

## Social justice and education for ethnic-racial relations (ERER): Relationships to knowledge in higher education in the State of Ceará — Brazil

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### Abstract

*Over the last two decades, the proportion of the Brazilian population in higher education has tripled. The country's top-ranked universities are public and free, and campuses have been geographically decentralised across the country. Access to higher education for Black, Indigenous and Quilombola students has increased. Although slowly, the effects of legislation mandating education on ethnic and racial relations (ERER) can be seen in the redress of historical injustices linked to colonialism, capitalism and regional territorial conflicts. This article aims to explore the concept of relationships to knowledge, as defined by Bernard Charlot, as experienced by three Black professors teaching at two universities in the state of Ceará in the north-east of the country. The participants are members of a research group dedicated to relationships with knowledge in the field of physical education, in which they have been working for five years. This self-study research is based on a theoretical-methodological approach involving thematic analysis of autobiographical narratives. The findings highlight four key areas: students' engagement in intersubjective modes of learning about ERER; collaborative educational processes between professors when addressing social injustices; intergenerational aspects of relationships with knowledge concerning ERER; and the reconfiguration of knowledge about social justice based on shared experiences.*

### Keywords

*Relationship to knowledge, physical education, self-study, anti-racism, social justice*

### Résumé

*La population étudiante brésilienne a triplé au cours des deux dernières décennies. Les principales universités sont publiques et gratuites, et leurs campus sont décentralisés géographiquement dans tout le pays. L'accès à l'enseignement supérieur pour les étudiants et étudiantes noirs, autochtones et quilombolas s'est élargi. Bien que lentement, les effets de la législation spécifique sur l'enseignement obligatoire des relations ethno-raciales (ERER) se font sentir en ce qui concerne la réparation des injustices historiques liées au colonialisme, au capitalisme et aux conflits territoriaux régionaux. Dans cet article, nous nous intéressons aux rapports aux savoirs proposés par Bernard Charlot, à travers l'exemple de trois professeurs et professeures noirs et noires dans deux universités de l'État du Ceará, dans le nord-est du Brésil. Les participants sont membres d'un groupe de recherche consacré aux rapports aux savoirs en éducation physique, dans lequel ils travaillent depuis cinq ans. La recherche, qui relève de l'auto-étude, s'appuie sur une approche théorico-méthodologique fondée sur des récits (auto)biographiques, analysés selon une approche thématique. Les résultats mettent en lumière quatre axes : l'engagement des élèves dans des modes d'apprentissage intersubjectifs relatifs aux relations ethno-raciales ; les processus de formation collaborative entre les enseignants face aux injustices sociales ; les aspects intergénérationnels des rapports aux savoirs relatifs aux relations ethno-raciales ; et la reconfiguration des savoirs sur la justice sociale à partir d'expériences partagées.*

### Mots-clés

*Rapport au savoir, éducation physique, self-study, antiracisme, justice sociale.*

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## Introduction

The Brazilian population within higher education has tripled in the last two decades (Duke *et al.*, 2025). The top ranked universities are public and free, and campuses have been decentralized geographically across the country's five regions. Access to higher education for Black, Indigenous, and *Quilombola* students has expanded, as has the diversification of faculty through public policies aimed at promoting social justice (Brasil, 2012). Although slowly, the effects of specific legislation — created over two decades ago — on mandatory education for ethnic-racial relations (ERER) can be seen in a process of reconfiguration of the educational field (Corsino & Conceição, 2016).

On the one hand, there are rhetorical convergences regarding the redress of historical injustices linked to colonialism, capitalism, and regional territorial conflicts (Venâncio *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, there are divergences regarding the concrete possibilities for transforming universities regarding learning modes in higher education (Bruno *et al.*, 2022). In this article, we explore this second path by analyzing transformative perspectives based on the relationship to knowledge (Charlot, 2020). The objective is to make explicit the relationships to knowledge of three professors who research the relationship to knowledge while teaching at two universities in the state of Ceará, in northeastern Brazil.

