los desafíos de la vida actual. La falta de titulación básica obligatoria les ha privado del pleno estatus de ciudadanía. El aspecto académico es crucial en su autoconcepto, ya que el rendimiento académico se percibe como medida de su valía personal. Algunos estudios anteriores ponían de manifiesto la relación entre el autoconcepto, la autoestima y el rendimiento académico (Gallardo López *et al.* 2009; Lekue 2010; Padilla Carmona *et al.* 2010). Esta parte de la intervención parece mitigar parcialmente este sentimiento de forma que se alcanzaron los objetivos de la LOMLOE y los ODS 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, y 16.7.

A continuación, se da cuenta de la segunda pregunta de investigación sobre las percepciones de las personas participantes acerca de su futuro a partir de las respuestas a las preguntas formuladas en el decurso de las tareas 4 y 5.

La Tarea 4 inquirió al alumnado de EPA sobre las emociones que la representación del futuro evocaba en ellos y ellas, como se expone en la Figura 4. En los resultados se observa que la opción más puntuada es “¡Qué miedo!” por parte del alumnado del Ciclo I, probablemente debido a su edad, ya que este grupo se encuentra en la franja de mayores de 65 años y esta cuestión les genera miedo, pena y, a la vez, enfado ante la pérdida de la vida y la falta de tiempo futuro para realizarse. La persona participante CIA-36 resumió sus temores en la siguiente aportación: “Sin guerras, que haya paz en el mundo, bienestar y tranquilidad, amor para todos, comida para todos, que se trabaje en la agricultura”. Asimismo, es revelador que dentro de este colectivo una opción destacada es la respuesta “¡Qué bien!”, demostrando de esta manera ser personas optimistas y emprendedoras a pesar de estar en su etapa final activa.

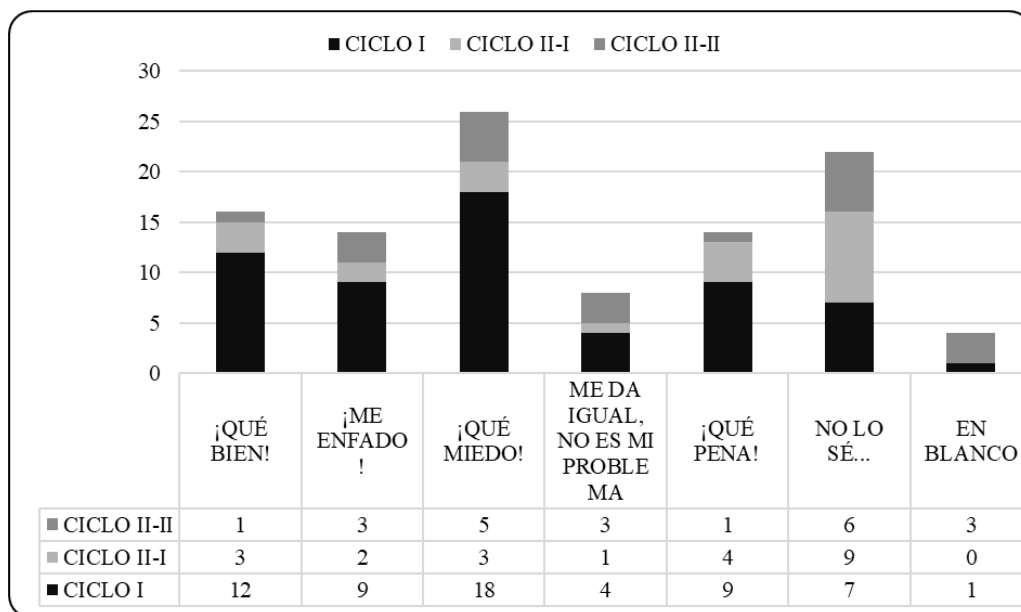


Figura 4: ¿Cómo te sientes al pensar en el futuro? Fuente: elaboración propia

Por lo que respecta al Ciclo II-II y Ciclo II-I, como se distingue en la Figura 4, la respuesta más elegida es la opción “No lo sé”, demostrando su escasa o nula implicación social que sugiere, como se mencionó anteriormente, un bajo autoconcepto personal y académico. La segunda opción en el Ciclo II-II es “¡Qué miedo!”. La preocupación futura de la persona participante CII-IIA-2: “mantener mi trabajo para que a mi familia no le falte de nada”, ejemplifica el temor manifestado por diversas aportaciones. La tendencia mostrada en las respuestas parece ser fruto de su baja autoestima traducida en una incertidumbre ante sus posibilidades de futuro, concretamente, las laborales, al encontrarse dentro del rango de población activa y tener limitadas sus posibilidades de promoción por su falta de cualificación académica y profesional.

Podemos vislumbrar con estas respuestas la imagen negativa que se tiene del futuro y que viene vinculada a la incertidumbre, como observaron Santisteban y Anguera (2013). En el caso del Ciclo II-I, la segunda opción es “¡Qué pena!” mostrando, de esta manera, un hecho positivo: su vuelta al sistema educativo para incorporarse laboral y socialmente. Asimismo, se desprende la toma de conciencia de su pérdida de oportunidades en periodos anteriores, las limitaciones con las que se encuentran, por este motivo, para acceder al mercado laboral y del impacto que genera en su crecimiento personal. De igual forma, parece apuntar una relación directa con la idea de sociedad líquida entendida como un tiempo sin certezas,

que supone la obligación de enfrentarse a sus miedos y angustias en una cultura laboral marcada por la flexibilidad que afecta a su previsión de futuro (Vásquez 2008).

Las respuestas emitidas por las personas participantes en la Tarea 5 sirvieron para evidenciar las creencias sobre su futuro y se presentan sin distinciones por grupo, como se muestra en la Figura 5. Cabe destacar una opción sobre el resto: una convención negativa respecto a su futuro que responde a la correlación analizada anteriormente. Es decir, si considero que mi futuro será peor, el pensamiento vinculado al mismo también es negativo, reflejado en las opciones de “No lo sé” o “¡Qué miedo!”. Las preocupaciones del colectivo de estudiantes de esta etapa pueden resumirse en los deseos manifestados por CII-IB-10: “[que] no haya guerras, no vender armas, acabar con el cambio del clima, no haya hambre, luchar por las desigualdades, reciclar, reutilizar”.

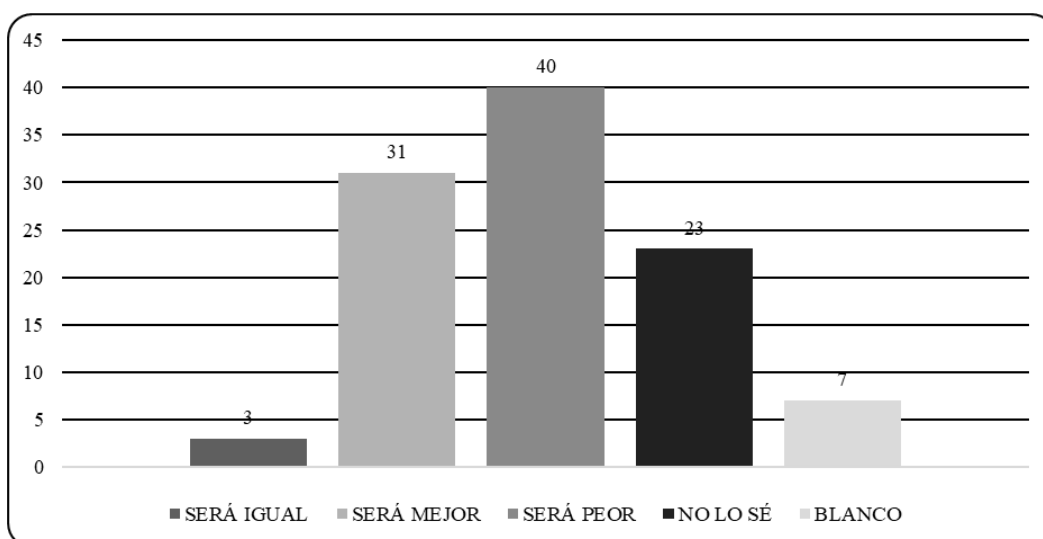


Figura 5: ¿Cómo crees que será el futuro? Fuente: elaboración propia

Esta relación estaría vinculada con el futuro visto como amenaza a causa de, en parte, las informaciones constantes de catástrofes transmitidas por los medios de comunicación (Garcés 2020; Servigne y Stevens 2020). Así pues, la participación del alumnado de EPA en cualquiera de las modalidades formativas que se ofrecen en los centros parece ayudar a que se logren los objetivos citados, tanto de los ODS como los de la LOMLOE (Maldonado *et al.* 2016).

Conclusiones

La singularidad y relevancia de la EPA dentro del sistema educativo queda a menudo eclipsada por la prioridad otorgada a los niveles educativos obligatorios inferiores en las políticas educativas. Si embargo, los resultados obtenidos ponen de manifiesto aspectos afectivos y actitudinales dignos de ser visibilizados.

Se observó que el alumnado que cursó sus estudios en sistemas educativos anteriores a la democracia carece de una cultura participativa, ya que no considera la opción de expresar su opinión o tomar decisiones de manera válida. Aunque se les permite hacer preguntas, no se espera una participación activa por parte del alumnado en ese sistema educativo previo. No obstante, se sostiene la creencia de que la participación es esencial para la movilización social, en tanto que implica modelos de comunicación horizontales que facilitan el intercambio de puntos de vista, la expresión de ideas, la colaboración y la construcción conjunta de conocimiento.

Por otro lado, se constató que la toma de conciencia de un futuro peor impulsa a las personas adultas a regresar al sistema educativo, lo que fortalece su autoestima y las empodera. Los adultos mayores, con experiencia vital en regímenes políticos dictatoriales, buscan el acuerdo y el consenso. Las personas más jóvenes, que han crecido en democracia, pueden mostrar desencanto y desafecto social al enfrentar conflictos, y se refugian en la indiferencia. Los resultados parecen apuntar a la falta de imposición de ideologías o formas de respuesta ante situaciones conflictivas como las posibles causas, lo que deriva en una falta de valoración del diálogo y una falta de compromiso social y personal. Esta cuestión en este grupo de edad de personas merece mayor atención en futuros estudios.

Respecto a la perspectiva del futuro de las personas adultas mayores, esta parece estar condicionada por el miedo y, en el grupo de personas más jóvenes, por la incertidumbre. En general, predomina la percepción que el futuro será aún peor, en consonancia con la idea de una sociedad líquida según Bauman (Vásquez 2008).

