

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: EXPERIENCES IN BRAZIL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article refers to the results of a survey on policy implementation of public policies for inclusive education and the experiences of school inclusion of students with visual impairments at the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School, located in Niterói, state of Rio de Janeiro, with the primary objective of characterizing the experiences on pedagogical praxis with students with visual impairments considered to be in a situation of inclusion. The theoretical-methodological framework adopted in the problematization of the object of study and data analysis was the critical theory of society. The study included: two visually impaired students considered to be in a situation of inclusion, a teacher from the inclusive classroom, a teacher from the multifunctional resources room and a teacher of pedagogical support for school inclusion. The results revealed that the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School is developing inclusive education, mainly due to the implementation of public education policies in the municipality of Niterói, which prioritize the inclusion of students with disabilities. It was found that inclusive education demands collective political-pedagogical commitment from teachers, administrators and family members in favor of public schools and their democratization. Consequently, inclusive education enables solidary teaching and learning experiences centered on the humanization of students with disabilities, thus making them able to recognize themselves as participants in society, in which the violence present in competitiveness prevails.

### **KEYWORDS**

public policy, inclusive education, pedagogical praxis, public school

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## **POLÍTICAS DE EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA E PRÁXIS PEDAGÓGICA NA ESCOLA PÚBLICA: EXPERIÊNCIAS NO BRASIL**

### **RESUMO**

Este artigo refere-se aos resultados de uma pesquisa sobre a implementação de políticas públicas de educação inclusiva e as experiências de inclusão escolar de estudantes com deficiência visual na Escola Municipal Adelino Magalhães, localizada em Niterói, estado do Rio de Janeiro, e tem por objetivo central caracterizar as experiências sobre a práxis pedagógica com estudantes com deficiência visual considerados em situação de inclusão. O referencial teórico-metodológico adotado na problematização do objeto de estudo e análise dos dados foi a teoria crítica da sociedade. Participaram do estudo: dois estudantes com deficiência visual considerados em situação de inclusão, uma professora da sala de aula inclusiva, uma professora da sala de recursos multifuncionais e uma professora de apoio pedagógico à inclusão escolar. Os resultados revelaram que a Escola Municipal Adelino Magalhães está desenvolvendo a educação inclusiva,

sobretudo em decorrência da implementação das políticas públicas de educação no município de Niterói, que estabelecem como prioridade a inclusão escolar de estudantes com deficiência. Foi constatado que a educação inclusiva demanda compromisso político-pedagógico coletivo de professores, gestores e familiares em prol da escola pública e de sua democratização. Consequentemente, a educação inclusiva possibilita experiências de ensino e aprendizagem solidárias, centradas na humanização de estudantes com deficiência, tornando-os, assim, aptos a se reconhecerem como participantes da sociedade, na qual impera a violência presente na competitividade.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

políticas públicas, educação inclusiva, práxis pedagógica, escola pública

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### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

In the current civilising stage, inclusive education is a struggle not exclusively for public policies, which guarantee the access of students with special educational needs to public schools; but also by the transformation of society marked by the struggle between capital and labour, social hierarchy and competitiveness, marks of the managed society. In this sense, individuals considered more robust and, consequently, more able to compete in class society are ranked hierarchically above individuals from the so-called social minorities, such as people with disabilities and other individuals with physical, sensory and physical characteristics considered deviant of the standard imposed by the administered society.

The theoretical-methodological framework of this study is the critical theory of society, emphasising the thought of Adorno (1970/2010). According to this author, we consider that “education has meaning only as education directed to a critical self-reflection” (p. 121) and “the demand that Auschwitz is not repeated is first of all for education. In such a way it precedes any others that I believe it is neither possible nor necessary to justify it” (p. 119). Therefore, it was necessary to discuss: does school education contemplate human demands and the need to face the social violence manifested at school? Society’s critical theory contributes to this discussion, especially in the elaboration of the past so that the worst that happened — barbarism — is not repeated:

which is to say that memory, time and remembrance are liquidated by bourgeois society itself in its development, as if they were a kind of irrational remainder, just as the progressive rationalisation of industrial production procedures eliminates along with the other remnants of artisanal activity also categories such as learning, that is, the time of acquisition of experience in the craft. When humanity alienates itself from memory, exhausting

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<sup>1</sup> This article is part of a master’s thesis in education developed at the Fluminense Federal University, on the implementation of public policies for inclusive education and the experiences of school inclusion of students with visual impairments at the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School, located in Niterói, state of Rio de Janeiro, with the main objective of characterizing the experiences on pedagogical praxis with students with visual impairments considered to be in a situation of inclusion (Agra, 2015).

itself breathlessly adapting to the existing, this reflects an objective law of development. (Adorno, 1970/2010, p. 33)

