DOSSIÊ

Educação Especial: diferenças, currículo e processos de ensino e aprendizagem

arquivos analíticos de políticas educativas

Revista acadêmica, avaliada por pares, independente, de acesso aberto, e multilíngüe



Volume 22 Number 81

August 11th, 2014

ISSN 1068-2341

The Schooling of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Brazil: Institutionalization of Inclusion Policies (1973-2013)

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Citation: Pletsch, M. D. (2014). The schooling of people with intellectual disabilities in Brazil: Institutionalization of inclusion policies (1973-2013). Translated version. Originally published as: Pletsch, M. D. (2014). A escolarização de pessoas com deficiência intelectual no Brasil: da institucionalização às políticas de inclusão (1973-2013). Arquivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas, 22 (81). Dossiê Educação Especial: diferenças, currículo e processos de ensino e aprendizagem. Editoras convidadas: Márcia Denise Pletsch & Geovana Mendonça Lunardi Mendes. http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v22n81.2014

Abstract: This article discusses the schooling of people with intellectual disabilities in Brazil during 1973-2013. This study analyzed federal documents and data from ethnographic studies conducted in municipalities of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Data from the study were then compared with statistical data and trends presented in the scientific literature. This article focuses primarily on three dimensions. The first dimension is the historical dispute over the *locus* of schooling for people with intellectual disabilities, between segregationist perspectives advanced by philanthropic-private initiatives and inclusive perspectives advanced by the public sector (increasingly focused on principles of inclusion since the 1990s). The second dimension refers to the lack of clear guidelines about the curricular practices to be developed by school systems to ensure the development of students, especially those considered severely intellectually disabled. The third dimension analyzes

Página web: http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/

Facebook: /EPAAA Twitter: @epaa_aape Manuscript received: 16/02/2014 Revisions received: 7/04/2014 Accepted: 12/05/2014 problems of pedagogical support, particularly in Specialized Educational Services (AEE), as current federal law requires. The results call attention to historically-constructed contradictions in the arena of political disputes in the country and the fragility of the public system in providing conditions for the identification and promotion of educational practices promoting learning and development for people with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: intellectual disabilities; school inclusion policies; curriculum practices; specialized pedagogical support.

La educación de las personas con discapacidad intelectual en Brasil: institucionalización de las políticas de inclusión (1973-2013)

Resumen: El artículo aborda cuestiones de enseñanza-aprendizaje de personas con discapacidad intelectual en Brasil en el período 1973-2013. Metodológicamente fueron analizados documentos y datos oficiales del gobierno, correspondientes a estudios etnográficos realizados en diferentes ciudades del estado de Río de Janeiro/Brasil, los cuales se compararon con los indicadores estadísticos y la literatura producida en cada época del período en cuestión. El texto discute, entre otros aspectos, principalmente tres dimensiones. La primera se refiere a las disputas sobre el lugar de escolarización de estas personas, entabladas históricamente entre las iniciativas filantrópicas y privadas (en su mayoría segregacionista) y públicas (progresivamente centradas en principios de inclusión a partir de la década de los 90). La segunda se refiere a la ausencia de directrices claras sobre prácticas curriculares a ser adoptadas por los sistemas escolares para garantizar el desarrollo de los estudiantes, especialmente aquellos con acentuado nivel de discapacidad intelectual. En la tercera dimensión se analizan los problemas de apoyo pedagógico, especialmente en lo que se refiere a los servicios de Atención Educacional Especializada (AEE), conforme determina la ley federal vigente. En resumen, los resultados indican, entre otras cosas, las contradicciones históricamente construidas en el escenario de los conflictos políticos del país. También revelan la fragilidad del sistema público de enseñanza en proporcionar condiciones para la identificación y la promoción de prácticas educativas con apoyo pedagógico, cuando sea necesario, para promover el aprendizaje y el desarrollo de esta población.

Palabras clave: discapacidad intelectual; políticas de inclusión escolar; prácticas curriculares; apoyo pedagógico especializado.

A escolarização de pessoas com deficiência intelectual no Brasil: da institucionalização às políticas de inclusão (1973-2013)

Resumo: O artigo discute a escolarização de pessoas com deficiência intelectual no Brasil no período de 1973 a 2013. Metodologicamente foram analisados documentos federais e dados de estudos etnográficos desenvolvidos em diferentes municípios do estado do Rio de Janeiro/Brasil, os quais foram cotejados com indicadores estatísticos e a literatura especializada produzida em cada época. O texto problematiza, entre outros aspectos, prioritariamente três dimensões. A primeira diz respeito às disputas pelo *lócus* de escolarização dessas pessoas travadas historicamente entre iniciativas de cunho filantrópico-privadas (majoritariamente segregacionistas) e públicas (focadas crescentemente em princípios inclusionistas a partir dos anos 1990). A segunda se refere à falta de diretrizes claras sobre as práticas curriculares a serem desenvolvidas pelos sistemas de ensino para garantir o desenvolvimento dos alunos, sobretudo daqueles considerados deficientes intelectuais graves. A terceira dimensão discorre sobre os problemas do suporte pedagógico, especialmente no Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE), conforme prevê a legislação federal atualmente. Em síntese, os resultados indicam, entre outros aspectos, as contradições historicamente construídas na arena das disputas políticas no país. Igualmente revelam a fragilidade do sistema público para

oferecer condições de identificação e promoção de práticas educativas, com suporte pedagógico, quando necessário, para a aprendizagem e desenvolvimento dessa população.

Palavras-chave: deficiência intelectual; políticas de inclusão escolar; práticas curriculares; suporte pedagógico especializado.

Introduction¹

The effects of an education law, like any other law, will differ, depending on whether or not it belongs to a general plan of reforms. (...) The application of a law depends on the existing infrastructure conditions. [The application depends on] the adaptation of the objectives and the content of the law to the real needs of the social context to which it applies. Thus, the effectiveness of a law depends on the men who apply it (Romanelli, 2010, p. 185).

[Guaranteeing] the full development of human potential and the sense of dignity and self-esteem, as well as the strengthening of respect for human rights, for fundamental rights, and for human diversity; the maximum development possible of personality, of the talents and the creativity of persons with disability, as well as their physical and intellectual abilities; the effective participation of people with disabilities in a free society (Brasil, 2008, p. 28).

This article discusses the education of disabled persons, with an emphasis on intellectual disability, in the period 1973 - 2013. We analyze federal documents and empirical data obtained from research carried out since 2009 in different teaching networks in the *Baixada Fluminense* region in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This region has a population of approximately four million inhabitants, consists of thirteen municipalities, and is characterized by numerous social and educational problems, low Human Development Indices (HDI), precariousness in health and public transport services, and urban violence. These and other problems are common in the large Brazilian metropoles (Pletsch, 2012, 2014).

