Case Study on Activities Developed for a Student with Autism in Elementary School[1]

Estudo de Caso sobre Atividades Desenvolvidas para um Aluno com Autismo no Ensino Fundamental I

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ABSTRACT: Research indicates the need for individualized work with specific strategies for students who are Target Population of Special Education (TPSE)[4] in the processes of inclusion in the common teaching network for the development of their learning. However, there are still few studies that present effective strategies for the effectiveness of these students' learning. Thus, this article intends to present activities offered to an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) student who attended the second grade of Elementary School in a private school of a medium-sized city located in the hinterland of the State of São Paulo, Brazil. An interview with the teacher was carried out and the materials offered to the student were analysed. Data analysis was qualitative and of exploratory nature, following categories established by the researchers. The results showed adaptations made by the teacher and the identification of student learning development during the school year, reinforcing the idea of a special procedure practice for the TPSE students through effective adaptations. The teacher did not give the student with ASD nor the rest of the class different activities, she offered him different conditions to learn. The work done can indicate ways to work with other TPSE students.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Education. Autism. Curriculum Adaptation.

RESUMO: pesquisas indicam a necessidade do trabalho individualizado com estratégias específicas aos alunos Público-alvo da Educação Especial (PAEE) nos processos de inclusão na rede comum de ensino para o desenvolvimento de suas aprendizagens. Entretanto, ainda são poucos os estudos que apresentam estratégias eficazes para efetivação das aprendizagens desses alunos. Dessa forma, este artigo tem como intuito apresentar atividades propostas para um aluno com Transtornos do Espectro Autista (TEA) que frequentou o segundo ano do Ensino Fundamental em uma escola na rede privada de ensino em uma cidade de médio porte do interior do Estado de São Paulo. Foi realizada uma entrevista com a professora e revisão dos materiais oferecidos para o aluno. A análise dos dados foi qualitativa e de natureza exploratória, seguindo categorias estabelecidas pelos pesquisadores. Os resultados mostraram adequações realizadas pela professora e a identificação do desenvolvimento da aprendizagem do aluno durante o ano letivo, reforçando-se a ideia da prática de procedimentos especiais aos alunos PAEE por meio de adequações eficazes. A professora não deixou o aluno com TEA com atividades diferentes de toda a turma, oferecendo a ele condições diversificadas para a aprendizagem. O trabalho realizado pode indicar caminhos para o trabalho com outros alunos PAEE.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inclusão Educacional. Autismo. Adaptação Curricular.

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[4] Note of translation: There seems to be no consensus on the translation of the term 'Público-alvo da Educação Especial' in Brazil. We have found, in different works: Special Education Target Audience, Target Audience of Special Education; Special Education Target-Audience; Target Audience Students of Special Education; Target Audience of Special Education Students; Special Education Target Public, among others. Despite 'audience' being a term broadly used in Brazil in translations, we have decided not to use this term as it may refer to the one who 'watches', going to the opposite idea of what is intended by Special Education. Thus, we have decided to translate the expression as Target Population of Special Education (TPSE), firstly to try to keep a translation more closely to the original. Secondly, we have opted for the term 'population' instead of 'public', due to what the term 'public' encompasses - people as a whole or people of a particular community. Whereas 'population' means a group of individuals, all people of a specific group, and mainly '[...] a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristic'. Retrieved February 15, 2018 (Available from University of Missouri-St Louis https://www.umsl.edu/~lindquists/sample.html).

1 Introduction

The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law[5] (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* - LDB (Lei n. 9.394, 1996), Chapter V establishes the offer of Special Education preferably in classes of the common education network and refers to the issue of curriculum for students who are Target Population of Special Education (TPSE), formerly referred to as students with special educational needs.

Regarding the issue of curriculum for the TPSE students in the common classrooms, the National Education Council established, in Resolution CNE/CEB No. 2, of September 11, 2001 (Secretaria de Educação Especial, 2001), the proposal of curricular flexibilizations and adaptations, instrumentalizing and leaving with practical meaning the basic contents, teaching methodologies, differentiated didactic resources and assessment processes related to the pedagogical project of the school. In addition, in 2015, the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (Lei n. 13.146, 2015) came into force. This law, in Article 3, refers to the development of universal design as a form of accessibility, this '[...] means the design of products, environments, programs and services to be used, as far as possible, by all people, without the need for adaptation or specific project' (Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos, 2007).

