

## The education of ethnic-racial relations: dialogues and tensions at the State University of Londrina<sup>I</sup>

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### Abstract

This article investigates how Ethnic-Racial Relations Education (ERRE) is incorporated into the curriculum of the Pedagogy undergraduate program at the State University of Londrina (UEL). The persistence of violence against Black and Indigenous peoples in both society and schools underscores the need to examine the extent to which *Law 10.639/2003* (Brazil, 2003), as amended by *Law 11.645/2008* (Brazil, 2008), is implemented within the program. The specific objectives are: to analyze selected documents that support debates on ERRE; to highlight key concepts central to anti-racist discourse; and to examine students' perceptions of this issue. The study adopts a descriptive methodology based on Lakatos and Marconi (2003) and Gil (2008), employing a qualitative approach to investigate students' understanding of the presence of ERRE within the Pedagogy program. The analysis reveals weaknesses in the integration of ERRE, limited awareness of the aforementioned legislation, and the absence of Black and Indigenous authors in the program's bibliography. This study is grounded in the works of Munanga (2004), Silva (2007), Krenak (2019; 2020), Baniwa (2021), Almeida (2022), and Longhini (2023), among others.

**Keywords:** Ethnic-racial relations education; teacher education; Pedagogy; racism.

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## A educação das relações étnico-raciais: diálogos e tensionamentos na Universidade Estadual de Londrina

### Resumo

Este artigo investiga como a Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais (ERER) aparece na grade curricular do Curso de Pedagogia da Universidade Estadual de Londrina (UEL). A violência contra pessoas negras e indígenas está presente na sociedade e nas escolas, justificando assim, questionar em que medida a *Lei 10.639/2003* (Brasil, 2003) atualizada pela *Lei 11.645/2008* (Brasil, 2008) está presente no Curso de Pedagogia. Os objetivos específicos são: analisar parte dos documentos que sustentam os debates da ERER; evidenciar conceitos caros ao debate antirracista; e analisar as opiniões dos estudantes acerca da questão. Utiliza-se da metodologia descritiva fundamentada em Marconi e Lakatos (2003) e Gil (2008), uma abordagem qualitativa que investiga as compreensões dos discentes acerca da presença da ERER no Curso de Pedagogia. A análise demonstra fragilidades na presença da ERER, desconhecimento das referidas leis, a ausência de autores negros e indígena na bibliografia do curso. Autores como Munanga (2004), Silva (2007), Krenak (2019, 2020), Baniwa (2021), Almeida (2022), Longhini (2023), e outros, amparam nesse estudo.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação das relações étnico-raciais; formação de professores; Pedagogia; racismo.



## La educación en relaciones étnico-raciales: diálogos y tensiones en la Universidad Estatal de Londrina

### Resumen

Este artículo investiga cómo la Educación de las Relaciones Étnico-Raciales (ERER) se incorpora en el plan de estudios de la carrera de Pedagogía de la Universidad Estatal de Londrina (UEL). La persistencia de la violencia contra las poblaciones negras e indígenas en la sociedad y en el ámbito escolar pone de relieve la necesidad de examinar en qué medida la *Ley 10.639/2003* (Brasil, 2003), actualizada por la *Ley n.º 11.645/2008* (Brasil, 2008), se implementa en dicho programa académico. Los objetivos específicos son: analizar documentos seleccionados que sustentan los debates en torno a la ERER; evidenciar conceptos clave fundamentales para el discurso antirracista; y examinar las percepciones del estudiantado sobre esta temática. El estudio adopta una metodología descriptiva fundamentada en Lakatos y Marconi (2003) y Gil (2008), con enfoque cualitativo para investigar las concepciones de los estudiantes acerca de la presencia de la ERER en la carrera de Pedagogía. El análisis revela debilidades en la integración de la ERER, un conocimiento limitado de la legislación y la ausencia de autores negros e indígenas en la bibliografía del programa. Este estudio se sustenta en Munanga (2004), Silva (2007), Krenak (2019; 2020), Baniwa (2021), Almeida (2022) y Longhini (2023), entre otros.

**Palabras clave:** Educación de las relaciones étnico-raciales; formación docente; Pedagogía; racismo.



## Introduction

In Brazil, in 2024, certain cases of racism have gained significant prominence in sensationalist media, which is often more concerned with audience ratings than with the social damage such reporting causes. These are explicit cases of racism reported in the heat of the moment, yet without interest in their legal or social outcomes; this creates an impression of impunity, as reported by the *Carta Capital* website (Estudante [...], 2024) and other outlets.