According to Charlot (2000), each subject's relationship to knowledge encompasses the relationship they establish with themselves, with the world, and with other subjects. The term *subject* often used in Portuguese and other Latin languages is connected with the perspective of subjectivity of an individual, emphasizing their idiosyncrasies and existential standpoint. In this sense, Venâncio (2019) explains that each subject's lived experience refers to the set of relationships with knowledge — which are developed beyond the school curriculum — and which are also shaped by physical education, the core field of the three professors. For Charlot (2009), physical education emphasizes students' learning about their own bodies as bodies-subjects, encompassing both domain and relational knowledge.

According to Venâncio (2019), the experiential flow is intersubjective and, simultaneously, engenders the living modes (as livelinesses), experiences, thoughts, and arguments of each subject. Experiences — such as those we experience in higher education settings — allow us to understand the transitions between choices and dispositions in the contemporary world. Our experiences are permeated by emotions

and perceptions without linear notions of chronological time. It is the time itself lived in different realities that implies the experiential flow, enabling both positive and negative readings of academic work throughout life.

## 1. Context

The three participating professors — Luciana, Luiz, and Paulo, co-authors of this article — identify as Black and are members of a research group dedicated to the relationship to knowledge and the field of physical education, where they have been collaborating for five years. The group is based at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), where Luciana and Luiz work as adjunct professors at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports, on the capital's campus. Paulo is a lecturer at the Regional University of Cariri (URCA), a higher education institution located in the interior of Ceará. Academic positions in Brazilian public universities are tenured then scholars' prerogatives throughout the career might be different from other countries (Duke *et al.*, 2025). Together we share a common educational practice oriented toward social justice.

In this sense, physical education presents a constant conflict of legitimacy when it comes to definitively establishing itself as a socially just field of knowledge, whether as a curricular component, an area of scientific study, or a professional practice. The mobility of scholars beyond their social conditions of origin requires understanding the numerous regional differences that, in a way, represent *a journey to the heart of physical education* similarly to the experience reported by Pochon (2025). Furthermore, the identity issue of physical education corresponds to the exhaustive quest to have its pedagogical intentionality recognized before the ERER, as it requires a critical and rigorous stance regarding its social and epistemological practices.

These are two points that we critically analyze in our reflections, supported by Charlot (2009). We understand that the search for meanings for (self)educative processes — with critical and progressive characteristics — whether from the perspective of the learner or the teacher, is an anthropological question that situates us in the world experienced by the human species, with the right to education as a premise (Charlot, 2013). With this assumption, we seek to approximate what Charlot (2021) called the heuristic value of the notion of relationship to knowledge.

Since its creation in 2017, the *Study and Research Group on School Physical Education and Relationships to Knowledge* — GEPEFERS — has established itself as a

community of knowledge. Craig *et al.* (2020) describe how groups like GEPEFERS function as knowledge communities because they provide an interactive locus where teachers negotiate meanings for their own experiences and validate the production of their own professional knowledge. This collective configuration is also aligned with the perspective of the *Black Educator Movement*, with the majority of participants being Black (Gomes, 2017). The group has sought to deepen the understanding of intersubjectivities in relationships to knowledge (Venâncio *et al.*, 2018).

Previously, we identified the dynamics that constitute aspects of the relationship to knowledge in the ways and reasons each subject understands themselves, others, and the world while researching (Venâncio *et al.*, 2023). Hence, we understand that it is important that those who intend to investigate the elements of the relationship to knowledge walk towards themselves to understand the complexity of this network of knowledge, the meaning attributed to the events narrated in the situations, how life stories are constructed and recognized in this community of knowledge.

## 2. Methodological choices

The research is characterized as a self-study and is based on a theoretical-methodological approach from our (auto)biographical narratives (Venâncio *et al.*, 2022). The narratives were written unsystematically to highlight the diversity of our relationships to knowledge. We emphasize the notion of critical friendship in self-study, taking the research of Garbett and Thomas (2020) and Garbett *et al.* (2025) as a collaborative possibility for faculty working at universities located in different regions and in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (MuVUCA) environments. In our reflections, we also consider the specificity of working with physical education teacher education (PETE) (Ovens & Fletcher, 2014).