Los centros de EPA desempeñan un papel crucial al garantizar una sociedad más inclusiva, ética y participativa, por tanto, esta es una de las implicaciones para la práctica orientadora y psicopedagógica del personal docente que están en activo o que vayan a trabajar en el futuro en este nivel educativo.

Estos centros permiten que las personas adultas se adapten a la sociedad actual y pueden actuar como puntos de encuentro que facilitan el compromiso y la reinserción en el aprendizaje continuo, conectan con el territorio y fomentan la inclusión social (Fombona y Navas 2020). De esta forma, mitigan algunas de las emociones expresadas por algunas personas participantes y las empoderan. Reconocer las emociones asociadas a la posibilidad de participar es fundamental para comprender cómo influyen en el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico (Ortega-Sánchez *et al.* 2021). Reflexionar sobre las propias emociones es esencial para formar una ciudadanía crítica y comprometida (Zembylas 2005), especialmente en el caso de las personas adultas.

Finalmente, podemos afirmar que la participación es necesaria y está presente en todos los aspectos de nuestra vida, incluyendo la escuela (Estellés y Castellví 2020), y debe fomentarse desde ella. Además, la EPA, tal como asevera Autor (2007), contribuye a la formación moral, social y cívica, neutralizando expresiones culturales que promueven la violencia, el racismo o la dominación. Es necesario profundizar en esta línea de investigación para comprender cómo las personas adultas analizan e interpretan las noticias, así como investigar su participación como ciudadanía comprometida y crítica en una sociedad globalizada. Los resultados confirman la necesidad de seguir explorando el papel de las emociones en la toma de decisiones reflexivas en contextos educativos y en el análisis de cuestiones relevantes para la sociedad. Coincidimos con Jara y Santisteban (2018) al considerar que esta línea de investigación es uno de los principales desafíos en nuestro campo.

Cabe destacar que la muestra de este estudio es limitada, ya que se refiere únicamente a los centros de titularidad municipal de una sola provincia. Por lo tanto, los resultados no pueden extrapolarse, aunque son útiles para identificar la relación entre los sentimientos y las acciones, y para plantear nuevas preguntas y propuestas. Las actividades realizadas en la EPA son de notable relevancia puesto que refuerzan la necesidad de pensar de manera crítica al confrontar a los alumnos con información contradictoria y engañosa.

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The emotions of adult citizens regarding democratic participation

Manuel Martí-Puig, Emma-Dunia Vidal-Prades, Abraham Cerveró Carrascosa

Abstract. The present study explores the emotions perceived by several groups of adult students from life-long learning education stage from four educational schools in the Valencian autonomous community in Spain regarding inclusive democratic culture, conflict resolution, and their personal and professional future development. For this particular purpose, a teaching intervention was designed for the two cycles of this educational stage, the UNESCO-led global Adult Learning and Education Conferences and the Sustainable Development Goals was taken as the departing point. The data analysed were obtained from responses to two questionnaires on self-perceived emotions, which were used as tools to assess their ability to identify democratic participation and education for the future.

The results suggest the participants' support for the democratic spirit through participation and agreement. The emotions identified in the

participants varied according to their educational cycle and life experiences. Younger students showed greater indifference toward conflict resolution, while groups with older students were more likely to seek for agreement. Moreover, it was revealed that the representation of personal and professional future development of the participants generated an affective polarization between distrust and peace of mind among the group with more life experience.

Keywords: affectivity, lifelong learning, democratic citizenship, adult education, sustainable development goals

Les émotions des adults face à la participation démocratique

Manuel Martí-Puig, Emma-Dunia Vidal-Prades, Abraham Cerveró Carrascosa

Résumé. Cette étude explore les émotions perçues par différents groupes d'élèves de l'éducation des adultes (EPA) dans quatre établissements scolaires de la communauté valencienne, concernant la culture démocratique inclusive, la résolution des conflits et leur développement personnel et professionnel futur. Pour ce faire, une intervention pédagogique a été conçue pour les deux cycles de cette étape éducative, s'appuyant sur les Conférences sur l'Éducation des Adultes promues mondialement par l'UNESCO et les Objectifs de Développement Durable (ODD). Les données analysées proviennent des réponses à deux questionnaires sur les émotions auto-perçues, utilisés comme outils pour évaluer leur capacité à identifier la participation démocratique et l'éducation pour l'avenir.

Les résultats mettent en évidence un soutien à l'esprit démocratique à travers la participation et la recherche d'accords. Les émotions identifiées chez les participants varient selon les cycles et leurs expériences de vie. Les élèves plus jeunes ont montré une plus grande indifférence face à la résolution des conflits, tandis que les groupes d'adultes plus âgés ont privilégié la recherche de consensus. Par ailleurs, il est apparu que la représentation du développement personnel et professionnel futur des participants a généré une polarisation affective, oscillant entre méfiance et sérénité chez les personnes ayant une expérience de vie plus marquée.

Mots-clés: affectivité, apprentissage tout au long de la vie, citoyenneté démocratique, éducation des adultes, objectifs de développement durable

Las emociones de las personas adultas ante la participación democrática

Manuel Martí-Puig, Emma-Dunia Vidal-Prades, Abraham Cerveró-Carrascosa

Resumen. El presente estudio explora las emociones percibidas por diversos grupos de alumnado de educación de personas adultas (EPA) pertenecientes a cuatro centros educativos de la comunidad Valenciana sobre la cultura democrática inclusiva, la resolución de conflictos y su desarrollo personal y profesional futuro. Para ello, se diseñó una intervención didáctica para los dos ciclos de esta etapa educativa que tomó como punto de partida las Conferencias de Educación de Personas Adultas impulsadas a nivel mundial por la UNESCO y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible. Los datos analizados se obtuvieron de las respuestas a dos cuestionarios sobre las emociones autopercebidas, que se utilizaron como instrumentos para analizar su capacidad para identificar la participación democrática y la educación para el futuro.

Los resultados ponen de manifiesto el respaldo al espíritu democrático a través de la participación y el acuerdo. Las emociones identificadas en las personas participantes son diferentes en función de los ciclos y de sus experiencias vitales. El alumnado más joven mostró mayor indiferencia hacia la resolución de conflictos, mientras los grupos de personas de mayores se apostaron por la búsqueda del acuerdo. Asimismo, quedó manifiesto que la representación del desarrollo personal y profesional futuro de las personas participantes generó una polarización afectiva que osciló entre la desconfianza y la tranquilidad en el grupo de personas con mayor experiencia vital.

Palabras clave: afectividad; aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida; ciudadanía democrática; educación de adultos; objetivos de desarrollo sostenible

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After-school activism within the state school system and within the neighbourhood: the “Scuoletta” case study in San Lorenzo (Rome)

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Theoretical and Urban Premises

The dismantling of the “Public City” contrasts with the high expectations about the Urban Destiny and contributes to devise as “fractured” contemporary Global Cities, in which a basic duality of rich and poor, formal and informal, organized and disintegrated, ruled and unruled, separated and linked at the same time has been shown. Two decades of neo-liberal reforms, formal democratization, and globalizing urban modernity have caused nothing but disillusion for a great area of city residents that live in the so-called “Anti-City”. Poverty, insecurity and exclusion are the main features by which the neo-liberal economic model deals with the performance and representation gap of the “real democracy” and with which it spreads high social costs among the lower sectors of the population.

Related to the above-mentioned scenario, the pandemic caused by the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus as a “total social fact” has revealed some effects well beyond those linked to people’s health. The epidemic has been changing our daily lives and our behaviour, and it is still causing a deep and far-reaching impact on the economic and political field. A closer look at the social, economic and political consequences of the pandemic suggests that these issues are not directly attributable to its epidemiological features, but they are instead shaped by the ways whereby national and local societies reacted to it. In the field of the state school system, for example, the “Distance Learning” that replaced classroom teaching during lockdown periods highlighted all the limitations of the neo-liberal reforms, which abandoned students belonging to the subaltern social classes and moulded a school suited to

the bourgeoisie. Faced with the paradox of a public school helping those who least need to be helped, some territories self-organise forms of resistance around basic needs: food, housing, health, schooling. In some cases, these activities take place in neighbourhoods that are undergoing a profound social and urban change, such as San Lorenzo district in Rome, where the subject of our research is located: the popular after-school called the "Scuoletta". This is where our socio-ethnographic investigation took place, by means of non-participant observation. In addition, six in-depth interviews were conducted between the popular educators and the neighbourhood inhabitants.

A Contentious Territory: the District of San Lorenzo in Rome

San Lorenzo is a neighbourhood of Rome with a very particular history. Since its construction, at the end of the 19th century, San Lorenzo was an "irregular" area, because it was not included in the Institutional Urban Plan of the City of Rome (in 1873). At first, it was intended as a destination for the former peasants who came from Southern Italy and the workers who erected the buildings in the Downtown. During Fascism it became the focus of the Resistance against Mussolini. Then, it endured a harsh bombing by the US Air Forces in July 1943, with almost two thousand dead, including several children. San Lorenzo was, in fact, located near the railway station ("Stazione Termini") and it was essential for the logistics of the fascist regime.

In the Seventies, San Lorenzo had an important role in the student and social protest, but then it has begun to be gentrified when the students of Sapienza University of Rome – located nearby – settled there. Rental prices started to increase sharply and the cost of living became unbearable for a large number of elderly residents, who were forced to move elsewhere. The neighbourhood suddenly changed, therefore: in the following years it has been structured along the lines of a "student economy", until another crisis has occurred, due to the lockdown and the closure of the University.

The Demographic Issue

Simone, the owner of "I Colli emiliani", one of the traditional inns in the neighbourhood, states: "Today, without the University, San Lorenzo district would not survive. Nearly all of our customers are university students. At lunchtime, we might have a few workers or office employees, but these are rare exceptions: the neighbourhood has become depopulated of its long-term residents. Today, we only see students and

tourists; in fact, during the day the district is deserted because students are at university and tourists are in the city centre". Evidently, the demographic desertification of a given area implicates the role of the school system, which has long been a reliable indicator of the age structure of a population. Daniele, a waiter at "I Colli emiliani", explains: "I am 42 years born, and I was born in San Lorenzo. When I attended elementary school, the institute 'Saffi' had classes going up to section 'L'. Now my daughter attends the same school, but her class is in section 'A', and there are only two sections left, 'A' and 'B'. Children are no longer born in the neighbourhood because young couples can neither find apartments to rent nor afford to buy one. Apartments are turned into bed & breakfasts and hostels. Even university students struggle to find rental accommodations, as hosting tourists is more profitable". Between university students and tourists, the neighbourhood fills up with "temporary population" (Brollo 2024).

