


Pedagogical practices for the teaching and learning of deaf students: pathways to inclusive and accessible education

ARTICLE

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Abstract

In this way, thinking about the organization of an inclusive educational proposal for the deaf student presupposes recognition and consideration of their way of understanding and interacting with the world, which takes place through visual experiences. It is a study that lists as a research problem: to understand how Portuguese Language teachers understand Visual Pedagogy in the organization of teaching strategies for the learning and development of Deaf students in regular schools. Based on this understanding, the objective is to investigate teaching strategies based on the visibility of deafness developed by Portuguese Language teachers, with a view to the school inclusion of deaf students in regular education. With this research we provide a reflection and analysis about the teaching strategies designed for the Deaf student and how they help in the appropriation of the systematized knowledge of these students, as well as the school inclusion of this subject in the regular school.

Keywords: School Inclusion. Education of the Deaf. Visual Pedagogy. Visual Experiences. Teaching Strategies.

Prática pedagógica para o ensino-aprendizagem de surdos: caminhos para uma educação inclusiva e acessível

Resumo

Pensar a organização de proposta educacional inclusiva para o estudante surdo pressupõe reconhecimento e consideração à sua forma de compreender e interagir com o mundo, que se dá por meio de experiências visuais. Trata-se de um estudo que elenca, como problema da pesquisa, entender como os professores de Língua Portuguesa compreendem a Pedagogia Visual na organização das estratégias de ensino para a aprendizagem e o desenvolvimento do estudante surdo na escola regular. Partindo desse entendimento, tem-se como objetivo investigar estratégias de ensino-aprendizagem baseadas na visibilidade da surdez desenvolvidas pelos professores de Língua Portuguesa, com vistas à inclusão escolar desses estudantes no ensino regular. Com esta pesquisa, proporcionou-se uma reflexão e análise acerca das estratégias de ensino-aprendizagem pensadas para o estudante surdo e como estas auxiliam na apropriação dos conhecimentos sistematizados desses estudantes, bem como a inclusão escolar desse sujeito na escola regular.

Palavras-chave: Inclusão Escolar. Educação de surdos. Pedagogia Visual. Experiências Visuais. Estratégias de Ensino.

1 Introduction

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The theme addressed in this study encompasses discussions concerning the schooling process of Deaf students in mainstream education. We understand that, since Deaf individuals comprehend and interact with the world through visual experiences, the organization of teaching practices must be grounded in an understanding of this experience and, therefore, prioritize the use of the visual channel. Even though mainstream schools adopt Portuguese as the language of instruction, which has an oral-auditory modality, we emphasize that, within the inclusive paradigm, the structuring of the educational process in regular schools must respect the cognitive processing of Deaf students, which occurs through visual perceptions.

When reflecting on the relevance of visuality, inherent to the condition of deafness, for understanding the specificity of Deaf individuals, we refer to Decree No. 5,626 of December 22, 2005, which provides for the identification of Deaf students. According to this legal provision, a Deaf person is defined as someone who, due to hearing loss, comprehends and interacts with the world through visual experiences and expresses their culture mainly through the use of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras). Libras, in turn, is recognized by Law No. 10,436 of April 24, 2002, as a legal means of communication and expression for Deaf people. In addition to this recognition, the legislation establishes guidelines regarding the constitution of its linguistic system, which is characterized by its visual-motor nature.

We draw on Strobel's (2018) explanation that visual experiences arise from the different way Deaf individuals understand the world and everything that happens around them. Built upon perceptions that range from the behaviors of living beings to objects in different situations, this experience is defined as the first cultural artifact of Deaf subjects and signifies

[...] the use of vision as a total substitute for hearing, as a means of communication. From this visual experience emerges Deaf culture, represented by sign language, by a different way of being, of expressing oneself, of knowing the world, and of entering the arts, scientific knowledge, and academic knowledge (Strobel, 2018, p. 39).

