


THE CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION IN THE CLASSROOM: HOW TO SUPPORT ATYPICAL CHILDREN <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.046-004>**Eunice Miranda da Silva¹****Abstract**

This article aims to critically analyze the foundations, practices and perspectives transforming inclusive education in the contemporary school context. From a qualitative approach, an in-depth bibliographic review was developed based on authors that discuss the limits of the school as a disciplinary institution, obstacles and advances in Brazilian public policies of inclusion, as well as the challenges faced in teaching and institutional practice. Initially, the normative structure of the modern school is problematized, whose disciplinary logic makes it difficult to welcome differences and reproduces patterns that exclude various subjects. Then, the guidelines of the National Policy of Inclusive Education are discussed, highlighting legal advances and obstacles to its realization in public schools. Finally, there are possibilities for educational transformation from the construction of an inclusive institutional culture that values diversity, promotes the continuing education of education professionals and favors collaborative, democratic and sensitive pedagogical practices to the uniqueness of students. It is concluded that school inclusion goes beyond physical or curriculum adaptation, demanding deep breaks with exclusionary paradigms and the construction of new meanings for education. Only through the political, pedagogical and ethical commitment of school institutions will it be possible to consolidate a truly democratic, equitable and welcoming education for all subjects.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Pedagogical practice, School culture, Institutional transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is configured as a fundamental paradigm for the construction of a more equitable, democratic, and plural society. In the contemporary school context, debates surrounding educational inclusion gain relevance in light of the urgent need to overcome exclusionary models that have historically marginalized subjects with disabilities, global developmental disorders, high abilities/giftedness, among others. Such an approach seeks to guarantee not only access, but above all permanence, participation, and meaningful learning for all students, valuing diversity as a pedagogical and ethical principle. In this sense, the contemporary school is challenged to reinvent itself through pedagogical practices that respect different ways of learning, recognizing the plurality of identities and trajectories as enriching the educational process (Cândido; De Vasconcelos; Pinto, 2022). Beyond occasional physical or curricular adaptations, inclusive education requires structural, cultural, and didactic-pedagogical transformations that resignify the school's social function and the role of education professionals (Carneiro et al., 2025).

The debate on inclusive education is embedded within public education policies, which over recent decades have been shaped by social struggles, national legislation, and international agreements. The enactment of the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), along with subsequent normative advances, reflects this movement toward the expansion of educational rights, although its implementation encounters numerous obstacles, such as the shortage of qualified human resources, the absence of continuing education, and institutional resistance to change. The current scenario, however, is still marked by contradictions: while there are legal frameworks that guarantee the right to inclusion, many school practices still reproduce segregating logics, hindering the consolidation of a truly inclusive culture (Lockmann; Klein, 2022). In this context, it is essential to rethink teacher education, the methodologies used in the classroom, and the school's ethical-political commitment to diversity (Santana et al., 2023).

The construction of an inclusive school also requires recognition of the power relations that permeate educational spaces, as pointed out by critical education theory. From this perspective, inclusion is not limited to a set of technical practices, but must be understood as a political and social process that challenges the mechanisms of normalization historically established by school institutions. The modern disciplinary school, structured to homogenize subjects and standardize knowledge, proves incompatible with the demands of inclusive education, which presupposes listening, flexibility, and openness to difference (Amancio; Rodrigues, 2020). Thus, reflecting on inclusive education also requires a critique of the traditional, authoritarian school model centered on decontextualized content, proposing in its place a pedagogy of difference that values the singularities of subjects (Gai; Kroth, 2022).

Despite conceptual and legal advances, the implementation of inclusive education encounters multiple challenges, which raises the following problem: how can the foundations of inclusive education be effectively translated into transformative pedagogical practices in the contemporary school context, ensuring not only access, but also permanence, participation, and the success of all students? This question guides the present investigation, which seeks to understand the complexity of school inclusion from a critical and multidimensional perspective, articulating theoretical, political, and pedagogical aspects.

