



**THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN:
PROPOSAL OF A RESEARCH METHOD IN TEACHER TRAINING**

O PLANO EDUCACIONAL INDIVIDUALIZADO:
PROPOSTA DE UM MÉTODO DE PESQUISA NA FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE

EL PLAN EDUCACIONAL INDIVIDUALIZADO:
PROPUESTA DE UN MÉTODO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN LA FORMACIÓN DOCENTE

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this study is to propose in the scope of the Brazilian public schools, an academic research method for the elaboration of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), PEI, in Brazil. The methodological procedure is classified as for the purpose, in basic research; in terms of the research problem, it has a qualitative approach; as for the objectives, the research is exploratory and descriptive. The results reveal that there is an incipience in the literature related to the production of knowledge about the IEP and that from the use of the collaborative research-action methodology between the academic researcher, the regular teachers and the staff of the Specialized Educational Assistance in the public schools, the IEP becomes an effective instrument in introducing pedagogical practices that can help the teaching routine.

KEYWORDS: Education. Teacher Training. Methodology. Individualized Educational Plan.

RESUMO: O objetivo deste estudo é propor um método de pesquisa para a elaboração do Plano Educacional Individualizado (PEI) no âmbito das escolas públicas brasileiras. O procedimento metodológico classifica-se quanto à finalidade, em pesquisa básica; com relação ao problema de pesquisa, tem abordagem qualitativa; quanto aos objetivos, a pesquisa é exploratória e descritiva. Os resultados revelam que há uma incipiência na literatura relacionada à produção de conhecimento sobre o PEI e, que a partir da metodologia de pesquisa-ação colaborativa entre o pesquisador acadêmico, os professores regulares e a equipe do Atendimento Educacional Especializado nas escolas públicas, o PEI seja um instrumento efetivo ao introduzir práticas pedagógicas auxiliadoras na rotina de ensino.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação docente. Metodologia. Plano educacional individualizado.

RESUMEN: El objetivo de este estudio es proponer un método de investigación para la elaboración del Plan Educativo Individualizado (PEI) en el ámbito de las escuelas públicas brasileñas. El procedimiento metodológico se clasifica en cuanto a la finalidad, en investigación básica; con respecto al problema de investigación, tiene abordaje cualitativo; en cuanto a los objetivos, la investigación es exploratoria y descriptiva. Los resultados revelan que hay una incipiente en la literatura relacionada a la producción de conocimiento sobre el PEI y que a partir de la metodología de investigación-acción colaborativa entre el investigador académico, los profesores regulares y el equipo del Servicio Educativo Especializado en las escuelas públicas, el PEI sea un instrumento efectivo al introducir prácticas pedagógicas auxiliares en la rutina de enseñanza.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación docente. Metodología. Plan educativo individualizado.

INTRODUCTION

The education of children and young learners with special educational needs in Brazil is currently defined by a dual system where on one hand there is a strong system characterized by a philanthropic assistance funded by various levels of the government, and on the other, a fragile educational system that has been impelled to include this part of the population in schools (MENDES, 2010).

The discussion of how special education students should be schooling is not a new topic, but now we are trying to think of the subject as a factual possibility and not as something that should be hidden and marginalized through discontinuous and segregated practices (MAZZOTTA, 2005).

However, in order to reshape such practices so that they promote the social and academic development of the student, without falling into the risk of in-school exclusion, we need to foster a reflection on the curriculum, still marked by a structure with characteristics of rigidity, decontextualized and even meaningless (PLETSCH, 2010).

In this sense, Young (2014, p. 195) reveals that “if the curriculum is defined only by results and competences, it will be unable to provide access to knowledge”. In this way, one can observe the convenience of taking different possibilities so that the learning needs of these students are considered in the implementation of the curriculum, as well as the different activities that the teachers develop with the students, aiming their social and school insertion.

In this bias, the important contribution of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is highlighted in accordance with what is stated in the Resolution nº 4, in its article 9 (BRASIL, 2009), which points out the need to carry out collaborative work among teachers of regular education and Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE), contributing to the development of the student, as is also verified in item VII of the article 13

VII – to establish articulation with the teachers of the common classroom, aiming the availability of services, pedagogical and accessibility resources and strategies that promote the participation of students in school activities (BRASIL, 2009, Art. 13).

