

# PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTIONS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION (CO-TEACHING): DIALOGUES WITH THE SECOND CLASSROOM TEACHER IN SANTA CATARINA<sup>1</sup>

*AS INTERAÇÕES PEDAGÓGICAS NA PERSPECTIVA DO ENSINO COLABORATIVO (COENSINO): DIÁLOGOS COM O SEGUNDO PROFESSOR DE TURMA EM SANTA CATARINA*

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents the results of a research that sought to analyze the perception of the Second Classroom Teachers about the pedagogical interactions that are established between this professional and the main classroom teacher in the perspective of collaborative teaching (Co-teaching). To this end, the role of the Second Classroom Teacher and his/her attributions are contextualized according to the legal documents and inclusion policies in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil. The Co-teaching is conceptualized from the theoretical contributions of Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), Vilaronga (2014), Costas and Correia (2012), França (2016), Zerbato (2014) and Mendes (2002, 2006). In the context of a qualitative research, the analyzes fall upon the voice of ten Second Classroom Teachers and the data from a post-interview self-assessment. It was noticed that there are still advances to be made regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools that impact the co-teaching culture in the school environment, bypassing the pedagogical relations between the teachers who work in the same class.

**KEYWORDS:** Co-teaching. Second Classroom teacher. Pedagogical interactions.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo apresenta resultados de uma pesquisa que buscou analisar a percepção dos Segundos Professores sobre as interações pedagógicas que se estabelecem entre esse profissional e o professor titular na perspectiva do ensino colaborativo (Coensino). Para tanto, contextualiza-se a função do Segundo Professor de Turma e suas atribuições de acordo com os documentos legais e as políticas de inclusão em Santa Catarina. Conceitua-se o Coensino a partir das contribuições teóricas de Mendes, Vilaronga e Zerbato (2014), Vilaronga (2014), Costas e Correia (2012), França (2016), Zerbato (2014) e Mendes (2002, 2006). No contexto de uma pesquisa qualitativa, as análises recaem sobre a voz de dez Segundos Professores e os dados de uma autoavaliação pós-entrevista. Percebe-se que há ainda avanços a serem feitos em relação à inclusão de alunos com deficiência nas escolas regulares que impactam a cultura do coensino no ambiente escolar, perpassando sobre as relações pedagógicas entre os professores que atuam na mesma turma.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Coensino. Segundo Professor de Turma. Interações Pedagógicas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This work, in the macro sense, addresses Inclusive Education and its implications in the context of schools, especially regarding the performance of teachers. This education is based on a historical context in Brazil and specifically, in this work, in the state of Santa Catarina. There is a trajectory to be considered, with advances, challenges and criticisms to be analyzed that need to be continually investigated.

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The field of inclusion is based on the conception of differences, something of the order of the singularity of the individuals. According to Paulon, Freitas and Pinho (2007), “to operate the transformations in the modes of relationship within the school, it is also necessary that the professionals involved take upon themselves the task of thinking these questions in a reflective and collective way” (p. 21). Inclusion in the school environment requires that all professionals perceive themselves as agents of inclusive education, enabling the integration, reception and inclusion of students equally, with the same rules and care.

The term School Inclusion has been widely used as an affirmation of the achievements related to the universalization of education, for all people, since it presupposes an adjustment to the existing school model, without changes in the structure, conceptions and educational practices. To Garcia (2011):

Inclusion consists in the relationship waged on a social historical context by social individuals, that is, a complex and contradictory practice, with a sense of struggle, of confrontation, which necessarily coexists with its opposite - exclusion - but which establishes itself in the direction of questioning and overcoming social practices based on inequalities. (p. 2).

The work of professionals working in the inclusive environment requires a collective sharing of knowledge in search of a single goal, which is the acceptance, schooling and success of all students (Peterson, 2006; Ramos, 2008; Vilaronga & Mendes, 2014). The school inclusion proposals presuppose the construction of a support network that involves the hiring of professionals, education and permanent training, articulated to a collaborative work, according to Mendes, Villaronga and Zerbato (2014). Corroborating, Ramos (2008) understands that the inclusion project has the collectivity as one of its principles. Thus, isolated decisions made by teachers, parents or specialists should be avoided. According to Peterson (2006), for the education of children with disabilities to be effective, it must involve collaboration among educators, professionals, students, families and communities.

We comprehend inclusive education as a process far beyond the act of the student being within the regular school space. It implies making it integral and active in the learning process, recognizing his/her different ways of learning. Currently, in Santa Catarina, there is the role of the “second classroom teacher”, regulated by Resolution no. 100, of December 13, 2016. According to the document:

IV. Second Classroom Teacher - available in classes with enrollment and attendance of students diagnosed with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder and/or multiple disabilities that present significant impairment in social interactions and academic functionality. Also available in cases of physical disability that present serious motor impairment and dependence on practical life activities. (p. 4).

Given the above, collaborative teaching (Co-teaching) is a possibility of work among regular and Special Education teachers, which needs co-responsibility in the teaching and learning process, sharing in the planning, execution and evaluation of a heterogeneous group of students, in which there are students with disabilities.

In the context of a qualitative research, this work sought to understand, in the light of the Co-teaching concept, the pedagogical interactions among the second classroom

teacher and the main classroom teacher. Thus, the research subjects were teachers of the State Education Network, acting as second classroom teachers of the early grades of Elementary School in the municipalities of the 36th Regional Education Management (known as GERED - *Gerência Regional de Educação*) of the State of Santa Catarina<sup>4</sup>, being the region of operation of the researchers.

