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PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO EVERYONE’S SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Abstract: Since 1948, with the enshrinement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, not only the right to Education has been claimed, but also the right to accessible and dignified schooling for all. Corresponding to the guidelines aspired by UNESCO (1994, 2005, 2009, 2017), it is up to Education to find, not only a reflective path, about its contribution to people's lives, but also to respond to the inherent needs of the right for Difference. In view of the multiplicity of population existing in schools, plus the multicultural enrichment, it is important that the student becomes aware of his place in the educational community to which he belongs. The great current challenge is related to the effectiveness in the operationalization of education for all, at a time when the term Inclusion gains prominence in school life. The Portuguese legislation in force reflects Inclusive Education and the re-adaptation of formats, with a view to developing skills that enhance access, participation and individual progress. Given the premises of a democratic education aimed at all, schools are required to adopt methodologies that are guided by the commitment to a process that aims to respond to the diversity of everyone's needs and potential. This article prioritizes highlighting a study of a Learning Community, and its potential in achieving Inclusive Education, through Successful Educational Actions. It is intended to aim at ways of achieving full socialization and academic success for all, as well as improving family and community cohesion. This way, we propose to reflect on the applicability of this project, as a preponderant strategy in the teaching and learning process of any individual.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Difference; Learning Communities; Successful Educational Actions.

INTRODUCTION

Current schools, characterized by the multiplicity of children and young people, with and without special educational needs (specific needs, with the new nomenclature, according to DL54/2018, of 6 July, of Portuguese legislation), are the pillar of a respectful society difference, dignity, respect and equality of opportunity. In this sense, and according to UNESCO guidelines, it is imperative that "(...) all students must learn together (...) regardless of the differences they present (...), styles and learning rhythms (...)", in order to validate and ensure "(...) a good level of education for all". (UNESCO, 1994, p. 21).

Attention to aspects related to student diversity and heterogeneity is essential to prevent and solve problems of social and academic exclusion, discrimination and inadaptation, often related to situations of disadvantage. Today it is believed that the school was created, not only to teach, but to prepare citizens for life in society – learning to live with the Other, in Community. How to meet the demands of an inclusive school if they are not ready to readjust methodologies, dynamics and pedagogically differentiated strategies and meet the needs of all those who are part of the educational community?

It must be taken into account that each individual has their own pace and learning profile. This idea triggered a greater concern between what could be applied as differentiation and/or individualization, for each student. According to Maia and Freire (2020, p. 8):

(...) a way of remediation during the class, a response to students who "deviate" from the standard class, common to all, and a kind of individualized teaching, i.e., a means of responding to the specific difficulties of the weakest students in school. (...).

Thus, the educational systems of each

country, and schools in general, must be given the obligation to practice principles “of interaction and inclusion”, which will provide “a predisposition to deal with diversity”, as well as, through knowledge experienced and shared among all, project students to “know how to live together” (Serrano, 2005, p.69). It is in this need to grow (in the case of the student) and to educate (in the case of the school) towards and in diversity, that the concept of Inclusive Education takes place, which is seen as a mission in and of the community. Is this the commitment to a “(...) process that aims to respond to the diversity of needs and potential of each and every one.”? (DL n.º.54/2018, p.2919)

This adequate, rigorous and egalitarian way, which aims to respond to the diversity of all students, will be the main objective of today's education.

It is intended to move from the dream to the effective operationalization of anyone's fundamental right (Abbas, 2016), with or without disabilities. The construction of “(...) a quality school with everyone and for everyone, in a perspective of inclusion and articulation with families and with the Community (...)” (General Directorate of Education of the Ministry of Education of the Portuguese Government) is idealized.).

This way, in order to guarantee equal access to public schools, promoting educational success and equal opportunities, this study proposes to investigate the operationalization of Successful Educational Actions, of a Learning Community, in the sense of sustainability of Inclusive Education.

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT INCLUSION?

At the outset, when we talk about Inclusion, in a (so-called) inclusive school, we refer to the one that gathers all students, without any

distinction or rejection, in the regular schools in their area of residence. An institution is therefore sought for each and every student as a unique being, making them have access to the best living conditions, joint learning, living and learning to live with their peers, in acceptance, mutual assistance and solidarity.

