

# International Journal of Human Sciences Research

## TEACHING INDIGENOUS HISTORY AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM/EARLY YEARS

---

*Franciele Sabchuk*

Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM)

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7752040431638361>

*Isabel Cristina Rodrigues*

Universidade Estadual de Maringá (UEM)

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/0643613119453873>

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



**Abstract:** This article proposes an analysis of the inclusion of indigenous history in primary school/early years school curricula, focusing on compliance with Law number: 11,645/2008, since it established the mandatory teaching of indigenous history and culture in basic education. The article problematizes the context of application of Law 11,645/2008 before and after the approval of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) in 2017, exploring aspects of the prescriptive dimension of these documents, as guiding and normative guides for curricula across the country. To achieve this objective, both documents were examined as documentary sources, allowing a reflection on long-term educational policy proposals for Brazil. The article also highlights how the field of knowledge of Indigenous History can significantly contribute to this debate.

**Keywords:** Law 11,645/2008; BNCC; Indigenous History; Teaching History.

## INTRODUCTION

The occupation of Brazil, as well as the rest of America, by the first groups of hunters and gatherers, or Paleo-Indians, dates back to a distant past, even without consensus among researchers, who differ in relation to many aspects, including the dating of these occupations. For some more conservative researchers, the occupation would have occurred approximately 11,300 years before the present time; others argue that there is evidence that this occupation occurred 30 thousand years ago, there are even researchers who defend an even earlier date, 50 thousand years BP.

What is consensus is the fact that the territory we agree to call America has been inhabited for a long time. Since the colonial period, from the year 1500 onwards, with the arrival of the Portuguese and Spanish on the American continent and contact with the

original peoples, these were named 'Indians', and from this fact, the trajectory of these subjects and peoples was marked by countless and tragic events, strategically designed to disqualify the condition of subjects who are protagonists of their own histories, knowledge and cultures, placing them in a condition of inferiority compared to cultures of European origin.

For a long time, historical narratives about the past of these people and subjects were recorded from a stereotypical perspective and a hierarchy where the colonizer is presented in a position of superiority in relation to the indigenous peoples who live in America. In such narratives, indigenous peoples were not presented as historical subjects, protagonists of their own trajectories, but despite the context of extreme violence and exploitation to which they were subjected, they did not stop resisting, reacting to contact in their own ways and with their own political strategies.

Among the strategies used by indigenous people, we can mention, for example, alliances with the Jesuits in the villages, as establishing an alliance is a way of resisting and continuing to exist. It is a political, diplomatic struggle, the result of a choice, which could have been warlike or one of removal or flight. One of the consequences of these alliances was that the State, together with these missionaries, took protective measures in relation to these people, and the guardianship lasted for a long time (OLIVEIRA; FREIRE, 2006, p. 73).

In 1910, the Indian Protection and National Worker Location Service (SPILTN) was created, later designated as the Indian Protection Service (SPI). It was a body that aimed to help indigenous people in villages and those who were defined as nomads, as well as administering the territories and assets existing in them. The SPI existed until 1967, when it was replaced by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI).

From the 1970s onwards, with the organization of social movements across the country, including indigenous social movements, the idea of breaking with the State's protective policy took shape. For Baniwa, it was during this period that indigenous people realized the need to overcome differences and unite, in order to claim common interests and their rights (BANIWA, 2006, p. 43). This movement became known as the indigenous movement and was outside official state policy.

With the ratification of the 1988 Constitution, indigenous populations gained citizenship and guaranteed "the right to be different, to live according to their own principles of social, political, cultural and cosmological organization, as well as the right to specific legislation that guarantees their territories, a differentiated, multicultural and bilingual education, as well as the practice of their customs and traditions" (BERTAGNA, 2015, p. 03).

This brief synthesis aimed to demonstrate some of the achievements that these people obtained through struggles, organization and seeking to act as responsible for their trajectories. This, to make a counterpoint to the way these people are commonly treated, in a pejorative, prejudiced, racist and mistaken way by a significant part of the Brazilian population. In addition to always being portrayed only from the colonizer's perspective, as barbarians, uncivilized, or victims, part of a historical process in which they did not exert any influence on their destinies after the arrival of European peoples.

This is an initial reflection, a trigger, to demonstrate the article's approach, presenting possibilities of approaches to be adopted by school curricula, with a view to a more diverse teaching and learning process, with regard to the inclusion of content relating to themes involving the history and cultures of indigenous peoples.

