Artigo Original

The Pedagogist as a Teaching and Learning Coach in Distance Education

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Abstract

This article is part of a master's research that discusses the activities developed by the educator in e-learning (EaD, acronym in Portuguese) courses as part of a multidisciplinary team of pedagogical coordination in which he/she plays the role of teaching and learning mentor (OEA, acronym in Portuguese). The role of the OEA was implemented with the purpose of monitoring, guiding and supporting teaching activities. Considering the centrality of pedagogical work and the unique and innovative nature of this role in e-learning, the research analyzed the perception of OEA work within the scope of the pedagogical coordination of courses offered by a Federal Institute, based on the perception of these professionals. Qualitative, exploratory research based on the case study was adopted, with data collection using semi-structured interviews and the focus group. The ALCESTE technological tool (acronym in Portuguese for Lexical Contextual Analysis of a Set of Text Segments) was used to support the analysis of the data content. The results indicate that there is a positive perception of the work of the OEA in the multidisciplinary team. However, there are dissatisfactions of this professional regarding the role of the mentor in e-learning, they feel it implies limiting their pedagogical work to a technical activity. The dissatisfaction of the OEA is manifested as a lack of clear understanding of their role on the part of the EaD management team; limitation of their activities to the technical-operational level; perception that managers need a professional with training in pedagogy and instructional design.

Keywords: e-learning; pedagogical coordination; mentor.

Introduction

Considering that pedagogy is intended for intentional education, educational practice, in the formal sphere, is inseparable from pedagogical work. In this sense, the pedagogue has a fundamental role, as he is qualified to work in various instances, meeting socio-educational demands in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts, with a view to achieving goals related to human formation, according to the historical context. Social (LIB NEO, 2010). This diversified qualification of the pedagogue is the characteristic that distinguishes him from the professional teacher. The pedagogue's work goes beyond the limits of the classroom, since he can act in different contexts that involve educational practice. Libâneo (2010) calls this professional "stricto sensu pedagogue".

Today, the educator finds his locus of work, also, in Distance Education (EaD). As this is a recent educational modality in Brazil – especially with regard to regulatory and institutionalization aspects of this teaching modality – there are many uncertainties regarding the professional identity of EaD, especially regarding the professionals who work in the pedagogical coordination of these courses. The identity constructions open gaps for the emergence of stigmas, such as the beliefs that the pedagogue should stick to technical and/or technological aspects and that they should assume administrative/bureaucratic functions that have little or no relationship with the pedagogical work. These stigmas end up compromising the meaning of the pedagogue's work, causing conflicts of a professional nature, especially because, in distance education, educational practices are based on the work of a multidisciplinary team.

Here, we will deal especially with the role of the pedagogue who makes up the pedagogical coordination team of the distance education board of a Federal Institute (IF) and who exercises the function called Teaching and Learning Advisor (OAS), which was implemented as a strategy to ensure the quality of the offer of distance courses. It is a unique and innovative experience in FIs.

The role of the pedagogue in EaD is still a recent activity in Brazil, if

compared to the face-to-face modality, but it is in an accelerated growth process. As Belloni (2015) states, the new educational demands arising from changes in the new world economic order require differentiated strategies, and, increasingly, EaD becomes an extremely suitable and desirable educational modality to meet such needs. For this reason, it was considered of fundamental importance to investigate the experience of the pedagogue in the role of OAS, understanding how the work of this professional is developed in the context of a pedagogical coordination of distance courses. The results of this study contribute to the construction of the identity of the pedagogical work in a multidisciplinary team in the context of EaD and, mainly, to the delineation of the pedagogue's attributions in this team.

Pedagogical coordination and the work of the educator in EaD

The concept of pedagogical coordination has essential functions for the educational process, which, aiming at the success of school pedagogical practice, seek to integrate all actions related to the teaching-learning process (PLACCO; ALMEIDA; SOUZA, 2011).

In the conception of Placco, Almeida and Souza (2011), there are three functions of pedagogical coordination: articulation, training and transformation. In summary, the articulating function represents the collective of the school, considering the specifics of the context and the concrete possibilities for the development of processes. The training function consists of teacher training activities with a view to deepening both their specific area and pedagogical aspects, so that the teaching practice is aligned with the school's objectives. Finally, the transformative function seeks to transform reality through a reflective practice that questions actions and raises hypotheses for changes with the intention of improving the school space.