At the time of data collection<sup>5</sup>, there were 14 Second classroom Teachers in this GERED. Of these, 10 were interviewed, being represented by the acronyms ST (Second Classroom Teacher). Interviews, previously scheduled by telephone contact, were conducted in schools as it was the easiest place for the participants. They signed the term of self-declaration and ethical reliability, giving consent to the research, in a proper document. The interviews were recorded in MP4 format, through a device (cell phone) and later transcribed. For data collection, two instruments were used, an interview script, with semi-structured, open questions, allowing dialogue at the time of the interview; and a quantitative and qualitative self-assessment questionnaire to be answered by the subjects after the interview. We opted for the semi-structured interview, as this allows the interviewer to ask complementary questions, if needed in relation to the subject discussed.

Thus, this paper discusses, from this introduction, about the themes involved in the study. Firstly, the concept of collaborative teaching – co-teaching, based on the theoretical contributions of Costas and Correia (2012), França (2016), Mendes (2002, 2006), Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), Vilaronga (2014) and Zerbato (2014), in order to focus on pedagogical interactions. Subsequently, we approach the definition of the term “Second Classroom Teacher”, as it appears in the legal documents of the State of Santa Catarina. Then, for the analysis, the data were organized in axes, seeking a more relational approach, in order to avoid fragmentation according to the adopted theoretical perspective. Thus, we present two axes of analysis, namely: Second Classroom Teacher and Co-teaching: an analysis of the senses and lived experiences; and Co-teaching Senses and Experiences: The self-assessment data. We note that this paper presents a cutoff of a research carried out under a Master’s in Education program<sup>6</sup>.

## 2 COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION (CO-TEACHING) AND THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTIONS

Collaboration refers to working together, not to what is done together. Thus, the process of collaboration in teaching is defined as “the joint work of two or more teachers to provide answers to the educational problems that arise in their daily school life” (Costas & Correia, 2012, p. 24). Regarding the terminology:

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<sup>4</sup> The 36th GERED covers the following municipalities: Armazém, Braço do Norte, Grão-Pará, Santa Rosa de Lima, Sao Ludgero, Sao Martinho and Rio Fortuna.

<sup>5</sup> This sample refers to the date of June 29, 2017, according to the 36th GERED human resources sector, and it is clear that the number of second classroom teachers changes according to enrollment. Temporary admission is a condition that involves the exchange of teachers, with a contract period for the second teachers of only one academic year of the institution where the student with disabilities is located. In the next term, the professional goes through a new selection process and a new choice of vacancies.

<sup>6</sup> Research conducted by Beatriz Buss, guided by PhD Professor Graziela Fátima Giacomazzo, entitled *As interações pedagógicas entre o segundo professor e o professor titular na perspectiva do ensino colaborativo* (The pedagogical interactions between the second classroom teacher and the main classroom teacher in the perspective of collaborative teaching), defended in the Graduate Program in Education of the *Universidade do Extremo Sul Catarinense* (UNESC).

The terms co-teaching and collaborative teaching were adopted to the detriment of the term “supportive teacher”, used in many other countries, considering that the latter does not reflect, from our perspective, the ideal professional relationship. This should occur at school, where the central idea has to be collaboration, that is, to work together, with a common goal, in parity situations, therefore, without hierarchy and voluntarily. (Mendes, Vilaronga, & Zerbato, 2014, p. 66).

Collaborative work or collaborative teaching (co-teaching), according to Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), “is defined as a partnership between regular and special education teachers, as long as the two teachers are responsible and share the planning, execution and evaluation of a heterogeneous group of students” (p. 46). According to the authors, the characteristics that best define co-teaching are:

- There are two or more licensed professionals who work as co-teachers, one being the “general educator” and the other the “special educator”.
- Both participate fully, though differently, in the teaching process. The “general educator” retains primary responsibility for the content to be taught, while special educators are responsible for facilitating the learning process.
- Students are grouped heterogeneously and both teachers work with all students. Thus, various student combinations and group sizes can be used so that each student has his/her full learning potential explored. Co-teachers should be firmly committed to the idea that everyone is “our student” rather than “mine and your student”. (Mendes, Vilaronga, & Zerbato, 2014, p. 34).

Co-teaching, as a model of duo-teaching, happens when two teachers - the second classroom teacher and the main classroom teacher - work together, aiming for the same goal, the students’ learning. According to Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), if both teachers opt for the co-teaching, some points should be considered: *Planning*: Time is necessary for common planning during the week. *Demonstrate Parity*: Since parity is essential for the co-teaching, the authors suggest using phrases such as “our students” and not “your/my students”; include the names of the two teachers in the communications and reports as responsible for the classroom; talk before giving feedback and/or communicating to parents, student or teaching staff; as well as ensuring that teachers are responsible for all students’ learning. *Behavioral issues*: Dialogue about classroom specificities, rules and decision making in case they are not met. *Conflict handling*: Teachers must decide when to confront and/or ignore problems. According to the authors, moments of confrontation should be avoided when one of them is upset or angry.

The strength of collaboration lies in being able to unite the individual skills of educators, to foster feelings of positive interdependence, to develop creative problem-solving skills and to support each other so that everyone assumes educational responsibilities. (Capellini & Mendes, 2008, p. 110).

Collaborative teaching is a process in which the consultant, who specializes in Special Education, works in an equal relationship with a consultant, a teacher of the regular class, assisting him/her in his/her efforts to make decisions and to develop pedagogical activities aimed at attending to a heterogeneous group of students (Lago, 2013).

