Entre la utopía y la realidad en los caminos hacia la inclusión con justicia social

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Abstract:

This article critically analyzes the challenges and advances in the process of school inclusion in the light of social justice, considering the limits and possibilities of the use of Assistive Technologies (AT). Although Brazilian legislation provides for the right to inclusive education, the reality in schools reveals a significant distance between the legal discourse and its implementation. The research, of a qualitative and bibliographic nature, is based on authors such as Fraser, Mantoan, Santos and Bersch, and points out that inclusion is still restricted, in many cases, to enrollment, without ensuring effective participation and learning. It is evident that the absence of adequate teacher training, the precariousness of public policies and the scarcity of technological resources compromise the advancement of inclusive practices. However, when integrated into the pedagogical project, Assistive Technologies have the potential to expand access to the curriculum, promote autonomy and reduce communication and mobility barriers. The study concludes that school inclusion with social justice requires intersectoral policies, continuous investment in teacher training and a paradigm shift that recognizes diversity as a pedagogical and social value. Between utopia and reality, it is urgent to move forward with concrete actions that materialize the educational rights of all students.

Keywords: school inclusion; social justice; assistive technologies; teacher training; public policies

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Introduction

The inclusion of people with disabilities in the school environment has become one of the main pillars of contemporary education, especially in light of the principles of equity, social justice and human rights. Over the last decades, important legal and conceptual advances have been achieved, such as the enactment of the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 13,146/2015), the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) and the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC). Such documents reinforce the right of all to quality education, ensuring the access, permanence, participation and development of students with disabilities in the regular school system.

However, even in the face of legal and normative progress, the effectiveness of school inclusion still faces structural, pedagogical and attitudinal barriers. Many schools remain physically and pedagogically unprepared to meet diversity, and education professionals do not always have adequate training to deal with the specificities of students with disabilities. The reality is still far from the ideal provided for in the legais frameworks, revealing a gap between the discourse of inclusion and its materialization in educational practices. In this sense, the debate on school inclusion takes on a critical character, requiring not only normative analysis, but also reflection on the possible ways to transform the ideal of inclusion into an effective practice.

The justification for this study is based on the urgency of understanding the limits and possibilities of inclusive education in the Brazilian social and educational context. In a society marked by historical inequalities, multiple exclusions and devaluation of diversity, it is necessary to rethink the role of the school as a transforming agent and promoter of social justice. Inclusion, therefore, should not be seen as a concession, but as a legal, ethical and pedagogical requirement. As Oliveira (2013) states, a school that segregates denies its sociais function and deepens the exclusion already experienced by subjects in other social spaces. The transformation of this reality involves intersectoral policies, the continuing education of teachers and the adoption of pedagogical strategies that include, among other things, other aspects, the use of Assistive Technology as a tool for democratizing access to the curriculum.

In view of this, the general objective of this article is to analyze the challenges and possibilities of school and social inclusion of people with disabilities from the perspective of social justice, considering the articulation between public policies, pedagogical practices and the use of assistive technologies. To this end, the following specific objectives are defined: to discuss the concept of inclusion as a right and ethical-educational principle; to investigate how the utopia of inclusion influences (or contrasts with) real pedagogical practices in Brazilian schools; identify public policies that contribute to the effectiveness of inclusive education with equity; and to analyze the role of assistive technology as a tool for access and permanence of students with disabilities in the school environment with satisfactory cognitive performance according to each characteristic and specificity presented by the target audience in question here.

The methodology adopted in this study is qualitative, with emphasis on bibliographic and documentary research. Classic and contemporary authors in the area of education and inclusion were analyzed, such as Mantoan (2006; 2011), Freire (1996), Oliveira (2013) and Diniz (2007), as well as legislation and official documents that guide inclusion policies in Brazil. The analysis of the data was carried out through the critical interpretation of the texts, based on discourse analysis and a perspective of social justice applied to education.

This article thus seeks to contribute to the broadening of the debate on school inclusion, showing that the utopia of inclusion can and should be transformed into a concrete reality, based on collective commitments and transformative educational practices.

Theoretical Background

The conception of inclusion based on social justice is rooted in the principles of equity, human dignity and active participation (Fraser, 2006). The Brazilian Law of Inclusion (Brasil, 2015) reinforces the need to remove barriers to the full development of people with disabilities. Authors such as Mitler (2000) and Mantoan (2003) defend a school that welcomes diversity as part of its educational function. The TA, according to the Technical Assistance Committee (CAT), includes every resource, methodology, service or strategy that promotes

the autonomy of people with disabilities, being essential for inclusive pedagogical practice.

