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## TEACHER TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to analyze teacher training for inclusive education in elementary school, investigating pedagogical practices, challenges faced, and the instruments that operationalize inclusion in the school environment. To this end, an observational approach was adopted through systematic classroom observations and document analysis, including internal guidelines and records that guide school practice. The results indicated that teacher training plays a decisive role in consolidating high-quality inclusive education, as there are gaps in both initial and continuing training, making it difficult to implement effective strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities (PcDs). Insufficient adapted teaching resources, limited school infrastructure, and the absence of multidisciplinary teams offering technical support were also identified. In addition,

teacher workload overload and a lack of opportunities for sharing experiences negatively affected pedagogical practices. Despite these challenges, there are examples of teachers who, on their own initiative, develop adaptations and seek additional training. However, broader actions—such as strengthened public policies, regular training, and the presence of specialized professionals—are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of genuinely inclusive education at the elementary level.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education. Teacher training. Pedagogical practices. Public policies.

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has been widely debated as a fundamental right to ensure equity in access to education for all students, regardless of their physical, sensory, intellectual or emotional conditions. In particular, the inclusion of people with disabilities ( PwDs ) in the Brazilian education system has required a restructuring of pedagogical practices, public policies and teacher training. This approach requires a school environment that recognizes diversity as an enriching element and promotes strategies that ensure the full development of students (Santos; Paula; Fascina, 2020).

Among the determining factors for the success of inclusive education, teacher training stands out. Trained teachers who are aware of their role as learning mediators are essential to meet the specific demands of students with disabilities. However, there are still significant challenges in preparing teachers to implement inclusive pedagogical practices that meet the individual needs of these students, while also favoring coexistence with their peers (Felicetti; De Lourdes Batista, 2020; Rocha et al., 2022).

Brazilian legislation, such as the Brazilian Inclusion Law (Law No. 13,146/2015), reinforces the need for education that eliminates barriers and promotes conditions of equality. Despite this legal framework, practice often does not correspond to what is expected, mainly due to limitations in initial and continuing teacher training. Therefore, understanding how these professionals are being prepared for inclusion is necessary to identify gaps and propose improvements (Pimentel; Ribeiro, 2021).

The effectiveness of inclusive pedagogical practices is directly linked to the support offered to teachers, who often face difficulties in the classroom. These difficulties can range from a lack of material and human resources to the absence of clear guidelines for implementing effective inclusive education. Analyzing these aspects can provide an overview for improving the teaching and learning process (Poker; Martins; Giroto, 2021).

Therefore, it is important to explore the documents and policies that operationalize inclusive education in the context of elementary education. These instruments are essential to guide pedagogical practices and ensure that all students, especially those with disabilities, have the right to a quality and accessible education. In this sense, establishing an ongoing dialogue between theory and teaching practice contributes to the advancement of teacher training policies and the strengthening of inclusion in the school environment (Rocha et al., 2022).

The general objective of this study is to analyze the training of teachers for the inclusive education of students with disabilities in elementary education, focusing on their pedagogical practices, challenges faced and the instruments that operationalize inclusion in the school environment.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this study consisted of an observational approach, carried out in the elementary school environment. The study was developed with a focus on analyzing

pedagogical practices and teacher training in the context of inclusive education for students with disabilities. During the process, systematic observations were carried out in the classrooms, with the aim of understanding the strategies used by teachers, as well as the challenges faced in the school routine. In addition, the data were complemented by documentary analysis, including the school's internal records and guidelines that operationalize inclusive education. This approach allowed a detailed survey of pedagogical practices and an assessment of the structural and methodological conditions that influence the teaching and learning process of students with disabilities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher training plays a central role in the quality of education offered, especially in contexts that demand inclusive pedagogical practices. In elementary education, the presence of students with disabilities (PcDs) challenges educators to adapt their methodologies, promoting strategies that address the specific needs of these students. In this sense, the analysis of the training of teachers at the Padre Conrado Municipal School, in Guapó – GO, becomes essential to understand how pedagogical preparation contributes to the implementation of inclusive education.

