

Continuing Teacher Education and School Inclusion: Adapted Pedagogical Practices, Curricular Accessibility, And Teacher Professional Development

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the continuing education of teachers as a structuring condition for the realization of school inclusion, understood not as the mere enrollment of students who are the target population of special education in regular classes, but as the guarantee of participation, learning, and permanence within diversity. The aim is to analyze how adapted pedagogical practices, curricular accessibility, and teacher professional development articulate in the construction of inclusive schools, while also revealing the institutional limits that separate normative discourse from the concrete conditions of teaching work. This is a theoretical essay of a bibliographical and documentary nature, articulating scholarship on inclusive education and teacher education, the recent Brazilian normative framework, including Decree No. 12,686 of 2025, amended by Decree No. 12,773 of 2025, and Ministry of Education Ordinance No. 421 of 2026, and data from the Basic Education School Census together with secondary analyses based on those data. The discussion shows that adapting teaching is not equivalent to simplifying content and that continuing education, when conceived as a permanent, situated, and collective process, offers teachers conceptual and practical resources to differentiate mediation without reducing the student to a disability. It is concluded that school inclusion depends on a systemic commitment capable of articulating training, planning, resources, accessibility, collaborative work, and democratic management, lest the responsibility for a challenge that is also political and structural be transferred to the teacher in isolation.

KEYWORDS: Continuing teacher education; School inclusion; Adapted pedagogical practices; Curricular accessibility; Teacher professional development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The affirmation of education as a right of all, inscribed in the Federal Constitution [1] and reiterated in the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law [2], progressively shifted the Brazilian educational debate from the problem of access to the more complex question of quality and equity. Along this path, school inclusion consolidated itself as an ethical, political, and pedagogical horizon, supported by documents such as the Salamanca Statement [3], the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education [4], and the Brazilian Inclusion Law [5]. More recently, this framework was updated by Decree No. 12,686 [6], which instituted the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education, subsequently amended by Decree No. 12,773 [7] and regulated by Ministry of Education Ordinance No. 421 [8], a normative set that reaffirms the inclusive perspective and introduces new planning and governance instruments, albeit amid interpretive tensions concerning the organization of special education. These milestones share the refusal of a selective school and the defense of a common space in which differences are not grounds for exclusion, but a constitutive dimension of the educational experience.

Recognizing inclusion as a right, however, is not enough to realize it. Between the enunciation of principles and the everyday life of schools lies a distance that the specialized literature has examined with growing attention. Mantoan [9] warns that inclusion is not to be confused with the physical placement of the student in the regular class, nor with occasional adaptations superimposed

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on an unchanged structure; it demands, rather, the cultural and organizational transformation of the school itself. In a convergent sense, Carvalho [10] underlines that inclusion is a process, not a decreed event, depending on the systematic removal of barriers that compromise access to knowledge. When reduced to enrollment, inclusion risks turning into precarious integration, in which the student is present but neither participates nor learns.

At the center of this tension stands the teacher. It is the teacher who, in the heterogeneous classroom, must translate legal prescriptions into concrete mediations, plan for diversity, and assess singular trajectories. Such responsibility, however, cannot be exercised without preparation. The research of Gatti [11] on initial teacher education in Brazil reveals fragmented curricula, distant from practice and insufficiently attentive to the real demands of teaching, which makes continuing education not an accessory complement, but a condition for inclusion to cease being an intention and become a sustainable practice.

Against this background, the present article is guided by the following question: in what ways can the continuing education of teachers contribute to the realization of school inclusion, in articulation with adapted pedagogical practices, curricular accessibility, and teacher professional development, within the recent Brazilian normative context? In response to this problem, the general objective is to analyze continuing education as a structuring condition of school inclusion, examining how these elements articulate in the construction of environments capable of ensuring participation, learning, and permanence. As specific objectives, the article seeks to discuss the foundations and the recent normative framework of inclusion, to characterize continuing education as teacher professional development, to examine adapted practices and forms of curricular accessibility, and to problematize the institutional conditions of their realization.

