

# Black Awareness and Social Inclusion in a State Public School: Report of Practical Experience

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**Abstract:** This experience report is about a pedagogical activity related to “Black Consciousness”, that was realized in a state public school in the countryside of São Paulo that has the supervision of the Santo Anastácio Department of Education, which I was responsible for, I had the support of the school’s direction and coordination and the presence of the Coordinator/Teacher in the pedagogical area (PCNP) of Portuguese Language. Fifteen classrooms participated in the activity, covering a total of approximately 530 students, from elementary school II to high school. It aimed the knowledge of Afro-descendant culture, the discussion about racism and prejudice in Brazil and by teaching the English language in the same school we worked with the theme covering this issue in the United States and the inclusion through socialization and awareness.

**Key words:** black consciousness, racism, social school inclusion, afro-descendant culture

## 1. Introduction

Brazil is a country where cultural diversity is extensive, but even today, racism is a subject that must be guided and demystified to let it finish, November 20th was instituted the National Black Awareness Day concomitantly. with the death of “Zumbi dos Palmares” in 1965, the largest representative, leader and defender of blacks in Brazil, consecrated black leader of Quilombo dos Palmares. The activity was held in a public school in the interior of the state of São Paulo, with 15 classrooms with approximately 525 students in Portuguese classes, acting as PAA (Assistant Learning Teacher) and English language teacher, in 2015. To realize it, I obtained the support and permission from the coordination, school management, staff and students throughout the course and in the presentation period. We also count on the support and presence of the Portuguese-speaking PCNP from the education department of Santo Anastácio-SP. We aimed to learn about Afro-descendent culture, a fight against racism and prejudice in Brazil and to teach the English language in the same school that works with a theme that covers this issue in the United States.

The Black Awareness Day in schools is primordial, it enables the school community to be aware of the existence of racism, inequality, from the LDB (Law No. 9394/96), the Federal Government sought to adapt education in Brazil to the proposed principles by the 1988 Constitution regarding the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO.

Art.26. Elementary and secondary education curriculums should have a common national basis, to be

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complemented in each education system and school by a diverse part, which is required by regional and local characteristics of the society, culture, economy and type of students (National Education Guidelines and Bases Act, 1996).

In 2003, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed Law 10639/2003 which made the teaching of Afro-Brazilian History and Culture an obligation in the official curriculum of public and private schools, which aimed the construction of knowledge that values the cultural diversity, social and ethnic.

The school as a trainer and transformation company has an important role for the school community and the community itself to become aware, according to Henriques (2002):

The 1990s, of course, show a trajectory of improvement in educational indicators, (...) advances are sometimes timid and generally do not significantly interfere with the structure of racial and gender discrimination. Thus, despite advances in quantitative indicators, racial and gender inequalities remain significant and relevant signs of changing patterns of discrimination are not clearly detectable yet. The structural challenge of an educational reform implies, therefore, the construction of effective foundations for the implementation of quality and equity-oriented teaching, which faces the contours of racial inequality that exist in the Brazilian educational system (Henriques, 2002, p. 47).

The attention was given to social inclusion in schools, prioritizing the integration of students with socialization difficulties in the activity and awareness to break the social paradigm.

Inclusive education is an educational paradigm based on the conception of human rights, which combines equality and difference as inseparable values, and advances the idea of formal equity when contextualizing the historical circumstances of the production of exclusion inside and outside the school (BRAZIL, 2008, p. 1).

Working the differences as well as the awareness requires time and knowledge, involvement of all to have a transformation in the future.

According to Mantoan (2004, pp. 7–8): “There are differences and there are equalities, and not everything must be equal and not everything must be different, [...] we must have the right to be different when equality makes us different. and the right to be equal when the difference makes us inferior”.

Through this thought we aim to: 1) Include students in activities and school social life; 2) To make the school community aware of racism, cultural and racial inequality; 3) Provide students with the opportunity to research, produce and socialize; 4) Introduce the Afro-Brazilian culture.

