

**WELCOMING AND PEDAGOGICAL MEDIATION OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERCULTURALITY AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

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**Abstract**

The inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities represents one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary Brazilian education, as it requires the articulation of the principles of Special Education, Indigenous School Education, and interculturality. Although significant legal advances have secured the right to inclusive education and recognition of the cultural specificities of Indigenous peoples, obstacles persist regarding teacher education, pedagogical practices, the production of contextualized materials, and the development of public policies that engage with the realities of Indigenous communities. In this context, this chapter analyzes the contributions of welcoming, pedagogical mediation, and traditional knowledge to strengthening inclusive educational processes in Indigenous schools. This is a bibliographic study based on books, scientific articles, normative documents, and research addressing the interface between Indigenous School Education, Special Education, and interculturality. The dialogue established with authors such as Gersem Baniwa, Vera Maria Candau, Célia Xakriabá, Ailton Krenak, Paulo Freire, Maurice Tardif, and Maria Teresa Eglér Mantoan demonstrates that inclusion cannot be understood merely as ensuring access to education, but rather as an ethical and political commitment to recognizing cultural differences, distinctive ways of learning, and the knowledge produced by Indigenous peoples. It is concluded that welcoming and pedagogical mediation, when articulated with traditional knowledge and community participation, constitute structural elements in the development of intercultural educational practices capable of fostering belonging, equity, and meaningful learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of educational systems committed to diversity constitutes one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary public policy. In Brazil, this debate becomes even more complex when it involves Indigenous students with disabilities, as it underscores the need to articulate two fields historically shaped by struggles and the assertion of rights: Indigenous School Education and Special Education from an inclusive perspective. On the one hand, Indigenous peoples call for an education that strengthens their languages, territories, forms of social organization, and traditional knowledge; on the other, persons with disabilities demand effective conditions for participation, learning, and continued attendance within educational systems. The convergence of these two agendas reveals challenges that go beyond simply ensuring access to school and require the development of pedagogical practices capable of recognizing human diversity in its cultural, linguistic, social, and educational dimensions.

In recent decades, significant legal frameworks have consolidated fundamental rights for both Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, the realization of these rights continues to face obstacles related to social inequalities, schools' structural limitations, the education of teaching professionals, and the persistence of pedagogical models that are insufficiently responsive to the cultural specificities of different Indigenous peoples. In this context, Indigenous students with disabilities frequently experience a condition of invisibility produced by overlapping cultural, linguistic, territorial, and pedagogical barriers, making evident the need for educational approaches that integrate inclusion and interculturality as inseparable dimensions of the educational process.

Understanding this reality requires moving beyond perspectives that address disability exclusively through biomedical frameworks or reduce interculturality to a superficial recognition of cultural differences. Critical intercultural education proposes a broader movement grounded in dialogue among

different epistemologies, appreciation of the knowledge produced by Indigenous communities, and efforts to confront the historical relations of inequality that permeate educational processes. From this perspective, inclusion no longer means adapting students to established school models; instead, it entails transforming the school itself, along with its curriculum and practices, to accommodate different ways of learning, teaching, and producing knowledge.

It is within this context that welcoming and pedagogical mediation assume central importance. More than methodological procedures, they constitute ethical principles that guide the development of educational relationships grounded in listening, respect, and recognition of students' cultural identities. In Indigenous schools, welcoming means recognizing that learning processes are profoundly shaped by orality, ancestry, first language, territory, and community participation. Likewise, pedagogical mediation involves building bridges between scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge, fostering educational experiences that simultaneously respect specific educational needs and each people's distinctive ways of living and learning.

In this setting, traditional knowledge ceases to occupy a peripheral position and becomes one of the principal foundations of intercultural pedagogical practice. The participation of families, elders, Indigenous leaders, and the community strengthens the connection between school and territory, expands opportunities for meaningful learning, and reaffirms that Indigenous School Education cannot be understood separately from the collective experiences produced by communities. This perspective broadens the very concept of inclusion, understanding it as a process that recognizes cultural differences not as obstacles, but as constitutive dimensions of the right to education.