After writing, we used a dialogic instrument — created within the group — to compare the narratives through thematic analysis and appreciation of metaphorical modes of narration (Nobre *et al.*, 2024). The instrument contains six reflexive questions to make explicit the living modes, experiences, thoughts, arguments, and epistemological dispositions (Sanches Neto *et al.*, 2023, p. 56). Furthermore, according to Ergas and Ritter (2020), our self-study encompasses an ontological dimension on two interrelated levels: the first concerns the identity milestones of the self, and the second concerns the ways in which these milestones affect those with whom the self relates.

By shedding light on relationships to knowledge through self-study, we make explicit the vivid and lived situations with social practices and unique stories in comparison with the knowledge empirically revealed in GEPEFERS. We interacted as critical friends in group meetings, through e-mails, messaging and sharing the reflective materials we produced. Although we explicitly addressed intersectionality in our dialogues on social justice, we maintained a focus on the complexity of social markers and on ERER, as racialized subjects working in higher education (Duke *et al.*, 2025).

Methodologically, our self-study research is critical from a scientific perspective, but also from a political standpoint. As Stamelos (2024) points out, researching allows us to detect the risk involved in using certain terms that become slogans, such as inclusion, democratization, priority education for all, or even equality of opportunity, as their implementation ultimately leads to the opposite of the intended result. To this end, we take into account how themes linked to social justice have been explored in physical education, such as gender inequality, intellectual and physical disabilities, homophobia and socioeconomic disparities, as well as the importance of education based on social justice in addressing power imbalances and social rights issues in teaching and learning processes (Flor *et al.*, 2024).

### **3. Findings and discussion**

The findings point to themes that we allocated into four axes: (1) students' engagement in intersubjective modes of learning about ERER; (2) collaborative educative processes between the professors when confronting social injustices; (3) intergenerational aspects in relationships to knowledge about ERER; (4) reconfiguration of knowledge about social justice based on shared experiences.

#### **3.1 Students' engagement in intersubjective modes of learning about ERER**

Although our educational practices converge with ERER, the conditions for implementing them differ. For example, neither UFC nor URCA has a *Center for Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Studies* (NEABI), so not all initiatives have institutional support. However, before joining URCA as a lecturer, Paulo led the NEABI at another higher education institution. This experience influenced the development of alternative ways to engage his students.

Recently, Paulo has been noticing within himself a (self)educative process, which points to individuation, as a more thoughtful and contemplative subject regarding his place in the field of education, teaching, and physical education. For Carneiro (2003a, 2003b), the concept of place is understood in the discussion of being and non-being, where being is the pale man of European origin and Christian. Therefore, the non-being would be the other, the Black person, the Indigenous person, consequently generating a paradox of “being and not being”. This is the crux of the matter. The Black population in Brazil and in the *Amefrican* diaspora — the way of living with African ancestry in the Americas and the Caribbean (Gonzalez, 2020) — lives in a paradoxical state: they are indeed (they physically exist, work, study, produce culture, love, dream), but are treated by the racist social structure as if they were not (they have no right to life, dignity, representation, or subjectivity). This ultimately undermines the knowledge originating from these populations.

However, Paulo learns by teaching, just as he teaches by learning in the GEPEFERS community of knowledge. The terminology of the non-place of ethnic-racial relations in the physical education curriculum (Alves *et al.*, 2024) relates to the many struggles and theoretical clashes to incorporate the field of social justice and ERER into the curriculum. However, the overarching feeling is that we are in a territory of constant dispute, where the topic of social justice would remain in a kind of limbo, between its rightful place and its non-place in teacher education. Our strength lies in the knowledge community, among critical friends who are professors and teacher-researchers. For Paulo, encouragement lies in Black students and also in the pale ones, as long as they can grasp the importance of developing a different kind of physical education.