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In light of the author's discussion, it is possible to infer that Deaf individuals have vision as their primary means of interlocution with the universe in which they live, since their communication "is visuo-gestural and produces numerous forms of apprehending, interpreting, and narrating the world from a visual culture" (Campello, 2008, p. 91).

In this regard, we recall what Campello (2008, p. 87) points out when stating that, "even living in a world without sound," Deaf subjects seek to adapt to the sounding world by assigning to this process adjustments that enable the attribution of meaning to surrounding objects through visuality. The author (2008) further adds that, in establishing their relationship with the environment, Deaf individuals "create strategies to deal with the visual cues of sound, interpreting these cues according to the context in which they are situated" (Campello, 2008, p. 87). Thus, the absence of sound comes to be represented in vision, which, in turn, is structured according to interpretations constituted through visual perceptions.

From the perspective of deepening the understanding of this theme, Belaunde and Sofiato (2019) emphasize that understanding Deaf visuality implies perceiving the meaning of vision beyond the intrinsic characteristic of the act of seeing. Based on this, they highlight that the visual is understood according to two particularities: "one related to the natural activity of the organ of vision and the other to a capacity to interpret the world" (Belaunde; Sofiato, 2019, p. 71).

In light of the foregoing, Belaunde and Sofiato (2019) conclude that it is not possible to discuss visuality without addressing the cultural influence inherent in the act of seeing. With the aim of elucidating this understanding, Campello (2008) explains that, when conceiving and structuring knowledge through vision, Deaf individuals develop strategies to compensate for the absence of sound.

By triggering processes of knowledge appropriation grounded in the centrality of vision, Deaf individuals consolidate forms of cultural belonging that enable the construction of meanings mediated by visuality. From this perspective, we corroborate the assertion of Carneiro and Wanderer (2019, p. 11), who emphasize that “visuality is configured as something inherent to Deaf people, positioned as proper to the way of life of these subjects.”

In order to clarify this prerogative, we highlight what Alves (2020) teaches, namely, that most Deaf individuals present experiences and modes of constituting themselves as subjects mediated by their visual perception. According to the author (2020), from the moment of birth, Deaf individuals connect with their environment through their senses, with vision being the one that most strongly influences their learning and development.

Consolidating this premise, we revisit the thought of Sansão and Santos (2021), who affirm that the way Deaf individuals interact with the world is constituted exclusively in visual terms. Based on this, the authors (2021) support the prerogative that, when explored as a tool, visuality “carries with it the potential for mediation that aims at the formation of thought” (Sansão; Santos, 2021, p. 31). Unlike what occurs with hearing individuals, whose linguistic and communicative processing is mediated by practices resulting from hearing and speaking, Deaf individuals have their manifestations originating from actions derived from seeing and signing (Campello, 2008).

Thus, Deaf visual thinking is configured as a complex activity that involves higher psychological processes. Because it is related to perception mediated by signs, it represents a practice imbued with meaning. This implies that visual thinking should not be understood merely as an activity resulting from mechanical action or produced by the sense organs alone (Campello, 2008).

2 Visual Pedagogy and the inclusion of Deaf students in mainstream schools

Practices delineated based on the conceptions of Visual Pedagogy encompass methodologies that include elements intrinsic to Deaf culture and sign language. As they constitute distinct practices for accessing hearing culture and incorporate particularities of Deaf students, they are grounded in actions that allow greater autonomy for these learners. Consequently, they enable better appropriation of educational content and thus promote meaningful learning (Perlin; Miranda, 2011; Colacique; Amaral, 2020; Gomes *et al.*, 2021).

When addressing the methodology of Visual Pedagogy for the schooling of Deaf students who are included in mainstream education, we draw on the line of thought proposed by Campello (2008). This author explains that, when educational practice is planned from the perspective of Visual Pedagogy, the cognitive process of Deaf students is respected, since visual stimuli are implemented within the educational context (Campello, 2008).