The relevance of the discussion is simultaneously academic, pedagogical, and social. In academic terms, it contributes to articulating fields that are sometimes treated in isolation, namely teacher education and inclusive education. On the pedagogical level, it offers elements for rethinking planning, assessment, and mediation in the school of diversity. Socially, it is linked to the commitment to equity and to the realization of a right that remains unequally distributed across the Brazilian territory. To this end, after this introduction, the text presents the methodological approach; it then discusses the conceptual foundations and the normative framework of school inclusion, with attention to recent legislative changes; next, it analyzes continuing education as the axis of teacher professional development; it then examines adapted pedagogical practices, curricular accessibility, and inclusive assessment; subsequently, it addresses school management, specialized educational services, and collaborative work; finally, it problematizes the tensions between discourse and the reality of schools, before the conclusions.

II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This work is characterized as a theoretical essay of a qualitative nature, developed through bibliographical and documentary research. It is not a systematic review in the technical sense of the term, with a search protocol, standardized descriptors, and quantitative inclusion and exclusion criteria, but a narrative and interpretive review, oriented toward the construction of a grounded theoretical argument. This choice follows from the very objective of the study, which is to conceptually articulate fields that are frequently treated separately, the continuing education of teachers and inclusive education, and not to measure the existing production on the subject. This nature is made explicit so that the scope and the limits of the conclusions may be understood in the register proper to them, that of theoretical reflection supported by verifiable sources.

The corpus of analysis is composed of three sets of sources. The first gathers theoretical references of recognized relevance in the fields of school inclusion and teacher education, such as the works of Mantoan [9], Carvalho [10], Rodrigues [12], Imbernón [13], Nóvoa [14], and Tardif [15], selected for their conceptual centrality and their recurrence in the literature of the field. The second set covers the Brazilian normative framework of inclusion, from the Federal Constitution [1] to Decree No. 12,686 [6], amended by Decree No. 12,773 [7], and to Ministry of Education Ordinance No. 421 [8], examined in its current version and in primary official sources. The third set incorporates official educational statistics, drawn from the Basic Education School Census [16], mobilized to situate the theoretical discussion in relation to the reality of the educational system.

The criteria that guided the selection of sources were thematic pertinence to the axes of the study, the recognized authority of the authors and documents, and the possibility of verification in primary sources, a condition strictly observed both for the bibliographical references and for the legislation and statistical data cited. The selection was purposive rather than exhaustive, combining seminal theoretical works, national and international, with recent normative and statistical sources, published mainly between 2024 and 2026, so as to articulate the consolidated theoretical foundation with the current conjuncture. The analytical procedure consisted of interpretive reading and the thematic organization of the material around axes: the foundations and the normative framework of inclusion, continuing education and teacher professional development, adapted pedagogical practices and curricular accessibility, institutional articulation, and, finally, the tensions between what is prescribed and what is realized. The subsequent sections correspond to these axes, so that the structure of the text reflects the very analytical movement adopted.

III. SCHOOL INCLUSION IN BRAZIL: FROM FORMAL ACCESS TO THE RIGHT TO LEARNING

Understanding continuing education as the axis of inclusion presupposes clarifying what is meant by school inclusion, distinguishing it from neighboring notions and situating it within the Brazilian normative framework. This section follows that path in three movements: the passage from the integration paradigm to the inclusion paradigm; the notion of barrier and its correlates, accessibility and equity; and, finally, the recent evolution of the legislation, which redefines the framework within which inclusive teaching is exercised.

A. From the Integration Paradigm to the Inclusion Paradigm

Understanding school inclusion requires, first of all, distinguishing it from the integrationist paradigm that preceded it. In the logic of integration, it fell to the student to adapt to the demands of a school previously structured for an idealized pupil, and permanence depended on the capacity to conform to a standard. Inclusion inverts this vector: it is the school that reorganizes itself to welcome diversity, recognizing that heterogeneity is not an exception to be corrected, but the ordinary condition of any classroom [9]. This inversion has profound consequences, since it shifts the problem from the individual to the environment and to practices, situating exclusion as an effect of barriers, and not as an attribute of the subject. Such an understanding converges with the international literature: in the Index for Inclusion, Booth and Ainscow [17] define inclusion as a process of reducing barriers to the learning and participation of all students, to be pursued through the continuous review of school cultures, policies, and practices.

