

PAPER

Ableism and anti-ableism in Basic Education: An analysis of the (Re)production of practices based on the reports of school staff***Capacitismo e anticapacitismo na Educação Básica: Uma análise da (Re)produção de práticas a partir dos relatos de profissionais escolares*****Simone de Mamann Ferreira^a**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify how ableism is (re)produced in pedagogical practices in Elementary School and Basic Education, based on reports from school professionals, and to determine which elements constitute anti-ableist pedagogical practices in the school context. A qualitative, exploratory research was conducted, utilizing semi-structured interviews with school professionals. These were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) and the localized research approach of Donna Haraway (1995). The theoretical framework was grounded in Disability Studies in Education and Feminist Disability Studies, particularly the Ethics of Care theory. The findings discuss barriers within the school structure, the lack of awareness among professionals regarding the Specialized Educational Assistance - SEA service, pedagogical practices that reinforce ableism in the school, teacher training, and the anti-ableism pedagogical practices observed in the study.

Keywords: Ableism. Basic Education. Pedagogical Practices. Anti-Ableism.

RESUMO

Com este estudo objetivamos identificar como o capacitismo é (re)produzido nas práticas pedagógicas no Ensino Fundamental na Educação Básica, a partir dos relatos de profissionais da escola, bem como, quais elementos são constituintes de práticas pedagógicas anticapacitistas no contexto escolar. Foi realizada uma pesquisa qualitativa e de cunho exploratório. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas junto aos profissionais da escola e analisadas com a técnica de análise temática das autoras Virginia Braun e Victoria Clarke (2006) e da pesquisa realizada por Donna Haraway (1995). O referencial teórico utilizado foi o dos Estudos da Deficiência na Educação e o dos Estudos Feministas da Deficiência, mais especificamente, a teoria da Ética do Cuidado. Nos resultados, discutimos sobre as barreiras presentes na estrutura da escola, o

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desconhecimento do serviço de Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE) por parte dos profissionais; as práticas pedagógicas que reproduzem o capacitismo na escola; a formação docente; e as práticas pedagógicas com elementos anticapacitistas percebidas na referida pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: Capacitismo. Educação Básica. Práticas Pedagógicas. Anticapacitismo.

Introduction

Ableism is structural and structuring in society, traversing and shaping environments, relationships, politics and services (Gesser, 2020; Gesser; Block; Mello, 2020), a phenomenon that plays a significant role in the proliferation of the prejudices and discrimination experienced by people with disabilities in school spaces. Campbell (2009, p. 44) defines ableism as “a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a certain type of body (the body standard) which is projected as perfect, typical of the species and therefore essential and fully human”. Mello (2016) points out that ableism is intrinsically linked to the notion of corponormativity, which defines bodies considered capable, and is materialized “through prejudiced attitudes that hierarchize subjects according to the suitability of their bodies to an ideal of beauty and functional capability. People with disabilities are discriminated against on the basis of ableism” (Mello, 2016, p. 3266).

In the school environment, ableism manifests itself significantly, either explicitly or implicitly, through unequal attitudes and treatment towards people with disabilities, contributing to the perpetuation of stereotypes associated with weakness, lack of intelligence, dependence and inferiority (Campbell, 2009; Dias, 2013). As a result, professionals inadvertently reproduce ableist, socially normalized behaviors and actions, which have a direct impact on pedagogical practices in the classroom, categorizing students based on their capacity and placing them in a second-class status (Machado; Böck; Mello, 2022). In view of this, it is imperative that professionals rethink the effects of their teaching practices, both in schooling and in the lives of students (Valle; Connor, 2014). The presence of ableism in education and, consequently, in pedagogical practices, is evident in various ways, for example, when education systems do not adapt resources or materials to meet the needs of students or disregard the use of Assistive Technology. It is important to note that persons with disabilities face significant barriers in accessing education: lack of knowledge of current legislation on the part of school professionals; underestimation of their full potential through adapted activities that differ from the teacher’s planning for the class; the organization of classrooms in a single format; and the constant proposition of the same unvaried strategies for learning processes, as well as a curriculum that is not accessible to the class as a whole. (Baglieri *et al.*, 2011; Valle; Connor, 2014).