The visual stimuli understood by Campello (2008) as information originating from the physical environment and capable of being perceived by the eyes are consistent with the singularity of Deaf students and, therefore, establish favorable conditions for knowledge appropriation. Based on this understanding, Buzar (2009) emphasizes that the absence of such stimuli in the structuring of educational actions may result in direct implications for achieving educational objectives with Deaf students.

It is essential that learners feel they are an integral part of the educational process. For this to occur, the singularity of Deaf students must be considered in the planning of teaching practices that materialize in the classroom context (Lima, 2010). Campello (2021) highlights that disregarding the visual aspects of Deaf students in the construction of pedagogical practices may lead to intense difficulty or even make the appropriation of curricular content impossible. In other words, organizing pedagogical practice without considering Deaf students' visuality may render their inclusive process unfeasible.

According to Campello (2021), Visual Pedagogy suggests that, in the design of Deaf education, the use of images enables "all forms of interpretation and ways of seeing,

both subjective and objective” (Campello, 2021, p. 136). This means capturing all the components that make up the visual signs of Deaf individuals.

This premise once again underscores the importance of attributing significance to the use of images in the education of Deaf students. Such significance should orient educational action toward a relationship with Deaf visibility, thus refuting the passive use of this instrument. In other words, this practice must:

[...] value the “gaze,” seeking more information within the field of the “gaze,” of subjectivity, of imagetic thoughts that may value our “being,” since the image is an object of study and research and, according to imagetic thinking, we can produce knowledge, as well as forms of appropriation of culture/knowledge that allow us to benefit from the world of images and not succumb to the bombardment of images to which we are exposed (Campello, 2007, p.130).

Based on what the author (2007) presents, we infer that fostering, within pedagogical practice, the perspectives encompassed by Visual Pedagogy presupposes much more than the mere insertion of visual elements.

In this line of understanding, we rely on Campello (2007), who indicates that the image, as a sign, is constituted by three dimensions: representation, concept, and idea. Likewise, we align ourselves with the interpretation of Simões *et al.* (2011, p. 3609), who explain that “while the eye examines images, thought is being constituted in a relationship of interdependence.”

This context presupposes profound reflection on the resources and perspectives that will guide the conduction of the educational process with Deaf learners. By making this assertion, we reaffirm what is emphasized by Silva and Lobato (2021), namely, that when the visual aspects of Deaf students are explored, their learning occurs with greater quality. Teaching and learning, in turn, become more dynamic and enable means for the construction of learner autonomy.

The structuring of pedagogical practice that enables the inclusion of Deaf students therefore requires recognition and appreciation of their visibility. In this sense, we understand that teachers, as professionals of teaching and learning, must be attentive to the development of strategies that enhance the abilities of Deaf students (Colacique;

Amaral, 2020; Silva; Lobato, 2021). In her studies, Lebedeff (2010) emphasizes the need for teachers to understand that they must develop educational proposals that encompass Deaf students' visibility. The author (2017, p. 192) further stresses that "deafness exists and requires a new pedagogical proposal, conceived for its linguistic and cultural singularities."

The promotion of student inclusion is closely related to the way teachers organize their pedagogical action (Prais; Vitaliano, 2018). In the case of Deaf students, such organization should prioritize the use of visual pedagogical strategies, a situation that can be effectively achieved through the use of Visual Pedagogy.

3 Methodology

The present study is characterized as qualitative research, since, according to Proetti (2017, p. 3), this type of investigation is directed toward the development of studies that seek answers capable of understanding, describing, and interpreting facts. Likewise, it is grounded in Chizzotti (1998, p. 79), who states that qualitative research is based on the principle that "there is a dynamic relationship between the real world and the subject, a living interdependence between subject and object, and an inseparable bond between the objective world and the subject's subjectivity."

The research was conducted in elementary schools that are part of the municipal education network of Codó (MA), located in the urban area of the municipality. At this level of education, the municipality has 44 (forty-four) urban schools, of which 14 (fourteen) serve students in the early years of elementary education, while 30 (thirty) provide instruction in the final years.