Inclusion and Social Justice: a critical look

School inclusion needs to be understood as part of a broader social justice project. Nancy Fraser (2007) proposes a three-dimensional approach to justice: redistribution, recognition, and representation. In the educational context, this entails not only providing physical access to school, but also ensuring that all students are recognized in their diversity, have fair access to resources, and actively participate in decisions that affect their school trajectory.

Social justice, in this sense, is not limited to material equity, but to overcoming exclusionary structures that permeate institutions. As Diniz (2012) states, inclusion is achieved to the extent that a school is built for all, and not for the "equal". Confronting educational inequalities, therefore, requires structural and cultural changes. The conception of a fair and inclusive education is also supported by authors such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007), who defends the need for an **"**ecology of knowledge" and the overcoming of the epistemicide present in traditional pedagogical practices. For him, the school must be open to the plurality of experiences, bodies, cultures and ways of learning, breaking with colonial and homogeneous models.

Inclusive Education as a right and constitutional principle

The Federal Constitution of 1988 ensures, in article 205, that education is a right of all and a duty of the State and the family. The LDB (Law No. 9,394/96) and the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI – Law No. 13,146/2015) reinforce this principle, establishing that education must take place with "equal conditions for access and permanence in school". The National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Mec, 2008) represents a milestone in defending the right of students who are the target audience of special education to attend regular classes in regular schools. According to Mantoan (2006), this implies rethinking the very purpose of the school, making it a space for coexistence and valuing difference.

Inclusion, therefore, is not a concession made by society to people with disabilities, nor is it a favor from the school to its students is, above all, a legal, ethical and pedagogical imperative. The Federal Constitution of 1988, the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Law No. 13,146/2015) and the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) legally support the obligation to guarantee the access, permanence, participation and learning of all students, especially those with disabilities, global developmental disorders and high abilities/giftedness, in ordinary education.

From an ethical point of view, to include is to recognize human dignity, it is to value differences and to promote respect for diversity as a fundamental principle of coexistence. It is a commitment to human rights and to overcoming the historical inequalities that marginalize certain groups. From a pedagogical perspective, inclusion requires the rethinking of educational practices, curricular organization, evaluation and teacher training, in order to respond to the needs of all students, and not only those who fit the normative standards of the traditional school.

As Oliveira (2013) points out, a school that segregates denies its sociais function and deepens the exclusion already experienced by the subjects in other social spaces. This means that the school environment has a central role in promoting equity: by excluding, it not only fails in its constitutional duty, but also reproduces and legitimizes the symbolic and structural violence that people with disabilities face in the labor market, in public spaces, and in social relations. The school that does not adapt to diversity, in fact, naturalizes inequalities and perpetuates an ableist and excluding logic.

To include, therefore, is to recognize the school as a space for social transformation, as a place where difference is not a problem, but a starting point for the construction of a truly democratic pedagogy. In this context, inclusion is part of the field of social justice, as it aims to correct historical distortions of access to knowledge and full citizenship. It is not just about ensuring physical presence in classrooms, but about ensuring active participation, meaningful learning and integral development for all students.

Assistive Technology: Concepts and Applicability

The term *Assistive Technology* originates from the English expression *Assistive Technology*, officially enshrined in United States legislation through Public Law 100-407, integrated into the *American with Disabilities Act* (ADA). In Brazil, the definition was consolidated by the Technical Aid Committee (CAT), linked to the National Coordination for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (Corde), which recognizes it as a:

> "an area of knowledge, with an interdisciplinary characteristic, which encompasses products, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices and services that aim to promote functionality, related to the activity and participation, of people with disabilities, disabilities or reduced mobility, aiming at their autonomy, independence, quality of life and social inclusion" (Brasil, 2007).

Therefore, Assistive Technology (AT) is understood as a strategic field to support inclusion, which contributes significantly to the expansion of the functional capacities of individuals with disabilities in various contexts: educational, social, work and family. More than devices, it represents a set of solutions designed to eliminate barriers and provide equal opportunities.

Garcia and Galvão Filho (2012, p. 12) point out that the expression "assistive technology" is still in the process of conceptual construction, and its scope goes beyond the physical limits of school institutions, being applicable to the daily life of any citizen with disabilities, at different stages of life. For the authors, AT dates back to the dawn of humanity, as exemplified by the use of a piece of wood used as an improvised cane, a rudimentary but functional resource to ensure the mobility and independence of its user.