The Case-study of "Scuoletta" and the Solidarity Network within the District

In the neighbourhood, as in the wider city of Rome, the issue affecting schools is not only quantitative, but also qualitative. The reduction in public funding allocated to schools has diminished the quality of education, precisely at a historical moment when, due to rising immigration to Italy and the increasing number of children born to foreign parents, greater investment is required – especially to prepare teachers to manage the multi-ethnic composition of their classrooms, as school-age migrants children arrived in Italy in recent years have exacerbated overcrowding, compounded budget shortfall, forced teachers to grapple with language barriers, and inflamed social tensions in places unaccustomed to educating immigrants students.

San Lorenzo district, however, has a different history, compared to other areas in the city of Rome. Here, solidarity and mutual aid have a long tradition, which is expressed by a deep-rooted democratic and left-wing associationism. Since 2019, the "Scuoletta" has organised after-school and homework assistance for students in difficulty. The service is provided three afternoons a week and concerns primary, lower secondary school and higher secondary school students. There is an agreement between the association and the "official" educational institutions: the popular educators carry out their activities on the school premises, after school hours, and the teachers refer students who need help to the after-school. At the end of each after-school session, the classrooms are cleaned by both educators and students. The participants are aware of the established

schedule: playtime is from 4:30 to 5:00 p.m., followed by study time until 6:20 p.m., and then cleaning activities continue until 6:45 p.m. This schedule applies to primary school children, while lower secondary school students follow a reversed routine, with study time preceding a short play period from 6:00 to 6:20 p.m., just before the cleaning.

The classroom setting reflects the multicultural composition of the group, with signs displaying the names of ethnic foods and words written in Arabic. This appears to be a pedagogical strategy aimed at supporting the acquisition of the Italian language, which many of the students with migrant backgrounds do not speak at home with their families. Other posters promote cultural diversity and tolerance, encouraging self-expression without fear of social stigma or marginalization. One such poster reads: "If you run against the wind, you feel a different wind!" Another poster tries to build a link between after-school and home life: "I need my own space to study!"

Learning takes place in small groups, with each educator supporting a maximum of three students. During the first non-participant observation, there was only one Italian student among approximately fifteen pupils of foreign origin. In the second observation, all twenty students were children of immigrant families. There were twelve educators present in the first session and fifteen in the second. Across both observations, primary school children outnumbered those from lower secondary school. Only one middle school student was present in the first session; in the second, all participants were from primary school. A gender imbalance was noted, with a higher number of female students. Two girls wore the hijab. Each group displayed a sense of harmony and mutual engagement in the educational experience. Educators frequently encouraged peer support – for example, to practice subtraction in Maths, one child would lower the fingers of the peer sitting across them.

Some students live in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo, and their families are employed in the tertiary sector, often in low-skilled jobs, such as restaurant services, hotel reception, personal care for the non-autonomous, and cleaning of homes, offices or hotels' rooms. Other students live in nearby districts, such as Casilino and Prenestino. After the program, they are taken home by educators using private or public transportation. Those living in other districts specifically come to the "Scuoletta" to attend the after-school program, having heard about it through schoolmates or family networks, sometimes along ethnic lines. At this stage of the research, it has not yet been possible to map how many students reside in the neighbourhood and how many come from outside.

The students appear attentive and disciplined: during the observation period, they would only leave their seats after asking permission from the educator in charge. Some have younger siblings enrolled in the same program as well: in such cases, they display responsibility and pay special attention to them.

Students proudly show educators the good grades they received in their morning classes, thus establishing a connection between formal schooling and the after-school program. This dynamic prevents the program from becoming merely a “holding space” for children who cannot stay home alone, or a neighbourhood play centre. Once they finish their homework, students are allowed to go outside and play in the courtyard, where only a few educators are needed as the children play freely and harmoniously. Most educators begin cleaning the classrooms, taking on more demanding tasks, such as lifting desks to clean the floors. It is noteworthy that some mothers accompany their children to the after-school program and then remain in the building – either in the corridor or the garden – chatting among themselves without interfering with the educational activities. These women are predominantly foreign, coming from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or India (during the first observation, there was also a man who stayed for half an hour to ask educators about his child’s school performance). This phenomenon is significant both because it offers women a space for socialization beyond their role as mothers, and because it brings the school institution closer to immigrant families, who often find in the after-school program the empathetic relationship they do not experience in formal school settings.

The Popular Educators: Biographical Path and Social Values

Obviously, educators play a fundamental role. At this stage, it is not possible to provide a definitive analysis of these actors: we can only identify some tendencies that may help guide our response to the research question: ‘Is the political culture of the district the main factor shaping their activism?’. During the initial phase of fieldwork – especially in a sensitive context such as education for underage students – it is advisable not to burden educators with in-depth interviews. Gaining their trust without being intrusive is essential. Indeed, during our first observation, we asked three educators to participate in interviews; one of them politely declined. We interviewed the coordinator of the “Scuoletta” project and another educator. Giulia explained that educators engaged in San Lorenzo rarely have past or present experience in political parties; many, instead, come from “secular” scouting movements. She herself started

there, then decided, as she put it, “to use my time to do something more useful”.

Fabio, on the other hand, had never participated in any social activity before. Now that he is working less (we did not inquire about the reasons), he decided to devote time to the after-school program because he could not accept that children of foreign origin had fewer opportunities than Italian ones. He wanted to help ensure they could start from the same educational level, in order to develop enough cultural capital to compete in the labour market. Fabio does not live in San Lorenzo (he did not say where), but he chose to be involved in the “Scuoletta” because he believes the neighbourhood is well-suited for the kind of support he wanted to provide. When asked explicitly whether he considers his activity to be “political”, he answered yes: even though he is not affiliated with any party, his goal is clearly political, as it aims to reduce inequality. In fact, he often discusses politics with other educators, who share the same objective. Their group is highly cohesive and they often meet in the evenings as well.

The political dimension of solidarity expressed by the “Scuoletta” is strongly emphasized in Giulia’s words. Although the interview was brief, certain features of the association’s pedagogical approach emerged clearly. The “Scuoletta” aims to propose a new pedagogy, as the one currently prevailing in the Italian school system is shaped around the capabilities and aspirations of the middle class. However, “this model structurally disadvantages many students – such as those who are children of immigrant parents – who often achieve poor academic outcomes, ultimately leading to school dropout. This is precisely why the after-school program is necessary. In a truly democratic and inclusive school system, the “Scuoletta” would be redundant”.

We did not discuss the theoretical foundations of the pedagogy it adopts – an issue that certainly warrants further exploration in a future meeting. However, within the *doposcuola* in San Lorenzo, the political dimension is not merely theoretical. For instance, the day after my second observation, the “Scuoletta” was scheduled to participate in a public meeting organized by the local network of community associations, focused on the ongoing transformations of San Lorenzo neighbourhood. The disappearance of long-term residents – replaced by a transient population of students and tourists – and the resulting inability of new families to find affordable housing also has repercussions on the quality of education. The families of the students who attend the “Scuoletta” are facing increasing difficulties due to the deterioration of local welfare and

the risk of a new wave of racism, fuelled by the presence of a far-right government in Italy.

At the end of the public assembly, participants were invited to the “Scuoletta” to sample ethnic food prepared by the students’ families. We can therefore identify three distinct levels of political engagement within the activities of the after-school program:

Scalar level	Characteristics	Empirical evidence
<i>Micro</i>	At the personal level, the educator makes a political choice by supporting the Scuoletta’s students.	“I started in the scouting movement, then decided to use my time to do something more useful” (Giulia)
<i>Meso</i>	Concerning the users of service: students are given the opportunity to catch up academically, and start on equal footing with their peers who hold Italian citizenship.	Fabio could not accept that children of foreign origin had fewer opportunities than the Italian ones.
<i>Macro</i>	Involving the active participation of the after-school program and its students in neighbourhood political initiatives, with the aim of shaping the area into one that is “family friendly”, not solely oriented toward tourists and university students.	The Scuoletta usually participates in public assemblies about various problems in San Lorenzo district: gentrification, loss of residents, high rental costs, drug and alcohol addiction in youth population.

Table 1_ Level of political engagement expressed by the “Scuoletta” after-school

The Meaning of Participation

The classification outlined above would require a deeper analysis of the current meaning of “participation”. Here, we limit ourselves to noting how the crisis of liberal democracy – manifested in voter abstention and the rise of populist movements – has prompted scholars to recognize as political those economic and social models that challenge the dominant paradigms, even when they are not promoted by mainstream political parties or trade unions. As such, the concept of political participation is not only confined to the pursuit of power or the intent to influence governing elites; it now encompasses expressive and identity-based dimensions. However, this is not merely an individual experience: activists build networks among associations that are no longer defined along rigid ideological lines, and are therefore more willing to form

alliances and combine their efforts. At the same time, social organizations increasingly become spaces for new forms of political innovation. The highly structured narratives of the twentieth century, focused on production, give way to new forms of planning that center on consumption, public services, local welfare, and minority rights.

In this regard, Ulrich Beck spoke of the “sub-politicization” of everyday life (Beck [1986] 1999) – yet this is not entirely a novel phenomenon. As recent studies have also shown, this “other politics” (which operates within the social sphere, beyond mere assistance) has deep roots, reworking patterns of participation that emerged during the 1980s. That decade is often associated with “the return to the private sphere” by many activists; in reality, the rejection of the “double violence” of the 1970s (on one hand, the violence of far-left political groups, and on the other, the massacres carried out by neo-fascists with the support of elements inner to the secret services) gave rise to alternative social models. These models blurred the boundaries between public and private, proposing “individualized collective actions” (Micheletti and McFarland 2010) in which collaboration and solidarity persisted, but without stifling individual freedom – precisely because they developed outside the traditional framework and ritualism of twentieth-century political parties. Another aspect highlights the political dimension of the educators’ commitment within the “Scuoletta”: their ongoing reflection on the experience they are part of and the meaning it entails. In the short term, the after-school program offers significant support to students. Even in the medium terms, its positive outcomes are likely to be substantial, as it enables students to enter the next stages of schooling without educational gaps. It is highly probable that the young participants in the “Scuoletta” will not drop out of school. However, in the long term, there is a risk that the after-school program might end up “legitimizing” the downsizing and poor quality of the state school system. Morning school teachers may stop making efforts to support struggling students, knowing that the afternoon program will take care of this task. Even from the students’ perspective, formal schooling might be delegitimized, as the most effective support will be perceived as coming from grassroots educators. This risk is frequently discussed in the Scuoletta’s assemblies. While no definitive response has yet been found, the issue will be further explored in our research. For now, it is sufficient to note how self-criticism and continuous analysis of one’s own practice are indicators of a solid political awareness expressed through social engagement. Once the political dimension of the Scuoletta’s activity is acknowledged, the next step is to assess whether and to what extent the local subculture influenced the development of the after-school initiative, or whether other

factors played a role. Recent and highly relevant studies (Parziale 2023) have confirmed that Italy is also undergoing a global reform of education aligned with neoliberal principles (Mayo 2015). More specifically, the school system is involved in a technical-organizational transition in which one of its key players (the teaching staff) struggles to redefine its role in the educational field.

