

## Inclusive teaching in public schools: pedagogical-curricular strategies in teachers' (auto)biographical narratives

### ARTIGO

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### Abstract

This study addresses inclusive teaching in public schools. Its central objective is to identify which pedagogical-curricular strategies the public school promotes for the inclusive teaching of students with disabilities. It takes as a reference (auto)biographical narratives of four teachers from two schools (one municipal and one at the state level) in the municipality of Caraúbas – RN. In methodological terms, the study used a qualitative approach and the (auto)biographical method. As a data production technique, reflective interviews were used. In conclusion, it is highlighted that the main pedagogical-curricular strategy promoted in schools aimed at inclusion is joint work between the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) professional and the regular classroom teacher. From this, teaching materials and specific methodologies are created for the curricular contents that require greater effort to understand.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Teaching. Special Education. Public School.

### O ensino inclusivo na escola pública: estratégias pedagógico-curriculares em narrativas (auto)biográficas de professores

### Resumo

Este estudo aborda o ensino inclusivo na escola pública e tem como objetivo central identificar quais estratégias pedagógico-curriculares a escola pública promove para o ensino inclusivo de alunos com deficiência. A pesquisa utiliza como referência narrativas (auto)biográficas de quatro docentes de duas escolas (uma municipal e outra estadual) no município de Caraúbas – RN. Em termos metodológicos, o estudo fez uso da abordagem qualitativa e do método (auto)biográfico em educação. Como técnica de produção de dados, recorreu-se a entrevista reflexiva. Como conclusão, demarca-se que como estratégia pedagógico-curricular principal promovida nas escolas que visa a inclusão está o trabalho conjunto entre o profissional do Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE) e o professor da sala de aula regular. A partir disso, são construídos materiais didáticos e metodologias específicas para os conteúdos curriculares que exigem maior esforço de compreensão.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino Inclusivo. Educação Especial. Escola Pública.

## 1 Introduction

2 The case for Special Education, from the perspective of inclusive education, has been strong in recent decades in Brazil. As a result, according to Ferreira and Bueno (2011), research on the subject has grown considerably. Studies on the pedagogical and educational practice of Special Education teachers, pedagogical-curricular resources for inclusive education, Specialized Educational Assistance, educational policy and the training of Special Education teachers, among others, have become topics of great interest to educational researchers (Ferreira; Bueno, 2011).

However, it is worth noting that Special Education in Brazil has also made progress, not just in the field of research. A set of legal provisions, such as the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (Statute of People with Disabilities), Law No. 13.146, of July 6, 2015, reinforces this statement (Brasil, 2015). These aspects contribute to us continuing to think about the need for studies on Special Education in the country, since we understand that they add up to progress in promoting the inclusion of people who need a school education that accommodates their specificities.

This research is part of a larger study carried out under the Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PosEnsino) at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN), in broad association with the Federal Rural University of the Semi-Arid (UFERSA) and the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN). As an investigative problem, we defined: what pedagogical-curricular strategies does the public school promote for the inclusive teaching of students with disabilities?

Thus, the main objective of this study was to identify which pedagogical-curricular strategies public schools promote for the inclusive teaching of students with disabilities. The study uses as a reference the (auto)biographical narratives of four

teachers from two public schools (one municipal and one state) in the municipality of Caraúbas, in the state of Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil.

We would like to clarify that, in this study, we understand pedagogical-curricular strategies as a set of intentional and planned actions aimed at achieving the objectives of the teaching-learning processes in the context of Special Education, from the perspective of inclusive education. These strategies range from the individual planning and pedagogical practice of teachers to the set of activities carried out collectively in the school, the practices that enhance inclusive education. In addition, they involve actions in the classroom and school curriculum, in Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), with specific pedagogical resources or not, which contribute to the integral development of Special Education students (Leite; Martins, 2012; Sacristán, 2013; Mantoan, 2015).

In methodological terms, the research used a qualitative approach and the (auto)biographical method in education (Medeiros; Aguiar, 2018), focusing on (auto)biographical narratives that textualize the experience of teachers with inclusive education in public schools. Of the teachers taking part in the study, two teach in the final years of elementary school, in the subject of English, while the other two work in Specialized Educational Assistance in these schools. As a technique for producing the data, we used reflective interviews carried out in 2022. Based on the narrative axis “inclusive teaching in public schools”, we developed individual moments with the teachers, crediting what they experienced and, above all, the pedagogical-curricular strategies on the school floor and in the classrooms that envisioned inclusion.

