

## EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT AND CHALLENGE INSTITUTIONAL AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CATARINA (UFSC)

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### SUMMARY

This paper analyzes the experiences and possibilities for promoting educational accessibility at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), based on initiatives developed by units such as the Application School, the Child Development Center (NDI), the University Library (BU), and the Permanent Commission for Educational Accessibility (CAE). The research question stems from the institutional advances, challenges, and perspectives in the field of inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education. The general objective is to analyze the accessibility strategies adopted by UFSC, while the specific objectives involve identifying implemented actions, understanding the legal and theoretical foundations, and reflecting on the challenges faced. The methodology adopted is qualitative, with a bibliographic review and documentary analysis of legislation, scientific publications, and institutional documents. The theoretical framework is based on authors such as Freire (1996), who emphasizes the ethical commitment of teaching to transforming reality; Candau (2008), who advocates for human rights education; Mantoan (2003), who questions the exclusionary logic of traditional schools; Sasaki (2003), who proposes a broad vision of accessibility, observed that UFSC has made significant progress in terms of institutional policies and pedagogical initiatives, but still faces challenges such as attitudinal resistance, a shortage of human resources, and the need for continuous curricular adaptations. Thus, the university appears to be in the process of consolidating an inclusive institutional culture, with concrete possibilities for expanding and strengthening its accessible practices.

**Keywords:** Educational Accessibility. Inclusion. Human Rights. Students with Disabilities. Higher Education.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Educational accessibility constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for implementation of an inclusive, democratic and equitable education, especially in context of public higher education. Educational accessibility, as

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referenced by the authors, should be conceived as a pedagogical principle and ethical, and not just as compliance with legal standards. At the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), the promotion of accessibility transcends the mere architectural adequacy, covering multiple pedagogical dimensions, communicational, attitudinal and technological, which seek to guarantee the full right to learning and participation of students with disabilities. This process demands coordinated actions between institutional units, public policies and the ethical commitment of the academic community to diversity and social justice.

This work aims to analyze the experiences and possibilities of educational accessibility at UFSC, highlighting the initiatives implemented by Application College (CA), Child Development Center (NDI), Library University (BU) and Educational Accessibility Coordination (CAE). Based on national and international legal frameworks, as well as theories criticisms of inclusive education. The study contributes to reflection on the challenges and advances in building a truly welcoming and accessible to all.

In the context of UFSC, educational accessibility is understood as a human right and a permanent institutional challenge, especially when consider the strategies developed by the different units and programs support for promoting inclusion. More specifically, it seeks to identify the actions undertaken through the College of Application (CA), Center of Child Development (NDI), University Library (BU) and Coordination of Educational Accessibility (CAE); understand the legal and theoretical foundations that support these practices; and reflect on the challenges faced and the possibilities for expanding educational accessibility in the university context.

The research adopted a qualitative approach, based on a bibliographic review and document analysis. National and international legal frameworks were consulted. international, in addition to institutional documents and records of experiences available on the official UFSC pages, supporting the understanding of practices accessibility in development.

When approaching this theme, we engage with the perspectives of authors such as Freire (1996), Candau (2008), Mantoan (2003), Sasaki (2003) and others researchers committed to expanding educational rights.

It is recognized that accessibility is a right that must be guaranteed by



**effective institutional policies and transformative pedagogical practices, being their expansion is a continuous and collective task within the scope of UFSC.**

## **2 ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION ACTIONS AT UFS**

**The Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) has implemented actions significant measures aimed at accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities and/or reduced mobility, through different units and structures. The College of Application (CA), the Child Development Center (NDI), the Library University (BU) and the Educational Accessibility Coordination (CAE), are examples of institutional spaces committed to democratic education and inclusive.**

**The College of Application has been promoting training activities with teachers and developing pedagogical strategies adapted to the needs of students with disabilities, considering the principle of Universal Design for Learning (DUA). According to Borges and Lacerda (2015), DUA “enables the creation of educational environments designed for everyone, from the beginning, without the need for subsequent adaptations”. The (CA) also participates in projects of research and extension involving teacher training and pedagogical practices inclusive, such as the project "Inclusive pedagogical mediations", which promotes interactive workshops with teachers on inclusive planning and production of accessible materials. Furthermore, it develops actions with students through discussion groups on diversity, accessibility and human rights, contributing to an inclusive and democratic school culture (UFSC, 2023).**

