

Inclusive Education and Continuing Teacher Training: a case study in the municipal school of Lindoeste

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Abstract:

Inclusive education presupposes the right of all students to full and effective participation in the school environment, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. However, this ideal faces numerous practical challenges, especially related to teacher training. This article investigates the role of continuing education in the implementation of inclusive education, having as a case study the Municipal School of Infant and Elementary Education 24 de Junho, located in the District of Lindoeste, municipality of São Félix do Xingu (PA). The research adopted a mixed approach, using questionnaires applied to teachers of the school unit, with objective and discursive questions. The results showed significant gaps in the training of teachers to deal with students who are the target audience of special education, absence of adequate institutional support and scarcity of contextualized and regular training. In addition, the participants pointed out the lack of infrastructure and specific pedagogical resources as factors that compromise the quality of inclusion. The study concludes that continuing education needs to be constant, practical and connected to the real needs of the school community, in addition to being accompanied by technical support and effective public policies.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Continuing Education; Teaching Practice; Public Policies; Public school.



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Introduction

The struggle for inclusive education in Brazil is marked by important legal and institutional advances, especially since the Federal Constitution of 1988, which guaranteed the right of everyone to education, and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394/1996), which established the principle of equity in the educational service. The National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) and the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 13.146/2015) reinforced the need to guarantee access, permanence and learning for students with disabilities in regular schools, ensuring adequate and equitable learning conditions.

The contemporary conception of inclusive education goes beyond the simple enrollment of students with disabilities in regular schools. It presupposes a pedagogical paradigm shift, which recognizes differences as part of the human condition and advocates for the creation of accessible, collaborative and responsive educational environments to the diverse needs of students. Thus, inclusion is not limited to a process of integration, but requires a joint effort of school management, teachers, the community and public policies so that everyone can learn with quality and dignity.

However, the practical reality of Brazilian public schools, especially in the most remote regions and with less public investment, is still far from this ideal. In the municipality of São Félix do Xingu (PA), particularly in the district of Lindoeste, the educational situation presents numerous challenges that compromise the effectiveness of inclusive education. Schools are experiencing serious structural difficulties, such as the absence of accessible teaching materials, the lack of multifunctional resource rooms, the absence of playrooms, libraries, adapted spaces and specialised professionals. These shortcomings reveal the gulf between legal guidelines and daily pedagogical practice.

The Municipal School of Early Childhood and Primary Education 24 of Junho, located in Lindoeste, is an example of this context. With about 440 students and 20 teachers, the school unit serves students from Kindergarten to Elementary I, including students who are the target audience of special education, but without the appropriate physical or human structure to respond to

their specific needs. The school does not have a Specialized Educational Service (AEE) room, it does not have a library, a playroom or an accessible computer lab. In addition, there are no school psychologists, Libras interpreters, support teachers or caregivers, which makes the inclusive process even more challenging.

In this scenario, the continuous training of teachers emerges as one of the main factors for the construction of effective inclusive practices. Teacher training focused on inclusion must be understood as a permanent process, articulated with the reality of the school and with the specificities of its students. However, according to the report of the institution's own educators, most of the training offered is theoretical, punctual and decontextualized, not attending to the real demands that arise in the daily life of the classroom. Many teachers reported that they feel unprepared, insecure, and overburdened to deal with the diversity present in their classes, demonstrating the urgency of rethinking the current model of continuing education.

This article was born from the concern for this reality and aims to analyze how the continuing education offered to the teachers of School 24 of Junho impacts, positively or negatively, on the effectiveness of inclusive education. It is based on the hypothesis that teacher training, well planned, continuous and connected to practice, can transform the school into a space of welcome, respect and learning for all students. It is a case study with a mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative), which aims to give voice to the institution's teachers, understand their difficulties, needs and suggestions, and contribute to the formulation of more effective public policies.

This study also seeks to reinforce that, despite structural limitations, it is possible to promote significant progress when teachers are listened to, valued and supported. Lifelong learning should be seen not as an isolated event or a bureaucratic obligation, but as an instrument for professional enhancement, the improvement of pedagogical practice and, above all, the guarantee of the right to inclusive quality education.

Method

This research is characterized as a case study with a qualitative and quantitative approach (mixed), developed with the objective of investigating the contributions and limitations of continuing education of teachers in the context of inclusive education, having as a field of study the Municipal School of Infant and Elementary Education 24 de Junho, located in the district of Lindoeste, municipality of São Félix do Xingu, in the state of Pará.

According to Yin (2001), the case study is an appropriate methodological strategy when seeking to understand complex phenomena inserted in specific contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined. In this sense, the choice for the case study is justified by the intention of understanding the reality experienced by teachers of a single educational institution in its entirety, considering the multiple variables that influence the process of school inclusion.

The qualitative approach, as defended by Bogdan and Biklen (1994), allows us to understand the meanings attributed by the subjects to their experiences and practices, which is fundamental in the field of education, where the subjectivities, perceptions and beliefs of teachers directly influence their pedagogical actions. On the other hand, the quantitative approach was incorporated to objectively measure and organize the data obtained from closed answers in the questionnaires, expanding the validity and robustness of the analysis of the results.

