

INCLUSIVITY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

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Abstract

This matter underscores the ongoing challenge of implementing inclusive education, both within educational systems and for personal growth. The endeavor to transform practices, which involves consistently questioning the role of schools in perpetuating inequalities, exclusion, and social disparities, is fraught with obstacles, unforeseen circumstances, and intense emotions. Notably, researchers identify numerous systemic elements within school culture that contribute to perpetuating hierarchical experiences and exacerbating institutional discrimination against immigrant or racialized students. The empirical findings also shed light on school staff's tendency towards deficit thinking regarding immigrant students and their families, often attributing academic struggles to linguistic and cultural differences. Nonetheless, the researchers, alongside school stakeholders and students, propose constructive approaches to enhance inclusivity within the educational environment. They emphasize the importance of amplifying the voices of all involved parties to foster institutional change.

Key words

integration and exclusion, education

Introduction. Amidst the evolving landscape of immigration diversity and the escalating polarization of identity both locally and globally, the issue of inclusivity in education demands thoughtful consideration and tangible measures. Historically linked with the educational integration of students facing disabilities or learning challenges, inclusive education now seeks to encompass the experiences of all learners who are marginalized or underrepresented within the educational framework. Two key objectives are entwined with this approach: firstly, establishing fair practices tailored to the specific needs of students to enhance the educational attainment of all; and secondly, acknowledging individual and collective differences to drive institutional reforms aimed at fostering educational equity and combatting discrimination. Thus, the ethos of inclusive schooling and

classrooms is intended for every student. The pedagogical processes employed should facilitate an education that respects each individual's identity, experiences, personal traits, and unique requirements. This inclusive paradigm recognizes diversity as an integral aspect of human existence, advocating for its expression to nurture the distinctive essence of community members. Rooted in the acknowledgement of the inherent shortcomings of the assimilation model in promoting equal opportunities, inclusive education advocates for necessary institutional reforms, particularly within educational establishments, to enable the participation of all individuals, embracing their diversity. It embodies a principle of reciprocity in the adaptation process among the school, the student, and their family.

However, international studies highlight the segregations experienced by immigrants within the school systems of host countries, and in some contexts, their direct marginalization. In societies with democratic institutions, certain organizational and regulatory modes within the education system tend to perpetuate inequalities and exclusion. This includes the stratification of available educational paths, the separation of students based on their socioeconomic background and academic performance, as well as competition among educational institutions. Additionally, practices such as assessment and screening, standardized ranking tests, models of services provided to students learning a second language, the organization of school transitions, curriculum content selection, teaching practices and devices, school staff selection practices, types of relationships with families and communities, and symbolic violence through identity imposition all contribute to this phenomenon. Depending on specific socio-historical contexts, seemingly neutral practices and decisions can disproportionately harm individuals and groups whose experiences, history, and realities are not reflected in the organization of the education system. It is primarily young people who are further removed from the codes associated with the culture of the host society and its elite who experience forms of discrimination. Certain groups are more likely to face academic difficulties or feel exclusion and discrimination at school, including young people belonging to marginalized groups, whether immigrants or not. According to major international surveys, young immigrants perform less well than their native peers, although there are nuances depending on immigration categories (for example, refugees, economic immigrants, etc.). Vulnerable populations are often those that combine recent immigration with low parental educational capital.

Literature review. Despite the influence of social determinants on the academic trajectories of youth from immigrant backgrounds, research has demonstrated that certain schools, within comparable student populations, foster educational success more effectively in a multi-ethnic environment. This phenomenon, known as the "establishment effect," is primarily attributed to effective management leadership and practices among school staff. However, much of the sociological research conducted in numerous Western nations on educational disparities and minority youth has tended to focus more on individual experiences and educational pathways rather than on institutional actions within schools. These quantitative and qualitative analyses, centered on the "public," provide valuable insights into identifying barriers rooted in social factors such as familial educational and economic capital, ethnocultural background, and gender. For instance, research on the academic achievements of youth born to immigrant parents has often pinpointed the regions of origin associated with higher dropout rates. While this approach sheds light on the processes linked to individuals and their backgrounds, it also risks oversimplifying inequalities based on migratory characteristics. While valuable for understanding the gap between schools and certain individuals, it constrains the advancement of scientific and social understanding regarding educational institution policies and actions, whether in promoting inclusive schooling or in perpetuating inequalities and discrimination.

Methodological basis of the study. The central theme of this publication revolves around the school's role and the involvement of its stakeholders in fostering inclusive practices within the context of ethnocultural diversity. The articles comprising this issue address two key aspects: 1) the integration of inclusive education principles into institutional practices within schools, including the acknowledgment of individual and collective differences and the implementation of fair practices tailored to the specific needs of students; and 2) the school experiences of learners from minoritized groups. The first part focuses on actual practices within schools, involving teachers, administrators, and other staff members. It aims to present empirical research that identifies competencies and strategies contributing to the promotion of inclusivity and educational success for all students, while also critically examining areas needing improvement. The second part delves into the perspectives of learners concerning educational institutions, their structures, and the practices of school staff, as well as potential solutions to enhance their school experiences. By exploring young people's perceptions of their socialization process within schools and the various stages of

their educational journey, this approach sheds light on the strengths and limitations of the institutional practices implemented in educational settings.

Conclusion. This publication underscores that the pursuit of inclusive education represents a significant ongoing challenge, both systemically and in terms of personal growth. The process of enacting change, which involves continual examination of the school's role in perpetuating inequalities, exclusion, and unequal social dynamics, is fraught with obstacles, unpredictable circumstances, and intense emotions. School stakeholders require institutional support in a collaborative and collective manner from educational authorities and national policies. Furthermore, the adoption of inclusive practices necessitates ethical action, wherein constant decentering involves embracing others without speaking on their behalf and acknowledging the impact of unequal social dynamics on educational trajectories and socialization processes. This demands attentiveness and vigilance towards the implicit cultural norms within schools, often monocultural and challenging for immigrant students and parents to navigate. The complexity of this situation emphasizes the importance of providing initial and ongoing training to support school staff and management in addressing these issues and fostering collaborative spaces for open discussion and implementation of changes. In this context, amplifying the voices of immigrant or minority school staff and valuing their experiences emerges as a promising avenue. Additionally, the proposal of competency models for guiding teacher and administrator training, as suggested in recent years in Quebec, aims to promote greater inclusion, equity, and social justice in education. However, the practical and sustained implementation of these inclusive and intercultural competencies by stakeholders in the field remains an ongoing challenge that requires continual support within the daily life of schools.

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