After this introduction, we have organized the rest of the text into three more sections and the final considerations. In the next section, we will discuss the current school system, demarcating Special Education from the perspective of inclusive education. Next, we will briefly describe the methodological dimension of the research. In the next section, we will present the (auto)biographical narratives of the teachers who took part in the study, with the aim of understanding the pedagogical-curricular strategies built in schools to promote inclusive education. In the final considerations,

we will summarize the main aspects captured in the course of the research that gave rise to this text.

## 2 School and Special Education - the social function of educating and including

Even if only briefly, we need to raise a debate in this text about school today, given that the research is based on inclusive education in public schools. In the meantime, we also need to highlight some points about Special Education from the perspective of inclusive education.

We must remember that part of our lives is spent at school. For a long time, we spend hours of our day in the school environment. It is appropriate to say that school is one of the spaces that is most intertwined and contributes to our construction as social and human beings (Medeiros; Fortunato; Araújo, 2022). Given this, two questions arise: if school is a space where we spend a significant part of our lives, what is its real social function? And what can Special Education do at school?

First of all, we'd like to point out that school is a place to teach, in a systematized way, the knowledge accumulated by humanity over time, which cannot be taught in other spaces, such as the family, the church, among others. However, we understand that its social function goes beyond this. According to the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, Law No. 9.394, of December 20, 1996, it is up to school education to enable training for the exercise of citizenship, through the insertion of the subject in social practice, and for training for the world of work (Brasil, 1996). We would add that in addition to this goal, it is the school's responsibility to humanely train people to live together responsibly in society. Thus, it is necessary for it to provide a civic education that gives each individual the knowledge accumulated by humanity, but in a critical and contextualized way.

As far as Special Education is concerned, we understand that its main role is to provide conditions, through special educational resources and services, so that people who have some special educational need (including people with/without

disabilities) can develop their abilities and potential at all levels and modalities of education (Brasil, 2001; Sertório; Sofiato, 2023).

Working at school, in conjunction with Special Education, helps people with special educational needs (in this case, people with disabilities) to develop in their biopsychosocial dimension, regardless of the challenges arising from their specificities. The different barriers that emerge in the school environment are gradually overcome, giving students room to grow, which makes the school an inclusive space (Souza; Pereira; Venâncio, 2022).

Having said that, we believe that the school fulfills its social function of humanely forming the generations that pass through it, in the individual and collective spheres, also forming the society of each present time. In this context, Special Education is an educational modality with the potential to favor the development of people who, in their uniqueness, need an education that welcomes and works with their specificities.

### 3 Methodology

Conducting research in the humanities is not a simple task. The researcher needs to build instruments that respond, in terms of investigation, to the objectives set by the study. To do this, they design means and use specific techniques to construct the data. This study was based on the qualitative approach and the (auto)biographical method (Medeiros; Aguiar, 2018). As we reported earlier, we decided that the reflective interview would be the technique used to construct the data with the teachers taking part in the research.

Reflective interviewing is a qualitative data production technique that, according to Medeiros (2019), allows for more intimate contact with the research subjects, allowing us to delve into details or general aspects of their lives that are crucial to understanding what is being studied. Reflective interviews can be carried out in specific stages or even all at once; however, the interviewees need to reflect on their statements (Costa, 2007).

In this study, we carried out reflective interviews with four teachers, who will henceforth be referred to as narrating teachers, in individual moments. For the meetings with the participants, we drew up a script with a set of ten questions, which were discussed and reflected on during the interviews. The reflective interview script was based on a narrative axis: inclusive teaching in public schools, with the aim of bringing us closer, through the questions, to the research problem and objective.

We should add that of the four teacher narrators, three declared themselves to be women (teacher narrators 1, 3 and 4) and one a man (teacher narrator 2). Teacher narrators 1 and 3 work in the AEE in the two schools (one in each school) and teacher narrators 2 and 4 teach in the final years of elementary school in their respective schools (one in each school), in the subject of English. The two public schools that took part in the research were nominated by the municipal and state education departments, considering the number of students with disabilities served by these institutions.

