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Intercultural education: strategies for inclusion and the appreciation of cultural diversity in schools

Educação intercultural: estratégias para a inclusão e valorização da diversidade cultural nas escolas

Educación intercultural: estrategias para la inclusión y valoración de la diversidad cultural en las escuelas

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Abstract:
This study analyzes intercultural education as a perspective capable of strengthening inclusion and the appreciation of cultural diversity in schools. It is based on the understanding that the educational environment brings together individuals with distinct histories, identities, beliefs, experiences, and ways of interpreting the world, a condition that requires practices opposed to homogenization and inequality. The objective is to discuss curricular, pedagogical, and professional development strategies that foster recognition of differences, students' sense of belonging, and efforts to confront prejudice, discrimination, and racism. A qualitative bibliographic study was conducted, based on books, scientific articles, and regulatory documents related to interculturality, curriculum, identity, ethnic-racial relations, and teacher education. The analysis indicates that cultural inclusion extends beyond commemorative events and depends on curriculum review, listening to communities, the representation of social groups, and educators' critical practice. It is concluded that an intercultural school articulates equality and difference, transforms conflicts into educational opportunities, and ensures conditions for everyone to participate with dignity in the production of knowledge.

Keywords:
cultural diversity; intercultural education; school inclusion; pedagogical practices; ethnic-racial relations.

Resumo:
Este estudo analisa a educação intercultural como perspectiva capaz de fortalecer a inclusão e a valorização da diversidade cultural nas escolas. Parte-se da compreensão de que o espaço educativo reúne sujeitos com histórias, identidades, crenças, experiências e formas distintas de interpretar o mundo, condição que exige práticas contrárias à homogeneização e às desigualdades. O objetivo consiste em discutir estratégias curriculares, pedagógicas e formativas que favoreçam o reconhecimento das diferenças, o pertencimento estudantil e o enfrentamento do preconceito, da discriminação e do racismo. Adotou-se pesquisa bibliográfica, de abordagem qualitativa, baseada em livros, artigos científicos e documentos normativos relacionados à interculturalidade, ao currículo, à identidade, às relações étnico-raciais e à formação docente. A análise indica que a inclusão cultural ultrapassa eventos comemorativos e depende da revisão do currículo, da escuta das comunidades, da representatividade dos grupos sociais e da atuação crítica dos educadores. Conclui-se que uma escola intercultural articula igualdade e diferença, transforma conflitos em oportunidades educativas e assegura condições para que todos participem com dignidade da produção do conhecimento.

Palavras-chave:

diversidade cultural; educação intercultural; inclusão escolar; práticas pedagógicas; relações étnico-raciais.

Resumen:
Este estudio analiza la educación intercultural como una perspectiva capaz de fortalecer la inclusión y la valoración de la diversidad cultural en las escuelas. Se parte de la comprensión de que el espacio educativo reúne a sujetos con historias, identidades, creencias, experiencias y formas distintas de interpretar el mundo, condición que exige prácticas contrarias a la homogeneización y a las desigualdades. El objetivo consiste en discutir estrategias curriculares, pedagógicas y formativas que favorezcan el reconocimiento de las diferencias, el sentido de pertenencia de los estudiantes y el enfrentamiento del prejuicio, la discriminación y el racismo. Se adoptó una investigación bibliográfica, de enfoque cualitativo, basada en libros, artículos científicos y documentos normativos relacionados con la interculturalidad, el currículo, la identidad, las relaciones étnico-raciales y la formación docente. El análisis indica que la inclusión cultural trasciende los eventos conmemorativos y depende de la revisión del currículo, la escucha de las comunidades, la representación de los grupos sociales y la actuación crítica de los educadores. Se concluye que una escuela intercultural articula igualdad y diferencia, transforma los conflictos en oportunidades educativas y garantiza las condiciones para que todos participen con dignidad en la producción del conocimiento.

Palabras clave:
diversidad cultural; educación intercultural; inclusión escolar; prácticas pedagógicas; relaciones étnico-raciales.

