


A DUPLA EXCEPCIONALIDADE NO CONTEXTO ESCOLAR: DESAFIOS, RECONHECIMENTO E POSSIBILIDADES DE INTERVENÇÃO PEDAGÓGICA**DOUBLE EXCEPTIONALITY IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT: CHALLENGES, RECOGNITION AND POSSIBILITIES OF PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION****DOBLE EXCEPCIONALIDAD EN EL CONTEXTO ESCOLAR: RETOS, RECONOCIMIENTO Y POSIBILIDADES DE INTERVENCIÓN PEDAGÓGICA** <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2025.021-046>**Marli de Fátima da Silva¹, Neuri Eliezer Senger² and Sandra Bueno da Silva Duarte³****RESUMO**

A dupla excepcionalidade refere-se a indivíduos que apresentam, simultaneamente, altas habilidades/superdotação e algum transtorno do desenvolvimento, como o Transtorno do Espectro Autista (TEA), o Transtorno de Déficit de Atenção com Hiperatividade (TDAH) ou dificuldades específicas de aprendizagem. No contexto escolar, esses alunos frequentemente enfrentam dificuldades tanto para serem identificados quanto para terem suas necessidades educacionais devidamente atendidas. Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir os principais desafios enfrentados pelas instituições escolares no reconhecimento da dupla excepcionalidade, bem como apresentar possibilidades de intervenção pedagógica inclusiva. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de cunho qualitativo, com base em revisão de literatura recente, que destaca a importância da formação docente, da avaliação multidisciplinar e das práticas pedagógicas diferenciadas. Conclui-se que a construção de um ambiente escolar inclusivo e responsivo às singularidades desses estudantes depende do engajamento colaborativo entre escola, família e profissionais especializados.

Palavras-chave: Dupla excepcionalidade. Altas habilidades. Inclusão escolar. Educação especial. Formação docente.

ABSTRACT

Double exceptionality refers to individuals who simultaneously present high abilities/giftedness and some developmental disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or specific learning difficulties. In the school context, these students often face difficulties both in being identified and in having

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their educational needs properly met. This article aims to discuss the main challenges faced by schools in recognizing double exceptionality, as well as to present possibilities for inclusive pedagogical intervention. This is a qualitative research, based on a review of recent literature, which highlights the importance of teacher training, multidisciplinary assessment and differentiated pedagogical practices. It is concluded that the construction of an inclusive school environment that responds to the singularities of these students depends on the collaborative engagement between school, family and specialized professionals.

Keywords: Double exceptionality. High abilities. School inclusion. Special education. Teacher training.

RESUMEN

La doble excepcionalidad se refiere a individuos que presentan simultáneamente altas capacidades/superdotación y algún trastorno del desarrollo, como el Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA), el Trastorno por Déficit de Atención e Hiperactividad (TDAH) o dificultades específicas de aprendizaje. En el contexto escolar, este alumnado suele tener dificultades tanto para ser identificado como para que sus necesidades educativas sean adecuadamente atendidas. Este artículo pretende analizar los principales retos que enfrentan las escuelas para reconocer la doble excepcionalidad, así como presentar posibilidades de intervención pedagógica inclusiva. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa, basada en una revisión de la literatura reciente, que destaca la importancia de la formación docente, la evaluación multidisciplinar y las prácticas pedagógicas diferenciadas. Se concluye que la construcción de un entorno escolar inclusivo que responda a las singularidades de este alumnado depende de la colaboración entre la escuela, la familia y los profesionales especializados.

Palabras clave: Doble excepcionalidad. Altas capacidades. Inclusión escolar. Educación especial. Formación docente.

INTRODUCTION

The debate on school inclusion has intensified in recent decades, driven by public policies, advances in educational research, and a growing social awareness of the rights of people with disabilities and other conditions that affect learning. In this context, the school has been called upon to transform itself into a truly inclusive environment, capable of welcoming diversity in all its forms and promoting the full development of each student. However, even in the face of legal and conceptual advances, certain groups of students continue to be made invisible or misunderstood in the school environment. Among them, those who have the condition known as double exceptionality stand out — that is, individuals who simultaneously have high abilities/giftedness (HA/SD) and some developmental disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or dyslexia.

