

Minor education and the use of school space: towards an inclusive pedagogy

Educação minoritária e uso do espaço escolar: rumo a uma pedagogia inclusiva

Éducation mineure et usage de l'espace scolaire : vers une pédagogie inclusive

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Resumo

O artigo explora o papel da educação minoritária e dos espaços escolares na promoção de uma pedagogia inclusiva. A educação minoritária, centrada em habilidades básicas e no desenvolvimento socioemocional, é essencial para garantir a inclusão e a equidade. O planejamento cuidadoso dos espaços escolares, como salas de aula flexíveis e ferramentas adaptadas, favorece um ambiente acolhedor para todos os alunos, incluindo aqueles em situação de vulnerabilidade. A pedagogia inclusiva defende a equidade e a adaptação às necessidades individuais, incorporando a diversidade e a colaboração. Por fim, o artigo destaca que essa abordagem requer um compromisso coletivo para uma educação universal e equitativa.

Palavras-chave: Educação minoritária, Espaços escolares, Pedagogia inclusiva.

The article explores the role of minor education and school spaces in promoting inclusive pedagogy. Minor education, focused on basic skills and socio-emotional development, is essential for ensuring inclusion and equity. Thoughtful design of school spaces, such as flexible classrooms and adapted tools, fosters a welcoming environment for all students, including those in vulnerable situations. Inclusive pedagogy advocates for equity and adaptation to individual needs, incorporating diversity and collaboration. Finally, the article highlights that this approach requires collective commitment for universal and equitable education.

Keywords: Minor education, School spaces, inclusive pedagogy

Abstract

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Résumé

L'article explore le rôle de l'éducation mineure et de l'utilisation des espaces scolaires dans la promotion d'une pédagogie inclusive. L'éducation mineure, centrée sur les compétences de base et le développement socio-émotionnel, est essentielle pour garantir l'inclusion et l'équité. Une conception réfléchie des espaces scolaires, comme les salles de classe flexibles et les outils adaptés, favorise un environnement accueillant pour tous les élèves, y compris ceux en situation de vulnérabilité. La pédagogie inclusive prône l'équité et l'adaptation aux besoins individuels, en intégrant la diversité et la collaboration. Enfin, l'article souligne que cette approche nécessite un engagement collectif en faveur d'une éducation universelle et équitable.

Mots-clés : Education mineure, Espaces scolaires, Pédagogie inclusive.

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Introduction

In contemporary education, core subjects such as mathematics, sciences, and languages hold a predominant place in curricula and educational policies. This preferential treatment grants these disciplines both symbolic and practical legitimacy, considering them as pillars of academic success and future careers (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). And this education evolves in an environment marked by complex challenges that require appropriate responses, particularly regarding inclusion and equity. These fundamental concepts are at the heart of global and local educational debates, as they aim to ensure quality education for all, without discrimination.

Education evolves within this perspective of adapting educational programs to better meet the needs of the population. Indeed, children, who represent a significant segment of the population and are considered the future potential of society, deserve a specific educational approach. In particular, a student's early stages in school play a crucial role in cognitive development. As Piaget (1975) states in his theory of cognitive development, the early stages of a child's growth are essential in the learning process. It is therefore crucial to design an inclusive education from the very first stages to foster harmonious development and address the individual needs of each child.

From this perspective, the education of minors often referred to as “primary education” in many educational systems, refers to the instruction provided to young children before adolescence. It focuses on the acquisition of basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics, but also on the child's social and emotional development. Primary education thus plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals, preparing them for their future integration into and contribution to society.

Given this reality, it is relevant to question the education of minors and how the organization of school space can address the challenges of inclusion. A more inclusive pedagogy, based on the reorganization of school space and a holistic approach to subjects, allows for the valorization of each student and the creation of an enriching learning environment for all (Felouzis, Van Zanten, & Perroton, 2020)

Research Problem

Considering the existing realities in many schools particularly issues of exclusion and the dropout of students with disabilities it becomes necessary to formulate our research question as follows: How can the use of school space be reimagined to overcome the dynamics of exclusion associated with marginalized education and to foster a truly inclusive pedagogy?