1 Introduction

Contemporary schools bring together individuals marked by different ethnic, racial, territorial, religious, linguistic, generational, and social affiliations. This plurality is not external to the educational process, as it influences relationships, the construction of knowledge, and how each student perceives their place within the group. Candau (2016) understands cultural differences as a central dimension of everyday school life, while Fleuri (2003) situates interculturality within the field of relations between distinct identities. Thus, recognizing diversity means acknowledging that teaching also involves creating conditions for dialogue, participation, and respect.

For a long time, the school as an institution valued cultural standards presented as universal and neutral. This orientation rendered the narratives of Indigenous peoples, Black communities, migrant groups, traditional populations, and other segments historically excluded from prestigious positions largely invisible. Moreira and Candau (2003) show that culture and curriculum are linked to power disputes, and Gomes (2003) warns that Black culture should not be reduced to exotic or folkloric manifestations. The intercultural perspective challenges these

hierarchies and proposes an education in which bodies of knowledge engage in dialogue without requiring any group to relinquish its own identity.

Valuing differences is not limited to the presence of varied content in teaching materials. It extends to relationships established in the classroom, assessment criteria, the forms of language considered legitimate, and opportunities for participation. Walsh (2010) associates critical interculturality with the transformation of structures that produce inequality, while hooks (2013) advocates an educational practice capable of welcoming voices that were previously silenced. In this direction, respectful coexistence requires sustained action rather than isolated activities on commemorative dates.

The choice of this topic is justified by the persistence of prejudice, discrimination, and cultural silencing that affect students' learning, self-esteem, and connection to school. Munanga (2005) demonstrates that confronting racism requires a review of established practices and representations, while Hall (2006) enables identity to be understood as a historical and relational construction. In view of this, the following research question is posed: how can intercultural strategies contribute to inclusion and to the effective appreciation of cultural diversity in schools?

The general objective is to analyze the contributions of intercultural education to the construction of inclusive and respectful school environments. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the relationship between culture, identity, and belonging; discuss the representation of different groups in the curriculum; present pedagogical practices that value multiple forms of knowledge; examine ways to confront prejudice, discrimination, and racism; and reflect on the teacher education required to consolidate a democratic school. These purposes bring Candau's (2008) articulation between equality and difference closer to the dialogical education advocated by Freire (1996).

Methodologically, a bibliographic, qualitative, descriptive-analytical study was conducted. The searches considered the descriptors "intercultural education," "cultural diversity," "school inclusion," "intercultural curriculum," "cultural identity," "racism in school," and "teacher education," used separately and in combination, in Portuguese and Spanish. Books by recognized authors, full-text articles, and regulatory documents directly related to the issue under investigation were included. Duplicate materials, texts with no identified authorship, merely opinion-based publications, content lacking thematic relevance, and sources that addressed diversity without a connection to the educational field were excluded. The interpretation integrated contributions by Candau (2016), Fleuri (2003), Walsh

(2010), Gomes (2003), Munanga (2005), Freire (1996), hooks (2013), Hall (2006), Moreira and Candau (2012), and Dehaene (2022).

2 Intercultural education and cultural diversity in the school context

Candau (2008) places the articulation between equality and difference at the heart of democratic education. Equality guarantees rights, access, and protection against injustice, but it cannot require students to abandon their language, memory, religion, or way of life in order to be accepted. Fleuri (2003), in turn, understands interculture as a complex relationship among distinct subjects and identity processes. In everyday school life, this understanding moves diversity away from being regarded as an obstacle and allows it to be treated as a source of knowledge, provided that power asymmetries are recognized and confronted.

The presence of students from different backgrounds does not automatically make a school intercultural; an institution may be socially diverse while maintaining a curriculum, language, and assessment guided by a single cultural standard. Moreira and Candau (2003) associate curricular justice with the capacity to reduce inequalities and embrace plurality, while Walsh (2010) distinguishes simple contact between cultures from a critical perspective committed to changes in social relations. Interculturality, therefore, depends on pedagogical intentionality, institutional review, and openness to the participation of different forms of knowledge in school-based knowledge production.

Candau (2008) and Fleuri (2003) make it possible to relate democratic education, pluralism, and cultural recognition. The Federal Constitution provides an indispensable basis for this interpretation by establishing:

> Education, a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, with a view to the full development of the individual, preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work. Education shall be provided on the basis of the following principles: equal conditions for access to and continued attendance at school; freedom to learn, teach, research, and disseminate thought, art, and knowledge; pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions; and the guarantee of the right to education and lifelong learning. (Brasil, 1988, arts. 205-206).

