

ARTICLE | Continuous Publication

Continuing Education from the Perspective of School Inclusion offered by the municipality of Porto Velho-RO

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the continuing education programs from the perspective of school inclusion offered by the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, between 2018 and 2023, as well as the perceptions of teachers working in a municipal school regarding the relationship between these programs and inclusive practices developed within the school context. Thus, this study adopts a qualitative research approach, with a municipal school located in Porto Velho, RO, as the research setting. The participants were five teachers working at this municipal school. Regarding data collection instruments, semi-structured interviews were employed. The organization and systematization of the collected data followed the criteria of content analysis (Bardin, 2011). An analysis of the continuing education programs offered by the municipality between 2018 and 2020 revealed that their themes were exclusively focused on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition to this emphasis, the training initiatives during this period were grounded in clinical models, which prioritize the study of the disorder to the detriment of critical and reflective training oriented toward the learning and developmental processes of students who are the target audience of special education. The teachers highlighted in their statements that the continuing education programs offered have not been sufficient to address the challenges encountered in the school context, noting that these courses were primarily based on the transmission of knowledge rather than on the integration of theory and practice. They also emphasized that the training provided has made a limited contribution to the school's daily inclusive practices.

Keywords: Continuing education; School inclusion; Teachers; Rondônia.

RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as formações continuadas na perspectiva da inclusão escolar ofertadas pelo município de Porto Velho, RO, no período de 2018 a 2023, bem como as percepções das professoras que atuam em uma escola municipal acerca da relação entre essas formações e as práticas de inclusão desenvolvidas no contexto escolar. Assim, assume-se que a abordagem desta pesquisa é qualitativa, tendo como lócus uma escola municipal localizada em Porto Velho, RO. Os participantes da pesquisa foram cinco professoras que atuam nessa unidade escolar. No que se refere aos instrumentos de coleta de dados, utilizou-se a entrevista semiestruturada. A organização e a sistematização dos dados coletados foram realizadas com base nos critérios da análise de conteúdo, conforme Bardin (2011). Ao analisar as formações continuadas ofertadas pelo município no período de 2018 a 2020, constatou-se que estas apresentaram temáticas direcionadas predominantemente aos alunos com Transtorno do Espectro Autista. Além desse direcionamento, as formações realizadas nesse período mostraram-se ancoradas em modelos clínicos, os quais enfatizam o estudo do transtorno em detrimento de uma formação crítica e reflexiva voltada ao processo de aprendizagem e desenvolvimento do aluno público-alvo da educação especial. As professoras ressaltaram, em suas falas, que as formações continuadas ofertadas ainda não têm sido suficientes para suprir as dificuldades vivenciadas no cotidiano escolar, apontando que os cursos oferecidos foram pautados majoritariamente na transmissão de conhecimentos, sem a necessária articulação entre teoria e prática. Destacaram, ainda, que a formação ofertada tem contribuído de forma limitada para o fortalecimento das práticas inclusivas desenvolvidas na escola.

Palavras-chave: Formação continuada; Inclusão escolar; Professoras; Rondônia.

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la formación continua desde la perspectiva de la inclusión escolar ofrecida por el municipio de Porto Velho, RO, entre 2018 y 2023, así como las percepciones de los docentes que trabajan en una escuela municipal acerca de la relación entre dicha formación y las prácticas de inclusión desarrolladas en el contexto escolar. De este modo, se asume que el enfoque de esta investigación es cualitativo, teniendo como escenario de estudio una escuela municipal ubicada en Porto Velho, RO. Los participantes de la investigación fueron cinco docentes que actúan en esta unidad educativa. En cuanto a los instrumentos de recolección de datos, se utilizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas. La organización y sistematización de los datos recolectados se realizó siguiendo los criterios del análisis de contenido (Bardin, 2011). Al analizar la formación continua ofrecida por el municipio en el período comprendido entre 2018 y 2020, se constató que las temáticas abordadas estuvieron dirigidas exclusivamente a estudiantes con Trastorno del Espectro Autista. Además, las acciones formativas desarrolladas en dicho período se encontraron ancladas en modelos clínicos, los cuales enfatizan el estudio del trastorno en detrimento de una formación crítica y reflexiva orientada a los procesos de aprendizaje y desarrollo del estudiantado que constituye el público objetivo de la educación especial. Las docentes destacaron en sus discursos que la formación continua ofrecida aún no ha sido suficiente para superar las dificultades enfrentadas en el contexto escolar, señalando que los cursos impartidos se basaron principalmente en la transmisión de conocimientos, sin una adecuada articulación entre teoría y práctica.

Asimismo, señalaron que la formación ofrecida ha contribuido de manera limitada a las prácticas cotidianas de inclusión en la escuela.

Palabras-clave: Formación continua; Inclusión escolar; Maestros; Rondônia.

Introduction

In Brazil, the commitment to school inclusion was strengthened following the country's adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which established that signatory countries must ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. This includes the implementation of measures to guarantee that the target population of this policy is not excluded from a free and quality basic education grounded in inclusive principles. As a result of this commitment, Brazil ratified the Convention through Decree No. 6,949 of August 25, 2009.