The double exceptionality represents a complexity that challenges the traditional models of diagnosis, evaluation and educational intervention. This is because the behaviors and performances of these students often oscillate between brilliance in certain areas and significant difficulties in others. Due to this heterogeneity, many of them go unnoticed in the educational system, being labeled only for their limitations or, on the contrary, for their abilities, without recognizing the coexistence of both profiles. This invisibility compromises not only the recognition of their specific needs, but also the elaboration of appropriate pedagogical strategies so that they can reach their potential.

The literature points out that students with double exceptionality tend to be underreported, both in relation to high abilities and the disorders that affect them. When identified, they are often misinterpreted by teachers and pedagogical teams, which can result in inadequate educational practices, which ignore the complexity of their profile. This highlights a significant gap in teacher training, which still lacks preparation to deal with neurocognitive diversity effectively, especially in cases that escape the most well-known categories of disability or giftedness in isolation.

The school, as a privileged space for socialization, development of skills and construction of identity, needs to be attentive to this demand. In order for it to be a truly inclusive environment, it is essential that it promotes not only access, but also the permanence and school success of all students — including those whose educational trajectory is marked by contradictions and challenges, such as those with double exceptionality. This implies the adoption of a pedagogical posture sensitive to the specificities of each student, with the offer of flexible curricula, differentiated methodologies, formative assessments and continuous specialized support.

In this sense, recognizing and understanding the double exceptionality is a task that requires the involvement of the entire school community, as well as the strengthening of partnerships with families, health services and other institutions that make up the support network. The construction of a fairer and more equitable pedagogical practice requires, therefore, a paradigm shift: it is necessary to stop seeing the student only from his difficulties or his isolated talents and start to see him in his totality, with his potentialities and needs coexisting in a complex and singular way.

This article proposes to discuss the main challenges faced by schools in the recognition of double exceptionality, as well as to analyze possibilities of pedagogical intervention that favor the integral development of these students. Based on a review of recent literature and normative documents that guide inclusive education in Brazil, we seek to contribute to the construction of a more attentive, welcoming and purposeful look at this condition that is still little debated, but extremely relevant for guaranteeing the right to quality education for all. By broadening the debate on double exceptionality, it is intended to foster educational practices that respect diversity and promote a more inclusive, ethical school culture committed to human potential in all its forms.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as a qualitative research of an exploratory nature, with the objective of understanding, in depth, the multiple dimensions that involve double exceptionality in the educational context. According to Minayo (2001), the qualitative approach is adequate to investigate complex and subjective phenomena, allowing the capture of meanings, interpretations and social representations about a given reality.

It is also an exploratory research, since it aims to provide greater familiarity with the theme and build hypotheses based on a problem that has not yet been studied in the national scenario (GIL, 2008). The choice for this investigative nature is justified by the scarcity of systematized studies on the identification and educational care of students with double exceptionality in Brazil.

The methodological strategy adopted was based on literature review and documentary analysis. The literature review was conducted based on national and international authors who discuss the theme of giftedness, inclusion, disability and double exceptionality. According to Lakatos and Marconi (2017), this type of review allows the systematization of knowledge already produced on a given topic, providing theoretical support for critical analysis.

The documentary analysis involved the examination of legislation, educational guidelines, institutional reports and data from the School Census, in order to identify how the double exceptionality has been recognized and treated in Brazilian public policies. According to Cellard (2008), document analysis is a fundamental tool in qualitative research, as it allows interpreting documents in the light of their context, content and social implications. Thus, the methodology adopted sought to ensure scientific rigor, considering both the theoretical references and the official documents that guide inclusive educational practice in the country.

RESULTS

The analysis of the reviewed studies and the school practices investigated revealed a set of persistent challenges in the recognition and pedagogical care of students with double exceptionality. First, it was found that there was a weakness in the identification of these students in the educational sphere. Many cases remain invisible due to the mutual compensation between skills and difficulties: while atypical behaviors tend to overshadow talents, high skills, in turn, mask significant deficits. This phenomenon makes it difficult to properly refer students for specialized evaluation, delaying interventions that could favor the integral development of the student.