This foundation takes on concrete meaning when equality of conditions includes the right to learn without humiliation, erasure of identity, or inferior treatment. Candau (2016) observes that differences are still commonly viewed as problems to be corrected; Gomes (2003), by contrast, shows that schools need to recognize the relationships among culture, inequality, and racism. The constitutional commitment requires reviewing routines, materials, and forms

of coexistence because physical access to the classroom is insufficient when certain students remain symbolically excluded from the narratives that are valued.

Hall (2006) contributes to the understanding that identities are not fixed essences but positions constructed through historical and cultural processes. For this reason, intercultural projects should not confine students within rigid images of what it means to be Black, Indigenous, a migrant, from the Northeast, or a member of any community. Moreira and Candau (2012) advocate practices that problematize difference without turning it into a label. Schools need to allow multiple identifications, changes, and intersections while recognizing concrete inequalities that affect specific groups.

Moreira and Candau (2003), in dialogue with Freire (1996), link teaching to respect for individuals and their contexts. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law reinforces these principles by establishing:

> Education shall be provided on the basis of the following principles: equal conditions for access to and continued attendance at school; freedom to learn, teach, research, and disseminate culture, thought, art, and knowledge; pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions; respect for freedom and appreciation of tolerance; valuing experiences gained outside school; a connection between school education, work, and social practices; and consideration for ethnic-racial diversity. (Brasil, 1996, art. 3).

Valuing experiences gained outside school makes it possible to connect systematized knowledge with family and community repertoires. Freire (1996) maintains that teaching requires respect for learners' knowledge, and hooks (2013) associates participation with the possibility for each person to speak from their experience without being reduced to it. This relationship broadens the curriculum and fosters meaningful learning because students realize that their history can engage in dialogue with scientific, artistic, and social concepts instead of remaining confined to the private sphere.

Learning also depends on attention, active participation, feedback on errors, and consolidation, aspects presented by Dehaene (2022). In a culturally plural classroom, these processes are strengthened when examples, texts, and situations are meaningful to different groups. Candau (2009) adds that intercultural dialogue does not eliminate conflicts; it creates conditions for analyzing them with respect and responsibility. Thus, the teacher combines cognitive foundations with social sensitivity, diversifies forms of mediation, and avoids interpreting linguistic or cultural differences as intellectual incapacity. According to Candau (2016) and Walsh (2010), daily choices concerning collections, conflicts, and participation make diversity a central axis of the political-pedagogical project and coexistence, in favor of more equitable pedagogical relations.

3 Identity, culture, and belonging in student education

Hall (2006) understands identity as a historical production shaped by the forms of representation available in each society. In the school environment, students construct perceptions of themselves by observing who appears as an author, hero, scientist, leader, or producer of knowledge. Gomes (2003) demonstrates that Black culture is part of Brazilian social formation, although many practices place it within the realm of the exotic. When the curriculum presents only certain groups as protagonists, it communicates which experiences deserve prestige and which should remain on the margins.

Belonging arises when a person feels recognized, safe to participate, and connected to a community that does not require them to abandon their points of reference. Candau (2008) proposes articulating policies of equality and identity, because fair treatment does not mean erasing differences. Freire (1996) adds that the educational relationship must respect the learner's autonomy and dignity. In this regard, calling a student by the correct name, respecting their linguistic expression, and welcoming their family history are pedagogical attitudes that affect their confidence and readiness to learn.

Culture does not correspond to a closed repertoire of customs transmitted intact from one generation to the next. Fleuri (2003) presents intercultural relations as spaces for negotiating and creating meanings, while Walsh (2010) draws attention to the political nature of these interactions. Children and young people receive traditions, but they also reinterpret them through friendships, media, territorial movement, and school participation. The pedagogical proposal should avoid both the imposition of a single standard and the idea that each student fully represents a fixed culture.

Dehaene (2024) shows that consciousness selects and shares relevant information, and Dehaene (2022) relates learning to attention and active engagement. In contexts marked by embarrassment, threat, or devaluation, some of the student's resources are directed toward emotional protection. A classroom grounded in trust encourages questions, the expression of doubts, and the review of errors. Candau (2016) links this sense of safety to transforming differences into a pedagogical advantage rather than a reason for exclusion.