In collaborative teaching, Gately Jr. and Gately (2001) point out that regular and inclusive teachers need to share collective work without hierarchies, in which all responsibilities

towards all students in a classroom belong to the team; from planning, interventions, monitoring, evaluation, and re-planning, everything is shared by teachers with different skills.

The development of the collaborative partnership among teachers does not occur accidentally, as it is an adaptive movement that takes some time. To Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), there are three different stages, with varying degrees of interaction and collaboration among regular education and special education professionals, which occur after the implementation of the co-teaching proposal. The first is considered the *Early Stage*, in which the two professionals communicate in an attempt to establish relationships, creating boundaries and partnerships. This communication is formal and infrequent, and there is a risk of stagnation in the first stage. The second is called the *Commitment Stage*, whereby communication among professionals becomes more frequent, open and interactive, enabling them to build the level of trust needed for collaboration and gradually the special educator begins to take over his/her space in the classroom. And in the third and final stage, known as the *Collaborative Stage*, the two professionals communicate and interact openly, with communication, humor and a high degree of comfort experienced by everyone - as a result they truly work together and complete one another.

Still, according to the authors, the necessary conditions for a truly collaborative work among professionals to take place are: existence of a common goal; equivalence among participants; participation of all; responsibility sharing; resource sharing; voluntarism.

School inclusion requires changes in teaching practices, culture, curriculum, activity planning, and diverse views within the school, but teachers are not always willing to move out of their comfort zone to take on these challenges. Given this context, collaborative work can become a means to achieve a richer and more meaningful learning for all students.

### **3 THE SECOND CLASSROOM TEACHER: REGULATION AND ROLE IN SANTA CATARINA**

The role of the Second Classroom Teacher in Santa Catarina is legally based on Resolution no. 112, of December 2006, which began in schools in 2007. In 2009, the Pedagogical Program was formulated, with the attributions of the professional and, in 2016, Resolution no. 112/2006 was amended, and Resolution no. 100, of December 2016 emerged. More recently, Law no. 17.143, of May 15, 2017, which provides for the presence of Second Classroom Teacher of the Basic Education schools that are part of the state education system. According to Araújo (2015), the Second Classroom Teacher is named as such only in the official documents of the State of Santa Catarina. At the Federal level, the term “support professionals” is used, which is intended for working with public students of Special Education, who do not independently carry out mobility, hygiene and food activities, according to Technical Note 19, September 8, 2010.

The terminology “Second Classroom Teacher” expresses a qualified Special Education professional who works closely with the conducting teacher in the classrooms with students with disabilities, Global Development Disorder (GDD), and high skills/giftedness. These professionals must have the skills to identify educational needs, providing technical support to the main teacher and pedagogical support to provide the students’ well-being and learning. According to Resolution no. 2, of February 11, 2001, in paragraph 2:

Specialized teachers in special education are considered those who have developed skills to identify special educational needs in order to define, implement, lead and support the implementation of flexible strategies, curriculum adaptation, pedagogical teaching procedures and alternative practices appropriate to their attendance, as well as working as a team, assisting the regular class teacher in the practices that are necessary to promote the inclusion of students with special educational needs.

According to Resolution no. 100, of December 13, 2016, in art. 2, the Second Classroom Teacher will be:

Available in classes with enrollment and attendance of students diagnosed with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder and/or multiple disabilities that present significant impairment in social interactions and academic functionality. Also available in cases of physical disability that present serious motor impairment and dependence on practical life activities. (p. 3).

The National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) states that, in order to act, “the teacher must be based on his/her initial and continuing education, general knowledge for the teaching practice and specific knowledge of the area” (p. 13). In this sense, the document affirms the need for the Special Education professional to have contemplated, in the process of his/her education, knowledge of both teaching as well as specific knowledge related to the needs of people with disabilities or the specific needs that make up the school context.

According to França (2016), the second classroom teachers must have a Higher Education degree, specialization course in Special Education or one of the correlated areas; or in specialization courses and/or in complementation courses. It should be added that Law no. 9.394, of December 20, 1996, in art. 18, clause 4, specifies that for teachers who are already working in the teaching profession, opportunities for continuing education should be available, including at the level of specialization by educational bodies such as the municipality and state.

To assist education professionals and in order to qualify the teaching and learning process of students with disabilities, typical behaviors and high skills/giftedness, as mentioned above, the Pedagogical Program was launched in the state of Santa Catarina in 2009 by the Santa Catarina Foundation of Special Education (FCEE - *Fundação Catarinense de Educação Especial*), with the purpose of outlining the Special Education guidelines for students enrolled in regular schools and also for those attending the Specialized Educational Assistance Centers in Inclusive Education. The objectives are:

- support - assist the teacher and student in the teaching and learning process;
- complement - complement the curriculum, enabling access to the common national base, according to LDBEN [*National Education Guidelines and Framework Law*];
- supplement - expand, deepen or enrich the curriculum of the common national base, according to the LDBEN. (Pedagogical Program, 2009, p. 15).

The actions reported by the document use three keywords: support, complement and supplement and must be performed by the Second Classroom Teacher.

