

## EDUCATION, CORPOREALITY AND THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSON: A NECESSARY DIALOGUE

### *EDUCAÇÃO, CORPOREIDADE E A PESSOA COM DEFICIÊNCIA VISUAL: UM DIÁLOGO NECESSÁRIO*

### *EDUCACIÓN, CORPOREIDAD Y PERSONA CON DISCAPACIDAD VISUAL: UN DIÁLOGO NECESARIO*

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**ABSTRACT:** The body brings with it different languages and meanings, through which relationships are established in which other people, other beings, things that are in the surroundings, the world are involved. Therefore, the study aims to understand the body conceptions of students with visual impairment from public schools in Santarém-PA, in the light of the corporeality approach. We opted for descriptive qualitative research. The theoretical/methodological structure is based on the assumptions of the phenomenon of corporeality. A questionnaire to characterize the participant and a semi-structured interview were used. Data were analyzed using the Elaboration and Analysis of Units of Meaning. The research results made it possible to understand that people with visual impairments have conceptions of the body that have different senses and meanings, moving between biological and mechanical concepts, but also approaching the approach of corporeality, which considers the body as existence and experience of being in the world.

**KEYWORDS:** Education. Body. Corporeality. Visual impairment.

**RESUMO:** O corpo traz em si diferentes linguagens e significados, por meio dele se estabelecem relações nas quais estão envolvidas outras pessoas, outros seres, as coisas que se encontram no entorno, o mundo. Diante disso, o estudo tem como objetivo compreender as concepções de corpo de alunos com deficiência visual de escolas públicas de Santarém-PA, à luz da abordagem da corporeidade. Optou-se pela pesquisa descritiva de cunho qualitativo. A estrutura teórico/metodológica baseia-se nos pressupostos do fenômeno da corporeidade. Utilizou-se questionário de caracterização do participante e entrevista semiestruturada. Os dados foram analisados a partir da Elaboração e Análise de Unidades de Significado. Os resultados possibilitaram compreender que as pessoas com deficiência visual possuem concepções de corpo que apresentam diferentes sentidos e significados, transitando entre conceitos biológicos e mecânicos, mas também que se aproximam da abordagem da corporeidade, que considera o corpo como a existência e experiência do ser no mundo.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação. Corpo. Corporeidade. Deficiência visual.

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**RESUMEN:** *El cuerpo trae consigo distintos lenguajes y significados, a través de los cuales se establecen relaciones en las que se involucran otras personas, otros seres, cosas que están en el entorno, el mundo. Por lo tanto, el estudio tiene como objetivo comprender las concepciones corporales de estudiantes con discapacidad visual de escuelas públicas de Santarém-PA, a la luz del enfoque de la corporeidad. Optamos por una investigación cualitativa descriptiva. La estructura teórico-metodológica se fundamenta en los presupuestos del fenómeno de la corporeidad. Se utilizó un cuestionario para caracterizar al participante y una entrevista semiestructurada. Los datos fueron analizados utilizando la Elaboración y Análisis de Unidades de Significado. Los resultados de la investigación permitieron comprender que las personas con discapacidad visual tienen concepciones del cuerpo que tienen diferentes sentidos y significados, moviéndose entre conceptos biológicos y mecánicos, pero también acercándose al enfoque de la corporeidad, que considera el cuerpo como existencia y experiencia de estar en el mundo.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación. Cuerpo. Corporeidad. Discapacidad visual.*

## Introduction

The phenomenon of corporeity has caused reflections on the understanding of the body, thus, corporeity contributes to the advancement of the understanding of the human being in its entirety, in the relationships it establishes with itself, with others and with the world. It should be noted that "the corporeality is considered as a field of experience and reflection, from which epistemological, ethical, aesthetic, social and historical possibilities unfold" (NÓBREGA, 2010, p. 35, our translation).

Seen through this prism, thinking with the perspective of corporeality is to consider a subject body, active, which opposes the view of duality between body and soul, seeing them as inseparable. Therefore, "understanding the body in the contemporary scenario is a task that involves paradox" (NÓBREGA, 2010, p. 36, our translation).

For a long time it was perpetuated the conception that the body was something that was possessed as if it were an object or just a dwelling place of the spirit, something sinful, which tends to decline, sometimes having a machinic character or a consumer product: such understanding was accentuated with the arrival of the capitalist market vision (GALLO, 2006).

Thus, historically the body was despised, violated, marginalized, as a synonym of impurity and imperfection, seen as a threat to the powers established in society. By emphasizing the body in its multiple knowledges, the corporeality seeks to lead to a critical reflection on the conceptions of body impregnated in society, presenting itself as an alternative to overcome the Cartesian, empiricist, and market visions of the body.