Objective

Thus, the objective of our reflection is to demonstrate how the organization of school space influences the inclusion of students, particularly those in situations of vulnerability or disability. We will seek to understand how the design of the school environment can serve as a lever for a more inclusive and accessible pedagogy, especially

for students facing learning difficulties or belonging to marginalized groups. We will structure this reflection in a simple and clear manner, highlighting the key elements of this issue.

Methodology

As part of this research on minority education and the use of school space towards an inclusive pedagogy, we have chosen documentary analysis as the main research method. This approach consists of examining and interpreting a set of official and institutional documents in order to understand how issues related to the inclusion of minority students are taken into account in the organization and arrangement of school spaces. Through this method, the goal is to identify representations, norms, educational objectives, as well as prescribed practices found in texts that govern school life.

This methodological choice is justified by the interest in understanding how school space is conceived and organized in theory, before eventually confronting these intentions with the reality observed in another phase of research (for example, through field observations or interviews). Thus, documentary analysis constitutes a crucial first step in defining the normative and institutional framework within which minority education and the use of school space are situated, and in assessing to what extent these documents truly support the emergence of an inclusive pedagogy.

School Spaces

The expression school spaces refer to the physical and symbolic places where students' learning and socialization activities take place. This includes school buildings, classrooms, common areas (such as playgrounds, libraries, and laboratories), as well as the social, cultural, and educational dynamics that unfold within them. School space is designed to promote learning, discipline, and the development of social bonds, while being influenced by institutional, pedagogical, and community factors (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970)

In a broader sense, the school space can also include the environment and socio-spatial configuration, which influence interactions and educational practices. For example, the type of furniture, the arrangement of classrooms, the rules governing the use of spaces, and even the architecture of the building can affect how students behave and interact.

Inclusive Pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy is an educational approach aimed at adapting teaching so that all students, regardless of their differences whether cultural, socio-economic, ability-related, gender-based, or related to their background can learn and fully participate in school life. It is based on the principle of equity rather than strict equality, seeking to provide resources, strategies, and learning supports that address the individual needs of each student. The goal is to create a welcoming and empowering environment where every student can develop their skills and potential.

Initially designed for students with disabilities, inclusive pedagogy has gradually expanded its scope to encompass all students in their diversity. It now includes children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, students from migrant or foreign origins, as well as children from traveling communities, among others.

According to a report by the European Agency for Inclusive Education, the terms inclusion and inclusive education can have different meanings from one country to another. However, at the international level, experts emphasize the need for a consensus on the notion of inclusion, favoring a human-centered rather than a technical approach. They argue that inclusive education benefits all learners, as it better prepares them for life. In this sense, inclusion is not limited to specific groups of students but concerns all learners.

In the preface of the latest book by Danielle Zay & Langouët, G. (2012) describes inclusive education as an interesting concept, provided that it is understood and applied in all its breadth and complexity, integrating both the educational and social dimensions of inclusion.

The first meaning of the concept of inclusive education, as explained by Zay, D. (2012), is rooted in its original association with children with disabilities. She highlights that all children, whether with or without disabilities, must be recognized as individuals in their own right, with complex lives and diverse needs, both in school and beyond.

These differences often referred to as specific needs or special needs, should not obscure the fact that these children also have fundamental rights, including the right to access education on an equal basis with any other child living in a democratic society.

This notion of rights aligns with a social justice approach and the principles of human rights, as developed by thinkers such as Rawls, J. (2009) and reaffirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). It leads to a second interpretation of inclusive education: one that demands equity and justice for all children, regardless of their differences whether biological, social, or cultural. This concept goes beyond a charitable vision to advocate for equal rights for all, irrespective of the labels assigned to them, such as intellectual, socio-cultural, or economic disadvantages.

This approach recognizes that differences among students can enrich collective learning and promotes flexible, differentiated, and student-centered educational practices. These practices help overcome the obstacles that some students may face within the traditional school framework.