In order to admit the possibilities of education against violence, given the objective conditions in force, it would be ideological to attribute such responsibility exclusively to school professionals, disregarding the current social structure:

the dominant ideology nowadays defines that the more people are subjected to objective contexts in relation to which they are powerless or believe they are powerless, the more they will make this powerlessness subjective. In keeping with the saying that *everything depends solely on people*, they attribute everything that depends on objective conditions so that existing conditions remain untouched. In the language of philosophy, we could say that the people's strangeness in relation to democracy reflects society's alienation from itself. (Adorno, 1970/2010, p. 36)

In this context, this article aimed to analyse the inclusive education policy actions and praxis in the pedagogical organisation of the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School and the inclusive education policies in the municipality of Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, considering that the Brazilian official documents and international declarations advocate the right to education. Two students with visual impairment participated in this study, a teacher from the inclusive classroom (IC) and a teacher from the multifunctional resources room (MRR), a space to support school inclusion. According to Alves et al. (2006), the MRR has specific material to meet students' differences and learning needs. This space stands out for the "development of learning strategies, centred on a new pedagogical practice that favours the construction of knowledge by students, subsidising them to develop the curriculum and participate in school life" (Alves et al., 2006, p. 13), and, even more, it is necessary to consider the participation of a teacher to provide pedagogical support (PS) for school inclusion in the school<sup>2</sup>.

The Adelino Magalhães Municipal School is located in the municipality of Niterói, state of Rio de Janeiro and offers the following architectural adaptations: wide doors and specific school desks for right-handed and left-handed students. We also identified some technological resources of communicational accessibility and alternative communication for students with cerebral palsy, such as communication boards, digital game and music platforms, Brazilian sign language interpreter (Libras), teaching material for writing and reading through the Braille system and voice programs for computers.

Concerning elementary school, 25 students, with a report proving the type of disability to participate in the specialised educational service<sup>3</sup>, benefit from the MRR, with

<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian Inclusion Law (Lei Brasileira de Inclusão da Pessoa com Deficiência, 2015) refers to the school support teacher in item XIII as follows "school support professional - person who performs food, hygiene and mobility activities for students with disabilities and works in all school activities in which it is necessary, at all levels and modality of education, in public and private institutions, excluding techniques or procedures identified with legally established professions".

<sup>3</sup> According to Decree No. 7.611 (Decreto nº 7.611, 2011), in Article 3, "the objectives of specialized educational care are: I - to provide conditions for access, participation and learning in regular education and to guarantee specialized support services according to the individual needs of the students; II - guarantee the transversality of special education actions in regular

14 inclusive classes in the school, counting the morning and afternoon shifts; with the participation of 14 teachers. The school also has teachers who provide PS for the special educational needs of students considered in a situation of inclusion. In addition to the two students with visual impairment considered to be in a situation of inclusion, there are also students with hearing impairment/deafness, physical impairment/cerebral palsy, mental impairment/Down syndrome, autistic spectrum syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, hydrocephalus, oppositional and defiant disorder, tuberous sclerosis and hemiparesis.

Students with visual impairment have low vision, are twins and attend the afternoon shift. The school is organised with a maximum of two students considered to be in a situation of inclusion per class. Because, among the 14 classes with students considered in a situation of inclusion, two have three students with disabilities, in line with the reference group<sup>4</sup> recommended for elementary education under Article 10 of Portaria FME nº 878/2009 (2009). It is noteworthy that the establishment of the reference group refers to the implementation of pedagogical, organisational strategies to provide sustainability to the school inclusion of students with disabilities. Therefore, stressing the school that has historically been segregated, as stated by Costa (2007), “well, it doesn’t cater to human diversity; educates for homogenisation; adaptation; and social reproduction; disregards human and learning differences; reproduces the logic of dominant capitalist production; ranks students by assessment and failure, among others” (p. 7).

That said, it is urgent to problematise the school as a social instance that reproduces the capitalist logic by imposing barriers to the access and permanence of students with disabilities in school, by promoting a hierarchisation of individuals concerning those able or incapable of learning, preventing the possibility of a welcoming formation of human difference and, consequently, a democratic education based on human rights. Thus, inclusive education can be affirmed when the school becomes a participant in the democratisation of education by designing and implementing a pedagogical project that addresses the philosophical and political foundations of human and democratic education and, thus, opposes teaching attitudes and practices discriminatory teaching methods. From this perspective, Leme and Costa (2016) affirm the daily pedagogical practice and the interrelationships between students at school as the epicentre of the inclusion process:

considering that the inclusion process materialises in the school, with regard to education, we defend the articulation between policies and praxis since the affirmation of public policies for inclusion in education is linked to the daily experiences of students in schools. Therefore, in everyday school life, participation and the full range of learning experiences experienced by

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education; III - foster the development of didactic and pedagogical resources that eliminate barriers in the teaching and learning process; and IV - ensure conditions for the continuity of studies at other levels, stages and teaching modalities”.