To understand the corporeality, there are no sacred formulas, but the search for a speech that does not stop only at a simple conceptualization, being necessary a positioning regarding a wider conception of body, beyond the reductionist view in the reading of human realities, conceiving the essence as existential, for it is an individual characteristic of all bodies, and cannot be represented or codified (MOREIRA, 1995). Thus, "it is the reality of the body that allows us, to dream, to desire, to think, to narrate, to know, to choose" (NÓBREGA, 2010, p. 11, our translation).

Based on this idea, the lived experience is what makes us understand the world in which we move, as expressed by Merleau-Ponty: "the world is not what I think, but what I live, I am open to the world, I undoubtedly communicate with it, but I do not possess it, it is inexhaustible" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2018, p. 14, our translation). In this sense, it is necessary to approach the concept of active body as an understanding of a lived corporeality that has the premise of learning to see life by looking at objects in order to inhabit them and understand them in their different aspects (MOREIRA *et al.*, 2006).

Moreira *et al.* (2006) introduce important dialogues when promoting the relations of an active body with education, emphasizing that it is necessary an educational practice that considers the individual's learning originated not only from his intelligible capacity, but from his whole body in its various interactions and complexity. From this premise, "to value corporeality is to look at the one who learns, recognizing his multiple potentials, stimulating him through problem situations associated with everyday experiences, favoring new learning" (NISTA-PICCOLO *et al.*, 2019, p. 388, our translation). This attentive look at the body and its various forms of expression can re-signify the ways of teaching, instigating a more meaningful and consistent learning with each reality experienced.

It is noteworthy that each body holds in itself a stethosis that is particular according to its experiences. The corporeality understood in its existential totality holds an "ambiguity of the human being as intentionality, as consciousness and body, unveiling its unity from the sensitive, the corporeal, the lived experience of being in the world" (MOREIRA *et al.*, 2006, p. 141, our translation).

In this sense, for Moreira and Simões (2016, p. 136, our translation), "in corporeality, existence and the expression of thought are significantly intertwined, the first being revealed by the body and the second by the word". Therefore, corporeality is concerned with the knowledge that emerges from the lived body, overcoming dualistic conceptions, being, as Nóbrega (2010) calls it, essence and existence faces of the same phenomenon. Corporeality seeks to be and have an involving discourse that tries to go beyond the understanding of the

human being in its biological structure, as it is concerned with providing new ways of organizing knowledge, as well as ethical and social coexistence. (NÓBREGA, 2010).

The corporeality is attentive to the lived reality of each subject with the perceptions they have of the world and of the shares established, because through the experiences of everyday life each human being is one, endowed with sensitivity and intelligibility. The body is no longer conceived only as a biological dimension, but also as an existential one. The body is language and has several ways of manifesting itself, thus, "[...] looking at the subject's corporeality is to look for the expression, is to look for the desire, because the look knows meaning and feels by knowing" (MOREIRA, 1995, p. 19, our translation). Thus, it is necessary to exercise the art of thinking critically about the body, leading students to be conscious and sensitive subjects, contributing to the formation of bodies that are increasingly more human.

In view of this, the study aims to understand the conceptions of body of students with visual impairment from public schools in Santarém-PA, in the light of the corporeality approach. We opted for qualitative descriptive research. The theoretical/methodological structure is based on the assumptions of the corporeality phenomenon, using a questionnaire for characterization of the participant and semi-structured interviews.

### **Being a body with visual impairment: approaches to corporeality**

Vision is considered one of the most important communication resources and one of the main accesses to establish relationships, with the other and the world. In this sense, we seek to discuss the capabilities and limitations of people with visual impairment and their relationship with corporeality.

In order to be able to understand the person with visual impairment, it is indispensable that the professionals have the sensibility to try to understand them in their entirety, disengaging themselves from any prejudice or structured and predetermined concepts which influence the attitudes towards them. Therefore, more relevant than focusing on the differences between the visually impaired person and the seeing person is to focus on the similarities, and from that, to focus on the characteristics of each one of them (AMIRALIAN, 1997).

It is essential to consider the needs, for instance, those who live with the blind must understand that their inability to read the facial expressions and gestures of people makes them need to be informed about the feelings and emotions of the other person so that a meaningful exchange can occur (MOTA, 2003).

From these assumptions, it is considered that a child born with visual impairment or who acquires it in the first years of life, has its form of contact with the world and its surroundings different from those who have sight. It is "[...] by means of their movements and interactions with their surroundings that the visually impaired child develops their ability to perceive, get in touch, organize and understand the world where they are" (MASINI, 2013, p. 19, our translation), this becomes noticeable in daily life situations, such as the orientation and mobility of people with this disability. It must be considered that the person with visual impairment (PcDV) also experiences the world which has vision and its representations as the predominant sense of human beings. However, it is worth considering that, despite being the predominant sense, it is not the only one, nor does it play a more important role than the others. In this way, this subject has all the other senses, involving all of its domains: the social, the affective, and the cognitive, evolving according to the opportunities that are offered and are within its reach.