The idea of universal design, as a world trend, arises considering the need to develop a more comprehensive environment, with knowledge about the specificities of the people through a more comprehensive planning of spaces, exploring within architecture its purpose as a vehicle for social integration (Camisão, Pamplona, & Ades, 2004). In the school environment, for example, the lack of accessibility may hamper the development of student learning. For a TPSE student, according to Camisão et al. (2004), the lack of accessibility may, in most cases, prevent their access to learning, hence the development of the universal design.

In spite of the recent circulation of this new term (Universal Design), there is, in literature, research on the favorable adaptations to the individualized development of student learning (Diniz, 2013; Suplino, 2005; Serra, 2004). To Leite, Laura, and Martins (2013), the adaptations made in the curriculum can be understood as didactic-pedagogical strategies that reach the greatest number of differences. Thus, the authors argue that it is necessary to develop a teaching plan that contemplates the specificities of the students, respects the academic differences and their learning rhythms (Leite et al., 2013), providing and predicting, the organization of teaching and common classes considering the contents, the teaching methodology and the process of basic evaluations (Mesquita, 2010). In addition, pedagogical practice should be based on the valorization of these differences (Siems, 2008) and within the principles of individualization of teaching and learning processes (Denari, 2014).

In this way, it is fundamental to have an individual understanding of the student, to look at him/her as a unique person with his/her specific social learning. Vygotsky (1983) explains that disability comes not only from the biological but also from social factors, so that education must be based on special procedures. A biological limitation in itself, according to the author, does not bring about necessary impediments to the subject. What marks their

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[5] Note of translation: The translation used here was the same used in the document World data on Education, compiled by UNESCO. Retrieved February 10, 2018 (Available from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/WDE/2010/pdf-versions/Brazil.pdf).

disability is the social demand and, in this sense, different ways of proceeding the practices may minimize or maximize limitations. Special procedures are understood as those that consider the specificities of the student to organize an individualized teaching. In this way, it is possible to emphasize the importance of the development of strategies thought and created for the characteristics of each student, considering the differences among the pupils. If so, the person with disability will not be seen as someone with incapacities, but as an individual who needs special procedures in accordance with their needs.

However, according to Leite et al. (2013), research is still scarce with regard to the strategies for effective inclusive education, focusing primarily on the reflections and theoretical discussions that involve educational principles and education policies. Not many researches portray didactic-pedagogical experiences that promote curricular adjustments and/or forms of teaching flexibility.

Considering that students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are part of TPSE, Nunes, Azevedo, and Schimidt (2013) affirm that the educational practices adopted in schools of the common network have produced few effects in the learning of these students. De Vitta, De Vitta, and Monteiro (2010), in a dialogue with teachers of Early Childhood Education from different schools, concluded that the concept of disability for such professionals was associated with the concept of incapacity, difference and anomaly.

Neves, Antonelli, Silva, & Capellini (2014) analyzed 157 theses and dissertations, from January 1987 to December 2011, and verified that there is a restricted academic production by the Masters and Doctoral programs in the country on the formal schooling process and the curricular dimensions for students with ASD. The authors suggest the development of more researches that offer and confirm pedagogical strategies so that the student with ASD learns the contents in the formal educational spaces (Neves et al., 2014).

Thus, based on the need for individualized teaching, indicated in literature, and with the aim of presenting a reality of adequate practices, this study aimed to present the activities offered to a student with ASD of the second grade of Elementary School in a private educational network of a medium-sized city in the hinterland of the State of São Paulo, Brazil. The researched reality was identified by a researcher in a private setting. Those involved - teacher, coordinator, director, mother and the researcher herself, as a professional in the area of Special Education, who accompanied the child in external services, - reported that the curriculum was appropriate for the student and it was benefiting the development of the child's learning.

2 Method
2.1 Participant

Julia (fictitious name) was 44 years old, had a degree in Pedagogy, and, at the time of the research, had taught for 20 years, including eight years in the same school where the research was conducted. She was then a teacher in the second grade of Elementary School, of a class of 22 students, including one student with ASD and one with cerebral palsy. Working with a student with ASD, Paulo, in a regular classroom, was Julia's second experience with students with disabilities.

