Education on ethnic-racial relations from the perspective of Afro-descendants. Agenda for knowledge production

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Abstract

The education of ethnic-racial relations plays a transcendental role in building democratic societies that are aimed at guaranteeing equal rights, power and authority to all social groups that constitute them. In Brazil, the education of these relationships is a matter of government regulation which, among other things implies the compulsory teaching of history and Afro-Brazilian and African. Thus, educating ethnic-racial relations into question-based education to create privileges for some and leads only to resize the meanings of academic excellence and education, promoting access and also respect for the knowledge produced in epistemological perspectives of different groups in the society and are documented under the most varied forms of expression.

Education on ethnic-racial relations plays a transcendental role in the construction of democratic societies that aspire to guarantee equal rights, equal power and equal authority to all the social groups of which they are constituted. To achieve such guarantees, it is essential that all citizens are aware of and value the histories and cultures of the peoples who gave rise to their nations and who have contributed to their consolidation. Consequently, dialogue among different points of view is essential, and mediation efforts are also vital in order to negotiate differing positions and concepts, with the aim of proposing initiatives and public policies that will have an impact on living conditions and the development of the citizenry.

In Brazil, government regulations have been developed for education on ethnic-racial relations. This is evident in the National Curriculum Guidelines[1] established by the National Council on Education (Brazil, 2004a), stipulating the compulsory nature of education covering Afro-Brazilian and African cultures and history, in line with Article 26A of the National Education Guidelines and Foundations Act (Law No. 9394, 1996). The aforementioned council expressed the following in Resolution CNE/CP 1/2004 (Brazil, 2004b):

> Article 2: The National Curriculum Guidelines for Education on Ethnic-Racial Relations and for Teaching of

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Afro-Brazilian and African Cultures and History constitute guidelines, principles and foundations for the planning, implementation and evaluation of Education, and are aimed at promoting the education of active, aware citizens in Brazil's multicultural, pluri-ethnic society, seeking positive ethnic-social relations oriented toward the construction of a democratic nation.
1. The purpose of Education on Ethnic-Racial Relations is to produce and disseminate knowledge, as well as attitudes, postures and values that educate citizens with respect to ethnic–racial plurality, making them capable of interacting and negotiating common objectives that guarantee respect for everyone's legal rights and place value on identity, in the search for the consolidation of Brazil's democracy.

In accordance with this resolution, education on ethnic-racial relations questions education that is oriented toward generating privileges for only a few, and leads to a process of redefining the meanings of academic and educational excellence. Moreover, it proposes access to and respect for knowledge produced from the perspectives of the epistemologies of the various ethnic-racial groups that make up society and that are documented under the most varied forms of expressions, such as scientific reports, *oralitura*,[2] literature, collections of songs, dances and games, art forms, cooking, clothing and decorations, work instruments and procedures, and ways of communicating with what is transcendental.

All of these means of recording and disseminating knowledge and guidelines for living, are the results of world views that flourished from the cultural heritage of each social and ethnic-racial group. Also, they are the results of society's projects, of the contexts in which men and women, in different phases of life, and with different abilities and conditions for becoming familiar with, learning and producing knowledge, are constructing history. In order to educate oneself and others regarding ethnic-racial relations in which everyone is considered to be equal, it is necessary to avoid hierarchies and fight against visions and feelings of domination and subjection.

These visions, feelings, and projects that were developed by the Europeans during three centuries of territorial and mental colonization in the continent they would refer to as the Americas, were also generated by anti-colonial rebellions that culminated in victorious battles for the colonies' political independence and the abolition of slavery in different regions of the continent, beginning with Haiti, in 1804 (Ceceña, 2006, p. 231).

In that process, the common identity of the continent's peoples was remodeled—the identity that linked them to the same history of plundering and insult in which, however, a conflictive and contradictory mestizaje took shape, with native peoples reappearing transformed by that long period of denial, prohibitions and exchanges, while the Europeans, for their part, became *Americanized* (Ceceña, 2006, p. 131) (emphasis by cited author).