In the context of pedagogical coordination, the figure of the pedagogical coordinator gains centrality, as, as stated by Azevedo, Silva and Alvez (2014), the pedagogical coordinator stands out as an agent capable of collectively conducting a process that aims, in addition to

meaningful student learning, to the improvement of teachers' practice.

According to the Brazilian Classification of Occupations (CBO), the pedagogical coordinators

> [...] implement, evaluate, coordinate and plan the development of pedagogical/instructional projects in the modalities of on-site and/or distance education, applying methodologies and techniques to facilitate the teaching and learning process. They work in academic and/or corporate courses at all levels of education to meet the needs of students, monitoring and evaluating educational processes. They enable collective work, creating and organizing mechanisms for participation in educational programs and projects, facilitating the communication process between the school community and the associations linked to it (BRASIL, 2007-2017, on-line).

In the context of EaD, the activity of pedagogical coordination has been developing and gaining ground in the education scenario in Brazil, but it still presents barriers and challenges to be overcome. Understanding the functions of pedagogical coordination in the school context is essential to face adversity.

This function, in EaD, if compared to the historical course of pedagogical coordination practices in the face-to-face modality, is recent, so there are still few theoretical subsidies found in the literature on the subject. However, we understand that the functions of the pedagogical coordination are transversal to all teaching modalities, respecting the specificities of each one. Thus, it is from this understanding that we seek, in this study, to understand the functions of pedagogical coordination, specifically the OAS, in EaD.

> The multidisciplinary and flexible nature of DE thus requires a new configuration of the Pedagogical Coordination, far from the idea of control and supervision, but, above all, aligned with the proposal of a space for interaction, exchange of experiences, learning, openness to dialogue , a space for active listening, which

provides the teacher with the certainty that he is part of a team and that his action is part of many others in the multidisciplinary distance learning team and that is fundamental for the quality and effectiveness of the courses (ALVES, 2009, p. 7).

Thus, the work of the pedagogical coordination must be collaborative, in partnership with the other professionals that make up the multidisciplinary team, being, therefore, subsidized by constant and permanent dialogue between the team members and having an articulating and integrative character. Hence the importance of flexibility and communication, which make possible the exchange of experiences and the space for active listening mentioned by the authors. Behar (2009) defends the construction of specific pedagogical models for distance education, different from those applied to the face-to-face modality, which also reinforces the need for multidisciplinary work, in which the pedagogical aspect is central.

According to Alves (2009, p. 9), the pedagogical coordination in EAD "is a collective achievement [...], it is a collaborative learning space where each participant connects to another interest and from this partnership the desire to educate is born. and be polite". It is in this context that the collective work of the pedagogical coordination is configured, as the act of conducting collectively configures a group direction activity.

For Souza (2008, p. 95), this function "brings a certain complexity, which differs greatly from other functions, due to the diversity of relationships that involves it". This complexity of the work of the pedagogical coordination is due to the nature of the educational practice itself as an activity of human formation.

The pedagogical coordination of distance education courses, at the Federal Institute researched, arose from a concern to ensure the quality of courses, given the specificities of this modality in face of institutional inexperience in terms of offering distance courses. The pedagogical coordination is made up of a coordinator and educators, who exercise the role of Teaching and Learning Advisors – the OAS mentioned

above. They are responsible for planning, guiding and pedagogical monitoring of distance courses and for the continuing education of teachers within the scope of EaD. This professional was selected through a notice of selection process for scholarship holders, therefore, he is not an effective servant of the IF.

For each of the EaD courses, a team composed of an OAS and a coordinator, with training and experience in the area of the course, is designated. In EaD, the activities of the pedagogical coordination were mapped from three axes: planning; monitoring and articulation. According to Pereira Filho, Reynaldo and Vieira (2018), these are axes that communicate in a flexible, participatory and democratic way. When articulated, such axes designate how to proceed in each activity of the EaD courses.

When explaining the process mapping methodology used in the activities of the EaD Board (DEaD) surveyed, we emphasize that

> [...] the Planning axis foresees processes related to creation, restructuring, development, definition and construction. The Articulation axis foresees processes related to preparation, elaboration, collaboration, production and delegation. The Follow-up axis, on the other hand, provides for service, dialogue and guidance (PEREIRA FILHO; REYNALDO; VIEIRA, 2018, p. 8-9).

