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## THE WELCOME OF MIGRANT STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A LOOK FROM CURRICULAR POLICIES

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**Abstract:** This article addresses the reception of international migrant students in primary education. Understand that the design of the curriculum, related to the student's experiences, must include identity, political and power relationship aspects, related to the purposes of inclusive social formation. International and national standards bring a pragmatic discourse of migrant inclusion, especially regarding the right to education. In this context, the objective is to verify the consonance between the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC (BRASIL, 2017) and national and international standards in view of the commitment to welcome migrant students in elementary education. It uses the inductive method, the qualitative approach, the bibliographic research technique, in addition to the Cartesian method in data processing. The results indicate that welcoming requires educational actions that include personal, didactic, cultural and methodological resources involving pedagogical, coexistence, family-school relationship and school management aspects.

**Keywords:** Migrant Students. Welcome. Curriculum. Elementary School.

## INTRODUCTION

This article addresses, through bibliographical research, the reception of migrant students in elementary school. Given the regulations involving human rights in international migration, the concept of welcome is understood as a necessary curricular element to ensure fundamental rights of migrants (ALVIAREZ and PAVA, 2021; MORALES et al., 2019). The principle of migrant inclusion, which permeates international and national standards, requires thinking about welcoming as a curricular practice.

Silva (2022) and Arroyo (2014) argue that the curriculum must conceive the

reality of everyday life, bringing elements of identity and power relations, in addition to knowledge. The curriculum must be critical and bring experiences that enable the inclusion of migrants in primary education. In the same direction, Sánchez-Mojica (2021) addresses the educational inclusion of migrant students through educational practices that work on cultural diversity and intercultural relationships, in order to promote the quality of education and provide a better life for all.

The intercultural relationship occurs when education opens space for “frank dialogue between cultures and their singularities”, for “dialogue and understanding between cultures” and for “vigilant epistemological reflection that requires overcoming social and relational models in which one culture considers itself superior to another” (GOMES et al., 2022, p. 194). Intercultural teacher training is capable of promoting change in educational systems, because it enables collective and dialectical construction, considers the diversity of knowledge, experiences, knowledge, conceptions and different modes of social organization (CECCHETTI et al., 2020).

Alviarez and Pava (2021), when carrying out a bibliographic review on the practice of welcoming migrants in schools in Latin America, point out three types of practices: assimilation, subordinate inclusion and integration. They state that discourses on the right to education are not yet consolidated in the curricular practices of the school system, as studies indicate that acceptance, on a recurring basis, is carried out through practices of assimilation or subordinate inclusion. In other words: through some form of subordination of the migrant.

At this juncture, the general objective of this article is to verify the consonance between the National Common Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017) – BNCC, hereinafter – and national

and international standards in view of the commitment to welcome migrant students in elementary education. As specific objectives, we seek to indicate international and national standards on the protection of migrants, especially with regard to the education of elementary school students; describe the design of the curriculum consistent with the welcoming educational actions and identify in the BNCC (BRASIL, 2017) skills, thematic units and objects of knowledge related to the theme of migrations.

In the methodological path, the inductive method, the qualitative approach, the bibliographic research technique were used, in addition to the Cartesian method in data processing. When presenting the results, the inductive logic basis was observed (PASOLD, 2021).

## **THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF MIGRANT STUDENTS**

Migration occurs when a people moves from one territory to another, changing the culture of that territory (ECO, 2020, p. 24). Historically, this movement has accompanied humanity and in recent decades it has gained new contours. According to the World Migration Report 2022, from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (MCAULIFFE; TRIANDAFYLLIDOU, 2021), there were 281 million international migrants in 2020, corresponding to 3.6% of the world population.

In the same year, 89.4 million people were on the move around the world, 26.4 millions of whom were refugees and 4.1 million asylum seekers. South America welcomed more than 10.9 million international migrants, equivalent to 2.5% of the continental population. Brazil welcomed 1.08 million migrants, being the sixth South American country that received the most migrants (BRASIL, 2023).

The impact of international migration on

education systems is undeniable. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that, in 2017, in low-income countries, among refugees aged 5 to 17, 50% of primary education students and 89% of secondary education students were not enrolled in schools (UNESCO, 2018). These data reveal losses in achieving the goals of the Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 4 of the United Nations (2015), which is “Ensure access to inclusive, quality and equitable education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone” (UN, 2015, p. 1).

The UNESCO Report (2018) defends the inclusion of refugee students in national education systems, valuing multiculturalism and cultural diversity. It draws attention to the vulnerability of migrants, especially in cases of refuge, which requires a sensitive view from the perspective of human rights, even more so in a globalized world that resists migrants from Asia, Africa and South America, for the historical preservation of a Eurocentric and colonizing consciousness.