**At the Child Development Center (NDI), inclusive practices are implemented from early childhood education, with an emphasis on actively listening to children and families, the work of multidisciplinary teams and the appreciation of uniqueness of each subject. This approach is in line with the perspective defended by Mantoan (2003), for whom inclusion requires that “the system educational system changes to welcome everyone, breaking with selective logic.”**

**The University Library (BU), in turn, develops actions to guarantee communicational, digital and informational accessibility. Among them, the most important**

provision of materials in accessible formats (such as braille and audiobooks), adaptation of physical spaces and the provision of assistive technologies. Glat and Blanco (2007) emphasize that “the provision of accessible resources is an essential condition for that the learning process occurs under equal conditions.”

The Educational Accessibility Coordination (CAE) acts as a body articulator and proponent at UFSC, developing policies and actions that aim eliminate barriers and promote the qualified retention of students with disability. The (CAE) provides training, meets specific adaptation demands, supports teachers, technicians and systematizes institutional guidelines. In line with Sasaki (2003), the commission seeks to build “a society for all”, understanding that accessibility is not limited to architectural aspects, but includes attitudinal, pedagogical and communicational dimensions.

The actions of (UFSC) also dialogue with the Brazilian Inclusion Law (2015), which establishes, in its article 28, that the educational system must ensure the provision of accessibility conditions and the full development of students with disabilities. As Freire (1996) states, “teaching requires commitment with the subjects and with the transformation of reality”, and this is the horizon that drives inclusive initiatives at the university.

### 3 LEGAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

Educational accessibility is supported by a set of legal frameworks and by theoretical foundations that ensure its legitimacy and drive its implementation as an ethical and political principle of higher education. The main international document that guides this conception is the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006), which was ratified by Brazil with constitutional status. This convention states that persons with disabilities have the right to inclusive education at all levels, and that educational systems must eliminate barriers and offer individualized support to ensure their full participation.

In Brazil, the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 13.146/2015) also known as the Statute of Persons with Disabilities, represents a civilizing milestone by stating, in its article 28, that it is the duty of



**State, institutions and professionals to ensure an educational system inclusive, accessible and equitable at all levels. The LBI reinforces the need for reasonable adaptations, the provision of assistive technology and the training of education professionals as instruments to ensure the right to education.**

**The National Education Plan (PNE 2014–2024), in turn, establishes goals and strategies to promote school inclusion, providing for the formation continued training of teachers, expanding access for people with disabilities to higher education and the elimination of barriers to access and permanence. These guidelines reflect the commitment of Brazilian educational policy to the principles of equity and social justice.**

**In the theoretical field, the Freirean perspective on education has been widely referenced as the basis for an inclusive practice. Freire (1996), when stating that “teaching requires respect for the knowledge of students”, proposes a pedagogy dialogic and liberating, capable of embracing the singularities of each subject. The inclusion, according to him, is achieved when the school recognizes and values different ways of being, thinking and learning. Candau (2008) expands this debate by addressing human rights education as a foundation for practices pedagogical practices that value diversity and promote active citizenship. For her, inclusion is not a favor, but a right that must be guaranteed through articulated public policies and the ethical actions of educators.**

**According to Mantoan (2003), traditional schools were built on exclusionary and meritocratic foundations, which is why inclusion requires a break with this logic. The author argues that inclusion is only effective when schools are transformed into institutions open to diversity. This implies rethinking curriculum, assessment, school spaces, and school time.**

**Sassaki (2003) contributes to the concept of inclusion as a process dynamic of building a society for all. He emphasizes that accessibility must be understood in its broad, architectural dimension, communicational, methodological, instrumental, programmatic and attitudinal as basic condition for everyone to have equal opportunities to participate.**

**The Brazilian Inclusion Law (BRAZIL, 2015) reaffirms that accessibility is a human right and an indispensable condition for the full exercise of education. In this sense, educational accessibility must be understood not only as a legal requirement, but above all as a pedagogical principle**



