

**CONTINUING TEACHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FORMATION POLICIES FOR THE INCLUSIVE
CONTEXT**

**FORMAÇÃO CONTINUADA DE PROFESSORES NO BRASIL E NA ARGENTINA:
UM ESTUDO COMPARADO DAS POLÍTICAS DE FORMAÇÃO PARA O CONTEXTO
INCLUSIVO**

**FORMACIÓN CONTINUA DE DOCENTES EN BRASIL Y ARGENTINA: UN
ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO DE LAS POLÍTICAS DE FORMACIÓN PARA EL
CONTEXTO INCLUSIVO**

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ABSTRACT: This article aims at a comparative study between the policies of continuing education of teachers of basic education for the inclusive educational context in Brazil and Argentina. For that, we opted for the Comparative Education methodology, through which it is intended to know, interpret and verify similarities and differences between the policies of continuing teacher education in the countries in question. First, we specifically discussed continuing teacher education for the inclusive context in Brazil and Argentina. Finally, we established the points of divergences and convergences of policies in the referred countries, where we verified that the legal apparatus of the policies for continuing education of teachers of Basic Education who work in regular common classes bring restricted mentions, because, when they talk about continuing teacher education, they are speaking about the specialized teachers for work with the Specialized Educational Assistance (SEA); and not to those of the regular classes, in whose classes students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are inserted. Brazil has a greater range of documents and programs in relation to Argentina, but neither country has a document, an excerpt within a document, nor a program that includes this group of teachers.

KEYWORDS: Continuing teacher education. Brazil. Argentina. Inclusion

RESUMO: *O presente artigo objetiva um estudo comparado entre as políticas de formação continuada de professores da educação básica para o contexto educacional inclusivo no Brasil e na Argentina. Para tanto, optamos pela metodologia da Educação Comparada, através da*

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qual se pretende conhecer, interpretar e verificar semelhanças e diferenças entre as políticas de formação continuada docente dos países em tela. Primeiramente, discutimos especificamente a formação continuada de professores para o contexto inclusivo no Brasil e na Argentina. Por fim, estabelecemos os pontos de divergências e convergências das políticas nos referidos países, onde verificamos que o aparato legal das políticas de formação continuada de professores da Educação Básica que atuam nas turmas comuns regulares trazem restritas menções, pois, quando falam de formação continuada dos professores, fazem referência aos professores especializados para o trabalho com o Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE); e não àqueles das classes comuns regulares, em cujas turmas os alunos com Necessidades Educacionais Especiais (NEE) estão inseridos. O Brasil apresenta uma gama maior de documentos e programas em relação à Argentina, mas nenhum dos dois países possui um documento, um trecho dentro de um documento, e nem um programa que contemple esse grupo de professores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação continuada de professores. Brasil. Argentina. Inclusão.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo un estudio comparativo entre las políticas de formación continua de docentes de educación básica para el contexto educativo inclusivo en Brasil y Argentina. Para ello optamos por la metodología de Educación Comparada, a través de la cual se pretende conocer, interpretar y verificar similitudes y diferencias entre las políticas de formación continua docente de los países en cuestión. Primero, discutimos específicamente la formación continua del profesorado para el contexto inclusivo en Brasil y Argentina. Al final, establecimos los puntos de divergencias y convergencias de las políticas en dichos países, donde constatamos que el aparato legal de las políticas de formación continua de profesores de la Educación Básica que actúan en las clases comunes regulares contienen restringidas menciones, pues, cuando hablan de formación continua de los profesores, hacen referencia a los profesores especializados para el trabajo con el AEE (Asistencia educacional especializada); y no a aquellos de las clases comunes regulares, en cuyas clases están insertados los alumnos con NEE (Necesidades Educativas Especiales). Brasil presenta una gama mayor de documentos y programas en relación a Argentina, pero ninguno de los dos países posee un documento, un trecho dentro de un documento, ni un programa que contemple ese grupo de profesores.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación continua de profesores. Brasil. Argentina. Inclusión

Introduction

This article is based on a comparative study of policies for continuing education of basic education teachers, in the inclusive context, in two Latin American countries, namely Brazil and Argentina. As a time frame of research, we chose the policies enacted from the 1990s, which represents a milestone in educational reforms driven in Latin America, the result of the need for adequacy "[...] to the new economic order, the changes brought about by the technological revolution and the new information and communication systems" (BUENO *et al.*, 2012, p. 1). In this scenario, characterized by technological, scientific and social innovation, we

highlight two aspects: the interest on continuing education for teachers and the rise of inclusive education.