The criterion for selecting the institutions consisted of the presence of a Deaf student regularly enrolled and in effective attendance. Within the scope of this research, teachers who work directly with this student were investigated. For the definition of the participants, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established.

As an inclusion criterion, teachers with a degree in Portuguese Language who were affiliated with the 14 public municipal schools of Codó (MA) that offer the final years of elementary education and who had Deaf students in their classes were selected. As an exclusion criterion, teachers who, although working in classes with Deaf students, did not have initial training in Portuguese Language were disregarded.

The selection criteria were applied to all members of the teaching staff of schools that serve Deaf students, regardless of their statutory employment status. Based on these parameters, two schools were identified, which, for the purpose of preserving anonymity, were designated as “Centro Municipal Flores” and “Centro Municipal Jardins”¹.

The research participants were two teachers who met the selection criteria, worked in classrooms with Deaf students, and held degrees in Portuguese Language Teaching. The pseudonyms chosen to identify the participants were *Amarílis* and *Camélia*.

Both participants are female and are between 30 and 35 years of age. Amarílis, who graduated in 2010, had nine years of professional experience at the time of the research. Camélia, in turn, who graduated in 2016, had two years and eleven months of experience in the educational field.

Currently, both teachers work with classes in the final years of Elementary Education. In both cases, the deaf students were enrolled in eighth-grade classes.

As a data collection instrument, a semi-structured interview with a narrative perspective was employed, as this type of procedure is understood to be a tool capable of enabling an in-depth exploration of the particularities existing between the interviewee and the context in which they are inserted (Muylaert *et al.*, 2014). Thus, the choice of the narrative interview is considered appropriate and relevant to achieving the objectives proposed in this research.

The organization and development of the interview guide were based on the theoretical references consulted, as well as on the general and specific objectives of the

¹ Due to the commitment to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the information collected and presented in the development of this research, the names chosen for the educational institutions and the participating subjects are fictitious.

study. The construction of this instrument followed the guidelines described by Boni and Quaresma (2005, p. 72), who emphasize that questions should be formulated “taking into account the sequence of the interviewee’s thought, that is, seeking to maintain continuity in the conversation and conducting the interview with a certain logical flow for the interviewee.”

For the analysis and discussion of the records obtained from the research participants, the assumptions of Content Analysis were adopted, in accordance with the guidelines proposed by Bardin (2016). The choice of this procedure is grounded in Franco’s (2020, p. 21) definition of content analysis as “a research procedure that is situated within a broader framework of communication theory and takes the message as its point of departure.”

It is understood that the message may present itself in different forms, “whether verbal (oral or written), gestural, silent, figurative, documentary, or directly elicited” (Bardin, 2020, p. 18), and that it carries within it meanings and significations by expressing “social representations as socially constructed mental elaborations, arising from the dynamic established between the subject’s psychic activity and the object of knowledge” (Bardin, 2020, p. 11).

With the aim of underscoring the need to consider the relationship between the subject’s representations and the object, Franco (2012, p. 18) further highlights that the production of messages is absolutely “linked to the contextual conditions of their producers.” In other words, content analysis seeks to produce knowledge and deepen the understanding of what is implicit in a discourse.

4 Results and Discussion

Initially, we sought to investigate how the teachers perceive the process of inclusion of deaf students. In their accounts, we observed that both participants understand the inclusive process in accordance with the perspective adopted in this study.

When mentioning factors such as lack of infrastructure, insufficient training, and limited knowledge of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), they expressed an understanding of the indispensability of knowing and understanding the student in order to address their educational needs. In this sense, they emphasize the perception that inclusion does not mean merely recognizing difference, but rather organizing educational practices in response to it.

