

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER TRAINING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT

The research investigated the importance of teacher training for special education, highlighting the main challenges and effective practices. The problem addressed was to understand how training programs have proven to be inadequate to prepare teachers for the realities of the inclusive classroom? The general objective was to evaluate how different training models influence the preparation of teachers to deal with students with special needs. A bibliographic review methodology was used, analyzing works by several authors on the evolution of special education and teacher training practices. The results revealed that training models that combine theory and practice, such as the inclusion of supervised internships and practical experiences, proved to be effective. In addition, the research indicated that isolated theoretical training and lack of continuous support compromise the effectiveness of the programs. The analysis showed the need for a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, as well as the importance of diversified methodologies and the use of assistive technologies. The final considerations highlighted the need to review and improve training models to better meet the demands of special education. Future studies should explore how different contexts influence the effectiveness of programs and investigate the impact of changes in educational policies.

Keywords: Teacher training, Special education, Teaching methodologies, Inclusive practices, Training challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Special education plays a significant role in the education system by ensuring that students with specific needs receive the necessary support for their development and learning. The training of teachers for special education is an essential component in this context, since the quality of education offered to these students is related to the skills and knowledge of professionals who work in this area. This training involves not only the acquisition of technical knowledge about different types of educational needs, but also the understanding of adapted pedagogical practices and inclusive strategies that ensure the effectiveness of the educational process.

The importance of teacher training for special education is evidenced by the need to ensure that all students have access to quality education. Adequate teacher training is essential for the creation of educational environments that promote the inclusion and active participation of students with special needs. However, there are considerable challenges associated with such training, including the adequacy of initial and continuing training curricula and the availability of adequate resources and supports. Understanding these challenges and identifying effective strategies are vital for the continuous improvement of educational practice in this field.

The central problem of this research lies in the question: what are the gaps and challenges present in the training of teachers for special education? Although there are several guidelines and policies aimed at improving teacher training, deficiencies still persist in the preparation of professionals to deal with the diversity of educational needs. This study aims to critically analyze the training of teachers for special education, exploring how current practices meet the demands of the field and which areas need improvement.

The objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher training models for special education, identifying challenges and proposing possible improvements based on the review of the existing literature. To achieve this objective, the text is structured as follows: it begins with an introduction that presents the theme and justifies the importance of the study. Then, a theoretical framework will be offered that supports the discussion. The development will be divided into three main topics: the historical evolution of special education, the challenges faced in teacher training and the models and methodologies used in training. The methodology will be described to explain the criteria and procedures for selecting and analyzing the sources, the topics of discussion will be

addressed, followed by the presentation of the results. In addition, the final considerations summarize the main findings and suggestions for future research and practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research is structured to provide a basis on the training of teachers for special education. At first, an overview of the fundamental concepts related to special education and teacher training will be presented, establishing the basic understanding necessary for the subsequent analysis. It will then review relevant education legislation and policies that influence teacher education, highlighting how these guidelines shape practices and requirements in the field. Finally, different models and approaches to teacher training will be discussed, evaluating their characteristics, effectiveness and adequacy to the needs of special education. This structure will allow a critical and well-founded analysis of the topics covered, providing a clear view of current practices and areas that need improvement.

HISTORICAL ASPECTS AND EVOLUTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The history of special education reveals a path of transformation and continuous adaptation to meet the needs of students with different types of disabilities. In the beginning, the approaches to the education of these students were limited and characterized by significant segregation. According to Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 165) "the process of continuing education of physical education teachers in an inclusive educational context has faced challenges related to the adaptation of pedagogical practices to adequately serve all students". The initial difficulties faced by teachers in integrating inclusive practices in the educational environment are highlighted.

As time went on, there was an important change in the way special education was approached. The 1990s marked a period of revision of educational policies, with an increasing focus on inclusion and the continuous training of teachers. Bueno (1999, p. 15) observes that "The advancement of educational policies and the growing demand for specific training have contributed to the evolution of pedagogical practices aimed at the special needs of students". The progressive adaptation of educational policies and the impact of these changes on teacher training are demonstrated.