School and Conflict

At the same time, schools have always been permeable to conflict (Bourdieu 1984), in line with their pedagogical mission. For at least a decade, teachers have shown solidarity with high school students protesting the reduction of public education funding and the introduction of reforms that, on the one hand, allowed private actors to enter school boards and, on the other, provided companies with young students to be used as a labor force (Cini 2017). In 2012, for instance, in Italy the joint mobilization of teachers and students succeeded in halting the Monti government's proposal to increase teaching hours without raising salaries (Piazza 2014). However, the convergence of goals between students and teachers can be considered a novelty: in everyday school life, these two groups are typically in conflict, as students often view teachers as the "proximate institution" to be resisted, while teachers tend to perceive students as problematic subjects to be disciplined when they break school rules. The recent and numerous episodes of bullying by students (and at times even by their parents) against school personnel further confirm this climate of tension within educational institutions.

Despite this, recent mobilizations have increasingly taken place in alliance. This anomaly may be explained by the fact that today mass protests are less politically oriented and more corporatist in nature compared to the past. Moreover, a paradoxical generational alliance has emerged between students and teachers: the "lengthening of youth" as a social condition, combined with the relatively young age of many teachers, creates a dynamic in which educators behave as "older students". The precarious nature of teachers' employment also plays a significant role in heightening their engagement in conflictual practices, especially as many young workers in schools are not unionized, unlike previous generations.

In this context, commitment to a self-organized after-school program can be considered a form of dissent, akin to participating in a rally or a strike, as it constitutes a way of doing politics by other means (Parziale 2025). Popular education carries a revolutionary attitude on multiple levels:

1. Providing academic support to struggling students represents an attempt to counteract the reproduction of educational inequalities, echoing Lorenzo Milani's view of schooling as a class struggle (Mayo 2013);
2. Popular educators do not merely reinforce school-sanctioned knowledge aligned with the value system of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Rather, "they attempt to adapt Italian/Western mainstream culture to the cultural background of students from other parts of the world, fostering intercultural dialogue" (Parziale 2025, 81);
3. The after-school program examined in this research display a strategic flexibility reminiscent of classic revolutionary theory: instead of confronting the dominant values of official schooling with wholly heterodox messages (which students may not even be able to understand), it seeks a compromise that allows coexistence between the traditional school curriculum (e.g., a Muslim student attending an Italian high school cannot avoid studying *the Divine Comedy*) and the cultural framework imparted by families from different sociocultural contexts.

In the case study of the educators involved in the "Scuoletta", does the political dimension of their activism reflect the subcultural traits of the neighbourhood? Could the epistemological and strategic sophistication observed in their teaching practices be informed by the political refinement of a territory historically associated with revolutionary aspirations and significant social movements? Although this research is still in its early stages, our initial findings suggest a positive response: none of the three educators we interviewed live in San Lorenzo, yet all deliberately come to the neighbourhood to provide the services of the "Scuoletta". Although they were not asked explicitly, it seems unlikely that they would have chosen to engage in a popular after-school initiative in a neighbourhood other than San Lorenzo. Indeed, here they have found a cultural and political disposition conducive to their work. What does this disposition consist of? This question will require further analysis in the next stages of the research. For now, we note the neighbourhood's solidarity networks toward the most disadvantaged and subaltern groups; the general absence of discrimination toward migration (though xenophobic attacks have unfortunately occurred here as well); the progressive political address of the local administration (the district has always been governed by centre-left coalitions); and the cultural importance attributed to education in a neighbourhood located near Europe's largest university. Finally, the area's working class and artisan past may symbolically connect to the "diasporic identities" (Parziale 2025) embodied by the young students attending the "Scuoletta".

As a conclusion, today the educational system is marked by global tensions. Learning processes have been profoundly disrupted by the digital revolution and by the inability to manage variables such as Artificial Intelligence – understood here simply as the acquisition of knowledge through electronic devices rather than through a human figure traditionally defined as “the teacher”. This upheaval is compounded by the neoliberal defunding of public education, a process that has been underway for years. School buildings, gyms, furniture and software infrastructure all suffer from decreasing financial support, often paradoxically redirected toward private schools. The existing socioeconomic conditions “out there” influence the school, which not only fails to correct them, but often exacerbates them, channelling students toward adult destinies that frequently replicate – or worsen – the socioeconomic paths of their parents. This is a global issue, so much so that *The New Zealand Listener*, published on the other side of the world, asked in its January 20-26, 2024 issue: “Is our schools broken?” (McLauchlan 2024). Popular education activism represents signs of resistance: it deserves to be studied as researchers, and supported as citizens.

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After-school activism within the state school system and within the neighbourhood: the "Scuoletta" case study in San Lorenzo (Rome)

Luca Alteri

Abstract. The article is based on a qualitative empirical research: non-participant observation and in-depth interviews with residents of San Lorenzo neighbourhood in Rome and popular educators of the after-school "Scuoletta". The objective is to understand whether and to what extent the subculture of the area influences this form of resistance to the neo-liberal school which, instead of helping the subaltern classes, relegates them to a destiny of social marginalization and labour exploitation. The research is not yet finished, but some results are already discernible.

Keywords: after-school, neo-liberal reform, popular educators.

L'activisme populaire au sein de l'école publique et sur le terrain. L'étude de cas de la Scuoletta à San Lorenzo (Rome)

Résumé. L'article est basé sur une recherche empirique qualitative: observation non participant et entretiens approfondis avec des habitants du quartier de San Lorenzo et des éducateurs populaires de la Scuoletta. L'objectif est de comprendre si et dans quelle mesure la sous-culture du quartier influence cette forme de résistance à l'école néolibérale qui, au lieu d'aider les classes subalternes, les relègue à un destin de marginalisation sociale et d'exploitation du travail. La recherche n'est pas encore terminée, mais certains résultats sont déjà perceptibles.

Mots clés: école publique, classes subalternes, éducateurs populaires

El activismo popular en la escuela pública y en el barrio: el caso de la Scuoletta en San Lorenzo (Roma)

Resumen. El artículo se basa en una investigación empírica cualitativa: observación no participante y entrevistas en profundidad con habitantes del barrio de San Lorenzo y educadores populares de la escuela extraescolar "Scuoletta". El objetivo es comprender si la subcultura de la zona influye, y en qué medida, en esta forma de resistencia a la escuela neoliberal que, en lugar de ayudar a las clases subalternas, las relega a un destino de marginación social y explotación laboral. La investigación aún no ha concluido, pero ya vislumbra algunos resultados.

Palabras clave: educación popular, clases subalternas, marginación social

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MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLE

Institutionalization and professionalization of adult learning and education (ALE) – a comparative perspective on the ALE Toolbox of DVV International

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Introduction

Adult learning and education (ALE) is a key element of lifelong learning, and the institutionalization and professionalization are of major concern when strengthening ALE (UNESCO 2016). There is growing attention on ALE in attempts to develop lifelong learning systems (Desjardins and Ioannidou 2020). Looking at ALE as a sub-sector of the education system, having a variety of providers and also becoming an academic discipline with ALE teaching and research, is growing (Benavot et al. 2022). All of this is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) where promoting lifelong learning for all is called for (UN 2015). The role of youth and adult education in the SDGs (Schweighöfer 2019) and ALE in the framework of lifelong learning (Grotlüschen et al. 2023) are therefore of high relevance for policy and practice.

The Marrakech Framework for Action as the outcome document of CONFINTEA VII (UNESCO 2022) has clear statements on “Redesigning systems for ALE” in which institutionalization and professionalization play an important role. Advancing CONFINTEA VII, the Futures of Education initiative of UNESCO (ICFE 2021) had invited the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) for their statement which included “strengthening the institutional structures (like community learning centres, for delivering ALE) and securing the role of ALE staff” as well as “improving in-service and pre-service education, further education, training, capacity building and employment conditions of adult educators” (ICAE 2021, 11)

DVV International as the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association is involved in ALE together with partners in more than 30 countries around the globe for the last 50 years (Hirsch et al. 2019). It is interesting and enlightening to look at the development of DVV International in light of landmark anniversaries and signposts of ALE globally and at examples in countries (Hinzen et al. 2024). A major learning throughout the rich experiences is that ALE needs institutions and places for adults just like children have their kindergarten, pupils their schools, youth their vocational education and training, students their colleges and universities (Belete et al. 2022). This requires solid ALE policies, legislation and financing, and professionalization which include the training and capacity building of staff working in ALE (Avramovska et al. 2023).

Context

A decade back DVV International with its partners started to work on a new set of instruments to develop and strengthen the institutionalization and professionalization of ALE. The experiences from a number of countries led to the idea to develop such instruments globally and at the same time adapt and apply them on local level. This process started in cooperation of DVV International, ICAE and the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibnitz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) by developing the Curriculum globALE CG) as a cross-cultural tool for the training of adult educators.

After a period of implementation with partners, and later consultation and revision under the leadership of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) it is by now recommended by UNESCO as a tool and available through their website and the UNESCDOC digital library (UIL et al. 2021). The official document is in English language. The DVV

International website has some 15 additional language versions, including Arabic, French, Georgian, Lao and Spanish.

Meanwhile, also in the context of strengthening ALE and places for adults to meet and learn, several additional tools have been developed, which has led to open up and fill the ALE Toolbox available on the website of DVV International (www.dvv-international.de). These tools include Curriculum institutionALE (CI) for organizational development in ALE institutions, Curriculum managerALE for managers of ALE institutions, Curriculum interculturALE for the training of instructors and trainers for their work with refugees, and a Gender in ALE Toolkit. In addition, there is ALESBA (Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach) as a tool for the development of ALE systems, and most recently the Guidebook sustainabALE for organizational development in line with Education for Sustainable Development.