With regard to pedagogical and educational practices that promote the undoing of ableism, we take the view that these should be constructed via the elimination of social barriers, based on respect for pluralities and bearing in mind aspects of intersectionality¹ Incorporating

¹ Authors Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2020) indicate that “Intersectionality investigates how intersectional power relations influence social relations in societies marked by diversity [...]. As an analytical tool, intersectionality considers that the categories of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity and age – among others – are inter-related and mutually shaping. [...] it is a form of understanding and explaining the complexity of the world, people and human experiences” (Collins; Bilge, 2020, p. 16-17).

principles from the Ethics of Care² (Kittay, 1999, 2011) in the educational sphere contributes to fundamental concepts in the (re)organization of accessible school spaces and the construction of pedagogical practices that contain anti-ableist elements. There is a need for school professionals to “plan their actions based on the principles of interdependence and the Ethics of Care” (Böck; Gesser; Nuernberg, 2020, p. 374), contributing to a more accessible environment.

Anti-ableist elements promote the construction of inclusive educational processes, which can be identified as: the removal of social barriers that obstruct access to knowledge and to the school's physical structure; the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the application of its principles and guidelines as a framework for optimizing teaching and learning; the active participation of students in suggesting teaching strategies; questioning the ideal of independence, assuming dependence and interdependence as an intrinsic part of the human condition; teacher training based on an intersectional, political and inclusive perspective; and valuing the comprehension of each subject's potential, capabilities and difficulties. Without understanding the ways in which ableism manifests itself in our daily lives and influences attitudes in various social spaces, including schools, it becomes difficult to implement effective anti-ableist practices.

Methodological paths

Research design

In this research, we selected a state public school in the southern region of Brazil as the field of investigation. The research is qualitative (Minayo, 2002, 2008), and seeks to “understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena ‘from the inside’” (Angrosino, 2009, p. 8), examining how people construct the world around them. As a theoretical foundation, we turned to studies on disability in education (Baglieri *et al.*, 2011; Böck; Gesser; Nuernberg, 2020; Valle; Connor, 2014), feminist disability studies (Garland-Thomson, 2002; Kittay, 1999, 2011) and localized research, proposed by Donna Haraway (1995). We considered the testimonies of the education professionals who work at the school in question, as well as the perspective of the main researcher in this study. According to Haraway (1995), knowledge and writing are not neutral, but rather situated somewhere, intertwined and connected by subjects traversed by various social markers such as gender, race and class.

Participants

We selected a 7th grade class in an Elementary School that had a student with a disability, which had been identified by the management team. Teachers and professionals who were directly involved with the specific class were invited to take part in the study. In total, 12 participants

² Concept coined by author Eva Feder Kittay (2011), in which she questions the ideals of independence and assumes dependence and interdependence as inherent to the human condition and essential for reflecting on the construction of pedagogical practices. These issues are raised by the authors of the 2nd generation of the Social Model, linked to Feminist Disability Studies.

contributed through semi-structured interviews and field observations. Table 1 provides information on the socio-economic profile of the participants. The names used in the table are fictitious in order to maintain confidentiality.

Table 1: Information on the educational professionals

Participants	Carlos	Mister S.	Mario B.	Lilian	Maria	Raio de Sol	Joana	João	Ana	Carla	Helen	André
Age	52	47	38	54	41	53	43	33	48	51	32	30
Sex	M	M	M	F	F	F	F	M	F	F	F	M
Origin	Southeast region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region	South region
Race	White	White	White	White	Black	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
Person with disability	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Religion	No	Catholic	No	-	Catholic	No	Protestant	Various religions	No	Catholic	Christian	Catholic
Year of graduation	1997	2000	2010	1997	2004	2000	2001/2008	2010/2017	2003	1987	2021	2013
Academic qualifications	Graduation	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and Master's	Graduation and specialization	Graduation and specialization	Graduation	Graduation and specialization
Length of employment at the school	Five months	Eleven years	Eight years	Twenty three years	Thirteen years	Ten years	One year and ten months	Two years	Two years	Seventeen years	Seven months	One year and eight months
Approximate income	Five to seven minimum wages	Five to seven minimum wages	Five to seven minimum wages	Five to seven minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages	Two to four minimum wages
Permanent or Substitute	Substitute	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Substitute	Permanent	Permanent	Substitute	Substitute	Permanent	Substitute	Permanent
Working hours*	37 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	40 hours	32 hours	40 hours

Source: prepared by the authors.