It is important to note that prior to the promulgation of Decree No. 6,949/2009, the Brazilian government had established a committee of specialists in the field of Special Education to discuss and prepare the document for the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (PNEEPEI) (Brazil, 2008). After several deliberations, the policy was officially established in 2008, defining not only the need to encompass all levels, stages, and modalities of education, but also to provide Specialized Educational Assistance (Atendimento Educacional Especializado – AEE) as a complementary or supplementary service to regular education. This service is intended for students with disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders, and high abilities or giftedness who are enrolled in regular schools (Brazil, 2008).

In this context, data from the Basic Education School Census, released by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), indicate a gradual increase in the enrollment of students with disabilities in mainstream schools. The percentage rose from 94.2% in 2022 to 95% in 2023 for students aged 4 to 17 years. According to the data, 1,771,430 enrollments of the target population of special education in regular classes were recorded in 2023 (Brazil, 2023).

INEP data demonstrate that the inclusion of students with disabilities in school settings has been expanding, reinforcing the relevance of continuing teacher education, aimed at “theoretical and practical professional improvement within the work context and the development of a broader general culture beyond professional practice” (Libâneo, 2017, p. 187).

Like school inclusion, teacher education has also become an agenda for international organizations, such as the UNESCO, which points out that successive national and international assessments indicate the persistence of low academic performance, highlighting the magnitude and complexity of the problem. This complexity is intensified by cultural, political, and economic factors, as well as by the diversity of interpretations and institutional responses (Gatti et al., 2019).

In this regard, Gatti et al. (2019) emphasize that teacher education constitutes a social problem, both because of its relevance and because of the uncertain way it has been addressed over time, marked by discontinuous policies and limited social debate about its concrete value in contemporary society, as well as about its foundations and associated practices. The authors also note that in recent years there has been a strengthening of policies aimed at teacher education, with emphasis on the National Conference on Education (CONAE), the National Education Plan (PNE 2014–2024), and State and Municipal Education Plans.

In light of these legal guidelines and established goals, and considering the importance of teacher education, the municipality of Porto Velho, in the state of Rondônia (RO), based on the legal framework of Brazilian education, has acted to ensure the right to education for all. From this perspective, the teacher education policy of the municipal school system is structured in accordance with Resolution No. 04/CME/2020, which establishes that:

Art. 11. Teacher education in the Municipal School System for Special Education shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, the National Education Plan, the Municipal Education Plan, and the National Curriculum Guidelines for teacher education.
§ 3 Continuing education for education professionals should promote transformations in the pedagogical organization of schools, aiming at the updating of professional practice as a

means of addressing the needs and potential of all students, in accordance with current legislation (Rondônia, 2020, p. 4).

Based on the provisions of § 3 of Resolution No. 04/CME/2020, the contribution of Bueno (1999) is noteworthy, as he emphasizes that continuing education should involve both regular classroom teachers and Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) teachers. The former requires specific training to address the particular needs of students in the classroom, while the latter must also direct their work toward the context of regular education.

From this perspective, both professionals—regular classroom teachers and AEE teachers—complement each other through joint actions, expanding learning opportunities for all students.

Within this context, Jesus (2008) proposes the concept of “learning by doing” for continuing teacher education, as this approach enables the articulation between theory and practice within the teachers’ own professional context, fostering critical reflection on their pedagogical experiences. The author further states that:

Education professionals can construct their pedagogical practice through the theoretical–practical confrontation. For this purpose, there must be time, space, and availability. Possible strategies include study meetings with the entire school team, direct support to teachers within the classroom, planning and regular monitoring of classroom activities, and specific meetings for support, guidance, demonstration, study, planning, evaluation, and follow-up of particular cases that require highly differentiated educational projects (Jesus, 2008, p. 79).

The perspective of continuing education proposed by Jesus (2008, p. 79) can effectively support inclusion and learning processes for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, as this formative dynamic enables teachers to engage in “a dialogue with themselves, with the context, and with knowledge.” Such dialogue, resulting from continuing education, may help teachers transform both the classroom and the school through critical and reflective analysis, valuing collaboration and the collective construction of knowledge.

In this sense, ongoing training processes may enable teachers to establish a balance between the individuality of each student and the collective dynamics

of the classroom, considering that diversity requires pedagogical work that addresses subjectivity in teaching and learning processes. This understanding implies recognizing each student as a unique subject, with specific characteristics, learning rhythms, and needs.

Given the importance of professional development initiatives that enable teachers to understand the diversity present in classroom contexts, this article aims to analyze continuing education programs from the perspective of school inclusion offered by the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, between 2018 and 2023, as well as the perceptions of teachers working in a municipal school regarding the relationship between these programs and the inclusive practices developed within the school.

Accordingly, this study adopts a qualitative approach, with its locus in a municipal school located in Porto Velho, RO. The research participants were five teachers working at this school. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The organization of the collected data was based on the criteria of content analysis. According to Bardin (2009), content analysis is a technique for processing information that aims to identify what is being said about a given topic, allowing for inferences about the conditions under which the messages were produced.

To this end, the article is organized into three main sections. The first section presents the continuing education initiatives from the perspective of school inclusion offered by the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, between 2018 and 2023. The second section discusses teachers' perceptions regarding the relationship between the continuing education programs offered by the municipality and the inclusive practices developed at the school. Finally, the third section presents the final considerations of the study.