In methodological terms, we will use ethnographical assumptions as they allow an immersion in the field through the use of different data collection procedures, such as participant observation (field diary entries), semi-structured interviews (audio recordings), and video images (recording of pedagogical practices in different school contexts). These procedures allowed knowledge of the research field to be obtained, the detailed description of practices, and the interpretation of the actions and relations of the social actors belonging to the investigated group (Pletsch & Rocha, 2014). The data was collated with the specialized literature and quantitative indicators produced by federal agencies, such as *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (INEP – Anísio Teixeira Institute of Educational Studies and Research), *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) and *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* (IPEA – Institute of Applied Economic Research).

Based on these considerations, we believe that the teaching of people with intellectual disabilities and the actual creation and institutionalization of Special Education in Brazil need to be analyzed in a manner that is connected to the more general social, economic, and political changes

¹ This article presents results of projects financed by FAPERJ (Fundação de Ampara à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and 0OBEDUC/CAPES (Programa Observatório da Educação da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior).

which Brazil is undergoing.² Another aspect that needs to be emphasized refers to the different categories historically used to denominate people with intellectual disabilities, including weak, exceptional, retarded, mentally deficient, and currently intellectually disabled (deficient in the original Portuguese). It is outside the scope of this article to analyze the epistemological effects of these changes on curricular practices and the public policies aimed at this social group. Furthermore, like Jannuzzi (1985), we believe that the change from one term to another temporarily softens its pejorative connotation, but does not necessarily result in concrete changes or improvements in the living conditions and education of these people. In this article the terms intellectual disability will be used, due to the changes proposed by the *American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (AAIDD, 2010) and the fact that it appears predominantly in recent federal documents. However, we will respect the nomenclature originally used in the documents and the quotations from the authors with whom we dialogue.³

The Institutionalization of Special Education Until the 1990s

In Brazil the understanding of current educational policies for persons with intellectual disabilities cannot be detached from the understanding of Brazilian education history in general. From the 1930s on, and more intensely after the 1950s, the gradual expansion of education was closely linked to industrialization and the economic development of the country. Until that moment the immense majority of the population had no access to schools and lived in a rural environment. In this period many people with intellectual disabilities went unnoticed, since they worked in manual activities or agriculture, where the ability to read or write were not needed.

The official institutionalization of Special Education occurred in 1973, during the military dictatorship, with the creation of *Centro Nacional de Educação Especial* (CENESP – National Center for Special Education) and its Basic Guidelines (Brasil, 1974). In the 1980s CENESP was renamed the Secretariat of Special Education (*Secretaria de Educação Especial* - SESPE), which was abolished in 1990, during the administration of Fernando Collor de Mello. In 1992, after the latter had left the presidency, it was renamed again the Secretariat of Special Education. In 2011 it was again abolished, when its actions were taken over by a *coordenadoria* (office) within the Secretariat of Continuous Education, Literacy, Diversity, and Inclusion (*Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão* - SECADI).

Until the creation of CENESP few official initiatives had been organized to effectively meet the demands of people with intellectual disabilities. CENESPs aim was to coordinate specific education policies for people with disabilities. Its creation was an important landmark, since it marked the beginning of more systematic actions aimed at improving and expanding education assistance offered to these individuals in state education departments. On the other hand, there were insufficient places and the services provided functioned as a parallel service to general education, in which the students who could not adapt to the regular system remained segregated, mostly in private institutions (Brasil, 1974). Also in relation to CENESP, it is important to highlight that its implementation — as well as the reform of primary and secondary education, university reform and vocational courses in second level education — had a strong US influence, as it was advised by

² In relation to the history of Special Education there is a vast literature, see, Jannuzzi (1985, 2004), Mazzotta (1987, 2005), Bueno (2004), Lobo (2008); Mendes (2010), Rafante (2011) and Kassar (1999, 2004, 2013).

³ Veltrone (2011) discusses the impacts of the change of nomenclature from mental disability to intellectual disability.

⁴ To understand the context of the creation of CENESP we suggest the reading of Mendes (2010).

specialists from the United States Agency for International Development, as part of the MEC/USAID accords (Kassar, 2013). Indeed, the first attempts to train special education teachers, which were carried out abroad, especially in the United States, were based on these accords.

According to Glat and Blanco (2007), it was in this period that Special Education "broke away" from the medical model and adopted an educational one, absorbing the psychology of learning, which stopped emphasizing the deficiency of the individual in favor of environmental conditions and the resources used for the development and learning of the subject. It is interesting to note that the doctors were the first professionals to call attention to the need for the education of disabled people, most of whom had previously been interned in mental/psychiatric hospitals (Jannuzzi, 1985; Glat & Blanco, 2007). Perhaps for this reason, the clinical concept of disability is still impregnated in culture and in school practices, particularly in relation to the education of students with intellectual disability.

It is worth mentioning that before the creation of CENESP, there were some pioneering initiatives, such as the creation during the imperial period of the Imperial Institute for Blind Boys (Imperial Instituto dos Meninos Cegos now the Instituto Benjamin Constant - IBC) and the Imperial Institute of the Deaf and Dumb (Imperial Instituto dos Surdos-Mudos, currently the National Education Institute for the Deaf Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos, INES), in 1854 and 1857 respectively, to meet the interests of the royal family. Unfortunately, these initiatives were isolated acts, since there was no legislation and/or directives for education in the country. Furthermore, their scope was very limited. In 1874 there were only 35 blind students and 17 deaf ones out of a population of 15,848 blind people and 11,959 deaf (Jannuzzi, 1985).

During the first decades of the republic little changed in terms of access to education, since the Brazilian economy, still primarily based on agro-exports, did not require a skilled labor force. Moreover, some Brazilian states excused students from having to attend school as they lived too far from the school, were poor, and/or were considered as sick or disabled (Pletsch, 2010). In the 1934 Constitution it was stipulated that education was the responsibility of the state, which had to establish the national directives. This position was repeated in the 1937 Constitution. In the 1946 Constitution education was recognized for the first time as a *universal right*. In this period, based on the precepts of evolutionist thought and liberalism, the first special education classes were created under the supervision of public health inspectorate to separate the "normal" from the "abnormal." Their aim was to socially homogenize classes in accordance with a strict European organicist concept of disability (Jannuzzi, 1985). Also deserving of attention in relation to this period is the 1961 Education Law, known in Portuguese as the Lei e Diretrizes de Bases da Educação (Law no. 4024), which included a specific article about the education of 'exceptional children' (the term at that time). This article recommended that education of these students should occur, when possible, in the general education system (art. 88), as well as allowing public funds for private institutions providing education for disabled persons (art. 89).