The distinction, although clear on the conceptual level, is not always realized in practice. It is frequent for arrangements described as inclusive to remain, in their operating logic, integrationist, insofar as they keep the school organization intact and expect from the student the effort of adjustment. Recognizing this persistence is important to prevent change from being reduced to vocabulary, without reaching the structures and routines that effectively condition learning. Inclusion, in this sense, is not a label to be adopted, but a reorganization to be built.

B. Barriers, Accessibility, and Equity

The notion of barrier is, in this sense, conceptually central. The Brazilian Inclusion Law [5], in its Article 3, defines a barrier as any obstacle, hindrance, attitude, or behavior that limits or prevents the social participation of the person, classifying barriers as urbanistic, architectural, in transportation, in communications and information, attitudinal, and technological. Although the law does not expressly include the category of pedagogical barriers, the educational literature has mobilized this notion to name the obstacles that, within methods, materials, curricula, and expectations, hinder access to knowledge. Such a reading is pedagogically fertile because it broadens the focus beyond disability: what hinders learning is not only in the body or condition of the student, but frequently in the rigidity of school practices. Carvalho [10] already insisted that removing barriers to learning is a task of the school, and not an exclusive burden of those who face them.

The same Brazilian Inclusion Law [5] defines accessibility as the possibility and condition of reach, with safety and autonomy, of spaces, services, information, and communication, and characterizes universal design as the conception of products, environments, programs, and services to be used by all people, without the need for adaptation or specific design. On the educational level, these legal concepts offer a precise foundation for the idea of curricular accessibility, understood as the effort to make the curriculum reachable by all without mischaracterizing it. More than a technical matter, accessibility is here a pedagogical category, since it implies decisions about what to teach, how to teach, and how to recognize learning in its plurality of manifestations.

From this follows an understanding of equity that is not to be confused with identical treatment. Treating everyone in the same way, in a context of profound differences, may perpetuate inequalities, whereas equity presupposes recognizing distinct trajectories, rhythms, and needs in order to ensure to all the right to learn. Inclusion, in this key, articulates equality and difference as inseparable values, as expressed in the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education itself [4]. Difference ceases to be a deviation from a norm and comes to be recognized as a constitutive dimension of the human and of the school experience.

C. The Recent Normative Framework: From the 2008 Policy to Decree No. 12,686 of 2025

The normative framework of inclusion in Brazil has grown continuously denser. To the Federal Constitution [1], the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law [2], the Salamanca Statement [3], and the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education [4] was added the Brazilian Inclusion Law [5], which consolidated rights and defined structuring concepts. More recently, Decree No. 12,686 [6] instituted the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education and the National Network for Inclusive Special Education, revoking Decree No. 7,611 [18] and reaffirming schooling in regular classes and schools for the special education population, understood as the set of students with disabilities, with autism spectrum disorder, and with high abilities or giftedness.

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Shortly afterwards, Decree No. 12,773 [7] amended Decree No. 12,686, in a movement that followed manifestations by various bodies and entities regarding its wording. Among the modifications, the guarantee of the inclusive educational system came to be formulated not as the determination that students be included in regular classes and schools, but as the right to be included, with the support necessary for participation, permanence, and learning [7]. Adjustments of this nature, and the very debate that motivated them, recommend interpretive prudence: more than a simple consolidation of the priority of the regular school, the recent framework reaffirms the inclusive perspective while keeping open tensions and disputes over the organization of special education, including the place of specialized institutions and the conditions under which support is provided.

Among the principles reaffirmed by this policy are the recognition of education as a universal and subjective right, equality of opportunities, equity, the fight against ableism, and the guarantee of accessibility and assistive technologies [6]. The subsequent regulation, through Ministry of Education Ordinance No. 421 [8], operationalized the policy and structured its governance, detailing instruments such as the case study, the Specialized Educational Services Plan, and the Individualized Educational Plan, in addition to reaffirming the continuing education of education professionals as a component of the policy itself. The norm also establishes that the quality of inclusive special education is not measured by formalized enrollment, but by the set of supports for the access, permanence, participation, and learning of students [8].