The problem presented here prompts an effort to better understand such conflicts within the field of teacher training, considering that there are educational policies addressing Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER). These are based on Law 10.639 (Brasil, 2003), updated by Law 11.645 (Brasil, 2008), in both public and private spheres, as the implementation of these laws can positively impact the fight against racism and prejudice toward Indigenous and Black populations. Thus, this study aims to investigate to what extent ERER is presented in the curriculum of the Pedagogy Course at the State University of Londrina (UEL).

Considering that violence motivated by racism is present in society and occurs daily within educational institutions, it is possible to articulate it with the perspective of Bourdieu and Passeron (2023) when they mention that symbolic violence is the way an individual submits to certain cultural patterns established by society. In this way, education can reproduce this violence when it denies Indigenous and Black peoples the right to have their histories included in the curricula.

On a macro level, *Folha de S. Paulo* comments on cases occurring in the United States of America (Goldenstein, 2024). These are hate crimes spread across primary schools, secondary schools, and even colleges. Between 2018 and 2022, there was an increase of nearly 90% in reports of crimes against African Americans. Although these actions are reported by the media, they are not always linked to the crime of racism, which camouflages statistics.



Contradictions emerge in Brazil when national surveys conducted by *Inteligência em Pesquisa e Consultoria Estratégica* (IPEC, 2024) question institutions and academics, pointing out that 67% of respondents “totally or partially disagree that they study in a racist school, college, or university.” It is further evidenced, based on the IPEC research, that the groups that suffer most from racism in Brazil are primarily Black people, followed by Indigenous people, African immigrants, *quilombolas*, mixed-race (*pardos*), Latin American immigrants, Asian immigrants, white people, and finally, European immigrants.

This study seeks to understand the gaps between the proposal and the effective implementation of the laws, based on the following key documents: CNE/CP Opinion No. 3 (Brasil, 2004a), which establishes National Curricular Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture; CNE/CP Resolution No. 1 (Brasil, 2004b); Law 10.639 (Brasil, 2003) updated by Law 11.645 (Brasil, 2008); CNE/CP Resolution No. 1 (Brasil, 2006), which establishes National Curricular Guidelines for the Undergraduate Degree in Pedagogy (DCNs); CNE/CP Resolution No. 2 (Brasil, 2015), which defines the National Curricular Guidelines for initial higher education training and continuing education; the Pedagogical Course Project (PPC) for Pedagogy (UEL, 2018); and CEPE Resolution No. 056 (UEL, 2023).

The aforementioned regulations guarantee the mandatory inclusion of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture themes in public and private educational institutions at the levels of Upper Elementary School and High School. This supports the argument that applying these laws in educational institutions is fundamental to demystifying the mistaken and stereotyped imagery created around the ethnic formation of the Brazilian people—which often disregards the presence of Indigenous and Black people as a vital factor in this process.

Longhini (2023) stands out by taking Kabengele Munanga’s (2004) text as a reference regarding his conception of race to reaffirm the existence of racism against Indigenous peoples. Longhini is an Indigenous author who writes about



racism; however, broadly speaking, there are few writings on racism against Indigenous peoples—violence that is sometimes not understood as racist acts, unlike those directed at Black men and women. In this regard, the author corroborates Munanga's (2004) view and criticizes the idea expressed in texts where the use of the term "race" in a biological sense persists.

This research falls under a descriptive methodology with a qualitative approach, investigating students' understandings of how Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations is addressed in the Pedagogy Course.

A questionnaire via Google Forms was used as an instrument that met the need to generate information, and the consultation took place in the first half of April 2024. Through a shared link, undergraduate Pedagogy students answered three questions, generating eleven (11) responses. From these, the responses that most closely dialogue with the guiding question were selected: to better understand the tensions that occur in the attempt to effectively include the ERER debate in higher education and other educational instances. An introductory text informed the students about the topic and the anonymity of their identities. Marconi and Lakatos (2003) and Gil (2008) were used to characterize this type of research involving groups, populations, or studied phenomena, making it possible to analyze the opinions and experiences narrated by the subjects involved. The developments of the methodology will be detailed throughout the text regarding the students' understandings of the issue.

### **Concepts Essential to Anti-Racist Education: Race, Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination**

In the face of so many cases of attacks, as previously mentioned, it is of paramount importance to recognize that the obstacles Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian peoples have faced are historical. However, this does not mean that the population as a whole is aware of or recognizes the contributions these peoples have made to our country. In the case of Indigenous peoples, these contributions date back to the colonization of Brazil; Black people emerge in this



scenario when they are brought against their will from the African continent, where they lived in freedom among diverse ethnicities. The resistance and struggle of the Black and Indigenous populations against enslavement were not enough for these peoples to achieve a position of protagonism in society, which is theirs by right. The original peoples were practically decimated throughout Brazilian history. This is a centuries-old struggle that persists today.

