

CARTOGRAPHIES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION, POLICIES AND PRACTICES^{1,2}

CARTOGRAFIAS DA EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA NA EDUCAÇÃO ESPECIAL: PRODUÇÃO CIENTÍFICA, POLÍTICAS E PRÁTICAS

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, we present a portrait of inclusive education policies in Special Education. We analyze the scientific production, education policies and the current educational reality, considering the 16 years of the National Special Education Policy from the Perspective of Inclusive Education. In methodological terms, we analyzed federal documents and the School Census produced by the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), as well as the scientific production of the *Revista Brasileira de Educação Especial* (RBEE). The findings were compared with qualitative data produced in education networks that are part of the Permanent Special Education Forum from the perspective of Inclusive Education in *Baixada e Sul Fluminense*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The results indicate a set of challenges in guaranteeing Inclusive Education within the scope of Special Education: setbacks in offering educational support, weaknesses in intersectoral policies/programs, educational inequity and theoretical and practical problems in the conception of Inclusive Education in Special Education.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Education policies. Disability. Special Education. Inequity. Scientific production.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, apresentamos um retrato sobre as políticas de Educação Inclusiva na Educação Especial. Analisamos a produção científica, políticas educacionais e a realidade educacional atual, considerando os 16 anos da Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva. Em termos metodológicos, analisamos documentos federais e o Censo Escolar produzidos pelo Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP), assim como a produção científica da *Revista Brasileira de Educação Especial* (RBEE). Os achados foram cotejados com dados qualitativos produzidos em redes de ensino que integram o Fórum Permanente de Educação Especial na perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva da Baixada e Sul Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro. Os resultados indicam um conjunto de desafios na garantia da Educação Inclusiva no âmbito da Educação Especial: percalços no oferecimento dos apoios educacionais, fragilidades de políticas/programas intersetoriais, iniquidade educacional e os problemas teóricos e práticos da concepção de Educação Inclusiva na Educação Especial.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Políticas de Educação Inclusiva. Deficiência. Educação Especial. Iniquidade. Produção científica.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sixteen years have passed since the presentation, within the scope of the *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (PDE) [Education Development Plan], of the *Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva* (PNEEPEI) [National Policy of Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education] in January 2008, which, among other measures, proposed “specific educational arrangements in which human development of each and every one is promoted” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 37). The PDE provided for several actions to intensify the educational and social inclusion of people with disabilities, among which we highlight: *Programa Escola Acessível* [Accessible School Program]; the expansion of the hiring number of educational support professionals; acquisition of affordable school buses; the expansion of the *Benefício de Prestação Continuada* (BPC) [a social assistance policy of Continuous Cash Benefit] at school; continuing training of teachers and managers primarily through distance education (Pletsch, 2014).

It is important to mention that PNEEPEI of 2008 has never been regulated. It was prepared by a working group designated through Ordinance no. 555 of June 5, 2007, delivered to the Minister of Education on January 7, 2008. Nevertheless, the document through an instituting movement has been used in the national territory as a reference for the elaboration of educational inclusion policies. In it, the term “inclusive education” is presented as “a political, cultural, social and pedagogical action, triggered in defense of the right of all students to be together, learning and participating, without any discrimination” (Ministry of Education, 2008), understanding it in the field of human rights that comprises disability in the social perspective and “conjugates equality and difference as inseparable values, and which advances in relation to the idea of formal equity in contextualizing the historical circumstances of the production of exclusion within and outside of the school” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 1). From this perspective, we understand that the policy of Inclusive Education must guarantee to the public of Special Education access to education, participation in educational activities and learning. This implies, in our understanding, as we have already signaled in other publications, the combination of three elements: 1) the recognition of difference as constitutive of the human; b) the specificities in the development of the subjects; and 3) the coexistence with cultural diversity in a school/university with and for all (Pletsch, 2020; Pletsch & Souza, 2021).

Another central aspect in 2008 PNEEPEI is the transversality given to special education that must permeate all levels and stages of education, from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education, assuming the character of modality and no longer as a segregated teaching service for people with disabilities in schools or special classes as occurred historically. Here, we would like to make a brief but not less important discussion about Special Education and a certain “identity crisis” that is constantly present in political and scientific discussions, including researchers in the area, about what Special Education is and which would be its role in contemporary times.