Accents, regional vocabularies, Indigenous languages, expressions used by migrant communities, and popular varieties carry collective histories. Moreira and Candau (2003) question curricula that legitimize only one form of expression, while hooks (2013) values voice as a dimension of presence and authorship. Teaching the standard language can broaden

opportunities, but such teaching need not classify other ways of speaking as moral defects or signs of lesser intelligence.

Offensive nicknames, isolation, and jokes can leave lasting marks, even when adults treat them as insignificant conflicts. Munanga (2005) situates anti-racist education in the confrontation of negative representations, and Gomes (2003) demonstrates how the body, history, and culture participate in the school experience. Intervention must protect the person who suffered the violence, hold the perpetrator accountable, and transform the episode into collective learning without exposing the victim again.

Closer ties with families and communities broaden the available frames of reference and prevent schools from speaking about groups without speaking with them. Candau (2009) associates interculturality with dialogue among individuals, forms of knowledge, and practices; Freire (1996) advocates an education built through listening and respect for context. School councils, discussion circles, the participation of community leaders, and local memory projects can strengthen bonds, provided they do not assign families the obligation of resolving institutional inequalities on their own.

Murals, ceremonies, classroom names, celebrations, assemblies, and student representation reveal which memories are highlighted and who occupies positions of recognition. Candau (2016) proposes that everyday life be treated as a field of transformation, while Hall (2006) makes it possible to observe that meanings associated with identity depend on public forms of representation. Reviewing these elements can include student productions, biographies of diverse individuals, and collective decisions about symbols and celebrations. Gomes (2003) helps prevent this presence from being restricted to folklorized images; hooks (2013) emphasizes that participation requires a genuine voice in decision-making. Thus, the environment ceases to serve merely as a backdrop and begins to communicate that different trajectories are part of the educational community.

Developing open identities does not mean eliminating roots, but rather creating conditions for each student to recognize their trajectory and engage in dialogue with other experiences. Hall (2006) helps explain the multiplicity of identifications, while Candau (2016) guides schools to transform their organization in response to new cultural challenges. From this perspective, belonging is not based on absolute similarity; it arises from the certainty that differences can coexist with common rights, effective participation, and mutual recognition.

4 Intercultural curriculum and representation of different social groups

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The curriculum selects knowledge and, in doing so, also produces visibility. Moreira and Candau (2003) explain that curricular organization is involved in cultural disputes, while Hall (2006) demonstrates that representations influence the construction of identities. The recurring absence of certain peoples from books, images, and scientific references communicates that their contributions are supposedly of lesser value. An intercultural curriculum examines these choices and broadens the repertoire without abandoning conceptual rigor.

Representation is not limited to including photographs or diverse characters in materials already structured by a single narrative. Gomes (2003) warns against approaches that folklorize Black culture, and Munanga (2005) advocates reviewing the stereotyped images present in education. Curricular work must present Black and Indigenous people, migrants, women, and traditional communities in their historical, political, scientific, and artistic complexity. This includes achievements, conflicts, intellectual production, and contemporary experiences.

Walsh (2010) relates critical interculturality to questioning hierarchies among forms of knowledge. Candau (2009) adds that dialogue cannot conceal power relations. In practice, the curriculum should bring academic knowledge into conversation with community knowledge, traditional technologies, oral narratives, and territorial experiences. This approach does not make all forms of knowledge equivalent for every purpose; it recognizes contexts of production, distinct criteria, and possibilities for collaboration.

Table 1 – Dimensions of an intercultural curriculum

Dimension	**Recurring problem**	**Curricular strategy**	**Expected outcome**
Content selection	Predominance of a single cultural narrative	Include authors, sources, and experiences from different groups	Broader representation and repertoire
Historical approach	Silencing of conflicts and resistance	Analyze colonization, racism, migration, and struggles for rights	Critical understanding of inequalities
Forms of language	Exclusive valuing of the hegemonic standard	Address linguistic varieties and multiple artistic expressions	Respect for forms of communication
Assessment	A single way of demonstrating learning	Combine written, oral, visual, and collaborative production	Equitable participation
Community relations	Distance between the school and its local area	Include local memories, individuals, and issues in projects	Stronger sense of belonging

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Moreira and Candau (2003), Gomes (2003), Walsh (2010), and Candau (2016).