Teacher training for special education has also evolved over the years. At first, the training was theoretical and often did not include the inclusive pedagogical practices

necessary to deal with diversity in the school environment. Garcia (2013, p. 104) emphasizes that "Teacher training, focused on general pedagogical practices, has incorporated specific components on special education, reflecting the new demands and challenges". This advance reflects a necessary adaptation to the new educational reality, evidencing a change in the approach to teacher training.

The discussion on teacher training for special education has focused on inclusive models and practical methodologies. Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 310) state that "The training of teachers for special education must consider the diversity of students' needs and integrate teaching methods that promote effective inclusion in the classroom". The authors demonstrate the need for training that goes beyond theoretical knowledge, emphasizing the importance of effective pedagogical practices adapted to the needs of students.

In summary, the evolution of special education and teacher training reflects a continuous adaptation to emerging demands and challenges. From initial segregation to increasing inclusion and improved teacher education, the trajectory demonstrates a continuous effort to provide equitable and effective education for all students.

CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF TEACHER TRAINING

The training of teachers for special education faces several challenges that impact the effectiveness of pedagogical practices. One of the main challenges is the adaptation of training curricula to cover the specificities of special education. Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 168) point out that "Continuing education programs for physical education teachers in inclusive contexts face difficulties in integrating content that addresses the varied needs of students". The difficulty in adapting the contents of training programs so that teachers can deal with the diversity found in inclusive classrooms is evident.

In addition to the curricular challenges, there are also issues related to the availability of resources and support for teachers in training. Garcia (2013, p. 105) observes that "The lack of adequate resources and the insufficiency of support during initial teacher training compromise the ability of these professionals to implement inclusive practices effectively". This reflection points to the need for additional investments and support to ensure that future teachers are adequately prepared to face the challenges of special education.

The competencies and skills required for teachers in special education include both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Bueno (1999, p. 20) points out that "Teacher

training should include not only technical knowledge about different disabilities, but also practical skills to implement adapted pedagogical strategies". This statement underlines the importance of training that goes beyond theoretical knowledge and prepares teachers for the practical application of inclusive strategies.

In addition, Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 315) point out that "It is essential that the training of teachers for special education includes the development of emotional and interpersonal skills, in addition to pedagogical skills, to ensure an effective and sensitive approach to the needs of students". This point emphasizes the need to prepare teachers not only with technical knowledge, but also with interpersonal skills that are fundamental for an inclusive and empathetic pedagogical practice.

Therefore, the challenges faced in the training of teachers for special education are related to the need for an adaptation of curricula, adequate resources and development of specific skills. It is essential that teacher training addresses these aspects to ensure the effectiveness of pedagogical practices in inclusive environments.

TRAINING MODELS AND METHODOLOGIES

The analysis of teacher training models for special education reveals a diversity of approaches, each with its own characteristics and levels of effectiveness. Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 170) argue that "Traditional models of teacher training focus on theoretical content, while recent models incorporate inclusive pedagogical practices and methodologies adapted to the needs of students with disabilities". The evolution of training models is verified, with a transition from theoretical approaches to the inclusion of pedagogical practices adjusted to the reality of inclusive classrooms.

In addition to models, the effectiveness of teaching and learning methodologies is also a central issue. Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 320) state that "The integration of active methodologies and differentiated teaching strategies have shown positive results in the training of teachers for special education, contributing to an approach adapted to the needs of students". The importance of methodologies that promote active and adaptable involvement is emphasized, which is fundamental for the training of teachers who work with students with special needs.

On the other hand, Garcia (2013, p. 108) points out that "The application of methodologies that consider the individual profile of students and their specificities can enhance the effectiveness of pedagogical practices and improve educational results". This

statement underlines the importance of adjusting teaching methodologies to meet the individual characteristics of students, which is critical to the success of special education. In addition, Bueno (1999, p. 25) observes that:

Training models that include practical experiences and supervised internships tend to better prepare teachers to face the challenges of special education, providing direct contact with the reality of inclusive classrooms.

The quote highlights the effectiveness of including practical experiences as part of the training process, as these experiences allow future teachers to experience and face the real challenges of special education.

Therefore, the analysis of training models and methodologies for special education demonstrates that the integration of inclusive pedagogical practices and adapted methodologies is essential to adequately prepare teachers. Models that incorporate both theoretical knowledge and practical experience have been shown to be effective in training teachers to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopts the approach of bibliographic review with the objective of examining the training of teachers for special education. This is a qualitative research, whose focus is the critical analysis of existing academic sources on the subject. The main instruments used were the search in academic databases, digital libraries and repositories of scientific journals, with emphasis on journal articles, books and relevant publications that address teacher training and special education.