Our interpretation follows two directions. One is that Special Education, in accordance with the 2008 policy, is a teaching modality that permeates all stages and educational levels. However, we have advocated, in line with international literature, that it increasingly needs to structure itself as an educational support system to ensure special education public inclusion and no longer as a substitute or segregated service (Pletsch, 2020). The other is that

Special Education is an area of scientific knowledge production listed in the specific topics of Education that is part of the area of education, which, in turn, is part of the large area of Human Sciences (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development [CNPq], 2024). Thus, as well as education, Special Education is interdisciplinary, proposing a dialogue with different fields of knowledge production such as Sociology, Psychology, History and others.

In other words, reducing the understanding of Special Education as synonymous with class or Special school, as commonly occurs in Brazil and other Latin American countries, or only as a cross-sectional modality to teaching, not only limits and restricts the understanding of the importance of Special Education as a system of support for the education of people with disabilities, as well as denies the scientific contribution that the area has historically been offering to advance in this field⁵.

Taking this perspective as a background, in this paper, our goal is to present a cartography of scientific production, policies and practices of Inclusive Education, considering the advances, challenges and perspectives after 16 years of the 2008 PNEEPEI. To do so, we went through scientific production data, School Census and the field of policy production and translation, in order to present systematizations constituted by the authors along the investigation course on this theme.

2 METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS

In methodological terms, we analyzed federal documents and statistics of the School and Higher Education Census produced by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP). These data were compared with results of qualitative studies conducted in education networks that make up the Permanent Forum of Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education of *Baixada e Sul Fluminense*, Rio de Janeiro (RJ)⁶. We also present the data resulting from the research conducted on scientific production published in the *Revista Brasileira de Educação Especial* (RBEE) [Brazilian Journal of Special Education] from 2008 to 2023. Such data are result of two research projects that aim to identify how scientific production in Special Education has adopted the conception of Inclusive Education.

The selected documents for the analysis were produced from 2008 to 2024, namely: 1) 2008 PNEEPEI (Ministry of Education, 2008); 2) Resolution no. 4, of October 2, 2009, which established the Operational Guidelines for the Specialized Educational Service (SES) in Basic Education, Special Education modality; 3) Technical Note no. 4, of January 23, 2014, which brings guidelines regarding supporting documents of Special Education students in the

⁵ To deepen this discussion about the constitution of Special Education as a field of scientific production, we suggest reading national works such as those by Bueno and Souza (2018), Casagrande (2021), Casagrande and Mainardes (2021), Pletsch (2020), Pletsch et al. (2023). In international terms, we highlight Artiles et al. (2011), Donoso et al. (2017), Messiou (2017), Slee (2016) and Yarza De los Ríos (2011).

⁶ Ethics protocol 135/2021. The Permanent Forum of Special Education in the Inclusive Perspective of *Baixada Fluminense*, created in 2015, currently has the participation of 12 municipal managers of Special Education and researchers from the two public universities in the region: the *Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRRJ) and the *Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (UERJ), Duque de Caxias campus.

School Census; 4) *Lei Brasileira de Inclusão* (LBI) [Brazilian Inclusion Law] - Law no. 13,146, of July 6, 2015; 5) Technical Summary of the 2022 Higher Education Census (INEP, 2024a); 6) 2023 School Census: Technical Summary (INEP, 2024b); 7) Specialized Educational Service in the South and Midwest, Southeast, North and Northeast Brazil of 2021 (technical document) (D'Avila, 2022).

The analyzes that follow were compared with the theoretical references with which the authors have dialogued in their research and assume a cartographic character in order to present a panorama, although incorporating different perspectives and empirical data to achieve an extended understanding of challenges and the current perspectives of Special Education, considering scientific production in the area and education policies.

3 EDUCATION AS A RIGHT: PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

As previously signaled, the 2008 PNEEPEI has been used to guide education systems to become *inclusive educational systems*, already in line with the Human Rights principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In Brazil, the CRPD and its optional protocol were promulgated through Decree no. 6,949, of August 25, 2009, having constitutional amendment status by virtue of §3 of article 5 of the 1988 Federal Constitution. It was in line with the CRPD that, in 2015, the Brazilian government instituted the LBI [Brazilian Inclusion Law] – or Statute of Persons with Disabilities, as it is also known (Law no. 13,146, 2015).

