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Working Sessions of Teachers of Inclusive Classes: a Space of Deployment of Reflexivity

Extended summary

The aim of this paper is to explore how the reflective capacity is elicited during working sessions between a special education teacher and a generalist teacher who collaborate within the framework of an inclusive school. The inclusive context is intended as a space of integration of students with learning disabilities within heterogeneous classes, in order to favor their autonomy, socialization processes and knowledge acquisition, as well as to promote openness to others.

The study is inspired by socio-cultural and conversational approaches that consider the educational action as a product of reflexivity, namely an interpretive and goal-oriented capacity that is interactively constructed, locally situated and negotiated in the course of discursive exchanges between interactants. Within the socio-cultural perspective, cognitive processes are constructed and developed through daily social interplays: discursive practices constitute a potential space of sharing, during which participants jointly produce and negotiate the object of discourse. Several studies have shown how daily activities impact educational interactions, often assuming an argumentative dimension questioning the validity of knowledge.

Within the framework of inclusive-oriented teaching, we consider verbal activity as highly reflective: educational activities are set out to illustrate the way teachers display reflexivity and how it entails pedagogical positioning during social interactions. The focus on working sessions allows for a better understanding of inherent concerns about heterogeneous classes and their different inter-individual resources. It contributes to a better understanding of the ways in which teachers provide appropriate solutions in order to preserve the equilibrium between stagnation and progress regarding educational choices. The work dynamics between generalist teachers and special needs teachers highlights a double perspective regarding stu-

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dents' difficulties: interactional analyses show divergent opinions about school activities and pedagogical choices. In this sense, we intend to propose a study focused on educational activities as a result of a collaborative effort, jointly constructed through reflexivity in action. In order to understand significant issues that occur in inclusive classes and the emergence of reflexivity, teachers have supplied the audio recordings of their working sessions and accepted to participate in individual interviews with the researchers.

A conversation analysis of the working sessions has been performed in order to account for the production of reflexivity in situ. The findings show that teachers, through verbal exchanges, orient the discourse regarding their knowledge, experiential approach, and evaluation of their students' competence and difficulties. The content analysis of the interviews confirms these results and allows teachers to explicit their responses with regard to inclusive education. The findings show that educational activities assume a projective and inter-subjective dimension: teachers actualize and stage the dialogues they have with their students, as well as their actions. The language functions in synergy with an embodied position of teaching wherein a space of thinking becomes a means of thinking space. In this manner, teachers test the disposition of students in absentia. The study shows that educational actors are willing to reflect on their own activities by making their conduct visible and rational.. While teachers display practices of reflexivity, the aim is to avoid disaffiliation by employing a joint attunement that involves justifying their proposals and supporting them through experience and knowledge. This efficiently planned exchange is aimed at overcoming the evaluations that either overestimate or underestimate students' competences in inclusive environments and it also underlines the relevance of improving this debate for new studies in education.

Key words: teacher, inclusive teaching, exchange of opinions among teachers, reflexivity.

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