## **2. Methodology**

The respective activity reported here, started based on the national curriculum that brings us Afro-Brazilian culture, and is supported by Law 10639/3 that made it compulsory. The school where the work on Black Consciousness was carried out, came through literatures inculcating the Afro-Brazilian culture, having knowledge of the curriculum and the law and consequently the obligation, and it was talked to the management of the school and asked permission to hold the event. From this, I made a project which I called “Black Consciousness” where it would be worked in the form of posters, music, poems, images, dances and other Afro-descendant cultures. The project also encompassed interdisciplinary involving the areas of Portuguese Language, Literature, English Language, History, Art and Sociology. There was also a concern with recycling and inclusion where I prioritized the students with greater difficulty in socializing to perform the activities. The works were distributed according to some criteria such as: elementary school II was responsible for research about Zumbi dos Palmares, musical

groups, dances, typical dishes and beliefs. High school had the most complex research such as religion, poetic installation, racism, ethnocentrism, caricatures, violence against blacks and other pertinent subjects.

### **3. Development**

Fifteen classrooms with approximately 525 students, lasting approximately 20 days, participated in this activity. I started by making a prior acknowledgment of the importance of Black Consciousness and then it was proposed the work, which to my surprise and joy had the acceptance immediate. Groups of 7 students were formed in each room, and after I wrote the themes on the board, they chose democratically, and after the distribution of all themes, in all rooms, I set a date for the collection of works, which will be described below with the rooms and what was the research or activity they were responsible for:

6th grade A: a) The Olodum group. b) Songs. c) Social Activities. d) They produced cans with Olodum colors and played a song.

6th grade B: a) What is Black Consciousness. b) Typical African foods of slaves and those that are inserted in Brazilian culture.

6th grade C: a) African games and those who came to Brazil. b) Black consciousness in Brazil. c) Production of the African and Brazilian Flag.

7th grade B: a) Zumbi dos Palmares. b) Drawing of Zumbi dos Palmares

9th grade A: a) Increased crime against black women. b) Poem Nega Fulô (explain). c) Dances

9th grade B: a) African culture and Brazilian culture.

9th grade C: a) Apartheid. d) Religion

1st year A: a) The struggle of black American women (liberation and prejudice). b) Black singers, biography, musical style. c) Musical groups. d) Persecution of blacks.

1st year B: a) Poetic Installation. (Castro Alves' poem)

1st year C: a) Violence against blacks, racism, ethnocentrism)

1st year E: a) Martin Luther King. b) Famous black American authors (Morgan Freeman). c) Nelson Mandela

2nd year A: a) Negreiros ship. (Installation - recycled construction). b) Dances. C) Sport. D) Beliefs.

2nd year C: a) Racial discrimination from 1500 to 2015. b) Black women in the labor market. c) Quotas for blacks in higher education.

3rd year A: a) Black Pope. b) Art. (drawing)

3rd year B: a) They collaborated in the setting up of the space where the exhibition took place.

The works were delivered on November 18 and 19, the students and the coordination helped in the organization distributing the cardboards so we could exhibit. We used the colors: black and red, already in order to draw attention to the theme, made available strategically as it is shown in the images below:

I- Negreiros ships produced by me and the 2nd year students with recyclable material.



Figure 1 Negreiro Ship



Figure 2 Theme

#### 4. Results and Conclusion

All work was exhibited in the school yard for the appreciation of the school people: students, teachers, management, staff, parents, Escola da Família and the general community. There was a wide acceptance by all the public and also all the satisfaction of the participants to have recognized their work, have learned and we noticed after this work a significant advance in the students who were shy or distant, and was possible to know different intelligences and the use of them.

Gardner defined intelligence as “the ability to solve problems or create valued products in one or more cultural settings,” and nearly twenty years later he conceptualizes intelligence as “a bio psychological potential for processing information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are valued in a culture” (Gardner, 2001, p. 46).

Regarding the report, the activity called Black Consciousness, the schools of the city from this event began to make and disseminate the work, and consequently more students began to have the information. It is a work that does not end, and it must be pursued until there is no more racism, no prejudice, until we can actually have equality for everybody.

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