The narrating teachers were nominated by the schools themselves, considering the purpose of the study. It's worth noting that the larger study, from which this text is derived, focused on inclusive education, considering the pedagogical practice of English language teachers in public schools, in conjunction with AEE. In order to take part in the research, the teachers signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF) at a meeting held with them before we carried out the reflective interviews.

The period of the reflective interviews took place between September and November 2022. In each meeting, which took place in a place defined by the participants, we tried to create a spontaneous moment, avoiding the exaggerated formalism that scientific research sometimes imposes on us. The interviews lasted between 1 hour 10 minutes and 1 hour 34 minutes.

All the reflective interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The transcripts were sent to the study participants for their reflection and for them to make changes if they felt the need. This procedure is recommended by Costa (2007) as an

important stage in working with reflective interviews, since the participants can add to, disagree with or revise their statements, reflecting on the interview process.

As for the analysis of the transcribed (auto)biographical narratives, we followed the principles of the narrative analysis technique (Moutinho; Conti, 2016), considering the main individual meanings that also emerge in the narratives collectively. Each question will be analyzed in the following section, filtering these meanings through the teacher narrators.

#### 4 Teachers' (auto)biographical narratives: inclusive teaching in public schools through pedagogical-curricular strategies

The first issue we discussed with the teacher narrators at the time of the reflective interviews was what they understood by inclusive education. Their narratives<sup>1</sup> are textualized:

*Inclusive education is where all students are included, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. Inclusive education is education for all. As educators, we have to consider that each student is a unique individual, and we have to take this into account when planning every action in the school. Educators, all school staff are educators, not just teachers who are educators. In order to promote inclusion, I believe there has to be a commitment from all these professionals. So, for me, inclusive education is where everyone is working together, collaboratively, where they are respected and valued (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] my notion of inclusive education is that education is everyone's right. It's only fair that this public [people with disabilities] should be in public schools, regardless of the potential they have or will develop (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*I understand that inclusive education [pause], for me, is respect for all students, regardless of race, belief, gender, economic, cultural, physical, mental, intellectual or sensory condition. Our task, as a school, must be to seek to meet diversity in the pursuit of inclusion. Thus, our challenge is to create a teaching proposal that values and recognizes differences (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] For me, it's something of a utopia, a dream that, according to the laws, [inclusive education] has the objective of equality, opportunities and*

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<sup>1</sup> The transcripts faithfully follow the teachers' statements. We have made minor adjustments to the language in order to adapt the text to the norms of the Portuguese language. This is a version of the transcription in English.

*possibilities, education for all, regardless of disability (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

From the teachers' narratives, we understand that inclusive teaching means teaching that is built for everyone. In their statements, inclusive teaching is associated with teaching that **takes diversity and differences into account**. We unanimously realized from the teachers' narratives that inclusion takes place when people with different needs are welcomed into the school, and their specificities are affirmed in the actions that the institution promotes, both in the classroom and outside it. Mantoan (2015, p. 16) adds:

[...] inclusion implies a change in educational perspective, because it doesn't just affect students with disabilities and those who have difficulties learning at school, but everyone else, so that they can succeed in the general educational chain throughout their lives.

As much as teachers are aware of what inclusive education is, it is essential to be vigilant, as Teacher Narrator 4 warns, given that inclusion can remain only on paper (be a utopia), since the educational reality, being the result of social dynamics (Freire, 1996), is complex. In certain situations, however much the intention is there, the local context (in public schools, for example) is sometimes undermined. Thus, what is a social right (education) becomes only an ideal.

With regard to inclusive education for people with disabilities, it is essential that we redouble our attention, especially considering the long period of time during which schools have not been inclusive towards these individuals. When we talk about inclusive education for people with disabilities, we need to recognize who they are and what special educational needs they have.

Continuing the analysis of the (auto)biographical narratives, we asked the four teachers how inclusive teaching is promoted in the institution where they work. Let's see:

*Regardless of whether it's something to do with special education, it's a topic on our agendas, it's a topic in our pedagogical planning. Sometimes, if it can't be resolved, we also call in the [school] administration to take part. So these issues are always discussed, it's a group of people looking for solutions (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*