In view of this context, this study has as its **general objective** to analyze the foundations, practices, and transformative perspectives of inclusive education in the current school scenario. To this end, the following **specific objectives** are established: (1) to identify the main theoretical and legal foundations that support inclusive education; (2) to analyze inclusive pedagogical practices adopted in public schools and their impacts on the learning process; and (3) to reflect on the potentials and challenges involved in building an inclusive school culture in light of critical and democratic perspectives.

The relevance of this study is justified by the urgency of rethinking school structures from an inclusive, humanizing, and democratic logic. In times of social and educational setbacks, discussing

inclusion is not merely a pedagogical necessity, but also an ethical and political imperative. The school must be a space for welcoming, belonging, and the collective construction of knowledge, and for this it is necessary to denaturalize discriminatory practices and propose forms of teaching that respond to the real needs of all students (De Andrade; Pereira; Damasceno, 2020). Furthermore, the education of professionals emerges as a fundamental axis for the success of inclusion, making it necessary to invest in continuing, interdisciplinary, and diversity-committed educational processes (Gomes et al., 2020).

It is important to emphasize that inclusive education is not achieved solely through legislation or isolated public policies, but through the construction of a new educational imaginary that places the subject, in his or her wholeness, at the center of the pedagogical process. This implies considering emotional, social, and cultural aspects as constitutive of learning, restoring the humanizing meaning of education. The valorization of active listening, empathy, and collective co-responsibility are pillars for the construction of truly inclusive school environments (Carneiro et al., 2025; Da Cunha; Andrade; Albuquerque, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a qualitative, exploratory investigation grounded in a bibliographic review. According to Gil (2010), bibliographic research is based on the examination of previously published material and is widely used when the objective is to deepen theoretical knowledge about a given topic or problem. In the specific case of this study, a qualitative approach was chosen because the analysis of discourses, ideas, and theoretical foundations concerning inclusive education requires a critical and contextualized interpretation that is not restricted to the quantification of data, but rather to the understanding of meanings, implications, and relationships among the elements analyzed. This methodological option is also justified by the fact that the field of school inclusion requires the articulation of political, social, and pedagogical categories that can only be understood through an interpretive and critical reading of the theoretical frameworks available in the specialized literature.

The search for materials was carried out in academic databases such as SciELO, Google Scholar, CAPES Journals, and institutional repositories, using keywords such as “inclusive education,” “inclusive pedagogical practices,” “contemporary school,” and “educational transformation.” Specific publications by Brazilian authors who stand out in the critical discussion of the topic were also considered, as well as current legal frameworks and educational public policies. As Gil (2010) points out, the bibliographic review must be conducted systematically, allowing the researcher to understand the current state of knowledge on the topic and identify gaps, convergences, and divergences in the frameworks analyzed, which contributes to the consistency of the analysis and the inferences made.

DEVELOPMENT

This chapter develops an in-depth analysis of the institutional and disciplinary foundations that permeate the contemporary school, Brazilian public policies for inclusive education, and the transformative perspectives emerging in the current school reality. Section 3.1 critically examines how school disciplinary logic creates tensions with inclusion; Section 3.2 explores the challenges and practices of the National Policy on Inclusive Education in Brazil; and Section 3.3 discusses the main challenges and possibilities for the effective transformation of schools through an inclusive culture. The text seeks to integrate the theoretical and empirical insights of the selected authors, presenting dense arguments and conceptual articulations in depth.

INSTITUTIONAL AND DISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS OF THE SCHOOL AND TENSIONS WITH INCLUSION

In the analysis of Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020), the school is understood as a disciplinary institution that structures everyday school life according to a logic of uniformity, control, and the standardization of knowledge and behavior, whose mechanisms of power establish rigid normative parameters that frequently exclude subjects and forms of learning outside the standard established by the

institution. This modern disciplinary regime operates through routines, hierarchies, and routines that regulate the time, space, and actions of students, limiting the flexibility necessary to welcome individual differences and singular identities, as a hallmark of its exclusionary logic (Amancio; Rodrigues, 2020).

