



School inclusion: reality or utopia?

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SUMMARY

This article aims to reflect on the practice of school inclusion as a facilitating and indispensable tool for quality education, where everyone, regardless of any "differences," is included in the teaching-learning process. This article aims to analyze the importance of school inclusion, based on a deep and interactive relationship between teacher/student/school and family. The methodology used was qualitative research and literature review, with contributions from authors such as Miranda, Sasaki, Gomes, Fávero, Sarlet, and others.

This research focuses on understanding that school inclusion must start from a proposal that actually inserts the student into the teaching-learning process and, above all, provides them with a quality and attractive education that meets their most diverse needs.

Keywords: School inclusion. Students with special needs. School.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to reflect on the practice of school inclusion as a facilitating and essential tool for quality education, where everyone, regardless of any "differences," is included in the teaching and learning process. The objective of this article is to analyze the importance of school inclusion, based on a deep and interactive relationship between teacher/student/school and family. The methodology used was qualitative research and a literature review, with contributions from authors such as Miranda, Sasaki, Gomes, Fávero, Sarlet, and others. This research focuses on understanding that school inclusion should stem from a proposal that effectively integrates the student into the teaching and learning process and, above all, provides them with an attractive and quality education that meets their most diverse needs.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The debate surrounding school inclusion has always been present as one of the greatest challenges of recent decades. It has been discussed at several international conferences and meetings, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989; the Salamanca Declaration in 1994; the LDB – Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education, in 1996; the Guatemala Convention – Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, in 1999; the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000; the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006; the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education in 2008, and in several meetings aimed at creating and improving laws that would enable improvements in education, with a focus mainly on school inclusion.

The Salamanca Declaration, for example, which was a document of principles, policy and practice for special educational needs, and the Guatemala Convention, discussed the elimination of all forms of discrimination against people with disabilities, and the full promotion of their integration into society.

At an international level, the fight for the rights of people with disabilities began in 1980, gaining enormous proportions.



nalities. This article presents the theme "School Inclusion: Reality or Utopia?" precisely because of the need to address a humanized education, where everyone has the right to a quality education, regardless of any emotional, cognitive, or physical impediment.

School inclusion allows children to interact with their classmates and, consequently, experience moments of pleasure, joy, and fulfillment, as it is through interaction that children build their identity and develop their physical and emotional well-being. Knowing the great importance of school inclusion for students with special needs, the following questions arise:

- Is the child with special educational needs actually included in the learning process?
- What should the teacher's behavior be towards this student?
- What school is offering services to these students?

2 METHODOLOGY

This article is the result of qualitative research using bibliographic and exploratory approaches. Its objective is to critically analyze the current situation and scenario of Brazilian education regarding school inclusion, particularly in cities in the Northeast region, based on its theoretical foundations, whether it is functional or not (albeit partially).

The choice of such an approach is essential due to the need to understand the pedagogical, social and political panoramas concerning the process of inclusion of students with disabilities.

A bibliographical study was conducted, analyzing previously published texts by authors who discuss school inclusion and its multiple daily challenges. Authors such as Aranha (2000), Baptista (2011), Fávero (2004), Gomes (1999), and related researchers greatly contributed to the entire literary construction process of this article. Documents and articles addressing facts about school inclusion were carefully consulted and analyzed. All of them referred to discussions, conferences, and international meetings that resulted in debates and the creation of laws such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the Salamanca Declaration in 1994, the LDB (Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education) in 1996, the Guatemala Convention in 1999, and many others. These analyzed texts demonstrated the effectiveness of this research, with significant proposals for pedagogical practice and school inclusion.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 A Brief History of Social Inclusion

History tells us that people with some form of disability have existed since ancient times. The same story tells us that these people were treated harshly and inhumanely, whether they were sick, elderly, or disabled.