This is because, in this article, the curriculum is considered as a document that delimits the formal territory of national education, therefore, it has an educational, cultural and social commitment, with the promotion of affirmative actions, valorization and historical repair on peoples and cultures. indigenous people. In this sense, looking at the content of Law 11645/2008 contributes to reflection.

## **LAW 11,645/2008 AND HISTORY TEACHING**

The indigenous movement strengthened in Brazil in the 1980s, promoting a narrative based on multiculturalism, which, according to Faustino (2006, p. 73), refers to the recognition of the existence of culturally different groups in a given country. This understanding was reflected in education, defending the idea of equality for all and combating discrimination and racism, although without addressing how these behaviors were structured.

The ideas of multiculturalism were present in the Constitution (1988), in the Education Guidelines and Bases Law (1996) and in the National Curricular Parameters (1997), as analyzed and systematized in research by Bertagna (2015, p. 04). It is important to highlight the importance of these documents for elementary education during this period, as they were written from a multiculturalist perspective and impacted the formulation of Law 10,639/2003.

Law 10,639/2003 made teaching about African and Afro-Brazilian culture and history mandatory in primary and secondary education (BRAZIL, 2003). In 2008, the law underwent changes in its content, expanding its text and scope, giving rise to Law 11,645/2008, providing that "in Elementary and Secondary Education establishments, public and private, it becomes mandatory to study History and Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Culture"

(BRAZIL, 2008). Thus, teaching the history and cultures of indigenous peoples became mandatory in schools across the country.

However, as stated in Law 11,645/2008, which amends Paragraph 2, of Article 26-A, of Law 9396/1996, “the contents relating to the history and culture of Afro-Brazilians and Brazilian indigenous peoples will be taught within the scope of the entire school curriculum, especially in the areas of artistic education and Brazilian literature and history”. This writing has generated and still generates some misinterpretations, such as understanding that the topic in question is a specific demand of some areas of knowledge, while others may be exempt from promoting didactic and pedagogical actions that include such content.

The school space is a privileged territory to provide students with greater and more appropriate contact with the indigenous presence in the ethnic, social, cultural, political and historical composition of the Brazilian population. For authors such as Bergamaschi and Gomes (2002, p.57), the image of the indigenous person created at school often remains in the subject’s imagination for the rest of their life. In this sense, it is understood that History, as a school subject, present in curricula since the early years of elementary school, must be analyzed from a privileged place for the implementation of the Law.

Therefore, it is necessary to promote public educational policies that guarantee a historical teaching and learning process capable of breaking with practices that prioritize content related to the history of a colonizing humanity, corresponding to the desires of the hegemonic classes made up of whites, Christians and Europeans. There is an urgency to overcome the teaching of History that does not take into consideration, the ethnic and racial diversity that makes up our society, yesterday and today, providing didactic and methodological

strategies that develop historical thinking capable of breaking with prejudices, stereotypes and racism still present in our reality historical and social (RODRIGUES; SABCHUK, 2022, p. 75).

## THE BNCC AND INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Since 2017, the teaching and learning process across the country has followed the standards and guidelines prescribed by the National Common Curricular Base (BRAZIL, 2017). According to the organization proposed by the document, the curricular component of History belongs to the Knowledge Area of Human Sciences, together with Geography. In the case of elementary education, it was structured as follows: BNCC General Competencies, Specific History Competencies for Elementary Education; Thematic Units, Objects of Knowledge and Skills (FRANCO; FONSECA; SILVA, 2018, p. 1019).

When analyzing the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017), it was observed in the writing of the document, which is centered on the idea of *Competences and Abilities*, where everything that is taught and learned needs to be useful. In this sense, it is worth highlighting that Brazil currently has an educational policy focused on training individuals for social experience, without deepening the idea of human formation (RODRIGUES; SABCHUK, 2022).

The understanding of Competence and Ability was described by the document as:

Competence is the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), while Skills (practical, cognitive and socio-emotional) refer to attitudes and values necessary to resolve complex demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work. (Brazil, 2017, p. 08).

However, to develop teaching work that deals with the history and cultures of indigenous peoples in the classroom, a

national educational policy based on the idea of human formation is necessary. In this sense, the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) is considered fragile when it comes to teaching and learning aspects of the history and cultures of indigenous peoples.