However, and despite the school reality being different from school to school, from context to context, from country to country, the nomenclature used today – Inclusion – intends to be universal. It becomes imperative that all those involved in the educational process act, directly or indirectly, being willing to assume this responsibility, theoretical and practical, and everything that it involves. It is intended to claim what the OECD report (2021) directs and reports for equity in Education.

In this sense, and according to Silva (2011) the inclusive school is built. To this end, a reorganization of regular schools is unavoidable and that the entire educational community feels prepared for this schooling. It depends on the legislative framework that will support it, but it will only be consolidated with inclusive practices – the know-how – as well as the attitude with which this is envisaged (Silva, 2011). It will only make sense if the school institution develops an adequate education, or appropriate, to the totality of its public.

Talking about Inclusion is talking from a student-centered perspective, and that in addition to providing them, “(...) the opportunity for them to make meaningful learning, can respond to their individual needs (...)”, planning their educational success (Serrano, 2005), p. 71). An inclusive school is where “students and teachers are linked by active feelings of friendship and mutual attention, thus promoting the construction of a climate of human interaction” (Serrano, 2005, p. 71). Contributing to “the qualitative

reinforcement of pedagogical practices”, it is intended that the inclusive school, this way, more open, assume the disability and, facing it, look ahead and project a future suitable for all children and that knows respond to their needs (Serrano, 2005, p. 71).

This culture of inclusion (Correia & Serrano, 2000, cit. by Serrano, 2005), will only make sense if we witness the change from a simple Educational Community to an Inclusive Community, where everyone assumes their mission and significant commitment to a school collective. Therefore, the idea is formalized that Inclusion cannot be assumed as an end in itself, but as “an opportunity to challenge practices (...) developed in the school context (...)”, in order to “find ways to new ways of transmitting the innovative paradigms of educational reform that it represents” (Rodrigues, 2011, pp. 13, 26).

If Inclusive Education itself assumes that Education is for All (EASNIE, 2018), in which everyone learns together, in a heterogeneous way and within the classroom (Sanchez & Teodoro, 2006), the school is directed to overcoming barriers that may prevent everyone from participating and learning (Maia & Freire, 2020). This presupposes the development of inclusive cultures, policies and practices not only in schools at the individual level, but also in education systems at a general level.

Trying to respond to the specific needs of each student, through racial, cultural, economic, linguistic and ethnic balance, and to cognitive and multicultural diversity, the challenge of proposing a (so-called) Inclusive School has become attractive, in the sense that the main objective is to make the learner feel an integral part of his/her own knowledge construction process. This way, promoting meetings, it is taken to Education for Citizenship, at the Escola do Futuro, called

Inclusive, accessible to all.

To this end, the principle of strengthening everyone’s ability to live change actively and creatively is revealed, to take care of each student with their own uniqueness, being concerned with the development of their personal projects and with the construction of an open relationship. and solidarity with others.

Therefore, what is the contribution of Education in this domain? And what about the Schools? They must play an essential role in understanding “humanity (...) about itself (...) helping to contextualize our existence (...) preparing us for change (...) about our own future” (Carneiro, 2001, p: 51).

The current society, which informs, knows and learns, must be anchored to the four pillars of Education, mentioned by UNESCO (1999): “provide a taste for learning” (UNESCO, 1999, p.236), considering Education as an end in itself – learn to know; putting theoretical wisdom into practice - learning to do; respecting differences, “understanding the other” (UNESCO, 1999, p. 237) – learning to live with others; and, knowing ourselves, becoming self-regulating, with autonomy, discernment and social responsibility – learning to be.

It is based on the fundamental principle of the Inclusive School, “(...) where each and every one of the students, regardless of their personal and social situation, find answers that enable them to acquire a level of education and training that facilitates their full social inclusion” (DL 54/2018, p.2918).

In short, it will be imperative to give a voice to all students, with and without specific needs, so that, speaking in the first person, they can give their testimony of what it is like to be and feel included in the school to which they belong. It becomes a priority to listen to them, to their desires and anxieties, expectations and disappointments, in order to make sure that

this Inclusion is not guided only by the issue of human rights, or is worth the certificates of competence that the different educational subsystems grant them.

