

## Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa



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### REFERÊNCIA

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## Teachers in transition: A study on production of meanings in initial practice in inclusive education<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** - We analyzed the production of meanings in teachers' positioning related to virtuous practices in inclusive education. A teacher in initial professional experience took part in four open-ended interviews sessions, data were submitted to a dialogic thematic analysis and a semantic map was produced. The position "being a teacher" generated 6 main themes that dialogically interact in multiple plans: teacher's education; previous and present pedagogic practices; the role of the teacher; tensions and expectations. Results indicated that an ambivalence between Public Policy and the conditions of teacher's education and work in inclusive schools regulated the participant's discourse. We conclude that positions oriented towards virtuosity were linked to different levels of reflexivity on the teacher's actions with students in inclusive education.

**Keywords:** school inclusion, virtues, teaching work

## Professores em transição: produção de significados em atuação inicial na inclusão escolar

**RESUMO** - Analisamos a produção de significados em posicionamentos docentes em relação a práticas virtuosas em contexto inclusivo, realizando-se estudo de caso de professora em experiência inicial na inclusão, com quatro sessões de entrevistas semiestruturadas, submetidas à análise dialógica temática. Foi elaborado Mapa Semântico composto a partir da posição Ser Professora, pelos temas que interagem dialogicamente em múltiplos planos: Formação do Professor, Práticas Pedagógicas Anteriores e Atuais, Papel do Professor e Expectativas. Resultados indicam que a participante organiza seu discurso a partir da ambivalência entre o que é enunciado pela política pública e as condições de formação e trabalho docente. Conclui-se que as posições orientadas ao fazer virtuoso vinculam-se aos diferentes níveis de reflexividade sobre a ação docente com os alunos em inclusão.

**Palavras-chave:** inclusão escolar, virtudes, trabalho docente

The introduction of public policies of inclusive education in Brazil, early in the 1990s, triggered transition processes in schools, providing new possibilities for studies on the teachers' production of meanings at inclusive schools. These studies promote the expansion of our understanding about the interrelations between interpretations of the self and the other, as well as of situations and activities in the school context regarding the public policy implementation.

In situations of transition, culture and mind are mutually built (Rosa, 2000) in the dialectic relationship between the collective and the individual. The subject is constituted by culture and in culture, in harmonic and dissonant experiences in a continuous chain of communication acts that actualize meanings in their historicity producing the chronotope (Bakhtin, 2003). The production of meanings in interactions (Linell, 2009; Voloshinov, 1992) are actualized (Rosa, 2007) during contextualization (Auer, 1995) in tensions between centripetal forces (of permanence) and those that react to them, known as centrifugal forces, of innovation (Bakhtin, 1981). Collaboration and breakdown of communication between interlocutors produce utterance chains, enabling the

negotiation of meanings, with the discontinuities generated by different dynamics in multivoicedness. In the games between surplus of seeing and closure, the harmonics produce new polyphonies (Bakhtin, 1981) in the conventionalization process (Rosa, 1996; Bartlett, 1995) where the introduction of a new technique or custom in a group triggers the development of other patterns, different from the known ones. These new patterns are directed by the selective conservation of old materials in interaction with the known ones with the new (Rosa, 1996; Bartlett, 1995).

The links between continuity and innovation are then established in the interrelation between cultural-historical and personal meanings, in tensions between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses (Gramsci, 1966). Such tension comprises the relations between political, ideological and cultural practices that are organized and oriented in a society. Teachers dialogue with public policies to implement them at different educational levels and contexts, negotiating previous and current knowledge and practices, giving rise to new ways of acting. In the dialogic interactions in which the multi-layered activity occurs in synchrony, (Bakhtin, 1981) segregating, integrating and inclusive discourses interact in a conflicting way, canalizing socialization and development conditions in everyday school life.

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New mediational tools change current practices. The establishment of the new brings about a crisis where “every new contextualization of a sign evokes some kind of discrepancy of the presentational kind - a state of ambivalence” (Abbey & Valsiner, 2005, p.4). These ambivalences become dynamogenic directing individuals towards new ways of acting and communicating. These forms are guided by other possibilities of interpreting and explaining the self, the other and the world, becoming sources of innovative processes. In dialogic processes, interlocutors take on responsive positions that express specific qualities of closure (Bakhtin, 1994) illuminating a set of meanings (Voloshinov, 1992).

Polyphony assumes canonic and non-canonic contrapuntal interactional dynamics. Voices are materialized in the dynamics of change and continuity of meanings across the history of cultural groups and each individual. These activities comprise problem solving, its typical strategic elements, in addition to collective instrumental and symbolic mediators in individual reflexive acts.