Black and Indigenous peoples were forcibly placed on the margins of society due to race prejudice, also known as racism. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe small advances—along with setbacks in various periods—in the struggle for their rights.

In the book *O Pacto da Branquitude* [The Pact of Whiteness], author Cida Bento (2022, p. 23) analyzes the so-called historical legacy and emphasizes that “descendants of slaveholders and descendants of the enslaved deal with legacies accumulated in histories of great pain and violence, which are reflected in the concrete and symbolic lives of contemporary generations.” The author also uses the expression “narcissistic pact” to reinforce the existence of an agreement—albeit non-verbal—transmitted generationally among white people, which culminates in the perpetuation of privileges for descendants of Europeans, while Black people are excluded and have their rights “systematically denied.” According to the author, these are the privileges of having been born white.

To understand the concepts of race, racism, prejudice, and discrimination, we rely on foundational authors, beginning with Kabengele Munanga (2004). The concept of race, from the Latin *ratio* (meaning: sort, category, species) and the Italian *razza*, was historically first used in Zoology and Botany to refer to classifications made in animals and plants.

Regarding the semantic field, the author emphasizes that the concept of race encompasses temporal and spatial dimensions, deriving from medieval Latin to designate descent or lineage, which implies shared physical characteristics within a common group. However, the author warns: “we can



observe that the concept of race, as we use it today, has nothing biological about it” (Munanga, 2004, p. 22). According to the author, it is a concept loaded with ideology because, like all ideologies, it hides something unproclaimed: “the relationship of power and domination.” In other words, currently, the concept of racism does not need to be linked to the concept of race or biological variant; it emerges reformulated from the concepts of ethnicity, cultural difference, or cultural identity.

It is evident that, although we may have the impression of progress in its understanding, racist acts persist, since “[...] today’s victims are the same as yesterday’s and yesterday’s races are today’s ethnicities” (Munanga, 2004, p. 29). Socially, skin color, according to the author, possesses other morphological criteria, such as “the shape of the nose, lips, chin, skull, facial angle, etc.” (Munanga, 2004, p. 20), which are used to reproduce popular racisms.

Because race was used as a justification for the domination of Black and Indigenous peoples, “some anti-racist biologists even suggested that the concept of race be banned from dictionaries and scientific texts” (Munanga, 2004, p. 22), though they were unsuccessful. Within the social sciences, “the use of the concept as a social and political reality is justified, considering race as a sociological construction and a social category of domination and exclusion.” However, the author warns that “the most important issue from a scientific point of view is not just to observe and establish typologies, but primarily to find the explanation for human diversity” (Munanga, 2004, p. 23).

Regarding the concept of race, Sílvia Almeida, in his book titled *Racismo Estrutural* [Structural Racism] (2022), dialogues with Munanga’s (2004) thought when he expresses that, historically, the term was used to classify plants and animals and subsequently began to be used for human comparison and classification, determining what the author mentions as “concepts of civilization and savagery/primitivity,” emphasizing, however, that no evidence exists relating race to intellect.



Having understood the concept of race through the social sciences, we sought to understand what racism is and how it is classified, differentiating it from prejudice and discrimination. In this sense, the author asserts that there is a systematic way of discriminating against people based on race, which culminates “in disadvantages or privileges for individuals, depending on the racial group to which they belong” (Almeida, 2022, p. 32). Still according to Almeida (2022, p. 50), racism is “[...] a consequence of the social structure itself, that is, of the ‘normal’ way in which political, economic, legal, and even family relations are constituted; it is not a social pathology nor an institutional derangement. Racism is structural.” The term “normal” refers to the notion of structural racism, which is constituted in daily relations in its “pattern of normality,” but which we must not accept, normalize, or fail to combat.

Silvio Almeida (2022, p. 32) conceptualizes prejudice and mentions that these cases occur when “considering Black people violent and untrustworthy, Jews stingy, or Asians ‘naturally’ prepared for exact sciences [...].” Thus, the author evaluates that “prejudice and discrimination are merely linked to the idea of race.” When dealing with the concept of discrimination, he classifies it into direct and indirect:

Direct discrimination is the ostensive repudiation of individuals or groups motivated by racial condition, an example of which occurs in countries that prohibit the entry of Black people, Jews, Muslims, people of Arab or Persian origin, or even stores that refuse to serve customers of a certain race. (Almeida, 2022, p. 32).