<sup>4</sup> The reference group, in accordance with Portaria nº 878 (Portaria FME nº 878/2009, 2009), is defined in Article 4, as being “the group of students organized at the beginning of each academic term, through the process of grouping” (para. 1).

students are defined, which can contribute to emancipatory and inclusive human development. (p. 669)

In short, it is at school and in the daily experiences of students with disabilities along with other students without disabilities, teachers, pedagogical and school management teams, that inclusive education can become a possibility for coping with and overcoming violence, especially that manifested by prejudice against students considered to be in a situation of inclusion. Therefore, the demand for studies that analyse the experiences of students with visual impairments at school.

### **EXPERIENCES OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS IN THE PEDAGOGICAL ROUTINE OF ADELINO MAGALHÃES MUNICIPAL SCHOOL**

This study opted to adopt pseudonyms (Paulo and Pedro) to preserve the privacy of students with visual impairments. These students attend the same fifth-grade elementary school class, in which a student with autistic spectrum syndrome is also studying, accompanied by a teacher who provides PS for school inclusion. Paulo and Pedro turned 14 years old in 2014 and entered the school in 2012, coming from a private school.

In classroom organisation, both Pedro and Paulo occupy the front row. Because, when they were evaluated by the special education team of the municipality of Niterói, some recommendations were necessary, such as using the inclined plane and the notebook with extended guidelines, 6B pencil that guarantees stronger writing, aiming to support reading and writing, in addition to the collaboration of the teacher who works in the IC in the general aspects related to the classes. For example, the teacher asks the school board to enlarge the pages used in the textbook when there is a need to study a specific page.

According to the reports of the MRR teacher, Pedro and Paulo, at the beginning of the school year, resisted participating in the proposed pedagogical activities, stating that “they interacted well when they were in this room, but asked that the door be kept closed, claiming not to like to be seen in a room for PS for school inclusion for students with disabilities” (teacher Nilza<sup>5</sup>, MRR). These students even asked about the reason for participating in the specialised educational service in the MRR.

In the IC<sup>6</sup>, the teacher reported that Pedro and Paulo had difficulty using the inclined plane, demonstrating that they did not like to use it, complaining when the teacher asked for an expansion of the textbook pages. Pedro and Paulo reported, at all times, the desire to carry out the tasks in the book itself, like the other classmates. The teacher was also careful to expand the tests and activities and, when writing on the chalkboard, she always adopted an enlarged letter.

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<sup>5</sup> Participants in this study are identified by pseudonyms to preserve privacy

<sup>6</sup> In which students considered to be in a situation of inclusion study together with students without disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Thus, inclusive teaching attitudes in meeting students' learning demands in a situation of inclusion are necessary to support their learning and develop solidarity with other students. For Crochick et al. (2011): "in this way, the relationships of students among themselves, with a greater or lesser degree of discrimination, also depend on how teachers act with all their students" (p. 197).

Regarding the MRRs, in the municipality of Niterói, it is worth noting that the service to students considered to be in a situation of inclusion occurs in the same period as the pedagogical activities of the IC, contrary to Decree No. 7611 (Decreto nº 7.611, 2011), to prescribe that specialised educational services take place after classes in the IC. Some reasons to justify the service mentioned above in the same shift of classes in the IC, narrated by the research participants, were "lack of financial resources for food, school transport, professionals at the school and the dynamics of the school's functioning".

In this sense, students considered to be in a situation of inclusion, who receive specialised educational care in the MRR, are removed from the IC at a time agreed between the teachers. According to teacher Nilza (MRR), Pedro and Paulo, who were not comfortable at the beginning of the school term, changed their behaviour as the days went by and started to participate actively in pedagogical activities. That provoked other students' interest in participating in these pedagogical activities, with the IC teacher having to justify not being possible for all students to participate. Therefore, it is possible to admit Pedro and Paulo's reason for participating in pedagogical activities in the MRR without feeling discriminated against. That expresses the importance of universalising access to PS at school, making it inclusive for all students.

Therefore, we affirm that, even though Pedro and Paulo have changed their attitude of resistance to specialised educational care in the MRR at the same time as classes in the inclusive room, it is not pedagogically adequate because they no longer participate in the activities in the IC, interrupting the development of their learning process in a collaborative and challenging environment. Thus, in addition to the justification for inclusive education (concerning specialised educational care) of students with disabilities considered to be in a situation of inclusion, not complying with Decree No. 7.611 (Decreto nº 7.611, 2011), it is worth asking: How can this distortion of specialised educational care be overcome in the MRR after shift time? Results of studies, considered by Crochick et al. (2011), provide elements that contribute to the understanding of what happens in public schools in Niterói (Rio de Janeiro):

by analysing 20 surveys that studied the attitudes of students from regular classes, which included students considered to be in a situation of inclusion, Klingner and Vaughn (1999) concluded that students with or without difficulties want equal treatment from teachers and the school, that is, they want everyone to undergo the same activities, the same books and have the same group activities. They don't mind that the teacher adapts methods or spends more time explaining something to students who could not understand a particular subject, because, according to them, this way they have

a chance to learn more and better. They like to help colleagues who have more difficulties and, with exceptions, prefer group work that contains students with and without difficulties. Thus, inclusive education should not be concerned only with the issue of socialisation because, in addition to what the work of Klinger and Vaughn informs, if the individual is formed through the incorporation of culture (see Adorno, 1959/1972), it must be transmitted so that everyone can differentiate through it. (p. 200)