Another important finding concerns teacher training. Most education professionals demonstrate little knowledge about the concept of double exceptionality, which has a direct impact on the development of pedagogical strategies. The absence of specific preparation leads to the adoption of generic or inadequate practices, which often prioritize the remediation of difficulties to the detriment of the valorization of potentialities. Such an attitude, in addition to limiting academic development, can compromise the self-esteem and motivation of these students, who often feel out of place or misunderstood in the school environment.

A shortage of teaching materials and adapted resources that simultaneously meet the cognitive needs and specificities of the associated disorder was also observed. This gap reinforces the need to build more flexible and subject-centered curricular proposals, which articulate curriculum enrichment, specialized educational service (SES) and diversified teaching strategies. However, the application of these proposals is still punctual, often limited to the individual effort of teachers sensitized to the cause.

In addition, the data indicate that the articulation between school, family and multidisciplinary team is fragile and discontinued. The lack of dialogue between these agents makes it difficult to build a coherent pedagogical plan aligned with the real needs of

the student. When networking is promoted effectively, the results are significantly more positive, pointing to advances in the academic and socio-emotional development of students with double exceptionality.

Despite the numerous obstacles identified, successful experiences were also found in schools that invest in the continuous training of teachers, in the strengthening of SEA and in valuing the uniqueness of each student. In these institutions, double exceptionality is understood as a condition that requires a sensitive look, active listening, and planned pedagogical action. Teachers report that the use of strategies such as interdisciplinary projects, specialized mentoring, flexible groupings, and the use of assistive technologies has contributed to expanding the possibilities of learning and participation of students.

The results point to the urgency of expanding knowledge about double exceptionality in the educational context, in order to ensure more inclusive, equitable practices committed to the potential of all students. Overcoming the challenges identified necessarily involves investments in teacher training, review of public policies and creation of truly welcoming educational environments, capable of recognizing and valuing the complexity of the learning trajectories of these subjects.

The analysis of the studies included in the systematic review revealed that double exceptionality is still a theme little explored both in academic production and in educational practices in Brazil. There is a significant gap in the recognition and identification of students who simultaneously have high abilities/giftedness (HA/SD) and some developmental disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or dyslexia. This invisibility originates, in large part, from the absence of specific protocols to identify these cases in the school environment. Educational institutions tend to adopt fragmented evaluation criteria, which consider in isolation the presence of an above-average ability or a difficulty, without recognizing the coexistence between the two.

Teacher training is one of the main obstacles to the adequate identification and fulfillment of double exceptionality. Teachers, including those who work in Specialized Educational Service (SES), demonstrate conceptual and practical ignorance on the subject, showing insecurity about the pedagogical strategies to be adopted. This limitation is directly reflected in the school's ability to welcome and promote the integral development of these students.

In addition, the studies analyzed highlight that the academic performance and behavior of students with double exceptionality are usually oscillating, which contributes to misinterpretations by educators. While some areas of knowledge arouse high performance and creativity, others have marked difficulties, especially those impacted by developmental

disorders. This ambiguity makes diagnosis difficult and often leads to the adoption of pedagogical practices that do not meet the real needs of the student.

Another relevant point identified was the absence of specific public policies aimed at double exceptionality. Although there have been advances in inclusive legislation and guidelines for the care of students with high abilities, there are no national regulations that deal directly and systematically with subjects with double exceptionality. This gap compromises the elaboration of articulated pedagogical practices and the strengthening of support networks.

In the school context, the pedagogical strategies observed in the studies are, in general, limited and not very individualized. When there is an intervention, it tends to focus only on difficulty or, on the other hand, to privilege high performance, disregarding the behavioral, emotional, and social barriers faced by these students. The use of individualized educational plans (IEP), active methodologies and assistive technologies aimed at the specific needs of each case is rare.

The articulation between family, school and specialized services also appears as a recurring challenge. The lack of dialogue and joint actions compromises not only the pedagogical planning, but also the emotional well-being of the student. Without a collaborative network, many of these subjects remain invisible to educational policies and support programs.

