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PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ART IN SCHOOL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

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INTRODUCTION

The day-to-day running of schools in the municipal public network of Rio de Janeiro, which primarily serves students residing in poor areas of the city, in general, allows teachers to face problems experienced by children and adolescents that affect their school performance and, as a rule, these problems get worse as poverty increases. Often, these students lack family references, values, affection and self-esteem, which are certainly determining factors for failure, school and social exclusion for a large part of our population.

In the school environment, many still have to face stigmas and prejudices of cognitive disability and behavioral deviations that make them the first placed on the list of discriminated against. These end up being part of the so-called problematic classes where students who are out of the above-average age group predominate and, therefore, because they are considered doomed to failure, they are excluded from the schooling process with reduced chances of integration and social ascension and finally, to become subjects of rights in childhood and in the later stages of life.

When reflecting on this problem, we developed the present work always defending the idea that social inclusion is a fundamental point that guides the humanization of the school. This humanization consists of the development of values of respect, mutual affection, stimulation of creativity, student self-knowledge, freedom of expression, appreciation of their reality and identity. Without such conditions, it is not possible to revert the scenario of school failure and exclusion that, historically, has most incisively affected the poorest social classes. Such values are essential for the school to become a space for strengthening self-esteem, socialization and encouraging the student to become an

active participant and protagonist of the educational process (COLL, 2004; FREIRE, 1967; MARIA, 2002; MUSSEN, 1995; PISTILLI & EGLER, 2021).

The student's leading role in the school process permeates the affirmation of his personality, the awareness of his social role and the exercise of his freedom of expression, which are enabled by the use of artistic languages, whose essence, like no other form of language, it brings together the elements to promote and leverage them. There is no other human instance that overlaps with art in the role of establishing and consolidating in the student the configuration of his identity and his ability to organize perceptions about the world, making his reading from himself, building and rebuilding himself. whether in valuing their culture (PISTILLI, 2021b; SOUZA, 2012).

Encouraging students and teachers to reflect on art as a vital phenomenon for the formation of creative human beings is the mainspring for building an inclusive school (OSTROWER, 1978). These reflections must extrapolate the school space by giving meaning to life in a more intense and profound way, becoming part of the daily life of all actors in the school.

Art is of fundamental importance in the formation of the personality of every man and through it he becomes capable of expressing his deepest intentions and desires, of raising awareness, of fully revealing the world in which we live and where beliefs, fears are built. and the desires revealing the human and humanizing side that is inside each one of us. Social interaction within any teaching process is strengthened when ideas are thought, perceived and shared from the perspective of art, from its production to its collective manifestation (BARBOSA, 1998; MARIA 2002; POUGY, 2003).

The process of artistic creation humanizes

the student and the educator, in addition to expanding and revitalizing their sensibilities. The artistic work in the pedagogical dynamics, by condensing a peculiar cosmivision rich in humanity, allows the student and the educator to reveal themselves as appreciative beings of the experience of the new and the strengthening of self-awareness. The teacher's mediation is of paramount importance for the student to procedurally acquire the ability to reproduce and produce autonomously from what was transmitted to him (MARIA 2002). This (re)transmission gains strength when the playful activities carried out by the use of artistic languages are worked on in the way of social interaction, the exchange of experiences and emotions in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, dynamics that foster the student's awareness of the world that surrounds him and makes him inserted in the path of school and social inclusion (PISTILLI, 2021b). Social inclusion requires socialization, active participation and student self-esteem in the school process.

As a reinforcement of what is most important we have exposed about artistic languages in the school process, we emphasize that this form of language is directly linked to its ability to arouse pleasure and enchantment in the student. We are convinced that this awakening fosters perceptive acuity and the sharpness of human sensitivity and awakens the student's capacity for reflection, interpretation and criticality, strengthening the process of (re)humanization of their senses. This awakening of certainty is an inevitable challenge that must be taken on every day by the teacher committed to humanizing and inclusive education, even in the face of the major obstacles faced in the daily life of public schools, which are so lacking in resources and alternatives. Such an awakening should point to ways of pedagogical enrichment in the ebb of school failure and exclusion (PISTILLI,

2021a; PISTILLI & EGLER, 2021). In view of the above, we understand the importance of mapping spaces within the public education network, together with teachers who have the perception of the need to collectively and interdisciplinary implement successful scenarios through the use of art as an instrument of humanization and integration of school actors and school and social inclusion of its students. Art contributes to the student's process of integrity in their sense of being human and points to humanization in a concrete way. Hence the importance of establishing the binomial art-education in the educational process so that it effectively fulfills its humanizing role (MARIA, 2002; PISTILLI, 2001b).