In the Brazilian Inclusion Law, accessibility, universal design and assistive technology are conceptualized, aspects that we consider important for the realization of educational inclusion. For example, *accessibility* and its different dimensions (architectural, communicational, instrumental, methodological, curriculum, attitudinal and digital) have been prominent, as well as the understanding of disability from its human functionality, based on biopsychosocial model. The evaluation of the disability in this perspective considers: the impediments in body functions and structures; social, environmental, psychological and personal factors; limitation on activity performance and restriction of participation (Law no. 13.146, 2015). This change meant a considerable conceptual advancement, as it took the focus away of the subject's impediments and focused the debate in the social role and possibilities of these people to the detriment of their relationship with the social or educational barriers to which they are exposed.

Advances in access to education for the Special Education public can also be identified in the 2023 School Census. Table 1 presents a synthesis of this public.

Table 1*Enrollments of Special Education public in Basic Education*

Public	Enrollments
Intellectual Disability	952.904
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) ⁷	636.202
Physical Disability	163.790
Low Vision	86.867
Blindness	7.321
Deafblindness	693
Hearing deficiency	41.491
Deafness	20.008
Multiple Disability	88.885
Giftedness	38.019
Total	1.771.430

Note. Elaborated based on the 2023 School Census (INEP, 2024b).

According to the 2023 School Census (INEP, 2024b), the number of enrollment of people with disabilities in Basic Education increased at all stages, from kindergarten to High School. In five years, there was an increase of 41.6%, from 1.25 million in 2019 to 1,771,430 enrollments in 2023. Of this total, 95% of 4-17 year-old population enrollment is in common classes of regular education, bringing us closer to the 2014 National Education Plan's Goal 4, and only 5% in special classes or segregated schools. It is worth noting that by the early 2000s, 59% of people with disabilities were enrolled in special schools, mostly philanthropic segregated state – funded schools (INEP, 2001).

Still on the 2023 School Census, a fact that also draws attention is the historical prevalence of enrollments of students with intellectual disabilities with 952,904 (53%), followed by students with ASD, with 636,202 (35.9%), totaling 1,589,106 enrollments, which is equivalent to 88.9% of the total. Another important fact concerns the concentration of Special Education public enrollment in Elementary School with 1,114,230 enrollments, which is equivalent to 62.90% of the total. The data also indicate that, from 95% of enrollments in common classes of regular education, only 42% receive educational support in SES resource rooms (supplementary for students with giftedness and complementary to others) (INEP, 2024b).

According to Resolution no. 4/2009, the SES for Basic Education involves a set of activities, accessibility and educational resources organized institutionally to be offered in multifunctional resource rooms or in partner Specialized Centers. School failure also draws attention, as well as the dropout rate, which, in the case of Special Education students, is higher

⁷ In the 2008 PNEEPEL, the term used is “pervasive developmental disorders”. In this paper, as well as in the School Census, we will use the term “autism spectrum disorder” (ASD) replacing the term “pervasive developmental disorders”.

than the overall average. The repetition rate is 2.8% in Elementary School and 3.7% in High School for Special Education students, compared to 2.3% and 3.9%, respectively, in the overall average. The dropout rate is 4.9% in Elementary School and 6.2% in High School for the Special Education public, while the overall average was 3% and 5.9%, respectively.

The educational and social iniquity between people with and without disabilities was also evidenced in the data of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (Gomes, 2023), which point out that the estimate is that of 18.6 million people with disabilities in Brazil, about 19.5%, are in the illiteracy range, against 4.1% of the population without disabilities. They also indicate that 63.3% of people with disabilities over 25 years of age have no instruction or present incomplete Elementary Education. Those who have complete High School represent 25.6%, while 57.3% of people without disabilities had this level of instruction.

The iniquity of participation of people with disabilities also occurs in other areas of social life, such as, for example, 55.0% of people with disabilities work in informality, while this data drops to 38.7% for people without disabilities. Inequality also occurs in salary income: the real average usually received by persons with disabilities in 2022, according to IBGE data (Gomes, 2023), was of 1,860 BRL, while the monthly income of people employed without disabilities was of 2,690 BRL.

Regarding access to Higher Education, these indicators are even scarier, because, in spite of advances with Law no. 13,409, of December 28, 2016, which amended Law no. 12,711, of August 29, 2012, to dispose of the reservation of vacancies for people with disabilities in the technical courses of High School and Higher Education of federal educational institutions, known as “*lei das cotas*” [quota law], less than 1% of total enrollments is of students from the Special Education public (INEP, 2024a).