Another important context is the growing interest globally in the importance of non-state actors or non-governmental organizations (NGO) as civil society partners and service providers of ALE. The theme of the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2021) was on *Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses?* This report came up with relevant findings like: “Non-governmental and community organizations are the main providers of adult education” (ibid., 183) and “Community learning centres (CLCs) are increasingly recognized as playing an important role in providing education opportunities meeting local communities’ needs” (ibid., 265). Implicitly this calls for strengthening institutionalization and professionalization of ALE services and structures. This is what the ALE Toolbox aims at.

Research question

The examples of countries where these instruments have been used have grown and several studies have shown interesting findings for comparative analysis of similarities and differences in implementation.

In the context of this presentation, CG for the professionalization of adult educators and CI for strengthening adult learning institutions are of special interest. Experiences from a variety of countries are used to discuss findings from a comparative perspective. The research design follows experiences and reflections that have earlier been made through the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE) (Reischmann 2024). The overarching research question is: What are

important factors that must be considered when implementing global tools on the local level?

Curriculum globALE in practice

CG is a modular and competency-based framework curriculum for the training of adult educators. It includes five modules: scientific and political foundations of adult education, adult learning and adult teaching, communication and group dynamics in adult learning and education, methods of adult learning and education as well as a unit on planning, organization and evaluation. It is used by DVV International since 2012 as a basis to creating qualification systems for adult educators in many countries.

CG was introduced in Palestine in 2014 – carefully aligning its key elements with the local context. This process required not only the translation of the framework into Arabic but also the modification of terms and descriptions to ensure they resonated with the common understanding of the Palestinian community. This adaptation engaged a diverse range of stakeholders from the ALE sector in Palestine. A pivotal element in the successful localization and implementation of CG was the strategic partnership with Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem, an institution with substantial expertise in both formal and non-formal adult education. By training selected university staff to serve as master trainers, DVV International played a significant role in advancing the professionalization of the ALE sector. Furthermore, Dar al-Kalima University integrated CG as a core component of its master's program in management of cultural institutions.

ALE in Palestine is predominantly associated with literacy programs aimed at older adults. Consequently, the implementation of CG required explanatory efforts to help partner organizations and training participants understand and embrace the holistic concept of ALE. To broaden perspectives on ALE and provide practical insights, an international expert with extensive experience in conducting CG trainings was invited to train the first cohort of facilitators. This initiative significantly enriched the local understanding of ALE by incorporating global best practices. Despite strong initial support from politics until early 2022, the Ministry of Education's interest has waned, posing substantial challenges to the institutionalization of CG in Palestine. Moreover, the political and security situation in Palestine has also impacted the implementation of CG. Movement restrictions across the

country have hindered the smooth execution of the program, adding another layer of complexity to the process.

When starting its work with CG in Kyrgyzstan in 2019, DVV International conducted a comprehensive study to assess the existing qualification system for adult educators and to establish which gaps were there to bridge.

From the start, graduates from CG courses in Uzbekistan were involved as advisors and master trainers. To ensure sustainability beyond the engagement of DVV International, a partner institution was identified, which would be able and was willing to provide trainings along CG also in the future: the Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev. It was then decided to translate the curriculum both into Russian and Kyrgyz – a difficult exercise, because some terms and concepts had no proper equivalent in the Kyrgyz language. The curriculum was then operationalized and adjusted to local needs. This included defining the exact content, methods, duration, session plans but also development of supporting material (including online resources) in Russian and Kyrgyz. In the first cycle of training implemented in 2019/2020 with 14 participants international trainers teamed up with local trainers to ease knowledge transfer and make sure the training inputs were well adjusted to the needs, interests and previous competences of the participants.

Participants were selected in a competitive way to reach out to the most motivated adult educators who would use and promote the new concepts and techniques. Part of the training are practical phases, where participants can include newly gained skills and competences into their regular work and document the sessions on film or other media to be shared and discussed with their peers. In 2021 and 2023 two more training cycles were implemented with altogether 35 participants, now with substantial support from trainers of the first cohort. The joint trainings created a lively community of practitioners.

Similar cases were studied in Tajikistan and Cambodia. In order to ensure government approval and consensus among the stakeholders from the start, in both countries a working group including representatives from ministries, universities and adult education centres was established to advise on and to accompany the implementation of CG. The contextualization in Tajikistan and Cambodia was described as particularly challenging, since some terms did not exist in the national languages and had to be invented in Tajik and Khmer. There was also a certain reservation against some of the teaching techniques CG suggests,

which were considered too playful and too interactive to be embraced by the participating trainers. However, introducing CG was very successful: In Tajikistan the Academy of Public Administration is in process of qualifying adult educators independently, while the Royal University of Phnom Penh also has all the expertise to provide contextualized trainings and licenses in ALE.

Curriculum institution ALE in practice

Core elements of CI were developed in 2014, while the curriculum was officially published in 2020. In various countries it serves as a navigator to strengthen the essential functions of adult learning centres: providing education, offering orientation and career guidance as well as encouraging participation in the community based on a set of basic capacities for adult learning centres. These include embedding ALE in the vision and strategy, conducting regular needs assessments as a basis for program development, reaching out to the community, attracting qualified trainers, engaging in networking, providing a motivating learning environment and ensuring sufficient and accurate funding. CI suggests a set of key performance indicators, which – adjusted to the specific context – allow assessing the current capacity of adult education centres, setting objectives and monitoring progress.

To effectively use CI for strengthening adult education centres in Palestine, it was essential to contextualize the curriculum to reflect the local realities. This was done in collaboration with Dar al-Kalima University, the same partner institution with which DVV International previously collaborated on the CG. Through a series of workshops, DVV International, together with Dar al-Kalima University and the partnering adult education centres, agreed to maintain the core content and structure of the CI while adapting some tools to better suit the local context. As a result, seven specific tools were developed to assess the needs for organizational development. It became necessary to prioritize and develop a capacity development program based on these priorities. DVV International then implemented this program and met various challenges along the way, such as a lack of time, budget, and personnel, as well as resistance to change from stakeholders.

Additionally, there were issues related to insufficient support to the partners from their higher leadership, such as the municipality or the Ministry of Education. In response, DVV International came up with approaches tailored to accommodate the partners' different levels of openness and availability of resources. The limited financial and human

resources of the partner centres impose constraints on what could realistically be overcome in the organizational capacity development process. For instance, although partners recognized the benefits of performance management tools, they are often understaffed. Beyond assessing needs and capacities, the CI and the accompanying key performance indicators (KPIs) were utilized in the selection of partner centres.

In a highly hierarchical and mostly state-driven country like Laos, it was key to form a strategic partnership with the government to get access to adult education centres. Although there was general governmental approval of using CI for professionalizing adult learning centres, the team encountered a certain resistance to systematic changes in the centres. Used to being told what to do rather than to conduct assessments and invent tailor-made solutions to problems identified, senior staff was open to new knowledge and techniques but was hesitant to apply them in their institutions. Accordingly, they felt more comfortable with attending classical management-related training than with individual consulting and follow-up that was applied in most other countries to foster change in adult education centres. It also turned out, that changing management styles is difficult in a financially weak and fully state-run environment, where there is yet limited knowledge and understanding of management skills and techniques.

In Jordan, DVV International undertook the development of a locally adapted set of KPIs for adult education centres through a highly participatory process, designed to foster a sense of ownership and commitment among the partners. These KPIs cover the main organizational development fields pertinent to adult education centres in Jordan. Currently, DVV International Jordan is in the process of revising these KPIs, with the assistance of an international organizational development expert, to ensure that partner organizations can apply them easily. During this phase, a tool will be created to assess the level of organizational development, accompanied by a guideline for managers on the effective use of the tool. This will empower the centres “to track progress, set benchmarks, and work towards continuous improvement” (Cretu 2023). The developed KPIs also played a crucial role in the selection of new partner centres.

Comparative findings

A comparison of the cases described above brings to light several factors, which must be considered when implementing these global tools on the local level.

Contextualization and operationalization are a key challenge requiring substantial knowledge of the local context and a clear vision of all involved stakeholders. Contextualization encompasses several spheres:

- Especially in the work with CG, translation of terms and concepts into local languages was hard and time-consuming but absolutely worthwhile, because in some countries, now for the first time, there are resources available on ALE.
- Closely linked to language is the challenge to localize the – mostly – western ALE and management concepts and terminology. Two aspects seem to be crucial: First, the localization should recognize local traditions and experiences and use them as a starting point for the capacity building. Secondly, space should be provided to share and clarify the theoretical background of the methods and approaches used.
- Another challenge is the integration of the curricula or qualification systems into the national ALE architecture. This affects the vision of ALE just as much as the institutional set-up, management processes, recognition, validation and accreditation of specific services and competences. Experiences show that liaising with key stakeholders from the start is essential.
- Moreover, the curricula must be adjusted to the specific needs and constraints of the target groups such as previous knowledge, skills and experience, availability or lack of resources, staff continuity, influence and power within and beyond institutions etc. To overcome these challenges, cooperation with stakeholders spanning from planning to evaluation has proven to be effective.

The curricula just set frameworks. Each office together with partners have to develop them further, create more supporting materials like additional modules, assessment tools, background documents (e.g. in form of an online library), videos and podcasts.

Especially CG impacts on a change of thinking about the learning objectives and process and contributes to personal development.

Most of the participants of CG trainings (especially women) expressed, that they gained relevant skills and feel more self-assured in planning and offering education. They reported to put more emphasis on critical thinking, debate joint decision-making in their courses. On a similar note,

it could be observed that organisational development based on CI leads to more interaction of adult education centres with the community, higher recognition of their work, a better understanding of their role in the ALE system and in many cases even engagement in lobbying and advocacy for ALE.

The curricula are so far focused on face-to-face learning, which most participants prefer to online-sessions. However, blended learning formats should be explored further as an effective and cost-efficient way to reach out to more participants and institutions and to help them become proficient in a digitalised world.

A key factor to success of both curricula is their focus on practice – requesting each participant to include newly gained skills and competences into their regular work and share this experience with their peers.

The selection of participants and partner organizations has become more strategic, structured and competitive to foster change. It is recommended to select participants and institutions from various backgrounds, rural and urban adult education centres, universities, vocational training and government. This creates the chance for a wider outreach and inspires the learning process.