In this line of reasoning, the study aimed to probe teachers' perceptions, through their representations, about the importance of art in the process of school and social inclusion of students. The students in focus were those from the 9th grade classes of Elementary School II considered to be problematic and/or with lower school performance, according to data provided by the directors of both schools and, therefore, made up of students with an above-average age group. It was agreed among the teachers participating in this work to relativize the syllabus in favor of interdisciplinary activities. We prioritize the use of different artistic languages and free themes involving nature, the environment, ecology, life on our planet, in our city, in our neighborhood and in our school, aiming to encourage greater integration between teachers from different areas .

Considering that the term perceptions presents ambiguity, there is a need to build its idea and define it as "act or effect of the faculty of perceiving [...] the cognitive process in which a stimulus or an object, present in the close environment of an individual, is represented in their internal psychological activity, at first

consciously and then automatically [...] it is an active process in which representations of the object or stimulus are constructed [...] it consists of a set of activities whose function is to apprehend information likely to be captured by sensory organs, thus being identified and categorized” (LAROUSSE, 1998).

Cognitive psychology, in accordance with the text of this Encyclopedia, studies in detail the role that these representations play in the various treatments of human activity, especially professional activity. Approaching this subject would go beyond the limits of this work, which ends with the functional role of teachers’ perception, that is, the way in which they express themselves about the subject, at a given moment in the questionnaire, providing elements that can raise evidence of the importance given by teachers. interviewed to the educational and human dimensions in the exercise of the profession. As for the term representations, used in this work, it should be understood as manifestations, declarations, expressions linked to the life story of each person, capable of guiding their behavior and not having, therefore, any commitment to any theory of language (Hall, 2004).

In many schools of the Municipal Public Network of this city, different and important dynamics of student appreciation are built, that is, of their interaction and school and social (re)integration. These practices, however, do not take into account the potential of interdisciplinary activities using recreational activities under the guise of different artistic languages. Faced with this finding, we set out to carry out an interdisciplinary work, differentiated from the systematic use of art, in schools over the four two-month period, as described in the methodology below.

In general, the present study pointed out signs that artistic activities permeated with playful events, as proposed and performed bimonthly, led, based on teachers’

representations, regardless of the location of the school, not only to better cognitive and behavioral development of the student, but it also allowed the teacher himself to mature in the importance of art for the process of school and social inclusion of his student.

METHODOLOGY

The research was authorized by the Regional Education Coordination (CRE) and carried out with teachers in four classes of the 9th grade of Elementary School II, two per school, in two schools of the Municipal Public Network of Rio de Janeiro, School A and School B Both schools received fictitious names so that the ethical stance was maintained by preserving the secrecy of the two schools and their actors. The first, School A, far from the favela, considered “good” and the second, School B, inside the favela, considered “bad”. This classification was based, on the one hand, on objective data, expressed in school performance indicators related to behavioral and learning issues and, on the other hand, on the results of the Prova Rio, an instrument used by the Municipal Public Education Network, to assess student learning. students. It should be noted that the 9th grade classes, object of observation in the study, considered problematic and/or of lower academic performance, according to data provided by the directors of both schools, were made up of students with an above-average age group.

The dynamic was based on carrying out weekly activities in the classroom or in workshops in the schoolyard and in bimonthly events in the form of Culture Fairs, followed by evaluations by teachers.

These events originated from a proposal made in both schools by me, a Mathematics teacher, to teachers of all disciplines, with the aim of stimulating presentations in an interdisciplinary way and in the format

of artistic language such as music, dance, declamation, *soirée*, theatrical play, posters, models of school themes. It was in this way that we sought to explore playfulness and stimulate discussions on the most diverse topics, especially those related to nature, the environment, ecology, life on our planet, in our city, in our neighborhood and at our school, themes that would provide greater integration among teachers from all areas of knowledge.