The perceptions of each subject are built on a daily basis, from the actions and exploration of what surrounds him/her, thus, through these interactions is that the human being perceives, differentiates and understands the world (MASINI, 2013). From this perspective, this study seeks to consider the body experience that is unique to each subject.

It is pertinent to highlight that one cannot generalize the positive or negative characteristics of a person with visual impairment, because each one has its individuality, although they have disability in common. Under this perspective, it is known that the ways of being are unique to each subject. One cannot limit and label them, preventing them from building the perceptions of the reality they experience. It is necessary to provide different opportunities, appreciation, solidarity, and, mainly, respect. Pity and excessive care do nothing to help these beings who have limitations, but who are also endowed with abilities (MOTA, 2003).

Therefore, to talk about the body with visual impairment, we take as a basis the writings of Merleau-Ponty (2018), because this philosopher emphasizes that the human being has in the body its source of meanings in which the experience with the other, with oneself, and with the world occurs. For the author, there is no way to establish any relationship without the body, it is the creator of meanings and each subject has an individuality, whether due to personality issues or biological nature, because it is through its bodily condition that the human being acts in the world.

Talking about the absence, recovery, or loss of any meaning involves a complex process, demanding cautious looks, because it is about discussing how a person perceives and builds his

or her own world. It is essential to offer development and education conditions beyond the rationalist and instrumental aspects, considering the experiences of each body in different moments and situations. It is necessary to understand it in its existential totality: how it expresses itself, communicates, thinks and feels (MASINI, 2013).

The author also states that for Merleau-Ponty (2018), when considering the subject and his perceptual experiences, one must evaluate that it is a dynamic relationship of the body and the world, and not only associations of the sense organs, because knowledge is manifested from the latent knowledge that occurs in the body itself (MASINI, 2013). The subject is conceived as a body in the world that manifests itself in several ways. In this direction, people with visual impairment need more physical contact, speech, additional care and different ways of mediation so that they can know, recognize and assign meanings to things, valuing the exploratory behavior, stimulation of the remaining senses and active participation in society (SÁ, 2011).

About the misconceptions concerning the visually impaired body, Mota (2003) mentions that not seeing with the eyes does not mean not hearing. A recurring mistake is to treat PcDV as if they were deaf or even that they cannot communicate clearly. Another erroneous view is the fact that many believe that they have a "sixth sense", but what happens is that they develop their latent resources in a more refined way.

In this sense, when conducting research on the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, Rodrigues, Bernardino and Moreira (2022, p. 13, our translation), concluded, from the participants' reports, that:

[...] It is very painful to see in others the expression of prejudice, discrimination, and the lack of attitudes and actions when facing complex situations. They register that they perceive stigmas and stereotypes, starting from their own family, due to lack of knowledge, but that extends to the school or University, in the overprotection or neglect of their specific needs. They feel that all the other accessibilities are related to the attitudinal one, to put an end to the barriers.

Therefore, the person with visual impairment must be understood from what the absence of sight represents, as well as the possibilities they may have through non-visual experiences, in order to establish their relations with themselves and with everything around them. Such premises become primordial for a good development of their teaching and learning process, being essential to enable them to face difficulties.

For being attributed to the eyes a great portion of the experiences, it is questionable how the visually impaired person places, establishes and perceives his/her relations in a world largely designed for the seeing person. It is understood that the body exists to the extent that its



relationship with the world is perceived. In this way, both the seeing person and the visually impaired person inhabit themselves and the world, not only occupying the space in an inert and passive manner, but in an active and conscious manner. Therefore, the relationship between a being and the world is established through his experiences and reflections, through his bodily reality: the body is the being's existential presence, and it is through the body that he lives his existentiality (PORTO, 2002). In this way, there is no point in making a distinction between the world of the seeing and the blind; to do so is to not admit that the world is the same as it is for any subject that shares it. What exists is a differentiation of the way of perceiving and attributing meanings between me and the other (PORTO, 2002).

In the words of the author, it is common to expect blind people to perceive the world in the same way as seeing people, but in doing so, it is denied that both can live the same situation. What happens is that they perceive differently because they are different in essence and in the natural conditions of their bodies, however, this can also be perceived from blind person to blind person or from seeing person to seeing person, because every being is unique and establishes its relationship with the world in this perspective.

Recent research, such as that of Martins and Chacon (2022), highlights that despite the advances regarding the rights of people with disabilities, inclusion does not always happen, especially in the school environment, due to several factors, such as the lack of curricular flexibility, lack of professional preparation and pedagogical resources consistent with the level of development of these students. Therefore, it becomes urgent to ensure conditions for all bodies to participate in the various educational activities.

