

## AFFECTIVITY AND EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN LEARNING: PATHS TO AN INCLUSIVE AND HUMANIZED SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the importance of affectivity and emotional relationships in the teaching and learning process, highlighting their essential role in building an inclusive and humanized school. The research, with a qualitative and reflective approach, integrates a theoretical review and a teaching experience report developed in a public rural school with a student with special educational needs. Based on classical and contemporary authors such as Vygotsky, Wallon, Freire, Rogers, and Goleman, it discusses how empathy, bonding, and active listening can transform the school environment into a space of acceptance and respect for diversity. The results show that affectivity is a fundamental pedagogical tool for students' holistic development and for promoting inclusion and humanization in the educational context.

**Keywords:** Affectivity; Emotion; Learning; Inclusion; Humanization.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the educational field has undergone intense transformations driven by social, technological, and emotional changes that characterize the 21st century. The contemporary school, as a space for human formation, is called upon to re-signify its pedagogical practices, overcoming the traditional paradigm centered solely on content transmission and recognizing the essential role of affectivity and emotions in learning. The educational process, understood from a holistic perspective, involves cognitive, social, and affective dimensions that intertwine, making it impossible to dissociate knowing from feeling.

Affectivity, often relegated to a secondary role in pedagogical practices, constitutes an essential component of human development and knowledge construction. Henri Wallon (1942) was a pioneer in affirming that child development results from the interaction between emotion, movement, and cognition, arguing that affective experiences directly influence behavior and learning. Lev Vygotsky (1991), in turn, emphasized that teaching and learning occur within social interactions, where the bond between teacher and student assumes a mediating role. For him, emotions mobilize curiosity and motivation—indispensable elements for cognitive advancement.

In the context of contemporary education, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, the emotional dimension of learning has gained even greater relevance. The difficulties imposed by social isolation and remote teaching highlighted the importance of care, empathy, and sensitive listening in the relationship between educators and students. The return to in-person classes revealed an urgent need to rebuild bonds, restore trust, and strengthen the human dimension of schooling. In this scenario, affectivity is not only a means of interaction, but also a tool for rehumanizing teaching, capable of restoring the sense of coexistence, solidarity, and belonging.

From Carl Rogers' (1983) humanistic perspective, meaningful learning occurs when the individual feels accepted and valued in their entirety. The teacher, by adopting an empathetic and authentic posture, creates conditions for the student's potential to flourish. Rogers argues that education should be person-centered, respecting emotions and subjectivity. This conception aligns with Paulo Freire's (1996) thought, which advocates "amorosidade" (lovingness) as a fundamental pedagogical principle: teaching requires ethical commitment, sensitivity, and openness to dialogue.

Thus, affectivity is not limited to expressions of kindness or affection but constitutes a pedagogical category endowed with intentionality and theoretical foundation. It permeates the organization of practices, activity planning, and the form of interaction among subjects within the school space. The presence of affection in the educational process enables the construction of an inclusive and humanized school, where students are recognized in their uniqueness and respected in their rhythms and ways of learning.



Beyond its pedagogical value, affectivity plays a crucial role in inclusive education. Teaching experience shows that students with specific educational needs respond better in environments where they feel welcomed and understood. Empathy and active listening are tools that foster the development of bonds and promote the effective participation of these students in school life. Inclusion, therefore, goes beyond legal and structural dimensions and materializes in the human relationships established in the classroom.

This study aims to analyze the role of affectivity and emotional relationships in the learning process, highlighting their contribution to building an inclusive and humanized school. The investigation starts from the understanding that affection is a structuring element of the educational process, determining academic and emotional success. Furthermore, it seeks to present an experience report that demonstrates how emotional relationships can transform school life and strengthen students' holistic development.

The scientific relevance of this work lies in its proposal to discuss affectivity from a critical and humanizing approach, articulating theory and practice. By reflecting on the role of emotions in learning, it intends to contribute to strengthening a pedagogy committed to equity, respect, and sensitivity, reaffirming the principle that educating is, above all, an act of love, dialogue, and hope.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative, descriptive, and reflective, based on theoretical assumptions of the interpretative approach, which recognizes the subject as the center of the knowledge construction process and values concrete experiences lived in the educational context. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1994), qualitative research allows understanding educational phenomena from the participants' perspective, privileging meanings, perceptions, and feelings.