Some people accepted them, but didn't offer the necessary care. They considered these people possessed by evil spirits; others merely tolerated them, but treated them with contempt; and still others completely exterminated such beings. Their justification was that the elderly, sick, and disabled couldn't keep up with their walking pace, since, as nomads, they needed to move from place to place occasionally. In this case, death was terrible. They were either strangled or abandoned to be devoured by wild animals. In Sparta, for example, children born with any type of disability—whether physical, sensory, or mental—were immediately thrown from a cliff. This was because it didn't meet the athletic standards required of the time.

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In ancient Rome, parents of disabled children were given permission by the state to sacrifice them, but if they wanted to raise them, so be it. Many of these children were abandoned in front of temples and, if they were lucky, taken in by a family, or even taken to be spectacles in the circus. In short, they were doomed to suffering.

In ancient times, people with disabilities were abandoned, persecuted, and eliminated due to their atypical conditions. In the Middle Ages,



treatment varied according to the prevailing concepts of charity or punishment in the community in which the disabled person was inserted, which was a form of exclusion (Miranda, 2008).

As for the Jews, the disabled had no right to even enter the temple to worship God, as they were considered impure. They were treated with indifference. With the advent of Christianity, a more humane perspective brought a slightly better quality of life for the disabled. They began to be seen as creatures of God and could not be abandoned or killed. Pessotti (1984, p. 4-5) explains that:

Thanks to Christian doctrine, the disabled begin to escape abandonment or "exposure," since, possessing a soul, they become persons and children of God, like other human beings. This is how, throughout the Middle Ages, they become "the children of the good God," an expression that both implies tolerance and charitable acceptance and conceals the omission and disenchantment of those who delegate to divinity the responsibility of providing for and maintaining their disabled creatures. As with women and slaves, Christianity modifies the status of the disabled, who, from the first centuries of the spread of Christianity in Europe, transition from being a thing to a person. But equality of moral or theological status would not correspond, until the Enlightenment, to civil equality of rights. Endowed with a soul and benefiting from Christ's redemption, the mentally disabled begin to be charitably welcomed in convents or churches, where they earn a living, possibly in exchange for small services to the institution or the "benefactor" who shelters them.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, a serious problem arose regarding the mentally disabled. They were placed in orphanages, asylums, and prisons, completely excluded from proper care and educational services. Jannuzzi (1985, p. 28) emphasizes that in Bahia, in 1874, the mentally disabled began receiving specialized treatment at the psychiatric hospital, now known as Júlio Moreira Hospital. The author notes that:

The creation of these first specialized institutions (...) (did not go beyond) a few isolated initiatives, which included the most disadvantaged, those who distinguished themselves, distanced themselves either by their social aspect or by their divergent behavior. Those who were not so to the 'naked eye' would be incorporated into the simplest social tasks (Jannuzzi, 1985, p. 28).

In fact, people with some type of disability have always been ignored, rejected, persecuted and exploited. Doesn't this still happen today? We talk about social inclusion, but does it actually exist in its entirety in practice? If social inclusion doesn't exist in its entirety, imagine school inclusion? This is far from being, to say the least, satisfactory, as it is woefully insufficient!

3.2 School Inclusion: Does It Really Exist?

Discussing school inclusion is a controversial topic that raises the following questions: does school inclusion actually exist? Are public and private schools prepared to accommodate students with disabilities and learning difficulties? Are teachers in these schools prepared to interact with these students?

It's one thing to talk about school inclusion; it's quite another to actually practice it! It's common knowledge that today's public schools have a Multifunctional Resource Room (SRM), but not all have Specialized Educational Services (SEAs). So, what's the point of an SRM? Not to mention that most (and I mean a majority) private schools don't even have a SRM, much less Specialized Educational Services.

Shouldn't these institutions be heavily monitored and held accountable according to the law? In this push and pull of responsibilities, the one who pays the price is the student who lacks such services. According to Sasaki (1997, p. 174), it is necessary to understand that inclusion is:

[...] A process by which society adapts to include people with special needs in its general social systems and, simultaneously, these people prepare to assume their roles in society. Social inclusion, then, constitutes a bilateral process in which people who are still excluded and society seek, in partnership, to address problems, decide on solutions and effectively equalize opportunities for all (Sasaki, 1997, p.174).