This normative evolution is relevant to the discussion proposed here for a precise reason: by shifting the criterion of quality from mere enrollment to effective participation and learning, the legal order converges with the pedagogical understanding that refuses merely formal inclusion. At the same time, by reaffirming continuing education and accessibility as institutional duties, the legislation recognizes that inclusion is not sustained by the presence of the student alone, but depends on conditions that must be ensured by the system. The examination of these conditions, and in particular of teacher education, constitutes the object of the following sections.

Recognizing these foundations and this normative framework, however, does not authorize naive optimism. Rodrigues [12] draws attention to a set of poorly formulated ideas that circulate in inclusive discourse and that, under the pretext of defending it, end up emptying it: the belief that inclusion is achieved through mere coexistence, the assumption that goodwill is enough, or the expectation that the regular school, without transformations, will provide for everyone. Inclusion, far from being a state to be proclaimed or decreed, is a demanding process, which requires conditions, qualified mediation, and the permanent review of practices. It is precisely at this point that the continuing education of teachers proves unavoidable.

IV. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSION

If inclusion depends on the reorganization of practices, then the education that sustains it cannot be reduced to sporadic events for the transmission of techniques. Imbernón [13] criticizes the model of continuing education conceived as a succession of one-off courses, detached from everyday life and from the concrete needs of teachers, and proposes, as an alternative, a permanent education anchored in collective reflection on practice and in collaboration among teachers. To educate oneself, in this perspective, is not to accumulate certificates, but to continuously reconstruct pedagogical action in light of the real challenges that the school presents.

This conception dialogues with the tradition that understands education as professional development throughout the career. Nóvoa [14] rejects the idea that education is built by the accumulation of knowledge or techniques and links it to personal, professional, and organizational development, that is, to the production of the life of the teacher, of the profession, and of the school itself. Understood in this way, continuing education ceases to be external to the institution and comes to be constituted within it, articulated with collective projects and with the school culture.

The nature of teaching work reinforces this requirement. Tardif [15] demonstrates that teachers' knowledge is plural and temporal, constituted of knowledge from initial education, disciplinary knowledge, curricular knowledge and, decisively, experiential knowledge, forged in practice and validated by it. Recognizing this plurality implies admitting that continuing education does not deposit knowledge into an empty receptacle, but dialogues with already constituted knowledge, helping the teacher to problematize, broaden, and reorganize it. In the field of inclusion, this means starting from teachers' experiences, insecurities, and attempts in order to build, with them, more consistent repertoires of mediation within diversity.

A. The Limits of Initial Teacher Education in the Face of Diversity

The relevance of continuing education becomes even more evident when the limits of initial teacher education are examined. Gatti [11], drawing on extensive research into Brazilian teacher licensure programs, identifies fragmented curricula, a predominance of generic content, weak practicums, and scarce articulation between theory and practice. For the field of inclusion, this picture is compounded by the often occasional and peripheral presence of course components devoted to special education and to specific educational needs, frequently treated as an appendix rather than as a transversal dimension of teaching.

The consequences of this gap are not negligible. Insecurity in the face of students with disabilities, developmental disorders, high abilities, or learning difficulties may translate into defensive practices, into low expectations regarding what these students

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can learn, and into dependence on improvised adaptations, elaborated in the heat of urgency and devoid of grounding. Low expectation, in particular, operates as a self-fulfilling prophecy: by underestimating the student, the teacher reduces the learning opportunities offered, thereby confirming, in the end, the pessimistic prognosis from which it departed.

It would be mistaken, however, to attribute such limits solely to teachers. The conditions under which teaching is exercised, the intensification of work, the multiplicity of demands, and the frequent absence of time devoted to study and collective planning severely restrict the possibilities of professional development. Continuing education, to be effective, must be inscribed in institutional conditions that make it viable, a theme taken up again in the following sections.

B. From Reflexivity to School-Centered Continuing Education

If initial education leaves gaps, and if continuing education cannot be episodic, the question arises as to which model of education proves most consistent for inclusive teaching. The literature has converged toward the valuing of school-centered, continuous, and collaborative models, in which reflection on practice occupies a central place. Education ceases to be a set of courses offered from outside and comes to be constituted within the very territory of work, based on the real problems that teachers face [13], [14].