These authors point out that, to be effective, inclusion requires a radical rupture with this disciplinary institutional framework, proposing the reconfiguration of the curriculum, the reorganization of school spaces and times, and the flexibilization of pedagogical practices in order to promote autonomy, participation, and social cohesion within the school environment. They emphasize that the logic of institutional order often prevails over the logic of care and listening, which restricts the possibility of building an inclusive school culture that recognizes and values the singularities of students, especially those with disabilities or specific educational needs (Amancio; Rodrigues, 2020).

According to Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020), one of the main obstacles to inclusion is the persistence of deficit-based conceptions about students with diversity, who are viewed as “problems” to be adjusted to the school system rather than as subjects with potential and their own ways of learning. This pathologizing view reinforces an exclusionary institutional culture, undermining the implementation of differentiated pedagogical practices, curricular adaptations, and sensitive listening to each student’s demands, weakening any inclusive advance that goes beyond institutional formalities (Amancio; Rodrigues, 2020).

In addition, they emphasize that the modern disciplinary school internalizes a culture of power that legitimizes centralized authority and minimizes student-centered protagonism. To subvert this paradigm, it is necessary to establish practices that value co-responsibility among teachers, students, and the school community, fostering democratic spaces for dialogue and collective problematization of norms and knowledge. This implies rethinking teacher education, evaluative strategies, and institutional organization as a whole (Amancio; Rodrigues, 2020).

The disciplinary structure of the modern school imposes substantial limits on the promotion of inclusive education. The traditional school model, grounded in a logic of normalization and

hierarchization, is guided by standards that classify and evaluate subjects based on homogeneous criteria of performance, silencing differences in the name of the standardization of behavior and knowledge. This logic relegates subjects with specific educational needs to marginal positions within the school space, hindering the construction of belonging and meaningful learning (Amâncio & Rodrigues, 2020). Rules of conduct, rigidly organized times and spaces, and the centrality of the teacher as sole authority contribute to making the school a space of control rather than emancipation.

In this scenario, the school often reinforces a pedagogy of exclusion. Instead of recognizing the plurality of knowledge and trajectories that students bring with them, disciplinary logic operates in the opposite direction, promoting the adaptation of the subject to the structure rather than the reverse. Thus, instead of a school that adapts to the needs of its students, what is observed is the insistence on rigid formats that do not engage with the diversity present in classrooms (Amâncio & Rodrigues, 2020). The curriculum is often presented as fixed and universal, ignoring students' singularities and sociocultural contexts.

In addition, assessment instruments become mechanisms of control and exclusion. The standardization of assessment methods, centered predominantly on written exams and objective tests, does not contemplate the multiple forms through which knowledge can be expressed. As a result, students with distinct learning profiles, especially those with disabilities, end up being labeled as unfit or uninterested, when in fact what occurs is the inadequacy of pedagogical practices (Glat, Pletsch & Fontes, 2007). This scenario demonstrates that the obstacles to inclusion are rooted not only in the school's physical structure, but also in the conceptions that guide its organization and functioning.

Another critical point is school management, which often operates in a verticalized manner, centralizing decisions and hindering the construction of a culture of co-responsibility and active listening. The absence of democratic and collaborative spaces among teachers, administrators, students, and families compromises the development of inclusive pedagogical projects. According to Glat et al. (2007),

without participatory management, it is practically impossible to promote an institutional culture oriented toward inclusion, because decisions do not emerge from the real needs of the school community.

The education of teaching professionals is also permeated by this disciplinary paradigm. Most teacher education programs are still based on transmissive teaching models, with little emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and critical reflection. This results in teachers who are insecure and unprepared to deal with the complexity of the inclusive classroom, which reinforces exclusionary practices, even if unintentionally (Greguol, Gobbi & Carraro, 2013). Inclusion requires education that goes beyond technical content, encompassing lived experiences, context analysis, and the development of socio-emotional competencies.

School culture, in turn, is one of the elements most resistant to change. It is nourished by beliefs, values, and attitudes that often reinforce the idea that disability is an insurmountable obstacle to learning. The internalization of these discourses by the school staff contributes to the maintenance of discriminatory practices and to the emptying of inclusion as an educational principle (Gabatz, 2012). Transforming this culture requires not only public policies, but also a continuous effort of education, reflection, and collective listening.