Research tool

We used a semi-structured interview script (Minayo, 2002; 2008), field diary entries and a sociodemographic profile form. Cruz Neto (2002, p. 57) points out that “interviews are the most common procedure in fieldwork. Through them, the researcher seeks to obtain information contained in the speech of the social actors”, as they reflect the opinions and experiences of the participants, using previously prepared questions. The scripts were drawn up so that the participants could

express themselves and direct their contributions in relation to the theme, as a support tool (Minayo, 2008), based on a set of comprehensive questions, covering topics such as: teaching or professional work; planning, organizing activities and assessments; pedagogical practice; stances regarding situations of oppression and discrimination at school; attitudes towards student heterogeneity; the school's physical structure; specialized educational assistance (SEA); and the understanding of disability. We developed a guiding script, but as the responses came in, we included other questions, according to the subjects discussed, with a specific focus on the research theme. The interviews and questionnaires on the sociodemographic profile were conducted face-to-face and were handed out to the participants and collected as they were answered.

Procedures for obtaining information

After completing the observation phase, in the second semester of 2021, the 7th grade class was divided into two groups (Group 1 and Group 2), and they were staggered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We conducted in-person interviews with the school staff. Two professionals asked to answer the interviews in writing, while the others were audio-recorded. These recordings were later transcribed in full for reading, analysis and use in this article. With regard to the length of the interviews, the professionals were able to report on the issues presented in the script, with the aim of eliciting elements that aligned with the research objectives. The interviews lasted between 20 and 70 minutes on average, with one interview per professional.

Ethical questions

The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) – Certificate of Submission for Ethical Appraisal (Caae) and Opinion No. 4.654.95. All the ethical principles recommended by Resolution 510/2016 of the National Health Council were strictly followed. The Free and Informed Consent Form (FICF) was drawn up in accordance with the rules established by this resolution and given to each participant to read and sign. Each participant received a copy of the FICF for their personal records.

Analysis procedures

The interviews were checked using the thematic analysis technique proposed by authors Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), which is used in qualitative research and is defined as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns in data. It organizes and minimally describes your data set in detail” (Braun; Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This methodology enriches thematic analyses related to the various aspects addressed in the research, without fixating on a single approach or definition. However, they propose six stages for identifying themes, namely: 1) familiarize yourself with the information through transcriptions and readings; 2) generate initial codes, highlight relevant characteristics and group the data; 3) identify potential themes by grouping codes; 4) revise themes

and create thematic analysis maps; 5) define and name the themes to refine the specificities of each one; and 6) produce the final report with analysis of the themes identified (Braun; Clarke, 2006). These steps provide a methodological framework for conducting the thematic analysis, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the data and facilitating the production of insights relevant to the study. After conducting the interviews, we transcribed, read and reread the excerpts, which allowed us to identify a series of codes that were grouped into four distinct thematic categories.

Results and discussions

Below, we will take a closer look at the thematic categories identified in this research, which include: barriers in the school's physical structure; lack of knowledge about Specialized Educational Assistance (SEA); pedagogical practices that reproduce ableism; and pedagogical practices with anti-ableist elements.

Barriers in the school's physical infrastructure

The school is made up of three distinct parts: the main building, annex I and annex II, the latter being more accessible as they only have one ground level. At the head office, access from the street to the building is flat and there is a gatehouse and parking lot, as well as ramps that facilitate access to the secretary's office, the school entrance and the ground floor of block A, which includes classrooms, a guidance room, a supervisory room, a library, the principal's office, a teachers' room, a computer room, a staff bathroom and a cafeteria. However, access to the classrooms located on the first floor of block A is via stairs only. Around the courtyard, there are tables, benches and trees, but there are no ramps or sidewalks suitable for access by persons in wheelchairs or with reduced mobility. When it comes to accessing block B, the courtyard and the indoor sports court at the back of the school, you have to go through the canteen, which has an open roof on the sides, followed by a ramp. But to get to the first floor of this block, you also have to use the stairs. The toilets for students are not very accessible. On the ground floor of block B, the toilets are slightly more spacious to accommodate wheelchairs, but none have grab rails or baby changing facilities, and the sinks are not lowered.