What the author says goes against the logic of what is being done in terms of adaptation, in order to be able to include. It is clear that the inclusion process is a succession of factors and requires time to be fully realized. Caierão (2015, p. 100) clarifies that,

Inclusion, however, is a slow process that requires profound changes, and the educational institution needs to review its approach and paradigm. These transformations involve major changes, from the school curriculum and methodology to awareness-raising efforts with the teaching staff and professionals available for teaching, fostering partnerships with parents and the school community, and psychopedagogical intervention throughout the educational inclusion process (Caierão; Kortmann, 2015, p. 100).

But shouldn't this process—given all this time of struggle and achievement—have already reached its desired fullness? What's missing? Is it disinterest, apathy, or indifference? Whatever it may be, the countless students who need a functional and inclusive school education are not to blame.

3.3 Inclusive School Profile

What is the profile of an inclusive school? What are its characteristics? These questions shouldn't just be used as tools for analysis and debate. Rather, they should raise awareness among those entitled to a precise resolution of the issue. It's up to our legislators to create laws and enforce them for the benefit of this select group of "invisible" beings.

Yes, invisible because their deepest and most hidden complexities and dilemmas are not seen.

An inclusive school is one that not only welcomes people with disabilities, but also provides accessibility within their reach, as accessibility is necessary for a more humane life.

In Fávero's view (2004, p. 53), school "is the privileged space for preparing for citizenship and full human development".

And it couldn't be any different, because inclusion is related to citizenship, and how can there be citizenship if there is no unconditional acceptance of students in the school environment?

Gomes (1999) strongly identifies with Fávero when he makes the following observation about the school as an inclusive space: "The school is a sociocultural space where different presences meet." It is these differences together that form genuine inclusion.

The school must be an inclusive space designed for everyone, with regard to physical space, communication, signage, and even educational practices. Brasil (2001, p. 28) endorses the idea of a policy that fosters an inclusive educational space:

The policy of including students with special educational needs in the regular school system does not consist solely of physically keeping these students together with other students, but also represents the boldness of rethinking concepts and paradigms, as well as developing their potential, respecting their differences and meeting their needs. Respect for and appreciation of student diversity requires that schools define their responsibility in establishing relationships that enable the creation of inclusive spaces, as well as seeking to overcome the school's own production of special needs (Brasil, 2001, p. 28).

This is the inclusive school model that promotes the dignity and active participation of all its students, thus resulting in quality of life, as Sarlet (2001, p. 60) discusses:

The intrinsic and distinctive quality of each human being that makes him or her worthy of the same respect and consideration from the State and the community, implying, in this sense, a complex of fundamental rights and duties that ensure the person against any and all acts of a degrading and inhuman nature, as well as guaranteeing the minimum existential conditions for a healthy life, in addition to providing and promoting his or her active and co-responsible participation in the destinies of his or her own existence and life in communion with other human beings.

Moreira (2006, p. 59) states that "inclusive education is the acceptance of differences, not classroom insertion." This is an undeniable truth, given that insertion simply means placing students in the school environment. Its focus is on physical presence and nothing more, as it does not guarantee full access to learning, social and pedagogical interactions, or adequate psychopedagogical support.

3.4 After all, which School is being offered?

There is a lot of talk about inclusion, but do schools today actually promote inclusion, or is this inclusion—perhaps not in its entirety—nothing more than integration? It can be said with certainty that Brazilian schools are inclusive.



vas? That meet all the needs of its audience? What school is Brazilian education offering regarding inclusion? Saviani (1999, p. 3) discusses the concept of educational theory and the issue of marginality. And what would that be? What is the author referring to?