PUBLIC POLICIES AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

Araújo (2023) is dedicated to systematizing the National Policy on Inclusive Education, elucidating its normative foundations, institutional advances, and the obstacles that persist in its application in Brazilian public schools. He argues that, although the legal framework ensures the right to inclusive education, including the guarantee of access, permanence, and learning for all students, the concrete materialization of these guidelines depends on adequate infrastructure, prepared professionals, adapted pedagogical resources, and effective interinstitutional articulation (Araújo, 2023).

Araújo's (2023) bibliographic research reveals that, in many Brazilian schools, the implementation of these policies still occurs in a fragmented manner—with instruments such as multifunctional resource

rooms and support professionals that are formally provided for in legislation, but are often absent or poorly integrated into daily pedagogical practices. This gap between normative discourse and school reality reflects mismatches in the operationalization of rights and weakens the transformative character of inclusive policy (Araújo, 2023).

Araújo (2023) also highlights that the continuing education of teachers is essential for policies to be converted into effective practices. Without professionals prepared to work with diversity, inclusive guidelines remain mere formalities, and everyday challenges, such as curricular adaptations, differentiated methodologies, and diversified assessments, tend to be neglected. He argues that inclusive education is only consolidated when teacher education is articulated with consistent institutional and pedagogical support (Araújo, 2023).

Another point emphasized is the need to continuously evaluate and monitor the effects of inclusion policies in schools. Araújo (2023) stresses that few studies have investigated the real impacts of these policies in terms of students' learning, participation, and sense of belonging. The lack of monitoring contributes to implementation becoming superficial and lacking accountability in relation to the legal objectives established.

Araújo (2023) concludes that the true consolidation of inclusive education depends on the articulation between universal policies and local initiatives, involving families, communities, support networks, and democratic management, so that school practices integrate inclusive principles into their institutional culture, and not merely as bureaucratic compliance with legislation.

The construction of a public policy of inclusive education in Brazil is a complex process involving multiple social actors, legal bodies, and institutional commitments. Since the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution, followed by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN No. 9,394/1996), the understanding that education is a right of all and a duty of the State has been consolidated. This perspective was reinforced by international documents, such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), which supported the paradigm of inclusion as a policy of social justice.

However, as revealed by a critical study on the trajectory of inclusive policies in the country, this legal construction does not by itself guarantee the effectiveness of school practices, because there is a considerable gap between the normative framework and everyday educational reality (Cunha; Andrade; Albuquerque, 2023).

Public inclusion policies have faced structural challenges in their implementation. One of the main obstacles is related to the precarious infrastructure of schools, especially in municipal and state public systems, which lack adequate resources, specialized educational service rooms (AEE), assistive technologies, and physical accessibility. Although the National Education Plan (PNE) establishes specific goals for the universalization of inclusive education, the lack of continuous funding and political commitment has compromised its execution (Araújo, 2023). Thus, even though rights are formally guaranteed, many students continue to remain on the margins of the teaching-learning process due to the absence of basic access conditions.

Another critical point identified by Araújo (2023) is the disarticulation between public policies and pedagogical practices. Although the legislation is relatively robust, many schools are unable to implement inclusive actions systematically. This occurs, to a large extent, because of the scarcity of continuing education specifically focused on inclusion, which limits teachers' ability to adapt their methods and planning to the singularities of students. The absence of adequate technical-pedagogical support and teacher overload aggravate this scenario, contributing to the perpetuation of traditional and exclusionary practices.

Teacher education strategies therefore emerge as a decisive factor for the realization of inclusion. According to Greguol, Gobbi, and Carraro (2013), education for diversity should integrate theory and practice, addressing cultural, emotional, and pedagogical aspects of difference. It is not merely a matter of training teachers technically, but of promoting a shift in conception regarding the school's role in guaranteeing human rights and valuing plurality. This education must be permanent, contextualized, and

interdisciplinary, enabling educators to develop critical autonomy and sensitivity to build inclusive didactic proposals.