The State of Santa Catarina has instituted the second classroom teacher in schools of the regular school network that have special education students enrollments who, to their knowledge, is a



*corregedor*<sup>7</sup> in the early grades of elementary school and collaborator of the teacher in the final grades of the elementary and high school. (Pedagogical Program, 2009, p. 3)

According to the Pedagogical Program (2009) and, more recently, Law no. 17,143, of May 15, 2017, it is up to the second teacher to:

- Plan and execute the pedagogical activities, in conjunction with the early grade main teacher;
- Propose curricular adaptations in pedagogical activities;
- Participate in the class council;
- Know in advance the planning of the conducting teacher [...];
- Participate with the main teacher in the guidance provided by SAED and/or SAESP;<sup>8</sup>
- Participate in studies and research in his/her area through projects previously approved by SED and FCEE;<sup>9</sup>
- Suggest technical aids that facilitate the special education student's learning process;
- Comply with workload at school, even in the eventual absence of the student;
- Participate in training in the area of education. (Law no 17.143, of May 15, 2017, p. 1).

In order to hire the second classroom teacher in accordance with Law no. 17,143/2017, the Elementary Schools that are part of the state education system of Santa Catarina are required to maintain the presence of the second classroom teacher that have students with diagnosis of: Multiple disability associated with mental disability; Mental disability with dependence on practical life activities; Disability associated with psychiatric disorder; Motor or physical disability with serious motor impairment and dependence on practical life; Autistic Spectrum Disorder with exacerbated symptomatology; and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder/ Impulsive Disorder with exacerbated symptomatology.

Given the actions explained in the Pedagogical Program, the knowledge advocated by the National Policy of Special Education, among other documents cited in this paper, the second classroom teacher needs to develop certain skills to perform his/her work, giving technical and pedagogical support to the main teacher to provide students' learning. A teacher's concept of a student with a disability can determine the relationship between them. According to Figueira (2013), it is necessary that strategies are thought through the preparation of the teacher, the students and the entire pedagogical technical team of the school. In planning, it is essential to consider certain items, such as knowing the profiles of students to be included, their needs, conducting studies to generate knowledge and procedures that best meet the specifics of the learners, in order to develop a consistent pedagogical project that enables the development and the autonomy of all students.

Mendes (2008 as cited in Rabelo, 2012) states that the biggest challenge is to build a collaborative culture at school, to think about proposals for teacher education and pedagogical

<sup>7</sup> *Corregedor*: Term used by the Pedagogical Program to mention one of the assignments of the second classroom teacher. A "corregedor" is someone who corrects mistakes of judicial authorities.

<sup>8</sup> SAED - *Sala de Apoio ao Estudante com Deficiência* (Disabled Student Support Room); SAESP - *Sala de Atendimento Especializado* (Specialized Care Room).

<sup>9</sup> SED - *Secretaria de Estado da Educação* (State Department of Education); FCEE - *Fundação Catarinense de Educação Especial* (Santa Catarina Foundation of Special Education).

work based on the collaborative philosophy: “the idea of collaboration can be considered today as the key to putting into effect the inclusion movement” (p. 114).

#### **4 SECOND CLASSROOM TEACHER AND CO-TEACHING: AN ANALYSIS OF MEANINGS AND EXPERIENCES**

In this paper, we present one of the aspects of analysis that sought to understand how the planning of classes occurs considering the organization of the educational process (methodological and didactic adaptations, strategies, resources and materials) and organization of the education system. In the light of the Pedagogical Program (2009), it is up to the second classroom teacher: “To plan and execute the pedagogical activities, along with the early grade main teacher” (p. 17). In the ST7 report, we noticed that the main teacher and the second classroom teacher plan actions to be developed with the students: “Yes, we plan together, when we share the transportation to get to school and when we stay in school during lunchtime”. As she stated, they use transportation and lunchtime to plan together, but even though it is an example of willpower, we do not consider this attitude to be ideal, as the activity hours for planning development must be made available in the school environment during working hours, providing access to the necessary materials and resources, and the time of rest and transportation should be used for personal needs. We emphasize that, in school transportation, ethical issues should be highlighted, since conversations and evaluations about students should be conducted in quiet and confidential environments, without exposing the facts. However, they choose to perform differently.

According to ST7: “Her planning is different from mine, she plans and I prepare tests and assignments, because I have little time, while she is planning, I attend the arts and physical education classes”. Therefore, in practice, it is not a planning, they fractionate the work, performing a fragmented planning. ST4 mentions that they talk about planning, but also opt for separate planning. The main classroom teacher does the planning for all the students: “We talked because we knew it would be ideal if we had some time to sit and plan everything together, but in fact, she (the main teacher) chose to stick with that part”.

Fragmented planning makes it difficult for teachers to collaborate because, in the solitary process, they list different objectives, which hinders the class’s co-teaching. Thus, they cause exclusion within the school space. Peterson (2006) emphasizes that it is necessary to discuss, at school, issues related to the common planning time between the Special Education teacher and the regular classroom teacher. As we noticed, the teachers have points that can bring them closer to the co-teaching, such as bonds and empathy; yet they still cannot establish shared planning. The problem of lack of time is perceived in the report of the other interviewees, who claim to hold conversations during classes.

It is important to point out that, regarding the definitions for the co-teaching, we have shared planning, but in the reports, ST1, ST2, ST3 and ST10 mention that they do not plan together, each with his/her own reasons, by choice or lack of openness of the main teacher. Thus, planning is carried out individually. SP2 affirmed: “little talk about planning, because there is no opening. Over time it got lost more and more. I can’t adapt the content to the student because we can’t talk and I don’t know what will be worked on. As the student is not literate and is in fourth grade, it makes it even more difficult”.