In this way, the societies and different nations in the Americas established themselves on the basis of the extermination of native peoples and the enslavement of Africans (Ceceña, 2006). In this context the coexistence among colonizing Europeans, original peoples in occupied territories and enslaved Africans was distinguished by domination and oppression

by the first group over the other two groups, which on the one hand were forced to submit, and on the other hand created strategies for resistance. These relations were characterized by tensions that distorted and limited their visions of themselves and others.

Ani (2007), an Afro-American educator, underscores that, even now, such processes seek to convert men and women who are originally from different cultures, to a world vision with European roots, turning them away from the values of their original roots and producing limited and distorted emotional, psychological and political understandings of life, of themselves and of others.

In these conditions, with the claim of guaranteeing equality, the goals considered to be universal in nature are prescribed and imposed on the lives of individuals—in an effort to erase the link to their ethnic-racial origins and connections, and to the history and culture of the social groups to which they belong. According to Freire (1978/2005), these relations based on oppression promote cultural invasion, inhibiting the expansion of personalities, the expression of free will and the development of projects.

Despite the confrontations and disagreements provoked by oppression-based relations, both men and women compare ways of being and living, value or reject certain ways of thinking, discover themselves as equal or different, and reaffirm or redefine the meaning of their values and their own ways of conceiving of and organizing life. Each one of them acknowledges individuals, citizens, participants, in a face-to-face relationship with other individuals who, in this process, question their certainties, and open the way to new meanings, new attitudes, and new postures. The political movements of Blacks

and indigenous peoples in Brazil interrogated society all throughout the 20th century, as they manifested their projects for fair participation in society, and at the same time, interweaving their proposals for their histories and their cultures to be recognized and valued by all Brazilians.

The state's curriculum policies, formulated in the terms of Laws 19630/2004 and 11645/2008, include their demands. Thus, the Brazilian government complies with what is established in the National Constitution, in the sense that each Brazilian is aware of and values the histories and cultures of indigenous peoples as well as the descendants of Africans, Asians and Europeans, all of whom make up the Brazilian nation.

It is important to highlight that the study of the histories and cultures of all the peoples who, through their efforts, are constituting the Brazilian nation, is the perfect medium for education on ethnic-racial relations (Brazil, 2004a, 2004b).

Education on ethnic-racial relations

A criterion that is shared by the Black movement and the indigenous peoples' movement, as well as legislators for education (who are expected to represent their perspectives and demands), is that reciprocal knowledge should help to overcome relations among ethnic-racial groups that are based on domination and subjugation.

Education on these respectful, ethical relations that value each person for his/her own individuality oblige us to confront and correct distortions and preconceived notions

with respect to the histories and cultures of Africans, indigenous peoples, gypsies and other groups that society prevents from exercising their rights, and from participating in the decision-making that affects society's future.

It is important to remember that the action of educating is the conjugation of the acts of teaching and learning. What can be "taught" is only that which has been learned. Consequently, those who were educated in a racist environment characterized by discrimination tend to transmit that experience, that way of relating to others who they consider to be inferior in light of their preconceived ideas. This leads to learning that can potentially consolidate or promote preconceived attitudes and postures, and can give rise to criticism and opposition that is rarely expressed explicitly to the authorities of educators, whether parents, professors or supervisors.

In order to learn, it is necessary to interact, to express one's opinion, to reconsider ideas, to evaluate positions, postures and attitudes, to make an effort to understand points of view different from one's own, and to work at de-constructing preconceived notions. In order to learn, it is necessary to become aware of both the realities in which we live, as well as those of others with whom we are learning. According to Oliveira, Silva, Gonçalves, García-Montrone and Joly (2009), we produce our lives through the social practices in which we participate. In the interaction between individuals, educational processes are promoted, that is, learning chains are produced, and in these chains we produce knowledge regarding life, individuals and society. Therefore, in order to learn to relate positively with individuals who belong to ethnic-racial groups other than our own,

we must be willing to criticize practices, including pedagogical practices, which are filled with preconceived notions, racism, machismo, homophobia and xenophobia.

