



## **Inclusive special education: New theory for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities**

### **Educação especial inclusiva: Nova teoria para a educação das crianças com necessidades educacionais especiais e deficiências**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This article aims to study the inclusion of children with special needs in childhood. Whereas inclusive education and special education are in different philosophies and alternative visions of early childhood education with special education and special needs. They are increasingly considered to be diametrically opposed in their approaches. This article presents a theory of special education that comprises a synthesis. the philosophy, values and practices of inclusive education as interventions, strategies and procedures of special education. The development of inclusive special education aims to provide a framework and guidelines for effective education policies, procedures and strategies for all children as children with special educational needs and disabilities.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, Special education, Disability.

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The most controversial issue currently regarding the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities, is that of inclusion. Theories of inclusion in education have important implications for special education policy and practice in developed and developing countries.

Inclusive education is generally considered a multidimensional concept that includes the celebration and appreciation of difference and diversity, consideration of human rights, social justice and equity issues, as well as a social model of disability and a socio-political model of



education. It also encompasses the process of school transformation and a focus on children's rights and access to education.

Four key principles are drawn from the literature on inclusive education through which the philosophy of inclusion is put into practice. These are, firstly, providing all learners with a challenging general education, engaging and flexible curricula; secondly, embracing diversity and responsiveness to individual strengths and challenges; thirdly, using reflective practices and differentiated instruction; and fourthly, establishing a community based on collaboration between learners, teachers, families, other professionals and community agencies. Inclusive education, therefore, aims to provide a facilitative and constructive focus for improving the education of children with disabilities.

Despite the negative views, the vision of inclusion still exerts a major influence on the educational culture of many countries. And it is now widely recognized that the policy of "full inclusion", with its vision of all children being educated in mainstream classrooms for all or most of their time at school is impossible to achieve in practice. This is because it is considered that there will always be some children who cannot be successfully included in mainstream classrooms, which sets a limit to the proportion of children who can be educated effectively in mainstream schools.

Since the vision of full inclusion is therefore unattainable and that of inclusion education is unclear, it is considered that what is now needed is a new vision for the education of children to replace those of inclusive education and special education. It is proposed that this is best achieved through the development of a theory of inclusive special education that synthesizes philosophies, policies and practices of special education and inclusive education in order to present a clear vision of effective education for all children.

The methodology used for data collection was bibliographic research, which according to Marconi (2001) aims to put the researcher directly in contact with everything that has been written on a particular subject, thus allowing the researcher to have a parallel help in examining their observations.

## **2 THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSION**

The concept of inclusion in Brazil, gains space in the 90s, this concept is disseminated from some world policies and consequently after being incorporated into some national policies. In 1990 there was the world conference on education for all, which discusses education aimed at all



subjects. "The inclusion is opposed to school and social exclusion, is a gradual process where science and ideologies walk together for the construction of a true society" (FAVERO, 2005).

In this sense, Barby, (2005), explicit that educational policies in favor of inclusion represented a great achievement, because in addition to guaranteeing the rights of this student, also boosted the movement, persuading education systems to adapt to the new legal guidelines.

As seen, inclusion was born from the 90s at the same time that physical education also entered its crisis or paradigm shift. So in parallel these two contexts of inclusive education and physical education or this "other" physical education, she came being built the two, at the same time, more specifically in the 90/94 when this context of inclusive education be mandatory and that students with special needs have to be enrolled in regular schools, and that also coincides with the new proposals of approaches to physical education, the advent of inclusion, is also absorbed by physical education. (AGUIAR, 2010).

In 1994 there was the Salamanca declaration, a moment when the term "special educational needs" emerges, and also document reinforces some principles of the 1990 declaration where it is advocated that education is for all subjects. The Salamanca declaration started from the following assumption:

Regular schools with an orientation towards inclusive education are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, providing conditions for the development of integrated communities, the basis for building an inclusive society and achieving real education for all (UNESCO,1994, p.09).

This declaration proclaims that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and should be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an adequate level of learning;
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- Educational systems should be designed and educational programs implemented to take into account the vast diversity of such characteristics and needs (UNESCO, 1994).