In this sense, Lauand (2005, p. 30 apud Manzini, 2005, p. 84) states that AT covers an extensive range of mechanical, electronic or digital devices and supports aimed at meeting different types of disabilities, whether physical, sensory, intellectual or multiple. These resources range from wheelchairs, prostheses and orthoses, to alternative communication software, screen readers, architectural adaptations and inclusive pedagogical objects.

In addition, the applicability of AT in the educational environment is of paramount importance. Garcia and Galvão Filho (2012) point out that there are numerous possibilities for simple, low-cost and easy-to-implement resources in inclusive classrooms. Among these, bookends, fixing materials with adhesive

tape, pencil thickeners, boards adapted for wheelchairs and adapted writing or reading instruments stand out. Such strategies favor the active participation of students with disabilities, promoting their learning, interaction and autonomy in the educational process.

The role of the teacher, in this context, is fundamental for the mediation and adequacy of these resources according to the specific needs of their students. Creativity, attentive listening and knowledge about the functionalities of AT can transform the school experience of students with disabilities, ensuring compliance with the principle of equity and the realization of the right to quality inclusive education. Thus, it understands that Assistive Technology is not just a set of tools, but an ethical, technical and political posture that aims to overcome inequalities and build a more accessible and fair society for all.

Assistive Technologies: mediations for equity

Assistive Technologies (AT) are fundamental resources for the effectiveness of school inclusion. According to the definition of the Technical Aids Committee (Cat/Mec, 2009), AT are "resources and services that contribute to providing or expanding functional abilities of people with disabilities". They do not replace pedagogy, but function as bridges to access to the curriculum, communication, mobility and autonomy.

Authors such as Bersch (2013) and Sassaki (2005) highlight that the use of AT should be integrated into the school's pedagogical project and cannot be thought of as an isolated prop or technical resource. The effectiveness of technologies depends on pedagogical intentionality, teacher training and the availability of technical support and interdisciplinary monitoring.

The use of screen reading software, alternative communication boards, digital readers, among others, can ensure that students with visual, motor, intellectual or multiple disabilities effectively participate in school activities. However, unequal access to AT also reflects regional and socioeconomic disparities, revealing once again the boundaries between the utopia of inclusion and the reality experienced in many public school systems.

Studies indicate that, despite inclusive policies, the presence of students with disabilities in regular schools does not guarantee, by itself, meaningful

learning (D'almeida, 2012). The literature shows that many teachers still feel unprepared to deal with diversity, and there is a lack of resources and technical-pedagogical support (Sassaki, 2010).

The analysis of data from the School Census reveals that the enrollment of students with disabilities has grown, but there is still a concentration in certain regions and the absence of adequate support in many public schools. It is possible to reflect that within its limits and possibilities, the use of assistive technologies (AT) can expand educational opportunities, facilitating communication, mobility, learning and social interaction of students with disabilities (Borges, 2017). However, its use is still limited by factors such as high cost, lack of specific teacher training, and absence of effective public policies for its implementation. On the other hand, the creative appropriation of free technologies and the development of accessible pedagogical solutions through collaboration between teachers and families have shown positive results.

Recommendations for Public Policies and Teacher Training

Utopia inspires and guides practice. It is not a useless illusion, but an ethical and pedagogical guide. Dreaming of an inclusive school may seem utopian, but it is this dream that motivates practical actions, public policies, social movements and committed educators. Especially because inclusion starts with small real changes, but always guided by a higher ideal. To move from utopia to inclusive reality, it is essential to: Invest in the initial and continuing training of teachers, with a focus on inclusive education and the use of assistive technologies; create and strengthen inclusion support centers with multiprofessional teams; expand funding for the acquisition and maintenance of AT resources in schools; promote policies that encourage an inclusive culture in the school environment and in society; stimulate research and low-cost technological development aimed at local needs.

Em retrospectiva com o andamento da educação inclusiva de anos anteriores e possível pontuar metas que foram cumpridas na sua totalidade, outras que foram efetivadas por parte, e algumas que ainda estão em andamento, ou seja, não evoluíram do quadro utópico, mas é uma proposta e um ideal de melhoria e avanço no contexto da inclusão social e escolar.

The analysis of the data and the literature reveals an ambiguous and sometimes contradictory scenario regarding school inclusion in Brazil. On the one hand, there is an important set of legal, institutional and discursive advances. The implementation of the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), the creation of multifunctional resource rooms, the provision of Specialized Educational Service (SES) and the enactment of the Brazilian Inclusion Law (2015) represent fundamental milestones in the recognition of diversity and in the fight against exclusion in the school environment.

