

Ongoing teacher education and teaching practice in specialized educational services¹

Formação docente continuada e práticas de ensino no atendimento educacional especializado^{2,3}

Gláucia Uliana Pinto ⁽ⁱ⁾

Mateus Henrique do Amaral ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

⁽ⁱ⁾ Methodist University of Piracicaba – UNIMEP, Piracicaba, SP, Brazil. <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5167-9664>, glaucauliana@gmail.com

⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Secretaria Municipal de Educação de Vinhedo, Vinhedo, SP, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3732-926X>, amaralmateush@gmail.com

Abstract:

The present paper discusses ongoing teacher education and teaching practices in the Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE, Specialized Education Services). Based on the historical-cultural perspective and on the historical-critical pedagogy, the article debates teachers' practices promoting a school education which favors the learning and the development of students with disabilities, reconsidering the pedagogical practices of the AEE. The presented considerations derive from a project developed with 23 teachers and their practices. The research collects field journal reports and discusses the pedagogical activities and the teaching practices performed with students with disabilities, reflecting about the possibilities of reconfiguration of the teaching practices in the teacher education process. The study considers there is a need of better theoretical education for teachers and of bigger political engagement by the teachers, making them more aware of what underpins their practices so they can contribute to the fight for the right to a quality education for everyone in public school.

Keywords: special education, Specialized Education Services, teaching practice, historical-cultural psychology, historical-critical pedagogy

¹ English version: José Pereira Queiroz (ze.pereira.queiroz@gmail.com)

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³ References correction and bibliographic normalization services: Mônica Silva (Tikinet) – revisao@tikinet.com.br.

Resumo:

Este texto trata da formação docente continuada e das práticas de ensino no Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE). À luz da abordagem histórico-cultural e da pedagogia histórico-crítica, objetivamos debater a atuação do docente na promoção de uma educação escolar que favoreça a aprendizagem e o desenvolvimento dos alunos com deficiência, repensando as práticas pedagógicas desenvolvidas no AEE. A partir de registros de um projeto envolvendo 23 professoras e suas práticas, tomamos situações relatadas em diários de campo, explicitando o trabalho pedagógico e as relações de ensino com alunos com deficiência, dando ênfase às possibilidades de redimensionamento de práticas pedagógicas nos processos de formação docente. Nosso estudo considera a necessidade de uma melhor formação teórica e um maior engajamento político por parte dos professores, de modo que tenham maior clareza daquilo que fundamenta suas práticas, para que contribuam na luta pelo direito à educação de qualidade para todos na escola pública.

Palavras-chave: *educação especial, atendimento educacional especializado, práticas de ensino, psicologia histórico-cultural, pedagogia histórico-crítica*

In Brazil, a series of laws, decrees, and guidelines released in the last decades has contributed for the increase in access to regular schools by students with disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders, and intellectual giftedness, legally recognized as the target audience for *Educação Especial* (PAEE, Special Education) (“Política Nacional”, 2008). This movement emerges and gains force facing a history of exclusion and institutionalization which has marked decades of educational experiences with these groups of people.

The current legislative discourse (“Política Nacional”, 2008; Resolução nº 4, 2009; Lei nº 13.005, 2014) guarantees access to formal education and establishes the transversality of Special Education, understood as a teaching modality which spans all levels, steps, and modalities and which performs *Atendimento Educacional Especializado* (AEE, Specialized Educational Services) complementarily or supplementary to the education of the student, through the provision of services, accessibility resources, and strategies eliminating the barriers for the full participation and for the development of learning. In principle, the AEE spaces should not substitute for schooling in regular classrooms, a reality which does not negate the existence and the legal recognition of special classes and schools.

Despite the increase in the enrolment levels of PAEE students in regular schools and the guarantee of AEE especially in multifunctional resource classrooms in these schools, there is a significant difficulty related to the permanence of these students in the school environment,

something we can perceive in the progressive decrease in the percentage of enrolment throughout the different stages of primary and secondary education in Brazil. Such issues are addressed and discussed in some studies, such as Laplane (2014, 2016), Meletti and Ribeiro (2014), and Moreira and Carvalho (2014), which place the concentration of enrollment in the initial stages of primary education, with a marked age-grade discrepancy and elevated evasion levels for PAEE students in regular schools. Among the main reasons for this to happen, we highlight the lack of preparation of the entire school community and the educational needs of the professionals who act with the students in the schools (Kassar, 2014; Pletsch, 2016a), as well as the infrastructural problems which impact the teaching activity (Pletsch, 2016b).