Content selection broadens the presence of different groups but loses strength when assessment remains based on a single form of language or when the community remains excluded from decisions. Moreira and Candau (2012) advocate that multicultural practices encompass the curriculum and teacher education; Candau (2016) reinforces the need to incorporate this perspective into the school's own routine. Transformation, therefore, depends on coherence among what is taught, how it is taught, and who participates in defining school knowledge.

Dehaene (2012) explains that learning to read changes brain circuits and opens access to complex symbolic systems, while hooks (2013) shows that critical engagement with texts can challenge boundaries and relations of domination. The choice of works should combine aesthetic quality, a variety of genres, and diverse authorship. More than simply presenting a book, it is necessary to create questions that make it possible to examine perspectives, absences, and conflicts within the narrative.

An investigation of the local area can integrate geography, history, Portuguese language, art, science, and mathematics. Freire (1996) values reading the world as a starting point for reading the word, and Fleuri (2003) conceives education as an intense relationship among individuals situated in different contexts. This organization brings school knowledge and social life closer together without reducing the project to personal opinions or abandoning learning objectives.

Dehaene (2022) attributes value to specific feedback on errors because it guides review and consolidation. Candau (2008) notes that equality and difference must remain articulated. Thus, diversifying instruments does not mean lowering expectations for certain groups, but removing unnecessary barriers and allowing students to demonstrate understanding through written, oral, visual, or collaborative means, depending on the purpose of the activity.

A curriculum review can begin with objective questions: which individuals appear as producers of science, art, and thought; who is described only as a victim; which historical conflicts have been omitted; and what relationships exist between the content and the area where the school is located. Moreira and Candau (2003) make it possible to understand that every selection expresses cultural priorities, while Walsh (2010) provides guidance for identifying hierarchies among forms of knowledge. The team can compare teaching plans, books, reading lists, and assessment instruments, recording absences and repetitions. It can then define changes compatible with the objectives of each subject, such as incorporating primary sources, authors from different backgrounds, and social issues analyzed from multiple perspectives. Candau (2009) supports dialogue as an encounter between positions that need not

lose their specificity, while Gomes (2003) calls for care with oversimplified representations. This procedure preserves conceptual progression and prevents the inclusion of new voices from becoming an appendix disconnected from the rest of the educational pathway.

5 Pedagogical practices for valuing cultural diversity

Cultural appreciation becomes concrete when it guides planned learning situations. Candau (2016) advocates practices capable of recognizing difference as a source of richness, and Freire (1996) places dialogue at the center of the pedagogical relationship. Discussion circles, memory projects, narrative analysis, and investigations of the local area can bring student experiences and school concepts closer together. To avoid superficiality, each activity must present objectives, reliable sources, problem-posing questions, and space for synthesis.

Students can identify celebrations, occupations, languages, migration trajectories, places of memory, religious manifestations, and local forms of caring for nature. Fleuri (2003) understands interculture as a relational construction, while Hall (2006) cautions that identities change according to context. The map should not freeze people into categories; it functions as an open record of the connections, changes, and tensions that shape the local area.

Shared reading makes it possible to encounter voices that rarely occupy the center of the curriculum. Dehaene (2012) demonstrates that reading involves cultural learning supported by brain plasticity, and hooks (2013) understands the classroom as a space where experience and critical reflection meet. Works by Black, Indigenous, and Latin American authors and authors from different regions can be incorporated into regular teaching sequences, not only commemorative events. Mediation should explore language, context, and narrative choices, avoiding turning the author into the sole representative of a group.

Gomes (2003) values culture as a field of memory and political positioning, and Candau (2009) emphasizes dialogue among individuals and forms of knowledge. Before interviewing residents, the class needs to discuss consent, respect, recording, and feedback. Afterwards, students should compare accounts, identify points of view, and produce careful interpretations, without treating every memory as a neutral description of the past.