Paiva (2024), based on official IBGE data, showed that iniquity expands even more when taking into account markers such as race and gender. This suggests, according to the author, that disability is a factor that contributes greatly to the exclusion of this population of the social rights in Brazil. Inequality between people with and without disabilities was also evidenced in a recent study conducted in Chicago, United States, by Waitoller and Lubienski (2024). The authors found that the disability associated with social markers such as class, race and geographical location of their families ends up restricting the opportunities of these families in choosing a school for their children compared to children without disabilities. Iniquity between opportunities experienced by students with and without disabilities was also reported in the investigations of Artiles and Kozleski (2019), which showed that children with disabilities in intersection with minority racial and linguistic groups, such as immigrants, perform significantly lower in academic standardized evaluations, present higher rates of abandonment and dropout.

As we can show, statistical data show advances in guaranteeing access to education, as well as the iniquities faced especially by populations with disabilities and ASD. However, despite such advances, our research has also shown the enormous challenges to be faced to ensure the right to learning and full participation in the educational activities of this portion of the population. These challenges, to a large extent, do not differ from those placed for the public education of the majority of the population.

Despite legal advances and access to education, numerous investigations have shown the challenges faced by Basic Education networks to ensure participation and learning with these people's development. Among the challenges, we name some: precariousness in the political-pedagogical proposals for curriculum accessibility; access to affordable teaching materials; high number of students per class; lack of initial and continuing education for teachers and SES teachers; guarantee of educational supports consistent with the demands of different students with disabilities; difficulties in developing different and affordable evaluations; insufficiency in offering SES; accessible transport problems (Observatory Research Group on Special Education and Educational Inclusion [ObEE], 2024).

Another common data in our research is the lack of knowledge of teachers on how to operate classroom management considering the student's difference. It is important to say that thinking about inclusion requires recognizing the specificities to appropriate culture from different social and psychological instruments, as Vygotsky's (2021) historical-cultural theory illustrates well. This demands educational practices planned from the beginning, considering the individuality of students and the need for strategy differentiation, when necessary, to achieve the general objectives proposed for the class. Therefore, instruments such as the *Planejamento Educacional Individualizado* (PEI) [Individualized Educational Planning] are important (Campos, 2016; Pletsch, 2022). In fact, recognizing individuality should be the priority guideline for the inclusion and execution of "curriculum practices for any student, as a humanist education cannot be performed from homogeneous Fordist curriculum assumptions" (Pletsch, in press, p. 8).

In other words, to ensure the participation of people with disabilities in teaching relationships, the use of resources, strategies and differentiated measures, in many cases, it is essential, for example, the use of alternative communication for nonverbal students, as is the case of a significant part of children affected by Congenital Zika Virus Syndrome. Without the use of alternative communication, often personalized for each child, the communication, interaction and appropriation of school knowledge is denied to them (Antonioli, 2023; Campos, 2022). In fact, the adoption of individualized measures is foreseen in the Brazilian Inclusion Law itself, Chapter IV - of the right to education. Article 28, item V, of the law ensures: adoption of individualized and collective measures in environments that maximize the academic and social development of students with disabilities, favoring access, permanence, participation and learning in educational institutions (Law no. 13,146, 2015).

Another aspect constantly indicated in our research is the use of the report to guide pedagogical practices (Paiva, 2017) and the elaboration of SES plans, which use the case study focused on the subject with disabilities as occurs in the medical model as a parameter for its elaboration, unlike the Individualized Educational Planning, which has indicated the development of education cases for its elaboration, which focus on the educational process (Pletsch, in press). The guidance of the case study is mentioned in Technical Note no. 4/2014, which indicates that, for the case study, the first stage of the collaboration, the SES plan, if necessary, the SES teacher may articulate with health professionals, making the medical report, in this case, a document attached to the SES plan (p. 3).

Thus, although the Technical Note recognizes that the report is not mandatory, by suggesting its use, it ends up legitimizing it as a reference for practices in schools and universities to plan and structure educational supports, whether human or of Assistive Technology. The overlap of the medical model on educational intervention has been constant in the reports of Special Education managers of the education networks that make up the Permanent Forum of Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education of *Baixada e Sul Fluminense/RJ*. Medical reports even indicate the need or not of professionals as mediators, support agents for educational inclusion and, currently, the companion or therapeutic assistant.