Ideology is part of the constitution of a rhetorical subject who thinks and argues (Billig, 1991). Actions are motivated by feelings (Scherer, 2004) that, in turn, have as central function organizing actions, pointing out the subjects’ own agency, resulting from previous and recursive semiosis. Closely related with the ideological and prevailing discourse, the subjects’ emotions trigger the production of meanings in the process of construing their experiences.

Therefore, meanings are built amidst tensions between the collective and the individual, between emotion and ideology. Emotion is developed by the production of meanings that is necessarily imbued with elements of cultural and social ideologies. Emotion is contextualized in the declarative-discursive field. The analysis of utterances allows the identification of subjectivity and emotiveness in the discursive sequence. The games between utterances unfold in the dialogue and at different interactive moments, depending on the emphasis attached to given terms, expressions, redundant senses that are contextualized in themes, in the flow of dialogue. A word is endowed with meaning when immersed in the communicative flow in which it is uttered (Voloshinov, 1992). Following the uninterrupted chains of dialogues, meanings have their feast of return (Bakhtin, 1994).

Meaning is the result of a social and collective convention. Its orientation, in turn, refers to the personal experience and history emerging in interaction (Bakhtin, 2003; Holquist, 2009) in which the relations between interpretation of the past and expectations about the future are produced, focusing on and illuminating perspectives of interpreting oneself, the other and the world.

Meanings produced in transition orient the pedagogic practices of teachers working in inclusive schools of children with intellectual disabilities drive their pedagogic practice. This production results from the intertwining of their personal histories, experiences, beliefs and values regarding their profession and people with disabilities, teacher education and expectations in relation to the teaching practice, their students’ education and what is expected of them. Teachers that know and decide for the excellent teaching are in tension with forces arising from the public policy ideology, and orient themselves towards differentiated practices.

Historically, educational institutions have changed their views on the diagnoses of disability, which used to be grounded exclusively on the biological logic. Transitions in Brazil point out that, initially, schools aimed at removing the disabled from the segregation to provide integration. In integration there was no need for major changes in the educational system and it was expected that integrated subjects would adjust to the existing (Ribeiro, 2006; Sasaki, 1997). The inclusive orientation gained strength in recent decades. It advocates that contexts should be ready to welcome people with disabilities, to ensure their rights and duties and promote changes to the educational process, granting the required support to ensure their socialization and learning. In this light, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations in 2006 and ratified in Brazil in 2007, provides the definition of disability with the social element required to understand the development of these persons (Pereira & Barbosa, 2016).

Inclusive education and citizenship education make up a feedback system in the construction of educational practices, allowing the formation of citizens who are, from an early age, aware of their rights and duties. In this system, individual freedom is accompanied by virtues that enable life in community (Camps, 2005).

Virtuosity results from a process that tends to promote previous reflexive actions for an action considered to be better, weighing future consequences before decision making. The concept of virtue has been employed since ancient times (Camps, 2005). Greek philosophy was the cradle of the concept that had its meaning changed by cultural practices over time. It was largely employed in everyday and popular scopes, until it was closely tied to Christian morality. For psychology (Fowers, 2003, 2005; Rosa & Gonzalez, 2012), virtue is closely related to attitudes. In the conceptions of Greek thought, in the ethics of virtues, the human being in search of excellence - *Aretè* - keeps on becoming virtuous, mediated by education and cultures, acquiring habits that grant his/her moderate behavior in any situation (Camps, 2005). Fowers’ (2005) definition describes virtue as a form of individual excellence in everyday activities, including work.

Virtue is in activities, which integrate cognitive and affect aspects towards what is ethically expected, what is considered good in a social context (Fowers, 2005). Reflexivity is an important element of virtue. It is observed in the possibility of individual setting different levels of self-reflection about his/her experience, taking responsibility for it. This characterizes an individual’s agency (Castro & Rosa, 2007). A person acts virtuously when he changes himself and his cultural environment to become better, do better and become better again, building a cyclical process of agency.

Virtuous practices are related to values which are abstract attributions formed by a cultural system (Geertz, 1983) composed of common sense knowledge and popular beliefs. When materialized in habits and skills at the service of a given moral (Camps, 2005), where the subject is responsible for his/her acts, circumscribed in consequences for the present and the future, values become virtues (Rosa & Gonzalez, 2012).