Regarding inclusive education, Silva (2016, p. 2) clarifies that this modality "[...] presents itself with the justification of reducing the impeditive conditions that limit the social participation and the full exercise of citizenship of people with special educational needs." Considering that the discussions about inclusive education happen since the end of World War II, in the case of Brazil, this discussion is incited with the Federal Constitution of 1988, being its policies materialized "[...] as a result of the dissemination of the ideals and guidelines of international conferences and conventions of which the country was a signatory from the 1990s" (SILVA, 2016, p. 2).

From this perspective, understanding the process of continuing teacher education for this context alludes to apprehend that this constitutes a field permeated with discussions and disputes, in which the internal struggles aligned to the hierarchies present in the field of teacher policies reveal the conflicts, also in the "[...] power relations that permeate human relationships in teacher training institutions" (MARTINEZ, 2014, p. 55) and in the policies that guide and institute this training. These disputes, most of the time, favor private interests.

Moreover, society constantly demands changes for teacher training, and curricular changes seek to meet demands. In this way, continuing education has been placed as a necessity in all sectors of society, in view of the constant changes in knowledge, technologies, and the world of work. Therefore, understanding and discussing teachers' training, working conditions and careers "[...] becomes important for understanding and discussing the educational quality of a country or region" (GATTI, 2009, p. 92).

In this sense, the new challenges brought by the period of school inclusion highlight the need to (re)think the continuing education of teachers who work with these students in the regular classroom, since most of them, in their initial training, were not familiar with the diversity present in the context of school inclusion. Therefore, to understand the training processes for teachers who work in common classrooms within the inclusive context, we aim to analyze comparatively the policies for continuing education of basic education teachers for the inclusive context in Brazil and Argentina after the 1990s.

From the methodological point of view, in order to understand the policies of continuing education for teachers, implemented in both countries, the research, qualitative in nature, intended a bibliographic and documentary analysis from the methodology of comparative education. It aimed to understand, verify and interpret what are the discourses present in the policies of continuing teacher education for the inclusive context in the countries in question.

Thus, Comparative Education adds rich reflections of the reality and heterogeneity of each country studied. Comparative Education is a process of noticing differences and similarities, to perceive the other and, based on it, recognize oneself. In this sense, "[...] the interest for the study of foreign educational systems, approached, reflected and confronted with 'our' own educational system, Comparative Education provides a better knowledge of our own educational reality" (BONITATIBUS, 1989, p. 14).

Continuing teacher education for the inclusive context in Brazil and Argentina

It is important to explain that the documents that we will present in this article are based on the principles that inclusive education is one that "[...] welcomes all and any student, with their abilities, interests, needs and uniqueness" (MANTOAN, 2018, p. 3). However, there is, in the spelling of the texts, recurrence of inclusion, especially of people with disabilities. However, as already explained, inclusive education aims to include all students in the regular education system, regardless of color, social class, cultural, economic, physical, cognitive and psychological conditions, among other aspects.

Public policies for teacher education in Latin America, especially in Argentina and Brazil, are inscribed in the context of the educational reforms that began in the 1990s and were strongly influenced by the neoliberal ideology. Therefore, it brings, from the international speeches and recommendations, the educational reforms, signed especially in the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, which resulted in the document entitled "World Declaration on Education for All", which influenced and supported educational policies in different countries. According to Gorostiaga and Vieira (2011, p. 64),

The influence of globalization on education systems stems both from the increased economic competitiveness between countries at the global level and the diffusion of cultural models that advocate certain lines of educational reform. In this respect, organizations such as the OECD or the World Bank have played a significant role, recommending or prescribing policies that emphasize the role of education in providing the basic requirements to participate in the new 'knowledge economy'.

