

Educational Inclusion in Brazil: a Challenge for Higher Education

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Abstract

The objective of the present work is to discuss about the processes of inclusion of students with specific educational needs in higher education, as well as to indicate the pedagogical aspects and challenges faced by these institutions in the process of inclusion, thus clarifying, the obstacles involved in the teaching learning process in the academic field. This article also exposes as from a bibliographical research the structure of higher education in Brazil, the discussions on educational inclusion and how this issue is handled by universities. In addition, it was emphasized the extreme relevance of public policies, of academic discussions, of analysis of the curricular structure to fill the needs of the inclusive perspective.

Keywords: educational inclusion, higher education, specific educational needs, physical limitations.

1 – Introduction

Considering the advances and the mishaps of the inclusion in the higher education, it is noticed that the theme has gained more and more notoriety in the Brazilian educational scene. In order for school institutions to open doors to attend to students with disabilities, a long journey has been made, decrees, laws and other documents have been drawn up so that inclusion could really be ensured in its fullness and education for all could be guaranteed. Thus, a great need has arisen to emerge in the social environment to the valorization of the human being and its rights and also to promote reflections on the potential of the disabled, since all human beings have limitations and difficulties.

Lately, individuals with specific educational needs and physical limitations have become a focus of concern for families, educators, social workers, physicians, among others. Among the various aggravating factors that guide educational inclusion in universities the challenges and difficulties that have been illustrated in this work stand out among their priorities.

Plurality is the basis of higher education and, in the midst of its diverse roles, requires, in addition to promoting training for the labor market as well, being concerned with the development of research and the production of knowledge linked to citizenship, highlighting each education inclusion. Thus, the university becomes a favorable space for debates that encompass human development, aspects of improvement in the quality of life, as well as public policies that ensure all these approaches.

This work presents considerations about the structure of the Brazilian university and some considerations about the way these institutions understand educational inclusion and deal with the proposals leveraged by a contemporary society and full of individuals in search of a quality education that does not segregate but which add and value all. In order to structure the concepts presented here, bibliographical research was carried out according to the inquiries conceived that involve higher education in Brazil, to educational inclusion, the advances and obstacles faced by this process in the academic environment.

2 – Structuring of Higher Education in Brazil

According to Azevedo (1958), the facts that involve the conception of the university in Brazil, points initially, an important aversion, both by Portugal and by the Brazilian society that did not identify relevance of the structuring of higher education in the Colony, considering that the wealthy of the time should go to Europe to carry out their studies in these educational institutions.

Several attempts were initiated in order to establish the university in Brazil, but during the colonial and monarchical periods there was no success. This confirms the intention of the Metropolis to maintain political and cultural control over the colony

(FÁVERO, 2000). At the beginning of the 19th century, as the installation of the royal family in Brazil, the Medical Course of Surgery was created in Bahia, a few months later, the Anatomical, Surgical and Medical School was established at the Military Hospital of Rio de Janeiro, so begins the outline of higher education in Brazil (CUNHA, 1980).

With the Proclamation of the Republic, more essays were made with a view to a significant structure of higher education, a fact that can be verified in the Constitution of 1891, where it is emphasized that this modality of teaching is configured as attribution of public power, but not is unique to its. However, several promulgations have altered the legal configuration of higher education in Brazil (CUNHA, 1980).

The Government of the Republic decides to execute the one described in article 6 of Decree No. 11,530 of March 1915, which had the purpose of establishing the University of Rio de Janeiro as the first university establishment in Brazil legally recognized by the federal government. In the midst of this scenario, questions arise about the understanding of the university, its role, how far its autonomy and the patterns to be followed in Brazil. On these discussions it is possible to analyze aspects that seek the development of scientific research and the formation of professionals, some prioritizing one aspect more than another. However, the university must have in vogue the cultural production, the practice of science and the search for it. (AZEVEDO, 1958). These surveys became the focus of the National Education Conference held for the first time in 1927, in the city of Curitiba, Paraná.

In the year 1950, the entrance to a university consisted of status, guarantee of recognition and better salary remuneration, this occurred according to the social reality of the time that, it brought a political scenario of populist government and in consequence begins the expansion of the higher education in Brazil. In the middle of 1990, there is another increase in the opening of vacancies in higher education, now, with great emphasis on private education (BRASIL, 2005).

The expansion of private higher education institutions has resulted in a large number of vacancies that surpasses the demand for candidates, thus increasing access to higher education, provided that the student pays the tuition fees, is at the beginning of the 21st century and tends to increase with the passage of time. From this perspective it is possible to verify the mercantilist disposition in the educational process of the universities in Brazil.

