



The importance of teacher training for the promotion of diversity and inclusion in schools: An integrative literature review



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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to analyze the impact of teacher training on the promotion of diversity and inclusion in schools, addressing both initial and continuing teacher training. The methodology used consisted of an integrative literature review, using scientific articles selected through academic platforms such as Google Scholar and SciELO, focusing on recent publications on the subject. Data analysis revealed that initial teacher training often fails to adequately prepare educators to deal with diversity in classrooms, limiting itself to general theories and not incorporating specific inclusive practices. Continuing education, although important, is often not sufficient due to the lack of specific courses and the gap in initial training. The results indicate that in order to promote effective inclusive education, it is necessary to have a closer alignment between teacher training and the practical realities of the classrooms, in addition to the effective integration of topics related to diversity and inclusion in the curricula of training courses. It is concluded that the evolution of teacher training is crucial to enable teachers to face the challenges of school diversity and to promote an education that values and respects all students' identities and experiences.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Inclusion, Diversity.



INTRODUCTION

Teacher training is a fundamental pillar for the promotion of diversity and inclusion in schools, especially in an increasingly plural and globalized educational context. In a world where classrooms reflect a wide range of cultural, social, and individual backgrounds, it is crucial that teachers are prepared to deal with this diversity effectively. Educators' ability to integrate inclusive and difference-sensitive practices can determine the success of educational policies aimed at equity and mutual respect. Therefore, the initial and continuing education of teachers plays a decisive role in creating educational environments that welcome and value all students' identities and experiences (Bezerra, 2020).

The evolution of educational policies in many countries, including Brazil, has emphasized the need for inclusive education that recognizes and values cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Legislation such as Law 11.645/2008, which makes the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture mandatory, reflect a movement to correct the historical marginalization of certain groups and promote a more comprehensive understanding of national identity. However, for these policies to be implemented effectively, it is imperative that teachers receive adequate training that allows them to incorporate these guidelines in a meaningful way into their pedagogical practices (Brizola; Fantim, 2016).

Teacher training should not be limited to technical and pedagogical knowledge alone, but should also include a deep understanding of issues related to diversity and inclusion. This involves building the capacity to deal with biases and stereotypes, adapting teaching methodologies to meet different learning styles and needs, and creating classroom environments where all students feel valued and respected. The lack of adequate preparation can lead to a superficial implementation of diversity policies, resulting in educational practices that do not truly promote inclusion or that, in some cases, can even reinforce existing inequalities (Bezerra; Pantoni, 2022).

In addition, continuous teacher training is crucial to ensure that educators stay up-to-date on best practices and new approaches to inclusion. The social and educational context is constantly changing, and teachers need to be prepared to adjust their practices to new demands and challenges. Professional development programs that address topics such as cultural diversity, the inclusion of students with special needs, and gender equity are essential for teachers to be able to face these challenges with competence and sensitivity (Furlan et al., 2020).

Thus, the objective of this research was to analyze the importance of teacher training for the promotion of diversity and inclusion in schools. This research is justified by the importance of understanding how the initial and continued preparation of teachers impacts the ability to implement inclusive practices that are sensitive to the diverse needs of students. In an increasingly plural educational context, the adequate training of educators is essential to face challenges related to



cultural, social, and individual differences, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support for their development.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted through an integrative literature review, a methodology chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive and critical view of the topic in question (Lima, 2024; File; Gomes Filho, 2024). Integrative review is particularly useful when seeking to compile and synthesize a wide range of existing studies to understand the current landscape and identify trends, gaps, and areas of consensus on the impact of teacher training on promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. This approach allows the integration of different types of studies and data, providing a more robust and complete analysis of the impact and challenges of implementing inclusive practices in education.

For the data collection, two renowned academic platforms were used: Google Scholar and SciELO. The search was performed based on specific keywords and search descriptors combined with Boolean operators AND and OR, such as "teacher training", "school diversity", "educational inclusion", and "inclusive pedagogical practices". This search strategy was designed to identify publications that directly addressed the relevant topics and ensure that the search was comprehensive and targeted.

The article selection process was rigorous and followed well-defined inclusion criteria. Only scientific articles that met the following criteria were selected: published in Portuguese, complete and free access, published between 2020 and 2023, and directly related to the research topic. This approach ensured that the analysis was based on relevant, current and accessible sources, offering a clear and up-to-date view on the impact of teacher training on the promotion of diversity and inclusion.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the data, other types of publications, such as theses, conference abstracts and other non-complete documents, were excluded. This exclusion was done to avoid the inclusion of information that could compromise the depth and accuracy of the analysis. The decision to focus exclusively on complete, peer-reviewed scientific articles ensures that the data used is of high quality and academic rigor.