Education on ethnic-racial relations, as a pedagogical process, seeks to create an opening for understanding the different ways in which people express their humanity. That is why it questions the claim that we live in a mono-cultural society, unified by only one language and only one culture in which all of the nation's inhabitants should converge. In other words, the goal of education on ethnic-racial relations is that we view each other just as we are, so that together we can build an equitable society.

According to Xavier Úcar, "to live is to know, to know is to change, to change is to learn." Therefore, living, knowing, changing and learning are continuous dimensions that cannot be separated from the process of existing (2010, p. 41).

There is a myth among Brazilians that we live in a racial democracy, and this hinders attempts to decisively include ethnic-racial relations in education. This myth suggests that the coexistence among people of different ethnic-racial origins is of a conciliatory nature, and thus people who are different get along with each other. In reality, this occurs when groups marginalized by society allow themselves to be assimilated into the prevailing ways of living and to adopt the objectives and interests of those who are in power and who attempt to govern over everyone's destiny.

Throughout nearly five centuries, racial democracy has only been possible when Blacks, indigenous, gypsies and others have allowed themselves to be assimilated and to assume the world views, interests and objectives of
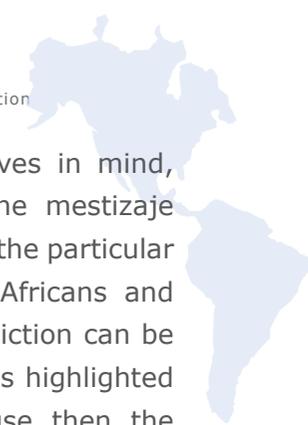
those who have maintained control over the power to govern society. These individuals, captivated by the criteria of meritocracy, deny or forget their ethnic-racial roots. They become fragile as a result of this loss, and they cling to and even defend what is convenient for those who accepted them into their medium, and who compensate them for their adhesion with goods and prestige that they would otherwise be denied. Those who accept such a pact pay a high price. The price is to detach themselves from their group of origin without being able to fully join those groups whose interests they have begun to defend (Lapenson, 2009; Silva, 2007).

The myth of racial democracy promotes the idea that belonging to an ethnic-racial group with European roots is associated with being successful in society, and with the possibility of guaranteed exercise of rights and enjoyment of privileges. This is an attempt to camouflage the racism that, as Saada emphasizes in reference to the French experience, cannot be reduced to postures and actions against people on the basis of their physical characteristics, but rather also implies adhesion to a project of society that is adverse to original non-European, ethnic-racial groups.

The arguments and actions associated with the discourse of racial democracy have been perfected with the aim of extinguishing society's diversity, and prioritizing the discourse of "we are mestizos." This is the strategy for formulating the project for transforming the pluri-ethnic,[3] multi-racial Brazilian nation to a white nation, reducing it to only one of its ethnic-racial roots: the European. Furthermore, as Hasembalg (1979) states, it is the ideological instrument that legitimizes outright inequalities between whites and blacks, with enormous advantages

for the first. With these objectives in mind, Munanga (2010) emphasizes, the mestizaje process will dilute and extinguish the particular features of indigenous groups, Africans and later, Asians as well. The contradiction can be seen when Brazilian uniqueness is highlighted in international contexts, because then the characteristics and customs of Afro-Brazilians and indigenous peoples are presented.

With this scenario, one of the main challenges awaiting education on ethnic-racial relations is to become familiar with and understand the individuals and groups with peculiarities that diverge from the human model that is being presented as the universal model, shaped in line with Euro-centric conceptions. It is important to point out that in order to know and understand the histories and different forms of human existence, we must first admit that we are only capable of knowing them through an intermediary and through the acknowledgement of our own bodies as men and women belonging to different ethnic-racial groups with different histories and life experiences that are marked by individual characteristics due to: gender, sexuality, age, deficiencies, employment/unemployment, education, living conditions (Silva, 2009).