Something else that should be mentioned are the campaigns aimed at specific types of disability, such as, for example, the national education campaign for deaf Brazilians (1957) and the national education campaign for the "mentally disabled" (1960). These actions were organized with the support of philanthropic institutions to obtain educational and social rights for disabled people. One of the principal factors which contributed to these campaigns was the holding of four Exceptional Childhood Seminars, organized by the Pestalozzi Society, founded in Minas Gerais in the 1930s by Helena Antipoff (Rafante, 2011). The creation of other associations also should be noted, such as the Association of Parents and Friends of Exceptional Persons (Associação de Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais (APAE)⁵ in Rio de Janeiro (1954), which, like Pestalozzi, rapidly expanded

⁵ Created based on the National Association for Retarded Children in the United States.

throughout Brazil, leading to the establishment of the National Federation of Associations of Parents and Friends of Exceptional Persons (Federação Nacional das Associações dos Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais, 1963) and the National Federation of the Pestalozzi Society Federação Nacional da Sociedade Pestalozzi - FENASP, 1971). Furthermore, the Russian Helena Antipoff — whose methods were based on education she received in Europe under the guidance of Claparéde — came to Brazil in 1929 at the invitation of the Minas Gerais government to work in the Advanced Pedagogical School (Escola de Aperfeiçoamento Pedagógico) (Senna et al, 2009; Rafante, 2011; Kassar, 2013). According to these authors, Helena Antipoff's participation in the foundation of the Pestalozzi Institute influenced Special Education all over the country.

In other words, the emergence of these entities had a decisive role in the creation of Special Education in Brazil, often "being confused with a public service in the eyes of the population, as some services were free" (Kassar, 2013, p. 46). The creation of these institutions resulted from the omission of the state to guarantee the social and education rights of these people, forcing their families to use philanthropic care institutions. In other words, Special Education in Brazil was formed through the creation of private institutions, which provided services subsidized by public resources (Pletsch, 2010). This is what Jannuzzi (2004) calls the partial symbiosis between the public and private, which in turn ends up influencing the definition of public policies for these areas. Currently, although policies for the target public of Special Education prioritize public education, these institutions have been strengthened by the establishment of "partnerships" with the state. Political disputes are constant, as will be seen below.

During the 1970s, pro-integration and normalization movements started at the national level, with the basic premise that every disabled person had the right to enjoy the most common or normal living conditions possible. In general terms, the integration advocated involved the prior preparation of students with special education needs so that they would be able to keep up with regular classes, with parallel specialized support. In other words, the proposed integration continued to be based on the medical model of disability, which centered the problem on students and exempted the school from responsibility, which only had to educate the students who were able to accompany regular activities conceived without any concern with the specifities of students with special education needs (Bueno, 2001; Mendes, 2003; Glat & Blanco, 2007; Pletsch, 2010; Kassar, 2013).

Based on the proposals coming from these movements, there was a growth in Brazil of workshops in which the disabled, especially the mentally disabled (the term used at that time), were prepared for the labor market for their later "integration" in society. Jannuzzi (2004) explains that in these workshops specific manual tasks were taught, to a great extent repetitive and with a low economic value. The labor directives in the workshops were described in a document entitled "Training the mentally disabled for the labor market" (Brasil, 1979), prepared in a partnership between CENESP and the Association of Parents and Friends of Exception Persons (APAE) of São Paulo. The vocational proposal was contained in the provisions of Priority Project no. 35, which stated, "how much cheaper it would be educate a retarded child than to sustain him throughout his existence. Educating him allows him to become useful and to contribute to society, increasing family income" (apud Jannuzzi, 2004, p. 179). In other words, this focus intended to make people independent, especially financially, even if in low-paying employment, to reduce the expenditure of the state. According to Souza (2013) this shows that education was provided based on the "human capital" theory.⁷

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⁶ It is worth noting that in 1926 the Pestalozzi Institute was created in Rio Grande do Sul, the first private institution specialized in caring for mentally disabled children (Jannuzzi, 1985).

⁷ In relation to the Human Capital theory, we suggest the reading of Frigotto (1984).

In special schools and classes curricular practices were governed by Federal Law no. 5692, dated 1971, which recommended special treatment for students with mental or physical disabilities, as well as "those who were considerably behind their regular age group in school and gifted students" (article 9). Similarly, the curriculum offered was considered "special" because it translated teaching objectives, content, methods, and materials adjusted to the needs of disabled students. CENESP defined directives in the "Proposed curriculum for educable mental disabled," which assessed and planned pedagogical actions based on the IQ results of students, according to AAMD, in accordance with the following table.

Table 1
Disability Levels and Education

Levels (AAMD)	IQ Limits	Schooling
Light	52-68	Educable
Moderate	36-51	Trainable
Severe	20-35	Trainable for profound
Profound	?-19	Profound

Source: Mazzotta (1987, p. 22).

It is worth noting that the intelligence quotient (IQ), created in 1916, is the index which calculates intelligence through the relationship between the mental age of the subject and chronological age (mental age/chronological age x 100) (Mazzotta, 1987; Mendes, 1995). IQ tests were used in the 1970s and previous decades to justify moving those who had undesirable social behavior to special classes or institutions, as well as to classify students as "immature," "probable exceptional students," and "mature" for learning (contemporary terms). According to Schneider (2003), this contributed above all to expand segregation into specialized classes or institutions for students with intellectual disabilities and others who had learning problems.

The growth in the number of special classes in regular public schools during the 1970s was also the result of the expansion of access of poorer groups to the education system, which had always presented these students with a rigid curricular structure. Many of these — more than half of Brazilians lived in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty (Mendes, 1995) — would be assessed as "probable exceptional students," because they presented behavior considered inappropriate for classrooms. For this reason they were sent to special classes, in which they were offered only repeatedly simplified pedagogical activities. During the 1970s and 1980s these classes reinforced problems related to school failure, showing what Ferreira (1992) has labelled "school deficiency."

Similarly, Mendes (1995) discusses the enormous flaws in the diagnostic processes of intellectual disability. Even in the present day challenges and problems are faced in the diagnosis and identification of intellectual disability due to the lack of clear directives and the precariousness of the public services responsible for this task. Furthermore, historically and culturally, diagnosis has been focused on rehabilitation and what individuals lack, and there is no joint action among different areas to plan actions and supports which can contribute to the development of the specifities of each person.

⁸ Throughout its history this Association has had different names. For example, Mazzotta (1987) referred to it as the American Association of Mental Disability. It was also called the American Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons. Currently it is called Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) (available in: www.aamr.org, accessed in December 2013). Brazil has used the assumptions of this association since the 1960s.