As for the teaching profession specifically, we can infer that educational reforms "[...] are not simply vehicles for technical and structural change in organizations, but also mechanisms to reform teachers and to change what it means to be a teacher" (BALL, 2002, p. 4-5). Thus, in many proposals from international agencies, the teacher appears as the innovative agent in the school, especially with regard to the teaching and learning process, as well as to the

competencies and skills necessary for their profession in times of new working conditions and modalities.

In addition, they shift the figure of the teacher to the centrality of the educational process, highlighting training models that shorten and lighten the initial training and reinforce the need for continuing education as a trend, which is especially dedicated to filling the gaps left by the initial training. Thus, continuing education is understood as a '*continuum*', that is, an education throughout the teacher's life. For Dri (2013, p. 81):

Under the aegis of training is the concept of Continuing Education, which as the name suggests is the continuation of an educational process, in which one always learns, regardless [sic] of age and place, because continuing education is a continuum process, proposing that people should be receptive to new ideas and knowledge, and may go through formal spaces such as school and university or less formal ones such as work, home, leisure and culture, or rather, a process that is not stagnant.

Since its insertion in education systems, continuing education has assumed different names and conceptions, and conceptualizing it is not one of the easiest tasks considering its infinite proposals. Over the years, terms such as training, recycling, capacity building, and improvement have been used for this formative process, which does not have the same meaning and attribution as initial training, but also cannot be understood in isolation from it. They are, in fact, complementary processes.

Whether in a broader sense, or offered in the teacher's work space, it is certain that continued education is focused on the different educational issues and needs that permeate the school. When thinking about the teaching work for the inclusive context, it is important to understand the specificities that permeate this field.

In the 1990s, the inclusion policies disseminated worldwide through international documents such as the World Declaration of Education for All (1990) and the Salamanca Declaration (1994), as well as the Guatemala Convention created in 2001, began to influence the formulation of public policies on inclusive education. Also in this decade Brazil enacts the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) - Law No. 8.069/90, which states in its article 55, that: "Parents or guardians have the obligation to enroll their children or wards in the regular education network" (BRAZIL, 1990).

The paradigm of inclusive education implies the insertion of people with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN) in regular schools and common classrooms, ensuring that they enjoy the right to education, which is not restricted to access to the classroom, but their permanence and effective learning. Therefore, it is necessary that these students are attended in

their specificities, particularities, and needs. In this sense, based on the concept of inclusion, we refer to the basic education teachers who work in the common school with a heterogeneous group of students, some of whom have SEN.

Thus, in an attempt to ensure students' learning and academic performance, it is important to articulate the relationship between teachers who work in the regular classroom, who, according to Brazilian legislation, are the so-called "trained" ones, and those who work with the Specialized Educational Service (SES) understood as the "specialized ones". Both teachers have different attributions. According to what is described in the National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education of 2001, qualified teachers are responsible for

I - understand the special educational needs of the students and value inclusive education; II - make the pedagogical action in the different areas of knowledge more flexible in order to meet special learning needs; III - continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the educational process to meet special educational needs; IV - act as a team, including with teachers specialized in special education (BRAZIL, 2001, p. 31-32).

Specialized special education teachers, in turn, are:

[...] those who have developed skills to identify special educational needs, define and implement educational responses to these needs, support the common classroom teacher, act in the development and learning processes of students, developing strategies for flexibility, curriculum adaptation and alternative teaching practices, among others [...] (BRAZIL, 2001, p. 32).

That said, according to the guidelines, the work of teachers considered qualified should be thought of collectively, since together with the 'specialized' teachers they will think and mobilize pedagogical actions to promote the learning of children who need SES. Specialized teachers, on the other hand, make up the group whose knowledge is related to the teaching of special education, and are used to teach "[...] content specific to Special Education, including orientation and mobility, use of assistive technology, teaching LIBRAS (Brazilian Language of Signs) and Portuguese as a 2nd language of the deaf, among others" (INCLUSÃO JÁ, 2020). For this, these teachers need specific training in special education, either in the field of undergraduate and / or graduate.

