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Food and Nutrition Education in the training of nutritionists: a space for critical reflection on racial inequalities

Educação Alimentar e Nutricional na formação de nutricionistas: espaço de reflexão crítica sobre as desigualdades raciais

Abstract

Introduction: When training nutritionists, it is necessary to reflect on ethnic-racial relations and their intersections with Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) and Food and Nutrition Education. **Objective:** This original article aims to reflect on the training of nutritionists regarding the issue of racial inequalities, in the light of the experience in the discipline Food and Nutrition Education 2 of a Nutrition undergraduate course at a public university in the north state of Rio de Janeiro. **Method:** Qualitative research with participant observation, document analysis, and systematization of experience. **Results:** In-class reflection on the reality experienced, in the light of theoretical references that deal with ethnic-racial and FNS relations, allowed us to problematize how institutional racism compromises the Right to Adequate Food among the black population. The experiences provided a critical reflection on dehumanization caused by racism, which fosters the denial of fundamental rights to the black population, including the right to food. The topic of ethnic-racial inequalities became more present in the final assignments of the discipline, in Final Papers, articles, and abstracts presented at scientific and academic congresses. **Conclusion:** Despite the power structures operating in the field of academic knowledge that silence epistemologies and other worldviews, the discipline analyzed was able to adopt creative proposals on ethnic-racial relations. Popular Education fostered the students' capacity to develop critical thinking on the racial inequalities regarding FNS.

Keywords: Food and Nutritional Education. Food and Nutrition Security Professional training. Popular Health Education. Racism.

Resumo

Introdução: No contexto da formação de nutricionistas, é preciso refletir sobre as relações étnico-raciais e suas interseções com a Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (SAN) e a Educação Alimentar e Nutricional. **Objetivo:** Este artigo original visa refletir sobre a formação de nutricionistas no que concerne à problemática das desigualdades raciais, à luz da experiência da disciplina de Educação Alimentar e Nutricional 2 de um curso de Nutrição de instituição pública de ensino superior no Norte Fluminense. **Método:** A investigação qualitativa envolveu observação participante, análise documental e sistematização de experiência. **Resultados:** A reflexão em classe sobre a realidade vivenciada, à luz de referenciais teóricos que tratam das relações étnico-raciais e de SAN, possibilitou problematizar como o racismo institucional compromete a realização do Direito Humano à Alimentação Adequada da população negra. As experiências proporcionaram a reflexão crítica

sobre o processo de desumanização gerado pelo racismo, que fomenta a negação de direitos fundamentais à população negra, incluindo o direito à alimentação. O tema das desigualdades étnico-raciais se tornou mais presente nos trabalhos finais da disciplina, em trabalhos de conclusão de curso, artigos e resumos apresentados em congressos científicos e acadêmicos. **Conclusão:** Apesar das estruturas de poder que operam no campo do conhecimento acadêmico e silenciam epistemologias e cosmovisões outras, a disciplina analisada conseguiu adotar propostas criativas sobre as relações étnico-raciais. A Educação Popular fomentou a capacidade de reflexão crítica dos educandos sobre as desigualdades raciais que permeiam a SAN.

Palavras-chave: Educação Alimentar e Nutricional. Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional. Formação profissional. Educação Popular em Saúde. Racismo.

INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian Federal Constitution (BFC)¹ brought a relevant contribution to the consolidation of citizenship, opposing the picture of historical continuities of inequalities. In its development, the participation of black movements in the declaration of new rights, fight against racism, and racial inequality reduction stands out.¹

Regarding education, the Constitution highlights as its main purpose the “full development of people, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and “their qualification for work” (Art. 205).² In this sense, it is expected that school and academic education contemplate issues that establish the commitment to the emancipation of the human being and the relationships that are organized around the educational act and in daily life, promoting a critical reading of reality, enabling actions of transformation and the development of citizen conscience.^{3,4}

To this end, academic actions must overcome the hegemonic notion of education that focuses on the accumulation of content and whose focus is on the development of skills and competencies for the labor market. They should also foster the dialogical encounter of subjects and epistemological diversities, to elucidate in depth the socio-cultural, historical, political, economic, and identity realities, to propose together with other citizens a new project of society based on the promotion of justice and equity.