In this direction, reflective practices assume a strategic role. Analyzing the continuing education of teachers from this perspective, Paixão [19] highlights that systematic reflection on one's own practice, when sustained by adequate institutional conditions, favors the reconstruction of teachers' knowledge and the critical appropriation of new approaches, instead of mere adherence to pedagogical fads. In the field of inclusion, this means creating spaces in which teachers can collectively examine their attempts, doubts, and difficulties in the face of diversity, transforming everyday experience into an object of study and a source of professional learning.

An education so conceived, however, cannot be improvised. It requires time devoted to study and planning, qualified mediation, continuity, and articulation with the pedagogical project of the school. Without these conditions, even the best formative proposals tend to become emptied, confirming the warning that inclusion is not realized through exhortation, but through sustained investment in the working and development conditions of teachers.

V. ADAPTED PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES, CURRICULAR ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

One of the most persistent misconceptions in the debate on inclusion consists of identifying pedagogical adaptation with the simplification or impoverishment of teaching. To adapt is not to lower expectations nor to offer the student a diminished version of knowledge, but to diversify the paths through which the student accesses, processes, and expresses learning. It involves understanding learning objectives, identifying existing barriers, mobilizing available resources, and offering varied forms of mediation, preserving intellectual ambition and the student's right to learn meaningful content.

Curricular accessibility, a concept introduced in the previous section, names precisely this effort to make the curriculum accessible without mischaracterizing it. It is not to be confused with the creation of a parallel and impoverished curriculum for some, but with the flexibilization of objectives, contents, methodologies, and forms of assessment, so that the common pathway can accommodate diversity. It is from this principle that the discussions on pedagogical differentiation, assistive technology, and assessment developed below depart.

A. Pedagogical Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning

On this terrain, Universal Design for Learning has gained prominence as a planning proposal that anticipates diversity instead of remedying it. Formulated by Meyer, Rose, and Gordon [20] and systematized in the CAST guidelines [21], the framework is organized around three principles: offering multiple means of representation of information, of engagement, and of action and expression, so that barriers are reduced in the very design of teaching, rather than compensated individually afterwards. These guidelines were subsequently updated to version 3.0 [22], which preserves these three principles and refines their guidance for application. In the Brazilian context, Zerbato and Mendes [23] argue that adaptations conceived exclusively for certain students and applied only after difficulties become manifest tend to generate double work and to maintain the logic of exception. Universal design, on the contrary, proposes conceiving from the outset multiple forms of representation of content, of engagement, and of expression, so as to broaden the participation of all and reduce the need for costly personalized adjustments. The printed test, the authors recall, is only one among many possible ways for the student to demonstrate what has been learned.

In practice, pedagogical differentiation and Universal Design for Learning translate into concrete planning decisions. Among them are the offering of the same content through multiple languages, such as text, image, audio, and manipulable resources; the provision of different forms of engagement and levels of challenge for the same task; the diversification of the ways in which the student can express what has been learned, from written production to oral, graphic, or audiovisual production; and the flexibilization of deadlines, intermediate objectives, and study itineraries. Such decisions, far from constituting concessions to some, broaden the possibilities of participation of the whole class and reduce the need for late individual adaptations.

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It is advisable, however, to treat such proposals with critical discernment. Universal Design for Learning does not dispense with the teacher's knowledge of the students, nor does it eliminate the need for specific responses to particular situations; it is a guiding principle, not a formula to be applied mechanically. Its adoption presupposes, once again, consistent education, planning time, and institutional willingness, without which it risks becoming yet another term incorporated into discourse without effect on practice.

B. Assistive Technology and Curricular Accessibility

Assistive technologies are part of this repertoire and their use is supported, in Brazil, by the Brazilian Inclusion Law [5], which, in its Article 3, defines them as products, equipment, devices, resources, methodologies, strategies, practices, and services that aim to promote the functionality, autonomy, and participation of persons with disabilities. In everyday school life, this repertoire encompasses augmentative and alternative communication resources, materials in accessible formats such as Braille and enlarged print, the Brazilian Sign Language and its professional translators and interpreters, as well as screen reading and magnification software. Locatelli et al. [24] observe that, in inclusive education, assistive technology articulates innovation, accessibility, and contemporary pedagogical practices, broadening access to the curriculum when intentionally integrated into planning.