Education on ethnic-racial relations is processed at the core of different socio-political perspectives, in the confrontations between different points of view that originate in different cultural and historical roots. These circumstances challenge us to seek knowledge on the cosmovisions, languages, spiritualities and technologies of the different peoples making up the Brazilian nation. From the Blacks' point of view, all citizens must know, respect and value Brazilian Africanities, denied until now —as knowledge— through the discourses that proclaim mestizaje.

Africanities

In Brazilian schools, from the perspective of education on ethnic-racial relations, Africanities are one of the focuses around which educational processes should revolve. This presents a challenge to teachers and to those who manage school systems because they must search for theoretical references in African thought, produced both in the continent and in diaspora. This is necessary for planning the political-pedagogical orientations of educational institutions at all levels, as well as classroom activities and even activities promoted in communities (Oliveira, 2009, pp. 17-19).

Africanity, emphasizes Munanga (1984, cited by Oliveira, 2009, pp. 164-167), is not merely an intellectual process removed from reality. It is a set of cultural characteristics common to many African peoples. And it results from a double action: adaptation and dissemination. Africanities are re-created and disseminated in dialogue, according to Oliveira (2009, p. 248):

> one should not make the mistake of rejecting another's thoughts, nor should one attempt to integrate them into one's own thoughts, but instead subject them to discussion in order to advance in one's contact with another. This signifies adopting an attitude of sympathy, which involves assuming the thoughts of another within oneself. Dialogue is only established, therefore, when a perspective of understanding is adopted.
> To understand is to leave oneself, and place oneself in another's place, momentarily suspending one's own thoughts.

Processes similar to the one just mentioned were those that made it possible for slaves to re-create their Africanities, constructing the African people from the Brazilian diaspora. Since dialogue was almost never possible between those who had been enslaved and those who considered themselves to be their masters, the only means remaining for expressing themselves were through resistance and rebellion, for example (Oliveira, 2009, p. 256).

At the same time, Africanities are a philosophy, a way of seeing-feeling-thinking realities, individuals, their interrelationships, and their relationships with the environment around them (Oliveira, 2009, p. 258). Africanities are also material expressions such as tools, attire, dances and the instruments accompanying them in the celebration of joy, sadness, commemorations, demands, and of course, above all, in the rituals passed on from ancestors.

Africanities are, therefore, the historical-cultural manifestations directly linked to the vision of the world rooted in the cultures of that continent, and including remnants of diaspora (Walker, 2004). Africanities are constituted through the efforts by Africans and their descendents to maintain their ethnic-racial identity, although invaded and wronged on a daily basis. Along these lines, it is important to remember a statement made by French president Sarkozy in 2007, in Dakar, at the Cheik Anta Diop University, where, among other inappropriate comments, he said that Africa does not have a history. Many indignant African intellectuals responded to this lack of respect, describing various Africanities (Konaré, 2008; Gassama, 2008).

It is evident that Africanities are frequently manifested along the lines of exchanges, not dialogue, and attempts are insistently made to discredit the intelligence

and knowledge of Africans living on the continent and in diaspora (Silva, 2010a, 2010b).

Africanities contain knowledge and meanings that began on the African continent during the pre-colonial period, and then painfully intensified during the voyage taken by the enslaved, as these human beings were forcibly reduced to the condition of an object. Africanities were then reinterpreted in the transfer of African thought and technology to non-African territories, and reconstructed in the struggles for liberation, in the fight against racism, in the deconstruction of the attempts to whiten bodies and minds. Africanities acquired renewed consistency in the political-cultural organizations of the Black movement, in the remnants of the *quilombos*, and finally, in the re-creation of the African world in diaspora (Silva, 2010a).

Brazilian Africanities conserve their memory from their womb, from the legacy that guarantees their link to the world they came from, with the wisdom and knowledge from that faraway continent. They have been elaborated since the time when enslaved Africans worked to help build the Brazilian nation, with their moral, intellectual and physical strength.