In this context, this study debates the teaching activity and the teaching relationships with students with disabilities in inclusive educational environments, focusing on the possibilities of reconfiguration of the pedagogical practices in the teacher education processes. It is an empirical study, produced within the research project *O trabalho pedagógico com conceitos científicos, ensino promissor e a formação de professores na educação especial* [The pedagogical practice with scientific concepts, the promising teaching, and the education of teachers in special education]. This project was developed between 2016 and 2017 with 23 teachers who act in AEE in regular schools in the municipal public network of a city located in the countryside of the state of São Paulo.

In light of the historical-cultural perspective and of the historical-critical pedagogy, the objective of this study is to discuss teachers' practices for the promotion of a school education which favors the learning and the development of students with disabilities who study in regular schools, rethinking the pedagogical practices of the AEE. Understanding that school development happens through the construction of knowledge in the social level in relationships mediated by the other and by the word (Vigotski, 1995, 2001), group work was proposed to contribute with the development of the teaching activity in a perspective which favors theoretical discussions intertwined with the reality of the classroom (Lüdke & Cruz, 2005). We recognize, therefore, the importance of proposing an educational work which happens in the exchange and in the meetings with the others, be them students or teachers.

As Martins (2010) posits, the relevance of educational processes lies precisely in the recovery of the possibility of an analytical process of the individuals, which considers ways of overcoming the ideological masks of a class society. Furthermore, from the presupposes we defend, the problems faced in the school environment require deep studies based on the necessities and challenges of daily life in school and of the social practice and its actors. According to Saviani (1984), social practice involves the broader process of the production of life in the relationships established between people. In this sense, teachers' social practice is not the same of everyday life nor is it the practice of each isolated individual, but the experiences of each person in relation to the historically and socially produced knowledge. Thus, it is important to have an educational and collective work promoting the analytical/scientific thought about the lived reality.

Discussions about the possibilities and the challenges of the teaching activity towards a school education which favors the learning and the development of the student with disability in the context of regular schools need to bring to light the interactions with the other and the construction of meanings and senses regarding the pedagogical practices. Thus, it is important to consider broader social contexts and teaching and learning concepts which substantiate the pedagogical practices developed by teachers, as well as the central role of school in the development of students.

In order to organize the reflection proposed herein, we present in the next section the epistemological bases of this study: historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy. Afterwards, we present the paths followed in the development of our research and the basis of analysis and discussion of the data. Finally, we reflect about the educational project with the group of teachers and present our final considerations.

Historical-cultural perspective and historical-critical pedagogy in teacher education, in teachers' work, and in the teaching-learning processes

Having presented our study's objectives and the epistemological bases of our text, we now aim to relate them with the broader themes of our work, namely teacher education, teachers' work, and the teaching and learning processes. Historical-cultural psychology has historical materialism as its theoretical and methodological support, basing itself in the works of soviet authors Lev S. Vigotski (1896-1934), Alexander R. Luria (1902-1977), and Alexis N. Leontiev (1903-1979), as well as in contemporary schools based on these authors' thoughts.

According to Luria (2016, p. 25), Vigotski concludes, based on Marx, that the origins of the higher forms of conscious behavior should be understood in the social relationships individuals keep with the outside world. In this sense, Vigotski (1995, 2001) evidences that, beyond the biological apparatus, human beings are social and that the forms of psychological functioning are originated in history and in culture, in concrete social relationships mediated by instruments and signs.

The genetic law of human social development, which posits the conversion of natural functions (elementary) into cultural ones (higher) is understood by Vigotski (1995) from the premise that every function in the child's cultural development surfaces twice, in two levels: first in the social level then in the psychological; first among men as an interpsychological category and afterwards within children as an intrapsychological category. The psychological constitution passes, therefore, through the process of signifying the concrete relationships with the other (interpsychological) which opens the possibility for the elaboration of concepts and for the (re)organization of subjective and cultural forms of behavior (intrapsychological).

In the pedagogical context, differently from perspectives which regard learning as a process demanding the maturity of the individual, i.e., as a result from the biological development, Vigotski understands development and learning as interrelated. As Marsiglia (2010, p. 102) affirms, in this perspective learning is seen as enabling the realization of higher mental functions as internalized functions, i.e., as intrapsychological functions constituted as such from interpsychological functions.