The concept of direct discrimination reminds us of the atrocities lived historically by different racial groups, which reverberate to this day. On the other hand, the concept of indirect discrimination is characterized by “racial neutrality,” disregarding social differences—also marked by the absence of the intention to discriminate.

Regarding the concepts of race and racism, we understand that they are social and cultural constructions used historically to “categorize” subjects, both



Black and Indigenous, in an attempt to justify the discrimination and oppression committed against them in Brazil.

To discuss the racialization that also falls upon Indigenous peoples, we turn to authors such as Baniwa (2021), Freire (2016), Krenak (2019), and Longhini (2023), who base their debates on Almeida (2022) and Munanga (2004). These authors present similar lines of thought and, together, form a robust theoretical framework for understanding more about the topic in question.

Longhini (2023), an Indigenous writer and activist, conceptualizes racism and disagrees with its understanding through a biological rather than a sociological lens. For the author, ethnicity is articulated with the cultural dimension, having been seen in other periods as a synonym for race, denoting a lack of clarity and ignorance regarding the difference between one category and the other. In times of the criminalization of racism based on the privilege of one class over another, the author raises a hypothesis that the “use of the term ethnicity, in many cases, would come as a way to ‘attenuate’ the term race, as if, somehow, ethnicity were more ‘subtle’” (Munanga, 2004 *apud* Longhini, 2023, p. 4).

In the Indigenous field, the text “Five Misconceptions about Indians” (2016), based on a lecture by Freire, contributes to counteracting the perspective created during colonization that currently still inhabits the imagination of a large portion of the non-Indigenous population. These are five stereotypes: 1. The generic Indian; 2. The Indian has backward cultures; 3. The Indian has frozen cultures; 4. Indians belong to the past; 5. The Brazilian is not an Indian. These are examples of prejudices that denote a lack of critical reading questioning the colonizer’s version and also translate attempts and ways to justify the invisibility affecting Indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Among Indigenous theorists, Gersem Luciano dos Santos carries in his name the ethnicity Baniwa, one of the 69 ethnicities of the Amazonas to which he belongs: Gersem Baniwa. His activism and production confer legitimacy upon him regarding the theme of racism. During an interview available on the



*Brasil de Fato* website, Gersem Baniwa (2021) criticizes the common sense view of a “folklorized” vision of Indigenous people and attributes this to the “result of ignorance and European racism, which argued that colonized peoples were inferior.” The author reiterates the relevance of implementing Law 11.645/2008 in non-Indigenous schools, focusing on the fight against racism, and further advocates for the provision of an authentic and liberating education. Baniwa (2021) adds that “the non-Indigenous school needs to deconstruct its worldview and its references to this uniformity and superiority, and open space for other cultures, traditions, knowledge, and values.”

Ailton Krenak, the first Indigenous person to occupy a seat in the Brazilian Academy of Letters, contributes to teacher training by presenting worldviews from an Indigenous perspective, and his work carries a strong connection with nature. He asserts that there are discourses that tend to camouflage reality, warning that capital remains firm in the idea that Indigenous peoples would be an impediment to human development—a view he considers completely mistaken.

In the work *Ideias para Adiar o Fim do Mundo* [Ideas to Postpone the End of the World] (Krenak, 2019), the author emphasizes that Indigenous peoples prioritize life in relation to the environment, contrasting with the priorities of non-Indigenous people. He discusses the racialization of Indigenous peoples and the injustice of environmental racism, which forces these peoples to live in unhealthy areas and strips them of all rights to their ancestral lands, considering that there is a hierarchy privileging one group over another, in which *caiçaras*, Indigenous people, and *quilombolas* do not have their basic right addressed—the right to life; for the death of these people occurs in disputes over arable land. Both Indigenous and Black people are targets of a persecutory racialization, reflecting a social disruption experienced in contemporaneity, directly linked to capital.



## Documents Supporting the Debate on Ethnic-Racial Relations in Educational Institutions: a Possible Path

It is important to remember that educational institutions are sites of social tension and the *locus* of subject formation. Therefore, it is pertinent to develop affirmative actions aimed at offering an anti-racist education, taking into account the Federal Constitution (Brasil, 1988) and, subsequently, the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDB) (Brasil, 1996).

It is noteworthy that, under the first administration of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2006), a major achievement was reached as a result of the demands and pressures from the Black movement, culminating in the amendment of the LDB/1996 through Law 10.639 (Brasil, 2003).