Slaves, and more recently their descendants, have influenced other ethnic-racial groups with whom they have lived and continue to live, and they also receive and incorporate contributions from those groups (Silva, 2010a, 2010b). It is clear that education on ethical, consistent ethnic-racial relations requires an attentive, curious posture and a commitment to an equitable social project, as well as knowledge, much of which must still be produced.

Therefore, before moving on to a proposal for an agenda for knowledge production, it is important to learn from Dzobo (1992) the meaning of "knowing," based on the perspective of African thought.

It is important to begin by emphasizing that knowledge is the product of experience. Knowing, then, signifies discovering, having the experience, embracing the unknown, displacing oneself toward the world, and its realities, and through the world. In other words, we must observe the environment in which we live and of which we are a part, and we must pay attention to the phenomena that occur there. First, we observe through our senses, and then, what was observed is organized and translated into ideas. Knowledge is the product of an intellectual process that begins through the senses (Dzobo, 1992, p. 75).

There is knowledge that passes from one to another through the word-of-mouth technique. Other knowledge is acquired in the silence of reflection. There is knowledge that one accesses through a school education. In this case knowledge comes from books, and many times it is "foreign" and divorced from the reality of those wishing to elaborate their own knowledge. Finally, knowledge is formed when one acquires possibilities for understanding things, relationships and situations, when one constructs wisdom capable of producing knowledge that leads to liberation (Dzobo, 1992, p. 78).

As we produce knowledge, we situate ourselves in the original culture and from that place, we have elements for continuing to create knowledge through confrontation with other cultures. Education on ethnic-racial relations is processed in the midst of different sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives, in the midst of conflict, and with tension from

the differing viewpoints originating in different historical and cultural roots. It is important to ask: do we need knowledge that seeks references in African and Afro-Brazilian history and cultures in order to teach ethnic-racial relations that fight racism and discrimination?

Agenda for knowledge production from the perspective of Africanities

Incorporating understandings from studies that contribute to education on ethnic-racial relations from different perspectives, in this section we will list some points that require research, in light of the experiences of Black African women and men, both from the continent and in diaspora—or in other words, people who value and consider their African roots. These are people who respect the principle of *Ubuntu*, which can be translated from Zulu into English as: "I am because we are." It is thus important for the production of works that embrace this perspective to adopt a methodology based on the *shared construction of knowledge*, which should be considered, according to Carvalho, Acioli and Stotz (2001, p. 101), as "the everyday experience of the actors involved, and aimed at the conquest—by individuals and popular groups—of greater power and intervention in the social relationships that have an impact on their quality of life."

What is important here, beyond identifying a list of topics for future research, is to think about a proposal for commitments to be assumed. Along these lines, Deveau (1998) urges that studies be conducted through cooperation from researchers and professors from Africa and the diaspora, and

using both written and oral sources, with the aim of revealing concealed truths associated with the deportation of slaves, slave trafficking and its consequences today in the societies of the different continents. Deveau emphasizes the need to remember and clarify facts, and to understand and reveal contradictions, such as the case of France, which maintained slave trafficking while at the same time proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It is important to shed light on and bring visibility to the reasons that the old colonizers, both previously and currently, attempt to maintain African countries in a dependent position. It is necessary to understand the voyage, comments Winter (1992), as the producer of the cultural-historical matrix of ethnic-racial relations that we are currently experiencing.

In this sense, Lovejoy (1998) emphasizes the importance of further exploring the degree to which slaves were forced to give up their roots and assimilate other cultures, and the process in which human beings were reduced to a state of servitude. Even more important is to understand the processes in which the cultural and social identities of slaves were redefined, the ethnic-racial group to which they belonged was reinterpreted, and yet, they still acknowledged themselves as Africans.

It is also important to explore the aspects of African culture that remain and persist in Brazilian culture, as well as other cultures in the Americas, since as underscored by Schávelson (2003), the African population in our continent previously had its own culture, and was able to maintain and reconstruct its customs, such as its ways of relating to each other, its social and religious relationships, and its imaginaries. Studies such as those by Silva (1987, 1996, 2003), Walker (2004), Oliveira

(2007) and Machado (2002), among others, demonstrate these permanencies.

