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# Collaboration between specialized educational support (AEE) teachers and mainstream teachers in the school inclusion process

*A colaboração entre professores do AEE e do ensino regular no processo de inclusão escolar*
*La colaboración entre docentes de atención educativa especializada (AEE) y de la enseñanza regular en el proceso de inclusión escolar*

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**Abstract:**
This article aims to discuss the importance of collaboration among Specialized Educational Support (AEE) teachers, regular education teachers, school managers, and other educational agents in the process of educational inclusion. The research was developed through a qualitative literature review, based on authors such as Carvalho (2004), Farfus (2008), Figueiredo, Bueno and Ferreira (2010), Franco and Schutz (2019), Glat and Pletsch (2011), Glat (2018), Mantoan (2015), Mittler (2003), Nóvoa (1992), Perrenoud (2000), Tardif (2002), Silva and Santos (2015), and Stainback and Stainback (1999), who are recognized in the field of inclusive education and collaborative practice. The studies analyzed indicate that the articulation between AEE teachers and regular classroom teachers, combined with the involvement of school managers and technical staff, directly impacts students' learning and the organizational climate of schools, fostering more democratic, welcoming, and inclusive environments. It is concluded that school inclusion must be understood as a collective commitment that involves shared responsibility among all education professionals. Collaboration, as highlighted by the authors reviewed, is essential for building an inclusive school capable of ensuring the right to learning and the holistic development of all students.

**Keywords:**
School inclusion; Specialized Educational Support; Teacher collaboration; Democratic education.

**Resumo:**
Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir a importância da colaboração entre professores do Atendimento Educacional Especializado (AEE), docentes do ensino regular, gestores e demais agentes escolares no processo de inclusão educacional. A pesquisa foi desenvolvida a partir de uma revisão bibliográfica de caráter qualitativo, fundamentada em autores como Carvalho (2004), Farfus (2008), Figueiredo, Bueno e Ferreira (2010), Franco e Schutz (2019), Glat e Pletsch (2011), Glat (2018), Mantoan (2015), Mittler (2003), Nóvoa (1992), Perrenoud (2000), Tardif (2002), Silva e Santos (2015) e Stainback e Stainback (1999), que se destacam na área da educação inclusiva e da prática colaborativa. Os estudos analisados apontam que a articulação entre professores do AEE e do ensino regular, somada ao envolvimento de gestores e equipe técnica, impacta diretamente a aprendizagem dos estudantes e o clima organizacional da escola, promovendo ambientes mais democráticos, acolhedores e inclusivos. Conclui-se que a inclusão escolar deve ser compreendida como um compromisso coletivo, que envolve corresponsabilidade entre todos os profissionais da educação. A colaboração, conforme destacam os autores analisados, é indispensável para a construção de uma escola inclusiva, capaz de assegurar o direito à aprendizagem e o desenvolvimento integral de todos os estudantes.

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**Palavras-chave:**
Inclusão escolar; Atendimento Educacional Especializado; Colaboração docente; Educação democrática.

**Resumen:**
Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir la importancia de la colaboración entre los profesores de Atención Educativa Especializada (AEE), los docentes de la enseñanza regular, los gestores y demás agentes escolares en el proceso de inclusión educativa. La investigación se desarrolló a partir de una revisión bibliográfica de carácter cualitativo, fundamentada en autores como Carvalho (2004), Farfus (2008), Figueiredo, Bueno y Ferreira (2010), Franco y Schutz (2019), Glat y Pletsch (2011), Glat (2018), Mantoan (2015), Mittler (2003), Nóvoa (1992), Perrenoud (2000), Tardif (2002), Silva y Santos (2015) y Stainback y Stainback (1999), quienes se destacan en el campo de la educación inclusiva y la práctica colaborativa. Los estudios analizados señalan que la articulación entre los profesores del AEE y los de la enseñanza regular, sumada al compromiso de los gestores y del equipo técnico, impacta directamente en el aprendizaje de los estudiantes y en el clima organizacional de la escuela, promoviendo ambientes más democráticos, acogedores e inclusivos. Se concluye que la inclusión escolar debe entenderse como un compromiso colectivo que implica la corresponsabilidad de todos los profesionales de la educación. La colaboración, tal como destacan los autores revisados, es indispensable para la construcción de una escuela inclusiva, capaz de garantizar el derecho al aprendizaje y el desarrollo integral de todos los estudiantes.

**Palabras clave:**
Inclusión escolar; Atención Educativa Especializada; Colaboración docente; Educación democrática.

## 1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, school inclusion has become one of the greatest challenges and one of the most important achievements in Brazilian education. The 1988 Federal Constitution and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9,394/1996) reaffirmed education as a universal right. The state is responsible for ensuring that all students, regardless of their individual circumstances, can enter, remain in, and succeed at school.

In this context, inclusive education has emerged as a fundamental principle guiding public policies and teaching practices that value diversity and promote equity for students with disabilities, so that their right to enter and remain in mainstream schools is guaranteed.