The teaching and learning of History, from the early years of elementary school, needs to be based on didactic and methodological approaches that consider the trajectories of different subjects, their social dynamics, how they produce and assimilate transformations in the historical context with which they interact (SILVA, 1995).

It is worth clarifying that the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) is not the curriculum itself, as states and municipalities across the country produced their curricular documents from it. However, most of its content must be maintained, education systems can change on average thirty percent of their content in order to adjust to their local demands. In other words, if a large part of what is prescribed and approved must be maintained in local documents, it has a very significant prescriptive dimension, which will be present in all curricula produced by the country's education networks and systems. That is why, in this article, we refer to the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) as a curriculum, even though the Ministry of Education (MEC) states that it is not.

Furthermore, it is important to take into consideration, the lack of clarity in the wording of some Learning Objects and Skills present in the BNCC, in the History component. This is because it would be based on the Learning Objectives that the Competencies would be developed. However, there needs to be clarity regarding the educational process that is being proposed, because if there is a misunderstanding of the proposal on the part of teachers, the result could be impacted.<sup>1</sup>

1. It is not a reference to a result linked to external assessments, but rather a measurement of the educational process, focused on student training in its multiple dimensions, including the human dimension.

Highlighting that in primary education/initial years, in general, the professionals who work have degrees in Pedagogy, not in History, therefore, they may have difficulties in addressing questions, concepts and categories that are specific to historical learning, and the way in which the BNCC text was prescribed is not capable of resolving such issues (RODRIGUES, SABCHUK, 2022, p. 66).

In order to exemplify such lack of clarity in the writing, mentioned in the previous paragraphs, a case study can be proposed, observing a Thematic Unit, proposed for the fourth (4th) year, entitled: "Transformations and permanence in the trajectories of groups humans". Based on this major theme, the proposed Knowledge Object was "The action of people, social groups and communities in time and space: nomadism, agriculture, writing, navigation, industry, among others.

Observe the extent to which a generalist teacher will understand the aspects of historical science that can be explored in this object, or even, covering such diverse temporalities in a single object, as it ranges from nomadism to industry. One of the consequences of this generality in the writing of the document may be the teacher's excessive attachment to the textbook, which will also not be free from mistakes, as Rodrigues and Sabchuk (2022) observed in relation to the use of the term "nomadism", to deal with movements population and movements of indigenous peoples across their territory.

Both theoretically and methodologically, the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) continued, even without mentioning them, the directions proposed by the curricular reformulations triggered in the process of redemocratization of Brazilian society, from the second half of the 1980s, which were materializing as curricular proposals in the following decades. This means that we have more permanences than

changes in the proposal for teaching History, according to analyzes by Moreno (2016).

Even with weaknesses, the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) is the document that regulates and guides teaching throughout the country, both in History and other areas of knowledge. It is up to the education systems of states and municipalities to adapt their curricula, based on what is prescribed, in order to maintain much of what the base document provides.

This set of guidelines and standards that form the BNCC, as well as any other curriculum, composing what Sacristán (2013, p. 26) called the official curriculum, that is, the prescribed one, is what was explicitly desired by those who - or group of subjects - who developed public educational policy, understood that it must be taught and learned in formal education. It is a movement permeated with power, where it is decided what must be part of a curriculum, in what form and also what is not relevant to composing the document.

Therefore, let us not be so innocent as to consider that there are no intentions in each Skill and Competence present in the text prescribed by BNCC (2017). The way each content, theme, choice of vocabulary and even the absence (or silencing of subjects), was written and is part of an intentionality, with a view to maintaining certain hegemonic ways of thinking and exercising power, through politics educational. (SABCHUK, 2020).

However, according to Sacristán (2013, p. 26), a curriculum does not only have the prescribed dimension, but other layers: the curriculum interpreted by teachers and teaching materials; *the curriculum carried out in practices; the actual educational effects; probable and proven effects*. Considering the weaknesses that the prescribed layer of the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) has, combined with the fact that it is approved, therefore it needs to be put into practice by teachers who

work with teaching throughout the country, it is understood that the curriculum layer interpreted takes on a special role in the teaching practice, who has the autonomy to navigate and make their didactic and methodological choices.

In this sense, continuing training actions for teachers to work with the curriculum are fertile territory. Considering that teachers who work in the initial years, in general, do not have a degree in History, however, they also work with this component, continuing education begins to occupy an important space, considering the multiple layers that a curriculum has.