For that to happen, it is necessary to consider the body with its specificities, deeply knowing its essence, paying attention to the ways this body with visual impairment apprehends the world and manifests itself. Thus,

The first task for those who propose to carry out any educational action with the visually impaired is to try to know about him, his life experience and his perception, because it is only from his own meaning - from what he feels and understands - that he will be able to organize the information about the world around him and act in situations (MASINI, 2013, p. 20, our translation).

Consequently, whether for those who live with people with visual impairment on a daily basis or for those who challenge themselves to study them or who develop some educational action, it is essential to know about them in their several aspects, paying attention to their development, perception and ways of being. For, it is from what the person feels and understands that he/she acts in the world and in the several life situations (MASINI, 2013).

From this, the complexity of interactions and manifestations that human beings experience in their existence from the specificities of their bodies is demonstrated. Having the absence of one of the distance senses is a limitation and must be considered in this way, and not as an impediment to their autonomy, learning, and integral development. The corporeality goes beyond what is perceived through the vision, it happens in the body as a whole, not being excluded by the lack or difficulty in using one of the senses. Although the visually impaired person has biological limits, he/she is a human being capable of keeping contact and interrelations with his/her surroundings, experiencing and learning the world in his/her own way. Thus, "being a disabled body does not mean being an absent body; being a disabled body is being a body like any other being" (PORTO, 2005, p. 38, our translation).

It is necessary to understand that the body is language, it is a source of knowledge, in it one feels joy and sadness, certainty and doubt, defeat and victory, fear and courage, passion and disappointment, love and hate, cold and heat, presence and absence, pleasure and displeasure, among so many other experiences and happenings. Therefore, regardless of the specificities and singularities of each being, it is necessary to perceive oneself as a corporeal being that has in itself ambiguity and complexity. In view of this,

It is important that the teacher is able to see his student through the eyes of a researcher, one who observes, analyzes and reflects on his learning. And, in this way, can understand the facilities and difficulties that the student presents to learn, stimulating his intelligence potentials. To understand this plurality of different potentials that students present is to stimulate their intelligences (NISTA-PICCOLO *et al.*, 2019, p. 381, our translation).

For inclusion to happen, it is essential the solid training of teachers, enabling the student to have his teaching and learning process carried out in a broad way within the school space, regardless of their specificities, ensuring not only access, but the quality of education, so that he exercises the right to full social participation (LOZANO; PRADO; JUNGO, 2022). Thus, the school environment should increasingly become a space that provides inclusion and greater participation of different bodies in order to contribute to the full development of the individual, offering varied experiences, and these should extend to all, without distinction.

### **The conceptions of body of visually impaired students**

The research locus is located in the western region of the state of Pará. The city of Santarém is one of the 144 municipalities of the state, one of the most populous, standing out for its beauty and exuberance both for natural and cultural issues.



The study aimed to be developed in state public schools in the city of Santarém - Pará, which had students with visual impairment attending high school. In total, 07 teaching units participated in the research, being 06 schools and the 5th Regional Education Unit, which in its structure offers high school in the modular modality for people with visual impairment.

The research was developed with 09 students, being 07 with low vision and 02 blind, 01 of them having acquired the visual impairment at the age of 05 and the other having had it since birth. The students are between 17 and 47 years old, most of them between 17 and 19 years old. Of the 09 participants, 02 are 17 years old, 03 are 18, 02 are 19, 01 is 24, and 01 is 47.

Students were presented with the study objectives, methodology, risks and benefits, as well as the Informed Consent Form (ICF); in cases where they were minors, it was necessary to present the Informed Consent Form (ICF), which was signed by the participants, leaving the ICF to be signed by their guardian.

Subsequently, they answered a participant characterization questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The data were analyzed using the "Elaboration and Analysis of Meaning Units", developed by Moreira, Simões and Porto (2005). This was made from the combination of two techniques and data analysis: the adaptation of the Evaluative Assertion Analysis (EAA) technique proposed by Osgood, Saporta and Nunnally, mentioned by Bardin (1977), and the Situated Phenomenon Analysis, structured by Giorgi (1978) and Martins and Bicudo (1989). In this analysis technique, one must go through the following moments: naive report, identification of attitudes and interpretation.

It is worth mentioning that this study was submitted and approved by the Ethics Committee on Research with Human Beings - Research Ethics Committee of UFOPA. Process with protocol number: 50822732.8.0000.0171 and opinion number: 5.032.050.