According to the staff, classes attended by students with disabilities or reduced mobility are moved to the ground floor due to the lack of ramps and/or elevators that allow access to the first floor of blocks A and B. Accessibility should include the provision of goods and services that serve and facilitate all persons, not just a group identified as specific, since "accessible sidewalks, buildings with ramps and elevators, wide corridors, well-marked virtual learning environments, and screen reader accessible texts have the potential to increase access for persons with and without disabilities" (Böck *et al.*, 2022, p. 8).

The SEA room, previously located in the school's main office, was moved to Annex I due to the inadequacy of the physical space. However, the room is neither dedicated to the purpose nor suitable for the students who use the service. The teacher in charge has to organize herself on a daily basis in some improvised space in order to provide care. In addition, the distance between the SEA and the other parts of the school makes it difficult for the teacher to accompany the students and

hinders coordinated work with the teachers and second teachers. As a result, many professionals say they don't know where the SEA room is located, highlighting the invisibility of this service. At the school in question, the SEA also caters for students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is in line with the Special Education Policy of the State of Santa Catarina (SED, 2018). Given the physical structure of the school environment, which is still precarious in many respects, and the relocation of the SEA service to another part of the school, it is clear to see the vulnerability of this service not being incorporated into the school's Pedagogical Policy Project (PPP).

Lack of Awareness of Specialized Educational Assistance Service (SEA)

The SEA is a compulsory service in all schools, whether state or municipal, according to the legislation in force in Brazil, and it is essential that professionals are aligned with the inclusive perspective and comply with the established guidelines. According to Resolution 04/2009, one of the duties of the SEA teacher is to "liaise with teachers in the ordinary classroom to provide services, pedagogical and accessibility resources and strategies that promote students' participation in school activities" (Ministério da Educação, 2009, p. 3). As mentioned above, the SEA room is located in a space separate from the school's main office, which makes it difficult to get to and compromises the service time, due to the number of students who need the services. As Helen (Special Education teacher, November 2021) pointed out, "I don't have much contact. I simply can't keep going to the main office all the time, because the schedule is full due to the number of students".

These aspects mean that teachers working in other areas of the school are unaware of the service and its importance. As João mentioned: "I've heard of it, but I don't know who does it" (teacher, November 2021). We identified that the school's professionals are unfamiliar with the training and attributions of the teacher who works in the SEA, which may be explained by the fact that the service is located elsewhere in the school. João's account highlights this lack of knowledge (teacher, November 2021):

Because if I'm not mistaken, at the beginning of the year there was a teacher who was reassigned to this position, she was from the primary years and she was repurposed for this position. I don't know if there's another person in the position, there's probably someone who's taken on this role as well, but what she does, when she's there, how long for, God only knows.

According to the SEA regulations, the relevant professional is required to have, as part of their original (undergraduate) and continuing education, general teaching knowledge with a specialization in the area of SEA or Special Education, covering specific knowledge in the area (Ministério da Educação, 2008; 2009). It is important to note that in some places this legal guideline is disregarded, and it is necessary to investigate other factors that contribute to this lack of knowledge, such as: the lack of communication and proper understanding among school professionals about a service that should extend to all pedagogical practices; as well as the lack of coordinated work between teachers, school staff and management. We observed an unfamiliarity with the legislation that provides for and details this service, both in terms of the training required for the relevant professional and their duties. According to the reports, the professionals who are closest to the SEA teacher for guidance and support in working with the students are the second teachers, who are therefore the ones

most knowledgeable about the service. Although this is an important link, it differs from what is characterized as collaborative work³ (Capellini, 2008; Damiani, 2008), which is established through co-responsibilities, exchanges and mutual support between teachers, with the aim of benefitting students and their learning process. It is essential that the school's PPP includes the creation of spaces that facilitate meetings between teachers, in order to carry out shared planning and improve lessons. The absence of these spaces reinforces ableism, as it prevents the SEA from promoting the changes needed for everyone to be able to participate effectively.

