

PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN IDEB: A STUDY ON THE MUNICIPAL EDUCATION NETWORK OF JATAÍ-GO¹

PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS ALUNOS COM NECESSIDADES EDUCATIVAS ESPECIAIS NO IDEB: UM ESTUDO SOBRE A REDE MUNICIPAL DE ENSINO DE JATAÍ-GO

PARTICIPACIÓN DE ESTUDIANTES CON NECESIDADES EDUCATIVAS ESPECIALES EN IDEB: UN ESTUDIO SOBRE LA RED EDUCATIVA MUNICIPAL DE JATAÍ-GO

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzed the participation of students with special educational needs (NEE) included in the municipal education network (Jataí, Goiás), in the assessments that are part of the IDEB. External evaluations were studied, which are an educational evaluation procedure that has gained space in the Brazilian educational system. Bibliographic, documentary and field research were carried out. Six schools were selected, and a questionnaire and interview were applied. The results revealed that: most respondents understand the evaluation as positive for improving the quality of education; the participation of students with NEE in the assessment that is part of IDEB is effective, but there is no differentiation of assessments for those with NEE; the additional time for completion of the written test, provided for in the legislation, is rarely used; and schools prepare these students to take the “Prova Brasil”, but without losing focus on the specific contents of the government assessment, which does not guarantee final success.

KEYWORDS: Education quality. Basic education evaluation. Students with special needs. Basic Education Development Index.

RESUMO: Este estudo analisou como acontece a participação de alunos com necessidades educativas especiais (NEE), incluídos na rede municipal de ensino (Jataí, Goiás), nas avaliações que compõem o Ideb. Investigou-se um procedimento de avaliação educacional que tem ganhado espaço no sistema educacional brasileiro: as avaliações externas. Desenvolveu-se pesquisa bibliográfica, documental e de campo. Selecionou-se seis escolas, e aplicou-se questionário e entrevista. Os resultados encontrados revelaram que: a maioria das respondentes compreende a avaliação como positiva para a melhoria da qualidade da educação; a participação dos alunos com NEE na avaliação que compõe o Ideb é efetiva, mas não há diferenciação das avaliações para os que têm NEE; o tempo adicional para a realização da prova escrita, previsto na legislação, raramente é utilizado; e as escolas preparam esses

¹ This article is part of a master's research produced in the Graduate Program in Education (PPGE) of the Federal University of Jataí (UFJ).

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alunos para fazerem a Prova Brasil, mas sem perder o foco nos conteúdos específicos da avaliação governamental, o que não garante o êxito final.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Qualidade da educação. Avaliação da educação básica. Alunos com necessidades especiais. Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica.*

RESUMEN: *Este estudio analizó cómo la participación de los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE), incluidos en la red de educación municipal (Jataí, Goiás), en las evaluaciones que componen el Ideb. Se investigó un procedimiento de evaluación educativa que ganó espacio en el sistema educativo brasileño: las evaluaciones externas. Se realizó una investigación bibliográfica, documental y de campo. Se seleccionaron seis escuelas y se les aplicó un cuestionario y una entrevista. Los resultados encontrados revelaron que: la mayoría de los encuestados entiende la evaluación como positiva para mejorar la calidad de la educación; la participación de los estudiantes con NEE en la evaluación que conforma el IDEB es efectiva, pero no hay diferenciación de evaluaciones para aquellos con NEE; el tiempo adicional para la realización de la prueba escrita, previsto en la legislación, rara vez se utiliza; y las escuelas preparan a esos alumnos para tomar el Prova Brasil, pero sin perder de vista los contenidos específicos de la evaluación gubernamental, que no garantiza el éxito final*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Calidad de la educación. Evaluación de la educación básica. Estudiantes con necesidades especiales. Índice de Desarrollo de la Educación Básica.*

Introduction

Investigating about the school and what happens in the educational process is very important, as it allows to understand certain actions and adaptations needed to achieve the expected goals. According to Sousa, Przylepa, and Assis (2019), there is concern about the quality of education offered in the public school network, since "its formation should be human, citizen, and for work" (p. 2,347). For the authors, the school must be understood as a place that is concerned with the human formation of the students, whatever their origin or social class, and that favors both struggles and contestations of social differences. This should be the locus of construction of a "mechanism that fosters social participation, democracy, citizenship, inclusion, and creates bonds of solidarity and fraternity" (p. 2,346).