The study adopts the experience report method as its main investigative strategy. This type of methodology, according to Minayo (2001), enables the researcher to critically reflect on previously lived practices, analyzing their pedagogical, emotional, and social implications. When scientifically structured, the experience report goes beyond narrative and assumes the role of an instrument for reflection and systematization of teaching practice, allowing dialogue between theory and reality.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE CONTEXT

The experiences reported in this work were lived throughout the researcher's practice as a teacher in the early years of elementary education, in municipal public schools located in rural communities of Rio Grande do Norte, where pedagogical work is characterized by multi-grade classes and by a very close coexistence among members of the school community.



In this scenario, teaching practice is marked by the constant need for adaptation, sensitivity, and creativity. Each student brings with them unique stories, rhythms, and emotions, which require the teacher not only to master content but also to possess emotional and affective competence to mediate relationships and promote meaningful learning.

Among the experiences analyzed are actions developed in literacy and school inclusion projects, with emphasis on activities aimed at strengthening students' self-esteem and their sense of belonging to the school community. In all these moments, affectivity emerged as the central axis of the educational process, both in mediating learning and in building bonds among teachers, students, and families.

#### OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION PROCEDURES.

Observations were carried out during the development of pedagogical practices that integrated cognitive and emotional aspects. Particularly noteworthy are moments experienced in shared reading activities, collective text production, conversation circles, and coexistence workshops, in which students were encouraged to express feelings, personal experiences, and opinions.

Participant observation, combined with reflective recording in a field diary, made it possible to identify situations in which affectivity acted as a mediator of learning. Attentive observation and sensitive listening allowed us to understand that the student's emotional involvement with the activity directly influences their motivation and performance.

In one of the experiences, for example, it was observed that students with reading and writing difficulties showed greater commitment when activities were associated with meaningful themes from their reality and conducted in an affectionate manner. Verbal encouragement, sincere praise, and recognition of individual effort proved to be effective strategies for promoting progress in learning and strengthening students' confidence.

#### THE EXPERIENCE REPORT AS A PATH FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT.

By adopting the experience report as a method, this study also proposes a reflection on teaching practice. Each reported experience is understood as an opportunity for learning and reconstructing pedagogical practice. Affectivity, in this process, is analyzed not only as a feeling but as an epistemological and formative dimension of teaching, as it guides ethical posture, sensitive perspective, and commitment to the humanization of education.

The systematization of these experiences contributes to strengthening reflective teacher education, in which the teacher recognizes themselves as a researcher of their own practice. This conception aligns with Schön (1992), who advocates the figure of the "reflective professional," capable of learning from their actions, interpreting context, and reinventing methodologies.



Thus, the methodology adopted in this study articulates experience and reflection, theory and practice, in a continuous movement of constructing pedagogical knowledge. The analysis of experiences makes it possible to understand that affection, when intentionally incorporated into educational practice, transforms the school environment into a space of trust, dialogue, and belonging, promoting meaningful and truly humanized learning.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results presented in this study emerge from reflections on real pedagogical experiences within the classroom context, in which affectivity proved to be a determining element for the success of educational practices and for strengthening bonds between teacher and student. The analysis of these experiences reveals that the emotional dimension of learning not only favors cognitive development but also contributes to the ethical, social, and human formation of those involved in the educational process.

In general, it was observed that school environments marked by healthy and welcoming affective relationships tend to show greater student engagement in activities, as well as more significant levels of participation and cooperation. Pedagogical practices guided by empathy and active listening enhance students' sense of belonging and self-confidence, generating direct impacts on learning.

During observation and reflective analysis of teaching practices, it was found that simple gestures—such as dialogue, praise, recognition of effort, demonstration of patience, and the use of encouraging words—positively influence students' behavior and disposition. These emotional elements become mediators of the teaching process, promoting engagement and awakening interest in knowledge.

Teaching practice also revealed that, in situations of conflict, anxiety, or insecurity, the teacher's affective posture is essential to restore emotional balance and ensure the continuity of pedagogical work. The educator who listens, understands, and respects the student's limits fosters an environment of trust, where mistakes are perceived as a natural part of learning. This approach strengthens what Vygotsky (1991) defines as the zone of proximal development, as affective interaction creates the necessary conditions for the student to progress with the support of others.

Another important aspect highlighted in the analyzed experiences is that affectivity acts as an integrating element of differences, allowing each student to be recognized in their uniqueness. In heterogeneous classes—with different rhythms, backgrounds, and learning levels—the emotional bond established between teacher and student becomes a channel for accessing knowledge and an instrument of inclusion. When students feel welcomed, respected, and valued, they engage more actively in the educational process.