Continuing Education from the Perspective of School Inclusion (2018–2023) in the Municipality of Porto Velho, RO

Considering the teacher education policies of the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, a survey was conducted with the Division of Training (DIFOR) through the analysis of detailed reports, from which the following data are presented.

In 2018, the seminar “Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD” was held, with a total workload of eight hours, delivered over two days. This seminar was exclusively directed to professionals working as student caregivers, in accordance with Complementary Law No. 386, of July 2, 2010. The main objective of the seminar was to provide specific training for these professionals, referred to as student caregivers, whose role consists of:

Working in school units assisting students who are the target population of special education (Disabilities, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, and High Abilities/Giftedness), as well as children in daycare, providing support with hygiene, feeding, mobility, and other activities that require continuous assistance in daily school routines. Performing other tasks compatible with the requirements of the position (Rondônia, 2010, n.p.).

According to the Detailed Report (2018), the 222 participants included teachers and school support staff, such as cafeteria workers, cleaning staff, and school monitors, among others (Rondônia, 2018). Regarding the importance of the participation of all school professionals in continuing education processes and their shared responsibility for the education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fonseca (2021, p. 41) emphasizes that:

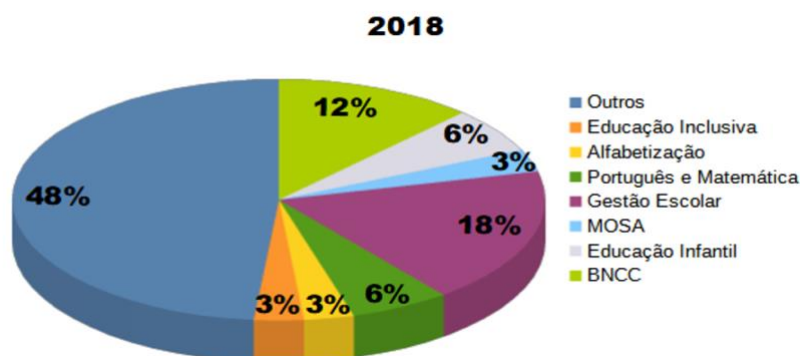
Both moments of success and failure should be shared by all those involved, since the student with ASD is not the responsibility of a specific professional; rather, the student is the responsibility of the school community. The student belongs to the school and to the school space, and therefore training should be directed to all professionals who make up the school context.

However, it is necessary to question whether an eight-hour training program, “regardless of its content and format, [...] would be sufficient” (Mendes et al., 2011, p. 143) to prepare professionals from the perspective of school inclusion. In line with the perspective highlighted by Fonseca (2021), the Training Policy of the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, establishes as a commitment the provision of continuing education for education professionals, including both pedagogical teams and technical support staff, with the “purpose of strengthening school management, pedagogical teams, technical support, and, above all, the

teaching staff, making efforts to ensure improvements in the quality of teaching and student learning” (Rondônia, 2019, p. 5).

Nevertheless, despite the expressed concern with improving the quality of teaching and learning, it is observed, as presented in Figure 1, that in 2018 only 3% of the training initiatives offered by the municipal system addressed inclusive education.

Figure 1 – Continuing Education in the Municipality of Porto Velho, RO, in 2018



Fonte: Prepared by the authors based on data from the Division of Training (DIFOR), Porto Velho, RO (2018).

Through Figure 1, it is possible to observe that in 2018 there was limited municipal investment in continuing education from the perspective of school inclusion. According to Carvalho (2008, p. 27), insufficient investment in training initiatives may contribute to resistance among teachers and other school professionals regarding inclusion processes. It is important to emphasize that the training of education professionals is provided for in the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education, which highlights the need for ongoing professional development for teachers working within an inclusive framework (Brazil, 2008).

In 2019, the program Porto Velho in Structured Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD was launched. This initiative offered one thousand places for permanent staff members of the Municipal Public Education System of Porto Velho, RO. In 2020, the Porto Velho in Structured Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD program, initiated in 2019, was continued. In addition to the one thousand places offered that year, 341 remaining vacancies were also made available. The course was organized into six modules, each with a workload of 66 instructional hours.

The modules consisted of workshops with live classes delivered online in real time, as well as complementary online courses, with schedules and locations defined by the Municipal Department of Education (SEMED) in partnership with the contracted company. The total workload of the program was 396 hours, as presented in Table 1. To complete the course within the timeframe established by SEMED and the institution responsible for its delivery, participants were required to follow a study plan with a minimum dedication of two hours per week on the Distance Education (EAD) platform (Rondônia, 2019; 2020).