This form of understanding development and learning, as Vigotski (2001, p. 333) proposes, has implications for the pedagogical practices. Pedagogy, according to this author, must guide itself not by what has happened, but by what will happen in the development of the child; only then can it initiate the course of learning of those development processes which are currently found in the immediate development zone. Hence, to Vigostki (2016, p. 114), good teaching—a fruitful teaching—is one that comes before development; it is prospective and is based on the development of complex and non-elementary knowledges, on scientific concepts of high generality, considering their relationships with everyday concepts, which need to acquire the systematization of the complex knowledges. Ultimately, it is the pedagogical work with scientific knowledges and their appropriation by students which will drive mental development and school learning. The responsibility of the school, in this sense, is to transmit historically elaborated classical knowledge (Saviani, 2005), demanding, from the teacher, educational actions intentionally guided towards students' school (psychological) development.

Sacomani and Coutinho (2015) affirm that historical-critical pedagogy defends precisely the role of school as a socializer of scientific, artistic, and philosophical knowledges in their utmost expressions aiming to amplify and enrich students' symbolic universe and keep them free from the chains of their everyday lives. The teacher, therefore, has a crucial role in the teaching relationships as the bearer of the symbolic universe which will be the object of the teaching and of the learning. This indicates the need for a solid initial and ongoing theoretical education which has, as its basis, its end, and its truth criteria, the pedagogical practice understood as a social practice for humanizing individuals.

We know, however, that in Brazilian public schools such undertaking is difficult to be implemented. These difficulties are motivated, especially, by the offering of an unequal education for the working class (Rummert, Algebaile, & Ventura, 2013) and by precarious conditions for teachers' education and work (Martins, 2010; Nogueira, 2012; Paisan, Mendes, & Cia, 2017), forfeiting the sharing of historically produced knowledge in favor of a utilitarian schooling not committed to overcoming the capitalist modes of production and the social exclusions⁴.

⁴ It is important to notice that school is not the only institution responsible for overcoming alienation and the capitalist modes of production. To make such overcoming attainable, transformations in other social fields (levels) are required, such as the political, the economic, etc. We must be careful not to attribute the responsibility solely to school, as if it, by itself, could directly transform social reality.

Duarte (2013) addresses this issue when he discusses the difficulties presented to the education offered in schools. Initially, the author highlights that the psychological phenomena are inserted in and constitute part of a totality, the existing social relationships, and indicates that the criteria for psychological development in the historical-cultural perspective is that individuals will psychologically developed to the degree that they are able to rationally and freely conduct their psychological processes through the incorporation, to their mental activity, of the human psychological experience materialized and synthesized in culture.

The author affirms that the bourgeoisie intensifies the use of resources to hamper the advancement of the fight for the effective socialization of the means of production. In this context, historical-critical pedagogy, as a mediator of the historical-cultural psychology in school education, turns towards the full development of individuals, holding the revolutionary transformation as the guiding principle of the educational activity. It offers, thus, a counterpoint to the bourgeoisie and hegemonic concept of pedagogical practice, which seeks only to adapt individuals to life in society (Duarte, 2013).

This discussion is relevant for our proposed reflection, considering the increase in the enrollment of students with disabilities in regular schools, the conditions of education and of teaching present in these spaces, and the development of the individuals, which does not dispense with the knowledges produced and appropriated in culture. According to Silva (2014), a quality public school for everyone cannot emerge while there are still such effective mechanisms of exclusion and social selection as the ones practiced by the Brazilian school. This author discusses the contributions of the historical-critical pedagogy for the Brazilian special education, identifying them in the philosophical underpinnings, in the pedagogical-methodological proposal, and in the political meaning of its undertaking, because, by basing itself in Marxist and Marxian thoughts, it leads to the understanding, under the historical valorization, of the education and of the educating person.

Marsiglia (2012), by standing on the same bases while reflecting about diversity, points out that school is a space which should be attended by everyone, with or without disabilities, of whatever creed, race, etc. because the school institution is the one able to transform individuals through intentional means of promoting development. This author also affirms that true inclusion is based on another concept of society, truly concerned with the humanization process of individuals.

