



## Literacy and literacy: challenges for the visually impaired

*Literacy and literacy: challenges of the visually impaired*

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### SUMMARY

This article analyzes the universe of visually impaired people and aims to deepen studies related to their literacy process, their specificities and the methodologies used to obtain better results. It addresses issues and paths that can benefit the teaching-learning process. In terms of pedagogical practice, we seek to look at work with students with visual impairments and reflect on specific procedures and resources that help direct the teacher in the classroom. In this work, bibliographical research was used as a research methodology and the theory-practice relationship, highlighting the need to pay attention to pedagogical practices that best adapt to the peculiarities of the visually impaired. The education process for students with visual impairments. It can be concluded that in relation to the literacy and literacy process of the visually impaired, it is necessary to offer guidance relevant to the area of visual impairment and qualification to teachers, so that they can provide satisfactory work that meets the needs of people who require specific conditions to become develop and participate in the inclusion process, so desired by everyone. Therefore, it is important to address this issue.

**Key words:** Literacy. Literacy. Challenges. Child. Visual impairment.

### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the universe of children with visual impairments and aims to deepen studies related to their literacy process, their specificities and the methodologies used to obtain better results. It addresses issues and paths that can benefit the teaching-learning process. In terms of pedagogical practice, we seek to look at work with students with visual impairments and the reflection of specific procedures and resources that help to guide the teacher in the classroom. In this work, bibliographic research was used as a research methodology and the theory-practice relationship, highlighting the need to be aware of the pedagogical practices that best adapt to the peculiarities of the blind child. The education process for visually impaired children. It can be concluded that in relation to the literacy and literacy process of the visually impaired, it is necessary to offer relevant guidance in the area of visual impairment and qualification to teachers, so that they provide satisfactory work that meets the needs of people who require specific conditions to develop and participate in the inclusion process, so desired by all. Therefore, it is important to address this issue.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of visually impaired people in educational institutions and in society is a major challenge that education faces today. Society, teachers, educational managers and public authorities must be and be prepared for the inclusion of the visually impaired, as they, as well as society as a whole, have the right to quality education.

However, there is a need to obtain greater knowledge to assist in the training of teachers who work in the regular education system, providing efficient education that favors the students. Many times, the teacher receives a blind student and does not know what the correct actions are and how to proceed in the student's literacy process.

To this end, we sought knowledge about visual impairment with its main aspects, characteristics and peculiarities, the literacy and learning of blind students, the approach to the main teaching resources for their education and the work of the Specialized Educational Service. This work constitutes an opportunity for a better understanding of the literacy process and the needs of quality education for the visually impaired.

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Another motivation is related to the results found in the case study. Unlike the most of the publications analyzed about the knowledge and literacy processes of blind students. The written language present in our daily lives favors understanding the importance of written culture and enables participation in the social practices that involve it. In this way, when starting the formal process of learning to read and write.

Therefore, seeking to contribute to the construction of this new teaching identity, this article analyzes the universe of visually impaired people and aims to deepen studies related to their literacy process, their specificities and the methodologies used to obtain better results.

Given this, the specific objectives are: a) to characterize the challenges and practices that involve the literacy method of a visually impaired person within the context of public schools; b) Check the literacy practices that teachers are using for students with visual impairments.

Therefore, this work focuses on the following question: What are the challenges and how do they do teachers develop knowledge/strategies to face them in the process of teaching students with visual impairments literacy?

The relevance of producing the article was due to the fact that it could show future readers the perspective of learning for the visually impaired and also the importance of the teacher as a mediator, believing in the potential of these disabled people and not focusing on the difficulties.

## 2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The concept of inclusive education seeks the social insertion of all children with educational needs. special captives in the regular education network. In this integration, interaction with other children and joint development are sought. However, sometimes difficulties arise on the part of schools and teachers in integrating these children due to the need to obtain adequate conditions.

In Brazil, the 1988 constitution, as well as LDB 9,394/96 (Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education) shows the importance of promoting educational inclusion as a formative element of nationality. For the school to be a training space for all, with a truly inclusive environment, public education policies must be aimed at inclusion and be equipped with materials, equipment and specialized teachers.

Democracy in education is only confirmed in educational systems that promote the quality of teaching and are able to respond to the needs of each student according to their peculiarities, as everyone needs school to learn and not to be present or to be attended to separately. .