Therefore, it is necessary that those strategies are based on a critical dialogue between the curriculum and the pedagogical practices offered to students with disabilities, besides the confirmation of the effective participation of all of those involved in the schooling process.

In this perspective, the IEP has been presented itself, in Brazil, as an important strategy to elaborate, implement and evaluate curricular adaptations that favor the insertion of students

with special educational needs in regular teaching groups, guiding teachers' pedagogical actions (VIANNA *et al.* 2011).

Therefore, it is extremely necessary to promote continuous and collaborative actions in schools that attend students with special educational needs and it has to be based in the dialogue between the knowledge produced in universities and the teaching knowledge built in the daily practice of the school.

The initial assumption is thinking about an individualized curriculum that is related to a break of existing paradigms, since the plan that will be traced to the student will not necessarily follow the complete content of the grade in which he or she is enrolled and may be based on goals through a program created in a personalized way to meet their needs. Another assumption is that the IEP will become effective with the involvement of professionals in the field, and not only through established educational policies.

Given this introductory context, this study proposes a methodology for the elaboration of the Individualized Educational Plan for students with special needs in public schools.

To achieve this goal, this study is structured in six chapters. The first one includes the present introduction, which presents the theme, purpose and assumptions. The second, third and fourth chapters are devoted to theoretical support, which addresses the concepts, foundations and characteristics of pedagogical evaluation in inclusive education; teacher training and curricular evaluation; and, the individualized educational plan. In the fifth chapter, in compliance with the proposed objective, a methodological proposal for the elaboration of the IEP in the scope of the public schools is presented. Finally, the sixth chapter is devoted to the final considerations and suggestions for future work.

PEDAGOGICAL EVALUATION IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In Brazil, the federal government determined that the public school system of all federative entities incorporate the inclusive proposal, making it compulsory, among other things, school enrollment of students with special physical, sensory, mental and psychological needs and those with high skills / giftedness in the regular system of learning (BRASIL, 2008; 2008b).

According to the Salamanca Declaration (1994), inclusive schools are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, and that students with special educational needs should have access to regular school, with a guiding principle that “schools should

accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions” (SALAMANCA DECLARATION, 1994, n.p.).

In another perspective, the Special Education Guidelines in Basic Education indicate that “instead of assuming that the student must adjust to the “normal” patterns to learn, it challenges the schools to adjust and attend the diversity of their students” (BRASIL, 2001, p. 33), what implicates in the school establishing various adaptations, be they curricular, structural, pedagogical, teaching materials, human resources, etc.

Thus, the pedagogical evaluation of students that present special educational needs should take into account the variables that affect the learning process; those of an individual nature; those that focus on teaching, such as school conditions and teaching practice; and those that inspire general guidelines of education and the relationships that are established between all of them.

However, Pletsch and Glat (2012) affirm that more than restructuring pedagogical practices and proposing curricular adjustments, it is necessary to provide theoretical-practical knowledge and support to the Education professionals so that they can carry out pedagogical mediations that favor the teaching and learning process of all especially those with special educational needs.

Martín and Solé (2011) share this view and add that the evaluation should provide a view directed to the potentialities and difficulties of the student, as well as promote educational responses that are better adjusted to their needs, from the knowledge of the characteristics of the instructional practices with which it is involved.

Furthermore, when the participation of different actors in the preparation of the IEP is foreseen, it is still observed in the school environment the lack of knowledge and the precarious training of the teachers to act in the inclusion and schooling the students with disabilities.

The assertion above is corroborated by Vianna *et al.* (2011), when they verify that both specialized and regular schools are not accustomed to the IEP. Likewise, in a study of the IEP as a strategy for the academic development of students with disabilities, Glat and Pletsch (2013) affirm that the tool is not widely applied still.

BRIEF CONTEXT OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lovisoló (1995) when discussing the relationship between academic support and teacher intervention, suggests that a large number of teachers carry out a fragmented, unsystematic and non-gradual professional intervention that is still resentful of the use of different resources because of the social objectives.