We realized that the fact that students have the right guaranteed by law, a planned teaching, with objectives, considering their specificities, activities, methods and strategies previously thought, is not yet a reality. The statement is based on the report of the interviewees who find it difficult for this process to occur, despite accompanying students with disabilities at all times in the school space. The strength of collaboration lies in being able to unite educators' individual skills to foster feelings of positive interdependence, develop creative problem-solving skills, and support each other so that everyone assumes educational responsibilities (Capellini & Mendes, 2008).

Given what they report, co-teaching is possible, but it needs a reorganization in the system, because collaboration lies in the ability to unite skills of these educators, working together when both assume the educational responsibilities. Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014) suggest that the education system should provide opportunities for teachers to make exchanges and set common teaching goals for Special Education students. The way work is organized makes communication, exchange and teamwork impossible.

In the light of the authors, we highlight the ST8 report: "sit down and plan... it doesn't exist, it is a utopia", and we highlight the contradictions between reality and what the Pedagogical Program (2009) advocates, for example. We also emphasize that the education system needs to provide teachers with time so that they can plan together, exchange ideas and seek solutions to the difficulties encountered in everyday school life.

There are other aspects that make planning difficult from the perspective of the co-teaching, such as: unwillingness to collaborate with each other; lack of bond; different times and spaces for planning (time seen as time off by some professionals); poor management assistance/support; lack of knowledge regarding the attributions of the second teacher; and lack of awareness of the need for joint planning. To Figueira (2013), it is also necessary to allow teachers who work with School Inclusion opportunities to reflect on planning options and new proposals for Inclusive Education.

A good school environment necessarily goes through the basic issues of the characteristics that an inclusive classroom should have. Among them are methodological strategies and pedagogical actions, allowing students equal access to a basic, rich curriculum and quality pedagogical praxis (Figueira, 2013, p. 84).

We also look at the planning issue that excludes students. A barrier is created between students with disabilities and the so-called "normal", who attend the same space but perform different activities and learning. According to the Salamanca Statement (1994), the document highlights: "We believe and proclaim" that every child has a fundamental right to education, and should be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain the appropriate level of learning. As we noticed in the ST9 statement, the fact that planning is exclusionary is perceived by the students themselves: "We cannot escape from what others are doing because he feels most valued when he is doing the same activities as other students. The student himself posed as the student he didn't know". They attend the classroom environment and realize that their peers learn different content from their own, creating two classrooms within a single space.

As ST10 also reported: "There are two classes within one. She sits in the front of the classroom and I sit in the back with the four students". Literally, two distinct teaching and

learning situations within a single classroom. To Vilaronga (2014), collaborative teaching does not happen in a common room where one teacher acts as “main teacher”, while the other acts as “assistant”, and even less when the activity with the disabled student is taught by the teacher of Special Education in the corner of a regular school classroom, while the regular school teacher dedicates himself/herself to the rest of the class. Thus, it is necessary to understand that not all students will reach the same degree of abstraction or knowledge, at a given time. Thus, the planning of school activities must take into account the uniqueness of the students. Given this, we also analyze the methodological and didactic adaptations, strategies, resources and materials.

In accordance with Resolution no. 2/2001, cited previously, we sought to verify in the statements whether there are implementations in practices and how this process occurs. In the statements of the second classroom teachers, we found evidence regarding the pedagogical adaptations, the accomplishment of the activities and evaluations or the impossibility to make modifications in the activities for the students with disabilities. ST5 mentioned that it makes pedagogical adaptations more focused on the structural and physical conditions (according to the student’s disability) such as pencils, desks and cutlery. ST6 elaborates activities, exploring images and words through associations. ST7 modifies activities and games in relation to those performed by the class. ST9 manufactures playful activities and games.

The second classrooms teachers mentioned report that they develop actions in relation to the content worked by the class. ST2 stated how the adaptations happen and which strategies are used: “When the main teacher works on a specific content, I look for activities for the student. Usually the student is included, the main teacher also looks for ways for the student with disability to participate, such as different projects and activities. As an example: she worked on the project ‘tin doll’, the student did the activities and we took the opportunity to work on the letter ‘B’. We also adapt games, routine activities, make posters, work with cutouts, collages, small books creation and image association. The assessments are also adapted to what was worked with the student”.

ST9 pointed out that they can’t adapt all activities, so they look for activities directed to the same subject: “but of course, there are things he can’t do, so I look for other things, but directed to the same subject. In Portuguese language we work the syllable families to accompany him. In calculations we always look for something different like the nail board, Lego and golden bead material<sup>10</sup>”.

As the teacher stated, in some situations, she seeks alternative materials and different strategies in her planning. Figueira (2013) states that it is necessary to eliminate activities that do not benefit the student or restrict his/her active participation or, furthermore, those that he/she is unable to execute; suppress objectives and curriculum content that cannot be achieved by the student because of his/her disability, replacing them with others that are accessible, meaningful and basic. The author mentions important details for teachers at the moment of planning, as the objectives should be geared towards the learning of all students, leading teachers to list meaningful and basic strategies, making it possible for everyone.

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<sup>10</sup> Material designed by the Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori to work with Math.

For the other teachers, the adaptation of content that enables the inclusion of students with disabilities at the time of learning is something which is impossible to happen, always perform different activities, as we can see in ST3 reports: “I always give differentiated activities for the class”; and from ST4: “I do not make any specific adaptation”. Given the answers, we investigated the cognitive conditions that prevent these students from doing the same activities as the others. In order to understand why they do not make adaptations, we think about the students’ disability: The student of ST3 is diagnosed with Moderate Mental Disability and the student of ST4 with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

The adaptations would enable the learning of these students who cannot develop and perform the process in the same time as the others. Therefore, the right to learning is not properly guaranteed in relation to the other students. These students only occupy the same physical space, contradicting public policies regarding the conception of learning for all students. As the Pedagogic Program (2009) quotes, “not defining functional goals for some and academic for others” (p. 16). All students need to be stimulated within their potential, seeking their development in the learning process.