In this context, it is understood that the participation of students, considered to be in a situation of inclusion, in the IC should not be interrupted for specialised educational care in the MRR, but rather take place after a shift as provided for in Decree No. 7.611 (Decreto nº 7.611, 2011). It should also be noted:

according to Monteiro and Castro (1997), research shows that students without disabilities tend to become more supportive. These data indicate a central point in the debate on inclusive education, which cannot be left unstated. On the other hand, the division of opinions found may indicate the little discussion about inclusive education in our environment. (Crochick et al., 2011, p. 207)

That said, it is possible to affirm that inclusive education can contribute to the teaching and learning of all students by promoting formation experiences in a collective, collaborative and solidary way. Thus, in the daily life of the MRR, several playful activities are developed, of which we highlight some. First, we present the material used: four large cards with pasted figures, materials the teacher made herself and letters enlarged. The proposed activity was the choice of one of the cards containing from three to four figures to put together the name of each one of the figures.

Teacher Nilza (MRR) reported that the most significant difficulty for both Pedro and Paulo is reading and writing, so, no matter how short their time in that room, she always plans and develops reading activities and writing. During the activity, it is noticed that Pedro and Paulo carry out the activity in partnership, even though each one is developing their own card. Both demonstrate difficulties writing words in current use in Portuguese for fifth-grade students. When they miswrite a word, the teacher asks: “is this the way you spell it?”. Thus, Peter and Paul are given the opportunity to think about the writing of the word and carry out the correction to be written properly.

Paulo is shyer and focused, while Pedro is talkative and complains about the activity and asks to finish later. However, he manages to complete the activity before Paulo. Thus, both complete the activity in their own time and with their own questions and doubts. Based on these observations, it is necessary to propose individual moments in specialised educational care for each student, to carry out activities focused on their educational needs. It is noteworthy that even being twins, their educational demands are different. After the first activity, Pedro and Paulo asked the teacher for a “memory game” activity. They went from a cooperative moment to a competitive moment in this activity.

In this sense, Becker (as cited in Adorno, 1970/2010) states:

evidently, one could defend the thesis that it is necessary to prepare for competition at school for a competitive society. Quite the contrary, I think the most important thing that the school needs to do is to provide people with a way of relating to things. And this relationship to things is disturbed when competition is put in its place. (p. 163)

In this way, competitiveness does not contribute to affirming the inclusive teaching-learning process. It strengthens the hegemony of capital in class society and thus, establishes a priori which individuals are more and/or less able to self-preservation and reproduction, of capital that does not aim at the inclusion of all individuals. Education has, as a central status, this excluding logic, which according to Adorno (1970/2010), does not collaborate with a possible debarbarization through of education, since in the competitive process, the human being experiences different forms of failure that generate guilt, which can turn into aggression. Thus, it is understood that collaboration, on the other hand, expresses a human need to relate to one another, regardless of sensory, cognitive and physical differences.

In this sense, inclusive education can help combat violence by integrating itself into a democratic school project. To this end, it is urgent to consider human differences as necessary for the subjectivation of students, so that they are formed as free-thinking individuals and, in these terms, the teacher's responsibility lies, above all, in the dimension of the inclusion of students, with or without disabilities, creating challenging and diverse teaching environments.

### **THE TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN DAILY SCHOOL LIFE**

The teacher's teaching activities gain visibility by analysing the daily school life of students with visual impairments in public schools. Even if the school has specialised teaching materials and technological resources to meet the educational demand of students considered in inclusion situations, the teacher must be receptive to live new pedagogical, such as the challenges related to inclusive education in public schools. That is essential to make these students feel involved and respected as individuals with physical, sensory and cognitive differences and that these differences constitute their subjectivity.