In this aspect, the continued education presents itself as a possibility of other ways of teacher training, where all the actors have strategic roles, where the knowledge of the experience is conjugated with the conceptual and theoretical questions, creating a core of teacher learning that interfere so much in school practice as in the elaboration of theoretical assumptions (VIANNA *et al.* 2011).

Thus, the “improvement of the quality of teaching can begin even through the reflection of the practice itself, that is, the recognition that the process of learning to teach continues throughout the teacher's career” (ZEICHNER, 1993, p. 17).

In the same way, Therrien (1993, p. 411) point out that “the knowledge of experience, as an element of teaching practice, is the expression of one's own social knowledge produced in a daily praxis”.

Similarly, Tartuci *et al.* (2014) point out that the exchange of experiences and knowledge among teachers, the approximation of the university to school, research-teaching and initial continued education training are essential elements for disabled students to have access, permanence and success in regular schools.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN

As the exclusion occurs within the educational scope, it is observed that it is not the laws that will insure the effective process of schooling and socialization of students, but the inclusive pedagogical practices.

As described by Kempinski *et al.* (2015), an aspect that draws attention to the fact that educational institutions are aiming to achieve pedagogical practices aligned with inclusive educational policies, refers to the elaboration and use of the individualized educational plan.

Despite the presence in the relevant literature, the Individualized Education Plan, or Individualized Education Program (GALLAHUE; DONNELLY, 2008) has had little visibility in the debates related to the schooling of people with special needs, especially when

it comes to their empirical content (PORTUGAL, 2006; PACHECO *et al.* 2007; SMITH, 2008).

It is observed that although this instrument has multiple denominations, its common characteristic is that a written evaluation record is created involving a team effort, that seeks the educational responses more appropriately to the specific needs in the schooling processes of students that demand diverse paths for their learning.

In the study from Glat *et al.* (2012), the authors point out that the instrument was conceived according to the individual inclusion plans that have long been used in the school networks of European and American countries (PACHECO *et al.* 2007; PORTUGAL, 2008), with the scope of promoting the development and the future social and employment integration of students with disabilities.

However, Munster *et al.* (2014) observe that unlike what usually happens in the United States, Brazilian schools do not have the systematization of information included in the IEP regarding the special needs students.

It is suggested that from an individualized educational planning, it is possible to stimulate the formulation of specific pedagogical strategies to be employed in the development of students with disabilities in the academic and social skills areas, depending on the age group, level of development and/or interest of the subject.

Preliminarily, it was possible to identify in the literature that the IEP can be an instrument that not only favors inclusive processes in the school environment, but also contributes to the promotion of these processes, so that any person who presents peculiar characteristics of learning, being in a regular or specialized school, may benefit from it.

At this point, the challenge of the school identified by Vygotski (1997), that is, the proposition of directed activities that qualitatively modify the life of these subjects, privileging the process and not the final product. Also present in legal argumentation and in educational practices, the concept of curricular adaptation is far from the mere idea of “arrangement” in the activities, because as Souza (2014) reveals, adaptation involves reviewing curriculum, content and evaluation, not only technical elements.

Therefore, the IEP is characterized as a convenient tool to assist the pedagogical practice through continuous planning and evaluation, which means, its structuring will involve both specific curricular adaptations and insertion into the general work proposed for the class (PACHECO *et al.* 2007).

In this path, the Decree No. 7.611 from November 17, 2011, that is about Special Education and Specialized Education Care (AEE), in its first article, points out the idea of individualization when it presents among its guidelines:

[...] guarantee of free and compulsory basic education, ensuring reasonable accommodation according to the individual needs; adoption of individualized and effective support measures in environments that maximize academic and social development, in accordance with the goal of full inclusion (BRASIL, 2011, emphasis added).

From the understanding of the individual's performance, as recorded Martini (2016), the psychoeducational assessment is not intended to diagnose, segregate, label or stigmatize the students, but rather to provide a more effective way of intervention.