Despite these challenges, the review revealed successful experiences in contexts in which double exceptionality was identified and addressed in an integrated manner. In these experiences, the collaborative work between professionals from different areas, the active listening to families and the students themselves, and the implementation of flexible pedagogical strategies, capable of promoting both the potential and the acceptance of difficulties, stand out. These results reinforce the urgency of thinking of the school as a space for listening, valuing diversity and guaranteeing the right to learning in its fullness.

DISCUSSION

The results presented show a scenario of significant challenges faced by schools in the recognition and care of students with double exceptionality. The difficulty in identifying these students, added to the lack of preparation of school teams, denounces a historical gap in teacher training and in the structure of educational systems, which still operate based on rigid and segmented categories of special education and giftedness. This inflexible structure makes it difficult to welcome subjects who do not fully fit into any of these classifications, as is the case of children and adolescents with double exceptionality.

The specialized literature corroborates this finding by highlighting that double exceptionality remains a concept that is little understood in educational contexts, both in Brazil and in other countries. According to Baum, Schader and Hébert (2014), the coexistence of high abilities and learning difficulties or developmental disorders challenges traditional assessment models, which tend to focus exclusively on deficits or potentialities, ignoring the complexity of the cognitive and behavioral profile of these students. This diagnostic fragmentation compromises not only the elaboration of effective pedagogical strategies, but also the very construction of the academic identity of these students, who often perceive themselves as inadequate, even though they have unique talents.

The lack of knowledge about the double exceptionality on the part of teachers points to the urgent need for continuing education that addresses the theme in a deep, interdisciplinary and practical way. As Renzulli and Reis (2000) argue, a truly inclusive education must recognize that human potential manifests itself in varied and often unconventional ways. To this end, it is essential that education professionals are trained to identify indicators of high abilities even in contexts of learning difficulties, promoting a more attentive, sensitive and holistic look at each student.

The scarcity of adapted pedagogical materials and the curricular rigidity identified in this study were also pointed out by researchers such as Fonseca (2018) and Mazzotta (2020), who emphasize the importance of subject-centered pedagogical practices, with an emphasis on the personalization of learning and the appreciation of cognitive singularities. In this sense, the proposal of a flexible curriculum, with enrichment and diversification of strategies, emerges as a powerful alternative to ensure the active participation of students with double exceptionality, respecting their rhythms, learning styles and areas of interest.

Another relevant aspect concerns the need for articulation between the different agents that make up the student support network. The absence of dialogue between school, family and health professionals compromises the continuity of interventions and hinders the development of a consistent educational plan. This reality reinforces the argument that double exceptionality demands collaborative and intersectoral work, in which the school does not act in isolation, but as part of an ecosystem that comprises the multiple dimensions of human development.

Despite the difficulties, the positive experiences identified in the study demonstrate that it is possible to move towards a more equitable and responsive education. Schools that recognize double exceptionality as a complex but legitimate condition, and that invest in pedagogical innovation, teacher training and active listening, have been able to create more

welcoming environments, in which these students can develop both their skills and learn to deal with their difficulties.

Therefore, discussing double exceptionality in the educational context is more than a technical issue: it is an ethical commitment to human diversity. Recognizing these subjects in their entirety — with their talents, challenges, weaknesses and strengths — is a fundamental step towards building a truly inclusive school. As Mittler (2003) and Mantoan (2011) argue, inclusion cannot be thought of as a set of adaptations for some, but as a profound transformation of the educational paradigm, in which everyone has the necessary conditions to learn, participate and belong.

The double exceptionality is still poorly understood in the Brazilian educational context, both in practice and in the theoretical field. This invisibility is reflected on several fronts, especially in the absence of specific public policies, in the insufficient training of teachers and in the fragility of the processes of identification and pedagogical intervention. This scenario corroborates Fonseca's (2018) analysis, when he points out that double exceptionality represents a "blind spot" in school inclusion, as it combines paradoxical characteristics that challenge traditional models of teaching and educational evaluation.

As highlighted in the studies by Baum, Schader and Hébert (2014), students with double exceptionality have a complex profile, marked by the coexistence between high cognitive potential and behavioral manifestations or significant learning difficulties. This oscillation, often misinterpreted by the school, leads to the adoption of inadequate pedagogical practices or even to the symbolic exclusion of these subjects. Often, challenging behaviors or lack of performance in specific areas end up masking potential, causing the school to prioritize remediation of deficits instead of also cultivating talents.