Resistance to change is an issue, which is addressed most prominently in CI: It recommends a number of steps to identify goals and design the development process together with the partner organizations and foresees joint monitoring and evaluation. All these steps enhance organizational change and are considered as important as capacity development in the form of trainings, coaching, peer-to-peer exchange etc. The participatory approach, involving key stakeholders already in the conception, planning, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes, has proven to be particularly effective and sustainable – creating openness and readiness for ongoing professionalization.

Working on the curricula has boosted exchange and cooperation between offices, partner organizations and individual trainers and education managers. Since the curricula provide a common framework and experience, colleagues and partners are more likely to exchange and consult each other, which enhances networking and creating communities of practice.

Conclusions

The comparative perspective on the research question has provided a number of findings in respect to communalities, similarities and differences when applying CG and CI in a variety of countries and contexts.

Looking at the country studies from Asia, it is obvious that preconditions are extremely diverse and substantial adaptation and contextualization of the curricula was needed in every case. The studies conclude that the success-factor of the curricula is their adaptability and flexibility. The key challenge, thus, lies in contextualizing the curricula and designing locally viable pathways to improve ALE by qualifying adult educators and strengthening adult education institutions.

The better organizational development of adult learning centres and the qualification of adult educators are embedded in the local ALE system, the more sustainability and impact they have on adult education systems. In general, the piloting has provided evidence that DVV International's initiative to develop outcome-based global curricula for ALE is realistic and successful. The curricula serve as "backbones" and guidelines to offer structured capacity development efforts and help to reach consensus among colleagues and with partners about the desired outcomes and the pathway to manage change.

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Institutionalization and professionalization of adult learning and education (ALE) – a comparative perspective on the ALE Toolbox of DVV International

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Abstract. Lifelong learning has become the leading paradigm for a holistic view on education. Adult learning and education (ALE) is an important component of lifelong learning – most people are adults globally, and they are adults for the longest time in life. ALE is seen as a human right. There are many global recommendations, especially from UN specialised organisations like UNESCO and ILO that support this understanding. ALE quality and access call for professionalization and institutionalization. DVV International and its partners have taken this call seriously and developed the ALE Toolbox that is filled by a number of instruments to support the training of adult educators, the capacity building for organizational development, the approaches towards intercultural challenges, gender perspectives and ALE system building. The article looks at some of these instruments through a comparative lens of implementation in a number of different countries. Findings and recommendations show the way for further improvements.

Key words: Training of adult educators; organizational development; global recommendations; local action; lifelong learning

Institutionnalisation et professionnalisation de l'apprentissage et de l'éducation des adultes (ALE) - une perspective comparative de la boîte à outils ALE de la DVV International

Katrin Denys, Uwe Gartenschlaeger, Heribert katrin, Barbara Hust

Résumé. L'apprentissage tout au long de la vie est devenu le principal paradigme d'une vision holistique de l'éducation. L'éducation et la formation des adultes (EFA) est une composante importante de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie - la plupart des gens sont des adultes dans le monde, et ils le sont le plus longtemps dans leur vie. L'éducation et la formation des adultes sont considérées comme un droit de l'homme. De nombreuses recommandations mondiales, émanant notamment d'organisations spécialisées des Nations unies telles que l'UNESCO et l'OIT, vont dans ce sens. La qualité et l'accès à l'éducation et à la formation des adultes nécessitent une professionnalisation et une

institutionnalisation. La DVV International et ses partenaires ont pris cet appel au sérieux et ont développé la boîte à outils de l'apprentissage et de l'éducation des adultes, qui comprend un certain nombre d'instruments destinés à soutenir la formation des éducateurs d'adultes, le renforcement des capacités pour le développement organisationnel, les approches des défis interculturels, les perspectives de genre et la création de systèmes d'apprentissage et d'éducation des adultes. L'article examine certains de ces instruments sous l'angle comparatif de leur mise en œuvre dans un certain nombre de pays. Les conclusions et les recommandations montrent la voie à suivre pour de nouvelles améliorations.

Mots clés: Formation des éducateurs d'adultes ; développement organisationnel ; recommandations globales ; action locale ; apprentissage tout au long de la vie

Institucionalización y profesionalización del aprendizaje y la educación de adultos (AEA) - una perspectiva comparativa de la caja de herramientas de AEA de DVV International

Katrin Denys, Uwe Gartenschlaeger, Heribert Hinzen, Barbara Hust

Resumen. El aprendizaje permanente se ha convertido en el principal paradigma de una visión holística de la educación. El aprendizaje y la educación de adultos (AEA) es un componente importante del aprendizaje permanente: la mayoría de las personas son adultas en todo el mundo, y lo son durante el periodo más largo de su vida. El AEA se considera un derecho humano. Hay muchas recomendaciones mundiales, especialmente de organizaciones especializadas de la ONU como la UNESCO y la OIT, que apoyan esta idea. La calidad y el acceso al AEA exigen profesionalización e institucionalización. DVV International y sus socios se han tomado en serio este llamamiento y han desarrollado la caja de herramientas de AEA, que contiene una serie de instrumentos para apoyar la formación de educadores de adultos, el desarrollo de capacidades para el desarrollo organizativo, los enfoques de los retos interculturels, las perspectivas de género y la creación de sistemas de AEA. El artículo examina algunos de estos instrumentos a través de una lente comparativa de la aplicación en una serie de países diferentes. Los resultados y las recomendaciones muestran el camino para futuras mejoras.

Palabras clave: Formación de educadores de adultos; desarrollo organizativo; recomendaciones globales; acción local;

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IN MEMORIAM
Passing of Paul Belanger (March 19, 1939 - January 31, 2025)

Budd Hall
University of Victoria

One of my best memories of Paul happened in Denmark following the triumph of the Hamburg CONFINTEA UNESCO Conference on Adult Education in 1997. A group of us had travelled to Elsinore, site of the first world conference on adult education in 1948, to share reflections on what had just taken place in Hamburg. A group of us were standing on ridge overlooking a beach leading to the Baltic sea. Paul in a great burst of energy began to run towards the water, stripping off his clothes. "We are Canadians who are not afraid of the cold water", he said as he dove into the sea. It was a moment of exultation that all of us who had been involved in the planning of the Hamburg events had felt. It was Paul who embodied the joy on all our behalf with his plunge into the sea.

I met Paul in the mid-1970s when I was planning the first ICAE World Assembly of Adult Education in Tanzania. Paul was the Secretary-General of the ICEA, the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes. We had invited the ICEA to become a member of the newly formed International Council for Adult Education. Paul began his years of activism as part of the student-worker movement in Quebec. He worked as an animator for a progressive cine-club that brought thoughtful films for discussions about politics, culture and the future. He did a PhD looking at the work of animation rural in Senegal before becoming the Secretary General of the ICEA. The ICEA became a powerhouse of research, policy development and advocacy for the adult education movement in Quebec. The ICEA was a remains a model of

bringing together the social movements of adult education together with the professional adult education bodies to form a remarkable space to promote not only learning itself, but the lives of learners.

Paul played a critically important role in the International Council for Adult Education during my time as Secretary-General. He and his team from Quebec were the main authors of the UNESCO Declaration, the Right to Learn. The Right to Learn was adopted by the 4th UNESCO Conference on Adult Education in Paris in March of 1985. From 1989-1999 Paul served as the Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, Germany. His best-known achievement during that period was the hosting of the Fifth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education. CONFINTEA in Hamburg brought 1500 people from 190 countries to Hamburg to produce The Agenda for the Future and the Hamburg Declaration.

Following his time with the UNESCO Institute, Paul was a highly productive scholar at UQAM, the Université de Québec à Montréal. Paul was recognized with Honorary Doctorates from St. Francis Xavier University in Canada and the University of Surrey in England.

Daniel Baril, Chair of the Board of the UNESCO Institute in Hamburg and Secretary-General of ICEA says, "I have lost my mentor, the person who taught me all about what is essential in Adult Learning and Education, about ICEA, ICAE and about the Hamburg Institute"

Prof Leona English, celebrates, "His long and distinguished career in adult education"

May he rest in Peace

Donations may be made to: <https://icae.qc.ca/fr.faire-un-don>

IN MEMORIAM

Albert Tuijnman (1959-2024): Pioneer in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Policy Development

Arne Carlsen

Former Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg

A pioneer in adult education and lifelong learning policy development and scholarship, economist Albert Tuijnman made extraordinary, long-lasting contributions to its legacy.

From within OECD, he was responsible for the first International Adult Literacy Survey. He convinced delegates in the OECD Network working on Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, to develop the first OECD indicator for adult education participation, based on his original research work. When OECD Ministers of Education met in 1996, Albert Tuijnman organised their conference. He was the principal author of the conference document laying out the lifelong learning policy issues and strategic directions “Lifelong Learning For All: Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level”. The Ministers adopted the position that lifelong learning constitutes the overall policy for organizing and financing education systems.

In his most groundbreaking research work, “Recurrent Education, Earnings and Well-Being: A Fifty-Year Longitudinal Study of a Cohort of Swedish Men,” he introduced the application of statistical models to longitudinal data to investigate the effects of initial schooling and later adult education on individuals’ employment, earnings, and quality of life. A game-changer for the field of adult education, the work demonstrated that when analyzed over an extended time horizon, participants in adult education regard their lives as more worthwhile, full, rich, and interesting than those who do not take part.

The longitudinal method Tuijnman employed in the study is now considered the gold standard in adult education research. He attracted

and promoted many data analysts, guiding their Ph.D. dissertations and launching them toward their academic careers.

In recognition of his achievements, Tuijnman was invited to become editor of the International Encyclopedia of Adult Education and Training (Elsevier Science, 1996).

A professor and Head of the Institute of Comparative Education at Stockholm University, he was invited to be the first and still the only Fellow of the International Academy of Education, to represent the field of adult education, and has since been awarded many honours, including special professorships in the United Kingdom, Denmark, China (Hong Kong), the Netherlands, and Sweden.

During the 20 years of his career as Managerial Advisor for Education and Public Research in the European Investment Bank (2003-2023), Albert Tuijnman laid the groundwork for the conceptualisation and financing of over 150 large-scale infrastructure projects in all countries of the European Union and much of the Neighbourhood. In Greece, projects have included Attica Schools PPP, Hellenic Education I-III, Hellenic Research Universities, Demokritos, and the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation, the national agency dedicated to scholar-led and bottom-up financing of research projects in all scientific disciplines. In Ireland, brand-new primary and secondary schools were constructed in all communities and major investments were directed to vocational colleges, universities, and adult education centres, including the Institutes of Technology in Galway and Limerick and Grangegorman in Dublin. In Poland, investments have targeted schools and community colleges in all regions and top-tier universities of the country. Importantly, Albert Tuijnman was instrumental in creating and financing the Polish National Science Council and the National Agency for Research and Development. He has also directed sustained financial support to the Polish Academy of Sciences since 2005.