Pedagogical practices that reproduce ableism

By exploring the elements linked to teacher organization and planning, we examined the difficulties of collaborative work and the use of pedagogical resources. We highlighted the importance of problematizing the reality of public schools in Brazil and pointed out various factors that hinder teachers' work, such as the lack of time and the scheduling conflicts that make it difficult to implement interdisciplinary planning. In addition, the lack of investment needed to implement projects and innovative lessons, the high number of classes and the unstable nature of teachers' work are significant challenges. Teachers are often forced to work 40 or 60 hours a week and work in other institutions in order to survive (Almeida, 2020; Assunção; Chaves, 2022), which means that having the maximum workload in the classroom makes it impossible to participate in ongoing training and collaborate with teachers from other disciplines and, according to teachers, this emphasizes the precariousness of teaching work.

Based on the interviews and analysis of the field diaries, we found that some pedagogical practices can inadvertently reproduce the structural ableism present in society, since teachers need to organize their planning and teaching plans according to the national guidelines of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), with a content-focused approach. On the other hand, José Libâneo argues that school planning "is a process of rationalization, organization and coordination of teaching action, connecting school activity and problems in the social context" (Libâneo, 2006, p. 222). As such, the situations reported highlight the adverse conditions of teaching work, as well as the demands for unique and standardized planning that result in the organization of uniform classes, disregarding individual specificities, leveling students based on an idealized model, which prevents the use of diverse methodologies and ignores the neoliberal and social impacts that affect school curricula (Corcoran; Claiborne; Whitburn, 2019). This leads to the exclusion of the subjects with disability, ignoring their characteristics and forms of learning.

Ableism also manifests itself when plans are drawn up and directed exclusively at students with disabilities, underestimating their potential and considering them incapable of carrying out the same activities proposed for the class as a whole (Baglieri *et al.*, 2011; Taylor, 2017). The school's difficulty in providing opportunities for collaborative construction and pedagogical planning compromises the teaching process, as reported by participant André (school professional, November

³ Collaborative work is a term that refers to the practice of groups working together, supporting each other and sharing common objectives to achieve results, without hierarchical relationships. It involves co-responsibility in the actions to be taken, shared leadership and trust between group members. Collaborative work seeks to enrich, act, solve problems and create possibilities for success in the difficult pedagogical task (Damiani, 2008).

2021): “The second teachers also do their planning based on the content that the teacher is working on, which is in line with the content that the teachers are working on in class”.

The dependence of the second teacher on the other one results in quick and superficial adaptations of activities for students with disabilities. The second teacher is often unaware of the activities’ purpose in relation to learning, which can lead to adaptations that are not aligned with the educational goals. This means that one activity is proposed for the whole class, while another, often disconnected from the work with the class, is aimed exclusively at the student with a disability (Böck; Gesser; Nuernberg, 2020; Fietz; Mello, 2018). As for the difficulty in carrying out this collaborative work, there is a perception that each professional has his/her own individual duties and plans, as evidenced by the following statement:

I work well with students with disabilities, but they have a second teacher. So I leave it more up to them to work with students the way they think they should [...] There are things that I know they won’t be able to follow, so the teacher there does a different activity, but based on the content I’m teaching. It’s shared work, because the teacher draws it up and then shows me the assessment. Then we see if it’s good or if we can tweak it, we always work like that (Mister S., teacher, November, 2021).

With regard to adapted and specific activities for students with disabilities, we observed that, even though there are a few occasional exchanges, it is common for responsibility for these activities to fall largely and incorrectly on the second teacher (Fietz; Mello, 2018), resulting in fragmented work that reveals: the difficulty of coordinating to ensure the equal participation of all students; the place that the second teacher occupies in basic education; and the lack of organization and opportunities that the school provides for planning, thereby weakening interdisciplinarity and hindering collaborative work. In an attempt to mitigate this situation, some teachers choose to reduce the content for the whole class:

So that’s what I usually do, I try to reduce it, because I always pass on the content to the second teacher who helps. And the second teacher sometimes makes adaptations according to what he thinks the student needs, or according to what he studies. And he knows that the student will understand, and develop in that specific content or vocabulary (João, teacher, November, 2021).

The lack of variability in assessment strategies, activities and methods used during the teaching process can contribute to the reproduction of ableism (Valle; Connor, 2014), when there is an attempt to level students based on the accumulation of acquired knowledge, through assessments and written tests on specific content, often administered by surprise and without prior consultation:

I’d already thought, I’m not going to do any more open-book tests, where they have the book, and the notebook and they simply don’t need to study or anything, all they need to do is read what’s there, right? I said, I’m not going to do it anymore, because that’s not the way to level students. If you want them to develop, you have to do an activity with them that really forces them to think (Mário Brava, teacher, November, 2021).