Based on these reflections, this chapter analyzes the contributions of welcoming, pedagogical mediation, and traditional knowledge to the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities in the context of Indigenous School Education, discussing contemporary challenges and possibilities for strengthening intercultural educational practices. Grounded in qualitative bibliographic research, the text establishes a dialogue among scholarship on Indigenous School Education, Special Education, and

interculturality, seeking to contribute to a deeper discussion of a subject that remains underexplored in the academic literature but is essential to consolidating an education committed to equity, social justice, and recognition of the plurality of forms of knowledge.

## **INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND INTERCULTURALITY: NECESSARY INTERFACES**

The discussion concerning the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities requires recognition that Indigenous School Education and Special Education are historically distinct fields, although they share principles related to the recognition of human rights, appreciation of diversity, and defense of an education committed to equity. For many years, both fields were marked by exclusionary practices produced by homogeneous educational models that disregarded both the cultural specificities of Indigenous peoples and the educational needs of persons with disabilities. The convergence of these two areas therefore represents a relatively recent movement, driven by the expansion of social rights and the strengthening of public policies directed toward inclusion and recognition of diversity.

Indigenous School Education became established as a result of Indigenous peoples' historical mobilizations in defense of the right to a school system that would not reproduce the processes of cultural assimilation characteristic of the colonial period and much of Brazil's republican history. For centuries, schooling was used as an instrument for denying Indigenous identities by imposing the Portuguese language, rendering ancestral knowledge invisible, and weakening cultural practices transmitted across generations. This model was gradually overcome, especially following the 1988 Federal Constitution, which recognized Indigenous peoples' right to preserve their languages, traditions, distinctive forms of social organization, and educational processes. From this landmark onward, the Indigenous school came to be conceived as a space for cultural strengthening, the reaffirmation of identity, and the production of knowledge in dialogue with communities' life projects.

In discussing this process, Gersem Baniwa observes that an Indigenous school fulfills its social function only when it strengthens the autonomy of Indigenous peoples and contributes to the continuity of their knowledge without disrupting the distinctive dynamics of each community. This understanding shifts the school away from its traditional role as a mere transmitter of content and brings it closer to a perspective in which teaching also entails preserving memories, strengthening identities, and ensuring that scientific knowledge enters into dialogue with the knowledge historically produced by Indigenous peoples. Thus, the school ceases to represent a space of cultural replacement and becomes an environment in which different ways of understanding the world encounter one another.

This conception aligns with Célia Xakriabá's reflections, according to which Indigenous School Education should be understood as a territory of epistemological resistance. The author argues that educational processes cannot be dissociated from memory, territory, ancestry, and Indigenous peoples' distinctive forms of producing knowledge. From this perspective, interculturality does not merely correspond to recognizing the existence of different cultures; rather, it represents the development of educational relationships capable of challenging the historically established hierarchies between scientific and traditional knowledge.

At the same time as Indigenous School Education was consolidating its foundations, Special Education was also undergoing profound conceptual transformations. For much of the twentieth century, a perspective centered on the medical model of disability predominated, according to which learning difficulties were attributed almost exclusively to students' individual limitations. The expansion of social movements led by persons with disabilities and the incorporation of new international frameworks significantly changed this understanding, shifting the focus from individual limitations to barriers within society and educational systems. Disability then came to be understood also as the result of contexts that restrict participation and the exercise of rights.

This shift had direct repercussions on Brazilian education policies. The Federal Constitution, the Brazilian National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, the Salamanca Statement, the Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education consolidated the understanding that the right to education presupposes not only access to school, but also effective conditions for participation, learning, and continued attendance. School inclusion ceased to represent a policy directed exclusively toward students with disabilities and became an organizing principle of educational systems, requiring curricular, methodological, attitudinal, and institutional transformations.

However, when these two historical trajectories converge, a field of challenges emerges that remains insufficiently explored in academic scholarship. Indigenous students with disabilities occupy a position marked by the intersection of cultural, social, linguistic, and educational inequalities. Frequently described as a condition of “double invisibility,” this reality demonstrates that policies directed exclusively toward Indigenous peoples or exclusively toward persons with disabilities tend to be insufficient to address the specific experiences of this population. The development of genuinely inclusive practices requires an understanding that disability and ethnic belonging are not independent dimensions of the school experience, but aspects that continuously interact in shaping these students’ educational trajectories.