Given this scenario, new challenges brought by school inclusion demonstrate the importance and the need to rethink the training of teachers who work in this context, as well as the fulfillment of what the legislation says about specific training in inclusive education, considering the SES and the pedagogical support of complementary and supplementary

character (BRAZIL, 1996). That is, these professionals act in a collaborative way, assisting the regular classroom teacher.

In 2001, Resolution No. 02/01 (BRAZIL, 2001), of the National Education Council (CNE), establishing the National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education, determines, in articles 8 and 18, which deal with teacher training for inclusion and subjects with SEN in basic education, that:

Article 8. The schools of the regular education network must foresee and provide in the organization of their common classes: I- teachers of common classes and of special education trained and specialized, respectively, to meet the educational needs of the students [...];

Art. 18. The teaching systems are responsible for establishing rules for the operation of their schools, so that they have sufficient conditions to elaborate their pedagogical project and can count on trained and specialized teachers, as provided in Article 59 of the LDB (Law of Guidelines and Bases) and the National Curricular Guidelines for the training of Early Childhood Education and Elementary School Teachers [...] (BRAZIL, 2001).

Therefore, this policy regulates measures to provide AEE to students with SEN. However, these measures seem to favor the development of the human being and bring a new approach to education. In addition, this resolution established how teachers who will work with special education should be trained. Considering inclusive education, in addition to the legal documents, we present some programs of the Brazilian federal government that were built in the inclusive perspective, but focusing on special education, particularly teacher training for SES.

In 2003, the MEC (Ministry of Education), aiming to train school managers and teachers to work in inclusive contexts, created the Federal Government program entitled "Inclusive Education: Right to Diversity". This program is currently allocated in Programs and Actions of SECADI. The program aims to support the transformation of teaching systems into inclusive educational systems, through the training of managers and teachers. Thus, the program was about "disseminating the inclusive education policy in Brazilian municipalities and supporting the training of managers and educators to effect the transformation of education systems into inclusive education systems" (BRASIL, 2006, p. 1).

In 2004, through the analysis of a collection produced by consultants for the MEC, through the then SEESP, a secretariat now extinct, a collection of books entitled "Inclusion Knowledge and Practices" was developed, which address the training of teachers who work with special education in the context of early childhood education and elementary school. This collection is composed of nine issues, with specific themes about attending to the SEN of

children from zero to six years old. The book collection also provides suggestions of materials for teachers to work on aspects of the teaching-learning of these children. Thus, although the collection does not constitute a specific training program, it has long been an important material for teachers, serving as a basis for their training.

In 2010, the MEC creates the document "Special Education in the Perspective of School Inclusion", composed of 10 issues. In this document, the MEC presents to the education systems, especially to teachers of common school, subsidies for the care of this school and its articulation with special education and its services. Throughout the document, a set of theoretical and methodological foundations are outlined about the common school in the inclusive perspective, the role of the SES in the environment of regular schools of Basic Education, the organization of the multifunctional resource room, in addition to the partnership with the common classroom teacher.

Continuing education is one of the priorities for achieving the goals set by the National Education Plan (PNE) 2014-2024, in its different editions, which may compose a public, free, inclusive and quality education for all within 10 years for its full implementation. Generally speaking, the PNE makes more specific reference to continuing education from the perspective of inclusion in Goal 4, which aims to universalize access to basic education and SES for people with disabilities, global development disorder and high abilities or giftedness, and that make up the age group of four to seventeen years (BRAZIL, 2014). To this end, in the strategies of this goal, the mention of continuing education for SES teachers is recurrent, implying continuing education for teachers of regular classes only once when it provides possibilities for expanding this training.

In the Argentinian case, the National Education Law (LEN) No. 26.206 of 2006, which compares to the Brazilian LDB No. 9.394/96, was also drafted after the Salamanca declaration was promulgated. Regarding continuing education for inclusion, in Argentina, there is no specific plan or programs for continuing education for teachers to work with this context with the same perspective as in Brazil. The attendance of students with SEN is legalized in special education. Most Argentine documents, when referring to inclusive education, refer to the most vulnerable students, from extreme poverty.