Thus, as a generating question we have: what is body for you? It was possible to extract 13 meaning units for this question, as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Meaning Unit

Generating question: What is body for you?												
Meaning Units	Students									No. of responses	%	
	P01	P02	P03	P04	P05	P06	P07	P08	P09			
01- It is something divine	X										01	11,11%
02- It is my existence	X	X									02	22,22%
03- My body is sensitive	X				X						02	22,22%
04- My body, it's base		X									01	11,11%
05- It's everything			X								01	11,11%
06- My body is normal			X			X		X	X		04	44,44%
07- It is to be careful, to have well-being, to love yourself				X							01	11,11%
08- It is movement, it is locomotion							X				02	11,11%
09- Body is a part of me						X					01	11,11%
10- Each person has a body that is different								X			01	11,11%
11- It's thing		X			X						02	22,22%
12- Set of several members									X		01	11,11%
13- It's life									X		01	11,11%

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data obtained in the field research (2021/2022)

In the Meaning Unit (Chart 01), it is highlighted that the body "**is something divine**"; participant P01 who reported such a response mentioned that the disability itself was something blessed: "*My body is something divine that God gave me. My body is what Jesus gave me with a gift, which is the disease, and I face several barriers with this disease, both at school and at work*" (P01).

When reading such statement, it is possible to reflect on the conceptions of the body with disability linked to divine issues, understood as a gift from God. It can be seen that this

view, linked to the supernatural world, was very present in the Middle Ages, in which disability was considered sacred or even as a punishment, an act of divine wrath for some action considered sinful by the subject or his parents, and is still perpetuated today both as something positive and negative.

In face of this reality experienced in the past, the handicapped body suffered:

During the entire medieval period, with the culture focused on religious themes, under the inflection of the dominant Christianity, this conception prevailed. The body was taken as a place of sin and, therefore, the less active the better. Some theological postures differed a little, but only sought to bring the body closer to spiritual reality (GALLO, 2006, p. 19-20, our translation).

From the author's reflection about the confrontations experienced by the body at that time, we realize that the same dilemmas occur today, because we notice that the speech of the interviewee is confusing, being at the same time a body graced as a divine gift, but then describes that this gift comes from the disease, which motivates the emergence of barriers at school and at work.

In the second Meaning Unit, two participants affirmed perceiving the body as "**It is my existence**", this understanding is close to the discourse of corporeality, in which the body is seen as the manifestation of the presence of the human being in the world, in the perspective of subject body.

As Merleau-Ponty (2018, p. 230, our translation) states, "the body is immobilized or generalized existence, and existence a perpetual embodiment." Corroborating with such a statement, Nóbrega (2010) highlights that the body is the condition of life, of the existence of being and of knowledge itself. In the words of the students: "[...] *My body is my existence [...]*" (P01); for (P02), "*gee, I wasn't ready for that one.... well, if I didn't have a body I wouldn't exist, so...*".

Given the answers, it is noted that the body for these two students is not conceived as separated by parts, mere framework or dwelling, but as being a body whole, which is the student himself in his manifestations in the world. What is emphasized by Merleau-Ponty (2018), who points out that the experience of being manifests itself in a body itself existentialized in the ways of being in the world, in contact with the other and with their experiences. Thus, a thought about the body as a manifestation of what is experienced stands out, in a being perceiving itself as existence admitting relationships, perceiving life and the world.

The students' speech comes close to the corporeality discourse, as it seeks to perceive those who show themselves. In this direction, corporeality exercises a look on objects in an

existentialist perspective, because "existence is primarily corporal and that the body is the measure of our experience in the world and, therefore, the first reference of knowledge" (NÓBREGA, 2010, p. 15, our translation). In this same view, Le Breton (2012) states that before anything else, existence takes place through the body. Therefore, it is in this perspective that the approach to corporeality, anchored in phenomenology, seeks to describe the experience of the human being in a sensitive world, discussing the perception of the body as an existential condition.

However, it is interesting to note that even though P02 describes body as "existence", he also mentions seeing it as "a thing" that he uses constantly. In this sense, it is noticeable that the discourse of body as something that is possessed is also present in his speech, as if it were an object, approaching the utilitarian and mechanistic view of the body. Thus, we notice that the same subject can present conceptions that are close to or far from the idea of the body in the conception of corporeality.

In this same scenario, when referring to the conceptions of body, Merleau-Ponty (2018, p. 269, our translation), points out that "[...] therefore, the body is not an object. For the same reason, the consciousness I have of it is not a thought, that is, I cannot decompose and recompose it to form a clear idea of it. Its unity is always implicit and confused. The body goes far beyond a simple understanding, it is a mystery, difficult to describe”.

It can be seen that such notes made by participant 02 has a certain approximation with the speech presented by corporeality, because as Pereira (2020) mentions, the approach discusses the experience of the being to realize himself, and through this perception, to resize the way of knowing himself, thus, the way the subject is today is a provisional and unfinished condition, and may change at any time. It is having flexibility, adapting to the conditions of life. Moreover, as P02 mentions, thinking about the meaning of body is not something so simple, and rarely is one encouraged to reflect about it. In the interviewee's speech, it is also possible to notice a certain discomfort, a certain strangeness at first about the question, probably because it is a little discussed theme. Another fact worth mentioning is that, despite both participants being people with visual impairment, one with low vision and the other with blindness, it is noted that it was not possible to differentiate the conception of body by the type of visual impairment, but by the world experiences and the relationships established with oneself and with others, because in fact it is understood that this is what gives meaning to things and phenomena.