At the end of each bimonthly event, we applied a semi-open questionnaire to the participating teachers (Figure 1), an effective instrument in research that has a mixed, quantitative and qualitative bias, as it favors spontaneity and freedom of expression of respondents (LUDKE & ANDRÉ, 1986).

We understand that the mixed approach adopted here was more suitable for generating responses that would indicate the importance of art in the process of social inclusion, defined as the basic point of this work. It should be remembered that the mixed approach is best suited to the study that:

“it works with the universe of meanings, beliefs, privileges values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reproduced to the operationalization of variables” (MINAYO, 1994, p.21).

The semi-open questionnaire allowed teachers to, in addition to providing objective answers, through percentages and grades, could also freely express their perceptions about the event and about the importance of using art in the process of school and social inclusion of students in aspects related to self-esteem, socialization and school participation as active beings and protagonists of the educational process. Part 1 used the Linear Bipolar Scale of Semantic Differential, an evaluative instrument, through which the interviewee records the answer on

the questioned subject on a straight line, expressing his perception. The Linear Bipolar Scale of Semantic Differential consists of a line segment measuring 10 centimeters, at the ends of which are the values 0 and 100. The percentage values assigned by the teachers were recorded on the line. Part II allowed the respondent to assign a score from 0 to 10 in their answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The teachers' responses to Part I of the questionnaire, over the four two-month period, referring to the importance of using art in the process of school and social inclusion of students in aspects related to self-esteem, socialization and school participation, indicate that the approximate averages of percentages were increasing in both schools. We found that, in general, at School A, the averages of these percentages are higher than the averages at School B. However, at School B, in general, the growth curve is greater over the two months (Table 1 and its respective Graphs 1, 2 and 3).

Graphs 1, 2 and 3, they help to visualize that, over the four two months, in both schools, there was a growing appreciation of the use of art, and in school B, considered the most problematic, the use of art had a curve of more accentuated growth in the level of this valuation.

The teachers' responses to Part II of the questionnaire, over the four two-month period, indicate that the approximate averages of the scores attributed by them to the levels of socialization, school participation and self-esteem of the students, due to the use of art, are increasing, over that period. These levels, in general, are higher in School A. However, the growth curves in the level of socialization and self-esteem are more pronounced in School B, a school considered to be problematic from a behavioral and learning point of view. (Table 2

PART I:

1. Mark on the line the percentage of importance of using art for student socialization

0 100

Comment:

.....

.....

2. Mark on the line the percentage of importance of the use of art for the student's school participation

0 100

Comment:

.....

.....

3. Mark on the line the percentage of importance of using art for the student's self-esteem

0 100

Comment:

.....

.....

PART II

1. Give a score from 0 to 10 for the students' level of socialization due to the use of art, in this two-month period:
Note:.....
Comment:

.....

.....

2. Give a score from 0 to 10 for the level of school participation of students in activities with the use of art, in this two-month period:
Note:.....
Comment:

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3. Give a grade from 0 to 10 to the students' level of self-esteem, depending on the use of art, in this two-month period:
Note:.....
Comment:

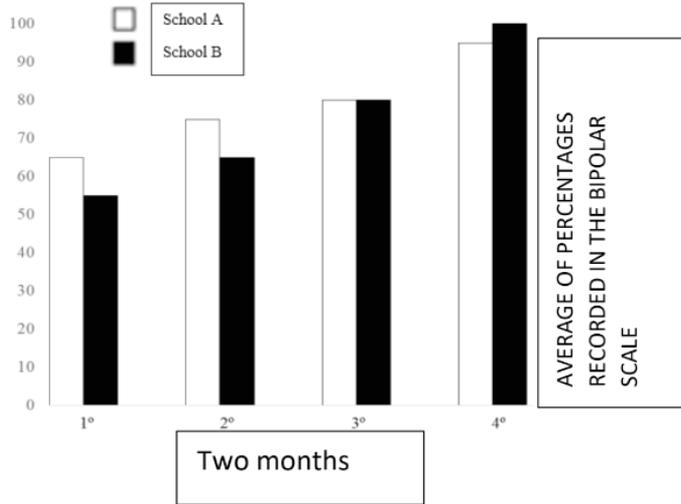
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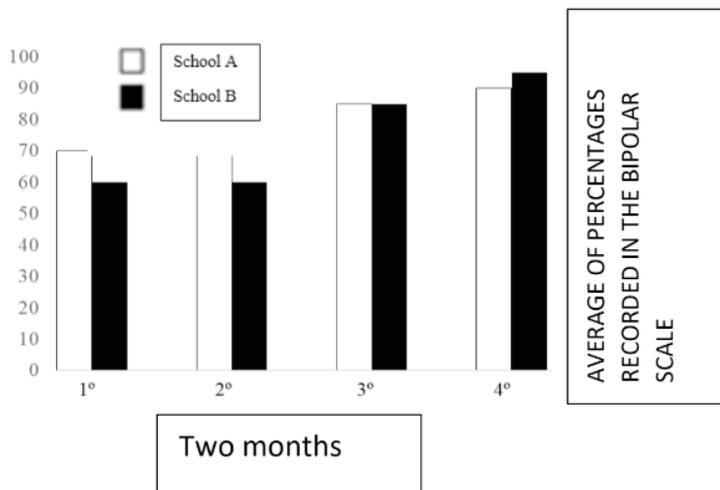
Figure 1 – Questionnaire for teachers