This research sought to obtain answers about some questions: how does the process of inclusion of students with NEE, henceforward called SEN in the English language acronym, take place in public elementary schools in Jataí, Goiás, Brazil? What is the number of students with special needs enrolled in the basic education network in that city? How do these students participate in the Ideb evaluation process? The guiding question of this research was: how does

the process of inclusion and participation of students with SEN, included in the municipal school system of Jataí, take place in the evaluations that make up the Ideb?

The general objective of the research, therefore, was to analyze how the participation of students with SEN, included in the municipal school system of Jataí, in the evaluations that make up the Ideb happens. To this end, three specific objectives were defined: to understand the evaluation policies for the basic education system in Brazil in the last decades; to understand how the participation of students with SEN occurs in school, specifically regarding the Ideb evaluation; and to discuss how the preparation of students with SEN occurs in schools, aiming at the Ideb evaluations.

To substantiate the research topic, it was necessary to understand some concepts. In this sense, a literature review was conducted to address the difference between special education and inclusive school.

The Law of Directives and Bases for National Education (LDBEN) of 1996 defines special education as a modality to be offered preferably in the regular school system (BRAZIL, 1996). According to Almeida (2002), special education is a type of education that aims to promote the development of the potential of people with special needs, typical behaviors of high abilities and covers the different levels and grades of the education system. As for the inclusive school, the author describes that "the educational process should be understood as a social process, where all children with special needs and learning disabilities have the right to schooling as close to normal as possible" (ALMEIDA, 2002, p. 12).

The assessment of students with SEN is the focus of this research. From this prerogative, one realizes that there is not one type of assessment for each disability, but rather one type of assessment for each need of the student with disabilities. These students' needs are only understood during the teaching-learning process. By considering how this student learns, it is possible to know how to teach and, consequently, how to assess him. The debate about the assessment process for students with SEN substantiates the need for change.

This change also implies attention to individual differences and the learning context, a flexibility of the curricular organization, teaching strategies, resource management and assessment, in order to provide a maximized development of all students, according to their individual needs (JESUS; MARTINS; ALMEIDA, 2003, p. 67).

By addressing the issue of evaluation of education, involving the results obtained in Ideb, this research brings more clearly the challenges of large-scale assessment, which inserts, in its investigative focus, the national education system.

According to Luckesi (2018), large-scale assessment began in the late 1980s, more precisely in 1988, with the creation of the System for the Evaluation of Basic Education (Saeb). However, the first practice of investigating the quality of the national education system occurred in 1990 and, further on, in 2005, underwent improvements with the arrival of Prova Brasil. In this same period, the Saeb gained two more allies in the investigation of the national education system: the National Assessment of Basic Education (Aneb), which maintained the objectives and procedures performed by the Saeb; and the National Assessment of School Performance (Anresc). In 2013, the National Literacy Assessment (ANA) was added to the Saeb in order to better measure literacy levels in Portuguese Language (reading and writing) and Mathematics.

The Ideb is the large-scale evaluation mechanism created a little more than ten years ago, with the objective of laying the foundations for a system of educational goals in Brazil. Created by Inep, the Ideb is intended to measure the quality of national learning and to establish goals for improving education. The Ideb is based on two indicators: flow, through the students' approval rate; and learning, based on the students' results in the Saeb, measured both by *Prova Brasil* and the census assessment of public education, and Aneb, a sample assessment of the Saeb, which also includes the private network (BRAZIL, 2013).

The analysis of the data collected in this research allowed us to verify how the large-scale assessment takes place in the schools researched, as well as to offer a clearer perception of the abilities and difficulties of students with SEN.

Methodological approach

This research is anchored on the assumptions of qualitative research of the descriptive type, conducted through bibliographic and field research. The study by Minayo (2001) explains that qualitative research is committed to the real and deep context of relationships, processes and phenomena.

In this sense, through qualitative research we sought to obtain information about the participation (or not) of students with SEN in the tests that make up the Ideb of the public schools of Jataí.

Bibliographic and field research were used. The bibliographic research consists of the systematic review of theoretical sources developed based on previously developed material, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles (GIL, 2002). The field study was conducted through visits to several municipal public schools in Jataí to carry out the investigative process. This allowed us to get to know and interact with the research object. The field research,

according to Gil (2002), consists in going deeper into a given research proposal, to the point of bringing a greater approach regarding the research object.