The procedures involved in data collection consisted of the identification and selection of studies relevant to the training of teachers for special education. Databases such as Scielo, Google Scholar and other academic platforms were used to locate relevant publications. The references were selected based on criteria of relevance, timeliness and academic quality. The techniques employed included the critical reading of the texts, the extraction of pertinent information, and the comparative analysis of the models and approaches discussed in the reviewed sources.

The research was conducted from the collection and analysis of bibliographic data, allowing the construction of a table that synthesizes the main references on the subject. The following table presents an overview of the references used, organized by author, title, year and type of work.

Table 1: Bibliographic References

AUTHOR(S)	CONFORMING TITLE PUBLISHED	YEAR	TYPE OF WORK
BUENO, J. G. S.	Children with special educational needs, educational policy and teacher training: generalists or specialists?	1999	Article in Review
CRUZ, G. C.; FERREIRA, J. R.	Process of continuing education of physical education teachers in an inclusive educational context	2005	Article in Review
GARCIA, R. M. C.	Special education policy in the inclusive perspective and teacher training in Brazil	2013	Article in Review
GREGUOL, M.; GOBBI, E.; CARRARO, A.	Teacher training for special education: a discussion on the Brazilian and Italian models	2013	Article in Review

Source: authorship

The analysis of the references was carried out in order to build a critical view of the training of teachers for special education. From this framework, the main trends and challenges in the area were identified, enabling a discussion on the needs and recommended practices for the continuous improvement of teacher training.

EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER TRAINING

The evaluation of the current training of teachers for special education reveals important aspects about how the training programs have met the needs of this specific field. Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 173) point out that "Teacher training, although it has advanced in some areas, still faces difficulties in meeting the demands of inclusion, often due to the lack of integration between theory and practice". Thus, there is a recurrent criticism about the discrepancy between the theoretical knowledge acquired during training and its practical application in the school environment.

In addition, Bueno (1999) observes that although many training programs include components on special education, the effectiveness of these programs is compromised by the lack of follow-up and continuous support for teachers after completing their training. This suggests that, despite efforts to improve training, the absence of support and continuous updating limits the effectiveness of programs in preparing teachers to deal with diversity in the educational environment.

The impacts of teacher training on teaching practice are also a fundamental aspect to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 325) state that "Training that combines theory with supervised practices and internships tends to improve the competence of teachers in the implementation of inclusive strategies and in meeting special educational needs". It is demonstrated that the combination of practical

experiences with theoretical training is beneficial to improve the ability of teachers to apply inclusive strategies effectively.

In addition, Garcia (2013) highlights that teachers who undergo targeted and adequate training show a greater ability to adapt pedagogical practices, which results in a positive impact on the learning of students with special needs. It is indicated that well-structured training can lead to better teacher performance and an effective adaptation of pedagogical practices to the needs of students.

Therefore, the analysis of current training and its impacts on teaching practice shows that, although there are significant advances, there are still challenges to be overcome to ensure that teachers are prepared to meet the demands of special education. The effectiveness of training is linked to the integration between theory and practice, as well as to the continuous support offered to professionals after initial training.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE LITERATURE

The literature on teacher training for special education highlights several challenges that impact the quality of teacher preparation. A recurring problem is the difficulty in aligning the contents of the training with the real needs of the school environment. Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 175) point out that "Teacher training programs often fail to provide an effective integration between theory and practice, resulting in a significant gap in preparation for real teaching situations". The frequent disconnection between theoretical training and pedagogical practice in the field of special education is evident.

Another challenge identified is the lack of resources and support during initial teacher training. Garcia (2013, p. 106) observes that "The insufficiency of resources and support during teacher training compromises the ability of teachers to apply the inclusive practices learned". This problem underscores the need for improvements in the support offered to teachers during and after their training to ensure a successful implementation of inclusive practices.