Particular attention should also be given to Amarílis's observation regarding the presence of the interpreter. In her narrative, the teacher demonstrates an understanding that the isolated performance of this professional is not sufficient to ensure the success of the deaf student's inclusion process. By making this explicit, she positions herself in opposition to the assumptions of the integrative paradigm and in alignment with the inclusive model adopted as the theoretical reference of this research.

Even in the face of the difficulties reported in their narratives, Amarílis and Camélia make it clear that they do not exempt themselves, as teachers, from responsibility for the inclusive process of deaf students. In statements such as *"his learning becomes stagnant at certain moments, especially with the absence of a qualified professional"* and *"it is about trying to include, trying to interact, requesting participation in whatever way is possible,"* it is possible to infer that, in the planning and implementation of their actions, they consider strategies that make the involvement of the deaf student feasible.

In order to understand the pedagogical practices developed by the teachers to meet the educational needs of deaf students and, consequently, to achieve meaningful learning, we sought to identify the educational possibilities undertaken by the participants in the teaching-learning process.

We asked them to report the educational possibilities perceived in the teaching-learning process of deaf students. From the analysis of the teachers' accounts, we inferred that the participants understand deaf students as individuals who communicate through a language that differs from Portuguese. It is possible to perceive in their discourse that, even though they conceive inclusion as a movement that demands actions beyond the mere

acceptance of difference within the school context, when faced with the presence of a deaf student in the classroom, their primary concern was limited to the communicational aspect.

This situation reveals the teachers' lack of knowledge regarding the particularity of deaf students, indicating that the actions carried out in the educational context focus on an attribute that does not correspond to the specificity of these students. Thus, the organization of educational practices may become universal and decontextualized, a fact that authors such as Orsati (2013) and Soares and Soares (2021) assert makes successful inclusion unfeasible.

In view of this scenario, in which a lack of clarity on the part of the teachers regarding the specificity of deaf students and their visual condition is evident, it was considered pertinent to understand how the teachers have been promoting means to achieve the learning and development of these students. It is assumed that, in light of the inclusive paradigm, regardless of the student and the educational need presented, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure effective strategies that foster learning. Thus, through the question formulated and analyzed, the aim was to relate how the teachers perceive the potential of deaf students.

Furthermore, we sought to establish relationships between the teachers' perceptions regarding the visual skills of deaf students and how this competence has been materialized in the classroom context. Therefore, we asked that, among the actions they had already developed in the classroom, they describe one or more in which they considered there to be effective accessibility of deaf students to the content addressed.

Amarílis reported the practice of image reading through nonverbal texts, highlighting the prominence/success of deaf students in this type of pedagogical practice. She describes, as a pedagogical strategy, an activity in the form of a summary aimed at understanding and interpreting what was addressed in the activity. With regard to deaf students, Amarílis emphasizes that *"they have good interpretation, they have good interaction, good learning through reading."*

By presenting this information, Amarílis emphasizes the perception that the prominence of deaf students differs in activities that require skills related to the written

component of the Portuguese language, prevailing only when reading occurs through nonverbal and imagetic texts. This distinction becomes evident in the excerpt in which she states “[...] *grammatical contents, no. But with reading, when I use it this way, yes.*”

By elucidating this understanding, Amarílis makes undeniable her comprehension that the potential of deaf students lies in vision, reaffirming what is advocated by authors cited in this study, such as Strobel (2018), Campello (2008), and Cardoso and Francisco (2017). In order to underscore Amarílis’s understanding regarding the meaning of vision beyond the intrinsic act of seeing, we highlight the following excerpt from her discourse: “*Of course I choose nonverbal texts, those imagetic texts.*” We infer that the use of the word “of course,” as an interjection, accentuates Amarílis’s understanding of the visual dimension of deaf students.

In our view, this remark by Amarílis refers to the interpretation of the act of seeing not merely as a function of a sensory organ, but as something that goes beyond the functional issue. By establishing a comparison with other students, we infer that Amarílis focuses on the way of understanding and apprehending knowledge and the information presented, a fact that, according to Belaunde and Sofiato (2019), reinforces the understanding of deaf visibility.