Paulo (fictitious name) was 10 years old and diagnosed with ASD. He had Pedagogy and Speech Therapy home care during the period he was not at school. In addition, he performed swimming and music lessons. He expressed himself and understood only short phrases, and he often needed gestures. Sometimes he appeared not to hear or understand simple instructions or requests. The child had been studying for two years at the school where the research was developed and was in the second grade of Elementary School. The classes were taught by teacher Julia, who had a classroom assistant who accompanied the teaching directed to students with disabilities, and also accompanied the students to the restroom and during school break. Paulo attended the Specialized Educational Service (SES) offered by the school, once a week in the period contrary to the common class.

2.2 Materials

For data collection, we used semi-structured interviews adapted from Ramos's study (2013) (see Appendix A) and observation of the materials used with the child with ASD and the researcher's records.

2.3 Delineation

This research aimed to provide more contact with the problem of curricular adaptation, in order to make it more explicit or to construct hypotheses (Silveira & Cordova, 2009). Thus, an interview with a professional who had practical experience with the problem researched and analysis of examples that stimulated the understanding were conducted (Silveira & Cordova, 2009).

The methodological basis adopted in this research was qualitative, of an exploratory nature. We chose to delineate a case study aimed at studying a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2015). The teacher presented to the researcher the activities developed with the student with ASD. The main unit of analysis was the specific teaching strategies used with the student for individualized work.

2.4 Data collection procedure

After compliance with the ethical aspects and approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of São Carlos[6], the data collection started. Initially, the researcher contacted the school official to present the research proposal. With the authorization of the school, the interview with the teacher was scheduled so she could answer the questions and present the materials to the researcher. Before the interview and presentation of the materials, the teacher signed the Free and Informed Consent Form and the Authorization Form necessary for the investigation. A semi-structured interview was carried out, observation of the materials presented by the teacher, besides the written accounts and photograph recording made by the researcher.

The participant was interviewed in person at the school where she works. The interview, previously scheduled without disturbing her activities, lasted for one hour and

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6 Research approved under the Consent No. 1.680.608.

enabled analysis of the activities developed by the teacher in relation to teaching a student with ASD in her classroom. In order to facilitate the interview and to make it more dynamic, the whole interview was recorded and transcribed later.

At the end of the interview, a new meeting was scheduled to present the documents with the activities proposed for the student with ASD. The observation of the materials counted on the researcher's accounts, as well as photos and photocopies for further analysis. The meeting for the observation of materials lasted for an hour. The teacher was asked to present the activities developed by the student with ASD in the classroom and at home (notebook, textbook, handouts, among others), teacher's lesson plan (content, objective, development, assessment), tests and works developed by the student, among others.

2.5 Data analysis procedure

The analysis of the collected materials was developed in a qualitative way, in order to gather detailed and illustrative information to produce new information (Silveira & Córdova, 2009). The interview was transcribed from the recorded audio and categorized into themes defined by the researchers. From the transcription and analysis of the semi-structured interview and analysis of the materials made available by the teacher, the researchers indicated the categories described in this article. The categories were highlighted in the teacher's statements based on similar subjects. For example, all the statements and activities presented in relation to the learning of the student with ASD were grouped, regardless of when they were mentioned during the interview. All categories are presented in topics with descriptions of Julia's statements, description of examples of activities and analyzes of the researcher according to the literature. The statements cited in this article have been transcribed in a literal way, except for the name of the student that was changed to a fictitious name - Paulo.

3 Results and discussions
3.1 Working with the student with ASD in the inclusive context

At the beginning of the interview, as described in the following excerpt, Julia mentioned that she felt anxious about teaching the student with ASD at the beginning of the semester, wondering what this teaching would be like, because, according to her, Paulo was different from the other students.

> With regard to ... Paulo [...]. At first it generates a certain anxiety. Because it's ... how am I going to work too, right? ... I keep wondering. How to do it? Because it's out of what we have of normality, that rhythm that you enter the classroom, you give your content and the child learns. In Paulo's case, it requires more attention and this attention is what I worry about, in the sense of looking for something that makes sense to him. (Interview granted by Julia).