The Ministry of Education ratified CNE/CP Opinion No. 3 from the National Council of Education, rapportead by Petronilha Beatriz Gonçalves e Silva (Brasil, 2004a). As one of the main architects of the aforementioned Law, she mentions that “the process of educating relations between people of different ethnic-racial groups begins with changes in the way they address one another, so that feelings of inferiority and superiority are immediately broken” (Silva, 2007, p. 490). That is, the researcher does not view the Law merely as a mandatory repository of content, but rather as a policy for transforming values, attitudes, and forms of coexistence, and for dismantling racial hierarchy.

Months later, CNE/CP Resolution No. 1/2004 (Brasil, 2004b) was established, henceforth referred to as the DCNs (National Curricular Guidelines). It is important to note that an “Opinion” (*Parecer*) is generally prepared by specialists and precedes a “Resolution” (*Resolução*), which is voted on by collective bodies, becoming a formal decision-making normative.

The DCNs (Brasil, 2004b) highlight the importance of ensuring access to national culture, valuing Afro-Brazilian history and culture, and promoting equal rights, living conditions, and citizenship. It guides not only teachers but the entire school community and students’ families on the importance of curricular policies and possible approaches to themes involving ERER.



The document also mentions the need to prepare teachers to mediate situations of racism, providing materials and resources for high-quality teaching, so that “descendants of Africans, Europeans, Asians, and Indigenous peoples” (Brasil, 2004b, p. 2) have equal access to all stages of education. The words “recognition” and “recognize” are frequently used in the documents to exemplify how reparations policies must be designed to ensure the entry, access, and retention of the Black population in school education. The mandatory nature of EREER should guarantee: access to knowledge for future professionals; the valuation of African and Afro-Brazilian ancestry and historical-cultural heritage; and the pursuit of justice, equality, and social, civil, economic, and cultural rights.

Structural changes are pointed out, as the document states: “[...] this requires a change in discourses, reasoning, logics, gestures, postures, and the way of treating Black people.” The regulations bring forward the debate on the false idea of racial democracy, “a myth that spreads the belief that if Black people do not reach the same levels as non-Blacks, it is due to a lack of competence or interest, disregarding inequalities” (Brasil, 2004b, p. 3). This excerpt exemplifies how structural racism and political intricacies have caused centuries of harm to Black people by attempting to justify deep-rooted societal disparities through a false meritocratic ideal.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), as mentioned in the DCNs, classifies the color of the Brazilian population as *preto* (Black), *branco* (white), *pardo* (mixed-race), and Indigenous (Brasil, 2004b, p. 15). The document (Brasil, 2004b, p. 16) argues that the racial issue should not be seen as a concern only of the Black Movement and specialists, but of everyone, especially the school. It mentions that “racism, according to Article 5 of the Brazilian Constitution, is an unbailable crime, and this applies to all citizens and institutions, including the school” (Brasil, 1988).

A milestone for EREER was undoubtedly the drafting of Law 10.639/2003, which was updated five years later by Law 11.645/2008. Both laws aim to



recover historical contributions and strengthen socio-cultural practices through the study of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture.

Specifically, the State of Paraná plays a crucial role in promoting changes in social behavior by making these themes mandatory in Basic Education classrooms. Actions extend to strengthening teacher training through participation in events, lectures, and seminars. A significant action occurred in 2010 with the creation of Multidisciplinary Teams in the State, aimed at qualifying a group of teachers to share knowledge with their peers—an initial process recently referred to as Racial Literacy (*Letramento Racial*). This theoretical perspective allows teachers to expand their knowledge and seek to become racially literate, strengthening the school as a political space and considering its members as subjects of their own history.

In 2015, Resolution No. 2 emerged, defining the National Curricular Guidelines for Initial Higher Education Training (teaching degrees, pedagogical training for graduates, and second teaching degrees) and for Continuing Education. It highlights foundational needs for articulating documents and fundamental principles in teacher training, ensuring it is continuous and consolidated based on principles such as “respect for and valuation of ethnic-racial diversity” (Brasil, 2015).

Moreover, it points out the importance of addressing aspects involving professional practice focused on human rights across different levels of Higher Education and throughout continuing education, leading “to the consolidation of inclusive education through respect for differences, recognizing and valuing ethnic-racial, gender, sexual, religious, and generational diversity, among others” (Brasil, 2015, p. 6).