Dehaene (2022) associates learning with active engagement and feedback, while Moreira and Candau (2012) draw attention to the power relations present in pedagogical practices. Teachers need to distribute roles, observe who speaks, prevent recurring interruptions, and ensure that less-recognized students also exercise authorship. Individual and collective assessment criteria help prevent some students from taking on all the work.

Cultural conflicts can be transformed into educational situations when protection and clear rules are in place. Walsh (2010) notes that intercultural relations are permeated by inequalities, and Munanga (2005) shows that silence in the face of stereotypes contributes to their reproduction. When an offense occurs, it is inappropriate to promote a debate that relativizes the dignity that has been violated. The aggression must first be interrupted; then, its origin, effects, and the responsibilities involved should be analyzed, with support from the school team.

Freire (1996) associates listening with respect, and Candau (2016) values collective processes conducted within the institution itself. Guests may share professional, artistic, or community knowledge, but their presence must have a pedagogical purpose and prior preparation. It is also important not to display religious or cultural practices as a spectacle. The community participates as a partner and producer of knowledge, not as an exotic illustration.

Digital resources can facilitate access to collections, museums, maps, videos, and testimonies from different places. Dehaene (2024) helps explain the need to select relevant information amid numerous stimuli, while Hall (2006) makes it possible to analyze how the media construct representations. The practice should include verification of authorship, context, and communicative intent. Comparing sources helps students perceive that images of social groups are not neutral and may reinforce or challenge prejudice.

Candau (2008) provides criteria for reconciling common rights with the recognition of differences, while Walsh (2010) recommends attention to the power relations that determine which versions become official. The class can compare news reports, testimonies, photographs, maps, and artistic productions, identify convergences and contradictions, and justify interpretations with evidence. Dehaene (2022) relates active participation and specific feedback to learning; Freire (1996) associates knowledge with critical curiosity. Throughout this process, the teacher does not relinquish mediation: the teacher frames the question, makes the criteria explicit, corrects false information, and ensures that disagreement does not turn into a personal attack. Plurality thus comes to support rigorous inquiry, argumentation, and respect.

Moreira and Candau (2003) relate cultural plurality to curriculum organization, and Gomes (2003) rejects approaches that confine Black culture to folklore. Diversity should therefore appear in annual planning, collections, projects, assessments, and everyday interactions. Participation records, student feedback, and pedagogical meetings make it possible to identify progress and limitations without turning the process into mere bureaucracy.

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6 Prejudice, discrimination, and racism in the school environment

Prejudice encompasses preconceived judgments that classify people based on real or attributed characteristics; discrimination arises when these ideas guide unequal treatment, restrictions, or aggression. Munanga (2005) shows that racism is sustained by representations and practices embedded in social life, while Gomes (2003) relates Black culture, education, and inequality. At school, these phenomena may emerge through jokes, nicknames, lowered expectations, curricular silences, and seemingly neutral disciplinary decisions.

Identifying racism requires attention both to explicit incidents and to routines that produce disadvantages. Candau (2008) warns that equality and difference should not be presented as mutually exclusive alternatives, and Walsh (2010) directs attention to historical power relations. When Black students are invited to lead less often, when hair and physical features become targets of scrutiny, or when the African contribution appears only in connection with enslavement, an environment is created that limits belonging and participation.

Gomes (2003) and Munanga (2005) relate the fight against racism to the substantive presence of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in the curriculum. In this regard, Law No. 10,639/2003 established:

> In public and private elementary and secondary schools, the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture shall be mandatory. The syllabus shall include the study of the History of Africa and Africans, the struggle of Black people in Brazil, Brazilian Black culture, and the role of Black people in the formation of national society, recovering the contribution of the Black population in the social, economic, and political areas relevant to the History of Brazil. The content shall be taught throughout the entire school curriculum, especially in the areas of Arts Education, Brazilian Literature, and Brazilian History. (Brazil, 2003, art. 1).

Gomes (2003) demonstrates that Black culture is part of the Brazilian way of life and cannot be treated as a foreign element; Munanga (2005) reinforces the need to overcome derogatory images present in materials and relationships. This responsibility extends to all subject areas, because mathematics, science, the arts, and languages can also present trajectories, productions, and issues related to ethnic-racial diversity.