The National Curriculum Guidelines (DCNs) for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations and the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture⁵ are in line with this conception, establishing that Higher Education Institutions must include in their disciplines and activities issues and topics that promote the dissemination and production of knowledge, and values that guarantee equity, respect for legal rights, and the appreciation of ethnic-racial plurality.

In addition, the DCNs for the Nutrition course, established in 2001, encourage students to approach the population and their health and Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) needs, considering regional diversity, as well as cultural, political, and economic reality, seeking to adapt Nutrition teaching to the real needs of different Brazilian communities.⁶

In this perspective, CNS Resolution No. 704, of October 20, 2022, which approves the contributions of the National Health Council to the proposed DCNs of the Undergraduate Course in Nutrition,⁷ advances by pointing out the importance of scientific commitment to understand the “specificities and knowledge of traditional communities, ethnic-racial and gender issues with food and nutrition”.

It is important to structure the curriculum around academic qualifications focusing on social responsibility to meet the demands of a society marked by social, racial, and gender inequalities. This is necessary, since neglecting issues and themes related to the black population is one of the ways of operating institutional racism in the scope of Higher Education.

In the field of food and nutrition, an intersectional perspective on the conditions of FNS of the Brazilian population, at different historical moments, highlights the perverse effects of institutional racism,⁸ aggravated when associated with gender inequalities. In 2022, the II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic (II VIGISAN) drew a dramatic picture of hunger in Brazil, which affects 33.1 million people. The percentage of severe food insecurity – when there is a concrete situation of hunger – jumped from 4.2% in 2013 to 15.5% in 2022. The percentage of households suffering from hunger was higher in cases where the reference person of the household was black (18.1%) and female (19.3%) compared to white reference person (10.6%) and male (11.9%).⁹ According to the Food Insecurity supplement and inequalities of race/skin color and gender of the II VIGISAN, households in which the reference person was a black woman were those with the highest percentage (33%) of severe and moderate Food Insecurity (FI), when compared to homes headed by black men (21.3%), white women (17.8%) and white men (9.8%).¹⁰

According to the Brazilian National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (Consea), full compliance with the Human Right to Adequate Food (HRAF) necessarily involves combating institutional racism that prevents or hinders the access of black populations, traditional communities, and indigenous peoples to FNS public policies and denies the right to land and territory and other means of production and reproduction of life. In addition, institutional racism is also expressed in the cultural dimension of food, since the protagonism of these peoples in the construction of national identity, in the valorization and preservation of socio-biodiversity, and in the knowledge and practices that mark our food culture are made invisible and erased.¹¹

Institutional racism is a national problem, and not only of traditional peoples and communities, as the loss of food sovereignty of these peoples results in the loss of Brazilian sovereignty and food culture, which has its roots in the habits and dietary practices of these peoples (p. 15)¹¹.

The HRAF, established by Constitutional Amendment No. 64/2010 as one of the fundamental rights provided for in Article 6 of the Constitution, has two indivisible aspects: the right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate and healthy food. In this perspective, it is important to highlight that fulfilling this right is not limited to physical access to food and the nutritional aspect but also involves socioeconomic, environmental, cultural, ethnic-racial, and gender characteristics.^{12,13}

Therefore, when training nutritionists, it is necessary to reflect on ethnic-racial relations and their intersections with FNS and Food and Nutrition Education (FNE). Based on this ethical-political commitment, since 2016, professors of the undergraduate course in Nutrition of a Public Institution of Higher Education (IPES) in the North of Rio de Janeiro, who are part of the Clarissa Gomes da Silva Center for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies, have been implemented discussions on racial inequalities in research, extension actions, and in the mandatory and elective disciplines offered by the area of nutrition in collective health, including the three FNE disciplines offered in the course (FNE 1, FNE 2 and FNE 3).

In this perspective, in the context of the 10 years of the Framework for Food and Nutrition Education for Public Policies (MREAN), this article aims to reflect critically on FNE in the training of nutritionists regarding the issue of racial inequalities for the implementation of FNS and HRAF, in the light of the experience of the elective discipline FNE 2 of the Nutrition course of IPES in the north state of Rio de Janeiro.