In the more specific field of Higher Education at the State University of Londrina (UEL), respecting its university autonomy, its administrators prioritize critical and high-quality training. The PPC (UEL, 2018) and CEPE Resolution No. 056 (UEL, 2023) seek to align their actions and proposals with the documents already named in this text. This PPC was based on the regulations proposed by



the National Council of Education in the DCNs (Brasil, 2006). Its text mentions what is expected of future pedagogues, who will act in diverse educational modalities, attending to various social segments and maintaining a careful gaze toward subjects in situations of social vulnerability—where Indigenous and Black people are often found. The Resolution highlights that social/ethnic-racial relations should be duly aligned with the valuation of cultures.

The DCNs (Brasil, 2006) remain a highly regarded and relevant document for the training and qualification of teachers as sensitive and ethical citizens, interested in issues that recognize cultural plurality within and outside the university campus. It is a document that records the concern to: “act with ethics and commitment toward building a just, equitable, and egalitarian society.” In this sense, it becomes necessary to “identify socio-cultural and educational problems with an investigative, integrative, and proactive stance in the face of complex realities, with a view to contributing to the overcoming of social and ethnic-racial exclusions [...]” (Brasil, 2006, p. 2). It also suggests articulation between regular schooling and other modalities, such as Indigenous School Education and education for *quilombo* remnants.

In dialogue with the DCNs (Brasil, 2006), the PPC (UEL, 2018)<sup>2</sup> is presented as an identity record of the university and, consequently, of society and its demands. Based on Federal, State, and Institutional Legislation as a mission of UEL, it is committed to promoting free education with democratic management and academic autonomy, prioritizing access and retention policies, along with the promotion of equality, cultural valuation, and respect for the pluralism of ideas (UEL, 2018, p. 11).

Regarding social justice, the PPC highlights that “in 2005, the Entrance Exam (Vestibular) adopted the quota system for students who self-identify as Black and for students from public schools [...]” (UEL, 2018, p. 12). In this perspective, UEL seeks to work with the idea of equity, which must encompass the reparation of unequal situations, providing greater support to those with the most needs—therefore, inequality at the starting point must be considered.



In CEPE Resolution No. 056 (UEL, 2023), mentions of Black and, especially, Indigenous peoples are based on the legislation that institutions must follow. Furthermore, regarding the training of professionals at UEL, it is mentioned: “[...] to value the human being, life, culture, and knowledge; to promote the scientific, technological, economic, social, artistic, and cultural development of society” (UEL, 2018, p. 12).

Contrary to much of what is experienced inside and outside the campus, UEL transcends the limits of the PPC with robust actions such as the creation of the Indigenous Entrance Exam in 2001, the Intercultural Cycle for Indigenous People in 2014, Anti-Racism Campaigns, and the continuous actions of support bodies—such as the Center for Afro-Brazilian Studies (NEAB)—which focus on the continuing education of municipal teachers. The PPC allows for formative experiences with Social Movements, Museums, and Social Organizations through curricular credit, highlighting the NEAB and the University Commission for Indigenous People (CUIA).

The goal is not to portray an idealized institution, but to record that there is a movement creating space for EREER to gain increasing visibility within the context of the curricula of educational institutions. Furthermore, the importance of the representation of Indigenous and Black faculty in schools and universities is reinforced. It is unsettling to know that these peoples have always been speaking, producing culture, research, and knowledge, yet they are often erased or not being heard.

### **Understandings of Pedagogy Students: an Opinion Research**

This research is part of a descriptive methodology which, through a qualitative approach, investigated students’ understandings of how Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER) is addressed in the Pedagogy Program. A questionnaire via Google Forms was employed as an instrument that met the need for generating information; the inquiry took place in the first half of April



2024. The link was shared with undergraduate Pedagogy students, including an introductory text outlining the research purpose.

According to Marconi and Lakatos (2003), questionnaires and forms are appropriate means for obtaining information from subjects. In this regard, Gil (2008) reinforces that this methodology assists in describing the characteristics of the group, population, or phenomenon studied, enabling the analysis of opinions and experiences narrated by the involved subjects.

It is noted that the surveyed students completed part of the course in a remote format. In this article, the non-identification of students followed the principles of ethics in research involving human beings. The study sought to understand their opinions, as well as the extent to which EREER is presented in the curriculum.

Following the discussion on the laws and documents that support the debate on EREER, it was considered necessary to conduct an opinion survey containing three (3) questions for students from the first to the fourth year of Pedagogy. Eleven (11) responses were received: 7 from fourth-year students, 4 from second-year students, and 0 responses from first and third-year students. The questions were: 1. Do you agree that the Pedagogy course satisfactorily includes Black and Indigenous authors in its curriculum? 2. How important is the educator's responsibility in promoting racial equality inside and outside the classroom? 3. What is your opinion on the importance of working with Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008 in teacher training? Among the eleven (11) responses obtained, three were selected that dialogue with the research objective.