It is essential that teaching and assessment approaches go beyond so-called *banking* education (Freire, 2018) or traditional teaching, as discussed by José Libâneo (2006). The teaching process must be linked to students being aware of their progress through informative and accessible feedback,

which provides opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection on their own learning, since the “purpose of assessment is to find out what students *can manage* do” (Valle; Connor, 2014, p. 155). Cast (2018) highlights the need for students to understand their educational progress, recognize their emotions and be able to regulate themselves in the face of assessment processes, since assessment is “a complex task that is not just about taking tests and awarding grades” (Libâneo, 2006, p. 195). We emphasize the importance of listening to students in order to qualify their performance, respect their rhythms, promote their autonomy, meet their demands and broaden their interest and motivation to participate in classes (Cast, 2018; Ferreira; Costa; Kittel, 2024; Gesser, 2020).

Ableism can also be perpetuated in the selection and use of resources in the classroom, if these do not correspond to the plurality of the class. It is therefore essential for the teacher to offer varied support, including resources that can broaden the challenges proposed in the classroom, in line with the UDL principle of engagement (Cast, 2018). The adequacy of the resources that help with the realization and completion of tasks contributes to the motivation, curiosity and enthusiasm of the class (Cast, 2018; Ferreira; Costa; Kittel, 2024), expanding skills, “in the different ways that subjects relate to knowledge and in the conditions of participation, instead of a determinism of resources by type of injury” (Böck; Gesser; Nuernberg, 2020, p. 372). The UDL can be understood as a structure that supports the work of teaching, conceived as a guiding principle in the structuring of curricula, aimed at promoting accessibility and learning.

Pedagogical practices with anti-ableist elements

Although ableism is present and influences teaching practices, there are teachers who are committed to ensuring access to knowledge and breaking down ableism and other forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism. Some points relating to the anti-ableist elements observed include: organization and planning aimed at meeting student needs; teaching processes that broaden access to knowledge; use of diversified resources; care for students, based on an Ethics of Care; emancipatory interpersonal relationships between professionals and students; and intersectional understanding of students. With regard to teacher organization and planning, the reports showed a concern for collaborative planning. In addition, we recognized the importance of proposing activities that go beyond copying in a notebook, as there are multiple languages to be explored, such as orality and other modalities:

I like to work on oral communication with them on a daily basis, but it's not my main focus, as I like them to try to read and write. I can see that this works reasonably well, they are able to recycle the theoretical content that they study, in their way, through practices applied to textual genres, short texts, little phrases, even questions or what certain vocabulary means (João, teacher, November, 2021).

In addition, diversified strategies can include building models, working with images, drawings, books, games, activities, comics, experiments, music, films, research, games and outings. In this way, “the UDL takes into account the variability of students, suggesting flexible goals, diversified methods, materials and assessments that enable educators to meet numerous needs” (Ferreira; Costa; Kittel, 2024, p. 102). We therefore see the need to redesign lessons whenever necessary, with the aim of revisiting the concepts covered in the classroom; broaden students’ understanding by

applying varied explanations and activities; the opportunity for teachers to question themselves and evaluate the progress of their lessons, checking whether the proposed objectives and concepts have been achieved (Libâneo, 2006). As Lilian and Joana (teachers, November 2021, respectively) pointed out: “Sometimes we plan before, come up with a lot great things and it doesn’t turn out quite the way we imagined”; I have this process of planning my lessons, designing them and going back to them as many times as necessary. I always emphasize what’s important”.

It’s worth noting that some teachers receive guidance from professionals in the field of special education, which allows them to observe student development, identify their needs and take into account the time needed to carry out activities. It is essential to respect and make the time it takes to complete activities flexible, especially for students with disabilities, as they defy “normative and normalizing expectations of rhythm and scheduling” (Kaffer, 2013, p. 27). Motivation, interest and linking the content to everyday life are essential elements in an accessible teaching process and, consequently, in learning, as evidenced in Carlos’ statement (teacher, November 2013, 2021):

[...] perhaps the biggest challenge is to get students interested. And in order for them to be interested, they have to understand what the application is, and it has to be close to the everyday reality of that young person, that child. [...] In other words, anything that is too far removed from their reality won’t interest them.