*[...] these training courses helped me to break down some prejudices or bad notions about what inclusive education is. I realized that I used to make a lot of excuses, you know? A lot of excuses about doing a proper job or a job that required too much effort. [...] when I stopped looking at the disability and started looking at each student, I was able to learn a little more from that student (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*Our institution seeks to develop pedagogical work in a collaborative dimension, so that all students are included and differences become a factor of enrichment [...]. We welcome them and work to meet their needs and abilities, respecting their limitations [...]. So [the school] is always trying to create links with all the educators (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] it's offered in various ways [...]. They are monitored, with a special teacher exclusively for them, and we are always trying to work with them in some special ways. The coordinators try to encourage this kind of work, always giving us feedback and other opportunities (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

We observed in the teachers' narratives that the schools carry out actions, as well as promoting dialogues aimed at establishing channels to include students with disabilities. The teachers mentioned pedagogical planning, training and specific moments in the schools to promote inclusion. In all four records, we see **joint and collaborative work** as fundamental to inclusion in institutions. In addition, according to Teacher Narrator 4, there is also **work with specialized professionals** for this purpose.

It is worth noting, according to Vaz and Garcia (2016, p. 02), that “since the 2000s, the Special Education Policy has been aimed at encouraging the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools” in Brazil. In these terms, as discussed elsewhere in the text, in recent decades the fight to promote inclusive education within schools has intensified, mainly through legal documents aimed at this end.

After discussing how inclusive teaching is promoted in the institution, we went on to reflect on the third question, which addressed what the teachers think (how they evaluate) about the inclusive teaching promoted in the school.

*I think that the school, to the extent that it can, it tries, it does. Can it improve? Yes, we can always improve [laughs]. There are still some people who are resistant to this process of inclusion, these people we have to sensitize in order to be part of this fight for education to become more and more inclusive,*

*but I believe that we are already doing it, and we can improve on some points (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] at school, I met children [with disabilities] who had incredible communicative competence orally, when they were in seminars they put on a show, but there were limitations when it came to writing. I'm not going to fail a student who can't answer a test in English, when he's very capable of speaking that content. [...] it's very comfortable for me not to change my methodology, not to leave my comfort zone. Meanwhile, the student's education suffers a huge loss. This was one of the many things I learned at school (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*The school has been playing a fundamental role in inclusive education. We know that there are many challenges, but the challenges of inclusion, although they are constant [...], we have noticed greater interaction between the family and the school. So this makes us feel progress in the relationship between teacher and student, in the socialization of students. We still have a long way to go, but many things have improved in terms of supporting these students (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] in my opinion, we need more information on inclusion. I see a lot of need in the area of inclusion, because inclusion isn't just about keeping the student in the classroom, we need to work with them, but in a way that they are really included in the class, regardless of anything (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

As Gomes (2008) points out, it is in the interest of people with disabilities that schools recognize them as subjects of law, with their own specificities. It is from this point of view that inclusive education needs to be promoted. We will therefore continue to reflect individually on the narratives.

Teacher Narrator 1 said that inclusive teaching already exists in the institution, but acknowledged that it could be improved. She pointed out that there are still resistant education professionals at the school, but she is not discouraged in the fight for inclusion which, despite being arduous, is rewarding, especially when the fruits are seen.

Teacher Narrator 2 did not focus on the school, but reflected on his classroom and his experiences with students with disabilities. We can see in his speech the teacher's concern to respect the students' learning, he understands that each subject has their own particularities and that it is important to move away from comfort in order to be more successful in his teaching practice. Thus, we agree that “all those involved

in this educational process need to feel that they are subjects of rights in order to pass on this experience beyond the school walls” (Mariussi; Gisi; Eyng, 2016, p. 448). Although the teacher does not refer to the institution, we understand that he believes that inclusive education happens at school, especially in his work in the classroom, which he assesses positively, as he highlights changes in his teaching practice over time.

Teacher Narrator 3 stated that the institution has been doing significant work in relation to inclusive education. The teacher also highlighted the importance of the relationship between family and school in promoting inclusion. This partnership makes a difference to the student's life. Teacher Narrator 4's account highlighted the lack of information provided by some of the professionals who work in the institution, despite the investment made by the state in recent decades to make inclusion a reality. In this dialog, we conceive:

[...] Inclusion should not be achieved at any price (especially if that price is cheap...). Taking on a public policy of Inclusive Education necessarily implies a sustained and prolonged investment in resources that can make the school capable of responding competently to various types of challenges: the challenge of valuing difference, diversifying the curriculum, educational planning, the challenge of information, among others (Mariussi; Gisi; Eyng, 2016, p. 451).

