

## THE INCLUSION OF AUTISTIC STUDENTS IN COMMON SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

### THE INCLUSION OF THE STUDENT IN THE COMMON SCHOOL: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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**ABSTRACT:** The inclusion of the autistic depends on several factors such as school, family, society, but also knowledge about autism. Thus this research aims to investigate if there are possibilities of inclusion of an autistic student in the public school classroom. Therefore, this is the focus of the present study: the inclusion of students with autism in the regular class. With this research, we seek to analyze the circumstances that these students establish with their teachers and colleagues in the classes of the regular network of education. Thus, it is intended to evaluate how the insertion of these students is processed in the context of the common class, in which the majority of students do not present such needs. It is seen that this situation impacts on the possibilities of interaction, communication and knowledge construction of these students. The study is oriented to the repercussion of these conditions that imply the non existence of a common territory, with consequences for the explicitation of ideas and the authentic dialogue, mainly because school and teachers are unprepared to attend these students. The school in the course of its history exclusion, characterized by vision where the schooling is the privilege of a group, in the time an was created that was legitimized in the policies and educational practices of the social order. From the process of democratization of education this inclusion / exclusion was identified, when the education systems extend access, but still continue to exclude individuals and groups considered outside normal school patterns, such as autistic students.

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**Keywords:** Autism. School. Teachers.

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**RESUMO:** A inclusão do autista depende de diversos fatores como escola, família, sociedade, mas também conhecimento sobre o autismo. Assim esta pesquisa tem como objetivo investigar se há possibilidades de inclusão de um aluno autista na sala de aula da escola pública. Portanto, este é o foco do presente estudo: a inclusão de alunos com autismo na classe regular. Com esta pesquisa, buscamos analisar as circunstâncias que esses alunos estabelecem com seus professores e colegas nas turmas da rede regular de ensino. Assim, pretende-se avaliar como se processa a inserção desses alunos no contexto da classe comum, na qual a maioria dos alunos não apresenta tais necessidades. Vê-se que essa situação impacta nas possibilidades de interação, comunicação e construção do conhecimento desses alunos. O estudo está orientado para a repercussão dessas condições que implicam na não existência de um território comum, com consequências para a explicitação de ideias e o diálogo autêntico, principalmente porque escola e professores estão despreparados para atender esses alunos. A escola no curso de sua história de exclusão, caracterizada por uma visão onde a escolarização é privilégio de um grupo, na época em que foi criada e legitimada nas políticas e práticas educativas de ordem social. A partir do processo de democratização da educação foi identificada essa inclusão/exclusão, quando os sistemas de ensino ampliam o acesso, mas ainda continuam a excluir indivíduos e grupos considerados fora dos padrões escolares normais, como os alunos autistas.

**Palavras-chave:** Autismo. Escola. Professores.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, Education seeks to understand some Developmental Disorders such as Autism, Down Syndrome, ADHD, among others that are quite visible in the school environment. Although there are other pathologies, the professional must pay attention so that they can include their students with disabilities in their classes in a correct and adequate way, providing opportunities for interaction inside and outside the school .

Throughout history, people with disabilities and disorders have faced situations that are adverse to their realities, either because of the lack of knowledge of what these deficiencies are, as was the case in remote times, or because of the neglect in current times, because even today , we talk about mutual respect. as something that must prevail and laws that ensure rights and duties, however, society shows that it is not yet prepared to include, causing these people to seek attempts to adapt to the means.

Inclusive education is present in our daily lives, with the assumption that every child has the right to quality education. Therefore, the school to include children with special needs needs to be prepared to respond to such needs. It needs to adapt to new

students, providing them with a welcoming environment that encourages learning. In other words, inclusive education refers to education for all, not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality, enabling students to appropriate knowledge, social integration and the use of their rights.

In order to be inclusive, the school needs to adapt to all students, not just the special, restructuring its school and pedagogical organization so that each student is part of the institution, receives specialized and quality care so that they can study and live socially. However, when only the process of integration to the special student occurs, it is possible to enter a classroom where they will interact with others, participating in classes, fulfilling their "duty" as a student, but the school does not change its structure to let it happen; simply the student with special needs will be treated as equal to all other children. The inclusion process goes beyond the integration process.

According to Ainscow apud Sánchez (2005, p.15), "inclusive education goes far beyond serving students with special educational needs, as it involves improving educational practices for all students and the school as a whole" . In other words, inclusion covers all students, providing a quality education. It promotes a reformulation in the curriculum and in the training of teachers, while integration aims only at an individual who is "excluded" from society.

The inclusion of people with special educational needs is law at the national level. The LDB, Law no. 9,394 of December 20, 1996 (BRASIL, 1996), defines in chapter V that "education for students with disabilities should preferably be offered in the regular school system, ensuring the same curricula, methods, techniques, specific educational resources to meet the needs of your needs", among others.