It is necessary to envision contradictions for a different kind of education where, for example, the term *Kariri* is not only in the name of the URCA institution. The *Kariri* are an Indigenous ethnic group, which the pale invaders imagined they had completely exterminated through genocide and epistemicide. Inspired by Gonzalez (2020), we understand that paleness is an effective term to racialize pale people who identify as part of the supremacy of whiteness, in order to racialize them. However, increasingly, through daily work — by building consciousness, brick by brick — through diverse experiences and (self)educative experiences, we have recovered an ancestral legacy. As in the African philosophy present in the *adinkras*, in the symbolism

of the *sankofa* bird, we have sought what had been left behind, while walking forward, on the shoulders of those who came before.

The meaning of this search within GEPEFERS, for example, led to readings of hooks (2013) and a collective of Black women physical education teachers (Venâncio & Nobrega, 2020). Then, relationships to knowledge were problematized based on these readings, epistemologically grounded in Black feminisms. This (self)educative experience also reached Luciana and Luiz's students, as both professors embodied these references into their teaching plans for undergraduate and graduate courses at UFC and in another program they teach.

### **3.2 Collaborative educative processes between the professors when confronting social injustices**

Over the past decade, the personal and professional trajectories of Luciana, Luiz, and Paulo have been transformed. In the collaborative construction of our educational practices, we have observed the complexity inherent in the (self)educative process, especially regarding the perception — by teachers and students — of the hygienist and eugenicist traits that still pervade physical education knowledge. Our journey through the intricacies of ERER configures an unprecedented viable that, in Freire's (2016) understanding, is an action not yet realized that requires overcoming limiting situations for its implementation. As anti-racist teacher-researchers, we seek to transform concrete realities with our social justice-oriented *praxis* (Gadotti, 2007). In this context, confronting the epistemology anchored in paleness is crucial.

Thus, we point to the need to expand thought matrices and broaden the curriculum as a disputed territory (Arroyo, 2017). This expansion occurs primarily from *aquilombamentos*, as in the dialogue with ERER proposals and perspectives based on Black narratives (Gomes, 2021; Santos *et al.*, 2025), decoloniality (Ferreira Júnior & Rubio, 2023), anti-racism (Nobrega, 2020), Afro-referenced studies (Mattos & Monteiro, 2021), Black embodiment (Paula, 2024), crossroads pedagogy (Bins & Molina Neto, 2022), visibility of Indigenous peoples (Feres Neto & Taffarel, 2025; Pereira, 2021), Afrofuturism (Silva & Venâncio, 2025), African matrices of body culture (Climaco, Santos & Taffarel, 2018), epistemic racism (Gomes, 2008), Africanities and Black youths (Rosa & Ribeiro, 2022), intersectionalities (Oliveira and Silva, 2023) and Black feminisms (Rêgo *et al.*, 2022) in the context of physical education. *Aquilombar* is a concept that transcends the physical territory to establish

itself as a space for intellectual empowerment and symbolism of the diaspora (Nascimento, 1986). It is in this mo(ve)ment that we seek to strengthen original peoples' epistemes, and Afro-descendant knowledge, bringing them to the center of new teacher-researchers education (Cunha Júnior, 2002).

We have analyzed relationships to knowledge through intersectional approaches (Akotirene, 2022; Crenshaw, 1987; Gonzalez, 2020). Along this path, it becomes imperative to honor our best ancestry, opposing the social injustices stemming from racism, sexism, capitalism, ableism, etc. (Ribeiro, 2022). For physical education, this means recognizing the knowledge of Black, *Quilombola*, and Indigenous populations and valuing African roots and the Indigenous peoples who promote ways of organic well-living (Santos, 2023).

It is necessary to revisit the educational processes that truly value collaborative models and contribute to a socially just education, without resorting to slogans devoid of criticality. It is necessary to forge a path between teacher-researchers, walking together in the construction of an educational *praxis* that simultaneously confronts dominant epistemologies and actively creates new paths based on diversity, respect, and the appreciation of the plurality of relationships to knowledge (Gadotti, 2007). Ontologically, we understand that this is the path to a physical education that is progressive — anchored in social justice — but that needs to confront its own limiting situations to consolidate itself as an effective space for social transformation.