Regarding the issue of marginalization, educational theories can be classified into two groups. The first group comprises theories that view education as an instrument of social equalization, and therefore, of overcoming marginalization. The second group comprises theories that view education as an instrument of social discrimination, and therefore, a factor of marginalization.

These two theories, which diverge from each other and have distinct visions and ideas, bring to public debate—or at least should—a truly important question: the state of Brazilian education. After all, is education democratic and, consequently, an instrument of social equity or marginalization? Has school inclusion, for example, been a reality or a utopia? Can we affirm that Brazilian public schools practice inclusion? This is the crux of the matter. The problem is the stagnation of theory, which tends, more often than not, to fail to align with practice. And in the Brazilian educational landscape, this is a sad and regrettable constant.

Could this, then, be a reflection of marginalization, which treats the less fortunate as an exclusionary entity, condemning them to rejection, to the margins of society, without access to basic rights, nor to a quality education? The plight of parents of children with disabilities is extremely precarious in this Brazil of immense and undeniable inequalities. So much suffering and struggle to gain access to constitutional rights, but these rights are not always fulfilled, especially in schools in the interior of the country.
North East.

The education that should emancipate, liberate, embrace, help, welcome, and include often does the opposite: it rejects, treats with indifference, marginalizes, and excludes. This is not the education of dreams. It is not the education that so many men and women fought with all their might to change and humanize the Brazilian educational landscape.

Integration? Absolutely! What is expected is active participation, confrontation, and elimination of social disparities, resulting in the inclusion of all those in need of functional and democratic inclusion, where everyone has full access to education, regardless of age, social status, or cultural diversity. Fávero (2004, p. 38) states that, unlike inclusion, in integration:

Society recognizes the existence of social inequalities and, to reduce them, allows the incorporation of people who can "adapt" solely through their own merits. Furthermore, integration presupposes the existence of distinct groups that can eventually unite.

It is not the person with some type of disability who must adapt to school. The school must adapt to them, providing them with the necessary means for their physical and cognitive development, as well as a pleasant and welcoming environment, minimizing, as far as possible, their special educational needs. Thus, by adapting to different levels of cognitive development, the school is truly being inclusive. The original quote from the Salamanca Declaration (1994, p. 18) refers to the challenge of schools embracing unconditional acceptance of all: Schools should welcome all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. They should welcome children with disabilities and children with disabilities.

-gifted; street children and children who work; children from remote or nomadic populations; children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized groups or areas...

Welcoming students is essential for the educational progress of students with special needs. When a person feels accepted, loved, and cared for, they radiate from within a Dantesque strength and will that is expressed and reflected in their actions. It is no coincidence that the inclusivist movement that began in the United States, Canada, Spain, and Italy aimed to expand and achieve its desired goal: inclusive education. Fávero (2004, p. 38) continues his argument about social inequalities, alluding to the meaning of inclusion:

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Inclusion means, above all, "stop excluding." To achieve this, it presupposes that everyone is part of the same community and not distinct groups. Inclusion requires that public authorities and society in general provide the necessary conditions for everyone.

And he is right, because inclusion is an obligation of the State and a right of all those who need it. It is only through the process of inclusion that the child truly feels comfortable living and putting into practice



practice your learning, free from all the constraints of inequality and indifference. In light of Man-toan's thinking (2005, p. 96):

Inclusion is our ability to understand and welcome others and, thus, have the privilege of living and sharing with people different from us. Inclusive education welcomes everyone, without exception. It's for students with physical disabilities, those with mental disabilities, gifted students, and every child who faces discrimination for any other reason. I often say that being together means crowding into the movies, on the bus, and even in the classroom with people we don't know. Inclusion, on the other hand, is being with, interacting with, another.

Similarly, the ECA (apud Lúcio, 2021, p. 44), points to school inclusion under the aegis of the rights of children and adolescents, when it explains that in "Art. 54. It is the duty of the State to ensure that children and adolescents: III - specialized educational care for those with disabilities, preferably in the regular education system".