Therefore, the school to become inclusive must be willing to change its curriculum and environment, making all students benefit, changing its educational paradigm in order to reach the whole society.

Faced with such a configuration, the question is: Is it possible to include an autistic student in regular classes? To answer this question, the research aims to investigate the possibilities of inclusive pedagogical practices of autistic students in regular classes.

The term Autism has a Greek origin, meaning "autos" or "of oneself", it was used within psychiatry to name human behaviors that are centered on oneself, that is,

aimed at the individual himself. (ORRU, 2012, p.17). The first scientific studies and investigations on autism were presented by Dr. Leo Kanner in the 1940s. In his study published in 1943, under the name of “autistic disorder of affective contact, Kanner conceived Autism as a condition of psychosis, originated by the lack of parental love, determining a strange behavior in the child, a inability to form relationships with other people, escape from reality, isolation and obsessive behavior. In parallel with Kanner's research, Hans Asperger in 1944 also identified some similar symptoms in children, however, disconnected from Kanner's psychogenic theory, Hans Asperger led other researchers years later to investigate the characteristics and broad spectrums presented by autism having as a basis for new approaches. Currently, Autism is considered a developmental disorder that is characterized by alterations present from a very early age, typically before the age of three, with multiple and variable impact on noble areas of human development such as communication, social interaction and learning. (MELLO, 2007, p. 16).

However, there is still a lack of appropriate conditions to guarantee the permanence of this student in school, especially with regard to the training of professionals to work with the schooling of these students. In practice, what has been perceived is the little knowledge about this condition of disability.

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

The present research is of a bibliographic and research nature, which is based on a qualitative approach, with data collection through articles found on the internet related to the family/school, where they seek to know the social and material reality of the process of inclusion of autistic students in the regular education.

In this sense, we justify the research as descriptive, where it values the process and not just the results, given that the presented problem aims to bring a reflection on the role of the teacher in the face of the theme of the inclusion of the autistic student.

### **1.1 CHARACTERISTICS AND DESIGNED VIEW OF AUTISM.**

What is autism? The research carried out in the following article from the Federal University of Rondônia reveals that:

[... ] Autism is a condition characterized by markedly abnormal and impaired development in social interactions, communication modalities,

and behavior (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Such characteristics vary in the way they manifest and in the degree of severity, being hardly present in the same way in more than one person. Since its discovery by the Austrian physician Leo Kanner in 1943, this disorder or mental condition has been the subject of numerous discussions and controversies regarding its diagnosis, causes and appropriate treatments. It is known, for example, that its origin is determined by multicausal factors (Schwartzman, 2011a), but there are not enough answers that specifically determine them. In the scientific scenario, there are, on the one hand, hypotheses of psycho-affective causes, in which autism results from impasses in the subjective constitution of the subject (Campanário & Pinto, 2011; Rabello, 2004) or from deep disturbances in the child's relationship with the environment (Campanário & Pinto, 2011; Rabello, 2004). Hall, Nicholson, & Adilof, 2006; Volk, Lurmann, Penfold, Hertz-Picciotto, & McConnell, 2013). On the other hand, there are hypotheses of neurobiological or genetically determined causes, which prioritize propositions in which autism would be caused by genetic conditions (Mecca et al., 2011), brain abnormalities (Bolton, Griffiths, & Pickles, 2002), neuronal changes (Kooten et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2009) or chromosomal translocations (Tarelho & Assumpção, 2007).[...]

Such scientific aspects, many contradictory to each other, form the complex conjuncture in which autism is inserted, contributing to the fact that many questions remain in obscurity. In this way, as pointed out by Klin (2006), autism has remained a heterogeneous concept that includes multiple symptoms and a variety of clinical manifestations in a range of levels of development and functioning, although there has been a recent attempt to delimit and define it. to simplify it, as done by the APA (2013).

Regarding education, the practices currently recognized for people with autism act under a behavioral approach, structured from the symptoms of this condition (Bragin , 2011; Orrú , 2012). However, when considered from a historical-cultural perspective, education becomes a learning process that drives human development ( Vygotski , 2000). In this sense, according to Saviani (2011), school education has the role of transmitting the cultural knowledge of humanity in a systematic way, formally conceptualizing it. In relation to people with disabilities - including those with autism -, through dialogic situations with cultural meaning, and not focusing on disability, it is possible for students with disabilities to appropriate school knowledge and humanize themselves ( Vygotski , 1997 ). ).

## 1.2 THE TEACHER'S PERFORMANCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Learning from the birth of a human being is considered essential for the development of the same. Throughout life, he adapts to important knowledge,

including himself in the world of culture and transforming himself and modifying the world through the participation of the other. However, education has been the means where human beings seek their development in society. Thus, the family where a child with autism characteristics grows up, it is expected that they can include him in a school network where there are teachers able to deal with this new horizon.