In this sense, active methodologies and flexible curricula are essential for operationalizing inclusion in practice. The use of interdisciplinary projects, conversation circles, group work, and problem-based learning fosters the active participation of all students, creating an environment of interaction that values different forms of expression and knowledge construction. As Araujo and Reis (2011) emphasize, these approaches contribute not only to learning, but also to students' civic education, as they promote respect, listening, and the recognition of differences as a constitutive part of the school space.

The adaptation of didactic materials is another fundamental front in inclusion policies. The personalization of resources—such as the provision of books in braille, audiobooks, tactile materials, or interactive software—broadens access to knowledge and respects different learning styles. According to Senna (2004), this personalization is a powerful strategy for ensuring equity, because it recognizes that access to information depends on mediation appropriate to the particularities of each subject. Moreover, it is a practice that reinforces the autonomy of students with disabilities, moving away from the welfare-oriented and paternalistic models still prevalent in many institutions.

CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN THE CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL REALITY

Based on the diagnoses of Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020) and Araújo (2023), it is clear that building an inclusive school implies overcoming the disciplinary model while at the same time strengthening the practical implementation of public policies. This process requires a renewed institutional culture capable of welcoming diversity, promoting pedagogical flexibility, and fostering collaborative practices centered on students as active subjects.

One of the greatest challenges highlighted by both authors is teacher education: according to Araújo (2023), without teachers qualified to plan and implement inclusive strategies, such as

individualized plans, diversified methodologies, and formative assessment, official policies tend to remain in the realm of rhetoric. This need for education echoes the critique by Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020), who identify institutional incapacity to listen and adapt as a cultural obstacle that only reinforces the disciplinary regime.

There is convergence between the authors in their defense of cooperative, personalized pedagogical practices centered on students' potentialities as fundamental. Araújo (2023) cites examples of schools that make progress when they are able to articulate resource rooms, multidisciplinary teams, and participatory projects; Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020), in turn, stress that such practices only thrive in school environments where centralized authority is questioned and co-responsibility and active listening are promoted.

The challenge of assessment is also emphasized: it is urgent to replace traditional evaluative logic with methods that recognize different ways of learning and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in varied forms. This movement toward inclusive assessment aligns with what Araújo (2023) calls "assessment sensitive to diversity," while Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020) emphasize that disciplinary rigidity prevents the adoption of flexible assessment systems.

Institutional resistance, manifested in cultural barriers, political disengagement, and lack of collective commitment, represents a significant obstacle. According to both authors, profound cultural changes require time, committed leadership, and the democratic involvement of all school actors, with reflective practices that question the disciplinary status quo.

However, there are concrete transformative perspectives: continuing education that articulates theory and practice, collaborative networks among schools, participatory monitoring, and the construction of an institutional culture that values difference not merely as tolerance, but as a central pedagogical value. These elements converge toward redesigning the school as a space of belonging.

In summary, the dialogue between Amâncio and Rodrigues (2020) and Araújo (2023) provides a robust picture of the main challenges—both structural and cultural—and of the possibilities for promoting

transformative inclusive practices that articulate a culture of difference with the political, pedagogical, and institutional commitment of the contemporary school.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Inclusive education, in the contemporary scenario, presents itself as an ethical, pedagogical, and social imperative that profoundly challenges the traditional structures of the school. The analysis developed throughout this work demonstrated that the realization of inclusive practices cannot be conceived in a superficial or merely normative manner, but requires structural, cultural, and methodological transformations that reach all levels of the school environment. Overcoming the logic of homogenization, breaking with exclusionary practices, and reconstructing the pedagogical foundations that organize everyday school life are indispensable steps for the school to truly become a space of welcoming, belonging, and the promotion of equity.

It was possible to perceive that, although there are public policies that guarantee the right to inclusion, their application encounters several obstacles, such as the absence of adequate education for teaching professionals, the precariousness of resources, and the maintenance of an institutional culture resistant to difference. This makes evident that inclusion cannot be reduced to a series of technical adaptations or isolated actions, but must be incorporated as a structuring principle of educational practice. The school needs to be open to dialogue, active listening, and the creation of collective strategies that value each subject in his or her singularity.

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