In 1996 in Brazil, had the approval of the law of guidelines and bases of national education, in this educational policy document, special education gains the prominent space where the care for this public as well as, who is part of it. Guebert (2007), focuses that, in 1994, the Salamanca Declaration outlined adjustments for the inclusion of students with special educational needs in regular school. Accompanying the process of changes, the National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education, CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2/2001, in Article 2, determine that:



Education systems must enroll all students, and schools must organize themselves to serve students with special educational needs, ensuring the necessary conditions for quality education for all (MEC/SEESP, 2001 apud BRASIL, 2008).

Once again the international community is present and supports the initiative.

Thus, the movement for inclusion grew and consolidated throughout the twentieth century, seeking to ensure inclusive democratic educational processes, concerned with guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens, regardless of their individual characteristics. (GUEBERTT, 2007, p. 35).

It is important to note that in this document, it is also a moment that physical education is considered as a compulsory curricular component, that is, it starts to have responsibility for the formation of these subjects that are present in the context of the school. If you still need to discuss school inclusion, reflect on this issue, then it should be considered that there is still exclusion in the school space. The adversity is related to difference, the human variety (BATISTA, 2005).

We are all different and to consider an inclusive physical education within an inclusive school, a good class is a class for everyone, regardless of their differences, that is, these differences that are present within the school are related to physical, biological, cultural, religious aspects; all the differences that contemplate human adversity. (BATISTA, 2005).

Inclusion is related to students having access to the most diverse sports, dances, gymnastics, fights and games and games without any distinction. If we think a little when we mention inclusion, we usually refer to students with special educational needs, this is a vision that we also need to broaden, because inclusion goes beyond insertion, inclusion of students with special educational needs within the school and in physical education classes. However, according to some authors surveyed (MONTANO, MAZZOTA, BUENO) some are dissatisfied with the paradigms that have prevailed in special education, this originated by the fact that, despite all efforts, students with disabilities, typical behaviors and neurological syndromes, psychiatric or severe psychological pictures and, still, the high skills (Gifted) are still excluded, either from ordinary schools, or the right to the appropriation of knowledge in the intensity and pace necessary for your learning. (CARVALHO, 2010).

## 2.1 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN SCHOOL INCLUSION

The role of the teacher towards students with special needs is of fundamental importance. The first step towards pedagogical accessibility is a radical transformation in the teacher's posture, he undresses of prejudices, because the attitudinal attitude is the first barrier in the success of inclusion of students; and when it comes to inclusive education, we are a country that exports



lenses and especially in this matter of inclusion. According to Saviani: "by acquiring competence the teacher also gains conditions to realize, within the school, the obstacles that oppose their competent action" ( SAVIANI, 1995, p. 45).

Teacher training has been presented by discussions as the central theme in the process of inclusion and care of students with special needs. For, the teacher is the main mediator in the relationships between students, it is through the critical and social intervention of the teacher that students can have a new vision about the differences between others and among themselves. ( MARTINS, 2005).

Inclusion seeks to remove the barriers imposed by exclusion in its most global sense. The support of the family and the partnership with the school is fundamental for the development of the special student. The benefits of inclusive education are that students are socialized, they do not feel excluded among other children, and this coexistence brings reflexes that are also perceived in adulthood, since the analysis points out that students with disabilities who have been included are more likely to take a higher education course, belong to a group of friends, find a job or live independently.

A curriculum that focuses fundamentally on conceptual content and more academic aspects, and which proposes assessment systems based on overcoming a normative level that is the same for all, sets pupils up to fail if they find it more difficult to progress in these areas. More balanced curricula, in which social and personal development are also important and in which assessment is based on the progress of each student, facilitate the integration of students ( MARCHESI, 2004, p. 39 ).

A large body of research has shown that this group develops stronger skills in reading and mathematics, have higher attendance rates, are less likely to have behavioral problems, and are better able to complete high school compared to students who are not included. In the face of such special educational needs, the role of the teacher is of paramount importance in inclusive education, since the teacher is the "competent authority, directs the pedagogical process, interferes and creates conditions necessary for the appropriation of knowledge" ( GAZIM et. al, 2005, p.51).

## 2.2 GENERAL DIDACTICS

The teaching practice to be effective and so that everyone can understand and build their knowledge is necessary to know these elements in which didactics is the discipline that studies; it will study all the necessary elements the organization of the room, the design of teaching methodologies, the evaluation structure, the skills, abilities and attitudes that are intended to develop during the teaching learning process; therefore, it is one of the most important disciplines.