In this context, interculturality assumes a structural role. As Vera Maria Candau argues, critical interculturality goes beyond recognizing cultural diversity and proposes the development of democratic relationships among different sociocultural groups, confronting the inequalities produced by historical processes of exclusion. This perspective makes important contributions to Special Education by demonstrating that inclusive practices cannot be universally applied in a homogeneous manner; instead, they must engage with the cultural, linguistic, and territorial specificities of each educational context. From this perspective, inclusion ceases to be understood as adapting students to prevailing school standards and comes to mean transforming the school itself so that it is capable of welcoming different ways of learning, communicating, participating, and producing knowledge.

This understanding significantly broadens the scope of inclusive policies. Rather than regarding traditional knowledge as peripheral or supplementary, it recognizes such knowledge as a constitutive component of learning and human development. The participation of families, community leaders, elders, and other individuals who are part of the collective life of Indigenous communities comes to be understood as an essential element of educational practice, strengthening the relationship among school, territory, and culture. Accordingly, the interface between Indigenous School Education, Special Education, and interculturality represents not merely the convergence of three fields of knowledge, but the development of a new educational perspective grounded in dialogue among different epistemologies and in the recognition of diversity as a structural principle of the contemporary school.

## **WELCOMING AND PEDAGOGICAL MEDIATION AS FOUNDATIONS OF INTERCULTURAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The consolidation of genuinely inclusive education in Indigenous schools does not depend exclusively on the existence of legislation, pedagogical resources, or specialized services. Although these elements are indispensable to ensuring the right to education, they become insufficient when disconnected from the human relationships that constitute daily school life. It is in this context that welcoming and pedagogical mediation assume a structural role, as they represent ethical dimensions of teaching practice that guide the development of educational environments capable of simultaneously recognizing cultural differences and the specific educational needs of Indigenous students with disabilities.

For many years, school inclusion was understood primarily as ensuring physical access to mainstream schools. Although important in expanding the rights of persons with disabilities, this perspective proved insufficient to secure students' effective participation in teaching and learning processes. Enrollment alone does not eliminate the attitudinal, linguistic, cultural, or pedagogical barriers that remain within educational institutions. In the context of Indigenous School Education, this limitation becomes even more evident because a student's admission to school does not, in itself, ensure recognition

of their cultural identity, first language, or the distinctive ways in which their community produces and shares knowledge.

From this perspective, welcoming goes beyond the administrative meaning of receiving a student at the beginning of the school year. It constitutes a permanent stance of recognizing the other as a rights-bearing subject with a history, a cultural identity, and particular ways of interpreting the world. In Indigenous schools, this understanding acquires an even broader meaning because it involves recognizing that each student belongs to a collective whose knowledge, values, and social practices constitute an inseparable part of their educational trajectory. Welcoming therefore means developing pedagogical relationships grounded in respect for differences, appreciation of Indigenous culture, and the creation of conditions that allow all students to feel that they belong within the school environment.

This understanding is closely aligned with the Freirean conception of education. For Paulo Freire, teaching presupposes a dialogical relationship in which educators and learners construct knowledge through listening, the problematization of reality, and recognition of individuals' lived experiences. From this perspective, dialogue is not merely a methodological strategy, but an ethical principle that breaks with authoritarian practices of knowledge transmission. When this conception is applied to Indigenous School Education, welcoming ceases to represent an isolated action and becomes a way of recognizing that the knowledge produced within Indigenous communities is legitimate and must remain in continuous dialogue with school content.

Vera Maria Candau's reflections broaden this understanding by arguing that critical interculturality requires the development of educational relationships based on confronting inequalities historically produced among different sociocultural groups. It is not enough to recognize that diverse cultures exist; conditions must be created so that these cultures can participate effectively in the production of school knowledge. From this perspective, welcoming Indigenous students with disabilities entails recognizing that they experience processes of exclusion produced by overlapping cultural, linguistic, and attitudinal

barriers. Intercultural pedagogical practices thus become instruments for confronting these inequalities, fostering the development of more democratic and socially engaged school environments.

If welcoming constitutes the relational dimension of inclusion, pedagogical mediation represents its formative dimension. To mediate means to create conditions for learning to occur through meaningful experiences by organizing teaching situations that respect students' different learning times, paces, and approaches. From this perspective, teachers cease to occupy exclusively the position of content transmitters and assume the role of articulators among different knowledge systems, building bridges among scientific frameworks, traditional knowledge, and experiences developed within Indigenous territories.