About the pedagogical coordination of the distance education courses of the researched IF, it performs the following tasks: (i) planning: identifying demands, planning teacher training and planning the academic calendar; (ii) monitoring: monitoring the development of demands, monitoring the training of teachers and monitoring the application of the academic calendar; (iii) articulation: liaise with course coordinators to define academic calendars, organize an event for teacher training, liaise with the technological coordination for training, liaise with the OAS, convene teachers for training, carry out pedagogical training, carry out technological training, mediate links between OAS and author teachers and mediate links between OAS and mediator teachers. As there are not many documents that define the OAS' attributions, it was

decided to analyze the functions foreseen in the notice for the selection of these professionals.

Table 1 was prepared from the collation of the pedagogical coordinator's attributions, the functions of the pedagogical coordination and the attributions described in the selection notice of the researched IF – guiding instrument of these attributions.

Table 1 – Relationship between OAS responsibilities and planned activities

Attribution of the notice	Process	Role(s)	Activities
Participate in the preparation of proposals and pedagogical guidelines with the course coordination.	Planning	Articulator Trainer Transformer	Plan teaching methodologies; plan guidance manual; plan discipline schedules.
Provide support and advice on teaching and learning issues with the managing teacher and support teacher.	Follow-up	Articulator Trainer Transformer	Monitor the development of methodologies and teaching; monitor the execution of the guidelines manual; monitor the development of disciplines.

Guide, monitor and validate the preparation of Teaching Plans and Mediation Plans, materials and evaluation activities prepared by the team of teachers that make up the discipline.	Follow-up	Articulator	Monitor the implementation of the guidelines manual; monitor the application of evaluation strategies.
	Articulation	Articulator Trainer Transformer	Validate the material produced.
Analyze the reports of the Monitoring and Evaluation System of courses (SAAS) proposing actions to improve the teaching-learning process and to prevent and/or reduce student dropout, enabling permanence and success.	Planning	Articulator Transformer	Plan assessment strategies; plan evasion combat strategies.
	Follow-up	Articulator Trainer	Monitor the application of evasion strategies.
Plan and execute, together with the pedagogical coordination, actions to train teachers and tutors	Articulation	Articulator Trainer Transformer	Collaborate with pedagogical training.
Establish, through the course coordinator, a continuous communication network with the team members.	Articulation	Articulator Trainer Transformer	Present guidelines manual for author teachers.

Source: Prepared by the authors from Placco, Almeida and Souza (2011).

We emphasize that the OAS selection notice in the IF surveyed provides for the three functions of pedagogical coordination, and the articulating function permeates all activities developed by the OAS pedagogue. The formative role is identified in six of the eight categories of OAS attributions. The transformative role is present in most OAS activities. Next, we deal with each of the functions of the pedagogical coordination.

The articulating function of pedagogical coordination

In the conception of Cerny and Almeida (2012), the pedagogical coordination must provide the meeting, articulation and integration of the actions carried out by the participants of the teams that work in EaD. The work of the pedagogical coordination must take place from a systemic and dynamic view, privileging work and collective discussion.

> A pedagogical view from this perspective is anchored from a systemic view of the process, comprising each of the spaces that integrate the EaD system in a dynamic and interrelated way. In this sense, a systemic view of distance education allows coordinating efforts to respond to challenges together (CERNY; ALMEIDA, 2012, p. 94, emphasis added).

In the context of distance education, as well as in the face-to-face modality, working with a multidisciplinary team is essential, as, as Cocco (2015, p. 35) states, "the existence of a multidisciplinary team is practically inherent to the process of pedagogical management of a course in the distance mode".

Pedagogical coordination has a primary function of articulation and integration of educational processes that take place in the school context. For Placco and Almeida (2009), it needs to be aware of the changes that occur in the educational context, valuing professionals and staff by monitoring results, in order to propose referrals and collective constructions based on reflections on the challenges, taking into account view the proposition of pedagogical actions.

Considering that, in the specific context of EaD, team members are usually in different spaces and times, Behar (2009) proposes, as a strategy to make collective work feasible, the use of technological tools and free collective use environments that favor collaborative construction. We can say that continuous communication is the basis for all other assignments to develop successfully; and, as a member of the pedagogical coordination responsible for planning, guiding and monitoring the pedagogical activities of the courses, the OEA plays the coordinating role of the pedagogical coordination, and the work is essentially collaborative and constructive.