An inclusive school, although it is contested by some and has frightened the school community because demanding changes and attitudes, leads us to reflect that this is a social position that guarantees equality and respect for differences. And for there to be success in the inclusion of students with disabilities, it is necessary to achieve significant progress in their learning, through the adaptation of pedagogical practices enabled to the diversity and specificities of each child.

The inclusion of a student with a disability in regular school goes beyond allowing participation and attendance. frequency in classes, requires active participation in the learning process, socialization and experience.

### 2.1 LITERACY AND LITERACY OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Conceptions about inclusive processes challenge us to review related concepts and practices to the teaching and learning processes of people with disabilities. In the case of blind people, there are certain controversies and some concepts that need to be rethought or made objects of more in-depth reflection.

two Publications, still scarce, on the literacy process of students with SCD are characterized by, to a large extent, by the emphasis on the process of learning to write and read the Braille code, treated as synonymous with the literacy process (MONTEIRO, 2004).

The defense of teaching Braille as the main resource for learning to read and write for blind people is controversial. For some authors, learning Braille is fundamental, as only through it would blind children have access to reading and writing (ALMEIDA, 2008).

However, there are other authors who argue that Braille is important, but there are countless ways for blind people to learn and use reading and writing, in addition to Braille, through technological resources.

computational resources, through resources from readers and scribes, through games and games, among others. (BATISTA; LOPES; ULMAIRA, 2016).

In addition to the questions presented above, there are others, involving Braille writing, that go beyond issues related to learning to write and read using this system. There are reports referring to the sociocultural limitation of the presence and circulation of Braille (RODRIGUES, 2014; SILVA, 2011).

The absence of Braille writing in the daily life of our society leads to questions about the final ability to learn to use writing restricted to a group of people, little used and discredited. In other words, in the different sociocultural contexts in which blind people participate/interact, the meanings and values that writing assumes are constructed by and for sighted people (GABAGLIA, 2014).

Therefore, Braille writing has restricted circulation and production. There is almost no production and circulation of books, magazines, pamphlets, packaging or other products with Braille writing. Public libraries, when they have Braille collections, do not meet the needs of access to printed publications, as we will see in Karine's report, which demonstrates the frustration of her ambitions as a reader due to the lack of access to printed materials in Braille (RODRIGUES, 2014).

Rodrigues (2014), a user of the Braille system, narrates fragments of her literacy process. From the childhood to youth, his narrative reflects the expectations and frustrations related to the uses and functions of reading and writing.

Similar to her family and schoolmates, who she observed participating in reading and writing situations, Karine longed to participate more actively in the literate culture of which she was a part. In the section in which she reported her knowledge about the presence of writing outside of school, she discussed some of her expectations in learning to read (SILVA, 2016).

However, over time, frustrations arose with the limited availability of printed materials. in Braille, with few possibilities of access to written texts, in addition to there being few readers for their writing.

The conceptions about the literacy and literacy processes of blind people, presented by Leite (2003), Almeida (2008), Lima (2010) and Monteiro (2004), in turn, suggest disadvantages in the learning process of blind people, because they would have little contact with reading and writing.

For these authors, blind children would only become familiar with the characters of their writing and reading when they are formally introduced to them at school, in most cases, around the age of seven. Only from this age onwards would their contact with the characters of the Braille alphabet begin, with the aim of learning to read and write.

Thus, like literacy in ink, prevalent until the 1980s, learning Braille is treated by many authors as a skill acquired by an individual, independent of the broader social context, such as learning a technique. In other words, this Braille teaching format can be understood as associated with the autonomous literacy model.

As Street (2014) explains, the autonomous literacy model operates with the notion of literacy in technical terms, regardless of the social context. Although the authors cited above credit their teaching proposals to the specificities of the learning needs of blind people, the teaching concept highlighted reproduces literacy proposals in force in the period between the 1920s and, more or less, the mid-1980s. last century.

## 2.2 LITERACY OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

The family, upon discovering that the child has visual impairment, usually seeks a cure through science or religion, forgetting to work on the basic concepts for its formation, failing to stimulate the other senses and not developing in the child the necessary skills such as tactile, gustatory, olfactory and auditory. Probably, due to their lack of preparation in dealing with this reality, they contribute for the delay in the child's learning, arriving at school with numerous difficulties and hindering the learning process.

