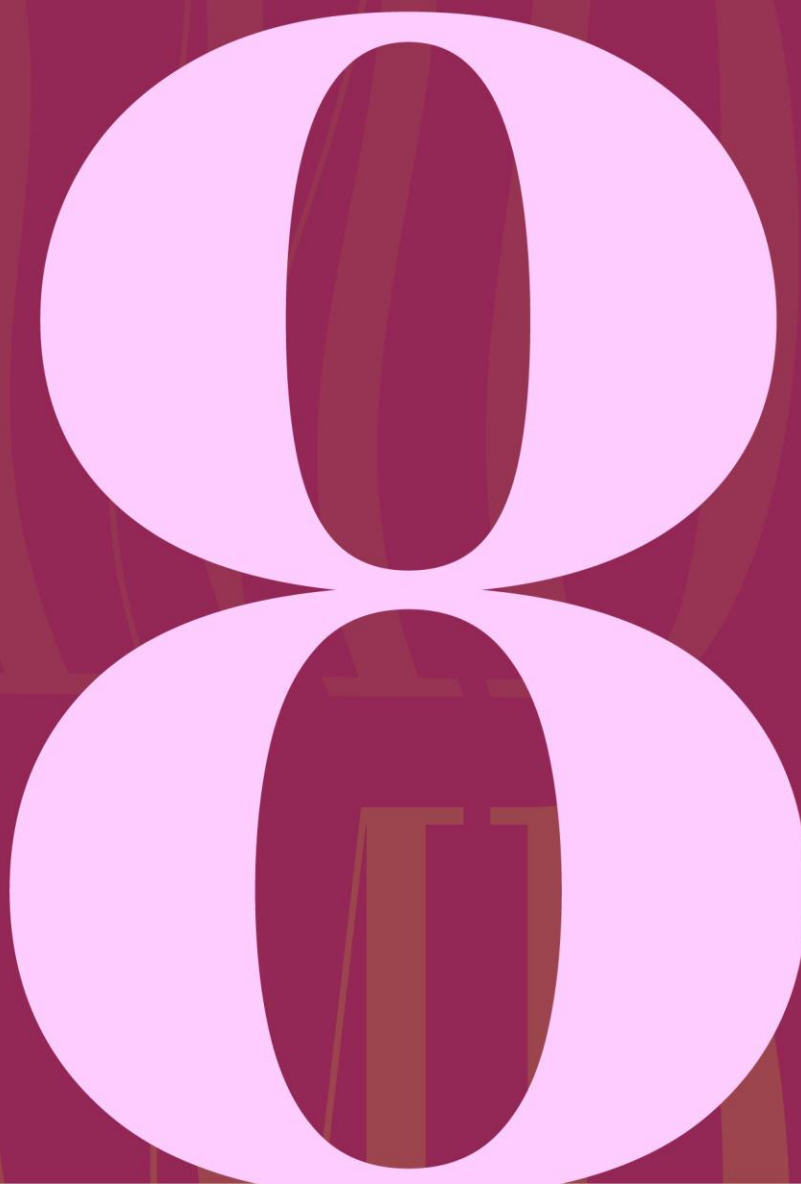


EXPANDED SUMMARY

Manual embroidery in art education for the deaf

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Translation: Daisy Cordeiro



1 Introduction

This article situates manual embroidery as an ancient cultural practice, present across civilizations and historical periods, bearing diverse meanings and social functions. Traditionally linked to the feminine sphere, embroidery was a skill taught to women, especially in spaces such as the *Recolhimentos* during Brazil's colonial period, where it formed part of the moral and cultural education of girls. Today, however, embroidery transcends these boundaries and emerges as an artistic expression with educational potential for various audiences, including deaf individuals.

For the deaf community, embroidery resonates with the centrality of visual perception, which is essential given that vision is their primary channel of communication. Thus, embroidery is presented as a powerful language within inclusive art education, engaging manual and visual movements that foster symbolic and cultural construction through the creation of tangible images and symbols. Drawing on theoretical contributions from scholars such as Andreza Cruz, the article emphasizes the importance of visual and imagetic languages in the learning processes of deaf individuals.

Furthermore, it underscores the relevance of connecting embroidery to Afro-Brazilian cultural identities, reaffirming the role of Federal Law No. 10.639/03 in incorporating Afro-Brazilian studies into educational spaces to strengthen the self-esteem and ethnic-racial belonging of Black deaf individuals.