In this sense, the articulating function is the basis for the other functions to develop successfully, as it is through it that we perceive the needs for training and transformation.

The formative role of pedagogical coordination

For Placco and Almeida (2009), taking care of teacher training and development is an essential function of pedagogical coordination. In this sense, it is essential to understand training beyond the fragmentation between theory and practice, between school and teaching practice. In the conception of Belloni (2015, p. 95), "the training of teachers, both for distance education and for the appropriate classroom for the present and the future, must be organized in order to meet the need for updating in three major dimensions: pedagogical, technological and didactic".

Training comprises several dimensions and, in this study, we highlight the pedagogical dimension, which concerns knowledge about learning processes based on psychology, cognitive sciences, human sciences and that focus on constructivist theories and active methodologies. Such pedagogical knowledge still refers to the technological dimension of EaD - existing relationships between technology and education - and is based on the ability to make decisions about the use and production of teaching materials using available technological means, and the didactic dimension, which it deals with the teacher's knowledge about a specific field of knowledge and the constant updating in all aspects,

especially regarding the technological and didactic aspects. (PLACCO; SILVA, 2007).

Among the activities assigned to the OEA, the continuing education of teachers occupies a prominent place, since there is direct contact between this professional and the teacher. In the multidisciplinary team work proposal, the pedagogue is responsible for collaborating with the teacher in the search for pedagogical knowledge to help them in their educational practice. This search takes place throughout the course of the discipline, in a reflective and collective way.

Thus, the work of the OEA is essentially formative, as it contributes to guidance and encouragement and because it provides teachers with new knowledge in the pedagogical field.

The transforming role of pedagogical coordination

The function of transforming the school context through collective work is defended by Orsolon (2007, p. 18), who considers that "the school, as an original space for the work of educators, maintains a dialectical relationship with society: at the same time time in which it reproduces, it transforms society and culture". This transformation, in the school context, is possible through the dialogic mediation between actors in the educational process. Thus, the role of the pedagogical coordination will be to lead actions for transformation through the articulation of different actors.

Pedagogical coordination can trigger a process of change through actions to promote work in connection with the school organization: carrying out a collective work, integrated with school actors, mediation regarding teaching competence, investment in the continuing education of teachers in school itself, encouraging innovative curricular practices, establishing partnerships with the student, creating opportunities for the teacher to integrate into the school, meeting the needs revealed by their desire, establishing working partnerships with the teacher and promoting challenging situations for this professional (ORSOLON, 2007).

Through collective work, the OAS pedagogue can encourage and create opportunities for changes in the pedagogical practice of EaD, as well as reinvent and re-signify their own role in education.

Materials And Method

This research was characterized as a case study, as it investigated the perception of the pedagogue's work as an OAS of courses offered in the distance education modality in the context of a multidisciplinary team in a specific Federal Institute of Education. The OAS function is contemporary and innovative in the field of distance education offered by the Federal Education Network, which justifies the study of the specific case (YIN, 2015).

According to Lüdke and André (2013, p. 20), the case study is "well delimited, and its outlines should be clearly defined in the course of the study". Thus, for data collection, we consider the focus group as an appropriate instrument for investigating the perception of OAS on work in a collective and interactive way. The work with focus groups was chosen because it allows understanding processes of reality construction by certain social groups, daily practices, actions and reactions to these facts and events, behaviors and attitudes, constituting an important technique for the knowledge of representations, " languages and symbologies prevalent in dealing with a given issue by people who share some traits in common, relevant to the study of the targeted problem" (GATTI, 2005, p. 11).

Five of the seven OAS that made up the EaD pedagogical coordination team in the researched IF participated in the focus group.

Content analysis recommends relating the possible identifications found in the texts and the determinants in the quest to understand the meanings behind the words (BARDIN, 2016). In this sense, the Alceste software (Contextual Lexical Analysis of a Set of Text Segments) was used, which performs the text analysis by descending hierarchical classification, that is, it performs divisions of the analyzed text and then locates the most notable contrasts between the classes of words that make

up the text, identifying the classes of representative utterances.