The field research allowed a more direct contact with the researched problem and provided an opportunity to see how the evaluation policies have been articulated within public schools, with a more detailed look at the target audience of special education. In order to establish contact with the locus of the research, a survey of the schools in the municipal network of Jataí was carried out to verify the existence of students with SEN enrolled in the 5th grade in these schools, and it was found that only six institutions served this public. A visit was made to each of the schools, with the purpose of explaining the development of the research and applying the questionnaire to the principals and teachers, both regular and support teachers. At first, this group of respondents was defined as being in direct contact with the educational reality of the school and for knowing the students with SEN enrolled.

The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Goiás (CEP-UFG), under number 3.380.213, dated June 10, 2019.

Research Development

The field research began by establishing contact with the selected schools, initially with the principals, then with the regular teachers and the support teachers. Only females participated in this research. Although the pedagogical profession is wide-ranging, with teachers of both sexes, in the six schools investigated the respondents were women. For this reason, this research refers to female teachers and principals.

The respondents were presented with the proposal of this research and the objectives to be achieved. Besides this first dialogue, it was necessary to give them the Informed Consent Form (ICF), a document that guarantees the participants their rights and safeguards the ethical aspects of a research project.

Each participant answered a questionnaire with open and closed questions, containing a total of eleven questions, some of which were multiple choice questions and others with the need to justify the opinion. However, some opted not to participate, alleging they had no knowledge of the research object.

During the investigation eighteen participants were contacted, of which only fourteen answered the questionnaire. In the first part of the instrument used, some information was requested, such as the informant's name, academic background, position/function, time of

experience in public service, employment relationship, e-mail, and telephone number; however, some chose to keep their identity secret and did not give this personal information.

The following table shows how the respondents of this research were characterized, pointing out their initial education, position and function they hold in the school, time of experience in public service and employment relationship with the municipality. They were grouped into three professional profiles which, in the chart, are represented as follows: principal (D), head teacher (PR), and support teacher (PA). To avoid exposing the names of the schools researched, fictitious names were assigned (E1 to E6) and, consequently, the number in front of the participants' names contains the number of their respective school (for example, PR1 means regular teacher from school 1). With this form of grouping, it is easy for the researcher to identify the selected research locus, in addition to enabling a better understanding of the data presented.

Chart 1 – Characterization of the research respondents

RESPONDENT'S NAME	DEGREE	POSITION / FUNCTION	LENGTH OF EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE	LENGTH OF EXPERIENCE IN THE CURRENT POSITION	VINCULATION
D1	Degree in pedagogy	Principal	21 years	7 years	Effective
PA1	Degree in pedagogy	Support Teacher	4 years	5 months	Temporary contract
PR 1	Degree in pedagogy	Teacher	5 years	5 years	Effective
D2	Degree in pedagogy	Principal	Over 30 years	3 years	Effective
PA2	Degree in pedagogy	Support Teacher	32 years	4 years	Effective
PR 2	Degree in pedagogy	Support Teacher	33 years	33 years	Effective
D3	Degree in Languages Portuguese	Principal	20 years	2 years	Effective
PA 3	Degree in History	Support Teacher	2 years	2 years	Temporary contract
D 4	Degree in pedagogy	Principal	28 years	2 years	Effective
PR 4	Degree in pedagogy	Teacher	5 years	5 years	Temporary contract
DR 5	Degree in pedagogy	Teaching Assistants	24 years	2 years	Effective
PR 5	Degree in pedagogy	Principal	9 years	9 years	Effective
D 6	Licenciatura in Languages Portuguese	Guidance Teacher	26 years	8 years	Effective

PA 6	Degree in pedagogy	Principal	22 years	1 year	Effective
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Source: Research data

It was noted that the principals have many years of public service, all with over twenty years of experience. The teachers and support teachers vary between a short and long time of work: only one regular teacher and two support teachers have more than twenty years of professional experience. As far as employment status is concerned, only three have temporary contracts: two support teachers and one teacher.

The information collected from the questionnaire and its tabulation and analysis allowed us to identify two categories of analysis, which emerged from the investigated reality. This categorization made it possible to group the conceptions of each respondent in this research regarding the evaluation policies for basic education and the participation of students with SEN in the IDEB. Thus, the categories of analysis consisted of two blocks that, in a way, responded to the specific objectives of this research: the participation of students with SEN in the IDEB assessments; and the preparation of students with SEN to participate in the *Prova Brasil*.

When the questionnaire was applied, it was asked whether the evaluation policies for basic education influence the functioning of the school in which they work: eleven participants said they did and three said they did not.