Bauman (2017, p. 13) states: “[...] refugees from the bestiality of wars, despotisms and the brutality of an empty and perspectiveless existence have been knocking on other people’s doors since the beginning of modern times”, seen how strangers cause anxiety because they seem different and “[...] frighteningly unpredictable, unlike the people we interact with every day and from whom we believe we know what to expect” (BAUMAN, 2017, p. 13-14). Refugee rights are linked to the universal protection of human rights. The Refugee Statute, created by the 1951 Geneva Convention, offers “[...] incomplete and Eurocentric protection for an issue that has always been universal, displacement in the world” (SARTORETTO, 2018, p. 33).

In Brazil, in the last four years, distorted manifestations about equality and diversity have been increasing in the public debate,

intensifying discriminatory acts and exclusion of minorities (including migrants), which makes the fight against prejudice and the promotion of diversity even more urgent. and inclusion. Law 9394/96, which establishes the guidelines and bases of national education (LDB), in article 3 (BRASIL, 1996), establishes that education will be provided based on the principle of equal conditions of access and permanence at school, with respect for freedom and appreciation for tolerance, valuing extra-school experience, with links between education, work and social practices, with consideration for ethnic-racial diversity and guaranteeing the right to education and learning. In article 26, the LDB (BRASIL, 1996) determines that the programmatic content of basic education includes historical and cultural aspects of the formation of the Brazilian population.

The National Education Plan (PNE), established by Law no. 13.005/14 (BRASIL, 2014), in article 2, provides as guidelines the universalization of school attendance, overcoming educational inequalities, with an emphasis on promoting citizenship and eradicating all forms of discrimination, training for work and for citizenship, with an emphasis on the moral and ethical values on which society is based, humanistic promotion and the promotion of the principles of respect for human rights and diversity, as well as establishing as goal 2 the universalization of fundamental education, ensuring that at least 95% of students complete this stage within the recommended age.

Given this context, the right to education is not limited to the student's access to school. Permanence and full participation in the educational process must be guaranteed. Therefore, it is essential to welcome and include migrants as a curricular practice contemplated in the School's Pedagogical Political Project and in educational planning,

in order to reorganize pedagogical action for the new demands of school work.

## **WELCOME MIGRANT STUDENTS AS A CURRICULAR ELEMENT**

Curriculum theories choose central elements with a focus on human knowledge. That is why it is said that curriculum is the result of a selection of knowledge and skills to form an ideal type of student, a model of human being to be achieved (SILVA, 2022, p. 14-15). Given this subjectivity, present both in the choice of elements that will form the curriculum and in the ideal purpose of the student's training that is linked to choices, it can be said that the curriculum constitutes an instrument of identity.

Comparing a curriculum with a "[...] race track, we can say that in the course of this race that is the curriculum, we end up becoming what we are" (SILVA, 2022, p. 15, highlights by the author). Therefore, curricular knowledge displaced from social contexts only serves to "[...] operate as a hierarchization of knowledge" (ARROYO, 2013, p. 116), as it proves to be poor, even in terms of knowledge, by wasting the diversity of human experiences as source of meaning and knowledge (ARROYO, 2013, p. 120).

The right to knowledge does not simply translate into learning skills or capabilities in the context of a diversity of social situations. It goes further, implying "[...] starting from the most destabilizing questions of living with children-adolescents that they already face and explain their meanings" (ARROYO, 2013, p. 121). These meanings are permeated with experiences based on the economic, social and cultural reality of the students and the places destined or denied to them and claimed by them. Arroyo (2014, p. 213) reiterates that immigrants "[...] assert themselves by fighting for their rightful places. In these struggles, subjects of rights to places were learned. They

learned strategies of affirmation and resistance by occupying places”, such as educational and knowledge production institutions.

For Santos (2008, p. 157), “[...] the fight for cognitive justice will not be successful if it is based exclusively on the idea of a more equitable distribution of scientific knowledge”. Therefore, it is necessary to provide elementary school students with experiences of integration between students, in which natives (ARROYO, 2013) can have access to the needs, desires, desires, passions, points of view of migrant students. May these migrant students participate, under equal conditions and opportunities, in school and local social construction. Providing this participatory space is a duty in line with national and international normative instruments, as well as ethical and moral precepts.