The Brazilian Inclusion Law provides for professionals such as: personal attendant, school support professional and companion, but they have not yet been regulated, and their attributions are not clear in the context of the classroom, especially when they do not involve aspects of personal hygiene, locomotion and food. In a report by one of the managers of *Baixada Fluminense/RJ*, this practice can be illustrated:

I received an opinion from a clinic, which was delivered to me by the mother, stating that starting in the next few days, a therapeutic companion will be in the classroom with the autistic son, even though he already has a mediator. She said it is for the elaboration of the ABA [Applied Behavior Analysis]. (Special Education Manager, April 2024)

She added: “There will be three professionals in the classroom and this new professional developing a methodology contrary to what has been developed by the school. This harms the child, and we are certain that there are other possibilities for intervention beyond ABA” (Special Education Manager, April 2024).

This practice of the professional or therapeutic assistant to develop specific methodologies in the classroom using ABA, particularly for children with autism, without any collaborative or pedagogical work articulated with the school curriculum, is recent and has become a very profitable market for private clinics, and even for international companies that sell training for education professionals with certification of national private institutions. Regarding this matter, we can highlight at least three aggravating factors. The first is that it relies solely on a perspective rooted in therapeutic/clinical intervention in the classroom, disregarding what the Brazilian Inclusion Law emphasizes about intersectoral collaboration for the integral promotion of the development of people with disabilities. The second is the introduction of healthcare professionals from the private sector into public schools, where the provision of services is a duty of the State, according to the 1988 Federal Constitution. The third refers to the lack of clarity on the formation of these professionals, the non-regulation of the profession and the lack of clear guidelines on who will supervise their performance.

Of course we do not intend to exhaust the debate, and we understand that there are particular cases that require permanent support, more continuous and even behavioral interventions that need articulation and collaboration between health and education. Likewise, there are cases, as indicated by research, with children with Congenital Zika Virus Syndrome, which require, for example, the action of healthcare professionals in schools for feeding these children via tube (Pletsch et al., 2021). However, according to these empirical research, education needs to play an active role. In fact, the data reveal the importance of education in the

orchestration of intersectoral actions for these children. Thus, promoting the need or not of support professionals, whether education or health professionals, needs to be planned in collaboration between the different sectors involved. It is not justified once again in our history the overlap of the medical model at school with the performance of these professionals (companions or therapeutic assistants) of private clinics and, in many cases, with the consent of the Judiciary, under the guise of the rights of the person with disabilities, following the medical model for decisions without any dialogue with Education.

The tendency for the judicialization of Special Education using only the report as a supporting document has been recurrent (Barros & Dainez, 2023; Carvalho, 2022; Carvalho et al., 2023; Coimbra Neto, 2019; Melo & Kassar, 2023; Pletsch, in press). If, on the one hand, judicialization has played a determining role in guaranteeing the right to education (Agrelos et al., 2021), on the other hand, using the report as the only instrument for decisions involving supports/assistance ends up strengthening biological/medical culture of human development, to the detriment of social and cultural perspectives, widely known in the scientific literature. In other words, it is urgent to reflect on the role of the Judiciary in education and what the implications of this judicialization in the creation and expansion of “new” subjects of rights that do not integrate the public of Special Education at school and university are.

The challenge of supports or assistance at their different levels to ensure inclusion with Special Education public’s participation and learning has been historic in Brazil, as we do not adopt, as in many other countries, an Individualized Educational Planning to structure such supports/assistance, among others actions, for students with disabilities from teaching cases, as indicated by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations (UN) (Mendes, 2023; Pletsch, in press; Tibyriçá & Mendes, 2023; Valadão, 2010). Since the 2008 PNEEPEI, the focus has shifted towards the SES in multifunctional resource rooms as a “unique model” (Mendes et al., 2022).

According to Mendes et al. (2022), which conducted national research through the *Observatório Nacional de Educação Especial* (ONEESP) [National Observatory of Special Education], this proposal does not meet the real needs of the national territory to ensure the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities and ASD in school. The study shows the inaccuracies of the proposal when it deals with students with intellectual disabilities (which constitutes 53% of the total enrollments in Special Education in Basic Education), problems in the training of teachers to work in SES, the central role of the SES teacher’s responsibility for students in Special Education, lack of collaboration between SES teachers and regular teachers, as guided by Resolution no. 4/2009, among many other issues (Mendes et al., 2016; Mendes et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2016).