In the 1990s, the inclusion movement was spreading, in contrast to the integration movement, and it was at the end of this decade that Argentina proposed the document entitled "La Concertacion Serie A, n° 19 Acuerdo Marco para la Educacion Especial (1998)", which shows intentions to modify special education on an inclusive basis, that is, to place all students in regular school. This seems to be the Argentine document with more specificity about this

movement, since it is in this document that diversities and special educational needs (SEN) are treated as components of the same space. Moreover, it is in this document that continuing education appears in greater detail.

In this way, the "Acuerdo Marco", within an inclusive perspective, proposed the transformation of special education. Regarding teacher training, the document makes it clear that issues such as training for diversity and for SEN, in addition to those more specific to special education, should be developed in the common curricular spaces for all teacher training (MATALUNA, 2011). Therefore, it should work the curricular composition as follows:

Introduce on a mandatory basis the study of attention to diversity and special educational needs in the curricular structure of teacher training [...]. Develop specific curricular structures for different careers related to special education. Schedule courses for graduates on specific topics in special education. Establish agreements with Departments of Pedagogy (or their equivalents) of the Universities to train their teachers in diversity and special education needs (ARGENTINA, 1998, p. 16 - OUR TRANSLATION).

In this aspect, the "Acuerdo Marco" presents a broader understanding of inclusion, by emphasizing the need for curricula related to teacher education to include the study of diversities, SEN, and special education, while others end up highlighting one or the other. In addition, the document brings the understanding that teacher training is important regarding education in the inclusive context, after all they are the ones who live most of the school time with the students.

Another issue in relation to continuing education: the aforementioned document states that this will be linked to the aspects of the transformation of care for students with SEN, as it is necessary to have a frame of reference based on the essential concepts of the transformation of special education, in order to select the contents contained in the training proposals.

It also adds that it is essential to complement the different dimensions of "joint training of common and special education teachers to strengthen strategies for shared work; specific training for special education teachers and interdisciplinary teams" (ARGENTINA, 1998, p. 18). Thus, the document stresses that it is essential to have joint training for common and special education teachers predisposed to strengthen tactics for shared work; we know that in practice they do not work this way, either by including the document in the curricular proposals for initial teacher training or in the continuing education actions of teachers.

Moreover, considering that the main goal of inclusive education is quality education for all, regardless of their specificities, by bringing together all students, without exceptions, it is not limited to students with disabilities, but as the name suggests, inclusive education includes all people, with their educational needs, whether special or not.

Thus, special schooling is defined in the "Acuerdo Marco" as a 'continuum' of educational services, strategies, knowledge and pedagogical resources, teacher training, aimed at ensuring a comprehensive, flexible, and dynamic educational process for people with temporary or permanent SEN, provided by specific organizations and diversified support. We emphasize the importance of this document having as one of its objectives the issue of flexibility in dealing with these students, as well as appropriate training for teachers to work with this target audience.

Divergent and convergent aspects in the continuing education of basic education teachers for the inclusive context in Brazil and Argentina

In the current context, discussing public educational policies is an even greater challenge, since their extinction and enactment has been recurrent. In terms of continuing education policies for teachers in the inclusive context, the reality revealed, as the research unfolded, was arid as we were faced with a certain absence of specific legal documents about the continuing education of basic education teachers who work in regular common classes in the inclusive perspective.

From the documents analyzed about the continuing education of basic education teachers for the inclusive context in those countries, we understand that although such policies are particular to each country, there is a common trend referenced in the guidelines of international organizations. At times this is more veiled, at others it is clearer and sharper, such as the movements seen in Brazil in recent years, in which a package of educational reforms has been established, converging to a project of society.

In this aspect, although both countries have laws based on the inclusive perspective, which advocates the inclusion of all in regular school, regardless of any distinction; and recognizing their differences in order to provide it in their interests, capabilities and uniqueness, when talking about inclusive education and continuing education of teachers for this context, the Argentine documents will deal with inclusion in a broader sense, especially related to inequalities and diversities. On the other hand, when referring to students with disabilities and SEN, they will refer to documents related to special education. In Brazil, most of the documents referring to inclusion are based on the inclusion of people with disabilities and SEN. In this regard, Díez (2010, p. 16-17) considers that inclusive education

It is not being developed in the same way in all countries. In some, inclusion is about challenging education systems to ensure that all boys and girls attend school. In others, the goal is to combat situations where schooling for certain

students represents segregated diversity care measures and the establishment of parallel tracks. And there are also other countries whose education policies apparently reflect the principles of inclusive education, but which in practice are developing pseudo-inclusive proposals.