It is understood that human beings are in constant development, so it is assumed that the speech about a particular phenomenon may also be being shaped and built throughout life.

Taking into account that the student is a high school student with visual impairment, it is imagined that the participant is in the process of formation, including reflections about his conceptions about his own body.

In this same perspective, the Unit "**My body is sensitive**" is presented, which was present in the speeches of both P01: "*I would say that my body is sensitive...*", and P05, and they reflect what they think about the body: "*Body... I never stopped to think... now it caught on... look I never... like... ahhhhhh... [...] It means the feeling ...*" (P05). It is noticeable that the speeches address a body that is considered sensitive, intelligible, complex, and at the same time possessing countless meanings and singularities, being even difficult to be defined.

As mentioned by the participants, this sensitive body is a body that feels, that experiences countless situations in everyday life, that has its difficulties, but also its potential. A body that shows itself and lets itself be known. A body that is learning every day, in a dynamic interaction with objects, the other, and the world, and that in this paradox of being a body demonstrates the beauty of being human. It is what Nóbrega (2010) mentions as body-self, body-living and sensitive exemplary. And being a body is that the subject communicates, expresses himself, shows his emotions, from the experience of his corporeality. It is a body that is undoubtedly intertwined with the environment in which it is inserted and, also, that establishes exchanges and sharing.

Moreover, as stated by P01, the body also has its limitations and needs which must be considered, especially in the school environment, "people with visual impairment have specific needs regarding interaction and communication with the environment. They need different procedures in the teaching-learning process, materials and specific resources for their education and inclusion" (MASINI, 2013, p. 94, our translation). It is up to school environments to provide experiences that allow each body to develop in an active way.

Contributing to this discussion, Correa, Moro and Valentini (2021) point out that Assistive Technology (AT), when added and properly used in the teaching-learning process, enables breaking sensory, motor and cognitive barriers, being a helper in the inclusion of students with disabilities. To that end, the school must provide a set of methodological tools which contribute to the full development of students.

In the fourth Meaning Unit, "**My body is the base**", one can contemplate the view of a body as being the essence of the subject, the base that gives life to the human being, therefore, without the corporeal being, there would be no subject that relates and expresses opinions. Thus, when asked about what is body, P02 exposes that: "*[...] it is a question that I had never stopped to think about it, but my body, it is base... if my body did not exist, I would not exist [...]*".

From the above, an approximation is made with what was presented by Merleau-Ponty (2018), in which the body is the basic unit, the first essence of the subject in the world, and the means by which it is possible to manifest itself, because the being is not in front of its body, but in its body, being body. And from this communication with oneself it is also possible to communicate and understand the world. In this sense, it portrays once again the importance of discussions about the body, in the sense of returning to the things themselves, to what is prior to knowledge (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2018).

The Meaning Unit my body "**is life**", was extracted from the report of P08, which states: "*Well, I think it means a life, right, a present life*". It is noticed an approximation with what was addressed in the previous units, because they also present a notion of body with broader and more philosophical meaning, leading to reflect on the human being that is complex and one, because "the body is the condition of life, existence, knowledge" (NÓBREGA, 2010, p. 19, our translation). The body cannot be treated as an artifact housed in man that presents itself as an obstacle to be carried in his existence, but, on the contrary, it should be considered as the human condition in the world in which it draws his path and makes his welcome hospitable (LE BRETON, 2016).

In the Meaning Unit: "**It is everything**," it can be observed that P03 comes close to what was mentioned by the participants cited earlier, who see the body as synonymous with their own existence, the totality of being. However, saying, "*It is everything*" may be convergent in relation to corporeality, but also divergent, because such a statement encompasses the various existing conceptions about the body. Therefore, there is no way to describe exactly what the participant understands his body to be.

It is understood that the body needs to be more mentioned and discussed, especially in the teaching units, and consequently, it is pointed out the need for more in-depth studies instigating the students to reflect about being body and to value it as a producer of knowledge. Thus, it will be possible to live an education that privileges human experiences and challenges teachers and students to have a sensitive, critical, and reflective look on themselves, on others, and on their surroundings. (COUTO; RIBEIRO; TEIXEIRA, 2021).

The Meaning Unit that addresses that body "**is to take care, have well-being, love yourself**" has a focus of body more focused on issues of health and aesthetics. According to P04: "*So, the body is to be careful, to have well-being with your own body and with yourself. In relation to my body, I think that it is having it and knowing how to take care of it. I think that it is to know how to love yourself regardless of what you are, regardless of your body, never give up on who you are.*" (P04).



It is noted that the student reports that the body is something that one owns, and in which one should have habits that ensure that it is healthy, having a relationship of well-being with himself, loving himself regardless of the peculiarities that the body has. In this speech, one can notice that even though the participant has visual impairment, he does not feel diminished, with a feeling of invalidity or inferiority.