The teacher's statement revealed, at first, a mostly biological look at the issue of disability. That is, even without knowing the student well, she had an image of him as someone who would have difficulties to learn. This conclusion was conceived from the physical/biological aspects of the student, characterized with disability in comparison to the others that have different characteristics or, still, guided by the medical report.

Regarding this issue, Vygotsky (1983) clarifies that, when one assumes a biological view, people are characterized as 'disabled' from some physical change that makes them different from the majority. However, the author clarifies that the physical change will not necessarily damage the development of the person. Vygotsky (1983) also states that what is most important is how society reacts to this change and what demands it makes on this subject. Thus, rather than considering the environment as a factor for the display of disability, most people consider the physical change itself as a determinant of disability. This may be why Julia has shown anxiety before teaching, since the diagnosis of ASD (biological alteration) would define that the student would have learning difficulties. Vygotsky (1983) explains that disability does not come only from the biological character, but also from the social environment. Thus, the author defends the need for an education based on special procedures that can collaborate to the subject's development.

In relation to the teaching procedures, the teacher also expressed, in her testimony, the conception of a homogeneous teaching, considering that, in a classroom without students with disabilities, their task would be only to administer the content and the children would learn. With Paulo's presence, more attention would be needed, since he was different from most. According to Vygotsky (1983), from the perspective of the biological view, disability is seen as something bad, since the person has an incompetence. This view is about the person and not about the environment in which he/she is embedded. With regard to Julia's students, Paulo would be incompetent compared to the homogeneous learning of others, thus requiring more attention.

Similar to the teacher's speech, teachers from Early Childhood Education from different schools revealed that their concept of disability was associated with the concept of incapacity, difference and anomaly, as something that defines the child and as if it were inescapable (De Vitta et al., 2010).

3.2 LEARNING OF STUDENT WITH ASD

Julia realized in the course of her activities and interaction with other students that Paulo was also learning, but, what concerns him, teaching should be more focused.

> The part of the interaction with the friends, the social part, Paulo seemed to be closer and closer to his friends, more and more interested in doing the practical classes. Then, as I saw a response from him, involved in the situation, for me Paulo was sharing the same situations and learning. I had this view. But then I began to realize, that he really needed to be more focused (Interview granted by Julia).

Regarding Julia's statement, we can draw from Vygotsky (1983) his description of an education based on special procedures. During the activities carried out in the classroom, the teacher realized that the student with ASD was learning, despite her initial concept, that is, that the student with a disability does not learn. From this perception, she identified a specific profile of this student and realized the need for a more focused teaching.

De Vitta et al. (2010) show similar information regarding the teachers' notion of the feasibility of a humanitarian education rather than an education focused on the actual school

content. In other words, it is when the learning of the student with disability focuses only on social development, the contact with the other students without disabilities, leaving aside the main development that a school offers that are the academic contents. Julia reveals this way of thinking in her speech. Initially, she had a more humanitarian view, believing that social contact activities with the other students were enough for Paulo. However, she came to the conclusion that her student with ASD could also learn, being able to carry out an education in a broad sense, not only socialization.

> [...] it is ... more focused on the issue of literacy, the issue of Mathematics, even in Science, History and Geography. And then I started to see it in a different way. At first, I would give to Paulo, I think, challenges he could not solve, right? It was like this, beyond expectations. But it's because I did not know Paulo. So I created some situations, right? (Interview granted by Julia).

In the statements of the teacher, the need for an initial survey for the development of teaching and learning was clear, in order to know what the student already knew, what his skills and difficulties were. Vygotsky (1983) states that it is necessary to know the person's access to learning to develop an education of quality. In this way, teaching can start from the person's abilities and, then, emphasize the development of new skills.

From the last excerpt from the interview presented, we can see that Julia, over time, and with more contact with the student, came to consider him as an apprentice, just as Vygotsky (1983) points out. The author states that students with disabilities should be put in the place of apprentices as well as students without disabilities so that their development can occur. In addition, it is essential to use a specific method, procedure and techniques for this teaching, always considering the characteristics and needs of the student, which is described in the following category: special procedures.