Table 1 – Modules of the Porto Velho Structured Training Program on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Module	Target Audience	Topics	Workload
01	Permanent staff of the Municipal Public Education System of Porto Velho – SEMED	Autism diagnosis; Impact of autism on the family; Epistemological foundations of Structured Teaching	Module I: 66 h/a
02		Current legislation and the rights of persons with autism.	Module II: 66 h/a
03		TEACCH model with emphasis on its main strategies: informal developmental assessment, environmental organization, visual schedules, work systems, and adapted activities.	Module III: 66 h/a
04		Educational resources and adapted activities for individuals with autism based on the principles of Structured Teaching.	Module IV: 66 h/a
05		Language and communication development in individuals with autism; psychoeducational strategies to promote communicative behaviors and prevent behavioral problems based on Structured Teaching.	Module V: 66 h/a
06		Augmentative communication strategies recommended by the TEACCH model.	Módulo VI: 66 h/a
TOTAL		Total workload	396 h

Source: Porto Velho Training Call for Applications (2019)

It can be observed from Table 1 that the Porto Velho Structured Training Program on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) addressed relevant topics for supporting the target population of special education with ASD. However, data from the School Census indicate that the municipal education system of Porto Velho, RO, does not include only enrollments of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The target population of special education enrolled in municipal schools also includes students with intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, low vision, blindness, hearing impairment, physical disabilities, among other conditions.

Nevertheless, it is observed that the continuing education initiatives offered to teachers from the perspective of school inclusion between 2018 and 2020 were directed exclusively toward students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, disregarding the diversity of educational needs present within the municipal education system. Another aspect to be highlighted concerns the themes addressed in the Porto Velho Structured Training Program on Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD, developed between 2019 and 2020, which appear to be grounded in clinical–pedagogical¹ approaches, emphasizing the study of the disorder rather than promoting critical and reflective training focused on the learning and developmental processes of students who are the target population of special education.

From this perspective, it is important to emphasize that “specialized pedagogical knowledge is legitimized in practice” (Imbernón, 2001, p. 35). Thus, beyond the theoretical study of disabilities and disorders, it is essential to ensure that teachers receive training that fosters discussions about teaching and learning processes, articulated with pedagogical practice developed within the context of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) (Simão, 2017).

Accordingly, it should be noted that for teachers to become inclusive practitioners, it is necessary to provide training that develops competencies “to perceive, analyze, and critically examine the pedagogical process in a broad and comprehensive way, rather than focusing only on the specific difficulties of the students under their responsibility” (Bueno, 1999, p. 13).

The need for training that addresses learning and development processes is also highlighted by the teachers participating in the study, who pointed to the absence of training initiatives with approaches relevant to strengthening pedagogical practices. In this regard, they noted that “I think there is a lack of practical, concrete aspects; I think there is still a lot missing [...]” (PR3), since “although there are many lectures, there is a lot of theory. What about the practical dimension?” (PR4).

¹ The medical–pedagogical approach in Special Education is defined by Jannuzzi (2004) as a perspective that emerged in Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century, when medical professionals and health services became involved in guiding the pedagogical organization of schools and teacher education (Borowsky, 2010, p. 69). Educational proposals designed for the target population of special education continue to be influenced by the conception outlined by Jannuzzi.

The statements of participants PR3 and PR4 are consistent with the considerations of Gatti et al. (2019), who argue that teacher education faces serious challenges, including fragmented curricula, the dissociation between theory and practice, and the superficial treatment of content. These weaknesses directly impact students' teaching and learning processes. Following the chronological order of continuing education initiatives developed in the municipality, the year 2021 is addressed next. This period was marked by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to reorganize pedagogical practices, which resulted in the provision of continuing education through remote modalities. Regarding the configuration of continuing education during this period, Silva (2019) emphasizes that training in this format:

It does not consist merely of transferring face-to-face educational models to virtual environments; rather, it requires adaptations in instructional planning, strategies, methodologies, and educational resources in order to support teachers in constructing active learning pathways (Silva, 2019, p. 12).

Corroborating Silva's (2019) contributions, Oliveira et al. (2020) point out that teacher education mediated by digital technologies can promote approaches that encourage multiple interactions among participants in the training process. This modality can also enable reflective and contextualized training, as it allows the instructor to become familiar with the realities of the participating teachers.

It should be noted, however, that the continuing education offered to teachers from the perspective of school inclusion in 2021 was directed exclusively toward the educational context of deaf students. According to participant PR1, the Municipal Department of Education has prioritized continuing education in the perspective of school inclusion mainly for caregivers and teachers working in Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE):

[...] "Yes! All the courses I have taken were paid for by me. Unfortunately, the municipal system does not offer all courses in this area to classroom teachers; they are only offered to caregivers and AEE teachers [...]" (PR1).

In her statement, participant PR1 highlights that the continuing education offered by the municipality is largely "focused on the group of specialists"

(Damásio, 2008, p. 21), whereas training initiatives from the perspective of school inclusion should more broadly address discussions related to pedagogical practices developed in regular classrooms.

Regarding the teacher education proposal presented in the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), Mendes et al. (2011, p. 138) characterize it as complex, as it involves the skills and knowledge necessary for working with all students who are the target population of special education, although it is primarily directed toward professionals working in Specialized Educational Assistance.

Thus, it is understood that such policy guidance may contribute to a lack of articulation between general education and special education. Furthermore, the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008) does not explicitly address the need for coordinated training between regular classroom teachers and AEE teachers for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

Therefore, training focused on school inclusion should be understood as “an integral part of the general education of education professionals and, therefore, subject to the same discussions taking place at the national, state, and municipal levels” (Cartolano, 1998, p. 29).