The results of ethnographic research which we carried out in nine municipal education networks in the Baixada Fluminense region showed that the laudo (medical report) was a requirement for pedagogical encaminhamentos, in other words for pedagogical assistance to be requested for students. In one of the teaching networks we found that when a clinical report was absent, the teacher "diagnosed" whether or not there was intellectual disability based on known Piagetian tests. In another network, the administrator declared that when the student had no medical report and presented learning difficulties, he was registered in the EDUCACENSO⁹ survey as intellectually disabled. According to her, the number of students with intellectual disability tripled from one year to another because of this. On the other hand, it also reveals that it was considered better when in doubt to label the student in the system as intellectually disabled in order to guarantee pedagogical support for the student in his educational network which is only given to those who are laudados – in other words who have official medical reports, a term that is commonly used in schools, (Pletsch, 2012). The medical report is not an innocent instrument and its use and implications vary considerably. Identification through medical reports can stigmatize and negatively impact on school trajectory. This is what we found in our doctoral research carried out in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro in analyzing the school trajectory of the student Maciel (Pletsch, 2010). Nevertheless, in other cases, such as that of José reported in the research of Anache (2011), uncertainty about diagnosis can prejudice the care they receive from the public system and consequently their development.

It can thus be inferred that federal government data about the registration of students with intellectual disabilities in "regular" classes can be camouflaged. More seriously, many of these students can become intellectually disabled when they enter school, as happened in previous decades, based on mistaken assessments. We need to urgently confront and discuss the question of assessment and identification, as Ferreira highlighted in 1992:

We also are clear about the limitations of the current systems of diagnosis [and of] resistance to discuss alternatives to the classification currently in place. What worries us is the risk of assuming, with the fear of stigmatization, and exciting ourselves with the discourse of integration [we would now say inclusion], an idealist position which can even ignore the concrete existence of disabilities or accept the "special pedagogical optimism" (reducing the problematic of disability to pedagogical efficiency) (p. 106).

In terms of the expansion of specialized services, the 1970s represented an advance. Basically these services consisted of special classes in regular state schools and predominantly private specialized institutions, which grew enormously during the military dictatorship and strongly depended on public resources (Ferreira, 1992). The strengthening of private services for this group can be seen in the documents for the First National Special Education Plan (1977/1979), prepared by CENESP.

Statistical data from the time (Brasil, 1975) show that there were 96,413 students in Special Education (in special classes in regular schools and in specialized institutions). Of these around 58,719 (70%) were "mentally disabled," divided into the subcategories of "educable" and "trainable," with 42,427 (75%) and 16,292 (25%) students respectively. Those considered "severely and profoundly disabled" had practically no access to education, something that still occurs

⁹ Educacenso is a detailed radiography of the Brazilian educational system. The tool allows individualized data to be obtained for each student, teacher, class, and school in the country, both in public networks (federal, state, and municipal) and private. The survey is carried out through the internet. Information available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br. Accessed in January 2014.

frequently, as shown in recent research on students with multiple disabilities (Pletsch, 2014; Rocha, 2014).

The education offered to the majority of these individuals, particularly in specialized institutions, focused on daily life activities or simple manual tasks. Rehabilitation activities were also offered with health professionals. In the context of its time this vision is understandable, since despite the advances obtained by focusing on integration and normalization, the therapeutic and psychological approach predominated and focused on — as it often continues to — the characteristics and difficulties of students, and not on the *possibilities* of their development through educational interventions.

It is important to also highlight that the 1970s saw the first third level courses for the training of special education teachers, following the enactment of Law no. 5692/71 (Bueno, 2002). As a result of this law, Special Education became obligatory in Pedagogical courses. Also created in this period was the first Licentiate in Special Education in the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM) and numerous courses of pedagogy with qualifications in special education. Equally, scientific research and meetings in the area also increased.

The 1980s were marked by the deterioration of social indicators in Latin America and by the increase in in socio-economic inequalities. The "lost decade," as it became known, was more lost for some than others. Parallel to this was the neoliberal attack against the list of social rights constructed in the postwar period in central and peripheral countries (Hobsbawn, 1995). Over ten years, privatization policies, fiscal adjustments, deregulation of the economy, and financial deregulation became part of the global political landscape. Amongst other consequences was the contracting of public investment in education and accelerated privatization in the sector.

In this context Brazil experienced a re-democratization process, after twenty years of military dictatorship. New hopes were presented to the Brazilian people, who organized to demand greater participation in political decisions. In 1985 the first election for a civilian president was held, albeit an indirect one. José Sarney, following the death of Tancredo Neves, became president of the country. In 1988, a new constitution was enacted, guaranteeing a series of social rights, especially in health and education. The advances also pointed to a greater financial and administrative decentralization of the country, strengthening the role of municipalities in the administration of the resources to be invested locally. The text of the Constitution stipulated that education is the duty of the state and determines that specialized educational care for disabled persons should preferentially occur in regular teaching. These directives marked a change in the concept of the education of people with disabilities. For the first time in legal terms the state assumed the responsibility for the education of disabled people, with priority given to regular schools.

In addition to the legal changes criticisms were made by researchers who, after the expansion of post-graduate studies in the area, carried out more systematized studies of the educational reality of people with intellectual disabilities in Brazil, expanding the questioning of the segregated model of education with its special schools and classes. The period was also marked by criticism of regular teaching due to the school failures of a large part of those educated. Many of these were as a result sent to special education based, to a large extent, on the so-called theory of cultural deficiency, which associated individual "difficulties" of students in school with their social condition (Pereira, 2005). Segregated spaces were used as "escape valves" or "compensation spaces" for regular schools, which thereby continued to exclude a significant proportion of their students, especially from the poorer social groups.

At the end of the 1980s, the results of the first research projects in the area and the growing criticism of the segregation of disabled persons emphasized even more the pro-integration discourse. However, public policies were marked by the discontinuity of actions and welfarist policies continued to dominate. Similarly, the technical and financial support for private institutions

continued. More than 50% of the almost 106,000 disabled students were now registered with these institutions (Brasil, 1985, 1990; Ferreira, 1989; Mendes, 1995).

The 1990s began with a serious of economic (high interest rates, internal and external devaluation of the currency, and the growth of poverty, amongst others) and educational problems. More than two thirds of children and adolescents between 7 and 14 did not benefit from school, due to the three forms of exclusion strongly present in Brazilian society, namely: a) impossibility of access; b) the precocious exclusion of school (above all high evasion rates); c) lack of access to good quality teaching (Patto, 2000).

In this context at the international level the Global Conference on Education for All: satisfaction of the basic needs of learning, was held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, which resulted in the well-known Declaration of Education for All. Brazil participated in the event and its organization, which began in 1985, and was one of its signatories. However, due to the lack of continuity in government, the targets were not met, and in 1993 the country was invited to participate together with the eight countries with the largest populations in the world in the Dakar Conference (UNESCO, 2000) to evaluate progress since Jomtien and to draft new targets for education. Complying with these directives the Global Conference on Special Educational Needs: Access and quality was held in Salamanca, Spain, in 1994. These declarations, together with the Guatemala Convention (1999) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Brasil, 2008), strengthened the discourse aimed at the social and educational rights of the historically excluded, amongst whom were people with special education needs due to disabilities and other atypical development conditions. To a great extent strongly based on humanitarian discourse and the universalization of basic education, a positive view of inclusive education spread and became institutionalized. Its principles were (and continued to be) incorporated throughout the 1990s in Brazilian education policies, under the strong influence of international organisms, such as UNESCO and the World Bank.