- 1) In its narrower conception, inclusive pedagogy entails a series of administrative and pedagogical measures aimed at meeting the educational needs of all students within the regular classroom (Salisbury C, 1991). This is what is proposed. (Sailor W. , 1991) For whom a school adopting a true pedagogy of inclusion presents the six basic components or essential characteristics: All students attend the school they would attend if they had no disabilities.
- 2) The natural proportion of students with difficulties attending each school reflects the demographic data of the school district;
- 3) The constant application of a policy excluding any form of rejection ensures that no student is excluded due to the type or severity of their disability;

- 4) There is no grouping of students with difficulties within the school, and a policy of placement in regular classes is applied, respecting the age criteria of the students;
- 5) The use of teaching strategies that involve cooperation (cooperative learning) and mutual support (peer teaching) is widespread within the school.
- 6) Specialized programs and services are offered within the context of the regular classroom or in a non-segregated environment.

School inclusion involves the integration of all students, regardless of their educational needs, socio-cultural backgrounds, or disabilities, into the regular education system. However, this raises several issues.

In many countries, infrastructures are not adapted to accommodate students with disabilities. For example, the absence of access ramps or specialized teaching materials can limit their inclusion (UNESCO, 2021)



Figure 1: A school that is not accessible for children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2009)

Prejudices and stereotypes against students from minority groups or those with specific educational needs remain widespread in some contexts, according to figure 1 (Salamanca, 1994). These attitudes contribute to their marginalization.

Teachers are often insufficiently trained to work with students with diverse needs. This hampers their ability to create an inclusive learning environment (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Thus, equity goes beyond equality by taking into account the specific needs of each student to provide them with fair educational opportunities. However, it remains a major challenge.

In developing countries, the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of access to education is striking. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are often forced to leave school to work (Banque, 2020):

- 1) The unequal access to educational technologies exacerbates the gaps between students, especially with the rise of digital learning (OCDE, 2022).

- 2) Educational systems can perpetuate discrimination based on gender, religion, or ethnicity. Girls, for example, continue to face significant barriers to their education in certain contexts (UNICEF, 2021)

1) Lines of flight and deterritorialization

The concepts of lines of flight and deterritorialization, developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980) in *A Thousand Plateaus*, provide an innovative framework for rethinking dynamics in various contexts, including educational and professional spheres. These concepts challenge rigid structures and highlight processes of transformation and escape from traditional frameworks.

For Deleuze and Guattari, lines of flight are not "escapes" in the classical sense but movements that reinvent spaces by transcending existing boundaries. A line of flight is a transformative process that disrupts dominant arrangements, allowing the emergence of new forms. In the educational context, for instance, these lines may manifest through alternative pedagogies that challenge established structures and propose more inclusive or innovative methods (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980).

Deterritorialization, on the other hand, refers to the process by which elements of a system or territory lose their initial attachment and redefine themselves within new arrangements. In education, this can involve detaching knowledge from traditional frameworks (such as textbooks and classrooms) to manifest in less conventional spaces, such as digital technologies or interdisciplinary approaches. This concept highlights the potential of ruptures in creating new meanings and opportunities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). In the educational world, the insistence on a rigid curriculum can be seen as a form of territorialization that limits the possibilities of thinking differently. Introducing lines of flight would then be a way to reinvent education by integrating approaches that respond to the diversity of learners and situations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980).

The inspiration drawn from lines of flight and deterritorialization can encourage an open and dynamic pedagogy, relying on concrete experiences, collaborations between learners and teachers, and participatory methodologies. For instance, by adopting flexible learning spaces or interactive methods, teachers create favorable conditions for the deterritorialization of knowledge, thereby stimulating students' autonomy and creativity.

However, it is essential to recognize how the school environment plays a key role in the success of inclusive education, which aims to meet the diverse needs of all students, regardless of their differences. According to Becchetti-Bizot (2018), schools must evolve to become welcoming spaces where each student feels valued and capable of developing their skills. This requires a reorganization of school spaces to promote positive interactions and collaborative learning.