Studies focusing on special education and on diversity under the perspective of the historical-critical pedagogy and of the historical-cultural psychology corroborate the valuing of a professional and pedagogical practice which overcomes the sensorial training centered on the organic deficit, a constitutive mark in the history of the education of children and young people with disabilities in Brazil (Jannuzzi, 2012), and takes on a broader perspective of human development facing the historical-cultural nature of the psychological education. Hence, we highlight the work with typical school content in the interactions with the other in educational situations, together with the ongoing education of teachers in public schools, considering their daily pedagogical practices and the school as a space for humanized education mediated by socially constituted knowledges which need to be shared with the students (Martins, 2013). In the next section we present, therefore, pedagogical situations reported in field journals illustrating the teacher activity discussed in the educative processes and the possibilities of pedagogical practices committed to the development of students with disabilities in regular schools.

From the educative encounters to the pedagogical practices with students: the path followed by the research and the work with school concepts in the AEE classrooms.

As we have previously indicated, the data presented in this article corresponds to the situations experienced in the context of the project *O trabalho pedagógico com conceitos científicos, ensino promissor e a formação de professores na educação especial* [The pedagogical practice with scientific concepts, the promising teaching, and the education of teachers in special education] developed between August 2016 and June 2017 with 23 AEE teachers from the municipal network of a city in the countryside of the state of São Paulo. The project focused on rethinking teaching with the group's teachers and their students in AEE.

The study produced audio, video, and written registration of the encounters with the teachers and some of the pedagogical practices accompanied by the researchers for the posterior group discussions. Every participant signed the *Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido* (TCLE, Free and Informed Consent Form)

In accordance with the historical-cultural perspective, the analysis method of the experienced situation focuses on searching for evidences revealing an ongoing process of dialectical nature, with mutually constituted contradictory spheres. Thus, this method aims to cast an interpretative look on human processes as something built by history, by culture, and by the crucial mediation of signs (Pino, 2005).

The encounters with the 23 teachers happened every 15 days, during the *Horário de Trabalho Pedagógico Coletivo* (HTPC, Collective Pedagogical Work Time)⁵, when they discussed the concepts from the theoretical perspectives adopted in their work and the pedagogical practices developed by them in their activities with the students. The group selected four cases to be followed weekly by one of the researchers in the schools⁶: teacher Claudia's students Kleber (6 years old) and Gilberto (8 years old) and teacher Ana's students Júnior (8 years old) and Jonas (7 years old)⁷, all of them presented delays in the learning process; Two of them had been diagnosed, Júnior with autism and Kleber with intellectual disability⁸. The teachers were selected due to their own soliciting for the researcher's presence in the AEE classroom and to their report of small advancements with their students, who were considered "difficult cases". The researchers accompanied the classes during the same period of the HTPC, that is, between August 2016 and June 2017.

Considering the centrality of the processes of conceptual construction for the development of thought in Vigotski's (1982, 2001) oeuvre and the implications of this perspective when thinking the educational practice, the research developed an ongoing educational work focusing on students' modes of learning and knowing. Such modes are mediated by the appropriation of school concepts and of the development processes which these concepts produce. Moreover, we highlight dialogical forms of working with the school

⁵ The encounters with the AEE teachers happened due to a solicitation by the professionals from a municipal teacher education center, who contacted the researchers. The teacher's HTPC meetings were already taking place before the beginning of this study's research.

⁶ One of the participating schools had significantly precarious infrastructure, mostly related to the number of classrooms. The other school was better structured and had an exclusive AEE classroom.

⁷ To preserve their confidentiality, all participants' names presented herein are pseudonyms.

⁸ In Portuguese, the research used the equivalent expression "*deficiência intelectual*" in accordance with the term adopted by the American Association on Mental Retardation (2011). Although we can still verify the presence of the expressions "*deficiência mental*" [mental disability] or even "*deficiência intelectual*" [intellectual disability] in social discourses, Caiado, Baptista, and Jesus (2017) present historical data about these concepts in Brazil and indicate that Brazilians uncritically adopt them, without understanding their historical reasons. The authors highlight that the differences between the two concepts must be thought out, beyond the idea of adequacy or revision, as something which overshadows individuals and their educational demands.

concepts, which favor the construction of knowledge and of learning, especially regarding reading and writing considering the reports from the teachers about their practices with the students.