Method Proposal

It was verified, after an observation made at the Department of Special Educational Care (SAEE) in a school from the federal system of Brazil, the need to discuss the concepts, ideas and interactions of the curricular adaptation and the IEP, especially because of the fact that this educational tool is still unknown, becoming then a relevant and unpublished research opportunity in the educational field (KEMPINSKI *et al.* 2015).

Because it is an applied teaching strategy, the construction of the IEP must be accomplished in the school context and based on the experience and knowledge of the actors directly involved with the teaching and learning processes. It is then suggested that the research follows a qualitative and descriptive matrix, using the methodology of “collaborative action research” where the researcher is concerned, at the same time, about the action and the research with the construction and the procedures according to the development of the work (THIOLLENT, 1988).

In this reflection, Braun (2004) cited by Pletsch e Glat (2010, p. 4) affirm that the action-research has the following characteristics:

[...] c) democratic, in the way it enables participants to engage in research, influencing it and relating it to the actions of their daily experiences; d) interpretative, since all the perspectives and opinions of the participants have legitimacy, instead of being the only opinions of the researcher; and, e) critic, because it involves all the participants in a reflexive position before the actions are taken, or analyzed, for possible changes that may develop.

From the dialogue between the theoretical knowledge studied and produced in the university and the reflections and actions of the teachers of the participating institution, this research

aims to create new knowledge that can qualify both the teaching work in the basic school and the research work in the academic scope.

The methodology will involve a broad interaction, which will allow permanent dialogic conditions, combining contributions from each of the actors (researcher, participants and teachers), promoting the collective elaboration of solutions to the issues presented and the review of actions, when continuous assessment indicates the need for modifications.

Research Participants

For the preparation of the IEP, it is pointed out that it is important for the participants to be the teachers of the regular education of basic education; the members of the team of the Department of Special Educational Care (SAEE); and the students with special needs of the researched school, since, as Nascimento (2011) recalls, the individual needs of the student constitute the basis for the preparation of the plan, which should indicate prioritization of tasks and ways of evaluation that enable attendance to these needs.

For Jesus (2006), to develop a research with teachers is to make them subjects of the research process, therefore, they become participating subjects from the moment they bring the information to the field of research and carry out the action-reflection-action of the participants.

In the meantime, Glat and Pletsch (2013) suggest that evaluation can be carried out through different instruments, among them, direct observation, interviews with teachers, support professionals, family members and the student himself.

Data collection

The collaborative data collection may occur from group discussions about a specific topic, its direction may be mediated by the SAEE chief or a school teacher.

In this perspective, the production of knowledge will occur through the valuation of practice and starting from collective actions and reflections, presupposing a broad interaction between subject and researcher, offering a permanent dialogue, capable of adding the contributions of the subjects, elaborating solutions to the possible challenges presented.

Thus, the use of procedures such as field journaling; the documentary analysis, through official documents and those provided by the school; semi-structured interviews with teachers who work in specialized educational services; and the participation of the students in

order to evaluate and validate the IEP can contribute significantly to the elaboration of this instrument.

It is suggested that after the data collection, the team of researchers and teachers analyze the completed questionnaires in order to select students for the preparation of the IEP. Some selection criteria can be adopted such as: the limitation of the number of students in small groups, allowing a better assistance on the part of the researchers; heterogenization of the age group, with students from all development cycles; and, verification of the most relevant demands regarding students' social and academic skills, in order to establish goals and deadlines to be achieved.

The elaboration of these goals should be temporal, which means it will delimit the scope of the time for its accomplishment. Achieving the goals and their short and long-term indicators will facilitate the follow-up of the students, so that the plans are evaluated at least every semester or according to the student's needs.

Phases

It is proposed to elaborate the IEP, following the sequence of steps proposed by Correia (1997) cited by Cruz *et al.* (2011), which are:

i) Identification, that is, the “*preliminary assessment* for the identification of the student with specific needs, considering possible curricular adaptations and environmental changes (CRUZ *et al.* 2011, p. 4). In this stage, it is suggested that the teachers conduct an interview in order to identify the current level of student performance, their abilities. Completing an observation script can reveal these skills.

ii) Evaluation, which seeks to determine the educational needs of the student, considering their potentialities and limitations. In completing the skills observation script, the teacher can identify the student's performance in categories such as oral communication, reading, writing and logical reasoning. Consubstantiated by the observation script, the teacher will pass the assessment phase of the student and the needs to be considered.

iii) Implementation. In this step, after completing the observation script, it will be possible to create the Individualized Educational Plan. During the planning, according to the individual characteristics identified, the teachers will begin to elaborate the contents to be worked with the students with special needs.