The analysis of the collected data was carried out in two distinct stages. In the first stage, the titles and abstracts of the selected articles were examined to identify those that were most pertinent to the research theme. The second stage involved the complete reading of the articles that passed the initial screening. This process resulted in a final sample of three scientific articles that provided a detailed and substantial view of teacher training and its relationship with diversity and inclusion in schools. This methodology ensured that the research was based on reliable and pertinent sources,

allowing for a comprehensive and informed analysis of the impacts and challenges related to teacher training for the promotion of school inclusion.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Through the integrative review, 3 scientific articles were selected, as shown in chart 1.

Table 1. Selected articles

Authors	Objective	Methodology	Conclusion
Campelo (2023)	To carry out an analysis of the historical context of teacher training in Brazil for development and social inclusion	Literature search	The survey highlighted that diversity in Brazilian public schools is broad and multifaceted, including differences in language levels, socioeconomic and cultural conditions, and the presence of students with disabilities. To deal with these differences, it is essential that teachers develop critical and reflective skills. Inclusion requires a continuous updating of pedagogical practices and the transformation of the school to meet the needs of all students, promoting a more ethical, democratic and inclusive education, as recommended by the BNCC and the Federal Constitution. Teacher training must therefore evolve to empower teachers to be effective agents of this change, facing challenges and contributing to quality inclusive education.
Rocha et al. (2022)	Map and reflect on the articles published by a journal that discusses teacher training to understand what have been the discussions about teacher training for inclusive education	Literature review	The analysis of the articles reveals that, in 2013, there were no specific publications on teacher training focused on inclusive education. Of the five articles found, four were published in 2019 and one in 2020. One of the articles discusses the lack of initial training of teachers to work in hospital classes, evidencing the absence of relevant content in the curricula of Pedagogy courses. Another study addresses the reformulation of teaching degrees in a technological university, highlighting inclusion as an important axis, although it is not the main focus of teacher training. There is also criticism about initial training for not adequately preparing teachers to deal with students with high abilities/giftedness, evidencing the marginalization of this theme. Another article highlights the importance of integrating diversity and inclusion issues into teacher education, and an additional study points out that inclusion training is still inadequate and needs to be more incorporated into curricular disciplines. These studies confirm that teacher training in Brazil faces significant challenges to meet the demands of inclusive education.

<p>Miskalo, Cirino and France (2023)</p>	<p>Understand the importance of teacher training focused on inclusive education</p>	<p>Bibliographic research articulated with field research with a qualitative analysis approach</p>	<p>The article examines the importance of teacher training for inclusive education, based on the experiences of ten teachers from a State College in Paraná. The research revealed that, during graduation, teachers did not receive adequate training on inclusive practices, having only had access to some theories focused on special education. Although they sought continuing education in the area, many found it difficult to apply this knowledge in practice due to the lack of specific courses and the historical context of the training received. The analysis showed that, even with efforts in continuing education, teachers face significant challenges due to the diversity in the classrooms and the limitations of the training received. The survey highlighted the need to offer continuing education in line with the reality of classrooms and emphasized the desire of teachers to improve their pedagogical practices to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities. Continuing education is considered crucial for the effective integration of theory with practice, allowing teachers to adapt their approaches to the diverse demands of the school environment.</p>
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Source: Survey data (2024).

Campelo's research (2023) reveals the complexity and scope of diversity in Brazilian public schools, pointing to the imperative need for robust teacher training adapted to these realities. The diversity found in classrooms includes significant variations in language levels, socioeconomic and cultural conditions, and the presence of students with disabilities. These factors not only diversify the educational environment but also amplify the challenges faced by teachers, who need to adapt to meet a diverse range of needs.

The analysis indicates that, in order to deal with this diversity, educators must develop critical and reflective skills. This means that teacher training needs to go beyond the transmission of theoretical knowledge and incorporate practices that help teachers reflect on their pedagogical approaches and adapt their teaching strategies to the different needs of students. The research suggests that inclusion is not a static goal, but a dynamic process that requires a constant updating of pedagogical practices. Teachers need to be prepared to review and transform their educational approaches on an ongoing basis to ensure that all students receive the support they need for their development.

The importance of school transformation is emphasized as a central element for the promotion of a more ethical, democratic and inclusive education. According to the survey, the BNCC and the Federal Constitution provide guidelines for an education that respects and promotes diversity. This implies that teacher training should be aligned with these guidelines, ensuring that teachers can



implement practices that are in line with the principles of inclusion and equity established by these documents.

Therefore, teacher training must evolve in order to enable teachers to be effective agents of change. The research highlights that the challenges faced by teachers in the context of school diversity can be overcome through continuous and adaptive training. This involves not only acquiring specific knowledge about inclusive education, but also developing practical skills to meet the demands of a diverse educational environment.

The analysis of the articles carried out by Rocha et al. (2022) reveals important gaps and challenges in teacher training focused on inclusive education in Brazil. In 2013, no specific publications on teacher training for inclusive education were identified, indicating a lack of discussion and development of the topic at that time. However, when considering the five articles found, which were mostly published between 2019 and 2020, there is a growing effort to address the issue.