Research subjects

Participants were 8 teachers from Elementary School I of the 24 de Junho School, all working in the morning and/or afternoon. Participants were selected based on the criterion of convenience, as they were directly involved with the care of special education students and voluntarily made themselves available to collaborate with the research. The small number of participants is justified by the size of the school and the institutional limitations, which does not compromise the depth of the analysis, given the qualitative nature of the study.

Data collection instruments and procedures

The main data collection instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire, composed of closed (multiple choice) and open (discursive) questions, which allowed teachers to express their opinions, perceptions, difficulties and suggestions about continuing education and the practice of school inclusion.

The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical references in the area of inclusive education and teacher training (Mantoan, 2015; Nóvoa, 1992; Perrenoud, 2001; Sassaki, 2010) and previously validated by a group of teachers from the municipal network with characteristics similar to those of the research participants, which ensured greater clarity, coherence and relevance to the questions formulated.

The application of the instrument took place in person, in the school's own environment, on days and times previously scheduled with the teachers, respecting the ethical protocols of confidentiality and anonymity. Each participant was informed about the objectives of the research, the voluntariness of participation and the right to withdraw at any time, according to the principles of Resolution No. 510/2016 of the National Health Council.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using two complementary approaches:

Descriptive quantitative analysis: it was used to systematize the closed answers, through simple frequencies (percentages), organized in graphs and tables. This allowed the identification of patterns, trends and majority perceptions among teachers about aspects of continuing education and inclusive practice.

Thematic content analysis: applied to discursive responses, following Bardin's (2011) proposal, which enables the identification of emerging categories and subcategories from the subjects' discourses. The open-ended answers were organized, read exhaustively and categorized in order to ensure fidelity to the participants' statements and coherence with the research objectives.

The analyses sought to highlight not only the individual opinions, but also the recurrent aspects, contradictions, silences and suggestions pointed out by the teachers, allowing a dense and contextualized interpretation of the educational reality of the school.

Limitations of the research

This research has some important limitations, especially with regard to the small sample (due to the restricted number of teachers in the investigated school) and the impossibility of generalizing the results to other institutions or education networks. However, as this is a qualitative case study, the objective was not to generalize, but to understand a specific reality in depth, which can serve as a basis for reflections, comparisons and future investigations in similar contexts.

Also noteworthy as a limitation is the lack of triangulation with other subjects of the school community (such as students, parents and management team), which could further enrich the analyzed panorama. However, this choice was intentional, with the aim of keeping the focus on the professors' gaze and deepening the understanding of their experiences, needs and perceptions.

Results

Characterization of the School

The 24 de Junho Municipal School serves approximately 440 students from Early Childhood Education and Elementary School I. It has 20 teachers and a modest physical structure, without a library, multifunctional resource room or playroom. There is no presence of specialized professionals such as psychopedagogues, Libras interpreters or support professionals.

Profile of two Participants

The participating professors were between 23 and 54 years old, with teaching time ranging from 1 to 25 years. Only two of the participants reported having already attended specific training in inclusive education.

Analysis of Results: Teacher Perception, Barriers and Suggestions

Category	Observed Aspects	Teachers' Data/Reports
Teachers' Perception of Continuing Education	Importance of training for inclusion	- 88% recognize that training is essential to serve students with SEN.

		- 100% say that continuing education should be mandatory.
	Participation in training	- 63% participate rarely or never. - 25% participate occasionally (every 2 or 3 years). - Only 12% participate annually.
	Evaluation of the quality of training	- 75% consider the training offered insufficient or superficial.
Top Reported Barriers to Inclusive Education	Insufficient training	- 75% point to the lack of specific training as the biggest obstacle.
	Lack of accessible pedagogical resources	- 63% report the absence of adapted materials.
	Inadequate infrastructure	- 50% point to deficiencies in the physical structure of the school.
	Overload and lack of institutional support	- 38% mention accumulation of functions and lack of management support.
	Training proposals	- Semester cycles with a practical focus and accessible language. - Desired topics: ASD, ADHD, multiple disabilities, curricular adaptation and differentiated assessment.
	Professional and institutional support	- Inclusion of a multiprofessional team (psychologists, Libras interpreters, assistants). - Active involvement of school management.
	Improvement of the physical and pedagogical structure	- Ramps, accessible bathrooms, adapted toys, visual and tactile resources.

Discussion

The data collected by this research show the persistence of a significant distance between the legislation that governs inclusive education in Brazil and the real conditions found in public schools in inland regions, such as the district of Lindoeste, in the municipality of São Félix do Xingu (PA). Although the legal frameworks clearly establish the rights of students who are the target audience

of special education and the obligations of educational institutions, teachers continue to face a scenario of devaluation, lack of structure, scarcity of resources and absence of technical support.

It is evident that continuing education plays a central role in the construction of inclusive pedagogical practices. However, it cannot be reduced to sporadic events, generalist courses or specific training promoted to meet bureaucratic goals. As revealed by the teachers interviewed, there is an urgent demand for training that articulates theory and practice, that addresses the real challenges faced in the classroom and that provides continuous support for the application of knowledge.