It is necessary, however, to resist a technicist reading that entrusts to technology, by itself, the task of inclusion. Without intentional pedagogical mediation and without integration into planning, the resource remains underused or becomes an end in itself. Technology is a means, and it is the pedagogical decision guiding it that gives it meaning. Curricular accessibility and assistive technology, in this sense, are not reduced to the acquisition of equipment, but presuppose the teacher's command of when, how, and why to use them in the service of learning, which refers, once again, to teacher education and working conditions.

C. Assessment from an Inclusive Perspective

Assessment constitutes, perhaps, the point at which the contradictions of inclusion manifest themselves most sharply. An inclusive assessment recognizes different forms of expression, rhythms, and evidence of learning, refusing both the excluding standardization that measures everyone by the same yardstick and penalizes those who depart from it, and the automatic promotion unaccompanied by effective learning, which, under the appearance of generosity, abandons the student. To assess for inclusion is to follow processes, offer formative feedback, and adjust mediation, keeping learning, and not mere certification, as the horizon. The emphasis on the formative character finds support in the international literature: the review by Black and Wiliam [25] gathered evidence that strengthening formative feedback to the student, with feedback centered on the task and on how to move forward, produces consistent learning gains, a contribution especially relevant in heterogeneous classes.

Concretely, an assessment from an inclusive perspective may draw on the flexibilization of instruments and timing, the diversification of the forms of recording learning, the use of processual and formative assessment throughout the pathway, and the consideration of individualized objectives when pertinent, without renouncing pedagogical intentionality. Such procedures articulate coherently with the individualized planning instruments provided for in the recent regulation [8], which take the monitoring of the student's trajectory, and not mere final measurement, as the reference of educational quality.

VI. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, AND COLLABORATIVE WORK

School inclusion is not realized solely in the encounter between a teacher and a class. It presupposes a network of supports and an institutional articulation without which responsibility falls, unsustainably, on the classroom teacher. Specialized educational services (Atendimento Educacional Especializado, AEE), provided for in the 2008 National Policy [4] and reaffirmed by the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education [6], fulfill a complementary and supplementary function to schooling, organizing resources and strategies that remove barriers to participation. Their meaning, however, is not to segregate the handling of diversity into a separate space, but to support the presence and learning of the student in the regular class. The recent regulation detailed this arrangement by providing, on the basis of the case study, for the elaboration of individualized documents such as the Specialized Educational Services Plan and the Individualized Educational Plan, with periodic review, and by reinforcing the role of multifunctional resource rooms and school support professionals [8].

The effectiveness of this arrangement, however, runs up against concrete limits of provision. Data from the Basic Education School Census indicate that the percentage of special education students aged 4 to 17 included in regular classes reached 95.7% in 2024 [16]. Analysis of these same data points out, however, that only about one third of the establishments with enrollments of this population offer specialized educational services [26]. The contrast is eloquent: presence in the regular class advances, but the support structure that should sustain it remains short of what is needed. Without this backing, inclusion risks being reduced to physical presence, precisely what the pedagogical and normative frameworks seek to overcome.

The effectiveness of this arrangement also depends on collaborative work. When the classroom teacher, the specialized teacher, the management, the family, and the support professionals act in a fragmented way, each in a separate compartment, inclusion is weakened. Zerbato and Mendes [23] recall that inclusion is not achieved only inside the classroom and that the

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teacher needs to count on a network of professionals, sufficient resources, and education in order to carry out good teaching. Collaboration, in this sense, is not a spontaneous gesture of goodwill, but a practice to be intentionally built and sustained by institutional times, spaces, and routines that make it possible.

School management plays a decisive role in this construction. It is up to management to organize times for joint planning, to make education within the school viable, to articulate support networks and, above all, to cultivate an institutional culture that recognizes diversity as a value and inclusion as a collective project. Without democratic and committed management, the best pedagogical intentions run up against a school organization that renders them unviable.