Is it the full commitment to a “(...) process that aims to respond to the diversity of needs and potential of each and every one.”? (DL n°54/2018, p.2919). Primarily, recognition of results is required, monitoring the educational needs of each student, as well as the way in which the Educational Community itself acts in this sense. It seeks to provide answers to improve its pedagogical mission, consolidating the feeling of belonging to these students.

Thus, it is relevant to address questions such as: What to do at school? What to do with the school? We often answer these questions, from the conviction “ought to be” or “have to be”, to the normalizing position, which obviously, is just another way of denying differences, profoundly and involuntarily unfair. It is requested that the simple “being” passively at school, gives way to “existing” interactively, with each other.

The concept of a school on the way to inclusion, envisages a new educational paradigm - the problem does not focus on the child or young person, with or without specific needs - but on the incapacity of society, here personified by the school institution, and the entire educational community, in giving effective and fruitful answers to the problems felt.

In line with this latest version of Inclusive Education, individual differences are seen not as limitations, but “as opportunities to democratize and enrich learning” (UNESCO, 2019, p.13). To this end, educational agents, students, institutions and the educational community allow themselves to be challenged by differences and assume themselves as “responsible for the formation of generations that seek, in education, the foundations (...)

to envision what they will be” (Dias, 2004, p. 169).

In Portugal, it is in the publication of DL3/2008, of 7 January, that the Portuguese legislature aims to put into practice the concept of inclusion, aiming at “educational equity, (...) results” (DL n°3/2008, 2008, p.154). Recently, with DL54/2018, of 6 July, the government action bets on “responding to the diversity of students’ needs, by increasing everyone’s participation in learning and in the life of the school community” (DL n°54/2018, p. 2918).

More recently, Souza and Machado (2019) emphasize the fact that Inclusive Education “(...) is not limited to receiving students with school disabilities, but rather includes the reception of all students, regardless of their conditions and/or specificities, be they they are social, cultural, ethnic, cognitive, physical (...)” (Souza & Machado, 2019, p.26). In this perspective, an Education for All is defended, with equal access and permanence, in addition to assistance and teaching that can respond to the reality of each individual.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO INCLUSION

Ivo and Dencuff defend that the main motto of education is “to instruct, educate, transmit a series of cultural contents and to instill values that society considers desirable” (Ivo & Dencuff, 2014, p. 271). The school institution was thus created to teach, having the primary duty to educate and socialize each and every individual, alerting to the essential values required to live in society. The so-called good learnings are made with high expectations, with timely, adequate and relevant feedback teaching and with a controlled and evaluated educational act. All students, even those with specific needs, learn if their educational process is systematically directed, planned

and evaluated (Sanchez, 2005), respecting their individuality.

The great challenge currently posed to the entire educational community is related to the effectiveness in the operationalization of education aimed at all. The Portuguese legislation in force, rethought in recent years in the field of education, namely in DL n.º.54/2018 and DL n.º. development of areas of competence that enhance the individual's autonomy and adaptation to the context in which his personal and social development takes place.

The school is now seen as comprehensive, where everyone is included without exception, in which the educational action focuses on individuality, focuses on the student as a subject with an active role, interacting with others belonging to their educational community. This way, it can be seen that the student is confronted with the problems of his surrounding world, and that he contributes to the resolution, or mitigation, of such questions, alerted by those who guide his teaching and learning process. school, an institution that advocates public policies, the task of organizing itself in order to give the appropriate response, with equity and diversity (Falcão & Sanchez, 2016, cit. by Souza & Machado, 2019), to each student who makes up their universe school.

This participation, in the construction of a democratic society, of justice, respect and equity, as guidelines of being and being with oneself and with others, awakens the student to solve problems, with a critical perspective (PASEO, 2017). This way, it becomes a fundamental right of anyone, with or without disabilities, and an obligation of the school system (Galindo, 2018), to rethink strategies for handling young people's thinking, in favor of citizenship.