Camélia, in turn, describes as “*very fruitful*” the participation of the deaf student in a pedagogical activity in which they could use their mother tongue, that is, Sign Language. In the same way that Amarílis expresses her perception regarding the visibility of deaf students, Camélia, in her narrative, refers to the effectiveness of the use of Libras in promoting understanding and participation of the deaf student.

In the excerpt “*he was able to use his own language, he was able to show it to others,*” it is understood that, in her discourse, Camélia points to a situation that converges with Campello’s (2007) assertion. The author explains that the use of Libras as a tool in the educational context values the cognitive capacity of deaf students, since, when expressing an understanding, these students mobilize their imagetic competence to apprehend and construct knowledge. Thus, the use of Libras in the school environment means providing

support for the improvement of the process of assimilation of the visual thinking of these students.

It was also inferred, based on Camélia's observation regarding the relationship between the use of Libras and the full participation of the deaf student, that there is an understanding of the existence of different forms of representation of reality between deaf and hearing students. The teacher's perception highlights a shift in perspective in relation to the traditionally established understanding of the difference between deaf and hearing individuals, by moving the focus from the pathological aspect of deafness to a sociocultural conception.

That is, even without explicitly mentioning the notion of deaf students' visuality, Camélia, like Amarílis, also understands the visual dimension of these students and perceives that, when it is explored, effective means are provided for the enhancement of their potential.

We analyze what was expressed by the teachers in line with Campello's (2007) perspective, which explains that the use of Libras as a tool within education values the cognitive capacity of deaf students. This occurs because, when expressing an understanding, deaf individuals make use of their imagetic competence to capture and comprehend knowledge. Therefore, using Libras in the school context means providing support for the improvement of the process of appropriation of these students' visual thinking.

We further emphasize that Camélia's observation regarding the relationship between the use of Libras and the full participation of the deaf student evidences an understanding of the different ways deaf and hearing students represent reality. The teacher's perception reinforces a change in the traditionally established perspective concerning the difference between deaf and hearing individuals, centered on the pathological aspect of deafness.

When discussing the importance of using Visual Pedagogy in the education of deaf students, it is possible to infer, from the interviewees' discourses, an alignment with the propositions of Gomes and Souza (2020), Buzar (2009), and Ribeiro and Silva (2016).

These authors argue that Visual Pedagogy provides instruments aimed at the construction of methodologies that incorporate, in pedagogical practice, the aspect arising from the singularity of deaf students, namely, their visuality.

In the excerpts presented by Amarílis, *“we realize that those who do not have the condition [of deafness] that they have are indeed at an advantage when it comes to grammar [...], I confess that I do not know how to use this Visual Pedagogy, right?”* and *“he [the teacher] will use this material as an additional complement in the teaching-learning process,”* as well as in the excerpt presented by Camélia, *“and the teacher has this need to have materials for this purpose in order to help in the student’s education, in the teaching-learning process, which is very important,”* one can observe convergence between the theoretical contributions and the teachers’ perceptions.

Based on the teachers’ reports, we also emphasize their observation that the conceptions of Visual Pedagogy bring together methods that differ from the pedagogy already established in the school environment, defined by Quadros (2004) as one centered on speech. We attribute this understanding to the interviewees’ discourses when they characterize Visual Pedagogy as a complementary resource to the pedagogy of speech, thus assigning it a complementary structural role in the education of deaf students.

From this perspective, it is understood that, when discussing Visual Pedagogy, Amarílis and Camélia demonstrate clarity in their understanding that this approach incorporates, within its methodology, elements inherent to deaf culture and Sign Language. Accordingly, we analyze that the teachers’ narratives support the contributions of Perlin and Miranda (2011), Colacique and Amaral (2020), and Gomes *et al.* (2021), in stating that Visual Pedagogy constitutes a resource that favors the conception of pedagogical actions capable of promoting better assimilation of school content, meaningful learning, greater autonomy for deaf students, and a distinct method of access to hearing culture.