Another positive point lies in the greater visibility of the theme in teacher training, in curricular guidelines and in academic and social debates. Many professionals are open to rethinking their pedagogical practices, and some education systems have advanced in the articulation between inclusion, training and the use of Assistive Technologies (AT). The increase in the enrollment of students with disabilities in the regular school system is also a relevant piece of data, although it is not, in itself, an indicator of effective inclusion.

However, challenges persist in a structural and daily way. The reality observed in schools, especially in peripheral and rural contexts and of social vulnerability, contrasts with the normative ideal. There is marked inequality in the implementation of public inclusion policies, marked by factors such as: Lack of continuity and articulation between federal, state and municipal programs; Lack of specific and continuous training of teachers to deal with diversity and make meaningful use of Assistive Technologies; Precarious infrastructure, which often makes physical, communicational, and pedagogical accessibility impossible; Devaluation of the education professional, which directly impacts motivation and preparation to deal with complex situations in the classroom.

These limits are aggravated by the logic of superficial inclusion, which is often restricted to the entry of students with disabilities into the education system, without guaranteeing their permanence, active participation and meaningful learning. The Specialized Educational Service, although an important resource, is not always articulated with the school's pedagogical project, being treated as a parallel instance.

In addition, unequal access to Assistive Technologies is one of the main obstacles. While some schools have resources and technical support, others do not even have basic connectivity or qualified professionals to operate the devices. This situation reflects a deep regional and socioeconomic inequality, revealing that the effectiveness of inclusion still depends on the CEP, and not only on legislation.

Por outro lado, experiências exitosas em escolas públicas, sobretudo onde há apoio da gestão, envolvimento das famílias e formação docente sensível às questões da inclusão, demonstram que a realidade pode ser transformada com vontade política, compromisso ético e investimento adequado. Projetos que integram as TA ao cotidiano escolar, respeitam os tempos e modos de aprendizagem de cada estudante, e promovem o protagonismo dos sujeitos com deficiência apontam caminhos possíveis.

On the other hand, successful experiences in public schools, especially where there is management support, family involvement and teacher training sensitive to inclusion issues, demonstrate that reality can be transformed with political will, ethical commitment and adequate investment. Projects that integrate AT into the school routine, respect the times and modes of learning of each student, and promote the protagonism of subjects with disabilities point out possible paths.

METHODOLOGY

The research developed a qualitative approach, based on secondary data found in the SciELO and Google Scholar databases. The selection criteria prioritized studies published between 2010 and 2023, with a focus on social inclusion and justice. The analysis followed the principles of content analysis, categorizing the data into thematic axes.

Several studies were reviewed, highlighting theoretical perspectives on utopia and reality in inclusion. The systematization of the data allowed the identification of patterns and contradictions in the discourses. Connectives such as "although", "therefore", and "consequently" articulated the logical relationships between the arguments.

The interpretation of the results of these socioeconomic and political contexts present in the sources. The triangulation of authors strengthened the consistency of the conclusions, avoiding generalizations. In this way, a methodology ensured rigor in the construction of knowledge on the subject.

CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

The construction of an inclusive education with social justice requires much more than good intentions or idealized speeches. It requires articulated intersectoral actions, involving not only the school, but also the areas of health, social assistance, culture and human rights, to ensure the necessary support for students with disabilities in their entirety. In addition, continuous investment in teacher training is essential, which trains education professionals to deal with diversity in the classroom, promoting accessible, welcoming and contextualized pedagogical practices. Public policies need to be effective and committed to equity, ensuring not only access, but also the permanence and school success of students with disabilities. This means offering physical, human, pedagogical and technological resources appropriate to the reality of each school and each student. In this scenario, Assistive Technology should not be seen as a magic solution, but as a strategic instrument that expands the possibilities of learning, communication, mobility and participation of students with disabilities. It helps to break down barriers that previously seemed insurmountable, contributing to transforming the school environment into a more democratic and inclusive space. The great contemporary challenge is to transform the inclusion of a utopian ideal mentioned only in legislation or planning into a concrete practice, present in the daily life of schools. This transformation requires political will, social mobilization, active listening to families and students themselves, as well as a sensitive and committed look from the entire school community. The utopia of inclusion should not be dismissed as an unattainable dream, but understood as an inspiring horizon that guides the struggles and necessary changes. After all, it is by pursuing this ideal that reais paths arem built for a fairer, more humane and accessible education for all. Assistive Technology, although not an isolated solution, represents a powerful instrument to make possible what was previously

seen as unfeasible. The challenge lies in making inclusion a real practice, not just a utopian promise.

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