Based on the author's considerations, we infer that the inclusive movement is made in each country in its own way, that is, based on their understanding of what inclusion is; by the historical, political, cultural and social peculiarities of each reality; by the intentionalities that overlap already in the context of policy influence, and are maintained in the writing of the text and later in its implementation. In short, these are particularities of each national context, driven by global trends.

Based on these ways of expressing inclusion in each country, in the case of continuing education for basic education teachers who work in regular mainstream classes, the legal apparatus makes restricted mentions, since when it speaks of SES continuing education for teachers, it refers to teachers specialized in working with and not those from regular mainstream classes in whose classes students with SEN are inserted. When taken together, Brazil has a greater range of documents and programs than Argentina, but neither of them has a document, an excerpt within a document, or a program that addresses this group of teachers

In highlighting this shortcoming from a policy perspective, we recognize that while laws play a key role in the process of change toward inclusion, they do not in themselves guarantee that inclusion will take place within educational institutions, or even in the training of teachers to work with students with SEN.

However, laws are an important support for incorporating and clarifying the goals of inclusion in the policy discussion and revising previous laws to adapt them to the changes that are needed in education as a whole. Of course, in the case of the inclusive education movement we cannot lose sight of its breadth, which goes beyond the educational aspects and extends to the whole of society. Thus, these are political, social, cultural, and educational actions. Therefore, the discourse expressed in both Brazilian and Argentinian documents about policies for continuing teacher education for the inclusive context allowed us to systematize the advances and the lack of public policies for teacher training to work with students with SEN.

Thus, we understand that continuing education must be thought of from the point of view of the educational formation of the subject, since human beings are not equal to pieces that must be fitted together for profit, but exceptional individuals, independent and authors of their own history. The issue of valuing knowledge and the theory-practice relationship enables enrichment in training, reflection on practice, as well as the possibility of changes to improve

the quality of education and value the participation of all in the educational process. It is in this perspective that we defend continuing education.

That said, we believe that continuing education becomes one of the basic prerequisites for changing teachers and their classroom practice, because it is through study, research, reflection, and contact with different conceptions provided by continuing education programs that this transformation is possible.

One aspect that is important to understand is that it is not possible to disassociate continuing teacher education from the context in which they take place. Argentina and Brazil have a cultural diversity that manifests itself in social and institutional relations and is configured by the character of intercultural identities, present in social relations and practices, marked by the existence of the other. Thus, it is important to identify, observe and analyze the main reasons for the continuous teacher training to be constantly updated, since society is always changing with the advancement of technology and human development, aiming at an improvement in education and teaching.

Final considerations

In times of great devaluation of education and precariousness of the teaching profession, thinking about aspects related to continuing education as a prerequisite for educational quality measured by international indexes led us to an incursion in the teachers' own policies that cover training processes, career, practices, among other aspects inherent to teaching. It was possible to identify that, in general, the continuing education programs for teachers in Brazil and Argentina are courses attended by homogeneous policies, with isolated and fragmented actions, without specificities on the inclusive context regarding teachers of regular common classes.

The policies that aim at the inclusion of students with SEN in regular schools must include continuing education, and are therefore comprehensive policies that seek to guarantee physical, material, and personnel conditions so that these students are not only enrolled in school, but that they can learn and develop to their full potential. If the student with SEN has arrived at school, the teacher, unquestionably, needs to have a background that offers him/her minimum conditions to develop his/her work. This means that all teachers should have, in their continuing education programs, at least a theoretical basis to assist these students.

Finally, it is important to understand that continuing education for teachers is just one more resource, among several others that need to be constantly reformulated in the development of public policies so that education can be truly inclusive. Furthermore, we need inclusive

education to happen not only in the classroom, as an educational practice, but also in the school, as a social practice, extending its action to society as a whole.

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