The teacher training process for inclusion, as described by Senna, Santos and Lemos (2020), involves both initial and continuing education. Initial training, offered by higher education institutions, is responsible for providing the theoretical and practical basis necessary for the exercise of the profession. However, this training often does not sufficiently address the challenges of inclusive education, resulting in professionals who enter teaching without adequate preparation to meet the demands of students with disabilities.

Soares and Soares (2021) point out that continuing education, which should serve as a complement and constant update for teachers, faces resource and structure limitations. At the Padre Conrado Municipal School, this reality is

no different, and teachers report difficulties in accessing courses, lectures, and specific training for working with students with disabilities. This highlights the need for more robust public policies that promote continuing education opportunities aligned with the demands of inclusive education.

A relevant aspect is the teachers' perception of their own training. Many educators recognize that the preparation they received during their undergraduate studies was insufficient to deal with the situations encountered in school practice. In their words, there is a lack of greater emphasis on subjects that address inclusion, as well as on supervised internships that involve real experiences in classrooms with students with disabilities.

In everyday practice, teachers often use trial-and-error strategies, trying to adapt materials and activities in an intuitive way. Although these efforts are valuable, they also reflect the lack of systematic preparation for inclusion. At Escola Municipal Padre Conrado, it is observed that many teachers develop their own methodologies, but face significant barriers, such as a lack of technical support and adequate resources.

The lack of specialized pedagogical support is another factor that negatively impacts teaching practice. Although Brazilian legislation provides for the presence of support professionals to assist in the inclusion of students with disabilities, the practical implementation of this support is still limited. In the school analyzed, the lack of assistants and interpreters, as well as adapted materials, represents a constant obstacle for educators.

Another point to be highlighted is the need for coordination between the school and those responsible for the students. Teacher training should not be limited to the internal environment of the school, but should also consider the family and social context in which the students are inserted. At the Padre Conrado Municipal School, teachers recognize the importance of dialoguing with families to align strategies and expectations regarding the

educational process.

Structural challenges also interfere with teaching training and practice. School infrastructure is not always adequate to meet the demands of inclusive education. In the school in question, limitations were observed in the physical space, such as the lack of access ramps and adaptations in bathrooms, which hinders the mobility and autonomy of students with disabilities. These conditions end up overloading teachers, who have to compensate for these deficiencies through improvised solutions.

Regarding the documents that guide pedagogical practice, it was identified that the school uses guidelines based on federal and state legislation, but lacks specific instruments to meet the particularities of inclusion. This gap reinforces the importance of teacher training that not only understands the legislation, but also develops practical skills to apply these principles on a daily basis.

The continuing education programs offered by the municipality have proven insufficient to meet the complexity of inclusive education. Despite some specific initiatives, such as workshops and lectures, teachers report that these training opportunities are not recurrent and often do not cover the specificities of working with PwDs.

On the other hand, it was found that some teachers seek training alternatives on their own, using online courses and materials available on the internet. This initiative reflects the dedication of educators, but it also highlights the lack of more effective institutional support. This individual search, although commendable, can result in fragmented training that is not aligned with the real needs of the classroom.

One of the ways to improve teacher training is through partnerships with higher education institutions and specialized organizations. Through these partnerships, it would be possible to offer regular and contextualized training, covering everything from theoretical aspects to inclusive pedagogical practices. In addition, the exchange of experiences among

teachers could also be encouraged, creating spaces for discussion and mutual learning.

Therefore, teacher training, although representing advances in the educational context, still presents significant gaps that need to be filled in order to meet the demands of quality inclusive education. The analysis carried out highlights the need for structured actions that articulate initial and ongoing training and pedagogical support, contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and equitable school environment.

### **Pedagogical practices used in the teaching and learning process for students with disabilities**

Inclusive pedagogical practices aim to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, actively participate in the teaching and learning process. In elementary education, these practices take on an even more important role, as it is at this stage that the foundations of knowledge and socialization are consolidated. To meet the needs of students with disabilities, teachers must develop adaptive strategies that respect the particularities of each student.

One of the most common practices is personalized teaching, which seeks to adapt content, activities, and assessments according to students' abilities and limitations (Souza et al., 2020). In an inclusive classroom, pedagogical differentiation allows each student to progress at their own pace, ensuring the assimilation of the proposed content (Abdalla; Almeida, 2020). This requires the teacher to constantly analyze the individual characteristics of each student.