Among the actions necessary for the recognition of cultural diversity in the school curriculum is multiculturalism as a legitimate claim to cultural diversity. The concept of multiculturalism relates to the political field and the conflict of power relations against the hegemonic culture to define “[...] common national culture” (SILVA, 2022, p. 86-89) and “[...] reminds us that equality cannot be obtained simply through equal access to the existing hegemonic curriculum” it requires “[...] a substantial modification of the curriculum” (SILVA, 2022, p. 90), which can lead to a more inclusive curriculum.

Morales et. al (2019), Sánchez-Mojica (2021) and Alviarez; Pava (2021) deal with the inclusion and cultural diversity of migrant students. Sánchez-Mojica (2021, p. 6) presents the concept of inclusive education, which gained strength in the 1960s with the aim of integrating students with disabilities. This concept was later expanded, including aspects of linguistic, cultural, social and gender diversity, among other factors fundamental to the development of learning. Inclusive

education reaches the 21st century, fighting against any and all forms of social exclusion, defending the perspective of integrated education, enabling the continuous improvement of students’ educational training. However, there is a gap between the standards guaranteeing the right to education and the educational reality (SÁNCHEZ-MOJICA, 2021, p. 6-7).

The cultural diversity in which the migrant student is inserted can be an enriching instrument for educational training and social transformation, as it develops intercultural dialogue between the cultural referents brought from the culture of origin and the cultural referents present in the host location, whose negotiation and cultural production contributes both to the individual identity of the migrant student and to the dynamics of local social formation (SÁNCHEZ-MOJICA, 2021, p. 10).

Morales et. al (2019), researching how schools in Chile responded to the arrival of students of other nationalities, identify welcoming educational actions created from personal, didactic, cultural and methodological resources, which are institutionally incorporated into school operations to organize educational interventions aimed at to facilitate the inclusion of students of other nationalities. Such actions involve pedagogical aspects, coexistence, family-school relationships and school management. At the same time that they meet the pedagogical needs of the teaching and learning processes, they strive to improve school coexistence.

Examples of educational welcoming actions are: welcoming protocol; intercultural party; observation script with an intercultural brand; school mediation; specific differential group; student tutors; migrant quota; bilingual team; welcome classes and interactive groups. These actions occur in the processes of assimilation, subordinate inclusion, integration and

adaptation, forms of reception, and may have an emphasis on the individual action of the student and their socialization or on the actors of the school and migrant population (ALVIAREZ; PAVA, 2021) and (MORALES et al, 2019).

According to Alvarez and Pava (2021, p. 15), the ways of conceiving and establishing the reception of migrants in schools and educational systems arise from the discourse of the right to education, as well as from the different inclusion practices that produce migrant and refugee subjects as subjects qualified to be at school. However, the discourses involved in the exercise of the right to education do not reach the curricular aspect, the elements of coexistence or the school trajectory in the educational systems in which the migrant is inserted (ALVIAREZ; PAVA, 2021, p. 16).

Welcome occurs through assimilation, subordinate inclusion or integration, as found by Alvarez and Pava (2021, p. 16-17). Assimilation is done in search of equality, not recognizing differences: all students are equal. Subordinate inclusion, in turn, contemplates practices of ignorance and devaluation of school trajectories, silencing the experiences of migrants. There are also adaptation practices, which constitute a mixture of assimilation and subordinate inclusion models, in the process of renouncing the culture of origin and acquiring the local culture. Finally, integration is related to cultural diversity, valuing and recognizing it as enriching elements of the social group.

The studies by the aforementioned authors recommend that educational practices must recognize cultural diversity as an element of inclusion for migrant students and enrichment of the school community. Likewise, the inclusive welcome of migrants must form part of curricular experiences, forming part of the school curriculum, adapting to the needs and peculiarities of each school environment.

## **THE BNCC CURRICULAR PROVISIONS AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WELCOME OF MIGRANT STUDENTS**

BNCC is committed to comprehensive education, aiming at “[...] training and global development, which implies understanding the complexity and non-linearity of this development” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 14). The document highlights the obligation of agents in the learning process to promote welcoming education, recognizing and providing opportunities for student development fully in singularities and diversities in a space of learning and inclusive democracy (BRASIL, 2017).

Equality, diversity and equity were recognized by the BNCC as constituent elements of curricula, serving as a guide for the preparation of pedagogical proposals (BRASIL, 2017, p. 15). Educational equality considers meeting singularities and educational planning must focus on equity, recognizing the different needs of students.