The World Bank proposals for education have to be analyzed from the political and economic angle, and not just from a technical one, as the self-legitimation discourse of that institution tries to argue (Pletsch, 2010). This involves denaturalizing what appears to be an act that is the product of "good administrative practices," since the Bank has acted as the intellectual adviser of public education policies in numerous countries (Pereira, 2010). Another dimension of the Bank's prescriptions for education is their connection with a broader agenda of contention policies, poverty reduction, and the neutralization of social tensions. This is what commonly appears in the discourse of this institution as the "maintenance of governability."

In this case inclusion policies appear to be grounded on the aim of forming 'human capital' and the social minimums, explained by Pereira (2010) as offering citizens the rights to basic social welfare and then holding them responsible for their "success" or "failure" in school and in other aspects of social life. In other words, while inclusion policies are expanded, the subject continues to be excluded, since no effective conditions are offered for integration and social mobility in the economic system in force.

This perspective of analysis is confirmed in the recent doctoral research by Souza (2013) who analyzed the propositions for inclusive education policy within the UN system to understand the impacts of these directives on the development of disabled students (looking at, amongst other aspects, social relations and insertion in teaching and learning processes). Based on documentary analysis, Souza concluded that the idea of poverty eradication related to educational policies (such as, for example, inclusive education) aimed at disabled people has been gaining importance, especially since the 1990s, with the instrumentalization of individuals so that they can seek their development opportunities. In addition, he showed that the idea of access to education and school inclusion policies is strongly associated with economic aspects to the extent that non-access can

"represent a high cost for countries' economies, both due to social welfare expenditure and the lack of productive labor" (p. 39).

In the same year as Salamanca, the FHC administration prepared the National Special Education Policy (Brasil, 1994), which replaced the Basic Directives for Action of the National Special Education Center inherited from the dictatorship (Brasil, 1974). Two years later, a new Education Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional - LDBEN no. 9394/96) was passed. For the first time this included a specific chapter on Special Education. In accordance with the 1988 Constitution, LDBEN established that the education of people with disabilities should preferentially occur in the regular school network. Amongst other aspects it allowed, when necessary, education in classes, schools, or specialized services with the support of curricula, methods, techniques, and specific educational and organizational resources to meet the needs of the target public of Special Education. Specifically for people with mental disabilities (the term used in the document), the Law stipulates a specific terminality for those students who "cannot reach the level required for the completion of fundamental education, due to their disabilities" (Art. 59, item II), which is defined as "a school completion certificate — based on pedagogical assessment — with a school transcript which presents in a descriptive form the abilities and skills achieved by the students" (Brasil, 2001, p. 59). The certificate differs from the one given for completing fundamental education, since according to Lima (2009) it is possible to identity in it the level of knowledge achieved by the student. The same author denounces that by proposing the terminality, the law does not provide any indication about how it should be done, since each system can prepare criteria and instruments in accordance with their perspectives and possibilities. These indications can lead to the "expulsion" of many students from the school system due to the lack of clarity about the best procedures to the followed. Furthermore, according to Lima's research, parents are opposed to this certification.

Actually, if we take into account advances in research about human development, there is no scientific grounding for the assessment that the possibility of intellectually disabled persons' learning has ended. Equally, based on the understanding of the principles of the International Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, known as the UN Declaration (Brasil, 2008) — approved as a constitutional amendment in Brazil¹⁰ —, in which article 24 recognized the right of disabled persons to education throughout their lives, this terminality loses its legal sense. In our research in nine teaching networks, only one had approved the specific terminality and even then had never used it, due to the lack of alternative directives and spaces to send students with intellectual disabilities after certification. According to the report of one interview, the majority would be "stuck at home, without any space to go to if terminality were applied" (Pletsch, 2012).

In Brazil the assumptions of inclusive education were accepted by the Ministry of Education in 2001, when the National Directives for Special Education in Basic Education (Brasil, 2001) were published. Following this, inclusive education began to stimulate educational discourse and practices in which students with disabilities and other atypical development conditions could be registered in regular classes, with the support of Special Education (complementary or supplementary), which could occur in the regular classroom with the support of a visiting teacher, or with small groups in resource classrooms.

Amongst other aspects, the 2001 National Directives for Special Education in Basic Education and the 1994 Special Education Policy regulated the organization and function of Special Education in basic education systems, and the continuation of the transfer of human and financial resources to private institutions through partnerships. Moreover, they also regulated the places where this service could be provided and proposals of curricular flexibilization and adaptation in harmony with the document "Curricular Adaptations: Strategies for the Education of Students with

¹⁰ Decree no. 6949, dated 25 August 2009 (Brasil, 2009).

Special Education Needs" (Brasil, 1998), which is part of the National Curricular Parameters. For students with intellectual disabilities, the document highlights two principal adaptations for educational practices, stipulating that they be held in class environments which favor learning, such as, for example, *ateliers, special places, and workshops*, amongst others. Also indicated is the need for the *development of adaptive, social, communicative skills, personal care, and autonomy*. In other words, as in previous decades, for those students considered to be intellectually disabled, no pedagogical practices were prescribed for the formal learning of school content and concepts due to the belief in their non-educability.

According to Michels and Garcia (2010), by indicating that the "education of students with special education needs should contemplate individual differences and require differentiated treatment within the same curriculum," the document allows "space to think about diversified resources and methods for pedagogical works, with the creation of alternatives in learning processes," as well as proposing "new levels of diagnosis and prognosis based on the relationship between individual differences and the curriculum" (p. 218). Certainly the idea of curricular flexibilization with the recognition of human individuality and the complexity of the teaching and learning process is a negative process. However, in our view, the debate about the flexibilization and individualization of the curriculum for students with special educational needs, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, involves the recognition of their specifities in relation to the internalization of culture through different social and psychological instruments. Furthermore, the recognition of individuality must be a priority directive of curricular practices for any student, since an education which wants to be humanist cannot be based on any "Fordist" curricular assumptions.

In the specific case of the public of this article, we understand that the use of differentiated resources and strategies in curricular practices based on planning linked to the general curriculum in general is fundamental and in many cases indispensable, such as, for example, the use of alternative communication so that students with communication difficulties can development social interaction and consequently learn and internalize knowledge and cultural goods. We agree with Souza (2013) when he says that it is through mediation and the interactions established there — based on individualized and challenging pedagogical proposals coherent with the possibilities (perceptive, sensitive, attention, mnemonic, cognitive and motor) of each student — that learning occurs. According to the same author, the teaching and learning process for students with intellectual disabilities involves the offering of a curriculum which privileges actions which have meaning and significance and which allow the construction of a conceptual, cognitive, motor, affective, and linguistic network, amongst others.