From this reflection, it is considered that the interviewee's speech has much to teach, because as mentioned by him, it is necessary to love, accept, respect, have self-confidence in oneself, so that from that, one can have the acceptance and respect of others. As Santin (2003, p. 114, our translation) states, "[...] one must learn to listen to oneself, listen to the speech of the body, attend to the signs of feeling.

Although, in some moments, it seems that P04 sees the body as an object, it is possible to notice traces that meet the corporeality speech, because the interviewee does not stick to biologicistic issues, but goes beyond, addressing issues related to the relationship with himself and with the other. Addressing the idea that the way the subject sees his own body influences even the view that others will have.

Thus, such conception of body reaffirms the thought of Merleau-Ponty (2018), considering that the body is not an object, and that the conception we have of this body cannot be understood as a thought. For the author, this reflects that it is not possible to decompose or recompose the thought that we have of body, because its unity will be at all times presenting itself in an implicit and confusing way. This is the beauty of the conception of body, unique and inseparable.

The Meaning Unit "**Body is a part of me**" demonstrates a conception that the human being goes beyond the material body, being the body a part of the extension of what the subject is. In the words of P06: "*Body is a part of me, and I am...it's, satisfied with it*" (P06). Based on the interviewee's speech and the writings of Santos (2019), it is understood that the body, when understood in this way, is not seen as object body, but as subject body, encompassing the perspective of the subject in its entirety, transcending the objective sphere and reaching the complexity and subjectivity of being.

The eighth Meaning Unit, "**It is movement, locomotion**", discusses a conception of body as an expression of the human being, the means by which he moves and interacts in the world. For P07: "*For me, the human being's body is movement, locomotion*".

Based on this reflection, it is emphasized that human existence occurs through the intentionality of movements, which enable human interaction. Thus, corporeality seeks to give meaning to these movements and the bodily relationships that are established from them. It is

an active being, which is in constant movement (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2018). Thus, it is considered that "the body is alive and significant and by moving, the human subject creates and recreates history and culture" (NÓBREGA, 2019, p. 86, our translation). Therefore, it is through the movement of the body that the human being expresses himself and, through his corporeality, makes himself present in the world. On the other hand, it is imagined that the participant's answer is also related to the views of body as a physical and biological instrument, because it is also perceived a utilitarian character in this unit.

Composing the Meaning Unit "**My body is normal**", one can notice a sense of affirmation from the participants in trying to clarify that they do not consider themselves "abnormal" for having a disability. The reports indicate a need for self-affirmation, because although the question is not directly related to this answer, the participants tried to evidence this statement: "*First, I don't think the body is different because of the disability*" (P03); while P06 states: "*I don't think it is different because I am visually impaired*". And another participant stated: "*I honestly don't know how to define the human body. But I imagine that it is a person. My body is normal, natural in my vision*" (P08).

It is assumed that such answers are related to the lived experiences of the students, linked to the fact of having to deal several times with prejudice about their body due to having a certain biological limitation. Contributing to this statement, when dealing with the body with some kind of disability Le Breton (2012) states that the more visible a disability is, the more discrimination the subject will suffer, because the relationship of these people is almost always of ambivalence, i.e., at the same time that society states that these are normal beings and that disability should not influence the social value, they still suffer much prejudice and disapproval, damaging their relationships with their peers.

In this regard, there is an understanding that the diversity of bodies should not be a reason for exclusion, but for interaction, for possibility, when the body suffers some kind of constraint, it may feel displaced or become closed to new relationships, and consequently, to new experiences and new learning. It is necessary to free oneself from dogmas, stereotypes, and pre-established standards that prevent the total flow of the expressions of corporeality.

The unit "**Each person has a body that is different**" is close to the previous unit. Expressing the conception of P08, who understands that each being is one, complex, as noted in his speech: "*My body has its limitations, it is a little difficult, but compare it with other people. You could say that each person has a body that is different*" (P08).

In the report it can be seen that the participant is aware that even with all the limitations and difficulties he faces, he does not have an "abnormal" body, but a different body, just like

all the others, because each one is constituted differently. We agree with the words of P08, because it is understood that the body can manifest itself in different ways and under multiple languages, socially, culturally, and historically. This statement of the student is in line with what emphasizes the corporeality, because as Nóbrega (2010, p. 21, our translation) states, "the corporeality coexists with the various existing bodies". In this sense, each body has its own characteristics, qualities, limitations, and potentialities that must be considered in all environments, especially at school, a privileged place for knowledge construction.