The present society can be called as a society of knowledge and of information, showing the position obtained by the education in the contemporaneity. Thus, the promotion of quality education in all its spheres is essential, which raises it to a level that aims not only at professional training but at the real integration of the individual as an active subject and capable of thinking and rethinking the social patterns acting. In this perspective, higher education cooperates with this scenario through its pillars constituted by teaching, research and extension, which corroborate in the contemporary formation.

With the great demand for this system of higher education, the Brazilian university is also faced with a wide and varied population, which was once standardized. Thus, people with specific educational needs and with physical limitations have sought more for higher education, showing Brazilian universities the importance of facing this contemporary challenge in the constant search for a rupture of the paradigm of limitations.

3 – Paths covered by educational inclusion

In primitive civilizations, man organized himself socially centered on himself, in this way he classified the other by aesthetics, by what he possessed and by his apparent normality and if he did not fit in these questions he was excluded from the social group, so it is plausible to verify, historically, the process of intolerance towards people with special needs. Currently, behavioral changes are observed, since the social order is not static, so the issues that cover the issue of inclusive education have evolved, but there are still shortcomings (PESSOTI, 1984).

The issue of inclusive education has long been addressed in political and educational circles, but this process has gained prominence since the Declaration of Salamanca, which was drawn up in the Spanish city of Salamanca in 1994 and deals with political principles and educational practices for individuals with some specific educational need for the purpose that falls within the regular network of education, highlighting the guarantee of learning, thus arising, inclusive school. (PONCIANO, 2007).

In 1990, Brazil adapted the World Declaration of Education for all and began to review its educational process by widening the frontiers for physical, cultural and cognitive accessibility, thus opting for an inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). In this way, the country becomes subscriber of the Declaration of Salamanca, thus giving prominence to matters pertinent to inclusion in the educational field. This led to severe changes in Brazilian educational principles, which consequently covered

legal issues, especially in the national educational guidelines, all based on the concepts of inclusion. Although changes and adequacy efforts have been recognized, it is still possible to check for failures throughout the process.

When reflecting on the breadth of the meaning and signification of the inclusive education process, it is of utmost importance to consider the diversity of learners and their right to equity. It is about equating opportunities, guaranteeing to all, the right to learn to learn, to learn to do, to learn to be and to learn to live together (CARVALHO, 2005). Inclusive education is a social, political, pedagogical and cultural movement whose purpose is to ensure education for all without discrimination. Thus, educational institutions need to be able to receive the needs and limitations of the students, contributing to guarantee the training of all individuals.

The Federal Constitution of 1988 has as one of its fundamental objectives "to promote the good of all, without prejudices of origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination" (art.3, subsection IV). It defines, in article 205, education as a right of all, guaranteeing the full development of the person, the exercise of citizenship and qualification for work. In its article 206, item I establish "equality of conditions of access and permanence in school" as one of the principles for teaching and guarantees as a duty of the State, the provision of specialized educational services, preferably in the regular network of education (art. 208).

People with some type of limitation, currently, have guaranteed by legal means their entry and stay in the regular education system from Early Childhood to Higher Education. Also, as a premise for the introduction of inclusive education, it is possible to verify a public policy effort to ensure accessibility and conditions for quality education at all levels of education; some of these practices are multifunctional resource rooms, physical access to buildings, training teachers.

However, the consolidation of inclusion does not happen in a harmonious way, since there are various modifications in the methodological and epistemological aspects of pedagogical activities, generating conflicts of structuring and the dispositions of the educational system in the inclusive molds.

4 – Higher education and the challenge of inclusion

It is important to point out that Brazil's higher education institutions, as well as other educational levels, have undergone changes in the bias of the legal attributions that structure educational inclusion. Most of the populations of students with some special needs are enrolled in basic education. However, Ordinance number 1679 of 1999 guarantees the entrance and stability of this public in Brazilian universities and establishes accessibility as a means of evaluating these institutions (CARVALHO, 2008).

Significant changes in this direction have been taking place for some time. Law No. 5540 of 1968 designated the University Reform, democratizing higher education and raising the status of place of educational inclusion. Although these facts have strong characteristics of the private sector, it is possible to analyze relevant points in the process, such as the discussion and reflection of teachers and students requesting the true democratization of higher education, together with citizenship education (SCHWARTZMAN, 1986).