Albert Tuijnman had a stunning work energy, a quicksilver intelligence, and a drive to overcome incredible amounts of tasks, that was second to none. He became a friend and collaborator of many of those who shaped the cause of adult and continuing education in several decades. He will be dearly missed.

BOOK REVIEW

Lilia. D Monzó *A Revolutionary Subject: Pedagogy of Women of Color and Indigeneity*, Peter Lang Group AG, New York, Bern, Berlin, Brussels, Oxford, Wien, 2019, 290 pp. ISBN 978-1-433-13406-7 (pbk)

Victoria Showumni
University College London

The cover draws the reader into the theme of the book, promoting activism. The beautiful art on the book cover is a graphic by artist-activist Melanie Cervantes titled 'Dreams are Stronger than Fear'. Cervantes is co-founder of the Just seeds project and uses the phrase in her artwork with Jesus Barraza, of Dignidad Rebelde. The author Lilia D. Monzó is known for her use of Marxist-Humanist and decolonial approaches to address and challenge capitalism, imperialism, racism, and the hyper-exploitation of women of colour. Her work envisions a socialist alternative that centres on humanism and liberation.

The book emphasizes the significant contributions of women, particularly women of colour, in revolutionary movements. It argues that women's liberation and anti-racist agendas are central to Marxist-Humanism. Monzó highlights how the voices and leadership of women of colour and indigenous women have often been marginalized, despite their crucial roles in grassroots organizing and activism. Monzó draws on Marxist-Humanism to highlight the human potential and creativity stifled by capitalism. She emphasizes the importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of human beings and the dehumanizing effects of capitalist structures.

Her decolonial approach critiques colonial legacies and their ongoing impact on marginalized communities, particularly women of colour. This perspective seeks to dismantle colonial representations and develop a praxis of liberation. Monzó's work addresses the intersection of race,

gender, and class, arguing that these forms of oppression are interconnected and must be confronted together. She critiques class-reductionist thinking and advocates for a more inclusive vision of Marxism. She envisions a socialist society that prioritizes equality, cooperation, and the well-being of all individuals. This alternative seeks to overcome the alienation and exploitation inherent in capitalist systems.

The key objectives of the book can be summarised as follows:

1. **Reclaiming History:** The book aims to reclaim the history of women of colour and indigenous women in revolutionary struggles, showcasing their leadership and insights.
2. **Marxist-Humanism:** It advocates for Marxist-Humanism as a philosophy for the oppressed, emphasizing the need to recognize and honour the experiences of women of colour and indigenous women.
3. **Addressing Class Reductionism:** Monzó addresses the limitations of class-reductionist thinking, arguing that racism and sexism are equally terrorizing structures that need to be confronted alongside class issues.
4. **Inclusive Vision:** The book calls for a more inclusive vision of Marxism, one that embraces the totality of Marx's work and promotes a new humanism built on equality and cooperation.

The title is a little less obvious and does not allow you to make any assumptions about the core focus of the book. The book was published in 2019 at a time of significant change in the global North, after Donald Trump won the presidential election in 2016. Fundamental tenets such as the 'right to be heard' with respect and behaviours which encouraged participants in debates to disagree well were eroded. The ability to discuss and debate with people who hold very different views is not without its challenges; but having the tools, techniques and platforms to do so is a vital part of enabling communities to co-exist. The acquisition of historical knowledge also supports constructive debate.

Monzó's book puts the voices and experiences of women of colour at the centre of the discourse. Her innovative approach to a 'pedagogy of dreaming' is presented as offering a potential catalyst for the creation of a new society. She foregrounds the capacity of dreaming to help us gain insights and make history to counter capitalist pretence.

This elucidates a reinterpretation of Marxist notions in relation to colonialism, gender, and exploitation, highlighting the female

perspective. Marxist dialectics are deployed in fresh ways, challenging reductionist readings and foregrounding a view of the class struggle that embraces anti-racism, anti-sexism, and opposition to all forms of oppression.

Additionally, this book offers insights into the women's movement over time, particularly the way in which middle class women interpret how the women's movement was seen through the lens of feminism. The book sheds light on what it is like to be considered to be hyper-exploited and simultaneously courageous through examples taken from lived experiences through a Marxist lens. This brings together capitalism, classism, and injustice and creates a compelling rationale for taking a stand against all forms of oppression.

It is important to deconstruct prevalent thinking in relation to Marx and Marxists. They are accused of class reductionism, that is relegating other problematic antagonisms to a secondary, less important category. Marxism asserts that the conflict between social classes—namely, the bourgeoisie (capitalists) and the proletariat (workers)—is the fundamental force shaping economic relationships within a capitalist system. This class struggle, it is believed, will inevitably lead to a communist revolution. Marx's thought was indeed ground-breaking, and it stimulated argument across every major language, including multiple disciplines: philosophy, history, politics and economics. Marx helped to shape the discipline of sociology. In *Das Kapital*, Volume 1, Marx argues that there was a need to analyse the profound structural processes through which the capitalist mode of production reproduces itself. Such a controversial topic disenchanted many followers during the 1980's and 1990's as orientations changed and disaffection ensued. This resulted in a weakening commitment to revolution and emancipation.

Feminists abandoned Marxism and reject Marxist political economy because they perceived that it was so reductionist that it prevented the creation of an adequate framework for a comprehensive theory the oppression of women. Others argued that this kind of reductionism had 'no place in the complex and rich ideas of Marx, or in the most Marxist tradition' (Pollard 2022). White women were not the only group that struggled to embrace Marxism. The Marxist interpretation of the Black experience in America failed to account for the noneconomic aspects of racism and the presence of racism within the working class. With the development of capitalism after the second world war, Marxism was

unable to incorporate the economics of uselessness whereby large numbers of Black people were permanently unemployed. Many Black people across the globe have become highly critical of capitalism, whilst, like feminists, also rejecting Marxism. The reason is that Marx's class analysis, which blames capitalists for racism, does not provide answers to account for racism within the white working class (Willhelm, 1980).

Building on these insights, we appreciate how Monzó moves beyond concepts of the bourgeois and the proletariat to more profoundly revolutionary praxis, including the voices of all oppressed women. She does not restrict herself to the voices of women who remain complicit with the privilege inherent in whiteness. Monzó dares to imagine that it is imperative to listen to the voices of women of colour. She examines the notion of a Freirean dialogue (Freire 1970), an epistemological encounter, whereby interlocutors listen to each other with profound attention and engagement. This is the democratic right of all human beings. She challenges all men and women who see themselves as change agents to pick up the mantle and understand that for the real distribution of power, privilege must be conquered. Monzó draws on Marxist, humanist, and feminist theory as well as the theology of liberation, to develop a new type of pedagogy of the oppressed for the twenty first century. She connects the need to uproot capitalism with the eradication of racism, sexism and heterosexism. Her arguments are based on the writings, life experiences and struggles of women colour and indigenous women from across the globe.

The book is compelling as it reconceptualises Marxist theory, embedding personal life stories that leave the reader humbled. Monzó challenges a one-sided regime of truth, entangled in unjust power relations and legitimized by dominant social systems. She recognises that women of colour around the world continue to suffer the devastating impact of racialized capitalism, despite historical efforts to promote equality.

Women of Color and Indigeneity: A Revolutionary Subject is comparable to several other influential works in the genre. These include *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria E. Anzaldúa, as well as *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde, and *The Combahee River Collective Statement* by The Combahee River Collective.

Researchers who focus on intersectionality would likely be interested in *Women of Color and Indigeneity: A Revolutionary Subject* by Lilia D.

Monzó, particularly Feminist scholars, Marxist-Humanist theorists, decolonial scholars, and social justice educators.

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BOOK REVIEW

Madeline Popelka, *You're Going to Be Okay: 16 Lessons on Healing after Trauma* Hay House Inc., Carlsbad, California, 2022, 207 pp. ISBN 978-1-4019-6824-3 (ebook)

Ilona Mercieca
University of Malta

In *You're Going to Be Okay: 16 Lessons on Healing after Trauma*, Madeline Popelka provides a deep and supportive guide for individuals as they embark on the journey towards healing after experiencing trauma. In the book, Popelka, who is the founder of @Healing from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), offers 16 lessons exploring key concepts, practical tips and empowering perspectives to help readers as they navigate through the complexities of recovering from trauma. As Popelka (2022), who is a trauma survivor herself, states, “healing is a lifelong journey, and while it can be messy and uncomfortable, there are gifts to be found along the way”.

So, will this book take us to uncomfortable places as a means to process our trauma?

This book is skilfully divided in 16 chapters, where each chapter tackles a different lesson: from acknowledging the reality and the impact of the trauma experienced to self-compassion and seeking support both informal and formal. The notions of setting boundaries are crucial for protecting one’s emotional well-being during the healing process and practicing mindfulness as a coping mechanism with the aftermath of trauma are cleverly portrayed.

Popelka encourages the readers to challenge negative beliefs to replace them with empowering perspectives. The concepts of practicing gratitude

and establishing routines as a means to provide structure and stability are explored in the book.

As the readers explore the practice of self-care as a means to nurture one's well-being after trauma, Popelka immerses us in various self-care practices that can help individuals feel grounded. Healing after trauma is gradual and thus the author emphasizes the importance of honouring one's progress while setting realistic expectations. The same importance is given to understanding triggers and here Popelka provides strategies for identifying and managing triggers effectively.

Towards the end of the book, the author explores the concept of forgiveness as an essential part of healing after trauma and finding meaning in the aftermath of trauma thus seeking out opportunities for personal growth. Ultimately, the closing lesson is about embracing hope as a means of providing a guiding light that can sustain the reader through the darkest moments of one's lives. Emphasis is put on embracing hope as the central belief of the healing journey.

You're Going to Be Okay: 16 Lessons on Healing after Trauma offers a comprehensive roadmap for individuals seeking to heal from trauma. Through practical strategies, empowering insights and compassionate guidance, Popelka provides readers with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of trauma recovering and emerging stronger and more resilient on the other side.

The ways the author explored the delicate concept of trauma and guided the readers through the healing process step by step is remarkable. The fact that every chapter is cleverly divided to tackle each lesson one by one makes it enjoyable for the reader and an opportunity to self-engage in the healing process by indulging oneself one stage at a time.