The use of adapted materials is another essential strategy in inclusive education. For students with visual impairments, for example, materials in Braille or with audio resources are essential. For students with hearing impairments, the use of sign language interpreters and visual resources, such as subtitled videos, can facilitate learning. In the context of the Padre Conrado Municipal School, it was found that the adaptation of materials is done to a limited extent, usually at the initiative

of the teacher himself.

Technology has proven to be an important ally in inclusive pedagogical practices. Digital tools, such as educational applications and communication software, help overcome barriers to accessing knowledge (Bulcão; Silva and Alves, 2022). In the school analyzed, teachers reported difficulties in implementing these tools due to the lack of technological infrastructure and specific training in the use of these resources.

Another frequently used pedagogical resource is collaborative group work, which promotes interaction between students with and without disabilities. This approach encourages the exchange of experiences, empathy and the creation of a more welcoming environment. However, for this practice to be effective, the teacher must be able to mediate conflicts and encourage the participation of all group members.

The organization of the learning environment is also a fundamental practice in the inclusive process (Nogueira; Antunes and Menezes, 2022). Adapted classrooms, with large and accessible spaces, help students with disabilities develop their autonomy. However, the Padre Conrado Municipal School faces challenges in this regard, such as the lack of appropriate furniture and the lack of physical adaptations for students with reduced mobility.

Active teaching methods, such as games, role-plays and hands-on activities, have proven effective in inclusive education. These approaches allow students to engage directly with the content, making learning more meaningful. In the case of students with disabilities, these practices can be adapted to meet their specific needs, using tactile, visual or auditory resources.

Formative assessment is another relevant pedagogical practice in the context of inclusion. This type of assessment, which prioritizes continuous monitoring of student development, allows teachers to identify difficulties and propose specific interventions (Felicetti ; Batista, 2020). In the school studied, teachers

highlighted the importance of this approach, but reported the difficulty of balancing the demands of standardized assessments with the flexibility needed for students with disabilities.

The pedagogical plans at the school analyzed show efforts to include students with disabilities in the educational process, but also reveal gaps. Many teachers face difficulties in developing adapted activities due to the lack of guidance and technical support. This reflects the need for greater coordination between the school team and support professionals.

Partnerships with families are another element in the success of inclusive teaching practices. Santos, Paula and Fascina (2020) highlight that when there is an open dialogue between school and family, teachers are able to better understand students' needs and align strategies for their development. However, at Escola Municipal Padre Conrado, teachers reported challenges in engaging some families, whether due to cultural issues or the lack of time of those responsible.

The development of extracurricular projects has proven effective in promoting inclusion. Activities such as workshops, cultural fairs and inclusive sports provide opportunities for students with disabilities to explore their potential and integrate into the school community. These initiatives, although positive, are still infrequent in the school analyzed, due to the limited resources and professionals available.

Continuous teacher training plays an important role in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices. However, the lack of regular training specifically focused on inclusion is an obstacle faced by school teachers. This lack is reflected in the difficulty of planning and implementing adapted pedagogical strategies in a systematic manner.

Collaboration between teachers is a practice that can enrich the inclusive teaching process. Through the exchange of experiences and teamwork, educators can develop creative solutions to the challenges they encounter. Despite this, in the school analyzed, moments of

interaction between teachers are limited, due to the overload of tasks and the lack of spaces for exchanging ideas.

Support from specialists, such as psychopedagogues, occupational therapists, and speech therapists, is essential to complement inclusive pedagogical practices (Senna; Santos and Lemos, 2020). These professionals can provide specific guidance to teachers and monitor the development of students with disabilities. In the school studied, the absence of a multidisciplinary team makes it difficult to implement more specific and effective interventions.

Another relevant aspect is the need to raise awareness in the school community about inclusion issues. Promoting campaigns, lectures and training for everyone involved in the educational environment can contribute to building an inclusive culture. Despite some specific actions, this work is not yet developed systematically at the Padre Conrado Municipal School.