According to Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), “the knowledge and skills required relate mainly to good teaching practice and includes the assessment of special needs and adaptations of curriculum content using technologies” (p. 38). Curriculum adaptations must be preceded by rigorous student assessment of the following aspects: academic competence; biological, intellectual, motor, linguistic, emotional development; social and interpersonal skills; motivation for studies, among others that indicate that adaptations are really indispensable to their education (Figueira, 2013). Given what the author states, we realize that the vast majority of respondents do not conduct previous studies on students with disabilities, in order to seek to understand and comprehend the specificities of each student, in order to define the strategies, techniques and adaptations necessary for inclusion and learning.

The use of resources and strategies such as computers, mobile phones, tablets, materials such as games adapted for each disability, audio descriptions and videos enrich the learning process of a student with disabilities and also the learning of the so-called “normal” students. Thus, the importance of technologies has been highlighted in the documents and also in some reports, such as the one by ST5: “Nowadays, with the media, he has a world inside the house, he has a cell phone, WhatsApp, he would click and speak, I set it to be in upper case only. He wrote everything together without using spaces, did not separate words, but it was understandable, after a while he was already adding the spaces. Then I was already communicating via WhatsApp. Now even midway through the year he read everything, the simple syllables and the complex ones”. And also in the ST10 states: “She can’t write because she has no motor coordination, but on the computer she can type, so I take her a lot to the computer and say the letters, she can write several words”.

The resources cited were computer and mobile, but we can take advantage of other means such as games, simulators, drawing and text editors, translators, 3D objects, alphabets and digital numbers, which can be explored in order to provide the inclusion of students with disabilities. We realized that the use of technologies in the learning of students with disabilities does contribute, as it enables the accomplishment of activities that the students could not

perform in a conventional way (with pencil and paper). Technologies are inclusive because for all special needs there are applications that can help.

A very interesting resource was a visit to the science lab to conduct an experiment, as cited by ST8: “the students went to the Science lab to do an experiment, so I made his report (I was the scribe) and it was worth it as an evaluation, then I was able to make this bridge but, I repeat, not everything is possible to adapt”. The second classroom teacher should work with the main teacher in the classroom to help him/her develop strategies and activities that support inclusion (França, 2016)

Strategies, resources and materials may be proposed in the teachers’ goals, but they need management support for development, such as purchasing specific materials, adapting physical spaces as reported by ST5: “After I went to work there, more ramps were built, and I taught him how to use them”. To Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014), “school management should help to secure support services, provide supplies and resources for the successful program, and be available to find solutions to problems” (p. 52). Management should be available with teachers to find solutions to all difficulties, whether material, physical structure, professional relationships, training, among others that affect student learning.

Management support for the inclusion of students with disabilities and development of the collaborative teaching process is paramount, as stated by ST2: “Here the school is very supportive in this matter of contributing, in everything we have always asked for. Since we (the two second classroom teachers of the same school) play a lot of games, everything we ask for, the school always gets it for us. All we need, when they (management) will buy, games with PDDE<sup>11</sup> money. The secretary asked the teachers and the second classroom teachers what they find interesting to buy for the students. Everything we need to do, for different activities, they buy or provide us with”. Another similar case is that of SP8: “I don’t need to make furniture adaptations, only activities adaptation. But the school invests a lot. We make games, or borrow to lend to SAED [Disabled Student Support Room]”.

Given the reports cited, we realize the importance of having a rich collection of materials with investment and management support. In these cases, the schools provide resources for the work to be done with the students, which facilitates the exercise of the second classroom teachers. There are other situations where teachers do not have much access to resources, such as ST7: “But we don’t have rich pedagogical material, the school does not receive this kind of material. So everything we have is built, it takes time”. Relating to the stage we talk about planning time, this situation is aggravated when the teacher also needs time to make materials among other tasks that involve resources.

When asked about the possibility of collaborative teaching in schools of the 36th Regional Management, most of the second teachers answered that collaborative teaching is possible, as ST1 pointed out: “It should be like that, there should be no other way of working. True inclusion only happens this way, because otherwise it is a false inclusion”, except for ST6 and ST10 who do not believe in the possibility of collaborative teaching in schools in the region. As stated by ST10: “I don’t think it’s possible, because the schools are very crowded”.

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<sup>11</sup> PDDE – *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (Money Directly to the School Program).

And to ST6, collaborative teaching is not possible because there are many who see the second classroom teacher as a person who is about to disrupt: “there is a lot of prejudice against the second classroom teacher and the presence of students with disabilities in the classroom”.

In ST2’s statement, she points out that collaborative teaching is possible, but what is missing is “this exchange and teachers accept a little more, because the main teacher sees the second classroom teacher as someone to disturb, to watch. Unfortunately we keep delaying and the year is over”. We can observe, in the declarations of the second classroom teachers that most of them realize the possibility of collaborative teaching and that it would be the best way to do the work, but still have barriers, prejudices and difficulties of relationships between the two teachers, in which the main teacher is viewed as superior in relation to the second classroom teacher. The very nomenclature given to the function of “second classroom teacher” as the one that comes in “second”, that comes after.