The family, especially parents, plays an important role in a child's learning. It is known that non-formal education constitutes one of the essential pillars in the construction of the self. According to KUPFER (1989):

*A child's education must prioritize the domination of instincts, since it must inhibit, prohibit, repress. It is known that the absence of restrictions and guidelines can mis-educate instead of promoting a healthy education. Anxiety is inevitable, but excessive repression of impulses can lead to neurotic disorders. The problem, therefore, is finding the balance between prohibitions*



It is in the family that the blind child acquires his first educational, social and historical experiences, it is there that he learns to relate to others, that he learns myths, beliefs and values that outline his profile as a person. The family plays an important role in the child's school life, and this cannot be ignored, as they greatly influence their learning. By the time children arrive at school, they already bring with them a whole range of knowledge about the world and themselves.

When a blind child is well stimulated and receives the necessary support in the first years of life, he or she arrives at school with development very close to that of a sighted child. It is the school that will help you to expand your social life, to leave the personal and restricted space of your home to explore other places, to have new experiences and achievements. However, not all children are the same, and some may experience delays in their development due to the lack of adequate stimulation or restricted experiences.

To include children with VI, the school needs to be aware of physical conditions such as infrastructure, furniture, tactile and visual signs to indicate locations and thus facilitate mobility and autonomy for the visually impaired. However, it also needs to be concerned with providing better preparation for teachers and a quality of teaching for people with visual impairments, trying to minimize their difficulties and seeking to include them in the school's activities as a whole.

When starting literacy for blind children, continuous and consistent stimulation work must be carried out, which will favor the development of essential and basic skills, such as body and spatial perception, definition of concepts, tactile and auditory discrimination, broad and fine motor skills. For this to happen, it is important that the child handles toys with different shapes and textures, as well as play dough, clay or paper pulp and other varied materials.

Pedagogical development must begin with the exploration of concrete objects and understanding the body, with different resources, involving games and using materials adapted to their needs, always inserting the student into the classroom context and encouraging them to participate in the proposed activities, before introducing the teaching of Braille.

Every school must offer accessible teaching material for blind and visually impaired students, such as regletes and punch (braille writing tools), soroban (abacus for teaching the numerical system), braille typewriter, communication tools, with synthesizers voice for the computer, manual and electronic magnifying glasses, inclined plane, games with enlarged letters and words, contrasting colors and their representation in Braille.

The lack of visual stimuli may cause a delay in the skills that are necessary for literacy. Blind children need materials and resources to motivate them to move, move around and discover the world. They need tactile materials that they can handle to develop tactile perception and coordinate hand movements, which is very important in learning. of Braille.

For Vygotsky (2005, p.77) the invention of the Braille system did much more for the blind than thousands of philanthropic actions. For the author, "(...) the possibility of reading and writing is more important than the 'sixth sense' and the acuteness of touch and hearing", the possibility of reading, decoding the sign and extracting information from a text to achieve an objective. Read to defend yourself, to participate, to free yourself, for pleasure, that is, to use reading as a social practice, enabling social advancement for the individual.

In this way, it is up to the teacher to develop the child's social and intellectual autonomy so that he or she sees himself as a subject in the process, developing his criticisms so that he becomes a citizen. It is necessary for the teacher to convey security by establishing emotional bonds, which will contribute to social, personal, affective and cognitive growth.

Dialogue is also important, as from this the child will try to understand the world with their subjectivities. For this to happen, it is necessary to describe what is around the child so that he or she can do an image that comes closest to the real thing.

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The teacher must not be a mere passer of information but must be resourceful in their pedagogical practice, as there is no ready-made recipe for the best way to teach literacy, especially when dealing with children who require a more diverse methodology.

Taking into account the Piagetian study, which demonstrates that the cognitive function of children with visual impairment develops much more slowly, compared to the development of sighted children, it can be said that the student must first be aware of the magnitude and complexity of this undertaking.

You must be a severe observer and pay attention to the evolutionary trajectory of the student in your hands,

showing himself to be a permanent scholar of the educational area in which he works and believes.

It is very important for teachers to reflect on their practices, to let go of so-called traditional models and try to work from a new perspective that encompasses everyone in a more inclusive way. You prepare your lesson plans taking into account that there is a child in the classroom with visual difficulties, and adapting the activities to meet their needs.