Regarding the responses obtained for Question 1, students point out weaknesses in the program's offerings on the subject; one of these is the absence of theoretical frameworks grounded in Black and Indigenous authors. Additionally, there are reports in which students state they have never had contact with Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008.



For the responses to Question 2, considering the relevance of this issue, further opinions were sought: they indicate that awareness and student pedagogical practice focused on the theme are essential. Few students show clarity in understanding the concepts of racism, and the need to bridge theory and practice materialized in student experiences highlights the dynamics of society and its interdependence—the practice of anti-racism inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of EREER themes in training and in the promotion of racial equality and, consequently, an anti-racist education.

It is observed that in the responses to Question 3, there is an awareness of the importance of working with Law 10.639/2003, updated by Law 11.645/2008, and that students value learning about the cultures of Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian peoples during their undergraduate studies. They highlight the importance of understanding the ethnic, social, and economic formation of the Brazilian people, as well as the need to assert the mandatory nature of these laws and the public's lack of knowledge regarding their content. The data were organized and analyzed interpretively, allowing for the comprehension of the information obtained and subsidizing the debate in this text.

Following the initial question regarding the inclusion or exclusion of EREER content, it is evident that the finding of absence—or weakness—in addressing the theme was expected. There is a lack of theoretical support in understanding racism in its biological and sociological dimensions, in which Munanga (2004) mentions the term historically used to classify plants and animals, a thought that culminates in the defense of the sociological perspective.

Added to this debate are the studies by Almeida (2022) on race, racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Both authors treat the issue from a sociological perspective. In the institutional sphere, there is a strengthening of this debate via the Center for Afro-Brazilian Studies (NEAB), which brings together a collective of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate researchers, as well



as faculty members working in the initial and continuing education of teachers in Londrina and the surrounding region.

The debate on the ERER offering at UEL is at the level of theoretical conflict, which involves inherent issues such as the personalization of the theme and the instructor, limiting the number of students who expand their theoretical repertoire with a focus on ERER. In the theoretical field, there is resistance from some faculty members regarding the inclusion of these themes, who sometimes suggest the presentation of isolated content or a simplistic dispersion across the curriculum. As for the students, it is evident that there is recognition of the importance of this debate, but they also do not see themselves as part of this living organism and the correlation of forces that engender the theme.

In the institutional field of the Pedagogy Course's pedagogical proposal, specifically in the discipline of Education and Diversity, the limits of the offering were noted. The Pedagogy Course Curriculum Matrix in the PPC (UEL, 2018) proposes 53 disciplines addressed over four years. Of these, only 2 of the mandatory disciplines cover the themes: 1. Processes of discrimination, stigmatization, and social segregation; and 2. The historical constitution of the education and schooling of Whites, Blacks, and Indigenous people in Brazil, from the Colony to the Empire.

The discipline Education and Diversity (60h) stands out, which, in its syllabus, addresses: "concepts of diversity, inclusion, and exclusion." This discipline is shared with the area of Psychology due to internal adjustments and needs. Thus, themes fluctuate between sociological and biological perspectives when addressing: "significant differences: people with special educational needs, social class, gender, culture, ethnicity, race, and religion" (UEL, 2018). Consequently, the expansion of concepts vital to the debate on anti-racist education is suppressed.

It is observed that the mention of Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008, and the theme of Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER), appears only in the supplementary bibliography. Only one text (Arroyo, 2003) dialogues with



the theme of education and diversity in the context of teacher training in a broader way, by considering a political—not merely technical—formation that is concerned with ethics, respect for the plurality of knowledge, and committed to human rights and social inequalities.

Based on the aforementioned information regarding the level of training, this would represent 3.77% of all disciplines, which calls for more studies on a possible mismatch between the demands of a society marked by racial conflicts and the offering, at the same intensity, of knowledge for qualified and culturally sensitive confrontation.

### Final Considerations

This research revisited the issue of the provision of Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER) within the Pedagogy Program at UEL. It considered the modalities offered to students with a view toward teacher training.

The text sought to draw attention to the need for greater vigor in the fight against racism. It is noted that various Brazilian municipalities are receiving incentives, such as quality seals for providing anti-racist education, as well as resources for teacher training focused on ERER; should these not occur, the funding is lost. These are recently initiated actions.