We also understand that the discussion about the school curriculum involves reflection on what we call didactic knowledge, which is often overlooked in the initial and continuous education of teachers, with justifications of the type "there are no cake recipes." In fact the educational process is much more complex than teaching and applying flexible pedagogical strategies, but we cannot deny the importance of diversified pedagogical practices linked with theoretical and methodological teaching references developed through the school curriculum (Pletsch, 2014). Another central aspect which needs urgent reflection refers to the actual concept of learning, especially in the most serious cases of intellectual disabilities. We should expand this to more than the formal educational processes (the so-called scientific processes), allowing these individuals forms of participation and interaction with the social environment so that they can develop new forms of being and acting. This defense is possible based on the analysis of superior psychological processes present in Vygotsky's historical and cultural theory, which mark the complexity of human development, even when an individual carries out activities considered simple and repetitive. A provocative discussion in relation to this can be found in Kassar (2013). Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the curricular debate cannot dispense with empirical analyses which take into account the social and

economic reality, and above all educational policies, since their understanding and application in school involves their culture and the dominant and ideological interests (Sacristán, 2000; Apple, 2006; Apple & Buras, 2008, Young, 2011). In Brazil, the research of Mendes-Lunardi (2008, 2010) and Silva (2008) critically analyzed the relationship between curricular practices and the education of students with intellectual disabilities.

In summary, we can say that the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s were strongly marked by the redefinition of the role of the state in the economy and in society. In education 11 neoliberal reforms were carried out through the universalization of basic education as a means of "controlling" poverty and stimulating the formation of human capital, according to the logic of "social minimums" provided by the state, opening enormous space for the control of private capital in the sector. In this period, the indicators about the education of disabled students showed that, despite the discourse defending school inclusion, student registrations in private philanthropic institutions did not diminish. To the contrary, they gradually rose during the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration, as well as public-private partnerships in social policy in general, even though the state had for the first time assumed responsibility for the schooling of those with special educational needs in regular public schools in the National Directives for Special Education in Basic (Brasil, 2001). Arruda, Kassar and Santos' (2006) analysis argues that this option followed the logic of the fiscal adjustment and the universalization of a low standard basic education, since the cost in the regular public system is lower than compared to the education provided in philanthropic institutions. The table below highlights the concentration of student registrations in the private sector, despite policy changes.

Table 2
Special Education Registration in Basic Education in Brazil, 1997-2001

Year	% Public	% Private
1997	42.92	57.08
1998	46.87	53.13
1999	43.90	56.10
2000	43.91	56.09
2001	40.35	59.65

Source: INEP. Available at: www.inep.gov.br/basica/censo/Escolar/Sinopse/sinopse.asp. Accessed: January 2014.

This tendency was also shown in the case of students with intellectual disabilities, who in 2001 amounted to 212,996 registered students. The majority of those registered were concentrated in special classes and schools (89%), with only 11% in common schools (INEP, 2001). This shows that these students predominantly continued to have access to education in a segregated manner, outside normal classes in the common education system, as was stipulated in the legislation.

Consolidation of the School Inclusion Policy (2003-2013)

Following the election of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva the Brazilian people experienced new hopes of a more just society. During his administration (2003-2010), Lula significantly expanded public investment aimed at educational inclusion in different sectors. The aim of these policies as

¹¹ In relation to the impact of the reforms on education, we suggest Michels (2006).

stipulated in the program of government was to "fight the socio-economic woes characteristic of the part of the population with low purchasing power and in this ways create conditions for social inclusion in all sectors of society, and in particular those in disadvantaged situations" (Soares, 2010, p. 31).

These proposals for inclusion were translated into public policies for different social groups by the Ministry of Education. The schooling of people with special educational needs was under the responsibility of the now extinct Secretariat of Special Education. In 2003, the first year of the new administration, this agency implemented the *Federal Inclusive Education Program: the right to diversity* in a number of municipalities in the country to publicize "inclusive education" for people with special educational needs. According to Soares (2010) and Souza (2013), the program followed a set of United Nations proposals focused on the strategy of multiplying the training of administrators. In the Brazilian case a number of municipalities were chosen — called training cores — which were made responsible for the expansion of knowledge in nearby municipalities. This model is used by international bodies such as the World Bank in poor and developing countries to guarantee the expansion and reproduction of knowledge, here directed towards inclusive education.

The multiplication strategy can be clearly seen in the document "The social inclusion of disabled persons in Brazil: how to expand this right" (Brasil, 2008a), written by the Special Secretariat for Human Rights (Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos - SEDH) in partnership with the National Office for the Integration of Disabled Persons (Coordenadoria Nacional para a Integração da Pessoa Portadora de Deficiência - CORDE), promoted to the National Sub-Secretariat for the Promotion of Rights of Disabled Persons (Subsecretaria Nacional de Promoção dos Direitos da Pessoa com Deficiência - SNPD) in 2009. According to this document, the multiplication effect is efficient in guaranteeing the reproduction of content. It is also more economic since one person is trained who will then spread the information to many more. Confirming what Souza (2013) indicates, this model has been used because it is considered less costly to the state or cost efficient. Also according to the same writer, various countries have shown the efficiency of this methodology in teacher training, in the use of interns as classroom assistants where disabled students are present, the training of relatives and members of the community, and in the transformation of special schools into centers of specialized education support and study.

Nevertheless, in the case of the Federal Inclusive Education Program: the right to diversity, the multiplication model has faced numerous operationalization problems. These included the lack of systematic assessment and monitoring by the Ministry of Education, which only used quantitative data as a reference; discontinuity of municipal governments, which led to the regular replacement of teams and actions; the large number of municipalities under the responsibility of a core municipality; the lack of participation and collective discussion among those taking part in the Program; the difficulties faced by Program administrators in core municipalities to administer financial resources; the distance between many municipalities and the lack of linkage between the sectors responsible for municipalities, states and the federal government (Soares, 2010; Pletsch, 2011).

The program aimed at disseminating the inclusive education policy in municipalities and supporting the training of administrators and educators, adopting the principle of guaranteeing the rights of students with special educational needs with access, permanence, and quality, in the regular teaching network, have not been reached. Analyzing the proposals and mechanisms used by the teaching networks investigated in the schooling of students with intellectual disabilities, who, generally speaking, were registered in the regular teaching system without any guarantee of learning and development, the reality can be seen as even more serious (Glat & Blanco, 2007; Braun, 2012; Glat and Pletsch, 2012, 2013).

In 2007, in compliance with the Accelerated Growth Plan (*Plano de Aceleração do Crescimento* - PAC), the Ministry of Education launched the *Education Development Plan* (*Plano de Desenvolvimento em Educação* - PDE), strongly inspired by the education entrepreneurs' movement called All for Education. According to Saviane (2009), PDE marked the continuity of the establishment of public-private partnerships ongoing since the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration. Amongst other measures, this plan established, based on a set of independent programs, targets for access and permanence in regular schooling and for meeting the special educational needs of students, strengthening educational inclusion in public schools (Brasil, 2007).