Faced with the issue of differentiation between the second classroom teacher and the main classroom teacher, ST1 states: “This would have to change, because special education is a very tough and difficult area, the second classroom teacher ends up carrying the student’s rejection [...] and the main teacher stands on his/her pedestal as a main teacher”. The second classroom teacher mentions something that has been debated before, but we would like to return to the issue of the nomenclature that ultimately induces a hierarchical dispute between the two teachers. There are other possibilities, including using the term “co-teacher” as it unites collaborative teaching and its function. We understand that the term used to designate the role of the second classroom teacher influences on how this professional is perceived within the classroom or even by the school community.

The relationship and communication between the second classroom teacher and the main teacher should always be present, as mentioned by Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014). In collaborative teaching, the two professionals communicate and interact openly, with communication, humor and a high degree of comfort experienced by all, and as a result they truly work together and complete one another. As the Pedagogical Program (2009) also points out, the second classroom teacher has the role of “correcting the class along with the main teacher, contributing due to his/her specific knowledge, proposing different procedures to qualify the pedagogical practice” (p. 16). Even highlighting the relevant characteristics for the co-teaching and the legislation supporting the process, we realize the slowness in which things happen, as the second teachers interviewed still cite many difficulties.

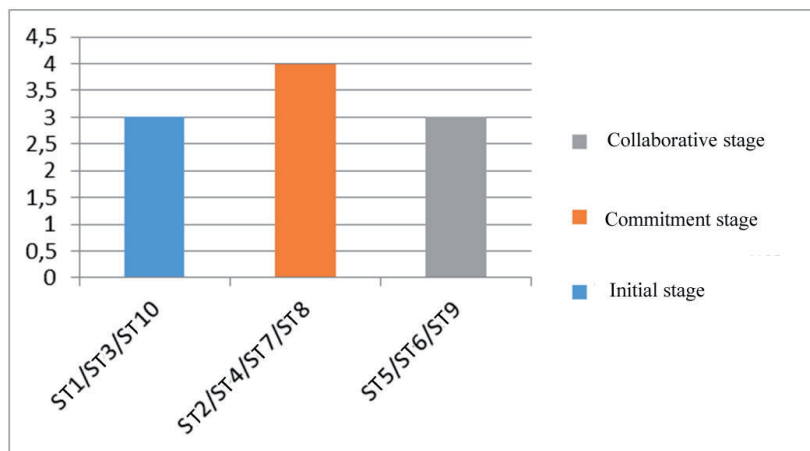
The lack of bonding between professionals can make it difficult even to develop a class, according to ST7’s statement: “If the two are not bonded, the whole class will be disturbed, the work does not flow then, the whole class will not socialize or evolve”. To respond to the difficulties encountered in everyday life, teachers should seek partnership with each other. To ST3: “It is bad that there is no collaboration between us, because if it existed the work would yield much more. If there was interaction, dialogue and harmony, she could contribute with me and vice-versa”. And ST4 mentions that: “I think our line will continue the same way in order to exchange ideas, talk, discuss and the time we need to sit down and talk, we need to do it and find out the best way we can act”. We realized that there is a similar position between the

second classroom teachers, as both point to the need for dialogue and perceive collaboration as positive for the development of the relationship process between the two teachers.

We can see that the positioning is similar, but the context is different. ST3 highlights that if there was interaction the work would be better. Thus, we point out the importance of the education system for the organization and restructuring of the process of inclusion of the second classroom teacher in order to conduct training for all professionals; develop strategies for teachers to realize the importance of collaboration; make time and space available for professionals to plan and get prepared in order to find solutions towards the difficulties presented in the educational context.

### 5 CO-TEACHING MEANINGS AND EXPERIENCES: THE DATA OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

The self-assessment was answered in an individual questionnaire, without the interference of the researcher who applied it right after the interview. For a better understanding of the meanings and experiences, we present one of the analyzed aspects of the self-assessment that aimed to understand the second classroom teachers' understanding of the approach stage related to the co-teaching, according to the definitions of Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014, p. 54): *Initial stage*: the two professionals communicate in an attempt to establish relationships, creating boundaries and partnerships - this communication is formal and infrequent; *Commitment Stage*: communication between the professionals becomes more frequent, open and interactive, enabling them to build the level of trust needed for collaboration, and gradually the special educator begins to take over his or her classroom space; *Collaborative Stage*: the two professionals communicate and interact openly, with communication, humor and a high degree of comfort experienced by all, and as a result, they truly work together and complete one another. In order to facilitate the understanding and the visualization of data, we summarized the information in Graph 1:



**Graph 1.** Co-teaching stages and performance.

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2018).



The second classroom teachers who mentioned in their answers being in the *Initial Stage*, 30%, assume they are in this stage, but they find this fact bad, they say that a change is necessary, because interaction and dialogue are lacking. ST10 does not believe that collaborative teaching is possible given his experience in the school year. As mentioned by Mendes (2015), collaboration is voluntary and requires trust and respect, because if one of the professionals involved in the process is not willing, the collaboration cannot continue.

When we look at Graph 1, we can see that 40% of the second classroom teachers are in the *Commitment Stage*, where communication between professionals becomes more frequent and interactive, which allows them to build a degree of confidence necessary for collaboration. The relationship established between the professionals - second teacher and main teacher - takes time for an opening and approximation between both, so that the trust is established, but the period for the teachers to relate is not enough. It occurs that the second classroom teachers are admitted on a temporary basis, and the contract terminates at the end of the school year, making it difficult to continue working with the student and the class teacher in the following school year.