Such problems were recently reaffirmed in a technical document released in 2022, prepared in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through the Special Education Board of Directors linked to the *Secretaria de Modalidades Especializadas de Educação* (SEMESP) [Secretariat of Specialized Education Modalities], extinguished with the recreation by the current government of the *Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização de Jovens e Adultos, Diversidade e Inclusão* (SECADI) [Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy of Youth and

Adults, Diversity and Inclusion]. The results of the research conducted in all regions of Brazil reaffirm data on the SES widely signaled in national scientific production, particularly regarding teacher education (Araújo, 2024; Kassar, 2014; Mendes, 2024; Pletsch, 2023). In this sense, we highlight the following: a) lack of training/qualification for all segments of school professionals; b) delay in hiring support professionals and caregivers for students; c) absence and/or little financial investment of the government; d) students who cannot have extra hour classes to receive the SES; e) absence or insufficiency of accessible didactic-pedagogical resources; f) high number of Special Education students per classroom.

These findings alone justify and reinforce the need for PNEEPEI's revision and not just its strengthening as provided for in the National Program for Strengthening Special Education Policy from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Ministry of Education, 2023). This review is urgent to meet the demands of education networks regarding the guarantee of the educational rights of people with disabilities in common schools of regular education, especially when the subject refers to support and its different levels.

Here, we draw attention to our perception that the SES as presented in the Constitution cannot be reduced to the idea that it is only offered in the multifunctional resource room. It has been 16 years since the initial version of the 2008 PNEEPEI. At that time, we had not faced a Zika Virus epidemic nor a COVID-19 pandemic. The social and educational scenario has changed deeply in recent years and, as a result, new social and educational demands have emerged to guarantee the rights of the population with disabilities, ASD and giftedness.

In addition to all these aspects that we point out from the point of view of the PNEEPEI and the educational reality, from the 2023 School Census data, we would also like to highlight some of the scientific challenges we have in the field of Special Education. As we pointed out at the beginning of this text, we understand Special Education as an important area of scientific production in the area of Education. This is extremely relevant within the map of the country's scientific production. As we can see in the figures presented by the Education Area Coordination report of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), the area's bibliographic production was greater than 156,000 products, during the quadrennium from 2017 to 2020 (CAPES, 2022).

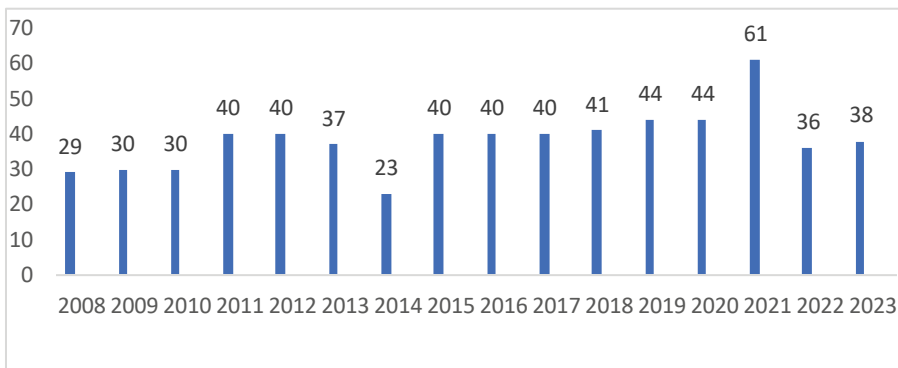
Therefore, the situation of the area is quite different from others, according to the Report produced by the *Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos* (CGEE) [Center of Management and Strategic Studies], considering the 2019-2022 production at the Web of Science (WoS) base, because even if the area of Education does not appear among the ten largest publication areas in the country, the theme is featured in different domains of interest, pervading different areas of WoS. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, there are multiple research efforts dedicated to this frontier, located in areas such as the Exact Sciences and Economics itself. In this sense, the grouping of the Education area stands as the second largest thematic group identified by the methodology of the Observatory of Science, Technology, and Innovation (OCTI) of 2022 (CGEE, 2023), second only to the Biodiversity Group.