With regard to the teachers' assessment (how they think) of the work to promote inclusion in the schools, we understand that, for three of the teachers, **the two institutions are concerned about inclusion**, both because it has been socially included in the national education debate, which has had an impact on the day-to-day running of the schools, and because of the daily practice that the professionals at the institutions have been building.

In relation to the fourth question posed to the teachers, we asked what the main educational actions are that the school carries out from the perspective of inclusive education. Let's read their narratives:

*[...] we hold pedagogical shifts and when there are more general issues, we call a meeting. There's the issue of pedagogical planning. We plan projects, reading projects that involve all the students, we're concerned about involving all the special education students (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*There is a professional who coordinates all this work and acts as an assistant to the other teachers. Coincidentally [in the municipality of Caraúbas - RN], they are more women, I don't know why, they are from the area, maybe Pedagogy, they bring activities, they guide how to bring adapted activities for that specific student. I always seek this help, because I can't do it alone (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] we offer differentiated activities that have contributed to their participation in the ordinary classroom, right? As well as their social interaction, they've been able to take part in activities together with other classmates. There is also the availability of the auxiliary teacher, who helps students who find it more difficult to perform their duties in the ordinary classroom (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*Today, we have a physical education teacher here at school, he arrived this year [2022]. He is extremely passionate about inclusion, he treats the students with a lot of affection and help. Then, helping them to promote themselves, so to speak, but we have very important work with CRAS and AEE (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

As we can see from the teachers' statements, there are **pedagogical meetings** held by the institutions in order to **develop planning for inclusive education**, which are, in fact, essential in schools. Through these moments, it is possible to identify the gaps in the school and devise ways to help minimize them, as well as highlighting the importance of other bodies that contribute by assisting students with disabilities, such as CRAS.

The teachers recounted how these moments take place, including: pedagogical meetings for planning inclusive education, pedagogical shifts (aimed at drawing up projects that bring all the students together) and parents' meetings. In addition to these actions, they highlighted the importance of **support from the AEE professional**. They see **this professional as helping with issues** that need more monitoring and planning in schools, especially in relation to the regular classroom. For us, this joint work of “collaboration and cooperation between different professionals, with different perspectives, favors the creation of [pedagogical-curricular] strategies to assist students with disabilities” (Thesing; Costas, 2018, p. 286).

In the fifth question, we asked whether there are physical spaces in schools that contribute to inclusive teaching and in what way. They reported:

*The school has a very large space in terms of structure, but, for the time being, I'm working in a makeshift room where the space isn't entirely adequate. It's a small space, so we make do with what we have (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*At the school [...], we have a large space. The physical structure of the school is large, but unfortunately, the spaces to contribute to inclusive education, only our cafeteria is the place where meetings, gymkhanas and activities with the students take place (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*Yes, our school has an adequate structure because it meets the main requirements for students with some kind of disability. We have classrooms, bathrooms, all with accessibility compatible with the standards required by the inclusive education policy (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*Well! The physical spaces would be the AEE room and a room for the psychologist. It's once a week or twice a month. The AEE room has some specific equipment for these students, as well as games. Our school is adapted for any student with a disability (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

Teacher Narrator 1 and Teacher Narrator 2 reported that the school where they work (both are from the same institution) has ample space in terms of structure, but at the time of the research, **the school did not have a specific space** (such as a multifunctional resource room) that would contribute directly to inclusive teaching. Both educators need to make adaptations to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

According to Mariussi, Gisi and Eyng (2016, p. 448), "it is necessary to transform the school into an inclusive and participatory environment, in which everyone has space, feels welcomed and respected". It is therefore necessary for schools to increasingly provide suitable physical environments to accommodate students with disabilities. As much as the institution tries to "improvise" a space to meet the demands of students with disabilities, it does not follow the national policy on special education from the perspective of inclusive education, following its guidelines and principles (Brasil, 2001; Brasil, 2009; Brasil, 2015).

The accounts of Teacher Narrator 3 and Teacher Narrator 4, on the other hand, mention the existing spaces in the institution that aim to collaborate with inclusive education and offer a better quality education for students with disabilities. These physical spaces are basic references within the scope of the national Special

Education policy (Brasil, 2009). Thus, “if the school manages to fulfill this role, it is certain that there will be more and more people with disabilities included in it and they will increasingly have their spaces respected” (Mariussi; Gisi; Eyng, 2016, p. 444).