In this context, in the following year (2008b) the government presented the current *National Special Education Policy in the Perspective of Inclusive Education*, implemented by Decree no. 6.571/2008, allowing for specialized assistance in classrooms with multi-functional resources and in specialized reference centers transformed from special schools. According to the document the target public of special education consists of students with physical, mental, or sensorial disabilities, students with global development disturbances, and gifted students or those with special abilities (Brasil, 2008a, p. 21). In 2009 specialized education was created by the Operational Directives of Specialized Education in Basic Education, Special Education mode (Brasil, 2009). These directives indicated that specialized support should occur in after school activities in order to complement students with disabilities and global development disturbances, or in a supplementary manner for those assessed as gifted or having special abilities.

The indications of these documents have been widely publicized and have guided teaching networks to transform themselves into "inclusive educational systems," in compliance with the principles of the *International Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons*, known as the United Nations Declaration, recognized in our country as a constitutional amendment (Brasil, 2008). To illustrate the commitment of Brazil to this Declaration, the Dilma Rousseff administration presented Brazilian society with the National Plan of the Rights of Disabled Persons known as the Living Without Limits Program, through Decree 7612. Its aim was to develop actions in different areas, such as education, health, social inclusion, and accessibility, to improve the lives of disabled persons (Brasil, 2011, 2013). Federal expenditure of R\$7.6 billion was estimated for this program, with targets to be met by 2014.

In the wake of these directives and programs, various actions began to be implemented to intensify the social and educational inclusion of disabled persons, those with global development disorders, and who had special abilities or were gifted. Amongst these we can highlight: the Accessible School Program; the expansion of the number of classrooms with multifunctional resources to be implemented; acquisition of accessible school buses; the expansion of the Continuous Benefit (*Beneficio de Prestação Continuada* - BPC) in schools; continuous education of teachers and administrators, especially through distance education. The table below summarizes the data referring to some of these programs, showing the targets to be met by 2014 and the results achieved by 2013.

¹² BPC is a program which guarantees disabled persons a monthly benefit of up to one minimum salary. To receive it, the individual has to prove they have no means to support themselves, nor that this is provided by their family. The *per capita* monthly family income must be lower than one quarter of the minimum salary then in effect.

Table 3	
Targets and Results of the Living	Without Limits Program

Programs	Numbers	Targets until	Amount required to
	until 2013	2014	reach target
Accessible School Program	21,288	42,000	20,712
Multifunctional resource	24,000	41,000	17,000
classroom			
Accessible school transport	1,316	2,609	1,296
BPC in school	340,536	378,000	37,464

Source: IPEA (2013) and Brasil (2013).

Will the targets be achieved by the end of 2014? This question will be left for the reader to reflect on. However before we continue it has to be clarified that the official data is often contradictory. For example, according to IPEA (2013), less than 10% of Brazilian schools had multifunctional resources in 2011. On the other hand, the Secretariat of Human Rights of the Brazilian Presidency stated that more than 83% of municipalities had these classrooms (Brasil, 2013). This demonstrates the lack of mechanisms to accompany, assess, and unify data from different governmental sectors. Nevertheless, both show a growth in student registrations in regular schools, which are now responsible for 75% of total Special Education registrations. Of the 193,000 registrations in segregated spaces, 160,000 are in private specialized philanthropic institutions and 30,000 in special classes in the regular network. Most of those registered in institutions or segregated spaces are students with intellectual disabilities.

As well as the contradiction between official information there is also a discrepancy in relation to what has empirically been found by qualitative research about the reality of teaching networks. This is one of the results of the National Special Education Laboratory (*Observatório Nacional de Educação Especial* - ONEESP) coordinated by Prof. Eniceia Mendes, from the Federal University of São Carlos, with the support of the CAPES Education Observatory Program, which included 203 researchers from 16 states and 20 third level institutions. Since 2011, ONEESP has mapped and analyzed specialized education in multifunctional classrooms. One of the first findings showed, based on fieldwork data collected in the municipalities, that the official indicators did not correspond to the data provided by the federal government. In other words, the number of classrooms is lower than indicated by the government.

The data also shows the lack of clarity in teaching networks about how to carry out pedagogical work, which is very varied and which in many cases is "in the hands of people who are practically amateurs," states Mendes (2014). These results corroborate data from our studies in different teaching networks in Baixada Fluminense, which showed, amongst other problems: a) the non-installation of material distributed by the Ministry of Education in multifunctional resource classrooms — many networks which had received the technological equipment (computers, printers, and others) in 2009 and had not installed them by 2012; b) lack of architectural accessibility; c) overcrowded multifunctional resource classrooms.

We also found a lack of clarity among professionals about how to work in these classrooms. One of the aspects highlighted shows that collaborative work between the special education teacher in the multifunctional resource classroom and the teacher from the common class is impracticable. In this case the data shows that the majority of networks do not have time in the workload of their teachers for joint planning meetings. Even in relation to teacher training, the research shows that there is a lack of opportunity for continuous education. Only two of the nine administrators

interviewed knew of the existence of continuous education programs offered by the federal government (Pletsch, 2012).

The lack of specialized support for school inclusion becomes even more complex and inefficient in the case of students with multiple intellectual disabilities. Recent and ongoing research has shown the problems experienced by networks, teachers, and above all by students and their relatives to guarantee effective schooling of a good quality and which can result in the development of concepts and abilities which allow these subjects a dignified life. Using fieldwork based on ethnographic references, we have found that in many cases students with more accentuated and multiple disabilities, despite being registered in normal schooling, only frequent the multifunctional resources classroom two or three times a week for one hour at a time. From what was discovered in the interviews with administrators and teachers, this is one of the alternatives found by networks to comply with federal directives, taking into account the lack of structure in their schools which could guarantee minimally adequate education for these students who need very specific interventions.

We have also found that many students with intellectual disabilities have been sent to Youth and Adult Education, unofficially called in the networks as Special YAE. According to the interviews most of this happens after years in regular classes without acquiring the learning related to reading and writing (Pletsch, 2012, 2014). This phenomenon is also evident in the INEP indicators analyzed by Meletti and Bueno (2011). According to these authors, the growth of student registrations in Youth and Adult Education:

seems to be an expression located in the problem which involves all of basic education in Brazil: despite the increase in registrations in general, the levels of learnings are very low, which implies returning to school as part of this modality (p. 387).

As can be understood from this situation, official data about school inclusion, especially for students with intellectual or multiple disabilities has been artificially inflated. Equally it appears to us that the proclaimed education in the so-called inclusive schools is still not for all. Furthermore, the specialized support in after school activities is insufficient or precarious.