3.3 EDUCATION BASED ON SPECIAL PROCEDURES

> So, from the moment I started to teach him and get to know Paulo a little, I could understand. So, what came to my mind? I need to help Paulo. In what sense?... every time I prepare something, some activity, it doesn't matter how simple the activity is, I think: when Paulo grows up [...], is he going to use this? Where? What is the meaning of this activity for Paulo when he gets older? (Interview granted by Julia).

From the moment the teacher became better acquainted with Paulo, with his specificities and abilities, she began to think about and prepare a class whereby the content was meaningful and reached his path of access. Thus, when Julia saw Paulo as an apprentice, she began to build the activities aimed towards his learning. At the same time, she left behind the biological view of disability and looked at the social construction in favor of the student.

> But I ask myself in that sense, when Paulo is older, when he grows up, will this be useful? That's where I start to prepare the class. (Interview granted by Julia).

From this view of an education based on special procedures, Julia described how she organized the preparation of each of the subjects to be worked with Paulo. She said that she developed activities following the same structure both for the activities and assessment in the

classroom and for the tasks to be done at home. She used the same instruction just changing the alternatives, images or words. Such strategies provided a basis for the student, since he knew exactly what the teacher expected from him with that activity. The way of presenting the instruction of the activity was fundamental, because certain ways made the activity more difficult for the student to analyze what was expected from him. The new way of organizing the set of activities favored a minor anxiety of the student, so that he could express himself and respond better to what was requested.

Next, there are some specific descriptions according to the subjects mentioned by the teacher. Julia began by explaining how she intended to teach reading and writing to Paulo:

> So Paulo needs to learn to read and write. When I think about the issue of [...] text ... Although I know that variety, the genre are many, but Paulo will have contact with these texts. He will have contact with the comic, he will have contact with the narrative, he will have contact with the poem ... as he grows up, he will know these texts. ... at first, is he going to use them all? Now, at the age he is? No! But he will have contact with this and other texts more, because we have the internet, TV. (Interview granted by Julia).

> So, how to work that? First, though it does not make sense to Paulo, what a poem is, what a short story is, at this point, work out the differentiation through reading. Without specifying: this is a poem ... the poem is written in verse [...]. This for Paulo is not useful now, but reading these texts, yes. (Interview granted by Julia).

We can relate Julia's testimony about offering texts with no emphasis on conceptualization or typology, such as giving opportunities for Paulo to know and get in touch with reading. According to Góes (1995, p. 77), '[...] everyday conceptions of children remain for a long time non-reflexive or non-conscious because the attention of the child is in the object to which the concept refers and not in the very act of conceptualizing the object'. Thus, the teacher might think that this was an impossible activity to develop with Paulo because of his difficulty in conceptualizing types of texts, but, instead, she used the same subject with all students and it taught Paulo what he needed to learn, reading.

Far from the teacher's initial biological view in relation to Paulo, after getting to know him better, she developed reading and writing activities with him, believing in his potential. Lacerda (2008) points out that it was believed that children who did not speak or who had very poor communication were not able to learn how to read and write. As Paulo presented an unintelligible speech, if compared to the other students, the teacher could not put him in a situation of apprentice, believing in the dependence of a well articulated speech for learning how to write. Instead, she realized that there was literacy potential in him and she invested in that direction.

> And in Portuguese, now, everything I do is related to reading, I always sit Paulo next to me. Let's read this sentence? Let's read that word? So he is always reading something with me, daily, or on the blackboard or in the notebook. Because I think this is reinforcement, you know? [...]. He can read and write. But I think this reinforcement is needed, this essay issue, right? To write, to repeat. What is that? He speaks, he asks. Write! He asks me to write, right? So, that's why it gives me the impression that I have to reinforce the whole time, always reinforcing. Although we have a gigantic vocabulary, but I think all the words he writes and speaks are valid, right, to reinforce this vocabulary, this reading. (Interview granted by Julia).

When the teacher talked about repetition and reinforcement of what the student has already learned, she referred to something important about teaching people with disabilities. It refers to the fact that there are no recipes and scripts on how to teach people with disabilities, according to her comment, but that some tips can be given, such as the procedures already described in this category, among them, the effectiveness of repetition. However, pedagogical practice cannot be summed up to this strategy, it is necessary to create different learning situations and require varied things from the student.