**fundamental. It is urgent that educational institutions recognize the diversity as a formative value and promote pedagogical practices that respect the singularities of the subjects, breaking with the normative standards of historically instituted normality.**

**In this way, the legal and theoretical foundations complement each other in the sense to guide institutional policies, pedagogical practices and teaching attitudes in favor of a truly inclusive higher education. The Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), by aligning its actions with the principles of these documents and theories, advances in the consolidation of a democratic university, plural and accessible to all subjects.**

#### **4 CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES OF EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY**

**Despite significant advances, the promotion of educational accessibility at (UFSC), faces structural, cultural and pedagogical challenges. One of the main obstacles is the attitudinal resistance of the teaching and technical staff-administrative, who often do not fully understand the fundamentals of inclusion or do not receive adequate training to work with diversity.**

**According to Sassaki (2005) and Mantoan (2003, 2006), the biggest barrier to school inclusion is not limited to infrastructure or pedagogical resources, but resides in exclusionary social attitudes. As Mantoan (2006, p. 32) highlights, “the school inclusion is not a question of putting the student in school, but of changing the school paradigm so that it accepts and values difference, the difficulty of dealing with what is different, with what escapes the expected pattern.” This resistance, rooted in ableist conceptions, compromises the emancipatory potential of inclusive education.**

**Another relevant challenge is the shortage of human and material resources specialized, especially in courses with a large number of students.**

**According to Glat and Blanco (2007), “the implementation of inclusion requires professionals prepared, accessible teaching materials and pedagogical support services, psychopedagogical and technological”. The lack of Libras interpreters, materials**

**adapted and accessible infrastructure still compromises equality of conditions for students with disabilities.**

**Furthermore, curricular adaptation and inclusive assessment are still topics sensitive, with different levels of understanding and application among departments and courses. Many teachers feel insecure about developing diversified methodologies or propose pedagogical adjustments. According to Pletsch (2009), “curricular flexibility constitutes one of the pillars of education inclusive, demanding a break with standardized and homogeneous teaching models-learning”. The lack of constant technical-pedagogical support also contributes to the fragmentation of adaptive practices.**

**Despite this, the possibilities for expanding educational accessibility at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), are concrete. The strengthening of the CAE, the institutionalization of transversal inclusion policies, active listening of students with disabilities and investment in assistive technology can transform the current scenario. As Mantoan (2006) states, “the inclusive school is one that changes to suit its students, not one that demands that students change to adapt to it.” The articulation between research, extension and teaching can also favor the construction of new pedagogical practices, more sensitive to differences and committed to the right to education for all.**

## **5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**Analysis of educational accessibility strategies at the University Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), demonstrates an institutional commitment to building an inclusive, equitable education committed to rights humans. Initiatives developed by units such as the College of Application (CA), the Child Development Center (NDI), the Library University (BU) and the Educational Accessibility Coordination (CAE), demonstrate significant advances in promoting sensitive pedagogical practices to diversity, as well as in the elimination of barriers that have historically excluded subjects with disabilities in the academic space.**

**However, challenges persist and manifest themselves in both limitations structural and resource-based as well as cultural and attitudinal resistance that still**

permeate everyday university life. The lack of continuing education, the lack of specialized human resources and the difficulty of articulation between institutional sectors indicate the need for continued investment, planned and transversal in the consolidation of accessibility as a structuring axis of educational policies.

Educational accessibility, as referenced by the authors, must be conceived as a pedagogical and ethical principle, and not just as compliance of legal standards. In this sense, it becomes essential to broaden the understanding on inclusion as a collective and political process, which requires not only actions punctual, but a profound transformation of practices, structures and institutional cultures.

It is concluded, therefore, that UFSC has developed relevant actions, but that there is still a long way to go towards consolidating a fully inclusive university. It is urgent to strengthen teacher training, expand investments in assistive technology and ensuring spaces for listening and participation of students with disabilities. Only through a dialogical, critical and transformative will be possible to fully implement the right to education for everyone, as recommended by the legal and ethical framework of inclusive education.

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