In addition, Alceste extracts the classes of utterances characterized by the dominant vocabulary and degrees of relationship between the classes are established, percentages of predominance of each one of them throughout the analyzed textual body, called, in this article, corpus (IMAGE, 2010).

Results And Discussion

Based on the analysis of the corpus of the research carried out with the help of Alceste, a synthesis of the results that present the perceptions that the OAS has regarding the role it plays in the scope of DEaD was built. As a comparative parameter for this analysis, we take as a basis the OEA attributions contained in the selection notice for these professionals and the activities foreseen in the DEaD process mapping.

The function of the OEA was created from a concern with the pedagogical quality of the courses offered by DEaD. This professional was hired to develop a pedagogical work of planning, guidance and monitoring of distance courses, in addition to being responsible for the continuing education of teachers within the scope of DEaD.

> *I imagined, during the exercise of the function, to be really pedagogical, to work pedagogically, but when you put me to validate the strictly technical material that the expert on the subject really did not give any opinion, which leaves you alone with the responsibility to validate it, nullifies in some way. I don't know to what extent I feel more like an instructional designer than actually [a] pedagogue* (Verbal Information, OAS 1).

In the perception of the OAS participating in this research, as can be seen in the speech of OAS 1 transcribed above, the role they have been playing in DEaD is not in accordance with the initial conception proposed when they assumed the function. Thus, we infer that, in the perception of the AEO, the DEaD wants a professional trained in instructional design (DI). However, this training was not required as a minimum

condition in the OAS selection process.

The issue raised by OEA 1 is also related to the conflict between two professions necessary for distance education: the instructional designer (DI) and the pedagogue. In this sense, it is important to distinguish these professions. For Libâneo (2010, p. 33),

> [...] the pedagogue is the professional who works in various instances of educational practice, directly or indirectly linked to the organization and processes of transmission and active assimilation of knowledge and modes of action, with a view to human formation objectives previously defined in its historical contextualization.

The ID is the professional "responsible for designing solutions to specific educational problems" (FILATRO, 2008, p. 9). It is a more technical and restricted role in the DI field of action. According to the Brazilian Catalog of Occupations, it has the following function:

> [...] implement, evaluate, coordinate and plan the development of projects, whether pedagogical or organizational, both in face-to-face, distance and connected face-to-face teaching modalities. Techniques and methodologies that combine the use of technologies in the virtual learning environment are applied. Its work is not only linked to the academic environment, it can work in HRs, Training Companies, Corporate Universities, Banks, among others. The main objective is to provide the translation between the content developed and taught by the teacher until the process of interaction between the content and the knowledge to be acquired by the student. Through interactive tools and resources, the Instructional Designer will seek to adapt the theoretical content synchronously and asynchronously, promoting learning through the aid of collaborative tools (BRASIL, 2007-2017, online).

Differently, the profile of the pedagogue presents comprehensive competences regarding the aspects of integral formation of the

individual, involving from the social, cultural, ethnic-racial, political, economic, religious aspects, among others, that permeate the educational process of the human being in a given society. It is inferred, therefore, that the work of the pedagogue is related to the process of integral human formation through the articulation between ends and means of a certain intentional educational action.

The role of the pedagogue can take place in both school and non-school spaces, at all levels and modalities of Basic Education (especially in Kindergarten and in the early years of Elementary School). In addition to teaching activities, the pedagogue works in management activities – school, educational projects, in the various spaces in which educational activities are developed. Academic research and scientific production are also part of the pedagogue's field of action on several fronts involving the educational process, from planning, implementation, development and evaluation of activities related to pedagogical work and educational processes (BRASIL, 2006).

In the DI field of work, we observed that this professional has a more technical performance profile, focusing on the design/development of strategies for the teaching process (instruction/instruction), an activity that has a close relationship with the field of didactics. The DI professional is dedicated to the development of educational products and solutions with a focus on instruction, making use of technological resources for the education of young people and adults, both in the academic field and in corporate spaces. In the field of management, it works in the development of educational solutions for specific situations of planning, implementation, development and monitoring of projects and programs, including the production of instructional content. In this sense, the activities of the DI and the educator sometimes have points in common, sometimes they complement each other in certain aspects. In addition, both are important in the composition of a multidisciplinary EaD team, but they play different roles, occupied by professionals with different backgrounds.