Teachers’ virtuous attitudes would then be characterized by the respect to their students’ agency, regardless of the students’ age or development. We define agency grounded

on the condition of an entity or subject suffering or bearing the onus of the activity (Castro & Rosa, 2007).

The objective of this article is to analyze the production of meanings in a teacher's position in relation to virtuous practices in an inclusive context.

### Method

In this article, we present the case study of Alexandrina (fictitious name), 22 years old, majored in teaching and with two years of professional experience. She was an inclusive classroom teacher, teaching the 1st grade of Elementary School with a class of 24 students aged between 6.0 and 7.8 years. At the time of the research, she was a staff member of a school belonging to the Federal District Education Authority (FDEA) located in an administrative region in the surroundings of the Federal District. It offers education from kindergarten to the first elementary school segment.

The principles of Grounded Theory were applied to enter the field (Sisnep FR - 156083; Ethics Committee 114/2007). These principles are related to sensitivity and sensitivity during observation and during the listening to observation and the listening to information exchanged in school contexts. Two observation sessions of approximately 30 minutes each were held in two classrooms and another two sessions of 10 minutes each, during recess. Observations were digitally recorded on audio and video. The interview themes emerged in the field (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Bryant & Charmaz, 2008). Documents related to inclusion in the Federal District were studied.

After the initial stage in the field, a multi-method approach was outlined. In order to characterize the inclusive school context as the ground in which the teacher is producing meanings, families and teachers were invited to a meetings and to open-ended interviews. Children took part in a focal group. Although all parents were invited, only one mother and a grandmother accepted the invitation and took part in the individual open-ended interviews, addressing families' stories, biographies and inclusion. The pedagogical supervisor and the school counselor took part in a joint open-ended interview. The focal group addressed themes related to the school and the classroom.

As new reflections emerged from the progress with theoretical studies, we decided to define the themes for the interviews with the participants based on the previous set of interviews and observations. The selected topics were introduced in the scripts of individual interviews to be further developed with the participant (Barbato, Mieto & Rosa, 2016).

Four sessions of semi-structured interview sessions were held with the participant, totalizing three hours of audio recording. The individual interviews focused on themes of autobiography and demanded explanations about inclusive teaching practices. The main topics addressed were: professional background; methodological conceptions of literacy and on inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities; uses of play in pedagogical context of inclusive education, in the early years of elementary school; and, children's development-learning processes in inclusive schools.

Interviews were transcribed and reviewed based on the model proposed by Atkinson & Heritage, and quoted by Linde (1993). The transcriptions of the participant's four sessions were gathered and organized in one single sequential text, and further subjected to the dialogical thematic analysis. The material was read repeated times for the analysis of the themes and meanings. This procedure implies the identification of redundancies, emphases and strength of signifiers and meanings produced in the discursive sequence. Intensive and extensive readings allow a differentiated thematic analysis that expands the possibility of establishing contrapuntal relations focusing on the interplay produced at different discursive levels. All the material produced by the participant is analyzed in the discursive flow, with two focuses: a) on the same signifier that is repeated with meanings that are clustered, and b) on the same clustered meanings actualized in different expressions. In both cases we could identify positions and meanings regulating the participant's communication during interviews. Taking into consideration the focus on polyphonic movements that imply using different markers and the production of meanings, the nonlinear temporal dynamic in which the participant produced meanings in her narrations and explanations was considered. The Semantic Map was composed based on the detailed analysis of the production of meanings by the participant.

### Results

The Semantic Map (Figure 1) identifies themes and sub-themes. Then, it is presented an explanation of the ordering of information and synthesis of the meanings produced with the inclusion of central examples with excerpts of the participant's speech.

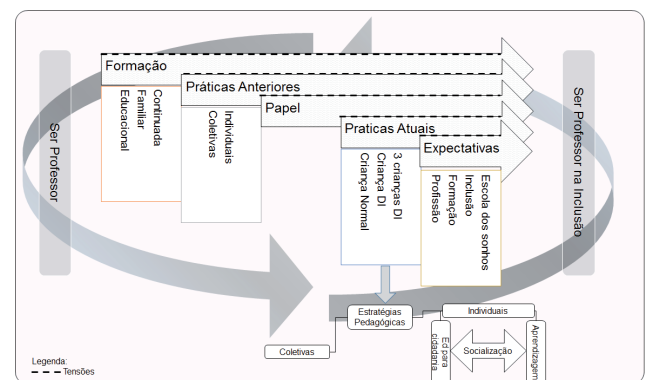


Figure 1. Alexandrina's Semantic Map.