We have chosen to question, with the teachers, the activities developed in the AEE space due to their not corresponding to the contents proposed in a regular classroom, focusing the pedagogical work on training perceptual and motor abilities or even on the memorization of letters and numbers, not considering, hence, the centrality of the work with scientific concepts. Pletsch and Glat (2012) posit that individuals “signified as disabled” are usually removed from the school curriculum in the teaching processes. This evidences the necessity to view “inclusion” students as subjects who can be and are in the school environment to learn. About this topic, Mendes, Silva, and Pletsch (2011) warn that the school needs to share knowledge with every student, prioritizing school content, since giving up on such content means being led into the trap of a school reduced to a space for socialization, something which has been strongly imposed to Special Education. Moreover, the authors point out the need to deepen the discussion regarding school curriculum and what is developed by the AEE, which must become an actual support for the pedagogical practices of regular classrooms.

The actions developed by the group in the AEE classrooms provoked changes in the pedagogical practices of the two teachers accompanied weekly, as well as in the behavior and in the commitment of the students in the activities. Initially, the work in the AEE classrooms predominantly focused on training motor skills, memory, and attention: the activities performed centered on the alphabet letters, on joining syllables to form simple and known words, on exercises to form numbers 1 to 5, and on memory games and puzzles, for example. However, as the project progressed, the teachers started planning more elaborate classes, considering the didactical contents of the regular classroom the students attended, such as: means of transportation, traffic rules, dengue, living beings, and the independence of Brazil. Other activities were included, for instance reading and writing based on literary stories or on the contents being worked in class. All of these actions were presented and analyzed in the bigger group, with theoretical discussions from the historical-cultural perspective.

The researcher would weekly share her field journal with the group to discuss it in the encounters. At times, this presentation was performed with teacher Ana. The intention was to highlight, with this material, the work with scientific concepts and the understanding of the

teaching and learning processes based on the presupposes of the historical-cultural perspective. Approximately 18 encounters were held in the HTPC and 32 in the AEE.

The following passage was extracted from a journal elaborated by the researcher and by the teacher for a presentation in the HTPC group:

On this day, the teacher continued the work about “means of transportation”⁹ (on video), a moment when Kleber was participative and interested. They talked about land, water, and air transportation, and the student received help to separate the different kinds, organizing them in his notebook according to their characteristics (grouping the ones who “travel by land, by air, and by water”). With help he could carry out the activity.

As Vigotski (2001) explains, it is part of the concept elaboration process to name objects, to separate them, and at the same time to include them in certain classes, in other words, to analyze them on increasingly abstract bases. Developing mental processes means looking at material reality and being able to think it, organize it, and explain it.

Possible benefits:

1. Attention

2. Memory (retrieving experiences to answer to what the activity proposes). An example can be found in the following dialogue: the research and the teacher are looking to make the student understand what means of transportation are, explaining they “are things which take us from one place to the other”. Kleber, having difficulty understanding the concept, is questioned by the teacher about how he goes to the doctor with his mother. To this he answers: “I go by bus”.

3. The organization, planning, and classification of objects: when he needed to separate and paste in his notebook the different means of transportation between the land, water, and air types. The student probably barely understood the concepts, since when children hear a word for the first time, the development of its meaning is just beginning (Vigotski, 2001). However, the activity was rich in term of the mental processes it mobilized, as we have highlighted. We must also remember that the meaning of the word, in the context of communication, directs the activity towards certain ends, organizing the activity itself, with impacts for the psychological functions, which start operating the usage of the word. Thus, the word is considered a psychological instrument in the historical-cultural perspective. (Field journal, researcher and teacher Ana—09/01/2016)¹⁰

It is important to highlight that, in the beginning of the work, the student was not interested in the activities proposed in the AEE and behaved in an aggressive, agitated manner, constantly leaving the classroom. Kleber¹¹ walked around the school and was reprimanded by

⁹ The developed activities were elaborated by the teacher in an interaction with the researcher.

¹⁰ In this paper, we have translated all quotations from Portuguese into English.

¹¹ We have chosen to follow this student because he was considered uninterested and undisciplined. The teacher’s initial report about him was: “He doesn’t stay quiet and he usually wanders around the hallways. He does not respect the teacher, nor any other school worker. He also does not like to follow rules. He is not interested in what the school has to offer him, nor even in the tablet or the computer, which usually call every student’s attention. Books, painting, and drawing do not interest him either”.

the professionals who found him. There was no school or teacher strategy to include him in the activities; “wandering around” school was part of his daily life.