THE METHODOLOGICAL PATH

This article is the result of research entitled “E quando a Educação Alimentar e Nutricional encontra a Educação Popular em Saúde? Refletindo na encruzilhada da aprendizagem e do cuidado” (And when does Food and Nutrition Education meet Popular Health Education? Reflecting at the crossroads of learning and care”) approved by the Research Ethics Committee, CAAE: 52777921.9.0000.5699. In this qualitative research, the following methods were used for collection, systematization, and analysis: participant observation, document research, and systematization of experiences.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

The first stage of participant observation consists of approaching the investigated social reality, which is reinforced by the implication of the researchers who are also professors of the undergraduate course in Nutrition at IPES, since 2012. They participate in the process of critical reflection on training nutritionists and articulate the insertion of the problem of racial inequalities in the teaching and practice plans of the three elective FNE disciplines (FNE 1, FNE 2, and FNE 3), with emphasis on the content and actions of FNE 2. It is worth mentioning that this Nutrition course, in particular, takes extension as a methodological perspective of action for training committed to the local population and their social demands, aiming at promoting health and FNS.

The second stage consisted of document research, by studying official documents of the aforementioned disciplines, such as teaching plans, schedules, practical class scripts, registration forms, course completion assignments, articles and abstracts published in annals of scientific and academic events on the teaching activity in focus, between 2012 and 2019.

On the other hand, the organization and analysis of the data took place through the systematization of experience proposed by Oscar Jara Holliday.¹⁶ This is a methodological approach based on the theoretical precepts of Popular Education (PE) and allows for the organization and rigorous interpretation of collectively shared experiences.

During this process, it was possible to analyze and re-signify experienced knowledge and practices, taking experience itself as an object of study and theoretical interpretation capable of producing learning paths. The systematization of experiences is a methodological resource that considers “five moments”: i) the starting points, ii) the initial questions, iii) the recovery of the lived process, iv) the background reflection, and v) the points of arrival.¹⁶

The “starting point” considers the territories studied, the experiences narrated, the field records, the reports, the conjuncture analyses, the images, the audiovisual elements, the productions of texts, and didactic materials originated from the experience. The second half, called “initial questions”, in turn, guides the objective of the work, defines which experience(s) we want to systematize, in addition to the central aspects that we are interested in analyzing. Thirdly, in the “recovery of the lived process”, there is the reconstruction of history, the organization, interpretation, and classification of information. The “background reflection” considers understanding the reasons that led a certain fact to unfold as it did. For this purpose, the process is analyzed, synthesized, and critically interpreted. Finally, the “point of arrival” is the time allocated to the formulation of conclusions and critically communicates the learning process.

The systematization of the discipline FNE 2, based on the times proposed by Holliday,¹⁶ are summarized in Chart 1 and will be presented in the results and discussion section.

Chart 1. Systematization of experience of the FNE 2 according to the moments proposed by Holiday (2006).

Moments	Systematization of the experience of FNE 2
Moment 1: Starting points	It situates the experience of FNE 2 in the context of the elective disciplines FNE 1, 2, and 3 that make up the IPES curriculum analyzed and its potential for promoting racial equality in the contexts of health and FNS.
Moment 2: Initial questions	How do ethnic-racial issues feed the process of reflection and action in the FNE 2 discipline and contribute to the anti-racist formation of the nutritionist?
Moment 3: Recovery of the lived process	Presentation of educational experiences with popular groups in the FNE 2 discipline
Moment 4: Background reflection	Critical interpretation of the educational process of FNE 2 from the ethnic-racial perspective
Moment 5: Points of Arrival	Learning about racial inequalities in the context of FNE training from lived experience

The disciplines Food and Nutrition Education and their potential for promoting racial equality in the contexts of health and Food and Nutrition Security

We start from the scope of the mandatory and elective disciplines of the undergraduate course in Nutrition at IPES, entitled FNE 1, 2, and 3, taught in the fifth, sixth and seventh semesters, respectively, with 30 hours each. The curricular organization of these disciplines includes theoretical reflections that contribute to the development of critical thinking and guide the practical and extension experiences with popular and institutionalized groups in the North state of Rio de Janeiro.