In 1993, Brazil established the National Policy for the Integration of the Person with the Disability, alleging, among its guidelines, the resolution to include persons with disabilities in all governmental actions based on education, health, work, public construction, social security, transportation, housing, culture, sport and leisure (BRASIL, 1993, article 5, item III).

It is important to point out that in 1994, the Ministry of Education, based on Ordinance number 1793, evidences the access of students with disabilities in the Universities and proposes disciplines that deal with the subject. As the actions for the inclusion of students with disabilities in universities are recent, it is common to encounter barriers of all kinds. However, it is possible to analyze that the problems found, for the most part, are of procedural and pedagogical orders.

Brazilian higher education also needs to be reformulated in terms of the models of educational inclusion, actively taking up the discussion of this subject and analyzing the objectives, methodologies, evaluations and curricular structuring, in short, are the themes that have afflicted education for several years in the country.

Another challenge of higher education and educational inclusion, besides the political, curricular and structural aspects of the process, is the insertion of students who have some type of specific need that is not clearly demonstrated such difficulties, and can be manifested in a gradual manner. Thus, until such needs can be detected and the best way for the collegiate to work with them, the student has already gone through the marginalization of inclusion.

The inclusion of young people or adults with disabilities in Higher Education postulates much more than just accepting them in the rooms, because for it to be a democratic action, it is necessary to understand the University as the place responsible for the improvement and emergence of new social conceptions that should contribute to ensure the quality of inclusion, so that it will comply with what the Law on the Guidelines and Bases of National Education in its article 59 sanctions:

I - curricula, methods, techniques, educational resources and specific organization to meet their needs;

II - specific terminology for those who cannot reach the level required for completion of primary education because of their deficiencies and acceleration to complete the school program for the gifted in a shorter time;

III - teachers with adequate specialization at the intermediate or higher level, for specialized care, as well as regular teachers trained to integrate these students into the common classes;

IV - special education for work, with a view to their effective integration into life in society, including suitable conditions for those who do not reveal their capacity to participate in competitive work, through articulation with related official bodies, as well as for those with a superior ability in the areas artistic, intellectual or psychomotor;

V - Equal access to the benefits of supplementary social programs available for the respective level of regular education.

Thus, it is possible to understand that the right to equality refers to the reformulation of prejudiced thoughts and labels attributed to people with special needs. Fonseca (1995) emphasizes that it is necessary to pay attention not to the equality that the law determines, but to the right to equality through the elimination of inequalities, which requires that specific differentiations be established as the only way to give effect to the isomeric precept established in the Constitution.

In this sense, Mantoan (2006) points out that inclusion brings about a series of transformations in educational paradigms, since it requires the reorganization of curricular practices, planning, evaluative processes and epistemological analysis. It is also understood from this point of view that the differentiation of teaching practice will be of great value in order to make possible teaching tactics that not only allow the progress of the disabled student, but will cover all the possibilities of the students attended in the Brazilian universities.

According to Rodrigues (2014) it is of the utmost importance that the Universities plan and execute the care of the handicapped considering the particularities of each individual.

5 – Final considerations

Inclusion, over the years, has been the object of study and concern of the most diverse social classes. However, even with all legal advances regarding the inclusion of disabled people in education systems, both in basic education and in universities, access, permanence and effective quality are crossed by obstacles, being intrinsic that there is an urgency so that it is recognized that higher education has a fundamental role for the social transformations that allow a broader view on the intellectual and labor potentialities of these new professionals that emerge after graduation.

The entry of people with specific educational needs into higher education is a new challenge. The structuring of an inclusive environment in education, whatever the level does not occur in a linear and harmonious way; but with mishaps, difficulties, mistakes and correctness. It is imperative that inclusion be established through knowledge and recognition of differences. The performance of students with disabilities or limitations in the classroom can contribute with the others in promoting discussions and reflections on educational and pedagogical activities through inquiries generated in the routine of the academic environment, which leads to rethinking and re-meaning of concepts and inclusive practices (Ainscow, Porter, Wang, 1997; Sekkel, 2003, 2005). We contemplate a scenario in which inclusion must be understood and practiced beyond laws, decrees, ordinances, norms, to consolidate egalitarian opportunities, either through educational actions, improvements in accessibility, professional training or even in attempts to minimize prejudices that may still exist arise. Despite all the legal provisions that establish well-defined responsibilities for the consolidation of a truly inclusive educational system, universities still need to be understood as an adequate space to promote educational advances that consolidate a new social thinking about equal opportunities.

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