When dealing with specific language skills for elementary education, the BNCC addresses the issue of linguistic diversity, not only arising from immigration, but also from all the diversities of indigenous, creole, Afro-Brazilian and Libras languages (BRASIL, 2017, p 70). The Ministry of Education develops the Intercultural Border Schools Program within the scope of Mercosul, in Brazilian cities located on Brazil's borders, with the aim of providing integral and bilingual education to students in the program (BRASIL, 2017, p. 71).

The search for words with the radical *migra*, in BNCC, resulted in 47 words. The first is ‘immigrations’, referring to the linguistic diversity of the Portuguese Language curricular component, the second being migration, within the same subject (BRASIL,

2017). The third word found was migration, which is in the description of the skill EF07CI08 – “Evaluate the impacts of changes in the population, which is in the thematic unit life and evolution of Sciences” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 347). The last two words were: migrate, a verb referring to media migration, which is in the footnote, and transmigration, referring to the skill EF09ER05, from the Religious Education component. The 42 words with the radical “migra” are distributed in the descriptions of thematic units, objects of knowledge and skills of the History and Geography components.

In the Geography curricular component, migration is covered in the 2nd, 4th, 5th and 8th years in the thematic unit “The subject and his place in the world”. The object of knowledge in the 2nd year is coexistence and interactions between people, projecting the ability to describe the history of migrations in their living environment (EF02GE01). In the 4th year, the object of knowledge is: migratory processes in Brazil, supported by the ability to describe migratory processes and their contributions to the formation of Brazilian society (EF04GE02). In the 5th year, the object of knowledge is population dynamics, aiming for the student to be able to describe and analyze population dynamics between the federal units in which they live and establish relationships between migrations (EF05GE01).

The 8th year, in Geography, establishes two objects of knowledge: distribution of the world population and population movements; diversity and dynamics of the world population. In the first, it is expected to describe the migratory routes and flows across the continents throughout history (EF08GE02). In the second, it is intended that the student: relate facts and situations representative of the history of families in their surroundings to global migratory flows, considering diversity (EF08GE02); analyze

representative aspects of demographic dynamics (EF08GE03); understand migration flows in Latin America and the region’s main migration policies (EF08GE04).

The BNCC, by presenting thematic units, objects of knowledge and skills of the History curricular component in elementary school, early years, demonstrates that it prioritizes the construction of the subject and the relationship between the “I” and the “Other” in a long and complex process. Thus, the following are included as objects of knowledge: political and ethical relations, population movements and globalization, from a perspective of formation of “a more uprooted collective subject, whether due to historical contingency (migrations), or also due to living in a time when multiple identity references are sought” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 405).

The History curricular component works with migration in three thematic units: people and groups that make up the city and municipality; historical issues relating to migration; recent history. The 3rd year will work on the “I”, the “Other” and the different social and ethical groups that make up the city and municipalities, as well as the social, cultural and environmental challenges of the place where the student lives, aiming to identify population groups that form the city and events that mark its formation (EF03HI01). The objective is to identify and compare points of view on significant local events, social aspects and cultural differences, with emphasis on African, indigenous and migrant cultures (EF03HI03).

The 4th year works on two different objects, although on the same theme (historical issues relevant to migration). The first object is the emergence of the human species on the African continent and its expansion throughout the world, whose related ability is to identify the motivations of migratory processes in different times and spaces and

evaluate the role of migration in destination regions (EF04HI09). The second object addresses the migratory processes for the formation of Brazil, from which it is expected to analyze the social changes arising from migration (EF04HI09).

In the last year of elementary school in History, in the topic of recent history, it is assumed to analyze aspects related to the phenomenon of terrorism in contemporary times, including migratory movements and clashes between different groups and cultures (EF09HI35).

Given the above, it is possible to identify that the BNCC (2017) requires that school curricula address skills, thematic units and objects of knowledge related to the topic of migration. The challenge is to use this knowledge to guarantee reception actions for migrants.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The right to education is not limited to the student's physical presence at school: it encompasses the guarantee of permanence

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and inclusion in the educational process. Therefore, it is essential to welcome educational actions that include personal, didactic, cultural and methodological resources involving pedagogical, coexistence, family-school relations and school management aspects, aimed at the inclusion of migrant students. The obligation to include migrants permeates international and national standards, through elements, devices and experiences aimed at welcoming as a curricular practice.

This research verified that there is consonance between the BNCC and national and international standards regarding the commitment to welcoming migrant students in elementary education. Therefore, educational practices must recognize cultural diversity as an element of inclusion and enrichment of the school community, adapting to the needs and peculiarities of each context.

The article aims to contribute to the topic and expand possibilities for new research. Based on the elements presented, it is possible to continue studying the topic, notably future local research on the reception of international migrants in elementary education.



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