VII. BETWEEN DISCOURSE AND REALITY: TENSIONS, LIMITS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The path taken so far makes it possible to confront, without evasion, the tension that runs through the entire debate: the distance between inclusive discourse and the concrete conditions of its realization. Over recent decades, Brazil has built a robust normative framework in favor of inclusion, from the 1988 Constitution [1] to Decree No. 12,686 [6], amended by Decree No. 12,773 [7], and to Ministry of Education Ordinance No. 421 [8]. This normative advance, however, coexists with persistent fragilities in implementation. The official data themselves make the mismatch explicit: the enrollment of special education students grew 58.7% in relation to 2020 and inclusion in regular classes became the majority in the 4 to 17 age group [16], whereas the provision of specialized educational services reaches only part of the schools [26]. Proclaiming inclusion without ensuring, in the same measure, education, resources, accessibility, and support is, in practice, to transfer to the school and to the teacher a disproportionate burden.

This burden falls on a numerous and heterogeneous teaching category, estimated at around 2.4 million professionals in Brazilian basic education [16], working under markedly unequal conditions across regions and school networks. Hence the importance of refusing the individual responsabilization of the teacher for a problem that is also structural, political, and institutional. Rodrigues and Lima-Rodrigues [27] observe that reforming inclusive education requires equally reforming teacher education, but warn that sustainable changes are not produced by decree nor by moral exhortation of teachers. When continuing education is offered episodically, without articulation with working conditions, it may, paradoxically, reinforce the idea that inclusion depends solely on individual effort, exempting the system from its responsibilities.

Recognizing structural limits should not, however, lead to the fatalism that postpones everything until ideal conditions are realized. Continuing education, even if insufficient in isolation, is an indispensable part of the solution, since it is through it that teachers build the conceptual and practical repertoires without which no policy takes effect in everyday life. The point is not to choose between transforming conditions or educating teachers, but to articulate both movements, understanding that inclusion is, at one and the same time, a pedagogical question and a question of educational justice.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

This article sought to analyze the continuing education of teachers as a structuring condition for the realization of school inclusion, avoiding both the abstract celebration of principles and the skepticism that discards them. It was argued that inclusion is not reduced to enrollment, but requires participation, learning, and permanence; that adapting teaching does not mean simplifying it, but diversifying paths of mediation; and that continuing education, conceived as a permanent, situated, and collective process, offers teachers the resources to differentiate practice without reducing the student to a disability.

It was equally shown that such practices do not depend on the teacher alone. Curricular accessibility, Universal Design for Learning, assistive technologies, and inclusive assessment presuppose planning, time, resources, and, decisively, institutional articulation, in which specialized educational services, individualized planning instruments, collaborative work, and school management play irreplaceable roles. The limits discussed, from the gaps of initial education to the precarization of work and territorial inequalities, warn against the isolated responsabilization of the teacher for a challenge that is also political and structural.

In view of the foregoing, implications and paths can be outlined. On the level of teacher education, the consolidation of continuing programs is recommended, situated in the school and articulated with the pedagogical project, taking reflection on practice and collaboration among peers as axes, instead of one-off and discontinuous initiatives. On the level of school management, it is important to ensure times for joint planning, to strengthen specialized educational services and multifunctional resource rooms, and to consolidate the articulation among the classroom teacher, the specialized teacher, and the support professionals, in accordance with the instruments provided for in the recent regulation [8]. On the level of public policies, it is necessary to reduce the distance, made evident by the official data, between the expansion of enrollments and the provision of supports, guaranteeing the material conditions without which the right to education remains a promise.

On the level of research, an agenda opens up that includes empirical investigation into the effects of different models of continuing education on inclusive practices, the monitoring of the implementation of the National Policy on Inclusive Special Education and its instruments, and the study of territorial inequalities in the provision of supports. School inclusion, in short, does not result from an isolated gesture, but from a systemic commitment that articulates education, planning, resources, accessibility,

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collaborative work, and democratic management. Taking difference as a constitutive dimension of the educational experience and the learning of all as the purpose of the school does not constitute, therefore, a merely rhetorical principle, but a requirement that follows from the foundations of the right to education and that demands, in order to be realized, the conditions discussed throughout this text.

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