

Special education in the context of inclusive education: Sharing reflections



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ABSTRACT

Special education has been building its identity and performance over time, being responsible for specialized educational assistance (SES), in order to complement and/or supplement school education. In this sense, the objective of this sharing of reflections was to reflect on the target audience of this action. There is a consensus that this public accounts for students with disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and high abilities/giftedness.

However, since 2008, the Special Education Educational Policy has identified students with specific functional disorders as part of this public. Despite this, students with ADHD and specific learning disabilities are generally not seen as part of the SES. Like other students who have neurodevelopmental disorders and are the target audience, these students may also have severe learning difficulties. Thus, this reflection is fundamental, since such conditions compose a list of early-onset disorders, with permanent conditions and atypical cognitive characteristics, which bring to these students the need for numerous curricular accessibility resources so that the process of inclusive education is effectively fulfilled.

Keywords: Special education, Inclusive education, Target audience.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INITIATING THE REJOICINGS

Over the last few decades, special education has gained its space and established its identity from the perspective of inclusive education. The special educator, then, is the specialist teacher, responsible for the specialized educational service (SES), whose objective is to:

[...] Identify, develop and organize pedagogical and accessibility resources that eliminate barriers to the full participation of students, considering their specific needs. This service complements and/or supplements the training of students with a view to autonomy and independence in school and outside of it, according to the Operational Guidelines of Special Education for Specialized Educational Service in Basic Education (BRASIL, 2009).

With his identity built and rebuilt over time, this teacher has consolidated his practice around a specific target audience, especially in Brazil, where legislation successively reiterates the special education teacher as the teacher of students with disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and high abilities/giftedness.

These subjects, historically excluded from formal education, had their struggle made visible from the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988) and its apex of legal inclusion with the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education of 1996 (BRASIL, 1996), a



moment in which their rights and guarantees to inclusive education were reiterated, the main ones being the reservation of vacancies in public educational institutions. instituted by the so-called quota law for PWDs, Law 12,711 of 2012 (BRASIL, 2012), the Specialized Educational Service, regulated by Decree No. 7,611 of 2011 (BRASIL, 2011) and curricular flexibilizations, regulated by LDB, Law 9394 of 1996 (BRASIL, 1996) and by the Statute of Persons with Disabilities, regulated by Law No. 13,409 of 2015, which ensures the right to education within an inclusive system (BRASIL, 2015).

1.2 IDENTITY, ROLE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATOR IN THE SCHOOL AND TARGET AUDIENCE

Obviously, there is still a lot to be done. However, much progress has been made in the sense of making visible and understanding that these subjects have the right to a truly inclusive education in regular schools, which should be seen as a place for all and respect for differences. As the inclusive paradigm itself points out, brought about through the Salamanca Declaration, a document to which Brazil is a signatory, the idea of inclusive education is to understand that education is for everyone. The Declaration also contains the idea that any subject with specific educational needs has the same right to education as others.

Recently, in 2021, Federal Law No. 14,254 was published, which guarantees subjects with ADHD and specific learning disorders the right to specialized pedagogical monitoring in regular schools, especially for those who have difficulties in the development of reading and writing, or instability in attention (BRASIL, 2021). However, long before that, in the National Policy on Special Education from the perspective of Inclusive Education (BRASIL, 2008), the idea of special education also serving students with the so-called specific functional disorders was already sown.

From the perspective of inclusive education, special education becomes part of the pedagogical proposal of the regular school, promoting the fulfillment of the special educational needs of students with disabilities, global developmental disorders and high abilities/giftedness. In these cases and others, which imply specific functional disorders, special education acts in an articulated way with regular education, guiding to meet the special educational needs of these students (BRASIL, 2008).

The latter, however, are not seen as the target audience of special education and historically have never been anyone's target audience. Those currently excluded from the formal learning process do not have legal guarantees to enter and/or remain. As Moysés (2014, p. 09) points out, these are subjects who "have conquered the right to enter through the school gates, but have not yet managed, despite all their resistance, their stubbornness in wanting to learn, to defeat the exclusionary character of the Brazilian school".

The question I ask myself daily, as a special educator, the reason for writing this sharing of reflections, every time the educational institution where I work as a special educator receives a student



with ADHD or Specific Learning Disorders, is: Why are these students still not seen as a target audience for special education in most educational institutions? Throughout Brazil? To better reflect on this question, I bring some elements on the subject:

1 - Like other students who have neurodevelopmental disorders and who are our target audience, these students may also have severe difficulties with the formal learning process.

2 - Another valid point of reflection is: Why, as inclusion professionals, do we insist so much that the medical report is not important to us and that, sometimes, it is just a label, when this same report serves us to say who is or is not our student?

3 - Also: With what criteria do we categorically state that subjects with Intellectual Development Disorder (better known in our environment as intellectual disability) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (or autism), both neurodevelopmental disorders, are our target audience, but subjects with ADHD or dyslexia, for example, also neurodevelopmental disorders, are not?

All these conditions make up a list of early-onset disorders in terms of human development, they are permanent conditions, considering that there is still nothing to talk about a cure for neurodevelopmental disorders and carry with them atypical characteristics, which bring many difficulties to the formal learning process, pointing to the need for curricular accessibility resources.

4 – Finally: The SES aims to identify, elaborate, organize and make available pedagogical and accessibility resources that eliminate students' learning barriers, considering their specific demands. In this sense, we can understand that such objectives involve curricular accessibility. By curriculum accessibility, we can understand the guarantee that all students, regardless of their abilities, can access and participate fully in the school curriculum. This includes adapting teaching materials, technological resources, and teaching methodologies to meet the individual needs of each student (NASCIMENTO, 2023). If we understand that this attribution belongs to the special educator, as the professional responsible for SES in the school, who should do it for students with specific educational needs, regardless of the medical report?

2 FINAL THOUGHTS

We may have a hard time dealing with other audiences because most of us have never studied neurodevelopmental disorders in more depth. I also suspect that the target audience legally provided for special education contains much of our identity as education professionals and, last but not least, the new is always scary.

When we struggled and defined our target audience, still in the 1980s and established it in the 1990s, little or nothing was known scientifically about ADHD and Specific Learning Disorders and scientific studies were still in their infancy. Perhaps, at the present moment, when we already know much more about these frameworks and scientific studies are already well known about how these



subjects present themselves to the formal learning process, we could propose new reflections. And, in this movement, to think that, instead of a report or diagnosis, what should define our target audience are the specific educational needs of each subject.

Finally, as a final reflection, I bring the following question: If a student with dyscalculia, for example, needs to work on the organization of specific pedagogical resources and curricular accessibility, which complement the training of the regular classroom, objectives of the SES, who should serve him at school? It remains the question for future reflections for those who wish, as I do, to do so.



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