The challenges faced by teachers reflect a broader scenario of disconnection between public policies and school reality (Soares; Soares, 2021). Although there are national guidelines that guide inclusion, their effective implementation depends on resources, training and technical support, factors that are still insufficient in the context of the school analyzed.

Inclusive pedagogical practices must be understood as a process in constant construction, which requires coordinated efforts between teachers, families, administrators and the community. Despite the limitations observed, the teachers at Escola Municipal Padre Conrado demonstrate commitment to providing a more inclusive environment for their students.

It was noted that for inclusive pedagogical practices to be fully effective, it is essential to invest in teacher training, school infrastructure, pedagogical resources and technical support. Only with integrated actions will it be possible to guarantee quality education for all students,

respecting their differences and promoting their full development.

### **Difficulties faced by teachers in the classroom with people with disabilities**

Inclusion is not just about opening the classroom doors; it is about transforming the educational space into an environment where everyone can learn and grow, regardless of their particularities (Balcão; Silva; Alves, 2022). However, when looking at the daily lives of elementary school teachers, especially those who work with students with disabilities (PwDs), the ideal of inclusion often comes up against the reality of a series of challenges. This study, through an observational approach, sought to shed light on these difficulties, revealing how teachers face structural, pedagogical, and emotional barriers in their daily practice.

Among the first points observed, the gap in initial teacher training stands out. Although educators arrive in the classroom with a solid theoretical basis, the specific preparation to deal with the demands of inclusive education often proves insufficient. During the observations, it became clear that many teachers need to learn "by doing", adapting intuitively to the needs of students with disabilities.

Continuing education, which could fill these gaps, also faces significant challenges. Training focused on inclusion is rare and, when it does occur, it is usually generic in nature, without addressing the specificities of inclusive education. This absence was widely perceived during the analyses, directly impacting teachers' confidence in applying adapted pedagogical strategies.

Teaching resources, or the lack thereof, constitute another barrier to the inclusive teaching process. During the observations, it was identified that materials such as Braille books, tactile resources and assistive technologies are scarce or non-existent. In some cases, teachers themselves create adaptations with the available materials, demonstrating creativity, but facing clear limitations that

compromise the effectiveness of the educational process.

The physical conditions of the school also represent a challenge (Nogueira; Antunes; De Menezes, 2022). The infrastructure observed lacked fundamental adaptations, such as access ramps, adapted bathrooms, and spaces suitable for students with reduced mobility. These limitations not only impact students with disabilities, but also overburden teachers, who often have to improvise solutions to ensure inclusion.

Teachers' work overload was a recurring theme in the observations. In addition to meeting the specific needs of students with disabilities, teachers deal with large classes, bureaucratic demands, and tight deadlines. This excessive workload limits the time available for planning and implementing inclusive pedagogical practices, generating a cycle of emotional and professional exhaustion.

The lack of multidisciplinary teams in schools was another critical point identified. Support from psychopedagogues, sign language interpreters, occupational therapists and other specialized professionals is essential to complement the work of teachers, but this support is rarely available (Abdalla; Almeida, 2020). This leaves teachers alone to face challenges that require specific technical knowledge.

The relationship between the school and the families of students with disabilities has proven to be both challenging and promising. During the observations, it was found that, although some teachers are able to establish productive partnerships with those responsible, in other cases there is a lack of engagement from families, which makes it difficult to monitor and support students' learning.

Another critical point observed was the pressure exerted by standardized assessments. These assessments often do not take into account the particularities of PwD students, requiring teachers to make an additional effort to adapt them, without there being clear guidelines or resources to do so. This scenario

generates a feeling of inadequacy and frustration among teachers.

Teachers face significant emotional challenges. During the study, it was evident that the lack of institutional support and high workloads result in feelings of exhaustion, anxiety and, in some cases, demotivation. These factors directly affect the quality of teaching and the well-being of educators.

Subtle but still present prejudice within the school community was also identified. Teachers reported that, on some occasions, they faced resistance from colleagues or other students regarding the inclusion of PwDs. This reinforces the need to raise awareness and educate the entire school community about the importance of inclusion.

The difficulties are not limited to the classroom environment. Document analysis revealed that the school's guidelines for inclusion are not very specific, relying only on general guidelines provided by law. This lack of direction leaves teachers without a clear framework to guide their practices.