Table 2 – Initial Teacher Education of the Study Participants

Participantes	Sexo	Idade	Vínculo	Formação Inicial	Formação Acadêmica	Especialização	Tempo de docência	Docência na escola pesquisada	Função Atual
PR1	Feminino	38 anos	Efetivo	Magistério	Pedagogia	Neuropsicopedagogia Clínica e Institucional	18 anos	15 anos	Professora Titular
PR 2	Feminino	54 anos	Efetivo	Magistério	Pedagogia	Alfabetização e Letramento	27 anos	27anos	Professora Titular
PR 3	Feminino	57 anos	Efetivo	Magistério	Pedagogia	Ensino Especial	34 anos	34 anos	Professora Titular
PR 4	Feminino	53 anos	Efetivo	Magistério	Pedagogia	Psicopedagogia	25 anos	10 anos	Professora Titular
PR 5	Feminino	58 anos	Efetivo	Magistério	Letras Portuguesa e Pedagogia	Estudos Linguísticos e Literários	32 anos	30 anos	Professora Titular

Source: Field research data (2024)

It can be observed from Table 2 that the five teachers participating in the study hold degrees in Pedagogy and that all of them have completed postgraduate specialization programs. However, it is important to highlight that,

according to Mendes (2015, p. 88), “initial teacher education programs have not provided sufficient theoretical and methodological support for everyday work with the group of students who constitute the target population of special education.” In light of this lack of preparation, Carvalho (2008, p. 27) notes that, in the absence of adequate training, some teachers resist the inclusive process, while others, in order to avoid conflicts with the school management team, “simply accept” inclusion.

From this perspective, Nóvoa (2017, p. 70) emphasizes that “the privileged space for continuing education lies in the fact that the teacher is embedded within a professional community and a school organization.”

Thus, the school can be understood as a permanent space for continuing professional development, since it is within this context that difficulties emerge and where the professionals who experience them daily work and, collectively, can develop strategies to address the challenges present in pedagogical practice.

In line with this conception of school-based continuing education, Mantoan (2013) proposes the creation of study groups within schools, emphasizing that:

Em consonância com essa concepção de formação continuada no espaço escolar, Mantoan (2013) propõe a constituição de grupos de estudo no interior das escolas, destacando que:

Hence the need to establish study groups within schools for the discussion and understanding of educational problems, based on scientific knowledge and, whenever possible, from an interdisciplinary perspective. These groups are spontaneously organized by teachers themselves during their time at school. Such meetings begin with the shared needs and interests of teachers to clarify situations and to improve the way they work in their classrooms (Mantoan, 2013, p. 45).

According to Mantoan (2013), the purpose of study groups is to develop competencies for addressing pedagogical problems within the school context. These groups should include the participation of the principal, the pedagogical coordinator, and teachers who, during their meetings, analyze how teaching is being conducted, how students construct knowledge, and discuss relevant themes such as teaching and learning processes, among other aspects. The author argues that the organization of such groups enables teachers to exchange

experiences and to understand that the improvement of pedagogical practice occurs through interactions established among colleagues. Through these interactions, viable strategies may emerge to overcome difficulties faced both at the school level and in the classroom, allowing teachers to recognize that the exchange of experiences within the school environment also constitutes a formative process.

The articulation advocated by Mantoan (2013) is also reflected in the Teacher Education Policy of the Municipal School System of Porto Velho, RO (2019), which emphasizes that “dialogue among professionals should be continuous within the school space, with a view to student development” (Rondônia, 2019, p. 23). The provisions of the municipal policy are supported by Resolution No. 04/2009, Article 13, item VIII, which establishes the need for the teacher of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) to collaborate with the regular classroom teacher in developing strategies and resources that promote accessibility and student participation in school activities.

However, beyond the collaboration between these two professionals, it is necessary to foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing among all school staff, recognizing that school inclusion is a collective responsibility of the entire school community. This perspective implies not only the provision of training opportunities, but also the creation of permanent spaces for dialogue and the exchange of experiences among teachers, school administrators, and specialists within the school environment. In 2022, two continuing education initiatives from the perspective of school inclusion were carried out, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 – Continuing Education Initiatives from the Perspective of School Inclusion Conducted in 2022.

	Target Audience	Topics	Workload
01	School administrators, supervisors, teachers, AEE teachers, and caregivers	Challenges of Special Education from the Inclusive Perspective: reflection on the topic with school network professionals in order to promote specific actions for Special Education.	12h
02	Urban and rural elementary school classroom teachers	Why Bring Vygotsky into Schools? Contributions to Special and Inclusive Education: presentation of general aspects and specific features of L. S. Vygotsky's theoretical framework and its implications for current Special and Inclusive Education in Porto Velho.	4h

Fonte: Prepared by the researcher based on the Detailed Report (2022).

It can be observed from Table 3 that, in 2022, the training initiatives offered by the municipality began to include themes related to inclusive contexts, particularly by addressing the challenges of Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education. This topic enables discussions concerning the articulation between the regular classroom teacher and the Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) teacher, as well as the different dimensions of accessibility—architectural, attitudinal, and methodological.

These reflections involve actions that require the collective engagement of the school. Furthermore, this theme contributes to understanding “the complexity of educational work and to providing better responses to problematic situations in practice” (Imbernón, 2010, p. 60).