Although the AEE teacher managed to keep him sitting for longer in the library or in the schoolyard, Kleber did not effectively perform the activities—usually he would doodle over the pages and play around with the alphabet with no criteria. In relation to the other school spaces, such as the regular classroom and the physical education classes, the student would also not participate, i.e., he would not do what was proposed for everyone.

At the beginning of the project, the activities done with Kleber used the mobile alphabet, so he could recognize and name the letters and write his name, his classmates’, and his teacher’s, for example—actions he initially appeared to perform mechanically. The teacher would constantly warn him to pay attention to what he was doing.

The teacher and the researcher were concerned about including him in the activities proposed by the school, according to the project’s objectives, as well as about doing a work which would favor friendlier and more respectful attitudes. In an HTPC discussion, the researchers and the teachers concluded that ludic activities could involve the work with rules, without forgetting about the school contents which needed to be addressed. The group, then thought about games which allowed the teacher to approach the topics presented in the adopted schoolbook, such as means of transportation and traffic rules.

We regarded as promising the idea of bringing teachers closer to analytical and investigative practices commonly developed in university research. Academic studies reflect about the daily situations brought by teachers during their work with students; these studies are, therefore, interweaved with a theoretical dimension which favors the understanding of the school reality from a broad and critical perspective. Thus, during the project, as encouraged by the researcher, teacher Ana also began writing field journals to be shared with the group. The following passage is a fragment written by her about student Kleber:

That day, the work was in group (Kleber, Júnior, and a new student, Maurício¹²). At the first moment, the teacher talked with the students about what means of transportation are, to remind them of what had been studied the day before. Kleber participated and gave examples of some means of transportation he knew. The students selected three means of transportation for the teacher to write in a cardboard (they helped along when they remembered some words). Kleber guessed some letters which could be part of the words. Afterwards, each student was called to write a word and make a drawing related to what he had written. Kleber wrote TRUCK, copying the word from the teacher, and then drew it. Júnior tried to write bus and made a drawing (similar to a body) in front of the word car. Maurício wrote car and made a drawing in front of the word bus. To end the activity, the three played with a banner with a car track while they talked about what was represented in the scenery (they talked with each other indicating where places such as the gas station and the school were, naming all the places in the banner, and indicating the stop points to each other, the snack bar, the garage, similarly to how they had previously played with the teacher). (Field journal, teacher Ana, 09/10/2016)

The journal refers to the activities which took place in the AEE regarding the content being worked in the regular classroom, including the boys in meaningful school activities in terms of the elaboration of scientific concepts and literacy. This activity was prepared by the AEE teacher based on the discussions with the group of teachers and on the weekly encounters with the researcher. The used material were two plastic cars and a plastic car track representing a city with streets, traffic signs, a supermarket, a school, a church, etc. supplied by the school.

The teacher not only started planning her classes according to these contents, but she also verified how the journals helped her more thoroughly notice the peculiarities and the advances of the students. With this, she ended up modifying her discourse about the impossibilities, since her focus became the pedagogical practice. Thus, the work in the group and with the researcher enabled a different organization of the pedagogical activity in the AEE classroom, with exchanges of suggestions between teacher Ana and the regular classroom teacher. These exchanges advanced the participation possibilities between both teachers and the students' learning, especially Kleber's, who had previously refused to perform any proposed activity.

Based on these first activities, the teacher's and the researcher's attentions were turned towards the learning of reading and writing¹³, necessary for Kleber's full inclusion in the school, considering that, according to Martins and Rabatini (2011, p. 355), the school activities are instituted as resources which stimulate a series of internal processes of the individual's

¹² Esse aluno não foi acompanhado pela pesquisadora, mas participava das atividades no AEE.

¹³ In relation to the first activities regarding reading and writing, the teacher started a work with literary stories and textual production activities (oral narratives, short narratives, and the rewriting of stories) which considered the characters and the events.

development, especially the most complex forms of thought. The movements were of approximating the student to the school contents, trying to transform the base of the experienced contents through the introduction of more complex contents.