One of the articles highlights the lack of initial training for teachers who work in hospital classes, revealing a critical absence of relevant content about this practice in the curricula of Pedagogy courses. This points to an urgent need to integrate specific knowledge about education in hospital contexts into the initial training of future educators. Lack of adequate preparation to deal with these situations can compromise the effectiveness of teaching and the support offered to students in hospital settings.

Another study analyzes the reformulation of teaching degrees in a technological university, which emphasizes inclusion as one of the main axes of its educational policy. Although inclusion is highlighted as important, the study reveals that it is not the central focus of teacher education, suggesting that, although there is recognition of its relevance, the practice of teacher education still does not fully incorporate the strategies and approaches necessary to promote effective inclusion.

In addition, criticism of initial training reveals an insufficiency in the preparation of teachers to deal with students with high abilities or giftedness. This theme, despite being relevant to inclusive education, has been marginalized in the curricula of Pedagogy courses, evidencing a lack of preparation to meet this diversity of skills and needs.

Another article analyzed highlights the importance of integrating issues of diversity and inclusion into the curricular disciplines of teacher training. Training for inclusion is still considered inadequate and needs to be more effectively incorporated into the curriculum, to ensure that future teachers are prepared to face the diverse realities of contemporary classrooms.

The reviewed studies confirm that teacher education in Brazil faces significant challenges to meet the demands of inclusive education. There is a clear need to review and update teacher training

curricula to include content and practices that reflect the diversity of classrooms and provide teachers with the tools they need to promote truly inclusive and equitable education.

The article by Miskalo, Cirino and França (2023) offers a detailed view of the importance of teacher training focused on inclusive education, analyzing the experiences of ten teachers from a State College in Paraná. The research revealed that, during graduation, teachers did not receive adequate training in inclusive practices, limiting themselves to some general theories about special education. This initial training deficit was a significant factor that affected the ability of teachers to implement inclusive practices effectively.

Although many teachers have sought improvement through continuing education, they have encountered substantial difficulties in applying this knowledge in practice. This difficulty was attributed to the lack of specific courses and the nature of the training received previously, which did not prepare teachers to face the diverse and complex realities of contemporary classrooms. The analysis suggests that continuing education, while necessary, is often not sufficient to overcome the gaps left by inadequate initial training.

The challenges faced by teachers are exacerbated by the diversity present in classrooms, which includes students with different needs and disabilities. The survey highlighted the urgent need to align continuing education with the reality of classrooms, providing a more practical preparation directed to the specific demands of these environments. Teachers expressed a clear desire to enhance their pedagogical practices to better meet the needs of students with disabilities, indicating an awareness of the importance of integrating theory and practice.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research carried out highlights the crucial importance of teacher training for the promotion of diversity and inclusion in schools, reflecting the contemporary needs and challenges faced by educators. The main objective of the research was to analyze how the initial and continuing training of teachers impacts the ability to promote inclusive and effective education. Analysis of the reviewed sources revealed several gaps and areas for improvement in teacher preparation.

First, the initial training of teachers is often insufficient to equip them with the necessary skills to deal with diversity in the classroom. The focus traditionally placed on general theories and technical aspects of education has not adequately addressed inclusive practices and the cultural and individual diversity of students. This deficit in initial training creates significant challenges when teachers face the reality of increasingly diverse and complex classrooms.

In addition, continuing education is identified as an essential tool to overcome these limitations. Although efforts for continuing education are evident, many teachers still find it difficult to effectively apply the knowledge acquired due to the lack of specific courses and the historical



context of the training received. The need to align continuing education with the practical realities of the classroom is one of the main conclusions of the research, suggesting that theory needs to be integrated in a more practical and relevant way to the educational reality.

The survey also highlighted the importance of a continuous transformation in teacher education, which must evolve to empower teachers to be effective agents of change. Training should incorporate practices that help educators to critically reflect on their pedagogical approaches and to adapt their strategies to the diverse needs of learners. This involves constantly updating pedagogical practices and promoting an educational environment that values and respects all student identities and experiences.

Additionally, the analyses point to the need to review and update the curricula of teacher training courses, ensuring that they include content and practices that reflect the diversity of classrooms and provide the necessary tools to promote inclusive and equitable education. The integration of diversity and inclusion issues must be done more effectively in curricular disciplines, to prepare future teachers to face the diverse realities of contemporary classrooms.

In summary, the research confirms that teacher training plays an essential role in promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. However, for this training to be effective, a continuous effort is needed to improve both initial and continuing teacher training. This includes the need to align training with the real needs of classrooms, promote more inclusive education, and adapt pedagogical practices to meet the diverse needs of students. The evolution of teacher training is therefore a vital component for creating educational environments that welcome and value all students' identities and experiences, promoting a truly inclusive and equitable education.



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