This set of principles, under permanent construction, leads us to the idea of a

Learning Community, open to all, where the availability to teach and learn emerges in each of its members, in a cooperative work. We work to build "(...) a quality school with everyone and for everyone, from a perspective of inclusion and articulation with families and the Community (...)". (DGE). From this perspective of the school of and for all, where one truly lives in Community (Pacheco, 2019), it seeks to realize the possibility that, through the Learning Communities project, of the University of Barcelona, it can emerge in an education directed to the good. common. As Moura and Manrique (2022, p.43) emphasize:

(...) to have the objective of modifying the traditional school that no longer presented good learning results, seeking to unite the school and the family, contributing to the access to information of the entire local community and enabling the school to be a collective and democratic construction.

Thus, the concern arises to sensitize the student and their respective family, to be able to participate and contribute to sociocultural enrichment.

When we talk about community, we can define it as "(...) a socially and culturally constructed reality (...) capable of being theorized and empirically studied." (Flores & Ferreira, 2012, p. 201). Although these authors emphasize the fact that such a concept has multiple meanings, contexts and practices - alerting to the fact that it is imperative to rethink the meaning and the challenges that are inherent to it - it was decided to outline it in table 1, in a simplify the information collected and present it summarily. However, we alert to the fact that, whatever the term chosen, it becomes relevant to become aware of the various a borders presented.

Author / Date	Rationale/perspective/concept
Ferdinand Tonnies (1989)	Community and community relations. Natural, effective and sentimental order. dichotomy between community.
Max Weber (1991)	Associative contract Social relations considered as community
M. Castells (2002-2003)	Virtual communities = new spaces and new communication networks
João Barroso (2003-2005)	Socio-community regulation = emancipatory relationship
Z. Bauman (2006)	“Being in community” = good feeling There are 2 models of community: aesthetics (superficial) and ethics (common to all);
M. Viché (2007)	Collective space for cooperation and solidarity exchange ties

Table 1 - Fundamentals, perspectives and concepts of learning communities

(adapted from Flores and Ferreira, 2012)

In summary, the authors mention that, whether through more conventional forms, or through more up-to-date (hence, more daring) conceptions, the educational potential of the concept itself, relations and practices of the community type, present in them, cannot be separated. That is, “(...) what we learn depends on the learning conditions” (...) because, despite being programmed to learn, we only do so depending on the type of “(...) learning community to which we belong.” (Flores & Ferreira, 2012, p. 209)

Given the fragility of current school institutions, it is a priority that the learning process is built through socialization and interaction, in the most varied contexts, and that this occurs among all those involved in this itinerary. Everyone must become aware of the reality around them, and, learning together, be able to find strategies to overcome some of the problems highlighted.

This vision of learning, reflected in favoring its learners, reveals itself as a provider of a shared contextual framework and a supporter of learning activities, along with the social construction of knowledge through collective learning. Accordingly, the author approaches

an alternative learning paradigm, in which learning itself is not designed as isolated and individualized, taking on the contours of community models. It supports the individual and collective development and construction of knowledge, promoting collaborative work, and consequently, a social dimension of learning.

However, when we talk about community, we find authors that go back to Rousseau, in the 18th century, to show that the community conceptions of education are defended by several theorists and pedagogues, as an innovative proposal, opposing the traditional teaching offered by school institutions, to the over the years. Consign Dewey (2007), who maintains that the process of living in community is educational, because “(...) not only social life requires teaching and learning for its continuity, but the very process of living in community is educational.” (Dewey, 2007, p. 24, cit. by Flores & Ferreira, 2012, p. 231)

Accordingly, the idea is explained that the building of a learning community supposes the sharing of a dialogue where the construction of an adequate educational practice and focused on the development of the abilities of all students is combined. According to the authors, a learning community implies making the school an autonomous organization, which establishes, among its members, an interaction based on the sharing of values and objectives, from which a sense of common belonging will be born. As expressed, using the words of DuFour (2004) and DuFour et al. (2008, cit. by Flores & Ferreira, 2012):

(...) A learning community is based, among others, on shared mission ideas, vision, values and goals, on a collaborative culture, which focuses on learning, on inquiry to improve practice, on action orientation, on commitment to with continuous improvement (...). (p. 239)

According to Marigo et al (2010), the learning community is defined as a proposal

based on the transformation of the educational context, carried out by various actors, and aimed at improving and accelerating student learning. From this line of investigation, this innovative proposal spreads, betting on the democratization of the school through participation and community dialogue.