The proposed activities led the student to accept rules and to perform the activities, even in the physical education classes, initiating his literacy process when he as invited to retell stories and to write characters' names or small passages of the worked subjects. These changes were *enabled in the school relationships, involving knowledges produced by people. Based on these relationships, the internal conditions are shaped and refined by the external conditions, by rich experiences, and by knowledges shared by the teachers with the students.*

In relation to the challenges presented by the educational proposal, we consider, based on the encounters with the teachers and underpinned by the theoretical presupposes herein discussed, that the pedagogical concepts and practices centered on the deficit are a significant barrier. Despite the indication of change, we could notice during the work that the teaching aimed at “special education” students is still centered on strategies materialized in fragmented and mechanical activities which are not guided towards the possibilities of the student and the development of complex thought, mediated by the school contents. On the contrary, the educational emphasis lies in the impossibility, in trying to overcome the disability with the training of basic abilities and competences. In this sense, to the student with intellectual disability the contents and forms of conduct taught are simple, of elementary character, in detriment of a work which enables the student to elaborate ideas and meanings shared in culture and to construct conditions for living with different social spheres. The person with disability is still interpreted as the bearer as an exclusively organic, biological problem (Omote, 1994; De Carlo, 1999; Amaral, 1998, 2002).

Final considerations

According to Vieira and Borges (2017, pp. 305-306), when we begin seeing Special Education as a field of knowledge and as a set of practices and knowhows directed towards attending the learning specificities of a determined social group of students, always in a permanent dialogue with the bases of school education, we can notice how work with specialized educational services, as an action connected to Special Education, will never fulfil its

function if it is subjected to a restrictive and corrective character and it is subjugated to the interventions performed in the multifunctional resources classroom. We believe these authors have translated the central point we have tried to highlight in this text: that we are able to, indeed, materialize inclusion based on a collective work, considering, as Amaral (1998, p. 22) posits, that education is only one, despite having to adapt itself to special needs in order to better fulfil its duties to the community.

Nowadays, when people with disabilities have their right to education and to citizenship recognized, the concept of disabilities as diseases, incapacities, or disadvantages continues to be a true barrier for these achievements (Pletsch & Oliveira, 2014). Even medical science itself, by how it defines these concepts (Amaral, 1998), collaborates to this view of a deficit centered exclusively on the individual. Moreover, the precarization of the Brazilian public education, reflected in the lack of investments and resources—be it in the education of the teacher or in the infrastructure of schools—, does not present effective learning conditions for the majority of the students, never mind for students with disabilities.

In this context, it is paramount to establish a teacher education more engaged with a social project of searching for the effective guarantee of the rights to quality public education for everyone, reaffirming to teachers their educational responsibility in the classroom, in the education of critical individuals aware of their reality. As Marsiglia (2012) posits, historical-critical pedagogy spends efforts in overcoming the capitalist modes of production to establish the school model defended by this theory. This means that such perspective works towards social transformation within the existing conditions, defending, as an integral part of class struggle, the socialization of knowledge through school, concerned with the humanization process of every person, with or without disabilities. Thus, in the context of educational processes, we highlight the urgency of providing access to theory, as well as of the need for a change in the perspective of teachers regarding their practices, particularly towards students with disabilities. This becomes increasingly necessary, especially when we consider Brazil's great social and opportunity inequalities

The project and the reflections presented in this study, based on the lived experiences, indicate the meanings of teaching and learning which were constituted into practices through the relationship with the others in the context of ongoing education, evidencing the possibilities of teacher and student transformation in the concrete social relationships. We highlight in this

article, having the project's data as reference, how some teachers were able to reconfigure their practices with students with disabilities, seeking actions which enabled the participation of everyone and including the teachers' collective in their own educational processes.

We could verify the need for bigger spaces of theoretical discussions and for work with typical school contents, a reality which often is impeded by the precarization of the teaching profession in the country. It is crucial for teachers to have the theoretical knowledge related to the development processes, so they can have more criticality and more support guiding their actions (in classrooms and in resource rooms).

Mello and Lugle (2014) confirm the necessity of every practice being underpinned by a theory which can provide the basis for the following questions: What is education for? How do children learn? In light of the historical-cultural theory and of the historical-critical psychology, we understand that education broadens everyday knowledge to a more elaborate, abstract, level: the scientific one. In relation to the second proposed question, we defend an increased centrality of the more elaborate and complex development processes, focusing mostly on the conceptual elaboration by the students, on the dynamics between everyday and scientific concepts, and on activities involving meanings and senses (Góes & Cruz, 2006), paying attention to the dialogical nature of language.

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