The flowchart of the actions that resumes these steps is shown in Figure 1.

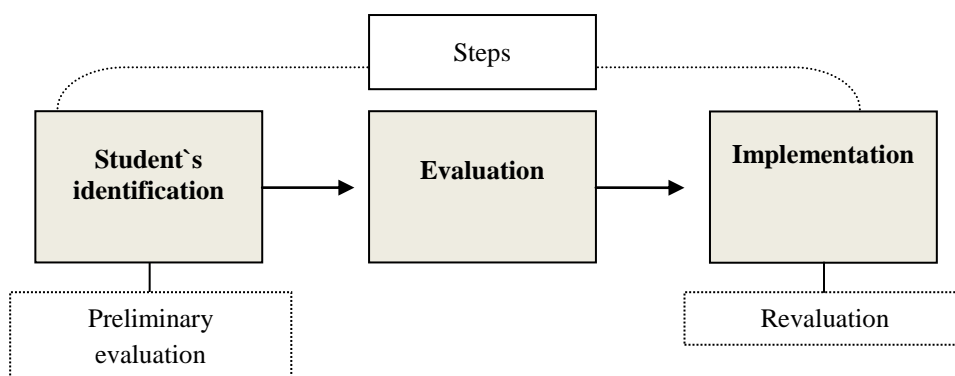


Figure 1. Flowchart of the IEP preparation steps
Source: Prepared by the authors

It is noted that during these stages, it may be necessary for the school to restructure in order to offer the necessary support for possible changes. We cite, for example, the need to adapt materials and pedagogical resources according to the specific needs of each student, in order to provide a (re)evaluation of the student's academic and functional performance level.

These steps are intended to clarify the teachers' thoughts about the elaboration of individualized pedagogical strategies to be used, while at the same time it is proposed to mitigate the difficulties of the teachers in describing the learning related to the school curriculum.

Therefore, the IEP can be identified as an instrument capable of mobilizing the information inherent to the student from the perspective of their present and/or necessary skills, serving as a method of reflection and analysis for the planning and monitoring of students during the school year.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Retaking the proposal of this article, we reiterate the perception that the elaboration and application of the IEP can be an effective strategy to guide the curricular organization in

order to boost the social and academic development of students of public schools with special needs, as well as to support their perspectives of school and work inclusion.

With the research-action methodology proposed in this study, it is expected that the IEP, when elaborated in a collaborative way between researchers, regular teachers and the SAEE staff of the public schools, will be an effective instrument when introducing pedagogical practices that help the teaching routine.

As for teachers, it is expected that the method can be characterized by intense interaction and dialogue, since school is the appropriate locus for continuing education, considering that experience and daily schooling allow teachers to improve their practice.

Still in this perspective, this proposal is aligned with the difficulty identified in the literature by teachers in relation to the schooling of people with disabilities, thus contributing to a change in pedagogical practice.

We reinforce the idea that, in the search for ways to help students with learning characteristics, the IEP is an important tool to refine this process, conducting together the continuous training for teachers, intending to improve the procedures such as evaluation, planning and monitoring of school activities and finally, to promote learning for all students, regardless of their difficulties and differences.

One of the ways to level these differences is to create the IEP in order to guarantee congruence and deepening of the pedagogical work, thus allowing necessary and timely advances in the development of each student, conducting the work of the educator.

Certainly, it is necessary to expand the studies of the IEP, in order to validate its use. It is suggested, for future investigations, the improvement of the method proposed in this study by researchers in the area of education and public school teachers, with the publication of the theoretical-practical findings, in order to increase the production of knowledge about the IEP and the assessment of the students with special educational needs.

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