The study sought to analyze documents and their reflections on education as one of the rights of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous peoples, which is a sharp—yet necessary—debate. In challenging academic canons, Indigenous and Afro-descendant authors do not deny the classics; however, as Gersem Baniwa (2021) asserts, other “methodological canoes” can be utilized in training based on alternative worldviews.

The issue of combating racism emerges in social media, and its manifestations in schools stem from a diseased society driven by capital accumulation, which dehumanizes subjects along the way. As Krenak (2020) states, “money is currently worth more than people,” referring in an interview to the Brumadinho disaster in Minas Gerais in 2019 (Índios [...], 2019). As reported



in the news, it is not a recent development that Indigenous peoples have been concerned with nature conservation as a way of respecting and preserving ourselves. For Krenak (2020), the Brumadinho disaster and the contamination of the Paraopeba River also affected the Doce River Basin and represent the destruction of ancestral ways of life in the name of greed. This contamination represents the destruction of ancestral beings and communal ways of life. The debate on the need to provide more robust training to work teams focused on EREER in regions of land conflict is discussed in an article by Kastelic and Amaral (2022).

In this context, the importance of exploring the origins and ancestry of the Brazilian people is affirmed; in doing so, their ethnic matrices will be observed, and new generations will take pride in their contributions. Contemporary researchers must open themselves to new perspectives or, rather, to a new consciousness, in which other possibilities emerge based on a counter-narrative to the history told by the colonizer. In the direction of valuing Indigenous and Black intellectuals, a full recognition of their ancestors in history is claimed—there have been centuries of epistemicide, and there is no longer room for the colonization of bodies and minds without resistance.

The curricular offering of EREER in the Pedagogy Program and the performance of teachers in basic education are the *raison d'être* of this debate. The research sought to problematize and demonstrate complexity in several points; among them, it stands out that a correlation of forces exists within institutions, limiting progress in higher education in this specific field of combating racism via Law 11.645/2008—which is contradictory, considering that HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) are regarded as sites for the production of knowledge mediated by theoretical dialogue.

In this course, the concepts of race and ethnicity, which permeate Afro and Indigenous issues, fluctuate between absence and fragility. In this area, theoretical misconceptions can occur; for example, when a Basic Education teacher trained in a Pedagogy Program brings a limited conception that fails



to account for the historical constitution of the term “race” and disregards the sociological perspective proposed by authors such as Munanga (2004) and Almeida (2022) in contemporary times.

The term “race” from a biological perspective proposes the supremacy of one race over another—dehumanizing and denying the history and cultures of peoples. The Black and Indigenous authors utilized in this text demonstrate clarity and establish their theoretical foundations in the sociological concept to ground the debate on racism. Thus, it is no longer acceptable to use erroneous definitions or justify racist practices under the guise of naivety or a lack of specific theoretical frameworks.

Regarding student opinions, they demonstrated that there are structural issues leading to new questions about the need to broaden the connection between the Pedagogy Program and Basic Education—especially considering that all training institutions are spaces for the materialization of racism in its forms of violating the physical and psychological integrity of individuals.

The opinion research points to weaknesses in reports regarding the absence of Black authors in the theoretical frameworks of the Pedagogy Program as a whole. Students felt affected by the remote teaching format during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as by the lack of debate on the concepts of race and racism from a sociological perspective. Although faculty members engage in fruitful dialogues with Psychology, complex reconciliations between theorists are necessary to address the proposed themes. The discipline Education and Diversity, in the organization proposed for 2025, does not encompass the central themes of EREER regarding race, racism, prejudice, and discrimination, and the work with Laws 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008 proved to be limited.

Two decades later, the aforementioned laws are still in the implementation phase. Studies such as that of Silva (2007) point to the need for an offering more focused on learning to coexist with differences rather than merely complying out of obligation. The presence of Black and Indigenous people in this scenario



is of utmost necessity and representativeness, as it contributes to breaking the idea of racial hierarchy.

The proposed debate should be revisited by other researchers, and this text was, within its limits, grounded in theoretical premises and experience derived from work in teacher training focused on ERER. These are understandings that carry support for causes related to the most vulnerable sectors of society; it is in this space that Indigenous and Black people are found: at the periphery.

Thus, the text sought to transcend the borders and resistance of faculty members who train students, as well as teachers who train their students in schools—this text is an invitation to broaden the debate concerning ERER.

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## Notes

- 1 Translation performed with the assistance of AI-GEMINI.
- 2 It is available online and its most recent version is from 2018, with updates in 2023 – based on CEPE Resolution No. 056/2023 (UEL, 2023).



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