Therefore, the teacher of visually impaired children needs to obtain prior knowledge of each case to be able to develop a work plan and curricular adaptation appropriate to the needs thus required.

### 2.3 BRAILLE LITERACY PROCESS

From reading both texts, we noticed a relationship between the literacy process and literacy of the school life trajectory of Silva (2015) and the approaches highlighted in the article by Silva and Anjos (2016) that deal with the literacy and literacy process of blind people in Brazil, with Braille as the main literacy instrument and the pedagogical perspectives about the role of the school and the teacher in this process.

*Thus, one of the first difficulties faced by the student in the literacy process was learning the Braille code. Knowing the alphabet in Braille, for me, that was a very boring thing because I had left a life in which before I wrote, I painted, I had and didn't depend on anyone [...] it was very impactful, in my life, I stopped doing something I liked to do something else I didn't like, which was Braille. For me, that wasn't funny and I also thought I would never read it there, because I always found it very difficult to read Braille [...] (SILVA, 2015, p. 27).*

According to the author, learning the Braille code seemed an impossible task, as it required sacrifices and a longer period of literacy compared to the literacy period of sighted students. According to her, the Braille code was boring and mechanical reading, so much so that she ended up giving up learning at a certain period, only to resume it later.

In relation to the literacy process for blind people, Silva and Anjos (2016, p. 73) highlight that “research and publications on the literacy and literacy process for blind people, still scarce, are characterized by an emphasis on the learning process of the mechanics of writing and reading the Braille code, treated as synonymous with the literacy process”.

We then realize, in both texts mentioned above, that theory and practice are related, because the blind person's literacy process happens mechanically without taking into account the knowledge of the literate world that the person brings.

### 2.4 TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN WORKING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR THE VISUALLY DISABLED

In 2002, the “Curriculum Guidelines for the Training of Basic Education Teachers, at higher level, in a degree course, full degree”, was inaugurated through Resolution No. 1, which deals with the systematization of each educational establishment, which should identify different ways of training specific tendencies for the work of the educator, so that they consider them in a way that takes into account the peculiarities of students with their own educational needs (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE EDUCAÇÃO, 2002).

According to Glat and Pletsch (2010), in order for Inclusive Education to truly take place, it is essential the present role of the teacher, who will have a primary role in preparing these students with their own educational deficiencies who are approaching teaching and will also be an actor in the setting of teaching materials and pedagogical resources to help with their inclusion.

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Due to the duty to include visually impaired people in common classes in regular education, some of the main barriers faced by educational agents on a daily basis are: harmony with peculiarities, family-institution interaction and teachers prepared to work with this reality.

The current scenario demonstrates that institutions are contradictory places, where habits prejudice and understanding, and who are far from being prepared for what is recommended in official documents on school inclusion (MATOS, MENDES, 2015).

Confirming this position, Dorneles (2002) reflects that school knowledge of the visually impaired intermediated by the educator in a school, faces some delimitations, such as teacher training and the difficulties that relate to public policies in this sector.

It is of intense importance to untie consolidated points in the community, encompassing society school and provide means to receive resources with the purpose of welcoming and preserving the student in the regular class. The teacher needs to understand the visually impaired learner as an individual with diverse capabilities and not as an unequal individual.

According to the explanation by Glat and Oliveira (2004), it is necessary to train all teachers quickly to achieve success in the insertion of these students, through increasing continuation; In this way, they will be able to interact with their dissimilar students and, consequently, with their own peculiarities and insufficiencies.

The regular class teacher is not prepared to face students with special needs and there is also no prosperity project focused on training these actors, as there is no in-depth debate regarding the pedagogical implementation that makes the qualification regular and durable; in addition to students with special needs, it is still seen as the sole task of special education (GLAT, PLETSCHE, 2010).

Given this scenario, it is essential that educators develop skills to generate, design, implanting different didactic and methodological methods that truly ensure the inclusion of students with special needs. Therefore, it is necessary for educators inserted in regular education, as well as those who are in ongoing training, to overcome pre-judged concepts that special needs are a point of impediment in the student's development (CAMARGO *et al.*, 2009).