The subjects are based on the theoretical-methodological framework of Popular Health Education (PHE), to develop a continuous and progressive process, in which dialogical practices and respect for others are valued, as well as the co-participation of individuals in health promotion processes.¹⁷

The theoretical and methodological frameworks that support PHE as the backbone of FNE disciplines are the following: MREAN,¹⁸ Freire's pedagogies,^{3,4,19,20} the National Policy on Popular Health Education;¹⁷ Afro-referenced pedagogies.^{21,22}

FNE 1 is the most deeply theoretical discipline, but with practical actions. It is aimed at building a dialogical link between educators and students, enabling a dynamic of cooperation and co-responsibility, which begins in this discipline and extends to the following two semesters. The principles and guidelines of MREAN¹⁸ and the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population are taken as a reference,²³ in addition to contemporary critical debates that challenge the actions of FNE in the current context, privileging topics such as HRAF, Food Systems, Sustainability, Food Culture, Culinary Autonomy, Educational Planning, and others.

In the disciplines FNE 2 and 3, it is possible to live the educational experience with people and collectives in a broader sense. The first meetings are opportunities for critical reflection on the relevant topics, and extension practices are carried out with the population, with activities in the field and supervision by the professor who tutors each student group.

FNE 2 seeks to prepare students to meet with population groups, emphasizing food as a space for reflection and action on social, gender, and racial inequalities.

The discipline FNE 3 takes as a reference the complexity of eating in the context of illness, from the multiple senses and meanings linked to it, the diversity of eating habits and regionalisms that show how people eat, dietary restrictions depending on the pathology and/or unique conditions, the interactions between food and medicine, among others. It considers the oppressor-oppressed contradictions in the field of nutrition, in which nutrient-centered rationality, distanced from the social dimensions of the human, from the multidimensionality of food, focused on the medicalization of food and the prescription of life, proves to be an instrument of oppression. In this context, the discipline uses narratives about the experience of becoming ill as a pedagogical resource to train nutritionists, to develop and value qualified listening and be able to carry out contextualized and critical FNE practices.

At the end of each discipline, the exam consists of a presentation of a critical-reflective individual portfolio and a collective preparation of an experience report, to be shared in class.

In this article, we focus on the discipline FNE 2, which works with popular and institutionalized groups, who live experiences specific to their geographical context and identity markers such as generational cycle, labor activity, social class, gender, race/ethnicity/color, among others. This course seeks to identify in daily experiences the potentials and challenges presented in carrying out the HRAF and others that seem more fundamental to them.

Thus, following the systematization steps of Holliday,¹⁶ we wanted to answer the question that guides the reflection from the experienced process: How do ethnic-racial issues feed the process of reflection and action in the FNE 2 discipline and contribute to the anti-racist training of nutritionists?

Educational experiences with popular groups in the FNE 2 discipline: reflections on the experience in progress

To meet the moment of “recovery of the lived process” systematization, in which of the investigated reality is historically reconstructed, we will briefly organize the structural characteristics of FNE 2 over the years, reflecting critically on the theoretical-methodological transformations, as well as the background that led to the changes pointed out.

The discipline was offered for the first time in the Nutrition curriculum of this IPES, in the second semester of 2012 and was organized with 10 hours of theory classes and 20 hours of practical activities. Its main purpose was to make students develop skills, so that they would be able to plan and conduct educational practices in Health, Food and Nutrition in the institutional spaces of collective eating.

The syllabus listed the following:

“socio and cultural conditions of human relations that permeate educational practices in food and nutrition; Educational methodologies applicable to Food and Nutrition Education for healthy communities. Theoretical principles, stages of the educational process, procedures, and instruments. Planning and simulation of educational practices aimed at healthy communities.”²⁴

The discipline was mostly focused on activities developed in class as an exercise of technical improvement of the planning of all stages that make up the conventional educational action (diagnosis, objective, contents, methodology and evaluation).²⁵ A practical field activity was planned for the educational diagnosis and, after planning and simulating the activity in class, we returned to the place of practice in two moments to perform and improve the educational activity.

. In general, there is a trend in the FNE disciplines to associate “Learning to Do” only with training people to perform tasks in the context of dietary care.²⁶ Amparo-Santos²⁷ highlighted the need to develop new teaching methods for FNE.

Given the above, the education developed seems to have had as its central issue the improvement, planning, and application of the technique with competence, as well as enabling students to develop organizational and evaluation skills. Considering that the practical field was Food and Nutrition Units of large oil companies, the technical approach was in line with the prioritization of training for the job market.

We concluded that the pedagogy that supported the FNE training process in the first four years of the IPES Nutrition course had a more technical and, therefore, traditional basis.²⁸

Technical education responds to the predominant economic system in the city where IPES is located, to guarantee a specialized workforce aware of the required standards and the demands of the productive sector. Capitalism is not limited to economic production, but triggers, above all, subjectivities consistent with its values.²⁹ Language, literature, communication, and education are at the service of the interests of the classes in power.³⁰ Unfortunately, when we do not reflect on the subjective productions of capitalism, we assimilate its false universality and are unable to overcome oppression.³¹ According to Silva (p. 23),³² the traditional curriculum aims to “develop skills necessary to efficiently exercise the professional occupations of adult life”, corroborating the statement presented above.

The implication of the social role of an IPES, especially this one, which is the result of the process of taking higher education to the countryside, has to do with an education project that contributes to overcoming inequality and social exclusion and to the construction of a more fair, ethical and democratic society.³³ Nevertheless, the choice of contents and practices of FNE 2, in the early years, has favored the capital market as a priority. In this perspective, Seixas et al. point out the convergence between technical training in nutrition and neoliberal ideology.³⁴

With the advancement and deepening of national debates within the scope of public policies on Food and Nutrition in the 2010s, which includes the publication of MREAN in 2012, the critical approach to education, based on dialogue and conduction of the HRAF gained evidence.¹⁸ Such provocations led teachers in the area of Nutrition in Collective Health, in 2016, to adopt PE as a theoretical and methodological reference for the disciplines offered by collective health, which guided the reformulation of FNE 1, 2, and 3.³⁵

In making this choice, FNE 2 has prioritized educational practices based on problematization, guided by the instrument called "Maguerez Arc" (MA), which is developed in phases: observation of reality, determination of key points, theorization, participatory elaboration of solution hypotheses, and reality application. The observation of reality occurs attentively and in communion with the people participating in the action. After the initial finding, the problems are identified and, then, it is possible to choose part of the reality that is a priority for the subjects of the action. The key points are the issues that determine part of the reality previously chosen, confirming the obstacles or limit situations that stand out the most, as well as the facilitating characteristics.³⁶

In the theorization, the scientific contents, narratives, and accumulations are consulted, to deepen the subjects that make up the key points. This stage is not limited to technical-scientific materials, but involves everything from communication carried out in virtual spaces, to art content, and life stories.

Finally, in the stage of elaborating a solution hypothesis, the community, together with the educators, uses creativity and criticality to plan initiatives that enhance the lines of fight to solve the problems theorized, as well as chooses the facilitating instruments and partnerships necessary for their viability.³⁶

The decision for PE as a methodological theoretical framework of FNE2 meant assuming, as fundamental to the educational process, the exercise of critical love, dialogicity, exchange, and appreciation of knowledge for the collective construction of knowledge, from a concrete reality to promote creative learning, awareness, and social transformation. It meant breaking with the idea of curriculum neutrality and confronting neoliberal ideology, in which capital is at the center of social relations. Considering Pedro Cruz's perspective³⁷ on the importance of critical action in Social Nutrition, it was necessary to denounce, from the discipline, the persistence of the phenomenon of social exclusion, sponsored by an economic system that normalizes hunger, poverty, and misery. However, it was necessary to consider the cultural webs that involve food and the impasses that individuals face regarding their food choices.³⁷

Since the first semester of 2016, the discipline was part of spaces such as the Reference Center for Social Assistance (CRAs) in peripheral neighborhoods of the city; the recycling project called Projeto Mulheres Reciclando (PROMUR); a collective of peri-urban agroecological farmers; the Integrated Resource Center for Adolescent Assistance (CRIAAD); the Young Apprentice Project of the company Viva Rio, an educational center for children, adolescents and adults with disabilities (SENTRINHO), and high schools of the state public network.