Specialized Educational Support (AEE, from the Portuguese acronym) plays a central role in this process as a service that complements and supplements the education of students eligible for special education. AEE works alongside mainstream education, providing resources, strategies, and accommodations that enable students to participate fully in school activities.

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This coordination is effective only when AEE and mainstream teachers work together in their day-to-day practice and share responsibilities, knowledge, and teaching practices.

Collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers is directly linked to building an inclusive school. When these professionals coordinate their work, they can develop more effective teaching strategies, promote active student participation, and strengthen the school's organizational climate. Collaboration also helps challenge prejudice and value diversity, making the school more democratic and welcoming.

This bibliographic study draws on a literature review that includes Carvalho (2004), Farfus (2008), Figueiredo, Bueno, and Ferreira (2010), Franco and Schutz (2019), Glat and Pletsch (2011), Glat (2018), Mantoan (2015), Mittler (2003), Nóvoa (1992), Perrenoud (2000), Tardif (2002), Silva and Santos (2015), and Stainback and Stainback (1999), who discuss school inclusion, democratic management, and teacher collaboration. The methodology consists of analyzing academic works on the role of AEE, coordination between teachers, and the effects of this collaboration on learning and school climate. This approach brings together different theoretical perspectives and provides a basis for a broader understanding of the subject.

The overall objective of this study is to discuss collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers in the school inclusion process. To that end, the analysis is guided by the following specific objectives:

- Examine the concept of school inclusion and the role of AEE;
- Reflect on collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers;
- Present the effects of this collaboration on learning and on the development of an inclusive school climate.

The study thus seeks to show that school inclusion goes beyond a legal requirement and constitutes an ethical and pedagogical commitment that calls for collaboration among education professionals. Strengthening the partnership between AEE and mainstream teachers is seen as a way to build more inclusive school environments that guarantee the right to education and promote the holistic development of all students.

## 2. Literature review

Over the past few decades, school inclusion, particularly in Brazilian education, has been widely discussed in academic research and public policy. Establishing inclusive schools

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requires both legal guarantees of access and teaching practices that recognize and value student diversity.

In this setting, AEE is an essential service that works with mainstream education to ensure that students eligible for special education can participate fully and meaningfully in school life.

## 2.1 The concept of school inclusion and the role of AEE

School inclusion is one of the major challenges and achievements of contemporary education. In Brazil, the 1988 Federal Constitution and the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB, Law No. 9,394/1996) reinforced this principle by guaranteeing everyone's right to education and giving priority to mainstream school enrollment for students with disabilities.

As Mantoan (2015) points out, inclusion requires more than students' physical presence in mainstream classrooms. It entails meaningful participation and learning for everyone, regardless of their circumstances. The author argues that inclusive schools must move beyond uniform models of instruction and recognize diversity as something that enriches teaching practice.

In this context, AEE is essential for ensuring that students eligible for special education can access resources and strategies that support full participation. Glat (2018) emphasizes that AEE complements mainstream classroom teaching by providing coordinated pedagogical support. This coordination calls for teachers to plan and carry out teaching activities together, ensuring that students receive support throughout the school.

The literature indicates that school inclusion requires profound cultural and pedagogical change. Franco and Schutz (2019) emphasize that teachers need to develop new ideas about teaching and learning that are consistent with an inclusive perspective. In their view, placing students in mainstream classes is insufficient. Teachers must dismantle exclusionary practices and reconsider their educational role. As they state:

> To do so, teachers must deconstruct assumptions about standardized and uniform student performance and carry out their educational role, which can no longer be limited to teaching only the students who achieve the exemplary performance expected by the school (Franco; Schutz, 2019, p. 245).

This reflection shows that school inclusion requires teachers to adopt a critical and transformative stance that challenges traditional models favoring only students who meet

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performance standards. Teachers must broaden their role to include every student and recognize their individual characteristics and potential.

Carvalho (2004) also stresses that school inclusion is a shared commitment across the school, extending beyond AEE alone. Collaboration between mainstream and AEE teachers is essential for effective teaching and for ensuring that students have access to quality education. It strengthens inclusion by bringing AEE resources and strategies into everyday classroom practice, benefiting both students eligible for special education and the wider school community.

## 2.2 Collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers

Collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers is central to putting school inclusion into practice. Building an inclusive school requires coordinated teaching practices through which different professionals share responsibilities and knowledge.

As Mittler (2003) emphasizes, inclusion is possible only when all teachers cooperate. This exchange helps them develop strategies that meet the needs of every student with a disability at their school.

> Coordination among educators is urgent because systems thinking calls for a redefinition of the teacher's role and ways of working. Learning must be understood as a cooperative, transformative process that prepares students to participate in the wider world beyond their local community. Finally, education must be considered in its ethical, aesthetic, and political dimensions and grounded in a democratic and inclusive ideal. (Farfus, 2008, p. 30).

