

FROM COMPLIANCE TO RECONFIGURATION

Reflective journals and the re-education of ethnic-racial relations in pre-service teacher formation at UFSCar, Brazil

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CENTRAL QUESTION

When does ethnic-racial education become structure, and when does it remain an event? This study examines reflective journals written by pre-service teachers enrolled in a course on Ethnic-Racial Relations Education in Brazil. The journals are not treated as confessional narratives, but as situated pedagogical technologies where legal mandate, school memory, family genealogy, racial self-location and theoretical language meet.

CONTEXT

Brazilian teacher education is legally required to address ethnic-racial relations and Afro-Brazilian, African and Indigenous histories and cultures. Yet legal compliance does not automatically produce curricular transformation. In practice, ethnic-racial education may appear as: event, ornament, representation, case-management, or institutional performance. The problem is not absence alone, but the way presence can be neutralized.

MATERIALS & METHOD

Corpus: 113 reflective journals written by pre-service teachers.
Analytical sample: 18 curated texts.
The analysis traces recurring narrative, affective and pedagogical operations through which students name or avoid racial identity; reconstruct family histories and silences; translate theory into professional self-understanding; describe school memories of racism, omission or intervention; move between compliance, discomfort, implication and reconfiguration.

FINDINGS

The journals reveal four recurring mechanisms of neutralization:

1. Curricular ornamentation. Ethnic-racial education appears as a commemorative date, project, activity or symbolic gesture, without redistributing the curriculum.
2. Euphemistic language. Racial naming is softened through terms that protect comfort more than they confront hierarchy.
3. Administrative containment. Structural racism is transformed into isolated cases, conflicts or classroom problems to be managed.
4. Superficial adhesion. Students reproduce anti-racist vocabulary without necessarily changing their own position, practice or pedagogical imagination.

The journals also document moments of rupture: racial self-location becomes possible; family and school memories are reread; silences become evidence; professional trajectories are displaced; pedagogical intervention becomes imaginable.

ANALYTICAL LEXICON

The study proposes a pedagogical lexicon to distinguish:

- surface adherence from implication;
- representation from curricular redistribution;
- presence from belonging;
- event from structure;
- case from hierarchy;
- memory from archive;
- confession from pedagogical technology.

ARGUMENT

This study contributes to debates on teacher education, curriculum studies and anti-racist pedagogy by showing that reflective writing can function as an archive of implementation. The journal makes visible the distance between policy and practice, but also the fragile moments where compliance begins to become reconfiguration.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Effective ethnic-racial education in teacher preparation requires more than normative alignment. It requires institutions to document and name the micro-mechanisms through which racial hierarchies are reproduced, softened, displaced or interrupted. Naming is not merely analytical. It is a form of institutional responsibility and pedagogical care.