As part of the recovery of the lived process,¹⁶ we analyzed the schedules of the FNE 2 classes from 2018 to 2019, which included the following fields of action: CRIAAD, a collective of women and agroecology, and two secondary schools. CRIAAD is an institution managed by the state government responsible for assisting

adolescents in conflict with the Law, seized in the region, aged between 13 and 18 years, who comply with a socio-educational measure, in a semi-open condition. They are young people, mostly black, from favela communities marked by inequalities, violence, and unemployment.³⁸

The second group was composed of self-organized women who produced agro-ecological foods in their backyards, benefited from these foods in their kitchens, and held a weekly fair in the neighborhood in which they lived. Such actions were linked to a process of mobilization and struggle of this group for the environmental preservation of the place where they lived, an area surrounded by beaches and lagoons with typical sandbank vegetation and which is a constant target of real estate speculation.

The third group consisted of high school students from state public schools in Rio de Janeiro, located in a peripheral neighborhood. Adolescents aged between 14 and 19 years old are usually black, mostly women, residents of the school's surroundings. In our performance, we realized that access to higher education did not seem to be, for these students, a goal after having completed basic education. There was a lack of knowledge about the dynamics of higher education, the mechanisms of admission to public universities, free education, affirmative action policies, and student assistance. These debates started to be discussed in educational practice as undergraduates shared their origins (sometimes similar), the daily challenges of life at university, as well as their professional dreams.

The approximation of the reality of people, whose bodies revealed the daily confrontation with barriers of oppression marked by the identity dimensions of race/color/ethnicity, class and gender, made evident the need to revisit the curricular contents of FNE 2. We started to adopt theories of education that proposed processes of reflection on identity-power-knowledge,^{21,22} fundamental when living in a country, whose deep marks resulting from colonization are visible in social and environmental relations, in configurations of power and knowledge, in structural inequalities, in violence against identities, and the context of training nutritionists. It was necessary to reflect on ethnic-racial relations and their intersectionality with FNS and FNE.

From the aforementioned changes, ethnic-racial inequalities were mentioned in the final assignments of the discipline (portfolios), Final Papers, articles produced by students and professors, and abstracts presented at scientific and academic conferences.³⁹⁻⁴³

After the theoretical and practical accumulations presented above, we observed that the 2019 registration form of the discipline had already been able to highlight changes in course plans, which have come to consider the racial debate and its intersectional crossings as fundamental content, as shown below

The sociocultural conditions of human relations that permeate educational practices in food and nutrition are considered, with a special focus on **social, racial, and gender inequalities**. Popular Education based on the principles of Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy is privileged as a methodological principle for reflection and to conduct activities with healthy communities. Active methodologies applied to Food and Nutritional Education. Planning and development of educational practices with groups (community, educational, health, and social assistance units, university garden) linked to the extension project of the discipline.⁴⁴ (emphasis added).

The changes made considered the insertion of classes that brought the racial debate to the scene. Since the first FNE 2 classes, whose objective is to prepare students to meet with popular groups, the book *Pedagogy in process: the letters to Guinea-Bissau*,¹⁹ is taken by reference to inspire the path that is intended to be taken. In this book, the educational process does not shy away from critical reflections on the impacts of colonization and racism, but also praises African values as fundamental pillars in the formulation of the country's education project.

Freire (p.19)¹⁸ draws our attention to the uniqueness of educational experiences that require from the educator the constant exercise of “seeing, hearing, inquiring, and discussing” and the abandonment of hasty conclusions. The author also proposes reflections on the true meaning of aid, which in no way can be distorted into domination, but into a genuine commitment to the transformation of that social reality.

Finally, a class on theories and concepts about racism in Brazil was included.^{30,31} The reflections shared in class aimed to uncover information that would allow us to understand the construction of the racist structure in Brazilian society and reflect on forms of resistance and possibilities of deconstruction of anti-racist ideologies and practices in the daily relations of the various social spaces, preferably in the field of Food and Nutrition.

Reaping the fruits of an FNE engaged in promoting racial equality

As part of the fourth moment of systematization, the background reflection, we seek to critically interpret this educational process from an ethnic-racial perspective.¹⁶ Experiences with mostly black popular groups, especially with CRIAAD students and public high school students, have been configured in an important learning space, enabling nutrition undergraduates to be able to recognize ethnic-racial inequalities as one of the main social determinants of health and nutrition conditions,^{39,40} which made this topic occupy more and more space in the discipline.