Thus, when teachers involve their students, it is important that they are aware of the different ways that motivate them to learn and understand, as well as “why” they learn about a particular concept. According to Maria Amélia Franco (2016, p. 542), “teaching only becomes concrete in the learning it produces”. We observed strategies that can be used in teaching to establish connections with students’ daily lives, contributing to engagement, encouraging them to seek out relevant information to understand the content and how it applies to their lives. This is evident in João’s statement (teacher, November 2021), who adopts a variety of strategies to work with each class: “If I need to reduce the load for them, I reduce it, whatever I need to draw on the board I draw, if I need to talk I talk, I do it there, let’s do a diagram, it helps me, they create a lot with me”.

When teachers create more accessible learning situations and environments for students, whether they have disabilities or not, their pedagogical practices and actions are undoubtedly positioned as anti-ableist. When the teacher establishes an environment conducive to dialog with the students, they are investing in a dialogic relationship between the subjects in order to build the teaching process (Freire, 2018).

With regard to the use of resources and assistive technology, it is important to note that this tool “allows students with disabilities to express what they know, navigating through various interfaces, and also using keyboards, voice synthesizers, screen readers, among others that are suited to their needs” (Ferreira; Costa; Kittel, 2024, p. 130). Beyond the management’s responsibility to provide, maintain and acquire resources and materials, according to prior planning and the resources available in the school, some professionals also strive to create or bring in these resources. However, these technologies are often not available or do not work properly and, to get around this, teachers choose to guide and utilize students’ cell phones when carrying out activities and research.

Another anti-ableist element is the zeal for students, the perception of individual needs, the acceptance and respect for particularities, representing forms of care (Böck; Gesser; Nuernberg,

2020; Fietz; Mello, 2018). We identified care and affection in the teachers' attitudes towards students' embarrassment at speaking in public, anxiety and nervousness in situations experienced in the classroom, in which they were received in a sensitive way, building bonds of trust.

In the testimonies of participants João and Maria (teachers, November, 2021, respectively), we can see the teachers' care for the students: "Because I realize that many of them are embarrassed to say anything so as not to be judged by the others"; "Because they stop to hear me. They listen to me. And they need me to say something to them, they need me to say it".

This demonstrates a sensitivity in dealing with students' insecurities and fears, compassionate care and attentiveness to their needs, which helps them maintain interest in what is proposed in the classroom (Cast, 2018). By welcoming students' demands with enthusiasm and affection, as highlighted in Maria's (teacher, November 2021) statement, students feel valued. In this way, these practices make the teaching process more dynamic, contributing to a "perspective of collective transformation of the meanings and significance of learning" (Franco, 2016, p. 543). This relationship of care between teachers and students is based on the Ethics of Care, proposed by authors such as Eva Kittay (1999, 2011), who sees care as a matter of social justice and a fundamental ethical and moral principle for human beings, based on the premise of interdependence that governs human relationships (Gesser; Fietz, 2021). The principles of the Ethics of Care "should permeate the construction of all educational spaces and practices" (Lopes; Ferreira; Gesser, 2022, p. 229), and manifest themselves in the search for a perception of the students' feelings before starting the class, in order to alleviate anxieties and situations that may interfere with the learning process, contributing to an environment where there is acceptance and that allows concentration on what is necessary (Zirbel, 2016).

It is important to recognize that some students are considered more vulnerable than others, depending on the contexts and environments in which they live. In this sense, Ilze Zirbel (2016, p. 142) points out that "inherent sources of vulnerability are not categorically distinct from situational ones, since both are experienced in the body". We emphasize that the person who is dedicated to caring for others must be attentive so that human relationships based on care recognize "the active role that all parties to relationships play in these practices. There must be no presumption of the most appropriate type of care based on general precepts, but it should rather be a daily co-construction" (Fietz; Mello, 2018, p. 134). As such, it is crucial to value the establishment of a horizontal dialog and the recognition that the student has agency, with their own cultural baggage and knowledge from everyday life. In light of this fact, the work of professionals in combating the prejudice and discrimination faced by many students in the school environment becomes an ally in the fight against the oppressions they experience. It is worth pointing out that these oppressions can also be experienced by some professionals, as expressed in the testimony of Carlos (teacher, November, 2021):

[...] I've seen situations of homophobia, racism and sexism. And there's something I always try to tell my students when an episode like this happens. [...] It's the argument used by the person who says it that it was a joke. [...] I always say, it's a very unfortunate comment, and you've assaulted a person. We live in a sexist society, a racist society, [...] It's a conversation, it's a dialog, explaining why we shouldn't say those things. I think the best way is dialog.