The literature corroborates this understanding. Authors such as Mantoan (2015), Sassaki (2010) and Nóvoa (1992) argue that teacher training needs to be understood as a dynamic, permanent and reflective process, which values the teacher's experiential knowledge and promotes the development of specific skills to meet diversity. Training, to be effective, must start from active listening to teachers, critical analysis of the school reality and collaborative construction of pedagogical strategies.

Another fundamental aspect is institutional involvement. School inclusion cannot be the exclusive responsibility of the regular classroom teacher. It requires the commitment of the entire school community, from managers to cleaning professionals, including families, students and public administration bodies. The absence of a multiprofessional team, for example, was widely mentioned by the participants as a limiting factor: without the support of psychologists, Libras interpreters, caregivers, social workers and support teachers, the teacher is alone in the face of demands that go far beyond his initial training.

It is also important to highlight the role of school infrastructure. The investigated school lacks accessible environments, adapted pedagogical materials, inclusive toys, multifunctional resource rooms, a library and a computer lab. This set of deficiencies compromises the permanence and learning of students with disabilities, limiting their full participation in school activities and reinforcing their condition of "foreign bodies" within the school environment.

The work overload, reported by several teachers, also appears as an obstacle to the effectiveness of inclusion. Without time for collaborative planning,

adaptation of materials or reflection on practice, teachers end up resorting to improvised strategies, often insufficient to meet the specific demands of their students. This overload also contributes to the physical and emotional illness of professionals, who feel helpless, pressured and blamed for educational failures that should be assumed collectively.

It is also important to mention that, although teachers demonstrate a willingness to learn and to build inclusive practices, this motivation is hampered by the absence of institutional incentive and the mismatch between what is preached in public policies and what is experienced in school. As a consequence, many teachers end up developing feelings of frustration, powerlessness and demotivation, which compromises not only their professional performance, but also the development of their students.

On the other hand, the present study also shows that, even in the face of so many challenges, the teachers of the 24 de Junho School seek possible paths. They propose practical training, request the presence of specialized professionals, suggest improvements in infrastructure and point out the need to value their work. These voices need to be heard and considered in the formulation of educational policies. The teacher can no longer be seen as a mere executor of external directives, but as a protagonist of the educational process.

Therefore, it is essential that continuing education policies undergo a profound restructuring. They must be planned based on participatory diagnoses, articulated with the school's political-pedagogical project, accompanied by instances of technical support and evaluated in a procedural way. They should also be understood as an investment and not as an expense, as a space for empowerment and not mere institutional conformity.

In summary, continuing education, when well planned, contextualized and committed to practice, can become a powerful tool for the consolidation of a truly inclusive school. However, without investment, without listening and without structure, it runs the risk of becoming another innocuous component within the educational system. The challenge is set, and it is up to the public authorities, the training institutions, the school administrations and society as a whole to assume their share of responsibility in overcoming these barriers.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand, based on the reality of the Municipal School of Infant and Elementary Education 24 de Junho, located in the district of Lindoeste (São Félix do Xingu – PA), how continuing education contributes (or not) to the effectiveness of inclusive education in the context of the municipal public network. The choice for this territorial cut was precisely due to its relevance as a portrait of the difficulties faced by many schools in the interior of Brazil, especially in the North Region, marked by geographical distances, social inequalities and budgetary limitations.

The results obtained through the application of semi-structured questionnaires to the school's teachers reveal a worrisome, but at the same time revealing picture. Most teachers recognize the importance of inclusion, but feel unprepared, overloaded and unassisted to carry it out. The training offered is scarce, punctual, impractical and detached from the school reality. The school's infrastructure is precarious, and the absence of a multi-professional team further aggravates the challenges faced daily by educators.

In view of this conjuncture, it is possible to affirm that continuing education, although necessary, cannot operate in isolation. It needs to be part of an articulated set of public policies that include investment in infrastructure, hiring specialized professionals, expanding pedagogical resources and valuing the teaching career. In addition, it is essential that school management is active, participatory and committed to building an inclusive culture, which involves the entire community and not just teachers.

The study also allows us to conclude that teachers have a lot to contribute to the construction of educational policies. Their suggestions, observations and criticisms are fundamental for the improvement of pedagogical practices and for the implementation of actions that are, in fact, transformative. To ignore the experience of teachers is to waste powerful knowledge, built in the daily confrontation of difficulties.

Thus, the considerations presented here are not limited in themselves. They should be seen as a call to action — to municipal education departments, universities, school administrations, and all actors committed to the democratization of access and permanence in school. Inclusion cannot be seen

as the exclusive responsibility of teachers or as a favor provided to students with disabilities. It is a right guaranteed by law, an ethical principle and a social commitment that requires effort, investment, dialogue and courage.

It is necessary, therefore, that continuing education be configured as a space for listening, learning, strengthening and transformation. An inclusive school is not built with good intentions or ready-made speeches, but with well-founded practices, effective policies and educators who are valued, supported and well trained. May this study serve as a starting point for other investigations, debates and concrete actions in favor of an education that welcomes and respects everyone, without exception.

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