In a similar percentage to the Initial Stage, we have the *Collaborative Stage*, in which 30% of the second classroom teachers believe working in collaborative teaching; thus, the two professionals communicate openly, the humor and the high degree of comfort are experienced by all, truly working together, completing each other, joining forces for problem solving and celebration of achievements. ST5, ST6 and ST9 believe that they act before the attributions of collaborative teaching. However, when comparing the data in Graph 1 with the interview statements, we noticed a contradiction of ST6, because in the interview, when asked about collaborative teaching, she replies that she does not believe in it, that she finds it impossible, but when she responds to self-assessment, she classifies her performance as collaborative. The contradiction of the second classroom teacher may be due to the lack of understanding of what refers to collaborative teaching as a whole.

According to Costas and Correia (2012), teachers often believe that they collaborate because they participated in a joint meeting, where issues concerning a disabled child were discussed or because they shared the same classroom. These reasons cannot be regarded as a sign of a collaborative process. "Collaboration refers to how to work together and group work of two or more teachers in order to provide answers to the educational problems that arise in their daily school life" (Costas & Correia, 2012, p. 45).

Therefore, we conclude that the second classroom teachers in relation to the approach stages mentioned by Mendes, Vilaronga and Zerbato (2014) – "Initial Stage", "Commitment Stage" and "Collaboration Stage" - believe to develop the approach path, bonding with their colleagues. However, we must bear in mind that the second classroom teachers are once again the victims of a system that precludes a longer approach period, as their contracts expire at the end of the school year.

Duo-training for all professionals would also change some professionals' view in relation to the process. From the data collected in this research, we realized the need for a reformulation of the system, in order to enable the permanence of professionals who establish productive links with their colleagues and develop the learning of all students, as well as

complementary and regular training towards the improvement of all teachers. However, as Vilaronga (2014) points out:

The collaborative stage is what is intended, but being in one of the stages is already a great advance in the daily life of schools, mainly because this function is innovative for some teachers and for some municipalities that only experienced parallel, complementary and supplementary education. (p. 12).

This work relationship has the nature of being an adaptation process; thus, it takes time and needs to be intentionally cultivated and to be a process in constant formation that should involve initial education, but which will only be completed in continuing education by providing opportunities, exercising it in practice and reflecting on it.

## **6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The inclusion of students with disabilities in the schools of the regular school network has required complex reflections on its effectiveness, among them the performance of two teachers simultaneously in the same class, when there are students with disabilities in the classroom. Considering this reality, we elaborated the problem question of the present research that aimed to analyze which pedagogical interactions between the second classroom teacher and the main teacher, in the context of the Elementary School, early grades of the state schools of the 36th Regional Education Management (GERED/SC), contribute to the collaborative teaching (co-teaching).

When analyzing the perception of the second classroom teachers about the interactions and pedagogical relations that are established between this professional and the main teacher from the perspective of the co-teaching, we understand the importance of the bond between the professionals. For the development of the co-teaching, initial and complementary training are necessary, providing support for the understanding of the role, the attributions, the specific knowledge about the disabilities, the conceptions and conceptualizations of the inclusion and the curricular and pedagogical adaptations, enabling the development of all students, in accordance with the goals set. Even the second classroom teacher, having his/her specific training, cannot seek understanding in all the technical areas the student needs. For this reason, the composition of a multidisciplinary team, including family members, is essential to enable the exchange of experience and seek to know the student in his/her entirety. In the development of co-teaching, a formative process is required which enables professionals to recognize the methods and strategies already structured with the characteristics of collaboration and the understanding of changing needs in order to evolve.

In order to carry out the highlighted actions, so that a contribution to the pedagogical interactions actually exists, we understand that there is a need for organization and modification in the process of hiring professionals according to class teachers, the vast majority being admitted on a temporary basis, a process which lasts for a term or until the student remains in the school unit. Thus, there is the difficulty of establishing strong bonds with their colleagues.

To support teachers and provide resources for the co-teaching, the support of school management is essential. The organization of the school space may or may not contribute to the collaboration between professionals. To contribute, we highlight the promotion of time

for planning, attention to solutions and difficulties encountered in the daily life of the school, material support in the development of activities and dynamics for inclusion, the development of dynamics to show the importance of the link between professionals, provide conditions for teachers' participation in training, to be available and to know how to articulate conflicts when necessary. Therefore, the manager must be a professional prepared and committed to education, having clarity of his/her actions.

The co-teaching seeks a partnership between professionals, completing each other, joining forces in pursuit of common goals for all students. These professionals should consider students in the class in which the student with disabilities is inserted, as “ours”, both responsible for the planning, development and evaluation of all. The division of students in the classroom as “mine” and “yours” shows us the masking of inclusion, concern of which is only to comply with the law - students with disabilities attend the regular school system, but, in fact, continue to be excluded within the school environment.

There is a need for reorganizations in the system to value the education of all students, without a classification, and a teaching that does not only take into account the development of the so-called “normal” ones. In addition, that schools are developed in order to facilitate cooperation and interaction between students of different classes and rhythms and collaboration among all education professionals. Furthermore, that teaching spaces enhance the participation of specialized technicians, parents and the community. And also that governors give the necessary agility to the implantation of the laws and, when sanctioned, allocate the necessary resources for the permanence, perceive the necessities and verify the accomplished actions, elaborate significant training to the education, inclusion of the people with disabilities and the development of the co-teaching. However, we realized that we still have a long way to go with the inclusion of students with disabilities, and also a way to go for co-teaching to happen in the region's schools and enhance the learning of all students.

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