(WALBER, 2013).

The issue of inclusion of special children in schools of early childhood education is to provide the ability to think of trained professionals and from other areas into the classroom. The function of the mediation of the teacher is the stimulation of this child for your social and intellectual advancement, and your presence is justified by the real participation of the child in the process (FAVERO, 2005).

What is desired is that the child is accompanied by a professional who is integrated into the school routine, who knows the culture of the school and who also integrates the projects. All this effort expands the cognitive capacities of the student; every child in the development phase of early childhood education needs constant guidance and students who have their spokesperson in mediation remain integrated longer and enjoy the proposals of the school day with more quality.

In this way, the movement that initially included a critique and denunciation of the merely instrumental character of Didactics then advanced to the search for alternatives and reconstruction of knowledge in the area. And, in opposition to the pedagogical model centered in the field of instrumentality, groups of educators begin to discuss the importance of forming a critical consciousness in teachers so that they put into practice the most critical forms of teaching, articulated to the interests and practical needs of the popular classes, with a view to guaranteeing their permanence in public school (FAVERO, 2005).

It is up to the mediator to meet the needs of social interaction, brings the other children in the class, helps in adapting the curriculum and school tasks. At the end of 2015 a new law was created in order to establish rules of conviviality clarifying a little more this activity within the school, but it is essential that the family also participate in this collective process. (WALBER, 2013).

### 2.3 LINGUISTIC/LITERARY ASPECTS

According to the institute of applied economic research, the Portuguese language is spoken today by more than 270 million people, its use takes place in Portugal and in countries that were colonized by this power. In 1990 an agreement was signed between these nations that aimed at the graphic unification of the language. (WALBER, 2013).

Portuguese is the eighth most spoken language in the world in ten countries, nine of them colonized by Portugal; it is in Brazil that there is the largest number of users of the language, there are more than 190 million people. The origin of the Portuguese language occurred in the third century BC with the arrival of Roman colonies in the Iberian Peninsula; Portuguese derives from Latin, but in the nineteenth century it became a specific branch of Latin, that is, it is from this Latin



that all neo-Latin languages, including Portuguese, derive (WALBER, 2013).

When we think about the study of literature, literature is first thought of as a human right, and in fact reading is very important, but from the perspective it becomes a novelty, because we can notice literature as a human right in the sense that it belongs to all people and this often seems a paradox precisely because not all people have the right to literature in a more complex way. (CARNEIRO, 2017)

Regarding linguistic aspects, there are some particularities, which are only noticed in a literary text, which are:

- **Complexity:** This is the characteristic of literary discourse;
- **Multisignificance:** This is related to the various interpretations that the text literary allows;
- **Connotation:** It allows ideas and associations to go beyond the meaning original word;
- **Freedom in creation:** This is when the artist does not have responsibility/commitment to the linguistic object;
- **Variability:** This is when changes occur that are cultural that are generally observed in individual discourse and cultural discourse.

Therefore, literary language is usually found in the most diverse genres, such as fiction narratives, chronicles, novels and even poems. And for it to be understood, it is important to be careful when interpreting and analyzing this type of discourse, as they can totally escape conventions; in addition to offering the best that art and literature have to offer. (JANNUZZI, 2014).

#### 2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Ethics is the ability to protect decent collective life, therefore, As Antonio Lopes de Sá (2001, p.110), "Each set of professionals must follow an order that allows the harmonious evolution of the work of all, from the conduct of each one, through a guardianship at work that leads to the regulation of individualism before the collective".

For Cipriano Carlos Luckesi (1994, p.37), education can be conceived as redemption of society, as reproduction of society or as transformation of society. In the work Pedagogy of Autonomy, by Paulo Freire (2006), there is a proposal for educational practice reflecting on the



commitment and responsibility of the educator, because the relationship in the classroom, the limits of ethics, of what is "being ethical", of recognizing a subject on the other side and not an object of the teacher's interests is part of a complexity in which the unpreparedness to exercise the function can result in a real disaster in the attempt to be a teacher, but Paulo Freire manages to face the theme with responsibility and with skill, calling the reader to a reflection.

One of the most important functions of the school or as important as the others, is even the establishment of interpersonal relationships. People have multiple intelligences and one of the basic intelligences for success in life is interpersonal intelligence (MAZZOTTA, 2015).