Consequently, the welcoming attitudes of teachers contribute significantly to allowing them to live inclusive pedagogical experiences that require more of their sensitivity than the use of didactic and technological resources. In this way, the teaching performance can be considered possible beyond the transmission of curriculum content and the use of material resources, seeking to meet the learning and development demands of students, among those considered to be in a situation of inclusion. We think this is possible, even considering the limits of education under the aegis of capital in managed society. In this regard, Crochick et al. (2011) contribute to this understanding:

the implementation of inclusive education is important in the struggle for a fairer society, but we must not disregard the limits of current education with regard to formation due to their own objective conditions. This implies the need for more than just the inclusion of minorities previously segregated from regular schools; the need to also be concerned with the quality of education and with how much this currently contributes to forming effectively critical individuals. If the criticism is related to the possibility of a fairer society, and, if possible, just, living with discriminated minorities is already a formative element. The teacher's role in this formation is fundamental, as it is not just about transmitting knowledge but how it is done and its relationship with knowledge. The form of transmission understood here does not refer only to techniques, even if they are essential, but to the teacher's engagement, to his complicity with the student's learning, that is, it refers to political and ethical principles. (p. 196)

Consequently, inclusive education demands articulation with conscious and democratic attitudes on the part of the teacher. Above all, about understanding the urgency of welcoming diversity at school. Therefore, teacher formation should not be disregarded, and support for their pedagogical activities favours school inclusion and students with disabilities who are considered a priori unsuitable for school learning.

This study carried out a semi-structured interview with the following teachers: from the MRR, from the PS to school inclusion and from the IC. The narratives of the participating teachers contributed significantly to characterising the school and the process of school inclusion of students with visual impairment and the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

According to the data collected, it is noteworthy that, through the semi-structured interview, it was identified that the participating teachers had lived previous teaching experiences with students considered to be in a situation of inclusion with special educational needs. However, never before with visually impaired students.

Teacher Nilza (MRR), working in the MRR since 2009 at the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School, had the opportunity to work with visually impaired students for the first time in 2012. As for the teacher in the IC, Albertina received students Pedro and Paulo in 2013, who continued studying in the same class in 2014, having been her first teaching experience with visually impaired students considered to be in a situation of inclusion.

Regarding the question, "what do you think about your initial formation (undergraduate degree) about students with special educational needs? Did it contribute with subsidies to your inclusive teaching performance? Why?", it was identified that teacher Nilza (MRR) did not study about the education of students with special educational needs in the undergraduate degree course. Because, as she completed her initial academic formation in 1985, it is clear that there were no subjects in these courses on education for students with special educational needs and inclusive education.

Teacher Albertina (IC) narrated that she did not study in her undergraduate course curricular contents that addressed topics such as “special education”, “inclusive education”, “students with special educational needs”, even though she completed two qualifications in pedagogy, school administration and teaching in the grades initials. Bruna, a teacher of PS for school inclusion, reported having had few opportunities to access information on the topic of special and/or inclusive education, although she believes it was important to her formation. Therefore, the teachers participating in the study had few learning opportunities in their initial formation in the pedagogy course on the themes “special education” or “inclusive education”, which can cause more significant challenges for teachers in the face of inclusive education for students with visual impairment.

As for the question “have you ever attended any specialisation and/or improvement course that has considered issues related to students with visual impairment?”, we obtained the following narratives: “my specialisation was in psychopedagogy. I took several courses and participated in workgroups, seminars and lectures on visual impairment” (teacher Nilza, MRR); “no, only at the university we work for a few moments discussing these issues and so many others” (teacher Bruna, PS).

Because I thought I had little knowledge about school inclusion and saw the number of students with educational needs increase every year, I tried to participate in the postgraduate course in inclusive education. I am currently conducting a distance learning course on this topic. Specifically about visual impairment, as I have not had the opportunity to take this course before. (Teacher Albertina, IC)

According to the narratives of the participating teachers, it was found that teacher Nilza, who works in the MRR, participated in a course on visual impairment and, as for teacher Bruna, who works in PS for school inclusion, she revealed that she did not have access to no course in his teaching practice so far. However, during his degree course, she had the opportunity to approach the theme of school inclusion. Teacher Albertina (IC) has developed knowledge about inclusive education in her teaching activity. In this sense, it is possible to affirm that the participating teachers support inclusive education, which has contributed to the access and permanence of Pedro and Paulo, students with visual impairments, at Adelino Magalhães Municipal School.

The next question refers to the importance teachers attach to theoretical studies in their formation. Unanimously, they affirmed that theoretical studies are essential. Teacher Nilza (MRR) narrated that theoretical studies contribute to expanding her knowledge and teacher Albertina (IC) highlighted that “theoretical studies are like a starting point, a foundation for the pedagogical praxis, making theory concrete”. Teacher Bruna (PS) narrated: “theoretical studies are always important in our pedagogical routine, and from them, we can project our pedagogical future. Therefore, they are always valid”. We observe in these narratives the reference to the “pedagogical future” intimately articulated to the theory as if the theory answered exclusively later questions. The challenge

posed to teachers to understand in theory what can meet the pedagogical issues present in everyday school life is noticeable. These narratives reveal that theory is split from praxis. Adorno (1969/1995) opposes this split stating, when resorting to Kant and Fichte, “thinking is acting, a theory is a form of praxis” (p. 204).