Clementino (2005) points out that the DI and the pedagogical coordinator make up the multidisciplinary team of EaD and mentions that the latter must have significant training in Education. However, the

author does not refer directly to the educator and emphasizes that one of the causes of deficiencies in the provision of distance courses is the absence of professionals who know how to deal with technologies and who have pedagogical knowledge.

Based on the attributions foreseen for the OAS, it is possible to affirm that the proposed professional profile is characterized as an intrinsically pedagogical activity. However, this professional is also being assigned activities inherent to the DI work. It should be noted that there is still a lack of clarity on the part of the other members of the DEaD's multidisciplinary team about the role of the OAS. OAS 3 points out this issue in his speech, as we can see below.

> *When the course coordinator comes in, he no longer knows who you are, he even starts demanding things that are not his role or ignores you, then he starts to see that, instead of having an approximation, he starts to have a distance, an estrangement* (Verbal information, OAS 3).

In the speech of OEA 3, the lack of support from the course coordinator, who is the professional, in the area of the technical course on offer, who, together with the OAS, has the competence to evaluate and validate the materials and the course's evaluative activities.

> *At first, a figure was thought to provide support. He would be this "expert" on the subject, he would take a second technical look at the issue. But what happens [...] we end up mixing the roles, playing the role of the course coordinator, and then, when the bomb goes off, the OAS is to blame* (Verbal information, OAS 1).

This speech by OAS 1 reinforces the lack of clarity about the role of the OAS, causing the course coordinator not to assume some of their own pedagogical responsibilities and to prioritize bureaucratic activities. This situation has possibly generated problems of a relational nature, conflicting and demotivating the OAS team, as shown in the following statements.

I feel technical. I read the material [...] give an opinion. Whether this opinion will be accepted or not is beyond my purview, got it? So, if I have a problem, I refer it to coordination and that's it. I am a technician here (Verbal Information, OAS 1).

I started very straight with the forum issue, making forum reports etc., how many times did they enter and such. But, as time went by, I realized that it didn't have an echo. It was something that consumed me time and remained within the formality and stopped at the coordination (Verbal information, OAS 3).

This perception of OEA 1 and OEA 3 is the result of the absence of a DI in the pedagogical coordination team, which leads the professional to develop technical activities that do not present the expected results. Although the OAS surveyed are clear about their role and seek to develop it in accordance with the attributions provided for in the selection notice for this function, there is a feeling of devaluation of the pedagogical work carried out.

It appears that your role is not validated. Your role is not validated [...] what is the vision of the OAS in fact? It is not the role you have, because, if you are really a pedagogical technician, it is one thing, but really one of doing pedagogy [...] (Verbal information, OEA 1).

The speech of the OEA 1 corroborates the conclusion that, in the perception of these professionals, the activities performed are outside their attributions related to their work, as there is no clarity on the role of the pedagogue within the scope of DEaD, which is reduced to the technical level.

Conclusion

The study investigated the perception of the work of the pedagogue who occupies the role of OAS within the pedagogical coordination of distance courses offered by a Federal Institute. It is observed that the role of the pedagogue is defined with the daily practice, even if there are documents that define it. Sometimes, however, it is confused with the role of ID.

It is noteworthy that ID activities require significant knowledge in the area of education, but this professional has a role in a field related to the development of educational solutions that include instructional strategies especially aimed at training young people and adults. The pedagogue, on the other hand, has a broader field of action, which goes beyond the instructional level, addressing integral human training.

The results reveal that there is a devaluation of the pedagogical work in the context of DEaD, which may be the result, among other factors, of the lack of clarity on the part of the management team regarding the role of the pedagogue in the multidisciplinary team in EaD. This devaluation is perceived by pedagogues when they report that their work in DEaD is limited to technical aspects, a fact that diverges from the functions described in the notice for hiring these professionals, which describes pedagogical assignments, and not just technical-instructional ones.

We conclude, therefore, that both the pedagogue and the DI are necessary in the composition of a multidisciplinary EaD team, but they are professionals with different backgrounds and, therefore, with different attributions. In this sense, it is essential that, when composing a multidisciplinary team to offer distance courses, the roles and attributions of the professionals involved are very well defined, considering both the technical-instructional aspects and those of a pedagogical nature, always emphasizing the importance of articulation and integration between them.

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