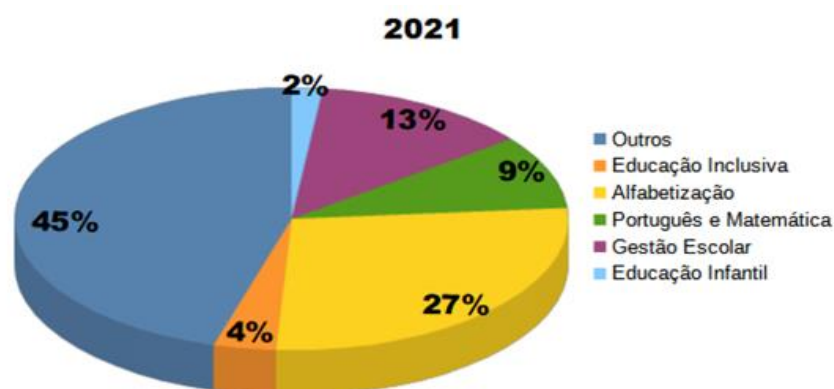
It is also noteworthy that, in 2022, elementary school classroom teachers participated in continuing education with the theme “Why Bring Vygotsky into Schools?” This approach is highly relevant to teaching and learning processes within inclusive mainstream classrooms, since Vygotsky (1997) emphasizes the need to attend to the singularities of each individual through two complementary perspectives: the general laws of child development and the specific characteristics related to students with disabilities or developmental disorders. The author further argues that disability should not be understood only in its primary biological dimension, but especially in its secondary social dimension. According to Vygotsky (1997), one of the fundamental conditions for the

development of collectivity lies in the formation of heterogeneous communities, as new aspects of students' personalities emerge within free and diverse child groups.

From this perspective, the training theme may have enabled teachers to develop new reflections on differentiated ways of teaching, contributing to the school inclusion of students with disabilities and, above all, to the construction of an education that embraces all learners. However, it is important to emphasize that teacher development for and within processes of change occurs through the development of collective reflective capacities and the sharing of knowledge within the professional context (Imbernón, 2010).

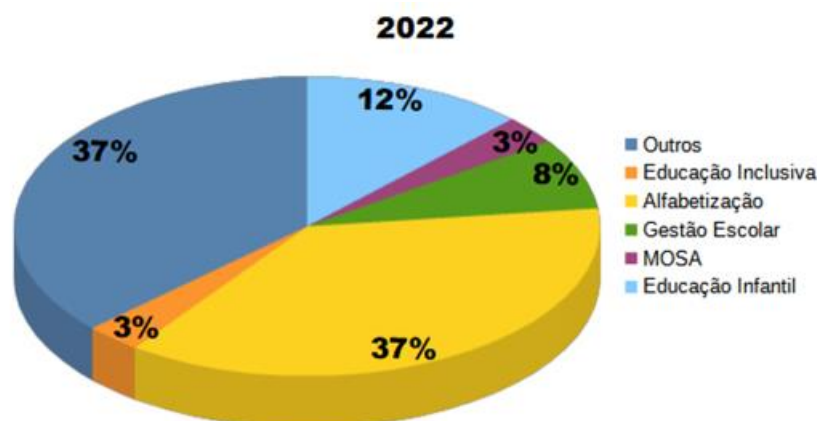
Despite the thematic expansion observed in the training initiatives, the data indicate that only 4% of the training activities conducted in 2021 and only 3% of those offered in 2022 addressed inclusive education, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 – Training Initiatives Conducted in the Municipal Education System in 2021



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the DIFOR/SEMED Detailed Report (2021)

Figure 3 – Training Initiatives Conducted in the Municipal Education System in 2022



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the DIFOR/SEMED Detailed Report (2022)

Through Figures 2 and 3, it is possible to observe that in 2021 and 2022, as in 2018, there was limited municipal investment in continuing education initiatives from the perspective of school inclusion. As indicated by participant PR1, investments in continuing education have been directed “[...] toward regular classroom teachers, focusing on literacy.” This orientation appears to be related to the enactment of Law No. 912, of August 23, 2022, which created and implemented the Alfabetiza Porto Velho Program. The program aims to ensure that children enrolled in the municipal education system achieve literacy by the third year of elementary school (Rondônia, 2022).

It is understood that literacy involves “real problems faced by teachers, with specific discussions about practice, and such discussions may benefit both students with disabilities and other students” (Rondônia, 2019, p. 72). However, it is important to emphasize that the continuing education initiatives offered in the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, have contributed to maintaining a model of Special Education that operates parallel to mainstream education. This lack of articulation between training initiatives and, consequently, between school practices, finds support in the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Brazil, 2008), which sustains the understanding that the teacher of Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) should be trained to work with all types of disabilities and educational levels,

directing their training specifically toward the target population of special education.