Within this field, Special Education has been an area of great relevance, either by the size of the production, the themes and methodologies involved. In one of our research projects

we are interested in understanding how the Special Education field has mobilized and translated the concepts of Inclusive Education and equity. To this end, in the case of scientific production, we analyzed RBEE's publications from 2008 to 2023. According to the data collected, during this period, the journal had a number of products per year as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

RBEE total publications per year



Note. Extracted from Mendes (2024, p. 10)

Accessibility note. Description of the Chart: Chart with 16 columns represented by vertical blue bars in chronological order, describing the number of publications in RBEE per year: 2008 with 29, 2009 with 30, 2010 with 30, 2011 with 40, 2012 with 40, 2013 with 37, 2014 with 23, 2015 with 40, 2016 with 40, 2017 with 40, 2018 with 41, 2019 with 44, 2020 with 44, 2021 with 61, 2022 with 36 and 2023 with 38 [End of description].

The research, still in the analysis phase, presents data on the issue of themes, methodologies, theoretical references and authors. However, within this paper, the only analysis we would like to present is related to the thematic issue of scientific production within the area of Special Education. We conducted a survey of all keywords present in all papers during the study period and present the set of the 20 most cited keywords in Table 2.

Table 2

Most cited keywords in RBEE papers

20 most cited keywords	Quantitative
Special Education	427
Inclusive Education	69
Inclusion	44
Cerebral Palsy	35
Intellectual Disability	34
Autism	33
Teachers' training	25
Educational Inclusion	25

20 most cited keywords	Quantitative
School Inclusion	25
Deafness	23
Visual Impairment	20
Family	20
Person with disability	20
Down Syndrome	20
Higher Education	19
Autism Spectrum Disorder	17
Assessment	15
Assistive Technology	15
Physical Education	14
Giftedness	14

Note. Extracted from Mendes (2024, p. 12).

When we look at Table 2, we can identify that RBEE's scientific production uses Special Education, Inclusive Education, Inclusion, Educational Inclusion and School Inclusion as umbrella terms that anchor their research in the field. Apart from these five terms, there are 15 terms that are distributed in stages or areas of education: Physical Education and Higher Education; Teacher Training: which stands out as a very important research area in Special Education; a surprising keyword is "family", indicating that in this field, collaborative studies and concern for family involvement should be common; we still have Assessment and Assistive Technology as highly prominent topics in the field; and, finally, accounting for nine keywords containing Special Education public's specificities: Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Deficiency, Autism, Deafness, Visual Impairment, Person with Disabilities, Down Syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Giftedness. Such findings resemble those found by the research conducted by Messiou (2017), which analyzed the production of the International Journal of Inclusive Education. The author provokes us asking the question: "If inclusion is about all, why do we still mostly focus on some?" (p. 152).

In the area of Special Education, the answer to this question has several nuances. It is obvious that it is in the specialized area that specific production needs to be present. However, what surprises and matters in the provocation made by the author and what we find in the scientific production of the area, besides what the keywords evoke, is what they silence. There is a complete absence of the themes regarding other markers such as class, gender, race, as well as topics such as poverty, inequality and equity. Thus, in the restricted space of the discussion that we want to provoke here, it seems to us that our investigation also needs to advance in the way they define their themes so that we can, in fact, complete our analytical ability on the phenomenon of educational inequality and its relationships with the context of Special Education and the general issues of national public Education.

4 SOME CONSIDERATIONS

As we pointed out, in the Brazilian case, despite legal advances, we continue to face challenges that go through the recognition of disability in the field of human rights with the necessary conceptual resignification and practices that result from changes in social reality, linked to struggles for the expansion of educational rights, through justice and the participation of the subjects themselves in decisions that directly affect them.

Moreover, the data illustrate different challenges in the elaboration and translation of education policies and practices, particularly concerning educational support and assistance for those who need it in order to have the right to be and participate in educational relationships. These challenges even imply a series of changes in the Special Education research agenda, broadening the understanding of the multifaceted character of disability as a social experience that undergoes methodological and epistemological changes.

To this end, concepts such as class, race and gender, among others, have to be taken into account in the construction of the research object and the elaboration of public policies involving the public of Special Education. It is not just about looking at human diversity, but also about understanding how social inequalities affect subjects with disabilities and their development conditions. An inclusive education with everyone and for all is part of the permanent and arduous construction of a more democratic and just society.

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