Schools	Evaluated items											
	Importance of using art for socialization				Importance of using art for school participation				Importance of using art for self-esteem			
	Two months				Two months				Two months			
	1°	2°	3°	4°	1°	2°	3°	4°	1°	2°	3°	4°
A	65	75	80	95	70	70	85	90	65	75	90	95
B	55	65	80	100	60	60	85	95	50	70	85	95

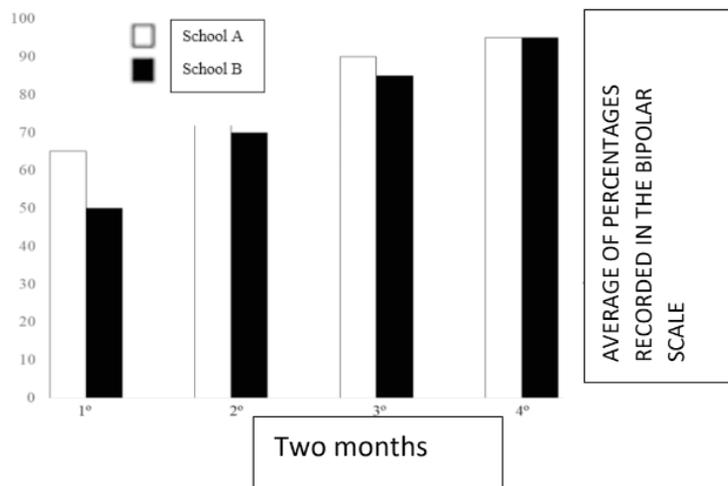
Table 1 – Approximate average of the percentages of importance given by teachers bimonthly to the use of art in socialization, student participation and self-esteem.



Graph 1 – Importance of using art for socialization



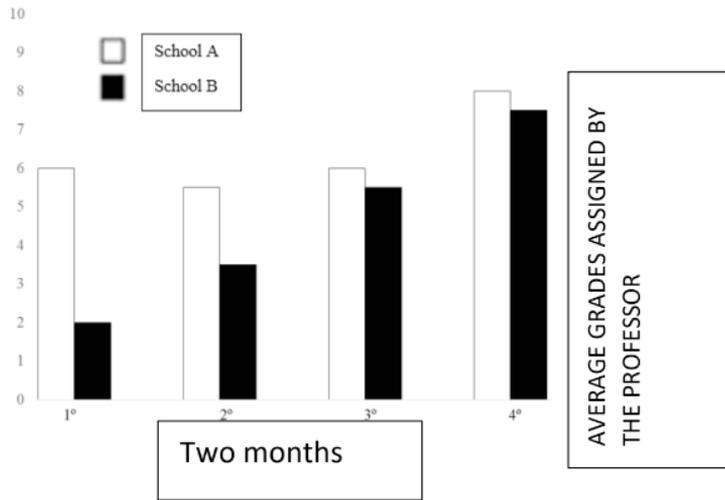
Graph 2 – Importance of using art for school participation