### 3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This is a bibliographical research based on scientific articles, BNCC and educational websites and several authors. The articles, theses and dissertations were the objects of investigation in this study, taken from reputable websites and works and recognized for their reliability

Bibliographic research is understood as the literature review on the main theories that guide scientific work. This review is what we call a bibliographic survey or bibliographic review, which can be carried out on books, periodicals, articles and databases (GIL, 2010).

As inclusion criteria, only references published in Portuguese were used, with full texts for access in updated databases, publications whose objectives were to identify or describe the subject covered. Publications in other languages were excluded, as well as publications that, although within the theme, did not respond to the objectives of the study, or the text was not in full.

### 4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In the case of children with visual limitations, in the literacy phase, it is necessary for the teacher to do systematic work to develop sensory organs before introducing reading and writing, as we will see later. Remembering that, in the case of literacy through the Braille System, you must first work on reading and, later, writing.

This is due to the fact that writing done on the reglete requires greater development of motor coordination. thin log. And during the reading process, students using the system acquire skills at their fingertips. Returning to the Vygotskian discussion, it is clear that learning implies development and vice versa. Therefore, at least two levels of development are determined, the actual and the potential.

The first is one in which the child is capable of carrying out complex activities without the help of another person. This level of development determines functions that have already matured. It characterizes mental development retrospectively.

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The learning process of a visually impaired child requires specialized procedures and resources. For your global growth to be truly effective, it is necessary that you are offered many opportunities for experience and adequate concrete material, as numerous skills must be worked on.

Children with visual impairments must participate in all proposed activities, which encourage exploration and broad development of the other senses, forming meaningful learning. Therefore, in the absence of vision, audio description appears as another instrument that must be offered and used in schools. Audio description is a resource for translating images into words, aiming to explain



images, objects, among others.

Specialized Educational Assistance is a service that must be guaranteed and offered in each and every school, by teachers specialized in serving children with special needs. This service must be offered in conjunction with the inclusive school teacher, so that together they can provide students with active participation in school activities.

**Matos (2012)** emphasizes the importance of training educators to meet the needs educational services for all children, with or without disabilities, with a view to the concept of Education that respects diversity. Teaching a visually impaired child is not an easy task, as the absence of vision makes it difficult to establish a contextualization of the outside world.

It is important to remember that people with visual impairments are capable, with perfect cognitive skills and excellent motor actions, and the only difficulty is in the way they conduct and interpret the world. The ability to understand, interpret and assimilate will be expanded through a variety of experiences, stimulating development.

**Masini (1994)** emphasizes that, by interacting, getting to know and exploring, we are contributing to the development of motor skills, balance, teaching notions of mobility and orientation that will go beyond the school context. Therefore, it is important to highlight that there is no need to overvalue or underestimate children with disabilities. We must bear in mind that it is necessary to know its limitations, but, in addition, to know how to value its potential, which, in the case of blindness, is directly related to the structural and material conditions of accessibility.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is extremely pertinent to consider the relevance of this production, signaling that they are still the constructions surrounding the literacy process for visually impaired people within the public education network are insufficient. Basing the development of a blind child's written and oral language within the theory taken as a reference in this article is a strong indication that the school can be inclusive in essence and become the difference when it comes to acquiring knowledge and socialization of specials

Today's society demands a school for everyone that meets the current social profile, in addition to having to prepare competent citizens for social life. Each student is unique in their way of learning and living together and to achieve this the school needs to find ways to accommodate everyone with competence.

Inclusion brought about the need to rethink education and the school institution, mainly due to the difficulties faced by teachers. Therefore, it brings with it changes in the way of seeing, thinking and carrying out school education and teaching. It appears as a stimulus to think about education based on the opportunity to review and rethink school practices.

The teacher, faced with this reality, needs to play his professional role, his way of working looking and relating to its students in a differentiated and loving approach, with a commitment to democratizing the school space and promoting development and learning.

Learning to work with a DV student requires knowledge that is acquired on a daily basis, in practice and through interaction with colleagues. It is necessary to understand this child's learning process, learning their discoveries and promoting their development, so that the educational action is in accordance with their needs.

From this research, it is concluded that the literacy process for students with visual impairment requires multiple actions and a pedagogical procedure that is appropriate to their specificities. There is no adequate way to educate, it is necessary to make discoveries during literacy, and for this the teacher needs to know the child in the classroom. The teacher's challenge is not only to insert the student into the class, but to learn how to work with them, and to do this they must believe in their potential.

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