The understanding of disability must be anchored in the social model (Diniz, 2003, 2007), recognizing that barriers arise from an inadequate social structure that prevents persons with

disabilities from participating fully, without attributing disability as an individual problem. It is essential to understand that teachers must recognize that students with and without disabilities have their own ways of learning, understanding the world and pace of development. Anti-ableist elements include respecting individualities, planning in a way that tries to meet everyone's needs, taking the Ethics of Care into account through inclusive actions, understanding the intersectionality present in the school context and having a comprehension of disability that is aligned with the social model.

Final Considerations

The aim of this study was to identify how ableism is (re)produced in the pedagogical practices of Elementary School in Basic Education, from the reports of school professionals, as well as to identify the elements that constitute anti-ableist pedagogical practices in the school context. Based on the information obtained from the reports by the school's staff, it is clear that the physical structure presents barriers that presuppose the absence of persons with disabilities, resulting in access fatigue⁴ (Konrad, 2021). Persons with disabilities are overburdened with various requests and restricted in their access to different spaces that should be organized to meet their demands, meaning that adaptations are relegated to improvisation. This shows how necessary it is for accessibility to be naturalized in public environments in a way that includes all bodies, regardless of whether or not the person has a disability.

Based on this study, we concluded that ableism is still (re)produced in pedagogical practices, which has a direct impact on teacher organization and planning, teaching processes, the difficulty of collaborative work and the use of resources in the classroom. We observed that the lack of knowledge of the SEA in the school environment results in a shortfall in the proper application of the legislation related to the service from an inclusive perspective, including the training and role of the professionals involved. In addition, the dearth of effective exchanges between teachers to qualify pedagogical planning and the existence of a precarious physical structure to accommodate the SEA room and serve students with disabilities, mean that this service is treated as an appendix to the school and not part of it. It is essential that the SEA is included in the school's PPP and is part of the daily actions of an inclusive management, which plans the implementation, continuity and innovation of materials, resources and methodologies from an inclusive perspective.

On the other hand, during the research, we identified a promising panorama, in which anti-ableist elements were identified in pedagogical practices related to teaching processes, which disrupt ableism. Although these actions are still fragmented, sporadic and non-linear, some professionals at the school have included these elements in their practices: 1) the presence of UDL elements; 2) replanning; 3) respect for the students' time; 4) an accessible teaching process; 5) the use of resources; 6) the deployment of available technologies; 7) the professionals' care for the students; 8) positive interpersonal relationships; 9) an awareness of the social markers that traverse people's lives; and 10) a comprehension of disability in line with the social model.

⁴ Author Anika Konrad (2021) writes that access fatigue "names the everyday pattern of constantly needing to help others participate in access, a demand so taxing and so relentless that, at times, it makes access simply not worth the effort" (Konrad, 2021, p. 179).

There are those who identify individually with the teaching process of a liberating education (hooks, 2013), which values affectivity and leads them to plan and carry out actions that incorporate elements of the Ethics of Care, as well as contribute to pedagogical practices that are in the process of being implemented and should ideally be applied throughout the school context. To date, only a few professionals have taken these anti-ableist elements into account in their planning, activities, strategies, assessments and actions. However, these practices have not yet been consolidated as a collective of practical applicability.

Finally, we would suggest that research be carried out to investigate the reproduction of ableism in basic education in order to identify pedagogical practices that will increasingly include and incorporate anti-ableist elements. It is essential that school professionals realize and become aware of the importance of including these elements in their planning, strategies and daily actions, in order to qualify their classes and promote a truly inclusive education.

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- Author 2** conception and design of the research; construction and processing of data; analysis of data; preparation and review of the final text.
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