In the sixth question, we looked at the experiences of teachers in the two schools that illustrate the main pedagogical-curricular strategies that public schools promote for inclusive education with students with disabilities. Read on:

*As a teacher, I always try to provide information to other teachers in this area. I'm always sharing materials, strategies that they can use with their students, we're always promoting training moments. As the area of Special Education is very broad, we try to focus on our audience [at school] (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*I need to learn from those who have experience in this area, I think it's important to always be seeking this improvement. [...] when it comes to adapting activities, I go to the AEE teacher. [...] I think there should be more visibility actions for these students, given that there is diversity (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*I think that all schools are being challenged to look for new teaching strategies that can meet their needs. Because it's a job that always needs new tools. We are always changing, trying to improve, for example, curricula are being rethought, teachers are reflecting more on their pedagogical practice, trying to develop work with diversified strategies in order to meet everyone's needs in their classrooms (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*The AEE teacher helps me. I talk to her about what I'm working on and she guides me, helping me with the teaching material. She researches with me. Together, we put it together to work with the children. She helps me to choose something more adapted to these students (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

According to CNE/CEB Resolution No. 4, of October 2, 2009, which established the Operational Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education, the creation of pedagogical-curricular strategies to assist students with disabilities is fundamental to their progress (Brasil, 2009). In this sense, the narrators reported building a rapport between the AEE and the daily demands that emerge in their work at school, in order to share and produce information, as well as teaching materials that can help them in class, making them more inclusive, with the aim of ensuring that students are able to grasp the curriculum content. We understand that the two English

language teachers at the two schools work in dialog with the two professionals who work in the AEE in the institutions.

From this perspective, we would point out that the teacher alone cannot meet all the needs that exist in a classroom. Dialogue and seeking support from the institution is essential. In this context, we have seen that the main pedagogical-curricular strategy developed at the school to promote inclusive education is **joint work between the AEE professional and the regular classroom teacher**. Based on this, **teaching materials and methodologies are developed for curricular content** that requires greater effort to grasp.

The seventh question asked teachers about the support of other educational bodies, such as the municipal and state education departments, in promoting inclusive education in schools. Three teachers reported on this aspect:

*We receive a lot of support in terms of training, especially in the area of Special Education. We're even way ahead of other states in terms of inclusive education. Our state is the only one that caters for specific learning disorders. [...] the secretariat gives us this support, or when we also request training sessions, they provide a professional [state education secretariat]. We also have a good partnership with Caraúbas City Hall. Sometimes they give us a bus or a professional [...] (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*We're always in dialogue and we need a partnership between the education department and the health department, because these students need a psychologist for therapy, a speech therapist, and some take medication. When they stop being monitored, we can already feel the difference in their behavior, some need visits. It's a collective effort and it's been essential to accompany these students since we can't do everything. Without a doubt, it contributes to the development of these students in the educational and social fields (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*The education department helps us by providing teams that can help these special students. And to be honest, I still think it's too little. I'm more looking for specific training, but I believe that the school office should provide better information about this support. Because the person who accompanies this student receives all the training, all the follow-up, all the preparation, but the rest of the team doesn't (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

From the teachers' narratives, we understand that there is mainly **support from the municipal and state education departments** in both institutions. This support is **manifested in the sense of contributing to the training of teachers**,

especially those **who work in AEE**, and also for the school community at specific times. Also, as the participants narrated, except for Teacher Narrator 2, who felt limited in answering this question, **the municipal and state education departments also make health professionals available** to help with monitoring and support in schools, with a view to inclusive education for students with disabilities and also for students with special educational needs who do not have disabilities. According to Laplane (2014, p. 193), “specific support should accompany the schooling of students with disabilities to ensure their access, permanence and progression in the education system”.

However, we note that Teacher Narrator 4 pointed out that although the training provided by the education departments is important, it should more permanently cover all the professionals at the municipal school where she works, given that she interprets that the target audience most covered by the training is the AEE teacher.