This should be the discussion: the State cannot shirk its obligations. The debate surrounding school inclusion lasted decades and countless meetings and ideas, until it became laws. But what good are laws if they are not fully enforced? The perception of progress is undeniable.

However, there is much more to be done. Several public schools that do not They don't even have the basics for specialized educational services. They lack recreational spaces, such as a covered multi-sport court, playgrounds, functional libraries, ramps, furniture, and other necessary facilities, as well as multimedia rooms and multifunctional resource rooms. Speaking of the Multifunctional Resource Room (SRM), Baptista (2011, p. 63) emphasizes that it "should be seen as an essential pedagogical space for the implementation of inclusive education."

Without this important instrument of inclusion, together with the AEE - Specialized Educational Assistance, the school does not practice inclusion, but rather, only integration.

Delors (2000, p. 130), points out that,

When children have specific needs that cannot be diagnosed or met within the family, it is up to the school to provide specialized help and guidance so that they can develop their talents, despite learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

And has the school played this role? Following the same line of reasoning, Delors (2000, p. 130) continues: "the family is the child's first school, but when the family environment fails or is deficient, it is up to the school to keep it alive, or even provide the learning potential."

3.5 Characteristics of Inclusive Culture

An inclusive culture is based on a school community that welcomes, collaborates, and encourages each individual, in addition to valuing them. An inclusive culture involves developing values that encourage people to think, live, and organize the school environment in a way that includes all students, regardless of disability and/or learning difficulties.

3.6 Characteristics of Inclusion Practices

The practice of inclusion determines that there are activities in the classroom and outside of it with the participation of all students. She also understands that diversity in the classroom is not a problem, but rather a great pedagogical value. Inclusive education aims to include students with special educational needs in classrooms.

regular in order to avoid, in a certain way, the prejudice and discrimination they experience.

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According to this concept, all these children and adolescents should be educated in regular schools. It is necessary to provide them with the educational conditions offered to others, but with the necessary adaptations for a learning experience that satisfies them. Regarding the role of the teacher in the regular classroom and the Special Education Program (AEE), based on Aranha's understanding (2000, p. 110), "the teacher does not control the learning process, but rather facilitates the student's activity. ...non-directivity predominates, whereby the teacher does not direct, but creates the conditions for the child's action."

Of course, for this to happen, a careful and clinical look at the real needs of each person is necessary.

The student's socio-historical and family background, behavior, and everything else that guides the teacher toward a pedagogical intervention tailored to each case, because, as the saying goes, "Every case is unique." And it is precisely this factor that guides education professionals to create mechanisms to achieve success in the teaching and learning process with their target students in Special Education, thus providing an environment that is not merely integrationist, but inclusive, with a faculty comprised of teachers specialized in special and inclusive education.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Taking into account everything that has been mentioned throughout this article, it is understood that school inclusion is extremely important for children with special needs, as in addition to developing some important skills, such as attention and imagination, it also matures the ability to socialize, through interaction.

It's well known that education is the foundation for anyone's development. Based on this premise, it's understood that including students with disabilities ensures they receive humane treatment that will result in their growth.

Thus, it was found that, unfortunately, what government authorities say is school inclusion is far from being a concrete reality, especially because Brazilian public elementary schools, especially in the Northeast, are not fully prepared to receive students who need an inclusive practice.

After all, the school offering this service falls far short of even satisfactory inclusion, as the lack of a Multifunctional Resource Room (SRM) and Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) allows for, at best, integration, not inclusion. Full inclusion occurs in the regular classroom, along with all these mechanisms.

The truth is that inclusion shouldn't be viewed coldly as a process full of steps. Of course, it's part of a process, but it must necessarily be part of a human process that aims for the child's well-being, regardless of the amount of investment required.

We know that every process is subject to difficulties and challenges, and school inclusion is no different. But how long has school inclusion been discussed? Isn't it time to enforce the law? This is the challenge for the 21st century: building a quality, inclusive school for all.

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