The institutional response must establish procedures known to students, professionals, and families. Candau (2016) notes that educators often recognize differences but do not know how to act when conflicts arise; hooks (2013) advocates a classroom in which voice and dignity are not privileges. Recording the incident, providing immediate protection, communicating responsibly, and conducting subsequent follow-up prevent the victim from bearing sole responsibility for proving or resolving the violence.

Candau (2008) and Walsh (2010) link cultural recognition to the transformation of social relations. The National Curriculum Guidelines detail this responsibility by establishing:

> The National Curriculum Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations consist of guidance, principles, and foundations for the planning, implementation, and assessment of Education, and aim to promote the education of active and aware citizens within Brazil's multicultural and multiethnic society, seeking positive ethnic-social relations toward the construction of a democratic nation. The Education of Ethnic-Racial Relations aims to produce knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, and values that educate citizens regarding ethnic-racial plurality. (Brazil, 2004, p. 1).

The guideline integrates curriculum, attitudes, and values, which prevents the racial issue from being restricted to a single lesson. Moreira and Candau (2012) advocate revising pedagogical practices and modes of representation; Freire (1996) relates teaching ethics to respect for students' dignity. An anti-racist school needs to assess its collection, learning expectations, access to leadership positions, and the way it responds to reports, in addition to addressing historical content.

Naturalized expressions may associate Blackness, Indigenous peoples, African-derived religions, nationalities, or regions with inferiority and danger. Hall (2006) shows that representation produces social meanings, while Munanga (2005) explains that stereotypes contribute to the reproduction of racism. Correcting the statement is not enough; it is necessary to investigate why it is offensive, what images sustain it, and how it could be responsibly reformulated.

Gomes (2003) values Black experience without reducing individuals to objects of observation, and hooks (2013) warns about power relations present even in spaces that present themselves as participatory. Before any collective discussion, the team needs to listen to the victim, preserve their privacy, and assess risks. The educational activity should hold the group accountable and should not require emotional exposure from the person who experienced discrimination.

Records of conflicts, disciplinary referrals, participation in projects, and access to student representative roles can be examined carefully. Candau (2008) associates justice with recognition, while Walsh (2010) guides the analysis of structures that distribute power. The objective is not to label classes or professionals, but to identify recurring barriers and plan educational, curricular, and administrative responses.

7 Teacher education and the construction of an inclusive and intercultural school

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Teacher education occupies a strategic position because cultural differences arise in daily decisions: selecting examples, organizing groups, responding to conflicts, and interpreting difficulties. Candau (2016) considers it important to develop collective processes within the school itself, while Freire (1996) understands education as critical reflection on practice. One-off courses can introduce concepts, but change becomes consolidated when the team observes real situations, plans interventions, and assesses their effects.

Teachers do not need to master every culture present in the community, an impossible expectation that can produce new oversimplifications. Fleuri (2003) highlights the complexity of intercultural relations, and Hall (2006) shows that identities remain open and mutable. The core competence consists of formulating respectful questions, recognizing limits, researching qualified sources, and creating space for different voices. This stance combines intellectual humility with pedagogical responsibility.

Dehaene (2022) presents attention, active engagement, feedback, and consolidation as pillars, and Dehaene (2024) discusses the conscious selection of information. Teacher education can integrate these processes with culturally meaningful repertoires, without assuming that students from the same group learn in the same way. Candau (2008) helps maintain equity as a guiding principle, because recognizing differences does not authorize lower expectations or impoverished curricula.

Table 2 – Dimensions of intercultural teacher education

Formative axis	**Teaching competency**	**Action at school**	**Monitoring evidence**
Self-awareness	Recognize beliefs and biases	Analyze cases and pedagogical choices	Reflective records and review plans
Curricular knowledge	Select diverse sources and authors	Review plans, collections, and assessments	Periodic mapping of representation
Conflict mediation	Intervene in cases of discrimination	Adopt a protection and accountability protocol	Monitoring of referrals and actions
Community dialogue	Listen to families and local groups	Create spaces for participation in decision-making	Minutes, feedback, and participant evaluation
Learning and equity	Diversify mediation without lowering expectations	Combine strategies and specific feedback	Student participation and progression

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Candau (2016), Freire (1996), Dehaene (2022), and Munanga (2005).