Thus, it is noteworthy that the teacher, as a product of society, split between capital and work, considers the theory to be distinct from praxis, in which education has historically focused on serving individuals according to their position in the social stratum. In this regard, Crochick et al. (2011) analyse the “production of mass education” that aims to prepare individuals to deal with technology in the world of capitalist work:

technology has not failed to enter education, which, in its drive to train for competence, has created methods and simplified knowledge so that teachers can be dispensed with, it has become a transmitter of information and no longer conducive to the formation that will go beyond what exists. This is consistent with Benjamin’s (1938/1989) description of the transformation of experience into living throughout the 19th century: the experience does not leave marks on the individual; and, according to Adorno (1959/1972), the information is soon replaced by new ones: it has to be updated at all times, but as the knowledge needed to deal with machines – whether material or human – is soon surpassed and the experience that cannot do without the Kantian precept: “an I that accompanies all my representations” has no place, weakly constituted individuals emerge. (p. 194)

Consequently, it promotes formation that does not aim at the totality and development of the various dimensions of students, in order to contemplate their differentiation as free-thinking individuals, instead of “standard citizens” and instrumentalised to meet production in the conservation and reproduction of society where the logic of capital, competitiveness and the exclusion of individuals considered incapable of meeting the dictates of this society prevails.

This weakness in the individual’s constitution directly impacts the teacher’s pedagogical work, as previously stated. The experiences do not occur, giving way to mere contacts that do not leave formative marks on the individual. Therefore, it does not support its humanisation. When we asked “tell us about your experience with inclusive education concerning students with special educational needs who are considered to be in a situation of inclusion. Does something tickle you?”, the teachers narrated: “I see that things still need to be straightened out. But, it’s a good start. *Soon, new times will be arriving, and everything can get even better* [emphasis added]” (teacher Bruna, PS).

The experiences that I live daily are very rich for my work. There are several types of students and their disabilities that attend the multifunctional resource room. Such as autistic and Down spectrum syndromes, low vision, hearing loss, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and others. Every day I’m improving my knowledge and increasing the challenges this work takes

me. *What instigates me is this daily struggle to conquer spaces for these students* [emphasis added] in a society where not everyone has the same approach to people with special educational needs. (Teacher Nilza, MRR)

When I first received a student with special educational needs, I realised I didn't know anything about it. I initially had difficulties understanding and understanding the student's special learning needs. He was extremely agitated, and the other students couldn't concentrate on the activities they needed to do. I made several mistakes and successes. *However, the number of correct answers increased from the moment I started talking, almost daily, with this student's mother* [emphasis added]. So, I began to understand his reactions, and I learned to relate to him better, following his mother's instructions. Therefore, I find the partnership between the family and the school very interesting and extremely important for the benefit of the student. (Teacher Albertina, IC)

In these narratives, it is clear that teachers are involved with inclusive education. However, by highlighting these phrases, the intention is to draw attention to some aspects: the first narrative shows the teacher's dissatisfaction with the current state of inclusive education. However, dissatisfaction does not seem to take her out of her comfort zone, which reveals something challenging in her pedagogical teaching practice. Perhaps this is what Adorno (1970/2010) would call "self-blame underage" when resorting, once again, to Kant: "stating that this state of underage is self-blame when its cause is not lack of understanding, but the lack of decision and courage to use understanding without the guidance of others" (p. 169).

In teacher Nilza's (MRR) narrative, the experience with students with special educational needs gains visibility and, according to the teacher, enriches her pedagogical work. We have to question: to what extent can this experience contribute to its own humanisation? When we learn to accept and respect human differences, it is possible that we also accept ourselves and, possibly, the world can be considered as being welcoming and human.

Thus, we agree that the daily struggle is necessary for our humanisation and respect for human differences. The school, considering the limits of education, remains the space in which it is possible to train autonomous and emancipated students, corroborating the thought of Crochick et al. (2011):

what can be done is, according to Adorno (1967/1995), to insist that education be geared towards resistance to the oppression of men, so that it is an education that leads to the perception of social contradictions, and not to deny it. Of course, only with education it is not possible to change society, however, through it, it is possible to strengthen the individual conscience so that it opposes violence. (p. 196)

Opposition to any and all forms of violence is the principle for inclusive education. In teacher Albertina's (IC) narrative, the expression "talk" stands out. Initially, the teacher felt insecure about meeting the educational needs of students with visual impairments, having faced the challenges of teaching and learning from an inclusive perspective. The teacher decided to understand and meet the students' individual learning needs and, to that end, established a permanent dialogue with their families. So, it became possible to advance in the process of school inclusion of students and, at the same time, to reflect on their praxis. For, it is what may provide the breakthrough in excluding, hierarchising and segregating education. The family, in this case, is present, which benefits the process of school inclusion of students with visual impairments and the adaptation of the teacher in the IC.