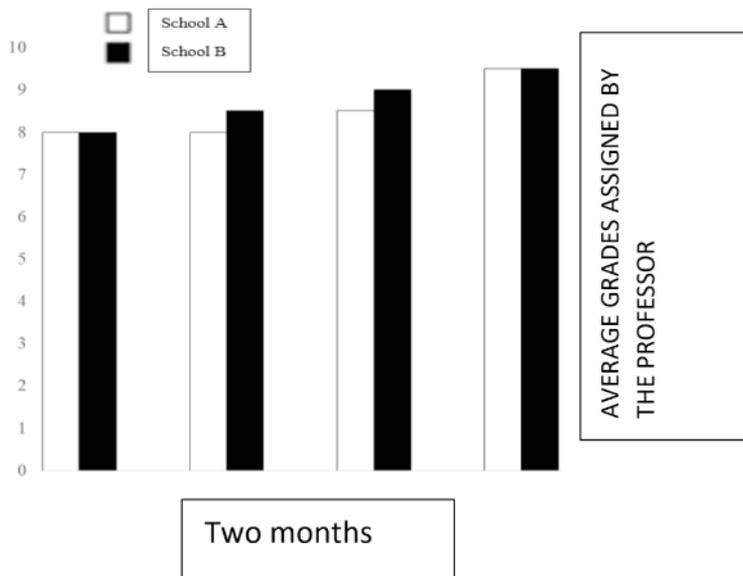
Graph 3 – Importance of using art for self-esteem

Schools	Evaluated items											
	level of socialization				School participation				Self esteem			
	Two months				Two months				Two months			
	1°	2°	3°	4°	1°	2°	3°	4°	1°	2°	3°	4°
A	6,0	5,5	6,0	8,0	8,0	8,0	8,5	9,5	6,5	6,0	7,0	8,0
B	2,0	3,5	5,5	7,5	8,0	8,5	9,0	9,5	3,5	4,5	6,5	7,5

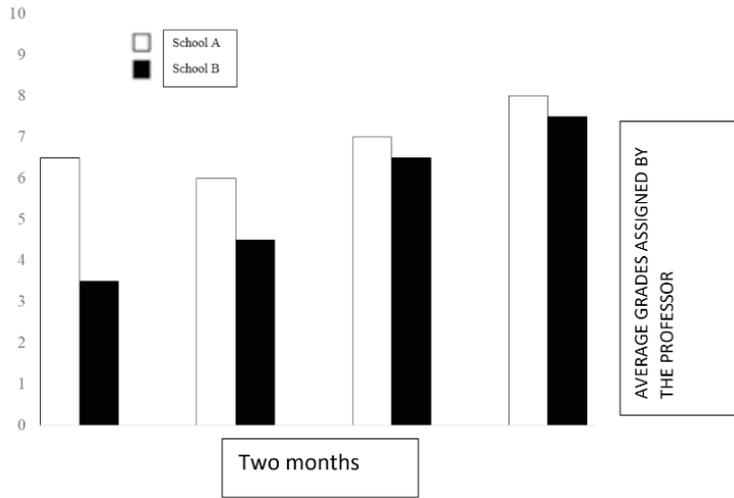
Table 2 – Approximate averages of the marks attributed by the teachers, bimonthly, to the levels of Sociability, School participation and Self-esteem, according to the use of art.



Graph 4 – level of socialization



Graph 5 – Level of school participation



Graph 6 – level of self-esteem

and their respective Graphs 4, 5 and 6).

Graphs 4, 5 and 6, they help to visualize that, over the four two-month periods, in both schools there was a growing appreciation of the use of art, and in School B, considered the most problematic, the growth curves in the level of socialization and self-esteem were more pronounced.

Regarding the qualitative aspect of the study and according to the interviewees' reports, activities based on the use of art had the power to develop students' self-knowledge and self-esteem, based on greater freedom of expression of their realities, of their worlds. In the teachers' representations there are signs that students began to experience, in regular classes, a growing process, throughout the school year, of disinhibition, encouragement, creativity and personality expression. Below, we present some expressive speeches of professors that summarize these ideas: "Many did not even know themselves or did not see themselves worthy of being what they really are. Art disinhibited, encouraged, freed students from their chains, awakening creativity and personality expression"; "Many surprised us and probably surprised themselves. It is the miracle of art that frees personalities and reveals talents and skills. The truth is that, from being excluded, many have become the darlings of teachers and colleagues. I am a witness because I am one of those who participated and encouraged the work from the beginning and infected students and other colleagues from other classes."; "Art made them participate in classes with different perspectives and their performance grew during the school year"; "The school became a meeting place for students who started to be listened to. And then they started to associate the school environment with a pleasant symbol where they feel valued, included, motivated and without fear of being judged and hostile"; "The