Despite all these barriers, many teachers demonstrated an admirable commitment to inclusion. Even in the face of difficulties, it was possible to observe continuous efforts to adapt materials, seek new strategies and, above all, welcome students with disabilities. These reports demonstrate the resilience of educators, but also reinforce the need for institutional support to enhance their initiatives.

The exchange of experiences among teachers could be a powerful tool to overcome some challenges. However, it was observed that the school routine, marked by tight schedules and overload of tasks, limits the opportunities for collaboration among teachers. This restricts the possibility of building more effective pedagogical practices through collective learning.

The challenges observed are not insurmountable, but they require coordinated actions that involve investment in teacher training, improvements in infrastructure, provision of teaching resources and

strengthening of specialized support. The transformation of the inclusive educational reality depends on a systemic approach that values teachers and provides the necessary conditions for them to fully perform their role.

Addressing teachers' challenges is essential to ensuring the success of inclusive education. This study highlighted not only the barriers faced, but also the potential for change, provided that public policies and institutional actions are implemented consistently and aligned with the demands of pedagogical practice.

Therefore, understanding and overcoming the difficulties in inclusive education is a fundamental step towards building a more equitable school environment, where all students, regardless of their characteristics, can achieve full educational development.

### **Documents that operationalize inclusive education**

Inclusive education in Brazil is supported by a set of legal and regulatory documents that guide and support pedagogical practices aimed at students with disabilities. These instruments are essential to ensure the effectiveness of inclusion in the school environment, providing clear guidelines for the actions of teachers, administrators and other education professionals.

According to Santos, Paula and Fascina (2020), the development of policies and documents that promote inclusion constitutes a permanent and fundamental articulation for the consolidation of a truly equitable educational proposal. However, the applicability of these documents depends directly on how they are operationalized in the school routine (Felicetti; Batista, 2020).

The 1988 Federal Constitution is the starting point for understanding educational rights in Brazil. In its article 205, education is defined as a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, and should be promoted with a view to equal conditions for access to and permanence

in school. In the context of inclusion, the Constitution establishes the basis for students with disabilities to be served equitably. According to Abdalla and Almeida (2020), this constitutional support reflects a broader trend in Latin America to recognize inclusive education as a fundamental right.

Another important milestone is the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDB), Law No. 9,394/1996, which establishes the general principles for the functioning of the Brazilian education system. The LDB provides, in its article 58, for the provision of specialized educational services to students with disabilities, preferably in the regular education system. This service should complement or supplement regular education, ensuring the inclusion of these students in the school environment. According to Senna, Santos and Lemos (2020), the LDB serves as a basis for the implementation of several policies that aim to build an inclusive and participatory education.

The National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education, published in 2008, is one of the most comprehensive documents on the subject. It reinforces the need to eliminate barriers to learning and participation of students with disabilities, proposing the reorganization of the educational system to meet the specific needs of each student.

According to Soares and Soares (2021), initial teacher training still has gaps in dealing with these specificities, a fact that highlights the importance of this policy in directing actions aimed at preparing educators. The policy also emphasizes teacher training and the provision of pedagogical resources as central elements for inclusion (Rocha et al., 2022).

Another relevant regulatory instrument is the National Education Plan (PNE), established by Law No. 13,005/2014, which establishes goals and strategies for Brazilian education in the period from 2014 to 2024. The PNE pays special attention to inclusion, with specific goals aimed at expanding access of students with disabilities to regular schools and



continuing education for teachers to provide specialized services. According to Pimentel and Ribeiro (2021), the effectiveness of these goals depends on constant investment in training programs and coordination between the different levels of government.

The Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI), or Statute of Persons with Disabilities, Law No. 13,146/2015, is another central document for the operationalization of inclusive education. The LBI reaffirms the right to education for all persons with disabilities, ensuring that schools offer adequate accessibility conditions, make available pedagogical and technological resources, and promote the training of teachers to work in this context (Poker; Martins; Giroto, 2021). Thus, the legislation lays solid foundations for the education system to be structured in a way that welcomes diversity.