Figure 2. Classroom promoting collaborative learning (UNICEF, 2009)

From a physical perspective of the figure 2, classrooms should be arranged flexibly, with modular furniture that allows for varied configurations depending on the educational activities. As Trigwell (2018) explains, this flexibility encourages student autonomy and active participation.



Figure 3. A classroom applying the participatory method (UNICEF, 2009)

Environments should also include technological tools tailored to the specific needs of learners with disabilities, thus contributing to equal opportunities in accessing knowledge (Duval, 2005).



Figure 4. A School space accessible to people with disabilities (UNICEF, 2016)

But it must also reflect the values of inclusion. Displays, teaching materials, and even architecture can convey messages of diversity and openness, strengthening the sense of belonging (Merieu, 1996).

Playgrounds, for example, should be designed as safe spaces where students can interact freely. By rethinking school spaces, we create an environment conducive to the development of all students.



Figure 5. A School inaccessible to students with disabilities (UNICEF, 2016)

According to figure 1, this approach aligns with a modern educational vision aimed at building a more equitable and inclusive society (Becchetti-Bizot C. , 2018).

Encouraging flexible spaces in schools involves integrating environments that cater to the varied needs of students. Discussion circles, for example, promote communication and conflict resolution (Gagné & Deci, 2005).



Figure 6. A collaborative learning method (UNICEF, 2009).

According to figure 1, a collaborative space stimulates cooperative learning and the exchange of ideas Dillenbourg (1999), while quiet zones allow sensitive students to recharge, thus reducing stress and promoting emotional well-being. These approaches, inspired by active learning theories and user-centered design, enhance inclusion and the effectiveness of school environments. (Fisher K. , 2005).



Figure 7. A classroom favoring the collaborative method (UNICEF, 2009).

Inclusive education provides each student with the opportunity to learn alongside their peers in a welcoming environment that values their backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Its key principles include recognizing the strengths and specific needs of students, removing barriers to learning, and promoting autonomy, interdependence, and a sense of belonging. According to figure 1, it also values diversity as an educational resource, encouraging respect, acceptance, and appreciation of differences.

Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (2002) developed a guide to strengthen school inclusion, proposing concrete actions: treating all students and staff equitably, promoting student participation in school culture and programs, and revising policies to better reflect diversity. It also involves transforming accessibility challenges into learning opportunities, ensuring students' right to education within their community.

Educational inclusion goes beyond academic performance, emphasizing the role of schools in building inclusive communities. This means improving conditions for both

students and staff, establishing harmonious relationships with the local community, and integrating inclusion into a broader vision of social equality. Thus, inclusive education must transform school spaces into places of learning, acceptance, and harmonious coexistence, contributing to the creation of a more equitable and participatory society.

Conclusion

This work is a cornerstone for the implementation of inclusive education while shedding light on minor education, its foundations, and its importance. Minor education must be free, inclusive, and accessible to ensure that everyone, regardless of their social status, race, color, or disability, has an equal opportunity for success and participation in society. The arguments in favor of inclusive education are based on principles of social justice, the freedom to learn, and equal opportunities. By allowing all children to receive quality education without discrimination, we not only foster their personal development but also that of society as a whole. Moreover, the importance of planning school spaces goes beyond the physical dimension: it also reflects the educational values and priorities of a society. Inclusive school architecture, adaptive furniture, and environments that promote cooperative learning are tools to transform the school into a welcoming and stimulating place for all. These adaptations, combined with differentiated pedagogy, not only reduce inequalities but also prepare students to live in a diverse and interconnected society.

However, challenges remain numerous. The lack of resources, inadequate infrastructures, and persistent prejudices exist in various contexts. It thus becomes imperative to invest in teacher training and adopt appropriate public policies to overcome these obstacles. As Piaget's studies on cognitive development suggest, an education planned according to the needs of students at different stages of growth can enhance their ability to learn and integrate harmoniously.

Finally, by reinterpreting the concepts of deterritorialization and lines of flight proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, we can rethink educational practices and school spaces to promote innovative approaches. Inclusion begins with a school that reflects the world we wish to build: a space where every individual, regardless of their trajectory, can thrive and fully contribute to society.

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