Empirically, this entanglement of both affective and intellectual networks strengthens Paulo's collaborative *esperançar* — an action verb coined by Freire (2016) which calls upon us not merely to wait, but to build the *inédito viável* (untested feasible). Each research group meeting and every interlocution with these peers function as identity mirrors, where the Afro-descendant force pulsing in our hearts and minds is reinforced. Furthermore, for Paulo, his master's degree — under the supervision of professor Cícera Nunes — was fundamental for a strengthening that transcends the academic sphere, reaching spiritual and identity-related dimensions.

We, as Black intellectuals within the Brazilian context, understand that the act of not giving up — of asserting our presence in the struggle for knowledge and modes of teaching and learning — is, in itself, an act of resistance. Grounded in an ethic of love, as theorized by hooks (2013), we understand love as a political practice of freedom and communion. Thus, we proceed in constant mutual support, validating every

micropolitical achievement and every advance toward the social and epistemic justice to which we aspire.

### 3.3 Intergenerational aspects in relationships to knowledge about ERER

There is a confluence of knowledge (Santos, 2023) in our lives that influences our perspectives on ERER because our relationships to knowledge are intergenerational. This confluence of experiences and knowledge, although distinct in age and origin, is united by a common driving force: the belief in social justice as a cornerstone of education and formative processes, as advocated by Freire (2016), Gomes (2021), and hooks (2013). The collaboration between the three of us — as teacher-researchers from different generations — exemplifies the richness of intergenerational relationships in the construction of knowledge, such as the self-study conducted by Duke *et al.* (2025).

On the one hand, Paulo is the youngest of the trio, admittedly with much learning to be consolidated and relationships to knowledge to be revisited. With experience rooted in the vibrant cultural reality of the Cariri region of Ceará, Paulo emphasizes the relevance and urgency of ERER at URCA, encouraging his peers to discuss this topic within the institution. Luciana and Luiz, on the other hand, have anti-racist pathways consolidated over three decades of epistemological struggles (Sanches Neto & Oyama, 1999). Both professors recognize their contribution to the theoretical deepening Paulo needed, provisionally offering the conceptual and methodological basis for research and intervention on ERER. However, they also recognize that ancestry is within us — *sankofa, ubuntu* — as we continue to learn together with more experienced professors and researchers, such as Cunha Júnior (2002), and through intergenerational coexistence in knowledge communities (Oliveira, Cunha Júnior & Domingos, 2025).

By emphasizing the epistemic, social, and identity dimensions of knowledge, the theory of the relationship to knowledge provides the framework for understanding how our trajectories intertwine and converge in the construction of organic knowledge (Santos, 2023). The epistemic dimension manifests itself in the pursuit of knowledge and in each subject's academic production. The social dimension is evident in collaboration in research groups, student mentoring, and collective mobilization in knowledge communities. The identity dimension is revealed in each subject's commitment to social transformation and the construction of an anti-racist and anti-capitalist physical education, as racial capitalism has historically fed off hierarchies

based on pale supremacy, and this debate permeates the educational field (Nobrega, 2020; Gerrard *et al.*, 2021).

In this context, valuing intergenerational aspects in relationships to knowledge about ERER becomes fundamental to understanding the engendering of racism in capitalism. Our lived experience is marked by a different place of origin and by specific challenges faced before the complexities of ethnic-racial relations in Brazil. Our experiences in different regions of the country provide us with the analytical tools — organically situated in our living modes, experiences, thoughts, and arguments — and the possibilities to intervene effectively in resolving these challenges. Together, we have constructed other relationships to knowledge, increasingly more complex than those we bring with us from our social conditions of origin. We are constructing knowledge that is simultaneously rigorous and socially engaged, and that reflects a loving ethic, as per hooks's (2013) perspective. We have an ethical-political commitment to the changes necessary to confront the pale supremacy in physical education, which refuses to recognize the prerogative typical of the paleness of ideas as a privilege.

Empirically, for a lecturer like Paulo, whose trajectory is in a consolidation phase, his interlocution with more experienced peers transcends mere technical guidance as it symbolizes a dialogue with living references in physical education. Throughout the confluence of these livelinesses we jointly construct the theoretical-methodological bases for an anti-racist and anti-capitalist physical education, truly committed to the epistemological valorization of Afro-Indigenous knowledges.