The article centers on the experience of the project “*Mãos que Falam e Bordam*” (“Hands that Speak and Embroider”), developed in Canavieiras, Bahia, with the aim of integrating manual embroidery into art education to promote inclusion, cultural appreciation, and empowerment within the deaf community. The project adopts an interdisciplinary and participatory approach that values the collective construction of knowledge and languages, recognizing embroidery as a resource to expand accessibility and foster inclusive pedagogical practices. In this way, the introduction lays out the theoretical, social, and cultural foundations that support the development and significance of the project presented.

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2 Development

The article highlights that, as a visual art form, embroidery aligns closely with inclusive educational practices aimed at deaf individuals, whose primary mode of understanding the world is through sight. The theoretical framework, particularly Andreza Cruz (2016), asserts that the cultural development of deaf individuals occurs predominantly through visual means, indicating the need for visually oriented pedagogical approaches.

It also addresses the intersection of multiple identities, especially among Black and deaf individuals. According to Elaine Pereira, knowledge of African and Afro-Brazilian history and culture — facilitated by the legal mandate of Law No. 10.639/03 — is essential for Black deaf individuals to build and reinforce their self-esteem and sense of belonging. The article suggests that anti-racist pedagogical practices are crucial to fostering understanding and appreciation of these identities.

At the heart of the article is the account of the project “Mãos que Falam e Bordam,” developed as part of the institutional initiative by the Ministério Público da Bahia titled “Educação inclusiva: todas as escolas são para todos os alunos” (“Inclusive Education: All Schools Are for All Students”). The project took place in 2019, in partnership with the Associação de Surdos de Canavieiras (ASSUC), the Municipal Department of Education, and the NGO Giardino Degli Angeli. The course lasted three months, with weekly sessions, and brought together ten deaf students of both genders, aged between 30 and 60.

These sessions fostered critical reflections on identity, Afro-Brazilian culture, and ethnic-racial practices, using as a narrative thread the short story “Estou voltando...” (“I’m Coming Back...”) by writer Agamenon Troyan, which explores the African diaspora. The story was adapted, translated into Libras (Brazilian Sign Language), and adjusted into accessible Portuguese for the participants.

During the activities, the group researched drawings, illustrations, images, and videos related to Afro-Brazilian cultural elements, exploring themes such as cuisine, dance, and African religiosity. The teaching process was interdisciplinary, emphasizing the exchange of knowledge between the art educator and participants, who collaboratively created new Libras signs for specific embroidery-related terms such as “miçanga” (bead) and “vidrilho” (bugle bead).

The article explores the symbolic and historical context of Afro-Brazilian embroidery, such as the Barafunda technique, which is associated with religious and cultural practices in

Black communities and Candomblé terreiros. It recounts instances where embroidery served as a strategy of resistance and cultural affirmation by enslaved Black women, who re-signified fabrics, memories, and traditions through their stitched patterns.

The article also points to the challenges faced by the deaf community, including limited access to the labor market, lack of accessibility, and insufficient recognition of civil rights, as well as a shortage of teachers proficient in Libras within educational networks. The formation of associations like ASSUC represents significant progress by promoting inclusive courses and encouraging the self-esteem and professional development of deaf individuals.

Embroidery education, by fostering new forms of expression and interaction, proves to be a powerful tool for inclusion, as it transfers knowledge, generates income, and enables cultural and identity dialogue. By valuing manual craftsmanship as artistic and cultural expression, the course empowers participants and encourages new teaching methods tailored to the realities of the deaf public, respecting their uniqueness and expanding educational horizons.

Conclusion

The article reinforces that manual embroidery, when integrated into art education, serves as a tool for strengthening identity, culture, and empowerment among deaf individuals — especially Black deaf individuals — by promoting the recovery and appreciation of Afro-Brazilian roots. Embroidery transcends its artisanal nature, functioning as an accessible form of visual expression and communication that helps break down social, physical, and economic barriers faced by this community. In doing so, embroidery proves capable of expanding educational and social horizons, fostering inclusion and protagonism.

Moreover, the experience of the “Mãos que Falam e Bordam” project demonstrates that educational initiatives combining artistic practices, visual languages, and ethnic-racial themes have the potential to transform pedagogical approaches, making them more inclusive and welcoming. The collective learning process and the creation of new Libras signs underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing the specificities and cultural contributions of deaf individuals within educational environments. The project thus serves as a model for other initiatives seeking to integrate culture, art, and inclusive education.

Finally, the author calls for a sustained commitment from educators and institutions to adopt anti-racist and inclusive practices that promote respect for diversity and full citizenship. The promotion of manual embroidery in art education emerges as a meaningful pathway

toward building a more equitable education system, where the sharing of knowledge and the appreciation of cultural identities enable the holistic development of these individuals, opening new possibilities for expression, learning, and social empowerment².

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