So the establishment of appropriate relationships, respect for others, the ability to deal with everyone, to deal with one's own mood, all this is established in relationships from the earliest age. That's why the child will find in school an environment for them to develop these relationships. These relationships are extremely important for emotional development, friends are essential to human life. Fritzen (1987, p. 73) states that "interpersonal relationships are the marrow of life. They form and entertain our personal identity. In a sense, we become and stay what we are thanks to the attention paid to us by others".

In the school environment you will find very different personalities, behaviors and values. There is no better place to learn about the art of coexistence and to exercise your beliefs. Some schools strive to teach rules of coexistence, but not all of them give the right value to this. It is also at school that the network of relationships begins to be assembled (PEREIRA, 2017).

Language is not only a means of seduction, it is the very place of seduction. In it, the process of seduction has its beginning, middle and end. Languages are loaded with softness, with amatory filters, which do not even depend on a seductive intention of the sender. (PERRONE-MOISÉS, 2003).

According to Pimenta (2002), "To face the challenges of teaching situations, the education professional needs knowledge competence, ethical sensitivity and political awareness". If students need to have the ability to establish interpersonal relationships and it is known that 80% of their learning takes place by observation, it is crucial that the interpersonal relationships of the staff within the school are established in a harmonious way.

## 2.5 DEBATES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

There is confusion about what is meant by inclusion, as noted by Norwich when he states, "its definition and use are seriously problematic" (Terzi, 2010). The term 'inclusion' is used in various ways, for example to refer to inclusive schools or an inclusive society.



The most serious question about the meaning of inclusion is that caused by confusing social inclusion with inclusive education for children. The term social inclusion is usually used to refer to the goal of creating an inclusive society in which all individuals are valued and have important roles to play. Social inclusion in education refers to the inclusion in mainstream schools of children with a wide diversity of differences and needs. This has a much broader focus than inclusive education for children, but is often used by proponents of full inclusion as if it meant the same thing. In addition, many advocates of inclusive education speak of it as a process that involves reorganizing the whole school in order to develop inclusive schools. Implicit in this process, however, is the ultimate goal of full inclusion (SLEE, 2011).

Therefore, since the word inclusion is used in so many different ways, it is important, in order to avoid confusion, to be clear about what is meant by each specific use of the term. The definition of inclusive special education encompasses a synthesis of inclusive and special education philosophies and practices. This involves educating children in the most inclusive settings in which their special educational needs can be met effectively, using the most effective teaching strategies, with the overall goal of facilitating the highest level of inclusion in post-school society for all young people (SLEE, 2011).

A common confusion occurs among educators influenced by the rhetoric of inclusion, despite its contrast with the reality of the situation in schools. The rhetoric of full inclusion suggests that it is possible to effectively educate all children in mainstream classrooms. However, the reality of the situation in mainstream schools is that many teachers do not feel able or willing to implement this scenario. The reality is that in many countries there is insufficient data on teaching children in initial teacher education courses and limited in-service training is available to teachers. This means that many teachers do not have the relevant attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to include children with a wide range in their classes and are also concerned that there will be insufficient material and human resources, and in particular support staff, to effectively implement a full inclusion policy (EMAM, 2009).

### **2.5.1 Rights**

The main confusion concerns children's rights. A typical argument presented in favor of full inclusion is that it is a basic human right of all children to be educated alongside their mainstream peers. To segregate children for any reason is considered by many advocates of inclusion to be a denial of their human rights. However, there are two confusions here. Firstly, there is confusion between human rights and moral rights. Just because someone has



a human right to a certain option does not mean that it is an obligation or that it is morally the right thing for them to do (THOMSON, 1990). Thus, although their human rights allow children to be educated alongside their traditional peers, for some of them it may not be, morally, the right or best option. As Warnock puts it, 'What is a manifest good in society and what is my right to have . . . should not be what is best for me as a student' (TERZI, 2010).

While it is clear that their human rights allow children with to be educated together with their mainstream peers, for some of them, this may not be the best option. Therefore, inclusive special education considers that the right to an appropriate education that meets the specific needs of children should be the priority. This is considered more important than the right to be educated together with their mainstream peers, which should be taken into consideration, but in the final analysis should be replaced by the right to receive an appropriate education (EMAM, 2009).