Walking alongside as living references mobilizes us to persist in the struggles inherent to a field of knowledge still deeply marked by eugenic and colonialist legacies. This collective process is vital for the constitution of the Black professors' intersubjectivity for being Black is not an *a priori*, or biological, or inert condition, but a dynamic process of *becoming Black* — as a political conquest of consciousness regarding one's own history and place in the world (Souza, 1983).

In this sense, the intergenerational alliance acts as a mechanism of defense and attack against the systematic erasure of our productions. As Carneiro (2003a, 2003b) warns us, the device of raciality operates through epistemicide, denying the legitimacy of knowledge produced by subalternized groups. Therefore, walking together is a tactic of resistance to ensure that our existences and intellects are not nullified by the hegemonic structure.

### 3.4 Reconfiguration of knowledge about social justice based on shared experiences

We have reconfigured our knowledge as we share experiences and make our intentionalities explicit, with a common focus on social justice. Luciana, for example, has been interested in the relationship to knowledge since her master's dissertation (Venâncio, 2005), but the idea of deepening this knowledge was postponed and redefined in her doctoral studies (Venâncio, 2014). Luciana problematized nuances of her work as a teacher-researcher by investigating the relationships to knowledge of a group of former students from a public school on the outskirts of Brazil's most populous city. The resumption of that educational process also occurred through narratives, as well as focus groups and explicitation interviews, allowing students to reflect on their own living modes, experiences, thoughts, and arguments regarding physical education.

Luciana's studies impacted Luiz and Paulo's perspectives on relationships to knowledge. Luiz is interested in the intersubjectivity of epistemic, identity, and social dimensions in relationships to knowledge as a source of mobilization for the subjects involved in collaborative (self)educative processes among teachers. His approach to the relationship to knowledge occurred when he was a critical observer of Luciana's doctoral research (Venâncio, 2014). While both participated in a group investigating the topic, Luiz also learned about the relationship to knowledge by attending Charlot's presentation at a colloquium and then embodied it into his own research during a doctoral fellowship abroad. In Paulo's case, the desire to learn more about the theory of the relationship to knowledge was fueled by his dialogue with Luciana at a symposium. Subsequently, Paulo reconsidered his research interests and began participating in GEPEFERS meetings.

By centralizing student engagement for the success of teaching, Charlot's (2005) perspective mobilizes us. According to Charlot (2005), teachers from different parts of the world have universal characteristics that permeate their work, such as the subtlety of their relationships with students, the way they view themselves and their students, and the way society views them. All of this brings a certain familiarity to teachers' work.

Charlot (2005) emphasizes that there is a worldwide openness to education for subjects who previously had no access to schooling. Consequently, there is an expectation that teachers should embrace these subjects to make them successful in their lives. Thus, teachers need to be seen as professionals who are not destined to passivity or to the reproduction of school ways. Although each teacher presents weaknesses that

are contextual to teaching situations, all teachers are social agents with a culturally consolidated social function. It is in this sense that we understand this function as oriented toward social justice and, pragmatically, to the fight against social injustices, as is the case of ERER.

According to Venâncio *et al.* (2023), concurrently with their pretended contribution to social reproduction, teachers educate and share knowledge that can transform realities. Our movements have generated redefinitions of the temporality of teaching and learning processes, based on the experiential flow of relationships to knowledge proposed by Venâncio (2019). These new redefinitions, in turn, have mobilized us collaboratively with critical, sensitive, and intuitive curiosity, as other intersectional redefinitions need to emerge for new perspectives to be made explicit.

The relationship to knowledge as a socio-anthropological theory of world appropriation allows us new epistemological and methodological approaches (Charlot, 2000). Therefore, we reflect on ERER and engage with different perspectives to formulate better questions and uncover possible answers by sharing knowledge. One example is Luciana and Luiz's research with other teacher-researchers on how pale educators and liberal institutions played fundamental roles in perpetuating racism and the supremacy of paleness in the arrangement of their teaching identities (Conceição *et al.*, 2025). This type of intellectual collaboration provides us with the opportunity for the critical friendship necessary to confront the discourses and practices that naturalize racial oppression in Brazil.