In 2023, four continuing education initiatives from the perspective of school inclusion were conducted, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4 – Continuing Education Initiatives from the Perspective of School Inclusion in 2023

	Target Audience	Topics	Workload
01	Educational counselors	Training meeting: The role of municipal school counselors in working with students with disabilities..	4 h
02	Support staff, school caregivers, and AEE teachers	Training course for support staff and/or school caregivers working with students with disabilities.	160 h
03	Teachers and pedagogical technical staff of an early childhood education school	Lecture: Teacher health in the context of Special Education.	4 h
04	School administrators	Lecture: Welcoming practices – From principles to inclusive practice.	4 h
05	Specialized teachers from Multifunctional Resource Rooms	Workshop on the development of pedagogical materials.	8 h

Fonte: Prepared by the researcher based on the Detailed Report (2023)

It can be observed from Table 4 that, in 2023, there was a greater investment by the municipality in continuing education initiatives focused on the perspective of school inclusion, involving the participation of all school professionals. The relevance of training directed to all members of the school community is reaffirmed, since all are co-responsible for the inclusion process of students who are the target population of special education. However, it is also evident that, despite involving all professionals, the training initiatives were conducted in a fragmented manner, with different target audiences and distinct themes.

In this context, the importance of collaboration in training processes should be emphasized. According to Imbernón (2010, p. 60), collaboration constitutes “a process that can help to understand the complexity of educational work and to provide better responses to problematic situations in practice.” Thus, for the development of a collaborative culture in teacher education—understood both as a principle and as a methodological approach—it is necessary to:

Break with the individualism of training and understand collaboration as a process of participation, engagement, appropriation, and belonging, rather than as a technique to be taught, grounded in respect, recognition, and confidence in the capacities of all teachers and school professionals (Imbernón, 2010).

Imbernón (2010, p. 81) further emphasizes that collaboration in training processes “depends on the willingness of teachers and professionals to assume their role as subjects of their own professional development, intersubjects in relation to their colleagues,” as they recognize their personal and professional identity and cease to be merely instruments in the hands of others. From this perspective, continuing education creates and strengthens opportunities for daily reflection on teaching practice, enabling its critical evaluation and fostering processes of self-assessment regarding what is done and why it is done. This conception of professional development therefore goes beyond the idea of mere scientific, pedagogical, or didactic updating, becoming a “possibility for creating spaces for participation, reflection, and learning so that individuals can adapt and learn to live with change and uncertainty” (Imbernón, 2001, pp. 14–15).

However, the author warns that “it is very difficult to change training policies and practices” (Imbernón, 2010, pp. 45–46), since such change requires breaking with training policies structured around multiplier strategies, which ultimately “leave the workplace context equally impoverished” (Imbernón, 2010, p. 46). Within this logic, training practices tend to prioritize individual development rather than collaborative models of continuing professional development. In this sense, the reflection proposed by Imbernón (2010) is particularly relevant, as it highlights central concerns in the field of continuing education, such as: what knowledge is necessary, how it should be constructed, which types of knowledge should be mobilized, and which models and training modalities should be adopted. These questions indicate that the theory and practice of teacher education must be continuously revisited and renewed.

Continuing Education and Its Relationship with Inclusive Practices in the School Context

We concur with Hummel (2012, p. 165), who argues that effective teacher education “must take into account teachers’ expectations and difficulties; moreover, the continuity of training is essential, since the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical actions in the workplace constitutes a challenge for teachers.” Based on Hummel’s (2012) contributions, the close relationship between continuing education and the strengthening of inclusive practices in the school context becomes evident, as such practices require training processes that engage with teachers’ lived realities and with the concrete challenges of everyday school life.

“[...] the municipality does not provide pedagogical materials for students with disabilities [...]” (PR1).

“What is needed is for everyone to put into practice what is being discussed. It is difficult when they tell me what to do, but they do not come and do it with me [...]” (PR2).

“[...] I think there is a lack of concrete support; there is still a lot missing. [...] regarding didactics and having appropriate materials, I think progress is still needed in this direction. The issue of practice and teaching materials [...]” (PR3).

“Even though there are many lectures and a lot of theory, what about the practical aspect? The AEE room exists at the school, but the materials stay there, and we remain in the classroom with the other students without adequate resources.” (PR4).

“I even find it difficult to respond because when they bring speakers, they share experiences. We already have experience in the classroom; we do not want to hear about that experience [...] we want to know about practice.” (PR5).

From the teachers’ responses, it can be observed that the continuing education offered has not been sufficient to address the difficulties encountered in the school context. The lack of effective training actions is highlighted by participant PR3, who states that “there is a lack of concrete support,” particularly regarding appropriate didactic materials and practical guidance. Similarly, participant PR1 emphasizes that “the municipality does not provide pedagogical materials for students with disabilities.”

These statements highlight the importance of material resources for the learning of students who are the target population of special education, especially accessibility resources of a pedagogical nature. However, the training gap goes beyond the mere availability or use of instructional resources, pointing to the need for professional development that promotes a critical understanding of their pedagogical use without losing sight of teaching practice. Participants report that the continuing education courses offered have been predominantly based on

knowledge transmission, to the detriment of the “practical dimension” (PR3) connected to everyday classroom realities, thus remaining distant from the real problems experienced by teachers (Imbernón, 2010).