The semantic map presents the different planes in polyphony. Themes were organized in such a way that their definition can be understood as a dialogic conflict between meanings that make up the theme on the right, and the theme meanings on the left. This arrangement allows for the horizontal reading from the left to the right.

There is no hierarchy between themes. Dialectic and dialogic movements are represented by the converging areas on horizontal arrow on horizontal arrows that announce the theme and that, at a give point, overlap. The horizontal lines point out the multi-planes in polyphony and the core ambivalences. Dotted lines, named as tensions, represent the counterpoint movements between different planes of temporality.

The figure reading, from left to right, indicates the time passage dynamic (present-past; present-future) in the participant's discourse. The Figure is supplemented by two arrows on the sides that loop and represent the mobility and multi-plane interaction in the narratives. This provides nonlinearity to the discourse and to the construction of the participant's current position.

Results indicate that Alexandrina organizes her discourse based on the ambivalence between what is stated by the public policy and the conditions of teacher education and teaching. Her experience with the daily routines routine, with the students, prompt criticisms to the current conditions of the inclusion process, in of infrastructure and support to teachers and students. However, she also states that the staff of the resources classroom changes the interactional quality and children's learning.

The meanings that produce tension in her interview are as follows: (a) "rewarding" as she is surprised - with the performance of the students diagnosed with Intellectual Disability -ID; and with their surprise with their own coping; she is rewarded with the student with ID; her practice in inclusive schools and literacy is new, and in the beginning she was confused and exhausted; and (b) the ambivalence between teachers' actuations and the possibility of children with ID learning both in the inclusive school and at the Special Education Center (CEE). In inclusive school socialization changes the teaching-learning process with the support of classmates, the board and the promotion of several practices with students. Citizenship is produced with respect, rights and action for inclusion. The inclusion law "is good on the paper, but does not grant resources" and there are requirements.

In this dynamic we observed transitory moments of monology that prompt a new transformation moment. The transformation moment can be identified in the game between the utterance of several indicators of a teacher-centered traditional education that co-exists with sensitiveness to the responsiveness of the other, in innovative actions in the planning and the required study. The need for change is emerge in different ways, as when she says that "sometimes the student is not to blame" or "it is not the equal, but treatment is the equal", and that included students are not a problem, but examples of resilience.

When talking about her teaching, other ambivalences emerged, relating the knowledge about children with Intellectual Disability (ID) offered by initial and continued teacher education and teaching children with ID. What she learned

in her education is pointed out as theoretical and abstract, hardly applicable, although she indicates that still she applies part of that knowledge. At different moments she also states that the three ID students in her class have attended the Special Education Center (SEC) before joining the inclusive school. In her opinion, this helps in the adaptation of children to educational aims. Her position as a teacher changes over time, matures; by overcoming the stages, she changes but, at the same time, says that there is yet a lot to be changed.

The position "To Be a Teacher in Inclusion" generates "To Be a Teacher" and composed by the following themes: Teacher Education, Previous Practices, Teacher's Role, Current Practices and Expectations. In the next session, we present the results following the order of themes in Figure 1.

### **Teacher Education, Previous Practices and Teacher's Role**

Alexandrina considers herself a young teacher who is still developing; she is learning with the students in her work in inclusive school. She is in transition from a novice teacher, as during interviews she alternates between positioning the other and herself as teachers. Her discourse is regulated by meanings generated in the game between what was already known and the surprises of the new practice, in which the excellent doing is related to the collective doing, to citizenship practices, and the personal action in an attempt to know, overcome and innovate, being amazed.

Observations in classroom indicated ambivalences as her meaning of inclusion is oriented by a set of meanings that are part of the definition of integration. An example is when the meanings of students' socialization are confronted with the sense of being accepted by the others, and the effective socialization practices to promote their agency (Castro & Rosa, 2007) and communication skills.

Regarding Teacher education, her discourse is divided into three sub-themes: Academic, Family, Teacher Continued Education. In relation to Teacher Education, utterances focused self-improvement and overcoming difficulties. She enrolled in the technical teacher education course when she was 13 years-old. Regarding her teaching profession there were some conflicts between the discourse and the teachers' practice; in her view, the course taken in this area were very theoretical, and theory should be allied to practice. This factor has even discouraged her to follow the teaching career; however, she acknowledges the important role played by the course to her "personal maturation". When she concluded it, still an adolescent, she was an educator with sound ethical precepts. She watched a film about the relationship between a father suffering from a degenerative disease and his daughter; this encouraged her to deepen her studies about special education.

