

The challenges of didactics on scholar inclusion: specialized teachers perceptions

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Introduction

This study is a section of the GP-FOREESP - Formation of Human Resources and Learning in Special Education Group’s agenda. This Group is engaged in the development of researches with the intent to contribute on the process to universalize the access to school as well as on the improvement of education system that is currently available to the target population of Special Education. Nowadays, the inclusion process subject has been prioritized by that research group, as they consider that, along with other reasons, the efforts to establish an inclusive education system would be the unique alternative to solve the problem regarding the access to school, which is currently limited, and also to improve the quality on special education, since the level presented in the country is low. Guided by such premise, the present work is a supplementary project developed within the group extent to generate knowledge on school inclusion matter.

It is supported in the current speech that schools which present proposals for inclusion should recognize and acts in response to their students' several difficulties, adapting the different learning models and rhythms, assuring a high level education for every student by the aid of the following: aligned curriculum, adaptations, actions, learning strategies, resources, and association with the communities (RODRIGUES, 2006). Among these students, we have those in condition of intellectual disability.

The intellectual disability is defined by *American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, as follows: *The mental retardation is a disability that involves significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday conceptual, social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18 (Luckason et al, 2006, p.55).*

The intellectual disability can be noticed observing the interaction of a person with limited intellectual functioning and his or her environment. As he or she is being leaded by a working guidance, it is extremely necessary to evaluate and classify how effective should be services and supports to be given. With the individualized and proper assistance, the premise is that people with intellectual disability will improve his or her everyday behaviour even at school’s environment.

In Brazilian scenery, one of the supports proposed by the legislation is the Specialized Educational Assistance - AEE. In accordance with the terms of Article 2 of Operational Guidelines for Special Education, AEE can be categorized as an educational service and its purpose is the following: *The*

complementary or supplemental AEE's role is the student's formation through the availability of its services, accessibility of its resources and strategies to eliminate barriers in a way that they will be integrated into their communities, as well providing his or her learning development (BRAZIL, 2009).

In Brazilian scenery there is a survey for a pedagogic structure that enables the student with intellectual disabilities to reach the maximum development and learning levels as to the context of regular school. Although, it is important to take into consideration that this didactic search for inclusion should always meet the following characteristics: plan for an individualized education, accessibility adaptations (physics and pedagogic), pedagogic flexibility and also new evaluation proposals.

In this stance, the collaborative education is introduced to be applied as an educational tool, in which both teachers from regular and AEE education are responsible for the development on inclusive pedagogic practices with the purpose to make them fruitful. Under the joint actions, the objective is to achieve the development on teaching methodologies, curriculum alignment, and evaluation models, to have them appropriate to obtain a proficient learning and the integration of the student with disabilities into a regular school (Cook & Friend, 1995).

Such joint work involves teamwork processes, scores equality between the involved professionals, and the cooperation has to be voluntary. Both involved professionals should establish the objectives they plan to apply to the student, their responsibilities should be mutually accepted, and should have an agreement as to the steps to be followed. In other words, both professionals from special and regular education are in charge to develop and evaluate the methodology for a mixed group of students, including children with disabilities. However, this joint work for the teaching-learning is not always easy to be established, and that is why the project requires the teamwork.

This work is a clipping from a doctoral thesis and its purpose is to identify the perception of the teachers from regular education in educational service to the student with intellectual disability, within the educational inclusion politics. It is a relevant survey since throughout the studies we can identify how didactic is being developed as to the inclusion in Brazilian educational context.

Method

This analysis is focussed on the qualitative approach. In this ground the researcher have to observe the environment of the individuals, describing their performance in an effort to identify their perceptions, and the way they are influenced to instigate the development of their perceptions, relating such evaluation with the environment they are integrated. The questions formulated within the qualitative approach are pointed to the comprehension of phenomenon in its whole complexity and to accomplish the historical (Brantlinger et al, 2005).

Summary

It was created focal groups to collect information through interviews that were performed in groups, which purposes were to identify opinions, feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the proposed subjects. Such procedure afforded great advantage since it was possible to collect an expressive number of records and get information in a short period, since it allowed the development of a friendly environment where the participation was favoured by the interaction among groups (Gomes, 2005).

The focal group management prepares a schedule for the questionnaire which would be followed. However, due to the interaction among all groups, it is considered that such schedule must be adaptable since some issues not planned can be included and some issues previously planned can be excluded. It is also necessary a moderator's presence, in this case the researcher, who will lead

and motivate the discussions, and controls the period of each participant's speech (Gomes, 2005). All groups were filmed and analyzed based on Bardin's analysis of content (1977).

Fourteen professionals involved with AEE for intellectual disability from four public institutions of elementary education of the State of S o Paulo, Brazil, contributed to this study.

Results and discussion

In accordance with AEE professionals' observation there are up till now strong barriers from the teachers of regular education that obstruct the joint work and the pedagogic development for inclusion: *The teacher from regular classroom should make a distinction from what he observes about the student and what is his or her opinion. When he notices the student has a limitation, he uses such difficulty to form his own conception about that person and then gives his diagnosis. When someone talks to the teacher about that student, he already has his own conclusion. He doesn't believe the student could be stimulated to do different things in different ways and possibilities, he has a misconception: the student doesn't get, doesn't do, and doesn't learn; he employs a lot of not (GFC2).*

The speech shows that the teachers from regular education tend to require a clinical diagnosis for the intellectual disability, in detriment to the pedagogic diagnosis, to pretext students' non-learning and be exempt from the responsibility that he or she would have to develop teaching-learning situations.