When explaining how she uses visual strategies in her educational practice, Amarílis states that she makes use of non-verbal texts, which she understands as those that present a greater predominance of images in relation to written text. Camélia, in turn, characterizes the use of this strategy in her pedagogical action through the use of flyers

and short advertising texts composed of verbal and non-verbal language. From the analysis of both teachers' statements, it is observed that, with regard to the implementation of visual strategies, they demonstrate discernment in recognizing that such strategies have the image as their main axis of realization, in line with what Campello (2008) points out in her studies.

It is pertinent to emphasize that, in her report, Amarílis highlights that, when asking deaf students to share their understanding of the studied text, she instructs that this should occur through Libras. It is understood that, by indicating this action, the teacher evidences her perception of the relationship between the visual strategy, the visual modality of Libras, and the visual aspects of deafness. This inference is supported by the fact that there is also the possibility of explanation through written Portuguese, which, according to Amarílis's narrative, is not prioritized in this type of activity.

Thus, it becomes evident that, when reflecting on the use of visual strategies in the schooling process of deaf students, Amarílis refers to what Cruz and Pinheiro (2020) and Colacique and Amaral (2020) defend, in highlighting that, in educational actions aimed at the teaching-learning process of deaf individuals, the use of visual strategies, as a meaningful means for reflection and organization of thought and action, must have the image as its central axis. Based on Amarílis's narrative, it is understood that the use of these strategies, as tools that enhance students' visual perceptions, favors the construction of meanings and the expansion of knowledge.

When analyzing Camélia's report, the same understanding expressed by Amarílis regarding the use of visual strategies with deaf students is not identified. Therefore, in order to detail how the proposals materialized through visual strategies are configured and to understand the association between such procedures and the resources used, the teachers were asked to describe an experience developed in the classroom. In addition to reporting on the methodology applied, they were also asked to indicate how the deaf student's involvement occurred in the developed practice

The information presented by Amarílis confirms what was previously stated regarding her understanding of the relationship between visual strategies and the

exploration of deaf visuality. When stating, *“I think they already have this ability well developed, to interpret through what they see, the way they read the world, how they feel,”* Amarílis evidences her perception of the visual dimension of deaf students. This understanding is further emphasized when she mentions that, when interpreting images, deaf students participate and interact much more than hearing students.

That is, by implementing visual strategies in the planning and execution of her educational practice, Amarílis seeks to provide effective means for the achievement of learning and development of deaf students, which, in turn, occurs due to the stimulation and enhancement of these students' visuality.

When reporting that, through the use of Libras, the deaf student interacted and participated effectively in the class, Camélia confirms the importance of attributing significance to the use of this visual resource in the education of deaf students. Included as an integral part of the instruments and techniques of Visual Pedagogy, according to Campello (2007) and Digiampietri and Matos (2013; 2007), Libras is characterized as a resource that goes beyond the communicational aspect. Thus, it implies the use of vision from a perspective that exceeds that of a mere means of communication.

Based on what was explained by the teachers, it is evident that, although they state they do not formally know the elements and techniques of Visual Pedagogy, the participants of this study incorporate, in their pedagogical practice, foundations of this approach within the school context. By recognizing and valuing the visuality of the deaf student beyond the organic dimension of seeing, and by outlining actions that enhance it, the teachers develop practices that align with the conceptions of Visual Pedagogy.

Finally, in order to highlight the teachers' expectations, desires, and needs regarding the improvement of the inclusive process for deaf students in regular schools, they were asked to present suggestions considered essential so that the schooling of these students may contemplate their specificities.

The teachers' statements reiterate aspects previously discussed regarding the inclusion of deaf students, especially with respect to the insufficiency of teacher training and the lack of pedagogical resources. This position is understood as coherent, particularly

when considering the implementation of pedagogical proposals that require structural and formative changes within the school context.