Her development was influenced by her mother and her sister: She has always been engaged in education because these family members were elementary school teachers. Despite that, when she was a child she did not dream about being a teacher: she wanted to be an astronaut. She started her teaching course and almost gave up, because her friends



did not want to take the course. Her mother encouraged her saying: “if you are approved, it is meant to be”.

Continued teacher education was still incipient and did not contribute to her current teaching as it was limited to a course delivered by the Federal District Education Authority (FDEA) to those who taught in literacy programs. In her opinion, that was a good quality course that, nonetheless, did not meet the classroom’s needs, as it was offered to remediate difficulties, “but difficulties are specific to context” and the course “is not so useful for special children”.

The Collective Previous Practices are historical and related to current changes: every professional should know the history of their profession to understand the present. When she emphasizes the care delivered to disabled persons, considered to be “a problem”, she links this practice to a potential change on current practices: “In the past, people masked, hid, but today we can start resenting some things”. She refers to the inclusion processes and special education segregation center in an ambivalent way: while services in the latter were were “poor as (students) socialized with few persons (...)”, services are good, in a more responsive environment in architectonic terms; the inclusion process should have combined socialization with more colleagues with typical development and the physical structure of the Special Education Center.

This ambivalence is expressed with emphasis, in the same speech turn as “tiring” and “rewarding”, she qualified the adaptation adaptation process of her “integration class” on another moment: “Firstly we did what they already knew, and I showed other forms equally good of playing, and they are now very well adapted. Therefore, nowadays we do not follow a strict routine, with time to do everything, we do different activities, and they like everything. They are well adapted (...) it is tiring, but rewarding (...) I have an integration class that is great! I could never imagine I would learn so much”.

Previous Individual Practices are “rewarding” as she observes her students’ improvement. She illustrates it with the case of a student that, even after failing, said: “teacher, I learned. I did it”. She reports that she continued with the same class because of this student, for the satisfaction of having done her work, and perceive that “sometimes the student is not to be blamed”.

Teacher’s Role is related to Previous Practices and Current Practices in the game between the present and past. She alternates positioning the teacher as the other and positioning herself as a teacher - “people” and us, to produce the Teacher as an “extremely important” mediator that typically holds absolute truth to students that are still building their personality: “we are a mirror of that”. “Above all, the teacher should treat all students in the same way. It is a hard task, as classrooms are not homogeneous, students are not equal(...) but we give equal treatment, manage difficulties and successes as well, in the same way”. “The teacher is a (...) mediator. He/she ends up changing even the child’s actions and thinking” shaping their personality, shaping the citizen; “we mediate between future pedagogical knowledge and the child’s previous experiences. So that they can reach knowledge in their own way and pace, respecting individual limits. (...) We play

the teacher’s role of transmitting content, but we really end up entering the students’ lives and they become part of our lives”; “citizenship is to work for others, for the other, in mutual aid”; “I’ve learned a lot, I’m very grateful to this experience as, from today on, I will change the way I think and see things. (...) I guess we must join this cause and assert ourselves”.

Current Practices relate to included and non-included students, three sub-themes were identified: “Normal Child” (expression used by the participant); “Child with Intellectual Disabilities”; and the third one that refers to the three students with Intellectual Disability that gather in a new sub-themes in common - the “Pedagogical Strategies”;

“Normal Child” described frequently children with typical development as “not included students”. She believes her students are experiencing a unique opportunity of socialization, with the possibility of learning new things like acceptance, non-prejudice, and solidarity. Children with typical development enrolled in her classroom like it and volunteer to aid their colleagues, because they see teachers doing that, showing patience with their peers. They never rejected their fellows that are included. Students considered to be normal and that did not attend preschool sometimes present more social and learning difficulties than disabled students with previous school experience.

The Child with Intellectual Disabilities is a true fighter; there must be a battle for inclusion. ID Children are not a problem, but fighters, and surprise even themselves because they proved that they have to cope with “insurmountable barriers”. She affirms she imagined she on she learned all on Down syndrome but, in fact, she is learning in the current practice. Alexandrina resumes the SEC relevance in the preparation of students for inclusion, although she had no teaching experience in this kind of institution: “when they come, we do our best, but they must be prepared”. In her opinion, starting school in the SEC is the hardest. Nowadays we know more about the diagnosis of these students. Everyone should accept them: “there are some limitations, but they are children, they are developing, and have the right to attend school, socialize with different people, because that’s what builds their personality, as individuals”, “they are more citizens than us” because they surmount obstacles to live as citizens, to achieve the independence they want; “they are extremely intelligent, wonderful, deserve all respect, all attention”.

Students with Intellectual Disabilities can participate in the construction of their own citizenship through the action of society as a whole: “We should effectively fight for them to enjoy all the rights we enjoy. (...) many of their (rights) are affected, and they are few to claim for themselves”.

The experience with Included Students is rewarding, amazes Alexandrina and changed her life. The three children included in her classroom have attended the SEC since early childhood: two are diagnosed with Down syndrome and the third one with Intellectual and Physical Disability. She is amazed with the previous knowledge of these three students and with the important role played by their academic experiences in the SEC.

Children with Down syndrome have shown her that their limitations are not that big. She emphasizes that they have no socialization problems because they act spontaneously with everyone in the school. Experience is rewarding because students are learning, endeavoring to learn. Students had no major adaptation problem, each one with his own peculiarities, and parents already feel the results: “learning centered on students’ difficulties centered on difficulties (like in the SEC) is quite different”. That’s why the students’ mothers are so astonished “and I’m astonished too!” Students have professional aspirations. They want to be: dentists, firemen and she believes they will fulfill their objectives “in their time and fashion”, provided that the work is adjusted and respects the children’s limitations, as they are committed. The three students are described, emphasizing emotional and practical aspects as loving, endearing, concerned about their colleagues and about the room’s organization.

### Current Practices and Expectations

Current Practices are directed towards citizenship, and are closely related to the public policies implementation and the expectations with the possibility of transforming pedagogical practice. The Pedagogical Strategies sub-theme focuses on collective and individual current practices. Collective Pedagogical Strategies includes her explanations of the governments orientation on student’s punishment, as they are against these practices. In their school, when students do not pay attention, “it is somehow the teacher’s fault”. She adds: “(...) I think that the turning point in education was when it perceived (...) that both (teacher and student) could be interacting and working together, in a true teacher/student relationship”.

Individual Pedagogical Strategies comprises three axes: Socialization, Education for Citizenship and Learning. Education for Citizenship involves values such as respect and accepting the other’s differences and limitations; co-existing with the other in society; and sharing. The other teachers at the school “are very sympathetic to the inclusion classes”. In the parade to celebrate the administrative region’s anniversary, , that had the theme social responsibility, she defended that their participation should have the focus on inclusion in its first section of Social Responsibility, she advocated at school that the first block should be about Inclusion: “People must see it, must see. We really have to show it”; “we have to be democratic” giving the child the right to participate and inviting community members to the school, to see what is being done, to participate and express their opinion.

The Socialization axis focuses interaction in other environments. Alexandrina reports that it was very hard early in that year, and she needed the school board’s assistance to organize the class. Everyday she went to the patio to perform playful-pedagogical activities with students, to assist the three included students. The whole class enjoyed those moments and, in the classroom, they were more productive. The Regional Education Bureau suspended this initiative for all Classrooms of six year old students.

The Learning axis regards investments in study, planning and implementation of activities, including the playful ones. There are conflict situations in the classroom, and she has to “reinvent herself, find a way researching, trying”, introducing

pedagogical games, rubber alphabets “(...) highly diversified, differentiated”, “sometimes they absolutely don’t want any content”. She refers to school supply difficulties, explaining that in the SEC students had more resources: “I’m buying games”.

Early in the school year she used the school routine familiar to students - which she learned from the report done by the teacher from the previous year. Her practice is inspired by her first teacher: “I want to bring innovative things”; “the students’ phases are no longer respected. (...) they are six-year old with lots of pedagogical demands”; in the students’ age group we have nothing to interfere, because they are just starting the learning process. The work performed by the Resources Room is important to her practice, since they adjust the contents and orient her classroom work: “I had never had this experience, so they gave me lots of instructions, and all that facilitates my classroom work”.

When the Resources Room became operational, students became more focused in the classroom. She is “dazzled” because she saw her students recognizing letters and their own names. The mothers of her students with special needs have participated and aided, despite their own difficulties (work and school distance). It is important for inclusion.

Expectations are built from meanings and also related to the topics Current Practices and of Teacher education. It includes four sub-themes: Profession, Teacher Education, Inclusion and the Dream school.

Profession: She wants to keep on being a teacher, it is rewarding and intends to follow the career getting a BA degree or taking a pedagogy course. On one hand, the system failures are demotivating while, on the other hand, make her feel like “a leverage to move forward”: “all of us should try the inclusion experience”.

Teacher education: there are expectations related to her own training, stating that teachers’ trainers should rethink their practice considering that school life is full of surprises.

Inclusion: in the beginning of the year the families challenged the benefits of inclusion, but have also learned and are noticing the results and participating: “every parent wants their children learning, supportive”, it is rewarding to learn that “my job is important to the mother and to my student’s development”. The inclusion law “is good on the paper, but does not grant resources”. They are now requiring children to be reading by the end of the first grade, but there is a shortage funding continued education. Regarding students, she hopes they surmount their difficulties and achieve the objectives. She cannot envisage a specific job for them, because she is concerned about the present. She would like them to have the opportunity of having a pleasant job, where they could feel useful. She hopes that the work developed by the school with the community improves people’s perceptions of inclusion.

The Dream school - which would be the ideal school for the community as a whole - requires different professionals, teachers from specific areas, playground, swimming pool, sports court, suitable classrooms - “I know this is not easy to have, right?(...) But this is not something other-worldly, right? It’s nothing we can’t do. (...) the government hardly invests on this”.

Permeating all themes in the map we observe tension between overlapping categories. It is highlighted by redundancy

how the lack of experience with special education affected the teacher, leaving her “somewhat lost, puzzled” - she is “exhausted”, she needs to reinvent herself to meet the class’ needs, and she has lots of fun “everyday is a surprise”. To improve “[I] should be more experienced, mainly in literacy classes (...) because I also have difficulties in teaching them reading and writing, in planning the class to my students that are already headed”. Inclusion is good on the paper, but in practice things are different: “[to improve] I should change a lot!”, it would need material and human resources, someone to commute students - like my colleagues on the other shift do; to promote activities out of the classroom everyday. She says that prior to this professional experience she could not observe some characteristics of the disabled population and the barriers posed to them in society. Considering this experience, she regrets the termination of the temporary service contract and the separation from her class before the end of the academic year.

## Discussion

The meetings with Alexandrina presented multivalent meanings resulting from the dynamics between centripetal and centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1994) “in the ambivalent space, individuals experience forces that throw them in different directions” (Abbey & Valsiner, 2005, p.4). Transition is observed in the effort when she interprets, compares situations familiar to her path, and builds on situations brought about by the new context. Practices are driven by the tendency to be surprised by the other, and when she observes that other also get surprised surprised with their own improvement. She marvels at her capacity of overcoming challenges, considering the other in her planning and everyday doing.

The moment is polyphonically produced (Bakhtin, 1994) in past times - “I got scared, despaired”; a present time which actualizes meanings - “now I see this is something simple”; and in future times, anticipating symbolic possibilities - “(to improve) I’ll have to change a lot!” Respect and reciprocity between teacher and students, among colleagues and peers orient and actualize inclusion, as public policy is applied to daily practice. Actuations that promote citizenship seek new possibilities for socialization that prompt the alternation of leadership between teacher and students and the child experiences with creativity. Aspects that enrich everyday pedagogical practices and students’ development are considered as the integration between collective and individual development emerge.

Alexandrina produces meanings that orient her professional experience towards dialogic practices and transformation. Her teaching practice improves her life experience (Kohan, 2000). In interaction with her students, she attempts to relate the conditions of her actuation according to her interpretation of what students expect from her - “they expect a lot from me”.

Alexandrina’s production of meanings and positions points out likely relations between the use of games in the context of inclusive education and the virtuous positioning of this professional. In the interviews, playing is materialized

as children’s main activity (Leontiev, 2004). Aspects of the imagination process are linked to their cognitive and social development (Cruz, 2002). Virtuous attitudes addressed and responsive to the child’s universe expand the democratic conditions of socialization; contribute to change beliefs and values (Barbato & Mieto, 2015); ensure activities where the child can *be*, exercise the *being* in her experience, and surprise and marvel the teacher.

These pedagogical practices are anchored in values and strategies that suggest fruition of imagination in opportunities to create possible realities and new positions in imagined stories; role play allowing the child to imitate a familiar reality added with their singular novelties, shifting between the imaginary context and reality; and the pedagogical function of playing, that promote the development of superior mental processes.

Orientation towards virtuosity is identified in the participant’s recurrent concern about the implementation of public policies on educational inclusion. Both initial and continued teacher education training proved to be insufficient and abstract, since they do not interact with the concrete demands of the inclusive school’s daily life.

Alexandrina’s definition of the Teacher’s Role in inclusion indicates her professional transition (Ball, 1995). Meanings, in turn, suggest her reflection about her pedagogical practice with the group of students, involving other aspects beyond learning the content, interpreting the mediation through ambivalences between students dialogic and monologic teaching processes. “He/she ends up by changing even the child’s actions and thinking (...) we are pedagogical mediators between their future knowledge and the student’s previous experiences. So that they can reach knowledge in their own way and pace, respecting the individual limits”.

Underlying her agency as a teacher, redundancies indicate values related to interpreting interlocutors as transforming each other. The ambivalence between inclusive education and education in special education centers for disabled children is also produced in this context. In different moments, the teacher referred to the integration of children with ID in her classroom because they learned how to read both in the SEC and in inclusion, supported by the practices developed in the resource rooms.

In addition to the aforementioned ambivalence, the function that Alexandrina assigns to the special education centers is also signified as transient. This may indicate a current orientation tendency in public policy and continued teacher education to defend the existence of SECs. In other words, the establishment of dialogues between collective and individual voices. In the teacher’s discourse, In the teacher’s discourse, condition contributes to the citizenship-centered development of these individuals temporary condition contributes to the citizenship-centered development of these individuals: “They are developing just like the other kids and, likewise, have the right to be developed in a school with several students, several different persons to socialize with, because this is what nurtures the personality of children, of individuals. If I socialize in a confined place, where I am with two students only, that is very few, exchange is quite few” - referring to a SEC as a “confined place”.



The polyphonic dynamic of meaning production is active in the recurrent interlacing of reflexive movements that relate her everyday teaching practices and children's responsiveness. Several utterances present meaning traces of her feelings and emotions in relation to the students and their experience together: "It is rewarding!" Her actions are motivated and organized by the expressed feelings (Scherer, 2004) that organize her Current Practices with her students.

Indicators of her orientation towards virtuous positioning are uttered through the emphasis on the importance of understanding the historical concept of her profession in close relation with the historical understanding about disabled individuals, the inclusion movement and the relation established between teachers and students. It orients her interpretation and understanding of her previous experience in parallel with the students' experience in formal schooling and in their communities, developed in the interactions established in and out of schools.

By interpreting her practice as rewarding, the teacher indicates that her actions are motivated by the finding that students diagnosed with intellectual disabilities develop, learn and take on positions regarding their diversified interests. She is also motivated by the understanding that her teaching practices can contribute to students' individual development as citizens. She envisages them becoming agents that disseminate and advocate for their rights - what is applicable to children with any diagnosis of disability - or for their peers' rights - for children considered to have typical development.

Alexandrina recognizes that her work contributes to some extent to change in society and implement public policies on inclusion with the provision of resources to adapt infrastructure and encourage teachers to innovate. In her classroom all students are in full development and take part in activities. For her, play activities contribute to children's development and she plans them even sometimes going against instructions of the school.

Her reflections about child development, her pedagogic practices and inclusion are in conflict, being negotiated and actualized in her described actions. Although the comparative terminology is present throughout Alexandrina's discourse, her meaning production is also oriented towards overcoming prejudices (Aranha, 1995; Diniz, 2007; Gil, 2009; Melo, 2003; Pessotti, 1984; Ribeiro, 2006; and Rosa, 1993; among others).

Her pedagogical experience indicates an evaluation of inclusion, in a discourse committed producing new educational conditions new conditions to historically segregated subjects in dissonance with the hegemonic thinking. Meanings produced about the socialization and development processes give rise to other indicators of virtuosity related to the Other's responsiveness. The focus on interlocutors canalizes her concept of intellectual disability, beliefs in children's agency, teachers' reflexivity and on her conceptions on the use and functions of play in educational contexts.

### Final Remarks

The empirical information obtained in this study indicates that reflexivity resulting from concepts on the development

and agency of included children, when oriented by values actualized in pedagogical practices, could trigger strategies that generate dialogic contexts that enable new practices of peer interactions. Positioning that may build new common spheres.

Meanings produced suggest a teacher in transition. An agent teacher responsible for her present and future practices, whose values are oriented towards doing better, promoting strategies that have contributed with her students to become agents, as well.

Positions oriented towards virtuous actions are bound to different degrees of reflexivity on teaching, in polyphonic dynamics canalized by tensions between emotion and hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. These dynamics can also result from reflections that are actualized in ambivalences between produced meanings and described actions.

We conclude that orientation towards virtuous positioning does not occur *a priori*. It is built in multiple planes that are related dialogically interconnected, being produced in the tensions in discourse on teaching, mediated by the reflection on practice with students, considering the game between known and new in the implementation of inclusive education policies the professional discourse about practice, mediated by the reflection on the practice with students in inclusion. In this context, new points of view are developed marked by reciprocity and sensitivity to the others' responsiveness.

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