The answers indicated that the evaluation policies for basic education are effective in diagnosing the weaknesses in the teaching and learning process, besides pointing out significant changes and improving the teachers' teaching practices.

The fourteen participants said that they perceive it positively, stating that through this monitoring it is possible to set goals for improvements in education; one respondent said that the Ideb is a reference mechanism to verify the students' learning performance and income. One of the statements pointed out that the Ideb as an evaluation policy for basic education is a way to monitor the quality of teaching and student learning in order to establish goals for improvement and growth.

In relation to *Prova Brasil*, we asked how the evaluation process occurs before and during the application of the test. All fourteen participants answered the question and it was found that the students are made aware of the importance of *Prova Brasil*, its purpose and its contribution to learning. It was also observed that the *Prova Brasil* is applied in accordance with the standards established by the government. It was noted that, before the tests, the teachers participate in courses to train and guide the students about the tests, and the participants in the

Prova Brasil receive an activity booklet prepared by the Secretary of Education to evaluate them in the process.

The responses indicated that most of the schools surveyed perform mock exams as a way of reviewing the content applied to students, and this occurs with students with SEN on an individual basis.

Still on the subject of *Prova Brasil*, the research sought to find out about the conditions under which the exam is taken, if there is additional time for students with SEN, what contents are presented in the evaluation, if there is any kind of preparation for the students, in short, it was questioned how this evaluation is carried out among students with SEN. Fourteen answers were given to this question, and it was observed that students with SEN receive differentiated attention during the test, because a support professional is available to accompany them throughout the test.

When addressing the specific skills that students with SEN need to take the Prova Brasil, twelve participants gave answers and two gave no answers. From the answers given, it is clear that the skills required are the same as those required of other students, but the school is not provided with a test adapted for students with SEN.

It was noticed that the schools surveyed show great concern about the preparation of students with SEN to participate in the evaluations that make up the IDEB. The respondents unanimously stated that the schools offer students with SEN after-school classes, tutoring, individualized care with the Specialized Educational Assistance (SEA) teacher, individualized care with the classroom teacher, and guidance on activities to be done at home with the help of the family.

Each respondent was asked to briefly consider the participation (or not) of students with SEN in the evaluations that make up the IDEB, but only six of the fourteen made any observations:

They need to apply more reinforcement activities according to classroom activities and also thinking about special students because they have a higher degree of difficulty (PA3).

Students show more interest when the concept is worked with them. I believe that the evaluations of students with SEN should be differentiated (D3). No meu ponto de vista as avaliações para os alunos com necessidades especiais deveriam ser diferenciadas. Para mim não é discriminação, mas reconhecer as suas habilidades e competências (D4).

I am not against students with SEN participating in the test. It is just that just as we have to make the activities of these students more flexible to meet their needs, the Prova Brasil should also be flexible according to the specificity of each student. (PR4)

I think education is for everyone, there should be no differences, but in situations like the Ideb evaluation, the child with SEN is excluded. The test brings the same questions, there is no difference in language, and there is no precise adaptation for these children (D6).

I believe that the Ideb evaluation aims to standardize education in an anti-democratic way, because it does not offer equal quality to all students with SEN (PA6).

Most of the answers indicate the need to adapt the *Prova Brasil*. With these arguments, it is possible to see that both principals and regular and support teachers have been concerned with making the *Prova Brasil* more flexible for inclusive education students.

When analyzing the answers of the participants from each school investigated, it can be noticed that in school E1 there is a certain contradiction between the answers of D1 and PR1: D1 answered that students with SEN participate in parts of the *Prova Brasil* due to the lack of adaptation of the assessments; and PR1 stated that students do participate in the *Prova Brasil*, but did not justify her statement. In school E2, three contradictions were found among the respondents: D2 stated that students with SEN do not participate in *Prova Brasil*; P2 said that students participate in parts, due to no adaptation of the assessment for students with SEN; and PR2 answered that yes, all students participate in *Prova Brasil*. In another school, E3, there were also two contradictions in the answers collected: D3 answered that students with SEN participate in parts, due to the difficulties encountered by most of these students; and PA3 stated that students with SEN participate yes, in the assessment, however, they need to use the entire duration of the test because it is necessary to better analyze the questions. In school E4, two contradictions were also detected among the respondents: D4 stated that students participate, but with help from the support teacher; and PR4 stated that students participate in parts, when they attend and are able to answer. In school E5 there was a contradiction, but without justification; in this case, it was observed that PR5 stated that yes, and D5 pointed out that the students participate in parts of the *Prova Brasil*. School E6 was the only one that did not present contradiction between answers; in this sense, both respondents stated that yes, students with SEN participate in the *Prova Brasil*.

