

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS - APRIL 12, 2024

Written by Luca Vernalha (translated by ChatGPT)

The realization of this second training benefited from the contribution and alignment among professionals from the Passo Project, coordinators of the Pró Infância Nursery, and the SEMED Early Childhood Education technician to think, organize, and prepare the physical space capable of accommodating and welcoming 60 educators from the network of 12 schools (including quilombola, rural, and urban schools) from nearby regions. To more efficiently receive the trainees, we decided that the training would be held at the Municipal Nursery School Pró Infância itself.

The objectives for this training, significant in the number of participants, consisted of working and experiencing more content (recognized as important themes to be addressed) from situations of shared management in the classroom. The themes addressed were:

- Games and play as tools for teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education;
- The importance of food and honoring typical Alagoas cuisines as classroom practices;
- Organizational modalities of teaching didactics: Junina recipes book project;
- Literacy: a process aimed at social practices of reading and writing.

For this, the training was divided into two periods.

The first began in the morning. The teachers were invited to participate and move between four classrooms composed of games and play used in Early Childhood Education, among them were: pick-up sticks, base 10, memory game (theme: animals of Alagoas), super trump (theme: Black Voices), monkey, dooble, parachute Jenga, jaguar game, mancala, and African hopscotch.





Teachers playing and interacting in the classrooms of the Municipal Nursery School Pró-Infância.

Presenting the trainees with real-life gameplay situations that involve multiple forms of access to learning through interaction proved to be a powerful tool in the process of acquiring new knowledge through various social practices. This provided an opportunity to step away from the role of teachers and take on the role of trainees, allowing them to access new perspectives on teaching methods in the classroom.

In addition to games featuring characteristics aimed at cooperation, collaboration, effective communication, and honest competition, the practice of playing calls for attitudes, a way of positioning oneself in the face of various situations.

According to Macedo (1995, p.8), "from the children's point of view, the game is a test (experience) of intimacy and therefore of knowledge." When they play, they are serious, intense, share their knowledge, question, argue, reflect, think and rethink moves, create and recreate strategies, logics, and criteria for gameplay, based on and due to the interactions among the children and with the games themselves.

"I loved the training because I gained more knowledge to pass on to my children."

"It was great. Very educational and I will put it into practice."

(reviews from two educators after participating in the training)

After experiencing and understanding the importance of working with games and play through the presented concepts, the trainees divided into subgroups to develop lesson plans focused on the use of games and play as teaching practices in Early Childhood Education.

Collectively, we reflected on good ways to use Chat GPT based on this theme. Chat GPT provided an organized and systematic structure, considering the duration of the chosen



class, the target audience, selected materials, definition of teaching and learning purposes, contents to be worked on, and procedural evaluation related to the classes.

The educators then organized, systematized, and developed their respective lesson plans. The use of tablets was still a challenge to be managed, mainly due to WiFi access which fluctuated at various times. The IT technician was present and could provide support during the activity handling. When the tablet did not have available access for use, the teachers opted to perform the proposed activity using cell phones or pencil and paper.

Overall, the trainees participated collaboratively, conversed among themselves, and made their respective records. All groups presented their plans to the other groups.



Teachers create lesson plans in subgroups.



Teachers presenting, in subgroups, their respective lesson plans to all the educators present at the training.

"It was good because there was an exchange of experiences with other teachers."

"It is always important to participate and listen to others on the subject discussed."

(reviews from two educators after participating in the training)

In the early afternoon, after the lunch break, we began the second period of the training.



At this stage, as a trigger element, we presented the video from the Institute of Food and Culture on YouTube, "Programa Cozinha & Infâncias - Cozinheiras Escolares," renowned for working with food education in an inclusive and conscious manner with children, so that they, from a young age, have access to knowledge about the origins of food, awareness and understanding of the nutritional value of food and its importance both for their health and for the environment they live in.

After a brief discussion on this, the educators had the opportunity to get hands-on and, through the prestige of the rich Alagoan cuisine, prepared and cooked some typical regional foods.

The educators were divided into four stations, each containing a typical Alagoan recipe: puba cake, tapioca with coconut and banana, "brasileira," and fruit salad.



Teachers participating in the training cooking typical Alagoan dishes

After cooking together, the trainees watched another video on YouTube titled "Pesquisa comida festa junina." This video presented a didactic classroom situation aimed at addressing the challenges of reading and writing for non-alphabetic children in the final years of Early Childhood Education through the "Receitas Juninas" project.



The situation presented was an invitation for the educators to critically analyze the didactics planned by the teachers in the video and how the respective children were enabled to find their own solutions to the challenge of reading and writing “junina party” recipes with the purpose of creating a recipe book for the festival that the respective school would hold that year.

For this, the educators again divided into subgroups to answer questions related to the importance of knowing good didactic actions performed by the teachers in the video so that, based on these, they could provide conditions for the children to find, among themselves, possible solutions concerning challenges related to reading and writing.

"Analyzing classroom situations is a strategy for shifting action, which provides more data for reflection. It helps the teacher to identify problems, think about resolution possibilities, investigate, allows them to see the situation from other perspectives; problematize, raise hypotheses, identify and name difficulties to seek action alternatives, develop didactic intervention proposals, reflect and discuss their suitability." (Lerner, 2007, p.103)¹

After watching the video several times, the teachers answered the questions in their respective groups and, collectively, shared their responses in a collaborative manner, exchanging their practices related to literacy and rethinking some of their own actions in the classroom.



Teachers presenting their responses about the watched video

¹Lerner, D. et al. The thematization of classroom practice. In: Teaching: A Task for Professionals. Editora Record, Rio de Janeiro, 2007, p. 103.



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"Very gratifying and rich in experience; it showed us a new perspective on pedagogical practices."

"It was great. It gave me new ideas to work with the children."

"It was an incredible and didactic experience, as it brought a new playful and educational perspective to the classroom, as well as to our own room."

(reviews from three educators after participating in the training)

Finally, the teachers were able to enjoy the food they had prepared themselves and filled out evaluations about their experiences in this training.



Teachers enjoying their own Alagoan recipes | Project Manager, Natália; Early Childhood Education Technician, Michele; Project Trainer, Luca and Coordinator of the Municipal Nursery School Pró Infância, Jani.



Participants of the training in Passo do Camaragibe

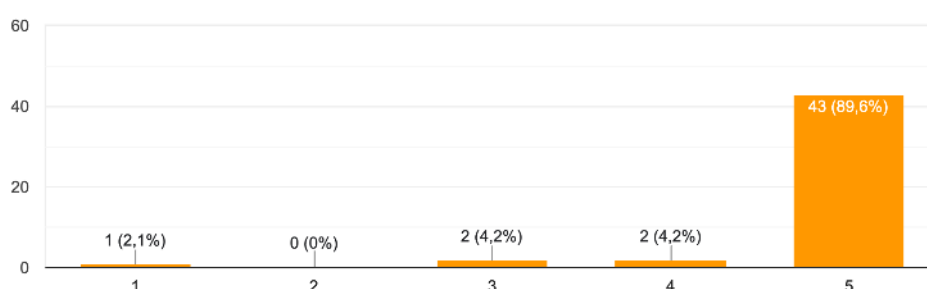
The number of teachers who provided positive feedback was high. Out of 60 participants, 48 completed the evaluation via tablet.



On a large scale, they emphasized the relevance of the training for their respective practices, expressed satisfaction with the use and suitability of the materials presented, felt more prepared to face challenges in the classroom, and highly recommended the training to fellow educators. Below is a table and charts that substantiate the reports presented:

Em uma escala de 1 a 5, o quanto a formação foi relevante para a sua prática profissional?
(considere 1: nada relevante e 5: muito relevante)

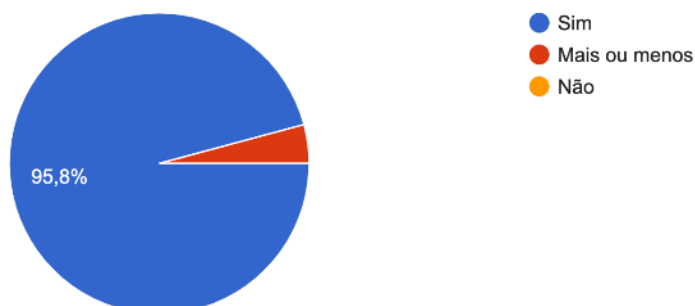
48 respostas



Translation: On a scale of 1 to 5, how relevant was the training to your professional practice? (consider 1: not relevant at all and 5: very relevant)

Os materiais e recursos disponibilizados foram úteis e adequados?

48 respostas

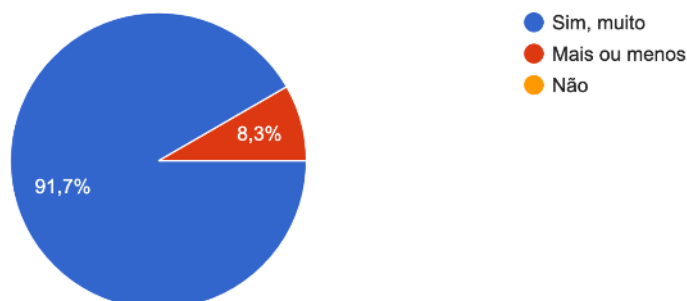


Translation: Were the materials and resources provided useful and appropriate? (Blue: Yes; Red: More or less; Orange: No)



Você se sente mais preparado(a) para enfrentar desafios em sala de aula após esta formação?

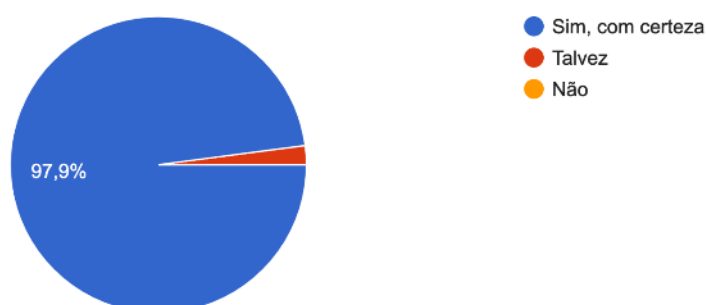
48 respostas



Translation: Do you feel more prepared to face challenges in the classroom after this training? (Blue: Yes; Red: More or less; Orange: No)

Você recomendaria esta formação a um colega?

48 respostas



Translation: Would you recommend this training to a colleague? (Blue: Yes; Red: More or less; Orange: No)

Overall, participants reported that the experience contributed to them revisiting their own practices, introducing ways to play and conduct games in the classroom as a form of learning for their students. They reassessed the importance of teaching in an interdisciplinary manner, planning didactic situations aimed at teaching and learning with purpose. For example, working on reading and writing recipes through a typical Alagoan festival cuisine to be shared with the school community.



Additionally, some significant challenges were noted and need to be considered. Among them are: intermittent Wi-Fi during the use of tablets; lack of materials available in schools.

The training also aimed to present solutions for creating games and activities with materials easily accessible in schools (like African hopscotch with chalk or masking tape, stick pickup with barbecue sticks and colored paint, base 10 with paper cutouts and dice making, memory game, and super trump with paper, pencils, and markers). However, the need for purchasing new materials was evident: colored papers, building blocks, color pencil and marker kits, tape, rulers, decks of cards, Jenga games, modeling clay, among others, to ensure that game practices are effectively and consistently carried out.

Furthermore, in their evaluations, teachers reported new themes they feel also need to be addressed:

- Adaptation during the first days of school for young children;
- School and family relationships, relationships between teachers and students;
- Literacy: continuation and deepening of the theme;
- Nature as a teaching resource;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities;
- Workshops on more games and play,
- Storytelling;
- The digital: how to work with tablets.

To continue, immersions in other nearby schools are essential goals to identify the main demands to be addressed with the local team of teachers and educational management, and thus, allow for improvements in teaching and learning through observations and investigations in classrooms and respective physical spaces of different schools, constant meetings with school coordinators and with SEMED to rethink and enhance curricular improvements in teaching with the Early Childhood Education technician and finally carry out new ongoing training focused on the main themes considered necessary and priority for the public Early Childhood Education network.