In this sense, the need for a paradigm shift becomes evident, both in identification and in the pedagogical approach. The inclusive perspective, as defended by Mantoan (2011) and Mittler (2003), requires that the school environment be prepared to deal with diversity in its multiple expressions, breaking with the homogeneous teaching model that still predominates. For this, it is essential that teachers are trained to recognize signs of high abilities even when they coexist with developmental disorders, such as ASD, ADHD, or dyslexia — a task that, according to Oliveira and Silva (2020), implies the articulation between theoretical knowledge, pedagogical sensitivity, and collaborative work.

The scarcity of specific identification protocols, evidenced in the studies analyzed, points to a structural challenge that demands more targeted public policies. The absence of official guidelines on how to recognize and serve students with double exceptionality compromises the effectiveness of inclusion and equity in access to the curriculum. Although

the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (BRASIL, 2008) represents an important milestone, it still lacks updates that contemplate the complexity of subjects with this profile.

Regarding pedagogical practices, it is observed that most schools still adopt generic interventions, little individualized, and often focused only on apparent difficulties. This contradicts what Renzulli and Reis' (2000) School Enrichment Model proposes, which advocates the implementation of flexible curricula, interest-based projects, and student-centered teaching as a way to favor the development of potential in all students, including those with double exceptionality. Such practices are even more urgent when considering that many of these students experience frequent frustrations in the school space, which can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem and academic demotivation.

Another important point revealed in this discussion is the need to strengthen the dialogue between the school, the family and the specialized services. As Cruz and Rangel (2015) state, the construction of an effective support network is essential to ensure continuous and integrated monitoring of these students, especially with regard to the elaboration and execution of individualized educational plans (IEPs), adapted to the specific potentialities and needs of each case.

Finally, it is worth noting that, despite the numerous challenges, successful pedagogical experiences were also identified, in which the recognition of double exceptionality resulted in more sensitive and transformative practices. In these experiences, active listening, collaborative planning, and investment in innovative methodologies contributed to students feeling valued in their entirety, reaffirming the school as a space of belonging and full development.

Thus, discussing double exceptionality is, above all, an ethical and pedagogical call for the educational system to expand its understanding of the multiple ways of learning, creating, interacting and existing. It is about recognizing that inclusion, in order to be effective, needs to consider not only deficits, but also talents, and that the right to education is only realized when each subject has their singularities respected and welcomed in the school routine.

CONCLUSION

The present study showed that double exceptionality is still a poorly understood and frequently neglected condition in the school context. Students who simultaneously present high abilities/giftedness and some developmental disorder constitute a group with specific

and complex educational demands, which require an attentive, sensitive and qualified look on the part of educational institutions.

The challenges identified, from the underreporting of cases to the absence of adequate pedagogical practices, point to the need to restructure the current educational model, which still operates with exclusionary and dichotomous categories. The invisibility of these students is aggravated by the insufficient training of teachers and the scarcity of resources and materials that meet their multiple needs. In addition, the lack of articulation between the different actors involved in the educational process — school, family and specialized support network — compromises the full academic, emotional and social development of these subjects.

However, the successful experiences identified demonstrate that it is possible to promote significant advances through a student-centered pedagogical approach, supported by flexible curricula, diversified methodologies and specialized support. The construction of a truly inclusive school requires, therefore, not only compliance with legislation and guidelines, but a paradigm shift that recognizes the complexity and richness of human diversity.

Recognizing double exceptionality as a legitimate reality that requires specific interventions is a fundamental step for these students to develop their potential, overcome barriers and fully exercise their right to education. To this end, it is urgent to invest in the continuing education of education professionals, in the production of scientific knowledge on the subject and in the strengthening of public policies that ensure access, permanence and school success for all.

This article contributes to broaden the debate on double exceptionality and reinforces the importance of pedagogical practices committed to equity, justice and respect for the singularities of each student. By giving visibility to this theme, it is expected to stimulate reflections and actions that transform the educational reality into a space of welcoming, appreciation and full development of all the subjects who are part of it.

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