Empirically, regarding the collaborative production, Paulo's master's research is noteworthy featuring Luciana's critical interlocution (Alves *et al.*, 2023). His study exemplifies the materiality of ERER as an indispensable curricular component in Brazilian universities. Investigating the contributions of *NEABIs* to initial PETE, it is possible to assert that such centers constitute pivotal institutional mechanisms. They act as catalysts for actions aiming at an effective ontological and epistemological expansion of curricula, redesigning the education of future generations of teachers to become structurally underpinned by diversity and an anti-racist commitment.

#### 4. Considerations

At the universities where we work, there is no institutional policy for ERER. However, although there is no NEABI at either university, at URCA there is a *Center for Studies*

and Research in Education, Gender, and Ethnic-Racial Relations (NEGRER), a collective registered with the *Consortium of NEABIs and related groups* (CONEAB). We understand this to be an indication that gaps in the academic structure are being exploited wisely to foster anti-racist actions.

It is also an indication that individual initiatives can gain collective support and thus contribute to breaking down individualism in educational practices. The initiative to create NEGRER came from professor Cícera Nunes, a scholar at URCA. Nunes also co-founded the *Consortium for Research and Knowledge Production in Afro-Diasporic, Luso-Brazilian, and Caribbean Spaces*. The *Consortium* is a knowledge community of academics and university students, established in the summer of 2020 together with an academic from the University of Tennessee in the United States of America and two academics from the Federal University of Ceará in Brazil. Currently, the *Consortium* is a collaborative and growing network of Black faculty working at universities in Brazil, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States (Duke *et al.*, 2025).

Similarly, there are currently two international research networks on the relationship to knowledge: the South American network, based in Brazil and Spanish-speaking countries — such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay — and the Francophone network, with Belgium, Canada, France, and Switzerland. Both networks have some connections, and there are several ways to engage in this research because the strands are numerous (Charlot, 2023). The theoretical and methodological approaches to the relationship to knowledge are different but not contradictory. The notion of a relationship to knowledge originally emanates from psychoanalysis and sociology, constantly open to (self)criticism when seeking its own gaps.

We consider ERER to be one of the gaps in the relationship to knowledge regarding the question of desire, the unconscious, the encounter with the other, and the institutionalized knowledge of a subject who is simultaneously singular and a member of social groups. For Charlot (2023), the relationship to knowledge can be approached from various perspectives. All approaches are legitimate, and the only illegitimate one is the one that claims to be the only legitimate approach. And they all have positive readings as a common thread. It is about understanding education — and physical education as our specific focus — as a human adventure of each subject. Therefore, it is essential that we listen to the voices of subjects to broaden the scope of relationships to knowledge toward social justice.

Finally, although we were inspired by the concept of *escrevivência* — *writing-living* — proposed by Evaristo (2020), we chose to maintain our (auto)biographical narratives without systematizing them *a priori* with theoretical frameworks and configuring them with affirmative meanings of resistance and liberation. In doing so, we maintained the (self)educative meaning originally suggested within GEPEFERS by sharing the narratives as a way of explaining relationships to knowledge. As a suggestion for future studies, we highlight *writing-living* as a critical and creative possibility for the authorial exercise of re-signifying knowledge and relationships to knowledge. This is an important observation for us because the concept of *writing-living* has been co-opted by pale researchers, without properly naming Conceição Evaristo as its proponent.

Our collaboration in this self-study provided a safe environment to discuss how the concept of paleness functions in the hierarchy and maintenance of pale people's racial privileges, as well as its implications for social justice-oriented teaching and teacher education in higher education. By recalling our histories of schooling, academic preparation, and teaching, we identified racist practices that were repeatedly normalized. Despite the normalization of paleness as a privileged reference to desirable ways of life, our steps toward social justice and ERER indicate progress for making explicit anti-racist relationships to knowledge in higher education.

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