According to the official Portuguese website of learning communities (<https://comunidades-aprendizagem.dge.mec.pt/>), this is a broad project, which aims at social and educational transformation. Based on international scientific theories, it highlights two key factors: interactions and community participation. Its entire structure has a solid and developed scientific basis, over more than 35 years of research, covering the work of more than 70 researchers, from different countries and from different fields of knowledge. This transformation of educational centers into learning communities is a proposal developed by the Community of Research of Excellence All (CREA), or Special Center for Theories and Practices Overcoming Inequalities, at the University of Barcelona, which was founded by Ramón Flecha. In Brazil, the genesis of this idea is complemented by the Instituto Natura.

The essence and objective of the Learning Communities project is to guarantee learning for all children, providing equal opportunities, achieving the best possible results, through an interactive family intervention, which contributes to the increase of everyone's expectations, regarding the learnings to be acquired or acquired.

The main mentor of the ideology of learning communities, Ramon Flecha (1997), explains that all educational experiences have benefits, not only for learning, but mainly for dealing with existing inequalities. According to him, they all have their origin in dialogic learning. This reason is due to the joint involvement of all those who are part of the Educational Community, namely: students, teachers,

education professionals, technicians, families, the surrounding community. According to Flecha (1997), learning depends essentially on interactions between students, what they learn and know together and their previous knowledge, arising from family, cultural or ethnic knowledge.

With the current Information Society, Flecha et al (2003) refer to the need to change the methodology in schools. They explain the scientific bases of the learning communities project, its guidelines and actions, in the participation of the entire educational community for the implementation of a schooling beneficial to all. Based on the idea that "education and training are fundamental foundations for the future (...)", there is a responsibility of the school "as an environment conducive to learning and the development of skills (...)" to train and educate young people for the future. Democratic, opinionated and constructive spaces are sought, "where students (can) acquire the multiple literacies they need to mobilize, (...)", in order to respond to the demands of these times of unpredictability and accelerated changes." (Order No. 6478/2017, p. 15484)

In this sense, Learning Communities, with the applicability of their successful educational actions (AES), under study in this investigation, implemented by the INCLUDED project (2006-2011), could be a strategic tool for raising awareness of all work of the educational community, for the practice of a true inclusive education.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

"It is up to the school (...) not only to move towards Inclusive Education, but to achieve meaningful and effective teaching, (...) allowing equal opportunities for all." (Souza & Machado, 2019, pp.31-32). Each school must recognize the added value of the diversity of its students, "(...) finding ways to deal with

this difference, adapting teaching processes to individual characteristics and conditions (...), mobilizing the means available to everyone to learn and participate in the life of the educational community.” (DL 54/2018, preamble, p. 2918).

It is not enough to think or idealize Inclusive Education. It is not only necessary to write normative texts, which govern new school organizational guidelines. It is not enough to dream, idealize or aspire. Being a continuously dialectical process, Inclusion will have to move from theorization to universalizing culture.

The results of the challenge proposed in this investigation will have an important impact on demonstrating the possibilities and potential offered by the structure and dynamics of Learning Communities in the dimension of student inclusion. It is intended to question and rethink the meanings and challenges inherent to the concept of Community, linking it to Inclusive Education and joint learning. It is about articulating the notion of Inclusive Education with the organizational forms of the practices of Learning Communities where parents, teachers, school directors and students are involved. It is intended to create evidence that that articulation is productive and goes beyond the mere intention of its realization.

The challenge is out. It is necessary to assume a new ethical commitment to Education, in order to develop practices that are coherent with this new educational paradigm.

It is up to each of us to put into practice what is demanded so much, but little is done in this sense. Providing the opportunity for full and accessible Education is, and will continue to be, a mission of All for All. Never forgetting the words of Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful soul that can be used to change the world”.

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