This finding aligns with Carl Rogers' (1983) reflections, affirming that genuine learning occurs when the environment is permeated by empathy, acceptance, and authenticity. Likewise, Paulo Freire



(1996) emphasizes that teaching requires lovingness, which implies seeing the student as a complete being, with emotions, dreams, and potentialities.

During the reported practices, situations were observed in which the simple act of listening to the student, understanding their difficulties, and encouraging their verbal and creative expression resulted in significant improvements in school performance. In this case, affectivity proved to be not only a strategy for rapprochement but a pedagogical resource for transformation, capable of promoting students' protagonism and autonomy.

Furthermore, the presence of affection contributed to strengthening the relationship between school and community. By involving families in school activities—through projects, presentations, and collective actions—emotional bonds extended beyond the classroom, creating a support network that enhances students' development and reinforces their sense of belonging to the school space.

These observations confirm that affectivity plays a structuring role in the educational process. A school that values dialogue, respect, and human care forms individuals who are more conscious and cooperative, prepared to live with differences and face the challenges of the contemporary world. According to Goleman (1995), the development of emotional intelligence is as important as that of reason, as it enables individuals to deal with their own emotions and understand those of others, making coexistence more ethical and balanced.

Therefore, the results obtained through the analyzed teaching experiences reinforce that the success of learning depends largely on the quality of relationships established in the school environment. The teacher, as a mediator of knowledge and emotions, plays a fundamental role in building a sensitive and inclusive education that integrates reason, affection, and action.

Thus, it can be affirmed that affection, when intentionally and consciously incorporated into pedagogical practices, transforms the classroom into a space of listening, trust, and hope, promoting not only students' intellectual development but also their holistic formation as human beings..

## CONCLUSION

The analysis developed in this study reaffirmed that affectivity constitutes a central axis in the teaching and learning process, being an essential element for consolidating an inclusive, humanized, and transformative pedagogical practice. The teaching experiences reflected throughout the research demonstrate that the act of educating goes beyond the mere transmission of content and is grounded in relationships of trust, empathy, and sensitive listening, in which teacher and student jointly construct knowledge and a sense of belonging to the school.

The results showed that the affective bond sustains meaningful learning and the holistic development of the student. The presence of affection in the classroom acts as a mediator of social



interactions, facilitates overcoming emotional and cognitive barriers, and creates an environment conducive to curiosity and creativity. In contexts marked by diversity and the challenges of inclusion, affectivity assumes the role of an emancipatory pedagogical tool, capable of transforming school life into a space of care, respect, and equity.

From a theoretical perspective, authors such as Vygotsky, Wallon, Rogers, Freire, and Goleman support the understanding that human development is an integral process in which emotion and cognition continuously interrelate. Learning, from this viewpoint, is both an intellectual and emotional act. Thus, teaching requires not only planning and technical knowledge but also sensitivity, ethics, and lovingness—indispensable characteristics for contemporary teaching.

In professional practice, affective approaches proved decisive for building democratic learning environments where all students, regardless of their conditions and rhythms, find opportunities to express themselves, learn, and coexist. The teacher who adopts an affective posture becomes a mediator of emotions and human values, promoting dialogue and empathy as formative principles.

Therefore, this study reinforces the need to rethink teacher education, systematically including the development of socio-emotional competencies. It is essential that educators be prepared to recognize their own emotions and those of their students, understand the impact of interpersonal relationships on the learning environment, and act with balance and empathy when facing the daily challenges of the classroom.

Affectivity, therefore, is not an ornament of pedagogical practice but an epistemological and ethical dimension of education, as it enables the encounter between knowing and feeling, between knowledge and humanity. It is in this encounter that meaningful, living, and transformative learning is produced.

Moreover, a school that cultivates affectivity in its relationships becomes a space of hope and belonging. As Paulo Freire (1996) states, educating is an act of love, and loving, in the pedagogical context, means committing to the other, believing in their ability to learn, and providing conditions for them to flourish fully. This perspective reaffirms the importance of an education committed to human dignity and to building a more just and supportive society.

Finally, this study reinforces the conviction that the path to a truly inclusive school lies in valuing emotions, building bonds, and recognizing that affectivity is the heart of the educational process. Educating with affection is educating for life—it is forming human beings capable of thinking, feeling, acting, and coexisting in a world that urgently needs more empathy, sensitivity, and humanity.



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