From the Unit presented "**It's a thing**", one can notice a meaning of body that is divergent from corporeality. In the speeches of P02, "*my body for me is something I use a lot, you know, like all the time*", while P05 says: "*the body for me, I think it is something to move around, like this, to walk, to do things, to think and learn things I don't know*". One can notice that in the speech of P02, "thing" is linked more to the speech of something mechanical and utilitarian. While, for P05, the discourse already approaches the sense of body as connected to movement, something intentional. This vision of body is present in the school environment. Currently, education professionals treat students' bodies as objects to be manipulated or improved, often reflecting on the conception that students will have of their own bodies. This scenario is worrisome, because in the twenty-first century, with the many advances in education, there are few movements within this environment that encourage students to reflect on their bodies as autonomous beings, and to feel corporeal (COUTO; RIBEIRO; TEIXEIRA, 2021).

Contrary to the body as a thing, the corporeality perspective is the body that "is presence and existence in the relationship with the world, respecting the space, time and its unique way of living" (PORTO, 2005, p. 105, our translation). Thus, to glimpse this body through this understanding is to move away from an understanding of objectified body and approach a body that reflects the human being in its totality, at the same time biological, social, cultural, political, and economic.

Another report pointed out the body as "**Set of several members**", a unit of meaning in which one can notice a vision of organic body, which is closer to the biologicistic and machinic conceptions of the body, as something fragmented, separated into parts, being linked more to organic issues. Based on the writings of Nóbrega (2010), it is understood that one should not consider the body as an inventory of parts or as a house for the spirit, but as the human being itself, with its experiences, sensitivity and reflexivity, in its relationship with the world and the other.

## **Final remarks: reflections of those who "see" on the conception of body of those who do not "see" with their eyes**

As outlined throughout this study, corporeality goes far beyond a concept, it is an act of intimate involvement with oneself, with others, and with the world. It is a way of being and being, a walk towards the best one can be as a person, in the constant search for making the world a better place. Understanding the corporeality approach is something complex, but it is possible to be understood and disseminated in formal and non-formal educational environments. We realize that schools are saturated with practices that insist on dominating and silencing the corporal manifestations, and a discourse that breaks with these perceptions is essential.

In this sense, when searching for the vision of the body of people with visual impairment, the aim was to give voice to the bodies that are continuously silenced by society, besides being a longing to better understand the different bodies present in the school environment. It is considered that these bodies are not exceptional because they have a disability, but because they are unique, complex beings, full of subjectivity and have differentiated experiences. Evidently, not having one of the remaining senses brings experiences that a sighted person will not have, but as stated by the interviewed students, this does not make them different bodies from the others, exclusively because of this characteristic. According to the data presented, most students with visual impairment describe the body as being itself, in its expressions and existence. Therefore, these speeches converged with the assumptions presented by the corporeality approach, in which the body is the manifestation of the subject, being the only way to be and be in the world.

It is necessary, based on what the participants say, to value the relationship and the care for oneself, for others, and for the environment. It is necessary to coexist with quality with all those who are in life, making possible a better and more pleasant world to be in and to live in. Each speech is loaded with meanings and more meanings, with a little bit of each being, of their trajectory, joys, anguish, and learning that are constitutive of the singularities of these students. These subjects have negative experiences and marks imprinted on their bodies that are the fruit of prejudice and discrimination, and this cannot be neglected by our educational institutions. On the contrary, it is necessary to fulfill what is foreseen in the Laws, providing opportunities for different positive experiences with quality.

The body of the visually impaired person that does not have the standards dictated by society cannot be treated with prejudice and exclusion, but as a body which has its challenges, but which is rich in sensitivity and intelligibility.

It is reaffirmed that their rights are guaranteed by Law, such as those instituted by the inclusion policies and laws (BRAZIL, 2008, 2015), the Brazilian Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988), the Education Directives Law, LDB n°. 9.394/1996 (BRAZIL, 1996), as they must be frequently recognized and respected so that they can fully exercise their citizenship.

To go deeper into the conception of body of these subjects is to understand that, even without the sense of sight, they have all the other senses that enable them to go beyond the things seen, allowing them to relate with themselves, with others and their surroundings from their lived corporeality. Thus, based on the theoreticians and on the reports of the subjects participating in the research, it is understood that the corporeality presents itself as a mechanism to overcome the mechanistic and reductionist views of the body, criticizing and re-signifying these conceptions that are impregnated in society, which sometimes imprison and silence the being.

In this way, the approach to corporeality presented in this article seeks to instigate the human being in its full development, conceiving the body in its subjectivity, plenitude, and autonomy. By perceiving himself as a corporeal being, the subject becomes the manager of his own history, living in harmony with all its facets. Therefore, when "we take our destiny into our own hands, we become responsible, through reflection, for our history [...]" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2018, p. 19, our translation).

Considering these factors, it is necessary to think about education critically, transforming it into a true learning space that favors the various knowledge and body experiences, in a way that goes beyond the limits of the school in order to train citizens for life, making them critical and active subjects in their reality. Human beings need a careful look at their constitutive singularities, so that they are respected in their differences, having the opportunity to develop fully in/through social interactions, in their relationship with others.

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