Also in Mathematics Julia organized a content with special and meaningful procedures for Paulo. One of the examples was when she developed the activity of 'Game 21' with the class. The proposal was for students to do various activities with math calculations that resulted in number 21. For Paulo, Julia used the keywords that were known to the student – 'equal' and 'different'. The teacher showed cards with different numbers and asked the student to say whether the written numeral was the same or different from number 21. The activities developed for the other students might not be exactly the same as those directed toward Paulo's learning, but, regardless of this, the teacher followed the same subject and adapted the content with special procedures for Paulo, according to his needs and learning possibilities. She set up a unique activity - Game 21 - and explored, within the game, different aspects for different students. In Paulo's case, something was required from him that made sense and what he could accomplish. From the other students, other knowledge was required according to the development of each one.

Besides the adequacy mentioned previously, the teacher also made adjustments that seemed simple, but that were significant for the student. For example, the teacher spelled out some words from the instructions expressed in the textbook and wrote some numerals to help him come up with the solution. In the instruction of exercise one (See the cards that John received at the beginning of the game 'Twenty-One'), the teacher emphasized the words 'John received', 'game' and 'twenty-one'. The words facilitated the focus for the student to solve the problem. As well as this, she wrote the operation in pencil below the cards for Paulo to solve.

In another activity of the textbook (which the teacher identified as not having sufficient space for the response in the exercise and that the activities did not contain objective instructions as Paulo needed), the teacher attached a sheet on the same sheet of the textbook so that he could carry out the activity, with more objective instructions and with more space to perform the math calculations. Odom, Collet-Klingenberg, Rogers, & Hatton (2010) developed a literature review to identify evidence-based practices for students with ASD and found 24 practices with relevance according to the established criteria. One of the practices is visual support, a tool that allows a student to independently follow events and activities, described by the authors as 'focused intervention practices', individual teaching practices that teachers use to develop skills and concepts for children with ASD. Julia presented, through an instruction accessible to the student, on an attached sheet, an evidence-based practice, with the development of a specific strategy for the educational development of the student. She used visual support for the student to follow up and complete the activity independently. As the activity presented earlier, this appropriateness may also seem simple, but it offered Paulo conditions to perform similar activities, with the same content given to all students, as expressed in two of the teacher's statements:

Speak, no, I'm going to put Paulo to make calculations, isolated, separated. I cannot do this with Paulo. I think he needs to be together. (Interview granted by Julia)

In History, Geography and Science, in the same way, I read the text with him in the textbook. Yeah, there are things I know that do not make any sense to him [...], he has an understanding of that and from that point on I observe what will be good for Paulo, what he will take advantage of and, then, I move to the notebook to do a more separated activity (Interview granted by Julia).

Julia described how she developed her activities with Paulo, always thinking of alternatives for his effective and meaningful learning. Despite these practices aiming at greater pedagogical adequacy, she still questioned her practice. She said that, as there was no recipe or script to follow, she felt insecure about the effectiveness of her work.

[...] is it correct what I'm doing? In that sense of adapting? Because, as we adapt, we end up taking phrases, eliminating things [...]. In the case of Science, that's where I get more in doubt. In Portuguese, in Mathematics, I think I feel more secure in adapting. In Science I sometimes have doubts, so if I'm teaching him a definition, even though it's simple, I try not to distort it for him. Am I distorting it? (Interview granted by Julia).

Even uncertain about her practice, she did not fail to prepare activities with specific procedures for Paulo and to look at his teaching needs. It is of great importance to highlight this continuity of work even when dealing with doubts and insecurities. In fact, there is no script or recipe to follow regarding adaptations for students with disabilities because each student is different and needs specific procedures. What exists is to believe that the student can learn independently of his/her characteristics. Thus, it is up to the teacher to offer conditions and opportunities for this to occur, just as he/she does for students without disabilities (Vygotsky, 1983).

In Science, as we worked on animals, I tried to work with Paulo, [...] closer to Paulo's reality. I always looked for something related to his experience. (Interview granted by Julia).