### **2.5.2 Etiology**

An important confusion related to inclusive education concerns theories about the aetiology of special educational needs and disabilities. Until about four decades ago, it was assumed that disability resulted entirely from physiological or psychological difficulties inherent in the children themselves. Since then, awareness has grown of the extent to which social and environmental factors can influence children's development and functioning. However, some advocates of inclusion education have taken this social perspective to its extreme and suggested that it is entirely socially constructed. Warnock and Norwich (2010) consider that it is going too far to deny the impact that disabilities can have on children's learning. They consider it important to recognize the role of physiological and psychological factors as well as social factors in the aetiology.

### **2.5.3 Intervention models**

Inclusive education is also considered, by its proponents, to be preferable to special education because it is suggested that the latter is based on a medical or deficit model of intervention, as opposed to focusing on learners' needs and strengths. This is a confusing and inaccurate view, for several reasons. Educational interventions have been influenced by medical, psychological and various other treatment models, as clarified by Farrell (2010), who concludes, 'The special education knowledge base includes a wide range of disciplines and contributions complemented by related research and methods that inform evidence-based practice'.



#### **2.5.4 Targets**

An important confusion that impacts the issue of inclusive education concerns the aims of education, as pointed out by Terzi (2010). This issue is particularly important for children. In many countries, there has been an increasing emphasis on academic achievement as the most important goal of education. Governments in many countries have focused their attention on improving academic standards, especially in literacy and numeracy, through various means, including the establishment of curricula and national assessment regimes.

Clarity about the aims of education is a key part of inclusive special education which therefore focuses on the broader aims of education, such as those concerned with the development of life skills, vocational skills and social skills, in addition to academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. The primary goal of education for children with difficulties and disabilities, as with all children, is to produce happy and productive citizens who are included in their communities as much as possible and have the necessary skills to meet the demands of adult life (FARRELL, 2010).

#### **2.5.5 Means and ends**

An important confusion with inclusive education is whether inclusion is actually a means to an end or an end in itself. Proponents of full inclusion argue that segregated placement is wrong because a primary goal of education should include children fully in the community in which they live. Therefore, they should be included in their local mainstream schools throughout their schooling. However, as suggested by Warnock (Terzi, 2010), inclusion in the community after leaving school is really the most important end that educators should be seeking. Inclusion in mainstream schools can be a means to that end, but it should not be an end in itself. For some children, segregated placement may be the best means to the end of inclusion in the community when they leave school. In contrast, inclusion in mainstream schools that does not fully address children's special needs may be counterproductive in that it is likely to reduce their potential for full inclusion in the community as adults.

### **3 CRITICAL DISCUSSION**

Inclusive education is generally considered to be a multidimensional concept that includes the celebration and appreciation of difference and diversity, the consideration of



human rights, social justice and equity issues, as well as a social model of disability and a socio-political model of education. It also encompasses the school transformation process and a focus on children's right and access to education.

In order to resolve the confusions highlighted above, a new theory has been proposed that synthesizes special education and inclusive education theory and research in order to present a model for providing effective education for all children. The theory of inclusive special education comprises a synthesis of the philosophy and values of inclusive education, along with the strategies and interventions used in special education (FAVENI, 2005).

The inclusion theory of special education provides guidelines for policies, procedures and evidence-based teaching strategies that will support the provision of effective education for all children. The aim of this new approach is to ensure that all children who have difficulties are effectively educated in special or mainstream facilities, where it is most appropriate, from early childhood through to secondary school. Thus, the model combines key aspects of special education and inclusive education to form inclusive special education (FARRELL, 2010).

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

For a theory of inclusive special education it was proposed that it encompassed the philosophies, policies and practices of special education and inclusive education. In this theory, aspects of both approaches are combined to form special education. The goal of inclusive special education is to ensure that all children are effectively educated in special or regular facilities from early childhood through high school in order to achieve their maximum inclusion and full participation in the community when they leave school.

It is intended that by studying these theories of inclusive special education, they help to generate a new vision that combines key aspects of inclusive education and special education in order to ensure that all children receive the best possible education and thus obtain the optimal preparation for a successful and fulfilled life after leaving school. It is hoped that this article will spark a debate that will lead to further development of the theory of inclusive special education.



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