In this context, disputes about the locus of schooling of students with disabilities, like the disputes internal to the government, never cease. The pressure of politicians linked to private philanthropic institutions and these institutions themselves meant that in November 2011, during the presentation of the Living Without Limits Program, President Dilma Rousseff announced the replacement of Decree 6571 by Decree 7611 which changed the regulation of the operation of specialized education. In other words, the new decree, unlike the previous one, allowed the possibility of registrations in segregated spaces such as special classes in regular schools and special or specialized community, confessional, or philanthropic schools. In other words, policy actions were made more flexible in the field of Special Education, strongly centered until that moment in the inclusionist model. The decree also foresaw the continuity financial and technical support for the sectors which had signed partnership agreements.

Another important aspect which marked the historic disputes between the place of schooling and the target public of Special Education refers to Target Four of the recently approved National Education Plan. This emerged out of months of discussions in forums and public hearings. On the one hand, those who defended the proposal of inclusive education with specialized AEE support in after school activities entrenched themselves as the only possibility of schooling for students with special educational needs. On the other hand were the defenders of an educational policy which recognized different spaces and supports for the schooling of these students, especially in cases where it is not possible for them to be part of regular classes, also defending the coexistence of

¹³ For a discussion of this document and the axis relation to Special Education, see Laplane and Prieto (2010).

special philanthropic-private schools. The former defended registration in the regular network as an unconditional right. The latter alleged that public schools did not have the proper infrastructure for these students. In the final document it was approved that the education of people with disabilities, global development disturbances, and special abilities or gifted students should preferentially occur in regular schools, allowing room for segregated spaces.

We understand that education is an unquestionable human right, but we also believe that in specific cases, it is necessary to discuss pedagogical and human development proposals beyond the debate about the schooling space. Our research shows that in the case of students with severe and multiple intellectual disabilities, demands extrapolate possible school interventions carried out in the classroom. Many of these subjects need intensive supports and interventions in different dimensions of life, even to develop alternative forms of communication and expression (Pletsch, 2014).

Unilateral defenses which only universalize a single educational possibility for these persons end up excluding some students from the right of access to differentiated interventions from those offered by public policies. It does not appear to us that the debate about inclusion takes these questions into account. To the contrary, we understand that it is necessary to analyze the impact of inclusion policies on the lives of these people qualitatively and longitudinally and to examine international experiences, so that we can reflect on the possibilities which may contribute to changing the current scenario of exclusion of access to development through learning, above all in cases considered severe. This does not mean that we are against school inclusion. This is not the point. We are clearly aware of the educational advances that this proposal has allowed for many disabled persons. Nevertheless, based on the accumulation of studies and research available in the country, we can state that a single policy proposal does not effectively work for all. Furthermore, the debate must involve not only the dispute between this or that schooling space, but also the conditions, the resources, and strategies which actually allow these individuals access to the teaching and learning process.

Conclusions

During the forty year period looked at here, the education of people with intellectual disabilities in Brazil was and continues to be marked by contradictions and ambiguities, including the omission of the state in the offer of public education, the period of segregational policies in the 1970s, and the current inclusion policies, leveraged by bodies linked to human rights and poverty reduction. In this agenda, Brazil has shown that, despite following international guidelines, it has not fulfilled the targets in relation to people with intellectual disabilities, since the majority of this public remains segregated in philanthropic institutions or even without access to any educational space. IPEA data (2013) show that 47.4% of recipients of continuous benefit in the under 18 age group remain outside of school. Certainly many of these have intellectual disabilities.

Within the federal government political disputes over the *locus* of schooling of this part of the population remained feverous. The revoking of Decree 6571 in November 2011 illustrated the correlation of political forces, as well as the internal contradictions and tensions involved in the implementation of international directives.

Another aspect which is evident is that, despite the legal advance in terms of social and education rights, these mechanisms have not been translated into practice for a significant contingent of disabled persons. The history of Brazilian Special Education clearly illustrated the discrepancy between the advance of legislation since its institutionalization and its non-compliance. The historic omission of public authorities in the guarantee of the educational rights for people with serious intellectual impairments, and often with multiple disabilities, is clearly visible. For them

private initiative in philanthropic institutions or public special schools continues to be the only option. The data of our research shows not only the maintenance of special schools in various networks, but also proposals to expand them to guarantee so that these individuals, as one interviewee stated, "will have at least somewhere to frequent. Otherwise, they would have nowhere to go, they would remain at home without any care." This was shown, above all, in cases where individuals started school late and/or were outside the age group for basic education.

Also in relation to the advances of current policies, while on the one hand they are significant, since they allow social inclusion and school access for individuals with intellectual disabilities, on the other hand, these policies are centered on "social minimums." In other words, the individuals are part of regular classes with AEE support, which generally speaking is not good enough to meet the demands of these students. Moreover, priority is still given to the provision of AEE in segregated spaces. To a large extent, these students, like others who have disabilities, have a low level of education. According to the last census, more than 60% have either no education or only primary level. Moreover, the data reveals that despite the law about quotas for labor market access (created in 1991), only 20% of men and 14% of women with intellectual disabilities have an occupation (IBGE, 2010).

In summary, what we have found is that the law is not self-applied. Its implementation, the amount of funds allocated, the public policy instruments involved, and the level of institutional priority depend on a series of factors, including the economic situation of the country, government directives, and the correlation of internal and external forces with social actors. Furthermore, the dominant theories in the fields of economics and education have to be taken into account, such as the education of intellectuals and the choices of public administrators, who to a great extent frequently assume positions due to political indication rather than technical skill.

Many problems need to be confronted. Moreover, they are of distinct types, for example: a) the lack of interconnection between the teaching system and other governmental sectors; b) the lack of clear directives to identify intellectual disabilities; c) infrastructure difficulties and lack of adequate material and resources to meet the developmental specifities of these students; d) problems related to properly adapted public and/or school transport to bring the students to school; e) lack of more flexible curricular practices for the schooling of students with intellectual disabilities and other atypical development conditions; f) lack of diversified and extensive supports in the different spheres of life for those that need them; g) lack of working conditions and career plans for a large number of Brazilian teachers; h) lack of physical and architectural accessibility in the cities, schools, and public buildings, amongst other social spaces; i) the non-guaranteeing of learning for the majority of students with intellectual disabilities; j) lack of attention for the public teaching system in general, since the problems mentioned, to a large extent, are common to the entire Brazilian educational system. To change this scenario it is necessary to improve and expand financial investment in education, so that students' right to development can actually be guaranteed, whether or not they are disabled. Moreover, further research is needed to assess the teaching and learning processes of students with intellectual disabilities, curricular strategies, and the cognitive resources used by them to learn and to develop.

Finally, but no less importantly, it should be highlighted that it is necessary to recognize the voice of those with intellectual disabilities and their families, listening to them and not speaking for them. Certainly they will have much to tell us and to contribute.

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Educação Especial: diferenças, currículo e processos de ensino e aprendizagem

arquivos analíticos de políticas educativas

Volume 22 Number 81

August 11th, 2014

ISSN 1068-2341

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