In addition to producing curricula, the secretariats and education centers of states and municipalities must develop, in parallel, continuing training programs for teachers, so that they can relate or deal with the Objects and Learning Objectives prescribed by the BNCC from a broader perspective. diverse, concerned with human formation, in its multiple dimensions. Prioritizing the inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity, with a view to a new design for the sociodiversity that makes up the country, a training program that can assist teachers in understanding and organizing content, linked to Laws 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2008.

To this end, the selection of syllabus content for the continuing education of teachers can adopt a post-critical perspective (SILVA, 2017), in order to develop work focused on problematizing power relations between the nations that make up the economic heritage, political and cultural aspects of the European colonial conquest (SILVA, 2017), not just the recognition of cultural diversity, multiculturalism. This is an attempt to seek teaching strategies, in order to fill in the interpreted dimension of the curriculum, a weakness in the prescribed dimension of the document.

The teaching and learning process of both teachers and students must consider the inclusion of the history and cultures of indigenous peoples in Brazil and the locality, based on the anthropological and historiographical approaches that have been produced since the 1990s in Brazil. Brazil, therefore, are aimed at inserting analyzes that demonstrate the protagonism of indigenous peoples and the place they occupied and occupy in the process of building the history of Brazil.

This approach to program organization comes close to the line *Indigenous History*, as an investigative field, where indigenous peoples are protagonists, authors and actors, subjects of their historical trajectories, they are not only analyzed based on processes of domination. These are analyzes that would allow us to treat both processes of domination and resistance, as well as the interaction between them (SILVA, 2017).

Furthermore, when approaching the line of Indigenous History, the selection of content, facts and historical events must consider researchers and productions that can provide theoretical contributions so that teachers and students can look at some episodes in the history of the country, state or municipality, and, be able to critically examine or re-examine (depending on the stage) the indigenous presence. As highlighted by Oliveira (2016), the task of replacing indigenous people as effective agents in the construction of Brazil is not a simple task, but necessary.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Looking at the multiple layers that make up a curriculum, in dialogue with what Sacristán proposed (2013, p. 16), allows us to understand the document beyond what is prescribed and move, plan and act consciously in its other layers, without disregarding current legislation, as it has a guiding and

normative character.

Thus, with a view to quality education, concerned not only with the development of skills and abilities that are useful, but with the comprehensive training of students in all their dimensions, including the human dimension, it is possible to work in other curricular layers, such as the interpreted curriculum.

For this, a necessary step is continued training programs that help the teacher to treat the content prescribed by the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017) with strangeness, thus, being able to equip this professional to sharpen the look at the events and characters of the story with a different focus., who can, for example, know and better understand the contradictions, political and ideological games that characterized the formation of identities in Brazilian society and why indigenous peoples, for a long time, in historical narratives, were first crystallized in the past, to, subsequently, they are silenced and erased from historiography and history taught whether in basic education or in teacher training courses.

Teachers from elementary school must act, methodologically and didactically, to promote a historical teaching and learning process, committed to the implementation of Laws 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2008, and with the inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity. This implies designing a new horizon for the sociodiversity that makes up the country. This approach not only recognizes, but also values multiple historical perspectives, highlighting the importance and richness of the actions of different ethnic groups in the construction of a plural national identity comprised of the diversity of peoples, ethnicities and cultures that inhabit Brazilian territory. This way, by incorporating pedagogical practices that reflect the plurality and complexity of Brazilian history, educators become essential agents in the formation of critical citizens who

are aware of the ethnic and cultural diversity that makes up Brazilian society.