Within the scope of the school analyzed in this study, internal documents, such as the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP), play an essential role in implementing legal guidelines. The PPP is the instrument that organizes and guides the school's pedagogical actions and should include specific strategies for inclusive education. However, according to Bulcão, Silva and Alves (2022), inclusive guidelines often fail to be implemented due to a lack of clarity in planning and investment in ongoing training, which are important elements to ensure consistent implementation.

The operationalization of documents also depends on the articulation between public policies and the resources made available to schools. During the documentary analysis of this study, it was observed that the lack of investment in infrastructure, adapted materials, and teacher training compromises the application of the principles established in the normative documents. This gap directly reflects on the school routine, making it difficult to achieve inclusive goals. As Santos, Paula, and Fascina (2020) point out, the lack of resources and professional preparation constitute barriers that prevent an effective inclusion policy.

Another relevant aspect is the lack of clarity

and uniformity in the interpretation of documents by managers and teachers. Many educators reported feeling insecure about their responsibilities and legal limitations in serving students with disabilities. This difficulty in understanding and applying the documents reinforces the importance of awareness-raising actions and ongoing training (Felicetti; Batista, 2020). Without the necessary foundation, inclusive practices end up becoming fragmented and inconsistent.

Education Boards, both at the state and municipal levels, also play a significant role in regulating and monitoring inclusive practices. They are responsible for creating additional standards and ensuring that schools comply with legal provisions. However, limited interaction between the Education Board and school teams weakens the monitoring of inclusive practices (Rocha et al., 2022), demonstrating that the effectiveness of legal documents depends largely on their appropriation and systematic application in the educational environment.

The evaluation and monitoring of inclusive pedagogical practices are also influenced by regulatory documents. Instruments such as the School Census and education quality indicators are used to measure progress in implementing inclusion. However, the analysis of this study indicates that, in the school analyzed, inclusion indicators are not yet fully incorporated into strategic planning.

Another challenge identified is the compatibility of legal standards with the specificities of each school context. Although the documents provide general guidelines, their application needs to be adapted to the reality of each school. In the case of the school analyzed, the lack of detailed practical guidelines limits the effectiveness of inclusion in everyday life.

The National Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education also contribute to the implementation of inclusion. They establish parameters for the organization of school curricula, highlighting the importance of adapting content and teaching methods to the needs of students with

disabilities. However, the lack of specific materials and training for teachers makes it difficult to apply these guidelines in practice.

The implementation of documents that guide inclusive education requires not only the existence of legal standards, but also integration between public policies, school administrators, teachers and families. This coordination is essential to transform legal principles into concrete practices that guarantee the right to education for all students.

The analysis of the normative documents and their implementation in the school analyzed highlights both the advances and the gaps in the inclusion process. Overcoming these challenges requires coordinated efforts to strengthen teacher training, improve school infrastructure and promote continuous dialogue between the different actors involved in the educational process.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in this study revealed that, despite legislative advances and guidelines that support inclusive education in Brazil, teacher training still faces significant challenges in aligning with the practical demands of everyday school life. Teachers, who play a central role in this process, often face gaps in their initial and ongoing training, which compromises the implementation of effective and inclusive pedagogical strategies.

Structural conditions and the lack of specific pedagogical resources make it difficult to develop practices that meet the needs of students with disabilities. Teachers' workload, lack of specialized support, and lack of coordination between the different stakeholders in the educational process – including families and school administrators – reinforce the barriers to inclusion. This reality highlights the urgent need for investments directed not only at infrastructure, but also at strengthening teaching skills.

Based on the observations and documentary analyses carried out, it was possible to identify

that, although there are isolated efforts at adaptation and innovation on the part of teachers, these are insufficient without the necessary institutional support. More robust public policies, regular and targeted training, and the presence of multidisciplinary teams in schools are essential measures to overcome the challenges faced and ensure effective inclusion.

Therefore, the study concludes that inclusive education, to be consolidated as a fully accessible right, requires an integrated approach that values and empowers teachers, promotes cooperation between the different agents involved and ensures the necessary resources for its operationalization.

Only in this way will it be possible to transform the school into a truly equitable environment, where each student, regardless of their conditions, can reach their full potential.

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