

An Evaluation of the Articulation of Public Policies on Inclusive Education in Training of Teachers at the State University of Maringá

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Abstract

The article discusses the initial training of teachers from the perspective of inclusive education. The current proposal for Inclusive Education is based on the Salamanca Declaration (Brazil, 1994a) –A document approved on 10 June 1994, at the World Conference on Special Needs, in Salamanca, Spain–, which aims to guarantee to individuals with special needs integration within the school environment and development of their abilities using adequate resources). In particular, we investigated the articulation between public policies on higher educational and initial training of teachers in Licentiate degree courses at the State University of Maringá (UEM) (at this time there are 14 areas of teacher training in the UEM, namely: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Sciences, History, Physical Education, Pedagogy, Philosophy, Geography, Social Sciences, Languages, Music, Biological Sciences, and Primary Education). The methodology used included routines of bibliographic and documentary research, and data collection by questionnaire. The results indicate the absence of incorporation of the inclusion principles in the initial training of teachers in this institution.

Keywords: training of teachers, public policies, inclusive education, special educational needs, Brazil

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to examine and discuss the initial training of teachers from the perspective of inclusive education. In this context, we investigated the existing form of the articulation between public policies on higher education and the process of initial training in the Licentiate degrees of the State University of Maringá. In particular, we considered what is prescribed in the “National Curriculum Directives for Undergraduate Courses” (DCNs) –in the areas of Physics (Brazil, 2002d), Mathematics (Brazil, 2003), Chemistry (Brazil, 2002c) and Biological Sciences (Brazil, 2002b) and Sciences, Philosophy (Brazil, 2002e), History (Brazil, 2002f), Geography (Brazil, 2002g), Social Sciences (Brazil, 2002h), Arts (Brazil, 2002i), Music (Brazil, 2004a), Physical Education (Brazil, 2004b) and Pedagogy (Brazil, 2006)–, in the “National Curriculum Directives for Training Courses for Teachers in Basic Education” (2002a), in addition to “Law n.º. 1.793/1994-MEC” (It recommends the inclusion of disciplines or content relating to “ethical-political-educational aspects of the normalization and integration of the individual with special needs” in the training courses of high level professionals) (Brazil, 1994b) and in the “National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education” (Brazil, 2008).

Among the questions raised in the course of this investigation, we would highlight:

- How have these educational policies modified the institutional procedures of teacher training?
- What clearly defined institutional actions have encouraged the implementation of these precepts?

In addition, the following aspects oriented the analytical procedure: a) revision of the content of disciplines and curricular conception, b) restructuring of the procedures of supervised training placements and/or of teaching practice, and c) profile of the teaching body and transposition of academic research.

METHODOLOGY

The study evaluated the existing form of articulation between higher education policies and the initial training of teachers in the Licentiate degree courses of the UEM from the perspective of inclusive education.

The methodology in this investigation involved systematic bibliographical research associated with documentary analysis and the application of the questionnaire presented in Table I.

Table I: Questionnaire for data collection.

Identification	
Licentiate course at:	
Year of Creation:	
Number of teachers giving classes on the Licentiate course:	
<i>Comments:</i>	
Questions	
1. Out of this number, how many teachers feel able to:	
Orient TCCs (end of course papers) or projects on topics of Special Education or Inclusive Education:	
Supervise placements in special schools, special classes, resource rooms or ordinary classrooms of normal education with students with special educational needs (PNEE):	
Teach disciplines dealing with Special Education or Inclusive Education content:	
<i>Comments:</i>	
2. Do you consider that this Course prepares professionals capable of contributing to the school inclusion of individuals with special educational needs PNEE.	
Yes	
No	
<i>Comments:</i>	

It should be noted here that the corresponding research project was submitted to the Standing Committee on Ethics in Human Research (COPEP) of the UEM, bearing in mind that ratification by COPEP is mandatory prior to the application of the questionnaire with the Coordinators of Courses of

Licentiate degrees. Furthermore, the use of the information gathered from these individuals was authorized by the respondents by means of their signature to the “Free and informed consent form”, as set out in the model presented in Table II.

Table II. Free and informed consent form.

FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM	
<p>I, [...], professor in the Physics Department of the State University of Maringá (UEM), wish to request your consent and collaboration in the sense of participating in the Research ... entitled “An investigation of the Articulation between the Initial Training of Teachers in the Licentiate degrees of the UEM and Contemporary Public Policies on Higher Education” which is being carried out by the academic [...] (RA ...), duly matriculated in the course of ... of the State University of Maringá. The general objective of this research is to investigate the form of articulation of public policies on higher education with the initial training of teachers (Licentiate degrees) in the UEM. The research to be carried out will be based on a questionnaire to be completed by its collaborators.</p> <p>The anonymity of those participating is guaranteed, as is also guaranteed to the participant the freedom to decline or to withdraw consent without any penalty. The data will be worked on and analyzed in a manner that preserves the secrecy and privacy of the participants.</p> <p>Participants are also guaranteed the right to have access to the results of the present research. It is important to point out also, that the researcher has the intention of presenting or publishing the results obtained through this study.</p> <p>I, _____, ID n° _____ having read and understood the information and clarified all my doubts with regard to this study with professor [...], FREELY CONSENT to participate in this research.</p> <p>Date: ___/___/___.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature</p> <p>I, [...] declare that all the relevant information relating to the research was given to the participant at the time of the signature of these terms of consent.</p> <p>Date: ___/___/___.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature</p> <p><u>Team</u> (Including researcher in charge):</p> <p>1- Name: _____ Telephone: _____</p> <p>Full Address: Physics Department of the State University of Maringá– Avenida Colombo n° 5.790</p> <p>2- Name: _____ Telephone: _____</p>	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the total of 13 questionnaires (at that time there were 14 areas of teacher training in the UEM, namely: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Sciences, History, Physical Education, Pedagogy, Philosophy, Geography, Social Sciences, Languages, Music, Biological Sciences, and Primary Education) sent out, six were returned, in the areas of sciences, biological sciences, physical education, physics, languages and music, in which the majority of the respondents

considered their courses adequate for receiving students with special needs.

Analyzing Law n°. 1.793/1994 (It recommends the inclusion of disciplines or content relating to the “ethical-political-educational aspects of normalization and integration of individuals with special needs” in the training courses of high-level professionals) we perceive that the Undergraduate Course in Biological Sciences (Maciel and Costa, 2009) had no discipline focused on the aspects

highlighted, and that no alteration to the curriculum occurred in the sense of meeting the recommendation of that law. In the Physics Course, the Instrumentalization and Supervised Placement (formerly “Teaching Practice”) disciplines prepare for the exercise of the teaching profession (Id., 2009), but without mentioning at any time the specificity of special education or of a discipline for the preparation of the student prior to the start of the Placement.

In the Sciences Course the objective is to train professionals to act specifically in primary education, although in its curriculum there are no disciplines geared to special needs.

The résumé of the Mathematics Course curriculum states emphatically that the graduating student has a “vision of his social role of educator and ability to fit into diverse realities with sensitivity to interpret the actions of those being educated; ability to perceive the world in a critical manner and to be able to help to transform it” (Fonseca and Costa, 2010; Paraná, 2010). In this Course in particular, there are materials that focus on students with special needs, via the disciplines: Pedagogical Theory and Practice I and Pedagogical Theory and Practice II. Pedagogical Theory and Practice II differs from the former discipline in that it is geared to secondary school education, although with quite similar aims and objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

The current proposal for Inclusive Education is based on the Salamanca Declaration (Brazil, 1994a), a document approved on 10 June 1994, at the World Conference on Special Needs, in Salamanca, Spain, which seeks to guarantee those with special needs integration into the school environment and development of his capabilities through the use of adequate resources.

Subsequent to the promulgation of the Salamanca Declaration, Brazil witnessed a surge in specific education legislation aimed at the reformulation of curriculums governing the training of professionals who deal with individuals with special needs, such as Law n°. 1.793/1994 (Brazil, 1994b), which determined the inclusion of the discipline “Ethical-political-educational aspects of the Normalization and Integration of Individuals with Special Needs” in Pedagogy and Psychology Courses and in all the Licentiate degree courses; and, more recently, The National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Brazil, 2008), of the Ministry of State for Education.

Similarly, in 2001 the publication of the National Curriculum Directives for Undergraduate Courses (DCNs) for the different areas of higher professional training was initiated, and, in 2002, the National

Curriculum Guidelines for Training Courses for Teachers in Basic Education (Brazil, 2002a) were established.

In this context, considering that the DCNs were drawn up after the Salamanca Declaration, the expectation was that these directives would have incorporated the Salamanca recommendations. However, the analysis of the DCNs for these Courses reveals the absence of such orientations aimed at the social integration of individuals with special needs.

In particular, although the Physics-DCNs do not emphasize the need for disciplines on inclusive education, and the other Courses investigated comment indirectly on this type of content, given that these are Licentiate (teacher training) degree courses it would have been more than appropriate for these aspects to be present in their curriculums. However, when we scrutinize the current curriculums of these Courses we perceive that inclusivist principles have still not been fully incorporated in the teacher training procedures of the institution, and this failure ultimately comprises the training of future teachers on its Licentiate degree courses and, consequently, the quality of teaching in the classroom.

Finally, although the majority of the respondents considered their Courses fit to deal with pupils with special needs, the data gathered suggests that there is still much to be done.

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