Consistent with the statements of PR3, participant PR4 notes that the training involves “many lectures, a lot of theory, and little practice.” Likewise, PR5 states: “We already have experience in the classroom; we do not want to hear about experience [...] we want to know about practice.” These perceptions indicate that the lack of articulation between theory and practice in continuing education contributes to teachers’ difficulty in recognizing the relationship between theoretical knowledge and their classroom performance (Silva et al., 2015). However, articulating theory and practice does not mean “turning teacher education into a laboratory of situational testing that provides ready-made solutions; rather, it means creating conditions for theory to confront concrete situations so that practices are constructed through reflection-in-action” (Azevedo, 2020, p. 108). In other words, continuing education should create opportunities for teachers to integrate theory and practice dynamically and reflectively, adapting them to the demands and complexities of the educational context.

From this perspective, Imbernón (2010, p. 40) emphasizes the need to “promote a new culture of professional development that generates new processes in the theory and practice of teacher education, introducing new perspectives and methodologies.” Such approaches should enable teachers to become “increasingly reflective professionals, capable of analyzing the situation of their students, examining tasks and strategies, and seeking resources that are most appropriate for each situation” (Miranda, 2011, p. 137), acting critically in response to the challenges of daily classroom practice. In this sense, professional development:

assumes a role that goes beyond mere scientific, pedagogical, and didactic updating, becoming a possibility for creating spaces for participation, reflection, and learning so that individuals can adapt and live with change and uncertainty (Imbernón, 2010, pp. 14–15).

In addition to the weak articulation between theory and practice, participant PR4 also highlights the lack of collaboration between the Specialized Educational

Assistance (AEE) teacher and the regular classroom teacher, stating that although the AEE resource room exists, its materials remain there, while classroom teachers continue working with students without adequate resources. According to the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Brazil, 2008), AEE is intended to “complement or supplement students’ education through the provision of services, accessibility resources, and strategies that eliminate barriers to their full participation in society and learning development” (Brazil, 2009, p. 5). AEE actions should therefore be articulated with the regular classroom, enriching the curriculum and supporting students’ participation and access to knowledge.

Thus, the work of AEE should not occur in isolation, but rather through collaborative action, in which special education and regular education teachers jointly develop support strategies for the schooling of students with disabilities within the classroom context. However, as indicated by PR4, such articulation does not always occur, and strategies and accessibility resources are not consistently shared.

This finding reinforces Mendes’ (2015, p. 90) analysis that continuing education for AEE teachers “has produced few changes in pedagogical practice, as it remains distant and disconnected from the real professional needs and everyday realities of AEE services.” In this sense, the training offered by the municipality has contributed only modestly to strengthening pedagogical work, as it appears to be “primarily designed for the theoretical study of disabilities” (Simão, 2017, p. 129).

Participant PR2 reinforces this perception by stating that “everyone needs to put into practice what is being discussed; it is difficult when they tell me what to do but do not come and do it with me,” suggesting that the process of school inclusion is often experienced individually and in isolation. However, this process must be collectively assumed by all actors within the educational context, involving “teachers, administrators, specialists, parents, students, and other professionals who form an educational network around a common proposal shared by all schools and, at the same time, constructed by each according to its specific characteristics” (Ropoli et al., 2010, p. 10).

In light of PR2’s statement, collaboration is reaffirmed as “a process that can help to understand the complexity of educational work and provide better

responses to problematic situations in practice” (Imbernón, 2009, p. 60). Nevertheless, the development of a collaborative culture within schools requires overcoming the individualism present in training processes and understanding collaboration as a process of participation, engagement, appropriation, and belonging, grounded in respect, recognition, and the valuing of all teachers’ capacities (Imbernón, 2010).

It is therefore understood that the process of school inclusion depends on multiple factors, including social conceptions and representations of disability, as well as the material resources and financial support available to schools (Mendes, 2015). In this context, teacher education must respond to contemporary demands and challenges, enabling teachers to mobilize their knowledge and articulate it with their professional competencies through continuous processes of action and theoretical–practical reflection.

Final Considerations

The analysis of the continuing education initiatives offered by the municipality between 2018 and 2020 revealed that the themes addressed were exclusively focused on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition to this restrictive focus, the training developed during this period was grounded in clinically based models, which prioritized the study of the disorder rather than promoting critical and reflective training centered on the learning and developmental processes of students who are the target population of special education.

However, beyond knowledge about disabilities or disorders, teachers require training that fosters the development of competencies to analyze the pedagogical process and to consider the singularities present in learning processes within the classroom context. Such a perspective demands training actions that move beyond a diagnostic approach and advance toward a deeper understanding of inclusive pedagogical practices.

The participating teachers emphasized that the continuing education offered has not been sufficient to address the difficulties experienced in the school context. They pointed out that the courses have been predominantly

based on the transmission of knowledge, without the necessary articulation between theory and practice. They also highlighted that the training provided has contributed only to a limited extent to strengthening the pedagogical practices developed in their daily school work.

In light of the findings, it becomes evident that continuing education from the perspective of school inclusion in the municipality of Porto Velho, RO, needs to be developed through collaborative processes in which teachers' expectations, concerns, and needs are considered. Such processes should create "spaces in which teachers have a voice, are heard, and develop reflective and questioning processes" (Imbernón, 2010, p. 112) regarding their pedagogical practice in response to the demands of inclusive education.

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