Self-knowledge makes it possible to perceive naturalized expectations and judgments; curricular knowledge provides resources for reviewing representations; conflict mediation transforms principles into concrete protection. Moreira and Candau (2012) connect diversity and pedagogical practices, while Munanga (2005) calls for taking a stand against racism.

Follow-up prevents teacher education from ending at the level of discourse, because it confronts intentions with observable changes in planning and everyday interactions.

A team may examine a discriminatory joke, the absence of Indigenous authors from the collection, or unequal participation in activities. Walsh (2010) guides the identification of power relations present in each situation, and hooks (2013) helps discuss voice, authority, and participation. The case must be handled without exposing students and should lead to decisions: who intervenes, how protection is provided, what is recorded, and which practices will be reviewed.

Gomes (2003) warns against reducing Black culture to exoticism, while Dehaene (2012) demonstrates the centrality of reading in gaining access to symbolic universes. Teachers need to assess authorship, context, language, and representation before using a resource. Collections do not become inclusive merely because of the number of titles; what matters is the quality of the narratives, the internal plurality of groups, and opportunities for critical analysis.

Candau (2016) emphasizes the potential of processes developed within the school, and Freire (1996) associates professional development with reflection on practice. Without a schedule, coordination, and documentation, interculturality tends to depend on the individual efforts of a few educators. School management needs to integrate the topic into the political-pedagogical project, meetings, institutional assessment, and the induction of new professionals.

Partnerships with universities, social movements, and community organizations can broaden knowledge, provided that the school preserves critical participation. Candau (2009) values dialogue among different individuals, and Walsh (2010) rejects relationships in which one form of knowledge merely decorates another's project. The partnership should make objectives, responsibilities, and forms of feedback explicit. It must also recognize that communities are not homogeneous and that no leader speaks for everyone.

The assessment of teacher education can examine changes in lesson plans, selected materials, responses to conflicts, and student participation. Moreira and Candau (2003) link curricular justice to the reduction of inequalities, while Dehaene (2022) emphasizes the importance of specific feedback. Quantitative data can support monitoring, but they need to be interpreted alongside accounts, observations, and attentive listening to the individuals involved. The purpose is to improve practices, not to surveil teachers or produce simplistic classifications.

Peer observation enhances teacher education when it is based on trust and previously agreed criteria. Candau (2016) values collective processes situated in everyday practice, and Freire (1996) associates professional reflection with openness to learning. One teacher can observe another's lesson, record opportunities for participation, cultural references, and forms

of feedback, and then discuss alternatives. Moreira and Candau (2012) help direct this perspective toward curriculum and difference, while hooks (2013) draws attention to voice and authority. Feedback should describe concrete situations, acknowledge successes, and propose feasible changes, without a punitive character. When sustained over time, the practice breaks down professional isolation and transforms individual uncertainties into team learning.

Candau (2008) offers an articulation between equal rights and the recognition of differences; Fleuri (2003) presents interaction among individuals as an inherently educational space. When the team acknowledges that it, too, needs to learn, mistakes can be recognized and corrected without paralysis. Teacher education ceases to be an external obligation and begins to support a collective project of dignity, participation, and educational quality.

8 Final considerations

Intercultural education does not correspond merely to the presence of different cultures in the same space; it also requires relationships based on respect, participation, recognition, and justice, as well as the revision of structures that transform differences into inequalities. Schools fulfill their democratic role when they ensure common knowledge without imposing the erasure of the histories, languages, and senses of belonging that constitute their students.

The strategies examined show that curriculum, pedagogical practices, responses to discrimination, and teacher education need to operate in an integrated manner. Representation loses its force when it appears only on commemorative dates, just as dialogue becomes insufficient when the institution fails to protect those who experience violence. Memory projects, readings by diverse authors, community participation, equitable assessment, and intervention protocols gain consistency when they are integrated into planning and the political-pedagogical project.

It is concluded that constructing an inclusive and intercultural school depends on continuity, collective responsibility, and a willingness to review naturalized choices. There is no single formula for different contexts, but certain principles must remain: dignity, equal rights, appreciation of differences, listening, and the rejection of every form of prejudice. By transforming diversity into a source of learning and democratic coexistence, education expands students' sense of belonging and strengthens their participation in society.

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