In the course of these reflections, we asked about the relationship between the school and the families of students with disabilities. The records are contemplative:

*As an AEE professional, I'm always in contact with these families, because this partnership is important. It's essential, not just for students with disabilities, but for everyone who needs special education [...]. We also need to know how the student is doing at home, when the student is making progress and suddenly has a setback [...]. AEE is not just about formal knowledge, but we help the student to have autonomy, to know how to socialize well, to interact well with society and their group. One of the first things I do when I receive a student with a disability is to interview the family, this is our practice, we call them in private and there's a moment where we talk a lot to get to know the student better. We ask if that student has any other care, if they take medication, what their behavior is like, what their difficulties are, what they accept and don't accept, because all of this makes a difference to our work and to that student's life (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*[...] sometimes it's challenging when the family stops being partners and becomes enemies of education, of their own child, they want to hide the fact that their child has that disability, they don't want to take the professional, they don't want the school to treat their child with specific and specialized care for that type of situation. Then they become enemies rather than partners. This is the most annoying thing I see, when the family is not a stepping stone for the student's growth (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*



*We have a very good partnership at school, parents are involved in their children's lives, and this is very important for their growth. But we've had families who were distant from the school, who had their own realities, which made interaction difficult. Lately, we have parents who are present (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*We have cases and cases. One of the school's mothers actually takes part in everything together with her daughter. She doesn't just take the student to school, she talks to the teachers, she's always informed. She does the activities with her daughter, she's already had to call me, asking about the English activity, because she said she didn't know any English, but she wanted to teach her daughter how to do the task. [...] but we've had parents with a lot of problems, which makes our job more difficult, because the family isn't being monitored. Everything becomes more difficult for this student (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

As mentioned earlier, the teachers recalled that, during their time at the two schools, they had experienced challenges with some families who were not always open to the schools. We know the importance of this partnership between family and school, it adds to the routine of the students, since formal schooling, in the life of any student, “is exercised as an agent of formation, awareness and human emancipation” (Medeiros; Fortunato; Araújo, 2022, p. 09).

In general, in both institutions, we can see that **the relationship between family and school is variable, at times it is, while at others it is not**. There are parents or guardians who seek to actively participate in the school education of their children with disabilities and there are parents or guardians who refrain from participating more effectively. We have seen, based on the narratives of Teacher Narrators 1 and 3, who work directly in the schools' AEE, that the institutions (through the AEE) try to strengthen this relationship which, depending on the parents or guardians, makes progress or not.

We affirm that the relationship between family and school is fundamental to the development of students with disabilities. This partnership becomes indispensable, as it makes a decisive contribution to school professionals being able to get to know the students and their difficulties better.

In the ninth question, we asked the participants to tell us how they evaluate collective work in favor of inclusive education in schools. We obtained understandable signals from three teachers:

*We always try to plan actions together and try to work collectively and collaboratively. [...] Unfortunately, there is some resistance to these partnerships that we seek in the institution, but in general it's a good team that communicates, plans together, looks for strategies, talks about problems and solutions. We're always talking about the demands at school. The AEE teacher, the regular classroom teacher, the school management. That's why I say that we work together (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*We are always looking to improve. Our school has been striving to do inclusive work, although we have made a lot of progress in this area, the mission is still very challenging, you see? Because many teachers still consider themselves unprepared to welcome these students into ordinary classrooms, and many are unaware of their needs and the didactic mediation required to develop learning. We still need more intervention to work with teachers in the ordinary classroom, especially in Primary School II [final years], because that's where we feel we need a partnership the most, and many teachers aren't as willing to receive guidance, as are other staff (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*I remember Easter, when there was a play, each classroom presented a short play related to the Easter theme. We also had the June season, where we had a project and the special children were also taking part. So they took part in the whole project. [...] there are these projects and moments with commemorative dates, which include the whole school (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

The teachers pointed out some moments when collective work in favor of inclusion is more visible in the institutions. In analyzing their narratives, we noticed that Teacher Narrators 1 and 3 were better able to describe these moments, as they work in AEE in schools. These moments include **planning aimed at inclusion**, as we have seen elsewhere in the text, and the **development of teaching projects on specific themes in schools**, such as commemorative dates.

One understanding that emerged from the research is that there are difficulties (or limitations, as far as we can tell) in developing more interactive work with teachers in the final years of elementary school at one of the institutions, perhaps due to the initial training they have undergone in their undergraduate degree, which, for the most

part, does not engage directly with Special Education (Medeiros, 2019), or even due to their work with specific subjects, which leads them to a certain isolation at school, due to the absence of colleagues who work with the same subject.