This reflection shows that teacher collaboration involves ethical and political dimensions as well as questions of methodology. Joint work between AEE and mainstream teachers helps build a democratic school where differences are valued and students take an active part in their education.

According to Glat and Pletsch (2011), teacher partnership is essential if AEE is to complement and supplement mainstream education. The authors stress that specialized support is effective only when professionals maintain ongoing dialogue, allowing strategies developed in AEE to become part of mainstream classroom practice. This coordination strengthens inclusion by ensuring comprehensive support and addressing students' needs in different school settings.

Mantoan (2015) adds that teacher collaboration is also a form of continuing professional development. By sharing experiences and practices, teachers expand their knowledge and

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acquire new skills that better prepare them to work with diversity at school. This exchange helps build an inclusive culture in which all professionals recognize their shared responsibility for students' success.

Stainback and Stainback (1999) also argue that school inclusion is possible only within a collaborative learning community in which teachers, students, and families work together toward common goals. They consider teacher collaboration essential for creating more welcoming and democratic school environments that enable all students to participate fully.

The literature also indicates that teacher collaboration directly affects the school's organizational climate. When AEE and mainstream teachers work together, coordination among professionals improves, strengthening interpersonal ties and fostering a more positive environment. In this inclusive climate, students feel welcome and valued, which supports their learning and holistic development.

## 2.3 Effects of collaboration on learning and an inclusive school climate

Collaboration among members of the school community is decisive for creating an inclusive and democratic environment. School inclusion is a collective commitment involving school leaders, technical staff, teachers, and the wider community, extending beyond the individual responsibilities of mainstream and AEE teachers. Collaborative practice is therefore essential for schools to meet students' needs and provide quality education.

> Collaboration among the various school actors, such as school leaders and technical staff, mainstream classroom teachers, and AEE teachers, is essential to developing practices that respond to students' needs. These professionals must learn to work together and coordinate their efforts to provide quality education (Figueiredo, 2010, p. 53).

This statement shows that collaboration is both a teaching strategy and an organizational principle that should guide how the entire school operates. When different professionals coordinate their efforts, they can develop more coherent and effective practices that respond to student diversity and foster an inclusive school climate.

According to Nóvoa (1992), schools are spaces for collective work, and teaching is a social practice strengthened by professional interaction. Collaboration between teachers and school leaders is essential for the school to become a shared learning environment in which everyone involved assumes common responsibilities.

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Teacher collaboration directly affects student learning by making it possible to develop more varied strategies suited to individual needs. Working together, teachers broaden their skills and develop innovative practices that foster inclusion and equity in education.

Tardif (2002) stresses that teachers draw on multiple forms of knowledge that are developed through interaction among professionals. Collaboration between AEE and mainstream teachers allows specialized knowledge to inform mainstream classroom practices, enriching teaching and learning. This integration gives students access to an education that is more meaningful and responsive to their context.

The literature also indicates that collaboration among members of the school community has significant effects on organizational climate. Silva and Santos (2015) argue that joint work strengthens interpersonal ties and fosters a culture of solidarity and shared responsibility. This positive climate encourages participation by making students feel welcome and valued, and it contributes to a more democratic and inclusive school.

Another important aspect is students' civic education. School inclusion is possible only in a collaborative learning community in which teachers, school leaders, students, and families work together toward common goals. This practice supports academic learning and helps develop values such as respect, solidarity, and democratic participation.

## 3. Final considerations

The analysis presented in this article shows that school inclusion is a complex process. It requires consistent public policy and, above all, collaborative teaching practices among the various members of the school community if inclusion is to become part of everyday school life.

AEE, in coordination with mainstream education, is fundamental to guaranteeing the right to education for students eligible for special education. Its effectiveness depends directly on collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and technical staff, as well as on families' participation in this collective effort of shared responsibility.

The three themes addressed here—the concept of school inclusion and the role of AEE, collaboration among teachers, and the effects of collaboration on learning and school climate—show that inclusion cannot be reduced to an isolated or occasional action. It involves cultural and pedagogical change that requires challenging traditional teaching models and valuing diversity as an integral part of school life.

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The literature reviewed confirms that teacher collaboration is essential to building an inclusive school. Collaborative practice has ethical, political, and organizational dimensions, and its absence compromises educational quality. School inclusion is therefore a collective commitment in which all education professionals share responsibilities and work together to ensure that students succeed.

Collaboration has multiple effects. It strengthens organizational climate, promotes meaningful learning, broadens students' civic education, and helps build democratic and inclusive schools. Through collaborative practices, students learn to respect differences, value diversity, and participate actively in building a fairer and more equitable society.

In conclusion, school inclusion goes beyond a legal requirement and constitutes an ethical and pedagogical commitment that calls for collaborative practices among education professionals. An inclusive school becomes a place of participation, dialogue, and shared responsibility, capable of guaranteeing the right to education and promoting the holistic development of all students.

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