As for the question about the experience in working with students with visual impairments at Adelino Magalhães Municipal School, some questions become relevant. First, regarding the work developed in the IC, teacher Albertina reports that students with low vision "do not accept this deficiency and, even less, the fact that it is progressive"<sup>7</sup> and that teacher of PS who is in the IC is not accepted by them either. So, because she has a good relationship with these students, she tries to give them the PS they need. As for the challenges faced in the pedagogical routine with students with visual impairment, teacher Nilza (MRR) narrated:

it's a challenging and very enchanting experience. Because, despite having low vision and not profound blindness, they have many difficulties in teaching and learning. I do adapted activities, despite having very varied material. I put into practice the knowledge I acquired in improvement courses so that students can overcome the barriers found in their daily lives.

In turn, teacher Bruna (PS) stated: "it has been a great and very productive experience. In a few moments, I even copied it for him, but only to encourage him". In these narratives, there is an interaction between teachers in the IC, in the MRR and students with visual impairments. However, the teacher's narrative of PS for school inclusion is dissonant. She states that in some moments, she developed the learning activity by the student. Students do not need the teacher to carry out their learning activities for them. However, it is noteworthy that this teacher may also need the knowledge to identify her pedagogical attributions at school concerning PS for school inclusion.

Despite being designated in the class to be with a specific student, the teacher of PS for school inclusion, is not a teacher exclusively for that student but the class. Therefore, the referred teacher needs to know that supporting a student is not performing school activities for him, exempting him from the learning process. Such an attitude will not contribute to the development of your educational development. Instead, it will

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<sup>7</sup> According to the medical assessment made available to the school, together with the assessment carried out by the municipality's special education team, students with low vision, participating in this study, have a vision pathology that tends to progress over time, with the possibility of blindness.

be contributing to its heteronomy, which inclusive education must oppose. As for the interaction between the IC and the MRR, teacher Nilza (MRR) says:

it happens in the best way. As I work on the shift in which students with low vision study, I am always in contact with the inclusive classroom teacher. We exchange ideas and information aimed at solving the difficulties that arise. I follow, through it, the content that is being worked on and make my adaptations. Everything is well articulated with no problem.

In this regard, Crochick et al. (2011):

Beyer (2005) and Pacheco et al. (2007) emphasise, in relation to the discussion on inclusive education, that joint work between teachers is important in this area, which Booth and Ainscow (2002) also advocated. For these authors, it is not about defending the presence of an assistant in the classroom, but about the joint work between teachers. (p. 212)

Consequently, the collaborative work between teachers in the IC, PS for school inclusion and the MRR contributes to the development of pedagogical activities by focusing on meeting the specific educational needs of students with and without disabilities.

When we asked teachers to give statements about the pedagogical challenges faced in teaching activities with visually impaired students, both in the MRR and in the IC, the pedagogical involvement between the MRR and the IC teachers' was identified. On the other hand, the teacher of PS for school inclusion expressed difficulty working with students: "I have no experiences to report, as the time I spend with Pedro and Paulo is very little" (teacher Bruna, PS).

During observations at the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School, it was noticed that the teacher of PS for school inclusion in the IC does not bother with the situation and ends up becoming practically exclusive to the student with autism spectrum syndrome. By not trying to change this situation, it ends up saying to the students, in general, that she is not a PS teacher in the class, which is recommended by the guidelines regarding the role of the PS teacher for school inclusion in an IC. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the narrative of teacher Albertina (IC),

my students with low vision perform the same activities as the rest of the class. However, with a differentiated dedication to serve them according to their needs, that is, all the written material provided to the class must be expanded for them (tests, exercises, textbook pages and handouts).

Stand out in the expression: "my students". It is interesting to observe how the IC teacher takes responsibility for these students. It was also identified that students with visual impairments interact with non-disabled colleagues, demonstrating that they are participants in the classroom, that is, they are not at the mercy of classroom dynamics and, as teacher Albertina (IC) stated, "of students with visual impairments it is required in a similar way to other students, with the necessary adaptations to meet their

special educational needs”, which is in line with the principles of inclusive education, as highlighted by Crochick et al. (2011) about its importance of the positive attitude of the teacher in the classroom in the affirmation of inclusive education:

certainly, the teacher is the main agent in the classroom, and much of what may affect students without disabilities in relation to those who have them depends on their attitudes. Thus, the experience of contact with students with disabilities is not enough for some degree of inclusion to occur; the consequent intervention of the teacher is also necessary. (p. 198)

Thus, the teacher’s intervention becomes central in the school inclusion process so that students with disabilities and without disabilities are guided in developing a collaborative educational process. Teacher Nilza (MRR) states that “it is an enriching experience. However, with many challenges. The students progress, even though they need more time than other students”.