When AEE professionals are enquired about how to organize didactics for the inclusion, they answer they believe the Special Education should not be the only responsible for the matter but it should be integrated in a larger context, in which the school would also be in charge for the educational assistance to the students with intellectual disability: *But I think that today we have children who have assistance everyday; the additional support which is given everyday in the different period. Even so, the child needs additional assistance. Does the school notice that something is still lacking? It is not satisfactory the support given in the different period; it will not work to the child, to make him or her to be different. The teacher is now aware that the school needs a reform. I think that it is crucial and such change would be very positive for us; the child won't change, the child will always present his or her disability; he or she can get better, can grow under the given support. I think it is fundamental the assistance given by those service programs. However, if the school doesn't change its conception about the student and his or her abilities, nothing will happen.*

The speech points out that the inclusive didactic for students with intellectual disability faces a restructuring of the school in a general way, in which every one involved is committed with such reform to adapt the teaching to the students' needs.

Therefore, AEE professionals state that it is necessary to re-evaluate the specialized service to issue a didactic for inclusion. For AEE teachers, the specialized support would have two main objectives, such as: to work on the student's development and to assist the teacher from the regular education. The following speech illustrates this subject: *Enhance the student's development and supply their needs at that moment. For instance, in my classroom there are students with intellectual disability and most of them present deficit of attention; they don't know how to concentrate themselves and their troubles are detected in their concentration and attention activities. When teaching those students I will have the chance to work things that in the regular education the teacher will never have, even working with 40 students. Then, I will employ games, rules, using things that detain his or her attention and work on all those difficulties I previously evaluated they have (GFC1).*

Regarding the aid for the teachers the speech is as follows: *Thus, the work doesn't only aim the child's development; we also stand out the following: give support to the teacher from regular*

classroom; then, it is interesting the interaction between the teacher from regular classroom and the teacher from special education to develop the work together, to be acquainted with information and also act together with the family, guiding them (GFCD1).

AEE professionals also enquire about the school's purposes for the students with intellectual disability, which should involve both the development on their daily reading and writing abilities and also on their adaptable behaviour: *Students are guided as to their behavior at school: they are told on how to be placed at the school canteen line and they were informed that they were not supposed to shout; to know when it is time to do this. Because at classroom I have a lot of problems with their sexuality, since they take out their clothes to masturbate and then it is hard to explain that they are not supposed to do this at classroom; you have to stop everything you are doing that moment to work with him or her. When the student doesn't present such behaviors it is a progress. Sometimes it takes a month to get a progress like that or to have them having their meals without any help, and to know how to behavior themselves when using the bathroom facilities. This is great for us but for the other, they just tell: he didn't know how to read and how to write, and then comes the grammar evaluation from everybody: if he is in the syllabic, in the pre-syllabic (GFC2).*

For a didactic of inclusion the focus on the activities for the students with intellectual disability should not just be centred in the official curriculum; the developed pedagogic activities have to be important to their cognitive capacity improvement (memory, attention, reasoning), supplying subsidies to enable the student to go along with the aligned curriculum for regular education and also providing that his or her development and learning capacities are being explored to the maximum.

For this purpose, when thinking about learning, AEE teachers explain how important is to the student to be informed about the evaluation on their progresses and advances. The evaluation from both the regular and AEE classroom should provide the identification of their potentialities and indicators to be used in probable curriculum alignment and pedagogic adjustments: *How long am I supposed to be in service? It will depend on the child's development, how it worked, if we did a good job, then we will think about his or her organizational difficulty; if you work on the subject of organization or even the literacy, there are children that go by themselves, showing a learning development and we notice that they are able to do things by themselves; so, we will not leave them alone but we will just allow them to try to walk without our assistance, and we will be always in touch with the teacher, because I think it is not good to the student depending on the other, not only on me but another person. If we notice that he or she is able to go on without any help, we leave him or her and only give support when he or she in fact needs assistance. (GFBI).*

Finally, AEE professionals state that to achieve the adequate educational assistance, besides the joint efforts from both specialized and regular teachers, it is necessary the attendance of a multidisciplinary team especially the professionals from health area, such as: psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and physiotherapist.

In general, as per AEE professionals' speech it is identified their concern with the learning of students with intellectual disability, and such concern is essential for the development on the didactic for inclusion: "Didactic has the commitment with the search of cognitive quality on learning, and that one, associated to the learning of thinking" (Libâneo, 2004, p. 5).

Under this ground, it is important that both AEE and regular teachers be aware of the didactic structure elected in your planning, bearing in mind that the chosen organizational modalities constitute the educational intentions process (Clementino, 2008 p.69). In this perspective, the search should be set within the planning so that the learning acquires a significant character for the students with intellectual disability, and this important learning is under the responsibility of both professionals from AEE and regular education.

Conclusion

The results show that AEE professionals are still trying to accomplish a joint work with the teachers from regular education aiming the establishment of a didactic structure for inclusion; they have noticed that teachers from regular classroom have misconceptions about the students with mental disability, and such behavior harm the cooperation. Particularly they don't take their responsibility as to the teaching-learning process. In this sense, it would be important to test the perception of teachers from regular education to find out why they exempt themselves from the responsibility on teaching-learning: whether it is due for fear, lack of knowledge, information, material resources, organizational, political affairs, and so on.

It is necessary to identify the barriers that hamper joint work to enable the regular school to be ready for inclusion, providing the consolidation of both special and regular education knowledge in the search of a didactic for inclusion. It should be considered that the politics of the school inclusion in Brazilian scenery is still in progress and in case these students won't have access to an appropriate education gap, to meet their particularities, they won't have the chance to reach highest levels of development and learning.

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