The teacher's statement is related to the aspects theorized by Vygotsky (1991) when he addresses the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the Zone of Real Development (ZRD). ZRD refers to what the child learned and performed independently. The ZPD '[...] will be the actual level of development tomorrow - that is, what a child can do with assistance today, he/she will be able to do it by him/herself tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1991, p. 98). When working with the reality of the child, starting from their experience, the teacher offered new opportunities for learning.

In another activity of the textbook, the teacher made a different type of adaptation that was very significant and simple, demonstrating that, for effective adaptation, many materials are often not necessary, but rather look at the student's needs. In an instruction of the activity of the textbook, the teacher changed a word, searching for words that the student already knew, according to his ZRD, offering facilitated instruction to teach new contents, that is, acting in his ZPD.

Another adaptation made by Julia in order to approximate the instruction of the student's reality was the alteration of the following question in the textbook: 'Does the same happen with the *vegetais* (vegetable kingdom)?'. The word '*vegetais*' was not known by Paulo; that way, the teacher used another word present in his repertoire – '*plantas*' (plants). Above the unknown word, the teacher wrote the word '*plantas*'. In this way, she received a response from the student once he understood the instruction given. This does not mean that he cannot learn new words, or he does not know the word '*vegetais*'. The main point is that the teacher, at that moment, prioritized his knowledge about the subject studied, the relation '*luz solar e plantas*' (sunlight and plants), and could explore the concept of vegetables at a more appropriate time.

For a History activity, the teacher also developed an effective adaptation. The topic worked on was schools in different parts of the world. When she thought about working on the reality of the student, knowing that the knowledge of the world dimension would be very complex for him at that time, the teacher worked with him on the issue of differences, initially referring to the various spaces of the school itself. Paulo walked around the school and registered the names of the spaces, among them, library, cafeteria, classroom. With this adaptation, the student followed the topic that was being worked on with the whole class, participating effectively.

3.4 Experience of adaptation practices

At the end of the interview, the teacher was asked about her practice prior to the contact with Paulo and if she had already developed some adaptation strategies previously with other students with or without disabilities. In response, Julia mentioned that she had used adaptations for teaching Mathematics and Portuguese for students with learning difficulties, however, for Paulo, the adaptations were broader, covering all subjects.

The participant stated that she noticed the learning development of the student during the school year, reinforcing the idea of the practice of special procedures with Paulo due to effective adaptations. Julia did not give Paulo and the whole class different activities, but she offered conditions for him to learn with minor changes within the activities. This is one of many practices that teachers develop with their students and, unfortunately, are little known or disseminated. When thinking about that, this work sought to show teaching alternatives to students with ASD. It should be emphasized that these were specific adaptations for this student, but they could serve as an inspiration and suggestions to be adapted for other students.

4 Conclusion

Aiming to present activities offered to a student with ASD of the second grade of Elementary School in a private school in a medium-sized city in the hinterland of the State of São Paulo, Brazil, we considered it pertinent to report a case of success observed in practice. With the results obtained in this research, we can indicate that by looking at students individually, a more organized and effective teaching was made possible.

When the characteristics of the student are known, a special procedure can be elaborated for the development of new skills. We considered it pertinent to indicate that this

process was not something previously programmed, but constructed on a daily basis with the student. It is also worth noting that Julia's work revealed the potential for teachers to act, as it was possible to identify her insecurity in the face of an unknown demand - besides the disability of students, and other difficulties that permeate the teacher's performance – and to point out that success in this inclusive process is necessary.

Finally, future research may investigate other realities in order to identify and present successful inclusion processes. We hope that the results obtained from this research serve to indicate the possibility of successful practices; however, more studies are needed to extend this knowledge and reflections on it.

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APPENDIX A - SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Identification:
Name:
Age:
Education:
Role in school:
Number of years teaching:
Work experience with students with ASD:

Describe the student with ASD:

Main questions:
1) How is it for you to be a teacher of a student with ASD included in this common education context?

- From the selection of three contents worked on with the student with ASD in the first semester of 2016 (including: preparation, development and assessment), answer:

2) How do you prepare, develop, and evaluate content for your student with ASD in this context?

3) What strategies and didactic resources do you use in the preparation and development of the pedagogical contents of your student with ASD? What are the challenges/difficulties faced?

4) Before, when you did not work with a student with ASD, how did you prepare the pedagogical content for your students?