theater workshops helped the cognitive and emotional dimension and favored intellectual and motor coordination"; "Art humanizes and appeases all forms of violence and self-violence at school, unveils emotional conflicts that hinder school performance, making it a fertile space for social inclusion"; "Art has matured the view on the role of the school in the process of socialization and increased self-esteem of students in situations of social risk".

The results, over the four two-month period, from the quantitative and qualitative points of view, express teachers' perceptions about the importance of using art in the process of school and social inclusion of students in aspects related to self-esteem, socialization and school participation. In general, at School A, the importance of the use of art in the perception of teachers exceeds the importance given at School B. However, this importance increased in both schools and regardless of their characteristics linked to their locations. Relevant for the purposes of this work is that the growth curve at School B is more pronounced, revealing a greater effect of art among the so-called "more problematic" students. These growths are indicative of the interviewees' perception of the importance of art in the pedagogical process, in direct proportion to the difficulties presented in schools. The experiences of using artistic languages lived in these schools, regardless of their locations, sharpened the idea that art humanizes when it serves as an element of contact and interaction between individuals, showing each one that the other, in the same way that he, too, belongs to the world. This process leads to the mutual understanding of an expanded human reality, making each of the parties uniquely identify with all of humanity in general (MARIA, 2002).

As a way of enriching this analysis, we emphasize that there were many reports from teachers, increasingly frequent and emphatic

during the two-month period, associating the workshops and bimonthly events with a fertile school environment for confessions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, of dreams and disappointments of students. This is a counterpoint to the difficulties in expressing feelings that hinder the potential of their skills and abilities in students and hinder the path towards socialization, school participation and the strengthening of student self-esteem, which constitute essential elements in the process of school and social inclusion.

In the various responses to the questionnaire, in general, both teachers from School A and School B expressed perceptions that art served as an instrument of freedom of expression, especially for students who had emotional conflicts, difficulties in integration and acceptance in the class. These perceptions were intensified every two months, which gives us indications that transformations took place throughout the year, both in students and in their teachers, due to the use of art in the sense of including students with integration and acceptance difficulties.

The scenario designed in the present study leads us to believe that, through art, we can visualize possibilities of carrying out a better diagnosis, assistance, guidance and intervention in schools with regard to student problems, which have their roots in the emotional conflicts that affect learning and the students' behavior (CINTRA, 2002; SOUZA, 2012). In addition to all the emotional and pedagogical benefits brought by artistic languages, we add that they can also contribute as a therapy to strengthen the identity and cultural rescue of a group and its inclusion in school.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Teachers' perceptions about the importance of art in school and social inclusion, as seen in this work, as well as the thoughts of scholars who draw relationships between education and

art, led us to reflect on art as a fundamental instrument in the construction of a humanizing school, while space for integration of students, teachers and other school actors. In this line of thought, we infer that the results of this study point to encouraging perspectives in the sense that due to the sensitivity and commitment of students and teachers, the use of art has proved to be a success factor in the process of school and social inclusion. Such success manifested itself in direct proportion to the present difficulties, that is, the greater the benefit of art the greater the difficulty presented in this construction. In this way, we could understand that art, in any of its languages, is the driving force behind profound transformations in the school educational process. Art is capable of developing criticality and awareness of the social role of each one of us as beings responsible for our humanization and the humanization of the world around us, due to its differences and social injustices. The artistic activities, as proposed and carried out in schools and permeated with ludic events, led, according to the teachers' perception, regardless of the location of the school, not only to the better cognitive and behavioral development of the student, but also provided the teacher himself with the maturing of the importance of art for the process of school and social inclusion of its student. The establishment of affective bonds of the student considered socially maladjusted with the school, with the teachers and with their colleagues, from their involvement with artistic activities, confirmed the transforming power of art as a promoter of reintegration and improvement of the quality of interpersonal relationships.

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