Something else that must be unveiled refers to the colonizing process unleashed in Brazil by the Portuguese in the 16th century, with the aim of imposing what they referred to as "civilization" upon, first of all, the original peoples, and later, African slaves. This analysis is important because the effects of that process are still present in the lives of all Brazilians. The invasion of territories, genocides and violations of cultures continue to damage identities, displace populations, destabilize social and political organizations, and deprive peoples of the knowledge necessary for building their future (Barbosa, Silva and Silverio, 2010, among others). These factors also have an impact on the identity of the European descendants who migrated to Brazil for the purpose of replacing slave labor in the plantations, filling the jobs opening up in emerging industries and serving to whiten the population. They see themselves as members of a white nation, and consequently believe that the prevailing and preeminent thought, values and ethics should be those with European roots (Piza). It is also vital to research the way in which the Black Movement of the 20th century was generated, in order to learn from it, and especially, to replace the declared policy for maintaining the Black population distanced from opportunities for schooling. And it is important to learn more about and study their proposals and initiatives for remedying racial inequalities, especially in the area of education. Some examples are educational courses for both the Black population and school teachers on combating racism, the history of Afro-Brazilians and Africans, and didactic methods for teaching about cultures with African roots (Gonçalves e Silva, 2000, 2006).

Along these lines, it is necessary to identify and understand the criteria for redefining and evaluating academic excellence and the educational quality of teaching institutions, taking into account the Black perspective that respects and cultivates African roots, and the principles that were formally or informally generated for consideration in national education projects. These principals, according to Silva (2004), are the following: confronting and overcoming racism, discrimination and intolerance; the recognition that each ethnic-racial group has its own values, reasoning processes and behaviors; and the need for different treatment for situations and conditions specific to different social and ethnic-racial groups.

These principles should guide learning in such a way that their impact extends far beyond classrooms, and they must not be limited to promoting benefits for individuals or a single social group. The high-quality learning and teaching processes sought by Brazilian Blacks are those that value the interactions among members of different original ethnic-racial groups, and that at the same time are situated historically and socially in the environments in which such individuals live and act. In this way they will be able to create conditions that will allow different world views and perspectives on life to be mutually nourished. This is fitting and proper because it promotes the means for acquiring and producing scientific knowledge that considers, values and dialogues with the knowledge rooted in what are known as popular cultures. From this perspective, if education is to be excellent, it must support minority groups (marginalized from the possibility of governing), to enable them to acquire instruments for participating in the decisions that concern everyone (Silva and Araújo-Olivera, 2009).
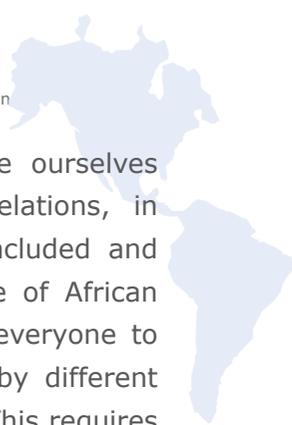
To this end, it is important to investigate the ways in which what Banks (2003, 2006) refers to as pedagogical equity —the right of each student to receive university—level instruction that considers his/her own values, languages and ways of learning—is constructed and evaluated. Banks underscores that it is unacceptable to believe and promote the notion that some individuals have cultural deficits, since this prevents teachers from becoming aware of the potential and cultural possibilities of their students, and prevents such possibilities from enhancing their students' learning. The difficulty in conducting research that focuses on pedagogical equity lies with the acceptance of the idea that we live in a mono-cultural society or at least one with predominantly European roots.

On this particular point, it is important to ask, together with King (2005): how can research be a means to fight for education that strengthens Blacks, in terms of their ethnic-racial identity, and does the same for non-Blacks?

Based on my understanding and that of other researchers with whom I have dialogued in the Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE) of the American Educational Research Association, it can be said that, from the perspective of Blacks —Africans from both the continent and their diaspora— and also of indigenous peoples and aboriginals, educational research makes it possible to strengthen their struggle for the right to a decent life, for their own identity, history and culture, and for education, and at the same time it encourages advancement in the understanding of people from different ethnic-racial and social groups.

Final considerations

In our effort to reeducate ourselves regarding ethical ethnic-racial relations, in the sense that all people feel included and valued, and from the perspective of African descendants, it is necessary for everyone to confront the conflicts generated by different world views and social positions. This requires trust and respect (values not to be confused with mere tolerance), as well as the willingness and capacity to understand diverse ways of approaching life and relations among people.

If we know nothing of the experiences of being, thinking and living as indigenous peoples, African descendants, and other peoples that make up the Brazilian nation, we experience difficulties in both correcting the deception in which we are submerged by the myth of racial democracy, and overcoming the determinations of a system focused on a cosmovision representing a single ethnic-racial origin: the European. It also prevents us from having access to other ways of being, living, and knowing. As a result, we become incapable of perceiving the everyday voices and images that are absent from our own groups, and we are inclined to want to limit people to a single, universal model for being a woman or a man.

As Blacks, we must tear off the white mask referred to by Fanon (2009) and imposed by European domination, in order to reveal our body, our thoughts, values and projects rooted in our African heritage. This is not an act of isolation. To the contrary, it presents the only possibility for dialogue.

It was through dialogue between inherited meanings and those they had and have to create that Blacks discover they have a culture that has been devalued and reduced, or they feel an even stronger ethnic-racial identity. For this reason, Steve Biko (1995, p.

537) states that "being black is not a matter of pigmentation: being black is a reflection of a mental attitude."

For each one of us, becoming involved in education on ethnic-racial relations means that we must discover for others who we are, and together with them, build a new future for all and a world in which all of us have a place, as the indigenous peoples of Chiapas are demanding. Of course, this is not a matter that is of exclusive interest for the Black or indigenous populations. It also demands commitment and an opening on the part of the white population, which has also been affected during the last five centuries —although in a different way— by colonization policies.

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Endnotes

1 The Curriculum Guidelines are regulatory guidelines developed by education councils with the objective of orienting the implementation of legal determinations. The National Council on Education has the task of interpreting and regulating what has been established by the National Education Guidelines and Foundations Act. All the Education Councils in the different states, in Mexico City (Federal District) and at the municipal level have the task, within the sphere of the system for collaboration and for the autonomy of states, to adapt these guidelines to local realities.

2 This term refers to the culture and history, as well as ancestral knowledge that remain imprinted in one's memory, and that manifest themselves in the interweaving of oral expression. *Orality* is as valuable as written and artistic expression, and reveals thoughts and visions of the world. UNESCO considers it to be one of the intangible forms of cultural wealth.

3 The Brazilian nation is home to citizens from 200 different nations of indigenous peoples; to Black citizens who are descendents of Africans from the Bantu and Yoruba nations; to descendents from Europeans, including Portuguese, Italians and Germans; and to Asian descendents, primarily Japanese.

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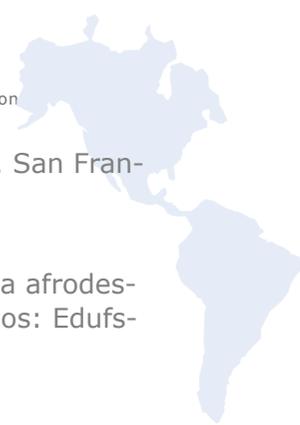
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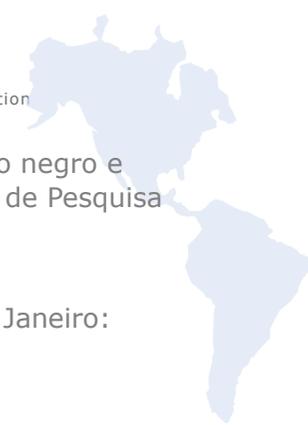
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