When responding to the question, Amarílis highlights that inclusion should be addressed more emphatically since academic education, that is, since initial teacher training. The teacher associates this understanding with the fact that inclusive educational processes are a reality in the school context, viewing the effectiveness of formative practice as an action inherent to teachers' pedagogical work.

When stating, *"we cannot close our eyes to this,"* Amarílis conveys the understanding that, as professionals in teaching and education, teachers cannot exempt themselves from participating in the implementation of an education that is inclusive. Reinforcing this premise, Amarílis reports that, in her view, it is unfair for students who have preserved intellectual abilities to be at a disadvantage in relation to others due to the non-fulfillment of their specific needs.

Explaining her conception regarding the issue addressed, Camélia expresses the same concern as Amarílis with regard to the lack of continuing education, but also mentions the absence of support and didactic-pedagogical resources in the development of her practice with deaf students.

Camélia's response, in addition to presenting a coherent relationship with the concept that underlies the essence of inclusion, reflects on the importance of teachers being aware of the aspects that characterize students' differences. Based on what was expressed by the teacher, we understand that, in her professional practice, Camélia recognizes the need to know in order to then think about appropriate paths for the learning and development of deaf students. Furthermore, we infer that, through her narrative, Camélia demonstrates awareness that the practices currently developed do not yet value the potential of deaf students.

Based on what was reported by the teachers, it is understood that, in their convictions, the perspective that inclusion implies change, re-signification, and transformation is consolidated. The position presented by the teachers proves to be pertinent and favorable to the process of improvement and transformation of the actions

that are materialized within the context of regular schools. It is also added that what was expressed by the teachers evidences the existence of knowledge that enables a clear distinction between inclusion and integration, insofar as they recognize that, in order to include, it is the school that must adapt to the students' needs, and not the opposite.

From the information provided by the interviewed teachers, it was possible to become acquainted with experiences constituted within the classroom context and, thus, to understand how teaching practice and the relationship with deaf students are materialized. Furthermore, gaps related to the theme addressed in this research, namely Inclusive Education and deafness, are identified, which reinforces the need to expand studies and formative investments in this field.

5 Final considerations

In light of what has been presented in this study, we infer that ensuring educational equity for deaf students requires attentiveness to their needs, not only in the sense of recognizing them, but also of structuring educational actions based on them. Foreseeing adjustments within an educational proposal does not, in itself, establish an equitable process for these students. We understand that such adjustments often materialize, within the school environment, as the implementation of alternative paths toward achieving the same proposal for all learners, based on a pre-established standard. This scenario diverges from what is advocated by the inclusive principle, which calls for proposals designed according to students' singularities.

To constitute an inclusive and equitable program means to build a pathway in which there are possibilities for expanding students' potentialities. In other words, structuring actions conceived for the majority and merely proposing adjustments cannot be understood as inclusion.

Deaf students have their own ways of learning, apprehending information, and establishing relationships with everything that surrounds them. They are therefore constituted as subjects permeated by a culture that encompasses elements of their

experiences and of the social group to which they belong. Through social interactions and participation, they produce different identities and subjectivities.

Thus, thinking about the inclusion of deaf students in regular schools cannot be tied to the development of proposals that are disconnected from their reality. To include deaf students, it is necessary to recognize the existence of their culture and experiences. We infer that, in order to truly include and promote equality within schools for both deaf and hearing students, it is necessary to respect the way each individual interacts with the world, whether through an oral-auditory or visual-spatial modality.

It is therefore considered that the legitimation of an inclusive space is possible insofar as the construction of a pedagogy that enhances the singularity of deaf students is undertaken, namely, Visual Pedagogy. This approach, in addition to circumscribing the specificity of deaf students, also assigns meaning to the learning of students who, even though hearing, have vision as one of their main means of apprehending knowledge.

Thus, the use of Visual Pedagogy constitutes a fruitful measure for meeting the educational needs of these students, reaffirming what is advocated by the inclusive principle.

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