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Inclusive Education: Barriers and Solutions

If viewed as a **product**, inclusive education represents the victory over all types of barriers that try to block it during the implementation.

If viewed as a **process**, inclusive education is a powerful instrument capable of transforming an educational system, gradually turning it from **exclusionary** to **inclusive**.

In both views, we can note the presence of all **educational aspects** that need to be either maintained or improved, the visibility of the **barriers** that need to be overcome.

For almost two decades, - considering 1994 the year in which, in Brazil, the first attempts of implementation of the concept of inclusive schools were undertaken by isolated and, sometimes, precariously instructed actions – I have heard **criticisms** and **compliments** with respect to inclusive education, equally as a product and as a process.

In the same period, I have witnessed or learned of **successful**, **partially successful** and **totally failed** experiences. To which **barriers** could we assign this partial or total failure?

After observing and studying written or oral accounts of these experiences and comparing them to the ones I have directly lived through my job as a consultant on inclusive education, I offer the following **suggestions**, considering that the **barriers** can be both of **quantitative** and **qualitative** nature:

1)   The **quantitative barriers** refer to the **limited scope of the actions that attempt to implement inclusive education** in ordinary schools, public and private, existing in all municipalities of the country. This limitation reveals the fact that most of the funding directed to

education is being used for other purposes. **Solution**: Raise the political will of leaders and managers in all regions of Brazil, in the sense of making the whole educational system more inclusive.

2)   The **qualitative barriers** refer to the inadequacy **of teaching and administrative practices** carried out in ordinary schools that were chosen or are being chosen to become inclusive. **Solution**: Imbue these practices with the following **principles**: (A) **Singularity**. Each student is unique; in this sense, the school needs to set individualized goals along with the student and/or his family. (B) **Multiple Intelligences**. The teacher, when teaching the content of their discipline, needs to stimulate and use each student's entire brain. (C) **Learning style**. The teacher, when preparing their lessons, needs to focus on each student's learning peculiarities. (D) **Learning evaluation**. The school needs to adopt the system based on selfhood (to compare the assessment of each student with other assessments of the same student, not of other students), on continuity (all classes serve as evidence of learning) and on inclusiveness (assessments should help to include and not to exclude the student). (E) **Coherence**. The whole school needs to adopt inclusive attitudes: teachers and staff must undergo periodic training on inclusive education.