## REFERENCES

- BANIWA, Gersem dos Santos Luciano. **O índio brasileiro**: o que você precisa saber sobre os povos indígenas no Brasil de hoje. Brasília: MEC/Secad/Museu Nacional/UFRJ, 2006.
- BERGAMASCHI, Maria Aparecida, GOMES, Luana Barth. **A temática indígena na escola: ensaios de educação intercultural**. Currículo sem Fronteiras, v.12, n.1, pp. 53-69, Jan/Abr 2012.
- BERTAGNA, CAMILA. A Lei 11645/2008 e a abordagem da temática indígena na escola. Estudo de caso: a ação das Equipes Multidisciplinares em escolas do NRE de Maringá. In: **XVIII Simpósio Nacional de História**, 2015. Disponível em: [http://www.snh2015.anpuh.org/resources/anais/39/1428339352\\_ARQUIVO\\_Anpuh2015.pdf](http://www.snh2015.anpuh.org/resources/anais/39/1428339352_ARQUIVO_Anpuh2015.pdf) - Acessado em 24 de maio de 2023.
- BRASIL. Constituição (1988). Constituição da Republica Federativa do Brasil. Brasília, DF: Senado Federal.
- BRASIL. Lei nº 9.394, de 20 de dezembro de 1996. Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDBEN). Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. Brasília: MEC, 1996.
- BRASIL, Lei n. 10.639 – 09 de janeiro de 2003. Brasília: Ministério da Educação, 2003.
- BRASIL. Lei 11.645/08, 10 de março de 2008. Altera a Lei nº 10.639, de 9 de janeiro de 2003. Diário Oficial da União, Poder Executivo, Brasília, 2008.
- BRASIL. BNCC – Base Nacional Curricular Comum. Brasília: SEE, 2017c. Disponível em: <http://basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br/download-da-bncc> - Acessado 24 de maio de 2023.
- FAUSTINO, Rosângela Célia. **Política educacional nos anos de 1990**: o multiculturalismo e a interculturalidade na educação escolar indígena. Tese de Doutorado. Florianópolis, CED/UFSC: 2006.
- FRANCO, Aléxia Pádua; FONSECA, Selva G.; SILVA, Astrogildo Fernandes Junior. Saberes históricos prescritos na BNCC para o ensino fundamental: tensões e concessões. In: **Ensino em Re-Vista**; Uberlândia, MG; v.25; n. Especial; p. 1016- 1035; 2018.
- MORENO, Jean Carlos. História na Base Nacional Comum Curricular: déjà vu e novos dilemas no século XXI. In: **História & Ensino**, Londrina, v. 22, n. 1, p. 07-27, jan./jun. 2016.
- OLIVEIRA, João Pacheco de, FREIRE, Carlos Augusto da Rocha. **A presença indígena na formação do Brasil**. Brasília: MEC/Secad/Museu Nacional/UFRJ, 2006.
- OLIVEIRA, João Pacheco de. **O nascimento do Brasil e outros ensaios**: “pacificação”, regime tutelar e formação de alteridades. Contra Capa, 2016.
- RODRIGUES, ISABEL; SABCHUK, Franciele. O conceito de “nomadismo”, a BNCC e os livros didáticos do ensino fundamental/anos iniciais - 4º e 5º anos: Entre o prescrito e o interpretado para o ensino de História. In: **História em Reflexão**. Volume 15, nº 31, 2022, p. 59-81. Disponível em: <https://ojs.ufgd.edu.br/index.php/historiaemreflexao/article/view/14844> - Acessado em 24 de maio de 2023.
- SABCHUK, Franciele. **Entre prescrições e práticas**: uma proposta para a formação continuada de professores no trabalho com a questão indígena no ensino de história para as séries iniciais no município de São José dos Pinhais. Maringá. 2020. Programa de Mestrado Profissional em ensino de História -UEM. Dissertação de Mestrado.
- SACRISTÁN, José Gimeno. A função aberta da obra e seu conteúdo. In: SACRISTÁN, J. G. (Org.). **Saberes e incertezas sobre o currículo**. Porto Alegre: Penso, 2013. p. 9-14.
- SILVA, Aracy Lopes da & GRUPIONI, Luís Donisete Benzi. **A temática indígena na escola**: novos subsídios para professores de 1º e 2º graus. Brasília: MEC/MARI/UNESCO, 1995.
- SILVA, Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves. Aprender, ensinar e relações étnico-raciais no Brasil. In: **EDUCAÇÃO**. Porto Alegre/RS, ano XXX, n. 3 (63), p. 489-506, set./dez. 2007.
- SILVA, Tadeu Tomás. **Documentos de Identidade**: uma introdução às teorias do currículo. 3. Ed. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2017.
- SOUZA FILHO, Carlos Frederico Marés de. Introdução. In: SOUZA FILHO, Carlos Frederico Marés de.; BERGOLD, Raul Cezar (org.). **Direitos dos povos indígenas no Brasil: desafios no século XXI**. – Curitiba: Letra da Lei, 2013, p. 13-34.