The book makes an enjoyable read. Even though the topic is a sensitive one, the author skilfully manages to shift between the narrative part to providing tips on how to heal from trauma. The book is written in a clear way in which it is a powerful yet practical tool that helps the reader to overcome trauma in small but meaningful steps. Healing is a work in progress; thus, this book enables the reader to go back and forward to the lesson that is required at that point in time. It is written in a way that has the reader in mind. The preamble of each chapter paves the way for the

lesson that needs to be tackled. It is surely a valuable contribution to the genre of self-help books.

Whether the reader is still dealing with past trauma or whether the reader is a novice on the subject, this book will certainly prove to be helpful and useful as the reader will immerse in the book while the author delves with the lessons on healing from trauma.

Considering that the book addresses the sensitive issue of trauma, which can lead to psychological difficulties and the development of mental health issues related to trauma, I would personally have preferred if this book had been supported by medical and perhaps psychiatric expertise. Nonetheless, towards the end of the book, there are useful resources like websites, details related to mental health organisations and further reads. This surely offers a more holistic approach to the subject and a valid opportunity to read more on the topic and to reach out to organisations for further support.

This subject, similar to other subjects related to mental health or psychological issues, is often regarded as taboo in certain cultures and thus it is not easy for persons going through such an ordeal to open up about their experiences. Such books will assist the reader to go through the topic in a safe and contained manner. This book will provide the reader with strategies that enhance clarity and sense of direction in life.

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Popelka, M. (2022). *You're going to be okay: 16 lessons on healing after trauma* [Book description]. Lighthouse – Edinburgh's Radical Bookshop.
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BOOK REVIEW

Richard G. Bagnall and Steven Hodge *Epistemologies and Ethics in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* Palgrave Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Springer Nature, Charn, Switzerland, 2022, 352 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-94980-8 (ebook)

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This book highlights the various epistemologies that underpin lifelong learning in modern society, and how each one is informed by a different understanding of what constitutes valuable knowledge. This helps to explain the tensions that often arise in the field of lifelong learning, as different epistemologies and their corresponding ethical conceptions can clash with one another. By recognising the normative nature of knowledge and its role in lifelong learning, the book provides a valuable tool for understanding the complexities of the field and navigating potential conflicts.

The monograph comprises 10 chapters, beginning with an introduction and concluding with a reflective postscript. There is no separate foreword or afterword included. The authors themselves contribute to all chapters, providing a cohesive exploration of various epistemological and ethical frameworks within adult education.

In the text, four epistemologies and ethical conceptions are identified as having influenced the lifelong learning movement to date. These four epistemologies and conceptions of ethics have played significant roles in shaping the lifelong learning movement. The disciplinary approach focuses on knowledge and skill acquisition within specific fields, while the developmental approach emphasises personal growth and self-actualisation. The emancipatory approach challenges power structures and seeks to empower individuals through education. Finally, the design approach, which currently dominates the field, is evolving to become more self-aware and reflective, focusing on ethical authenticity. Together,

these epistemologies and conceptions of ethics have contributed to the ongoing evolution of lifelong learning and its impact on society.

Some points that the book under review makes about lifelong learning include the idea that it is not limited to just adults but can also be fostered in childhood. Additionally, lifelong learning is not just about specific skills or knowledge; it is also about developing the ability and inclination to learn continuously throughout one's life.

While the book may be lengthy and complex at times, it offers valuable knowledge for readers at all levels of expertise in adult education and lifelong learning. Insights and perspectives on lifelong learning illuminate its importance and potential impact on individuals and society. The authors highlight the connection between lifelong learning and social justice, further emphasising the importance of continuous education for individuals and society. In this sense, the book is in some ways comparable to another book that I have also read recently on learning with adults, namely, *Learning with Adults: A Critical Pedagogical Introduction* by Leona M. English and Peter Mayo (2012). Additionally, this book provides insightful definitions for key terms, such as 'ethics', which facilitate readers with delving deeper into the read.

In particular, Chapter 2 is enlightening because it presents information and perspectives concerning adult education and lifelong learning in modern times. These are particularly valuable for postgraduate students and researchers. They illuminate and support the discernment of new ideas and possibilities, especially of adult education and learning in informal and non-traditional settings. These include online courses, workshops, and self-directed learning.

Lifelong learning is essential in today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, as it allows individuals to continuously adapt and acquire new skills and knowledge throughout their lives. This is especially relevant in times when technology and globalisation have created a need for individuals to constantly learn, adapt, and to stay relevant.

Another interesting chapter is Chapter 4, where the authors delve into the topic of disciplinary epistemology and ethics in lifelong learning. They explore how different disciplines have their own ways of knowing and understanding the world, and how these ways of knowing can influence our ethical beliefs and actions. Additionally, the chapter emphasises the importance of understanding disciplinary perspectives for facilitating effective teaching and learning in an ever-changing and diverse global

community. By recognising and respecting different disciplinary epistemologies and ethics, we can foster a culture of lifelong learning and promote critical thinking and understanding among students.

This chapter also refers also to the ways of knowing and understanding within a specific field of study or discipline. In lifelong learning, this can be seen through the emphasis on critical thinking and analysis, as well as the use of evidence and research to inform learning. For example, in a biology class, students may learn about scientific methods and how to evaluate and interpret data. Ethics in lifelong learning, on the other hand, involve understanding and adhering to moral principles and values in the pursuit of knowledge and personal development. This can be demonstrated through the inclusion of ethical discussions and considerations in course material, as well as the promotion of ethical behaviour and decision-making in the classroom. For instance, a philosophy class may explore ethical theories and their application to real-world situations.

After reading Chapter 8, "An Emergent Reflexive Epistemology in Lifelong Learning," I was forced to question my understanding of cultural context and how it shapes our beliefs and actions. The Chapter challenged me to think critically about the impact of cultural influences on our learning and development, and how we can use this knowledge to promote lifelong learning in a diverse and ever-changing world. It also made me question the role of education in perpetuating or challenging cultural norms and how we can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Overall, this chapter was a thought-provoking and eye-opening read that has changed my perspective on the importance of understanding cultural context in lifelong learning. Subsequently reading this chapter, I found myself asking questions such as: How does culture influence our ways of knowing and learning? How can we incorporate diverse perspectives and epistemologies into education? How can we create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all individuals? This chapter opened my eyes to the complexity and richness of cultural context in the realm of lifelong learning.

This book made me appreciate even more the vastness of lifelong learning and the importance of continuously seeking knowledge and growth. It also highlighted the crucial role of adults in facilitating meaningful learning experiences for others. Ultimately, we have agency in shaping our ideas and perceptions about learning and education.

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CONVERGENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles are accepted in English, French and Spanish.

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Keep footnotes and references to a minimum. Tables and graphs are considered only when they depict essential information that cannot be described adequately in the text. US and UK spelling accepted for texts in English. Numbers ten and under are spelt out; 11 and over use numerals.

Review Process and Response from the Editor: Articles are sent out to international reviewers; please expect a delay of three to six months for a response.

Requirements Submission: Authors are asked to transmit their articles in ASCII format via e-mail attachment. Length: Feature articles should be no longer than 5000 words; information reports up to 800 words; book reviews, 600–1000 words. Abstract: Upon acceptance, an abstract of 150–200 words is requested for translation into other languages. It should summarise clearly the points of the article. Book reviews, conference reports, other reviews and obituaries do not require an abstract. Author's information: Include the title, position, place of work and a background explaining your affiliation with the subject or country you are writing about. Include your address, telephone number and e-mail address. For more information, contact: CONVERGENCE Editor, Professor Peter Mayo, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Global Adult Education, Department of Arts, Open Communities & Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD2080, Malta. Tel. (prefix 356) 99845476, email: peter.mayo@um.edu.mt.

CONVERGENCE BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES

General Directions

Book reviews are an important source of information for adult educators in that they provide a valuable synopsis and summary of important recent texts in the field. Book reviews must provide a concise summary of the contents of the book and must address whether or not the book is a valuable contribution to the field. As such, reviews should evaluate the usefulness of the book and mention who would find the book useful.

We strongly recommend the review is introduced by a brief introduction to the text, with reference to its stated objectives, layout and chapter structure, etc. It is also recommended that reviews discuss the extent to which the text:

- a) Is comparable (or not) to other works in the genre, with examples of where this is particularly evident;
- b) Testifies to efforts that positively exploit and disseminate the state-of-art; primary / secondary research findings etc.; give voice / opportunity to 'silenced' / 'marginalised' authors, etc.
- c) Resonates with the work programme / agenda of our journal [*Convergence: An International Journal of Adult Education*](#). More info on this is available in the [editorial of the first issue of the relaunched version of the journal](#), also summarised below:

"articles... should help lift spirits in a disturbing time. Readers need little reminding that we face multipolar imperialisms bringing us potentially close to a Third World War. We are still reeling from a global pandemic and witnessing wider environmental degradation. Climate change is wreaking and will continue to wreak havoc especially in the Geographical Global South leading to constant mass migration flows. It is against this ominous global scenario that this journal is being resuscitated. The call for socially engaged adult educators strikes me as being ever so urgent" (Mayo, 2022, p. 3);

and

- d) What would be the specific research interests of readers / adult education specialists / practitioners that the text can support? (e.g., 3-4 examples of specific research interests and/or specific nomenclatures / levels of scholars / specialists / practitioners that the text can support).

The timeline for completion of a review will be negotiated between the book review editor and the reviewer. While most book reviews are solicited by the editor, *CONVERGENCE* does accept unsolicited book reviews. The editor reserves the right to reject reviews.

Style

Reviews should be written in a manner that is accessible to a general readership rather than to an academic audience. Footnotes and references must be kept to a minimum. For writing in English, *CONVERGENCE* accepts UK and US spellings. Numbers ten and under are spelt out; 11 and over use numerals. Include the title, author, place of publication, publisher and number of pages with your review.

Requirements

Length: Reviews should not be longer than 600–1000 words (about two to four pages).

Submission: Emailed submission is preferred (maria.brown@um.edu.mt), however, one copy may be mailed if email is not possible. The review should be typed double-spaced. MS Word format is preferred.

Author's Information: Include your institutional affiliation and its national location with the review. Also include your address, telephone number, and your email address.

For more information, contact: CONVERGENCE Book Reviews Editor, Dr. Maria Brown, Department of Arts, Open Communities & Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD2080, Malta, email: maria.brown@um.edu.mt