The teachers agree that there is support from the school management regarding the special educational needs of students with low vision, representing an advance in the school inclusion process. Because when school management participates and supports teachers and students in this process, school inclusion becomes possible:

my students with low vision are not entitled to a teacher to support school inclusion. Therefore, I need to fill this gap by paying attention to the rest of the class and, at the same time, giving special attention to students with special educational needs. Their notebook is different. I make the lines with a black marker, with a larger space between them and the school reproduces and binds these sheets. The school also buys the 6B pencil to make the writing darker. When I need to use the textbook with the class, the school expands the pages that will be used for the two students with visual impairments. I put them sitting very close to the whiteboard, and I always use the pilot with the darkest colours (black and blue) and make the letter really big. I always read everything with them or for them and the rest of the class.  
(Teacher Albertina, IC)

Based on the narrative of teacher Albertina, who works in the IC, it is possible to affirm that the school is engaged in making the school inclusion process possible. We also identified teacher Albertina’s commitment to supporting students with low vision, not only in the socialisation process but also with regard to “the development of skills and the learning of content necessary for participation in society” (Crochick et al., 2011, p. 213).

However, teacher Albertina’s (IC) narrative: “my students with low vision do not have the right to a teacher to support school inclusion”, expresses the lack of understanding regarding the role of the teacher of PS for school inclusion, as she considers it necessary a teacher of PS for each student with a disability considered to be in a situation of inclusion. What is lacking is an understanding of the teacher’s PS functions for school

inclusion and optimisation of her participation in the IC, contributing to students' learning process considered to be in a situation of inclusion.

Regarding the question: "do you think there is any kind of relationship and articulation between the democratisation of education and inclusive education? Comment on that", we highlight the following narratives: "yes, if there is no democratisation, relationship and articulation of education and inclusive education, there will be no success in the teaching-learning process. Because one interacts with the other's success" (teacher Bruna, PS);

I believe that there is a certain relationship and an articulation between the democratisation of education and inclusive education. I think that nowadays, you can't think about education without relating it to inclusive education. We still have many obstacles and barriers to overcome and overcome. However, it has already come a long way. I believe that each day this relationship and articulation, focusing on inclusive education, will gain more strength, seeking greater achievements for students with special educational needs. (Teacher Nilza, MRR)

I believe so, at least in the Public Network of Niterói, which is the one I know closely. I see, every year, increasing the service to students with special educational needs. At our school, most classes have students in these conditions, with an inclusion support teacher exclusively to accompany them in their socialisation and learning development according to their abilities. (Teacher Albertina, IC)

Thus, we were able to identify that the teachers managed to link the democratisation of education and inclusive education, which can be considered an advance in public policies for inclusive education in the city of Niterói. That said, we affirm that inclusive education provides the participation of all students considered to be in a situation of inclusion.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

After completing this study, we highlight some relevant results: the creation of spaces in the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School for reflection by teachers, managers and the strengthening of inclusive education for all enrolled students with disabilities, considering Crochick et al. (2011), by stating that "equality in the face of the possibility of learning, despite the differences, is a milestone in a democratic society" (p. 214).

With this, education should not be considered a privilege for some students at the expense of many who are outside the public school. But rather as a social and human right, through which students will develop as free-thinking individuals, having access to their own essence — unique and human. Therefore, it can be considered as a central

result of this study that the Adelino Magalhães Municipal School is significantly affirming inclusive education, especially as a result of the implementation of the public education policies of the municipality of Niterói, which established the school inclusion of students with disabilities as a priority.

The inclusive school is not responsible for selecting students for access to education or differentiating them according to the criterion of disability. Instead, it is up to the school to be a democratic and humane educational space. In this sense, education and access to knowledge become all students' rights. Democratizing access to school and giving sustainability to inclusive education is the same as creating spaces for learning and experience between different subjectivities (students, teachers, managers and family members), without hierarchy due to physical, sensory and/or cognitive differences, in the fight against the manifestation of prejudice, the maximum expression of violence against students with disabilities.

Thus, the defence in favour of inclusive education contributes, above all, for students considered to be in a situation of inclusion, in interaction with social limits and other colleagues, without disabilities, in everyday school life to recognise themselves as human beings able to live in society, without fear of the violence of prejudice against their sensory, physical and cognitive differences because they are considered inequality.

Finally, inclusive education needs to be a collective struggle of teachers, administrators and family members who favour public schools. Our fight is for the strengthening and democratisation of access and permanence of students with disabilities and without disabilities, in order for them to live teaching and learning experiences that humanise them and make them capable of experiencing a society that does not recognise differences as the essence of humanity. Inclusive education can drive formation that includes all students, making them sensitive and able to live in society without having their differences denied and/or made invisible by prejudice, the maximum expression of violence against students with disabilities. We hope that this study will contribute to confronting and overcoming segregation in public schools in Brazil.

**Translation: Michelli Agra and Valdelúcia Alves da Costa**

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