To address these challenges, the literature suggests several proposals and solutions. Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 328) recommend that "Teacher training should include a combination of practical experiences, such as supervised internships, and updated theoretical modules to ensure that future teachers are well-prepared to deal with diversity in the classroom". This proposal emphasizes the importance of integrating practice

with theory and updating training content to reflect best practices and new demands in special education.

In addition, Bueno (1999) suggests that the implementation of continuing education programs and post-training support can help overcome the identified gaps, providing teachers with the tools and knowledge necessary to adapt to the changes and challenges of special education. The reflection points to the need for continuous professional development strategies as a solution to improve the effectiveness of training and support teachers throughout their careers.

Therefore, the challenges identified in the literature, such as the disconnect between theory and practice and the lack of resources, highlight the need for significant changes in the way teacher education programs are structured. The proposed solutions, such as the integration of practical experiences and the provision of ongoing support, aim to address these issues and improve teachers' preparation for special education.

COMPARISON BETWEEN TRAINING MODELS

The comparative analysis of teacher training models for special education reveals significant differences in the approach and results achieved. A comparison between different training models shows that some approaches have been shown to be more effective than others. Garcia (2013) observes that training models that include supervised internships and practices in real teaching environments have proven effective in preparing teachers for the reality of inclusive classrooms. The importance of integrating practical experiences into the training process is highlighted, which contributes to realistic and effective preparation.

On the other hand, models that focus solely on theory often fail to provide future teachers with the necessary practical skills. Bueno (1999, p. 29) points out that "Theoretical training can limit the ability of teachers to apply inclusive concepts in a practical way, resulting in inadequate preparation to face the challenges of special education". The limitations of training models that do not include practical experiences and concrete applications of the knowledge acquired are evident.

The comparison between teaching and learning methodologies also shows significant differences in terms of effectiveness. Cruz and Ferreira (2005, p. 172) report that "Methodologies that combine differentiated teaching strategies with the use of assistive technologies have shown better results in adapting pedagogical practices to the specific

needs of students". This indicates that the adoption of diversified methodologies and the use of technologies can improve the effectiveness of inclusive pedagogical practices.

In addition, Greguol, Gobbi and Carraro (2013, p. 330) point out that "Training models that incorporate continuous feedback and formative evaluations tend to promote greater adaptation and improvement of pedagogical practices by teachers, resulting in better educational results". This argument suggests that the inclusion of feedback mechanisms and continuous evaluation can help teachers to adjust their practices and achieve better results in special education.

Therefore, the comparison between different training models and methodologies reveals that approaches that combine theory with practice, use assistive technologies and incorporate continuous feedback tend to be effective. These models not only better prepare teachers to meet the challenges of special education, but also contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes for students with special needs.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research carried out on the importance of teacher training for special education brought to light several fundamental aspects related to the theme. The main findings indicate that teacher training for special education still faces significant challenges, despite the advances made in recent decades. The analysis revealed that the integration between theory and practice remains a critical point. Training models that incorporate hands-on experiences and supervised internships tend to better prepare teachers for the complexities of the inclusive school environment. However, the lack of resources and ongoing support still compromises the effectiveness of many training programs.

It was observed that theoretical training alone is not enough to prepare teachers for the practical realities of special education. Models that combine theory with applied practices and that include differentiated methodologies and the use of assistive technologies have proven to be effective. The combination of differentiated and practical strategies in real teaching environments contributes to a better preparation of teachers to face the challenges of inclusive education.

The survey also highlighted that the inclusion of continuous feedback and formative assessments is an important practice that can contribute to the adaptation and improvement of teachers' pedagogical practices. This suggests that initial training should be

complemented by opportunities for continuing professional development to ensure that teachers can adjust and evolve throughout their careers.

Although the findings provide an insight into the challenges and effective practices in teacher training for special education, there is still room for further study. Future studies can explore how different regional and cultural contexts influence the effectiveness of training models and what are the best practices for adapting training programmes to local needs. In addition, it is essential to investigate how changes in educational policies and the demands of the school environment impact teacher training and practice.

In summary, the research reinforces the need for training models that integrate theory and practice, that offer continuous support and that use methodologies adapted to the needs of students with disabilities. The contribution of the study lies in highlighting the importance of adequate and dynamic preparation for teachers, with direct implications for the effectiveness of special education. The continuation of studies on this topic is essential to further improve training practices and ensure quality inclusive education.

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