Thus, in the classroom, when reflecting about the reality experienced in the light of theoretical references that deal with ethnic-racial relations and FNS, it was possible to problematize with the undergraduates how institutional racism greatly compromises the realization of the HRAF of the black population. These issues were even addressed by several students in their portfolios, as observed by Silveira.³⁹ In addition to being able to identify how the reality of the groups was crossed by racism, some students were also able to perceive how racism permeates their reality.

For Grada Kilomba,³¹ subjectivity plays an important role in the decolonization process of science. In this perspective, the use of the portfolio as an evaluative resource provides a better understanding of the learning paths followed by students throughout the discipline. At the same time, they were encouraged to revisit the lived experience, reflect on it and materialize their perceptions from diverse formats, such as photographs, poetry, short stories, drawings, illustrations and texts. When analyzing portfolios produced under the discipline FNE 2, Moura⁴⁵ highlighted that:

The portfolio is built by the student as an evaluative instrument. However, it is important to highlight that its meaning goes beyond mere evaluation. When building an experience and experiencing it, students need some important criteria to establish an understandable connection of what was developed, but at the same time lived. This is presented from a critical thinking on how the theoretical contents, their reflections, and the practices are articulated, and the portfolio intends to be the materialization of this movement⁴⁵ (p. 40).

In order to encourage students to increasingly activate subjectivity as an important part of the teaching and learning process, a workshop dedicated to Conceição Evaristo's *Escrevivência* (writing and living) was incorporated into the course's program, based on the reading and reflection of excerpts from *Olhos d'água*⁴⁶ and “Da grafia-desenho de minha mãe. Um dos lugares de nascimento de minha escrita”.⁴⁷

The document analysis of the materials produced within the scope of the discipline with the participant observation shows that the students demonstrated the ability to complexify their conceptions about food beyond the nutritional dimension. At the same time, they re-signified their role as future nutritionists who can contribute to the population's awareness of the social and ethnic-racial determinants of Food Insecurity

(FI) and the joint construction of ways to face the obstacles to meeting HRAF. In the classroom and in the planning of activities, some students started to question to what extent the educational materials and activities developed by them were contributing or not to reproduce a “white racial norm”.

Finally, it should be noted that, when analyzing the portfolios of students who carried out experiences at CRIAAD, Silveira³⁹ observed that one of the main aspects of this experience was the recognition of adolescents in socio-educational measures as subjects of rights, from a humanizing perspective of food and nutrition. This issue highlighted by the author is of paramount importance for nutritionist training, because although food is recognized as a human right, there is little problematization of the process of dehumanization generated by racism as a way to legitimize and justify the denial of fundamental rights to the black population, including the right to food.

Grada Kilomba³¹ draws attention to three main characteristics of racism: the construction of difference based on a white normal, the hierarchization of this difference producing inequalities, and unequal power relations. Therefore, it is essential that professional nutritionists, whose one of the main missions is to contribute to the promotion of FNS, be able to recognize how racism prevents the realization of HRAF.

Points of Arrival and Considerations for Moving Forward

The extension nature that the FNE disciplines started to have from the year 2018 draws our attention, promoting spaces of experience between undergraduates and popular groups, mostly constituted by black populations, in which contextualized and critical educational practices are developed, based on the dialogue of knowledge. The reports of experiences, critical-reflective portfolios, writings, narratives, and educational and cultural activities produced by the undergraduates point to a critical awareness of issues such as: i) the relationship between racism and the dehumanization of the subjects; ii) the understanding of whiteness as a space of privileges and a mechanism of oppression and the adoption of anti-racist practices in the exercise of the profession; iii) the understanding of the role of the FNE in confronting racism; iv) the ways in which institutions operate institutional racism.

We conclude that, despite the power structures operating in the field of academic knowledge, which historically silence epistemologies and other worldviews, we observed that creative proposals to establish dialogue on ethnic-racial relations were made in the FNE 2 discipline of the Nutrition Course. In addition, the choice of PE as a theoretical-methodological reference provided greater approximation between undergraduates, teachers, and popular groups, resulting in a rich process of strengthening bonds and spaces for mutual learning, as well as fostering the capacity for critical reflection on the conditions of racial inequalities that permeate the dietary practices of the Brazilian population.

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