The last question discussed with the participants focused on the main challenges to promoting inclusive teaching, as well as the strengths they consider to be inclusive teaching in schools. The teachers recalled:

*The main challenges of inclusive education, I think, are attitudinal barriers. Are there other challenges? There are. Accessibility, technology and other issues. If there was an environment, in this case a more suitable space, it would help a lot. If they had more teaching materials, technological tools, it would be a great contribution [...]. When I talk about attitudinal barriers, you can do a lot when you're aware that it's your responsibility too, to promote inclusive education, when you want to do it and are dedicated to the cause. The work flows better. Awareness of collaborative teaching is very important in promoting inclusive special education, but not everyone has this working dynamic, not everyone likes to work in partnership, share their planning or like to sit down. There are teachers who like their individuality more. I can understand that. He would have to discuss and have other plans [...] (Teacher Narrator 1, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*A strong point is that now we've received more resources, more support from the state, the public machine has started to operate, right? Today, we have people in the classrooms who help students who have some difficulty with writing, sometimes a LIBRAS professional to be able to communicate with students who have a hearing impairment. (Teacher Narrator 2, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*We still have a long way to go to achieve true inclusion in our schools. Even though various documents guarantee the right to inclusive education, it is necessary for governments to improve their educational systems by investing in infrastructure, in the pedagogical area, offering adequate teaching materials, technological resources and, above all, continuing training for all professionals [...]. School inclusion is possible if it takes place in the regular school, but for this to happen, a new outlook is needed from the entire school community [...] (Teacher Narrator 3, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

*The biggest challenge is the lack of information, the barriers we encounter are still very high, including is just leaving him in the classroom. To include is for him to be able to participate in class. I keep looking for information, but it's not enough. You need specific training for that disability [...]. What is the best methodology? I still question myself a lot. Another difficulty is the partnership with the family that doesn't accept it, or with the family that has problems at home, which distances the teacher from the student. Sometimes the student becomes even more agitated, with more difficulties, if they don't have*

*adequate support. We really can't provide adequate support on our own (Teacher Narrator 4, Caraúbas - RN, 2022).*

As we can see from the statements made by Teacher Narrator 1 and Teacher Narrator 3, who work in AEE in the schools investigated, there are still many challenges, despite the fact that nationally we have a special education policy from the perspective of inclusive education. The educational policy represented a historic advance for inclusive education, but it is possible to find gaps, such as a **lack of resources and infrastructure issues** (narrated by Teacher Narrator 1). Another perceived aspect is the **tendency of some education professionals to work individually**.

However, apart from the challenges, there are also advances or strengths, according to Teacher Narrators 2 and 4, who teach English. They reported positive points, such as the increase in resources and investments in recent years and the availability of specific professionals to help students with disabilities in public schools. In the research, we saw that collaborative work is fundamental to promoting inclusive teaching.

## 5 Conclusions

The teachers recounted their experiences in the context of inclusive education. The (auto)biographical narratives helped materialize the aim of the research. Through them, we learned about pedagogical-curricular strategies aimed at including people with disabilities in the two public schools.

We emphasize that the schools have done their best to promote inclusive education in the conditions available to them. In general, we see a commitment on the part of the four teachers to the inclusion agenda, both in terms of seeking further training and in terms of their teaching practice with students with disabilities.

With regard to the pedagogical-curricular strategies developed in the schools, we would highlight the following: a) joint work between the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) professional and the regular classroom teacher; b) collective and

collaborative work carried out at specific times involving the whole school; c) continuous planning, mainly involving AEE professionals and teachers from the institutions; and d) the use of specific teaching resources in the classroom, focusing on curricular content.

At this point in the text, we have highlighted the lack of infrastructure in one of the schools and also the individualized work carried out by some teachers in the institutions. Nonetheless, the participation of the family and other bodies, such as the municipal health department, is fundamental for actions in schools that enhance the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Having made these considerations, we understand that although the study provides important reflections on inclusive education, it also has its limitations due to the particular context investigated, which does not allow for generalizations. The narratives are rich in details about inclusive teaching in public schools, but they should not be generalized. They can provide powerful reflections for thinking about the object of study analyzed in this text.

Finally, we hope that this research will contribute to investigations related to the central theme of this text (inclusive teaching in public schools), either by stimulating the desire for new studies or by expanding existing knowledge. In the same vein, we hope that this study will add to the current issue of the journal *Práticas Educativas, Memórias e Oralidades*, enriching the debate on inclusion.

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