The child with autism, with the vision we have, is known to be a person who feels different, learns differently, wants different and thinks differently. It is important first hand to discipline them and not mobilize them, remembering that not all autistic learners are equal learners, what works for one may not work for another, all this depends on the Pedagogical relationship between the school and the parents . The teacher needs to find out which skills – social and academic – his student already has and which he needs to acquire. From there choose the appropriate materials. Always prioritizing communication and socialization.

When we refer to the role of the teacher in this article, we assume that a mediatized intervention is necessary, in this sense, the teacher is no longer just a transmitter of knowledge to be an advisor, who stimulates development and learning from interactions built on the involvement of the whole class. We can say that mediation “is the process of intervention of an intermediary element in a relationship; the relationship then ceases to be direct and becomes mediated by this element” (OLIVEIRA, 1997, p.26).

Regarding their participation in the inclusion of children with autism in regular schools, the teacher has an important role, as it is he who receives and establishes the first contact with the child, whether positive or negative, in this way he is a great responsible for implementing or not the inclusion process, considering that it is their duty to create development possibilities for everyone, adapting their methodology to the diverse needs of each student.

We then approach some ways of working that teachers already use in the classroom and can use:

- Activities with a minimum level of attention;
- Stimulating short-term memory with words or themes that connect with the affective and daily life of the student,
- Stimulate the verbal repertoire, showing each action a word and each word an action;
- Propose works that encourage visual discrimination;

- Propose works that stimulate auditory discrimination;
- Perform one activity at a time;
- learner 's everyday and affective life .

It is important to encourage the autistic student in the following classroom activities:

- Perseverance in completing work;
- Ability to deal with errors;
- Ability to deal with frustrations;
- Ability to overcome challenges and setbacks;
- Affectivity;
- Team work.

We understand that to obtain a good result and the relationship of this child with the Teacher, it does not always depend only on the school or pedagogue, but on the help of the parents, which is essential at this time. It is very important that he has sensitivity and serenity to promote in the classroom the awareness of inclusive acts, seeking to contribute, in this way, to development and learning.

We have observed in the educational reality that teacher training does not offer a solid basis in theoretical and practical aspects, so that few teachers have a basic training focused on inclusive or specific aspects for autism, which implies a lack of understanding about the differentiated needs and knowledge necessary to teach the child with autism. In addition to studying and analyzing the development of children with autism, the teacher is responsible for making the classroom an inclusive environment, enabling children to learn about differences and encourage them to develop solidarity.

The teacher needs to obtain self-confidence and independence from the child, as they are absent characteristics in their personality. For the teacher it also implies the responsibility to develop activities according to the child's level of knowledge, so that they can perform the activities correctly, resulting in new learning and progress in the development of school activities.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ahead of what was searched and evaluated, it is possible to understand that it is essential to make accessible to the entry and continuity of children with autism in schools regulating , however, is not an easy job To become an inclusive school , it is

essential that the government , school and family work together in favor of offering quality education , with the right conditions and possibilities for growth and learning.

We can't talk about inclusion without make reference to the teaching - learning process, since inclusion has the purpose of providing the same conditions to all students, aiming at their growth and learning.

Through this work, we identified the role of the teacher as mediator of inclusion, that is , he creates situations that provide opportunities for this process , approaching and managing conflicts in a way that makes it understood that differences are characteristic of all students, regardless of being disabled or not .

also understand, that the lack of a solid formation focused on the inclusive aspects, reflects negatively on the teacher's teaching practice , because he needs , in a continuous way, to be in contact with new information regarding their professional performance . We also note that despite the existing difficulties, the inclusion process is possible, as long as there is commitment and involvement on the part of the teacher , a good pedagogical training, in addition to school and family support .

In this way, throughout the work, the importance of granting significant situations that enhance the achievement of cognitive and social skills and increasing autonomy in the context of regular school was addressed. We recognize that good results in the inclusion of autistic people are perceived when professionals respond to the learning needs of these students, with the realization of inclusive actions and strategies in all spaces of the school.

Throughout the work, it was possible to understand that laws serve to ensure the right of students, access to education and learning, however, they are often not guaranteed in practice in ordinary schools of regular education. In school practice, it is observed that inclusion happens through integrationist practices of the student in the educational environment.

There is little or no qualification of the teachers interviewed to meet the needs of students with autism or special educational needs. Continuing professional qualification is one of the essential factors for understanding the autistic spectrum universe. Schools need to offer courses every year for teachers on inclusion and everything it involves, in order to prepare professionals for what can happen in the classroom, in addition to strengthening continuous learning.



It is essential to help and support the family, the pedagogical team in the learning process, as well as adapting the curriculum and activities. It was observed in the interview that with special class teachers, there is little affective bond between the student and the teacher. In this sense, teachers of special classes need to be considered in pedagogical meetings.

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