Through the answers obtained, it can be inferred that schools have tried to follow the guidelines for applying the *Prova Brasil* to students with SEN, but this goal has not always been achieved. Moreover, the contradictions in the answers demonstrate a certain lack of information about what really occurs in this analyzed process within the educational institutions.

Regarding the interference of this research for the educational field, it is understood that the exploratory analysis of the Ideb has recorded data on education in the country. This research

model can reflect positively on the teacher education process, in the sense of expanding the view that one has of the positive and negative aspects of educational policies, as well as collaborating to think about the education offered in public schools in Brazil. However, it cannot be said that this, in itself, allows us to assess the quality of Brazilian education. And one can also question that, if this were an efficient format for evaluation, there would be no need for schools to adapt and prepare their students to participate in the tests, both students with SEN and the rest. The teaching offered in schools should be sufficient for students to perform the large-scale assessments, just as they do in everyday assessments.

Sousa, Przylepa, and Assis (2019) understand that "nowadays, the school must seek the quality of education, by focusing its pedagogical work on transformative teaching techniques and strategies, aiming at the consolidation of innovative projects" (p. 2352). However, to what extent does the rigidity presented by external evaluations allow for innovation and transformation? On the contrary, the methodologies used to prepare students to take the standardized tests limit content, restrict teaching techniques, and may compromise the broader goals of public education in the country.

It is not possible to understand the need to prepare students with SEN to participate in large-scale evaluations, since the tests applied should be only to assess the content seen and learned in the school environment. If there is previous preparation of these students, there is some contradiction between what is taught in school and what is evaluated in the *Prova Brasil*.

Final remarks

With this research, it was found that the Brazilian educational system is quite fragile when it comes to the quality of education, both in infrastructure and in terms of pedagogical factors. In this vein, the research highlighted the training difficulties of professionals working with inclusive education in Jataí. It was also realized that the respondents still have little knowledge about the educational skills aimed at students with SEN, given that most of the research participants did not know how to address the topic "specific skills that students with SEN need to perform the Prova Brasil", suggesting that the understanding of some educators about inclusive education lacks greater theoretical and practical deepening.

The participation of this public in the assessment, the *Prova Brasil*, was evident, but minimal conditions of accessibility are not offered. The data revealed that the only resource available to students with SEN is the presence of a support teacher to read and help them during the test.

Another issue raised in this research was the relevance perceived by the participants regarding the Ideb as a policy for evaluating basic education. The perception presented by the respondents about the Ideb is that it makes it possible to set goals to improve education and also to monitor the progress of the learning process of students in general.

The analysis carried out in this research corroborated to understand that the evaluation policies present needs for improvement in terms of accessibility for students with SEN who, by right, participate in this process. The INEP, throughout the years of the Ideb's creation, has thought of a single evaluation model, which is the model of printed tests; however, it is noted that this model does not meet all the needs of all the participants of the *Prova Brasil*. In order to meet these needs, we should think about tests in Braille for blind students and in Libras for deaf students, as the National High School Exam (ENEM) already provides.

With the results of this research and the considerations exposed here, it is not intended to minimize the importance of large-scale assessments created by the government to obtain improvements in the quality of education, however, it aims to point out new possibilities for this process to be inclusive and meet all students in their specificities.

It is hoped, therefore, to contribute to the taking of new directions for the policies of large-scale assessment in basic education schools. With this production, it is not intended to exhaust the theme presented, but to raise new eyes to the Brazilian educational system and draw new studies and research on evaluation policies, as well as on inclusive education policies in Brazil.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Foundation for Research Support of the State of Goiás (Fapeg).

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How to reference this article

SILVA, F. R.; ASSIS, R. M. Participation of students with special education needs in IDEB: A study on the municipal education network of Jataí-GO. **Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional**, Araraquara, v. 26, n. esp. 1, e022014, Jan./Dec. 2022. e-ISSN:1519-9029. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22633/rpge.v26i00.16464>

Submitted: 08/11/2021

Revisions required: 27/12/2021

Approved: 19/02/2022

Published: 31/03/2022

Management of translations and versions: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação