

Teacher Education and Pedagogical Practice: Challenges in the Education of Children with *High Learning Potential / Most Able*

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Abstract

The inclusive education of students with *High Learning Potential / Most Able* (HLP/MA) remains a persistent challenge within the Brazilian educational system, particularly due to shortcomings in teacher education. This study aimed to critically analyze initial and continuing teacher education for serving students with HLP/MA and to examine the challenges faced by teachers in the Early Years of Elementary Education in public and private schools in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted. The study comprised three stages: an initial survey of teachers' perceptions regarding HLP/MA, the dissemination of educational materials designed to support teacher development, and a subsequent impact assessment. The diagnostic phase, conducted with 60 teachers, revealed substantial gaps in professional preparation. Although 87% held a *lato sensu* postgraduate specialization, only 6.5% had specific training in HLP/MA, and more than 75% considered their initial preparation insufficient or nonexistent. Furthermore, 93.5% reported not using formal identification instruments, and approximately 40% acknowledged lacking the technical competence required to work with this population.

The educational intervention involved the development and dissemination of instructional materials integrating theoretical foundations, legal frameworks, and contextually adapted teaching strategies. The impact assessment, completed by 33 teachers, indicated significant positive changes: 87.9% reported substantial theoretical gains; 84.8% considered the proposed strategies fully applicable to daily planning; and 81.8% felt better prepared to engage with school administrators and families. Notably, 45.5% reported feeling prepared to work autonomously with students with HLP/MA, while 24.2% indicated increased professional confidence.

The findings suggest that the main barrier to the effective inclusion of students with HLP/MA is not a lack of teacher commitment, but rather insufficient specialized training and limited access to appropriate professional resources. Continuing professional development that integrates theory, legislation, and contextualized practice appears to be an effective strategy for fostering professional autonomy and strengthening inclusive educational practices.

Keywords

Inclusive Education, Teacher Education, Teaching Practice, *High Learning Potential / Most Able*.