This understanding is supported by the work of Maurice Tardif, which recognizes that teachers' knowledge is constituted not only by academic knowledge, but also by the professional, social, and cultural experiences developed throughout each educator's trajectory. In Indigenous schools, this knowledge is broadened further by incorporating knowledge collectively produced by communities through orality, interaction with elders, observation of nature, and traditional practices. Teachers thus act as mediators among different rationalities, articulating scientific and community knowledge without establishing hierarchical relationships between them.

When discussing pedagogical mediation in Indigenous contexts, it is equally necessary to consider that educational processes are not confined to the physical boundaries of the school. Learning takes place within the territory, through collective activities, rituals, oral narratives, relationships with nature, and interactions among different generations. This understanding aligns with Ailton Krenak's reflections, according to which human development cannot be dissociated from the bonds established among people, their territories, and their communities. In this sense, the school relinquishes a centralizing position and becomes part of a broader network of knowledge production, sharing responsibility for educational processes with the community.

This perspective also transforms the understanding of disability. Rather than focusing exclusively on a student's individual limitations, pedagogical mediation begins by identifying barriers within the school environment and organizing strategies that foster everyone's participation. This movement is consistent with the social model of disability, according to which many of the difficulties people face arise from the conditions provided by society, rather than solely from their individual characteristics. In Indigenous schools, this analysis becomes even more relevant because it demonstrates that inclusive practices will be effective only when they simultaneously respect the functional and cultural diversity present within communities.

Another fundamental aspect concerns the participation of families, leaders, and elders in the educational process. Unlike school models centered exclusively on teachers' work, Indigenous School Education recognizes that learning results from collective processes developed within the community. The presence of these participants strengthens students' sense of belonging, broadens the cultural repertoire of school activities, and fosters the development of more contextualized pedagogical practices. For Indigenous students with disabilities, this participation represents an important protective factor because it helps the school understand their potential through cultural frameworks shared by the community, thereby avoiding narrow or decontextualized interpretations of their learning processes.

Accordingly, welcoming and pedagogical mediation are not independent dimensions of teaching practice. Both are part of the same educational project grounded in intercultural dialogue, appreciation of traditional knowledge, and a commitment to developing a school capable of recognizing diversity as a constitutive element of learning. When articulated with one another, these principles foster not only the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities, but also the transformation of school culture itself by strengthening relationships of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility among teachers, students, families, and communities.

## **TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES**

The development of inclusive pedagogical practices in Indigenous schools requires overcoming conceptions that regard school knowledge as the only legitimate form of knowledge production. Historically associated with Eurocentric educational models, this perspective disregards the fact that, over generations, Indigenous peoples have developed distinctive ways of teaching, learning, and transmitting knowledge that are profoundly connected to orality, community life, the observation of nature, ancestry, and territory. Recognizing this knowledge as a constitutive component of school education represents one of the principal challenges of interculturality and, at the same time, one of the greatest possibilities for strengthening the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities.

For a long time, Brazilian schools were structured around the idea of universalizing content and teaching methods, based on the assumption that all students should learn in the same way and through the same pathways. This logic produced significant processes of exclusion by ignoring the cultural, linguistic, and social specificities of different groups. In Indigenous contexts, this process had even more profound consequences because the knowledge produced by communities was frequently classified as inferior or incompatible with scientific knowledge. As a result, many schools began reproducing practices that distanced children and young people from their own cultural frameworks, compromising not only their learning but also the development of their identities.

Indigenous School Education breaks with this logic by recognizing traditional knowledge as the intellectual heritage of Indigenous peoples and, therefore, as something that should occupy a central place in educational processes. Teaching in this context means establishing relationships among different epistemologies, enabling scientific knowledge to engage with the knowledge historically produced by communities without presenting either as superior to the other. In this sense, interculturality ceases to be understood as the simple coexistence of distinct cultures and becomes an ongoing process of negotiation, recognition, and appreciation of different ways of producing knowledge.

This understanding aligns with the reflections of Gersem Baniwa, who advocates for the Indigenous school as a space for strengthening Indigenous peoples' collective projects. According to the author, the school's social function is not to replace traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge, but to enable both to enter into dialogue in the education of new generations. The school thus becomes a territory for articulating different rationalities, simultaneously strengthening communities' autonomy and access to the knowledge produced by the national society.

This perspective is also advocated by Célia Xakriabá, who states that Indigenous education should strengthen Indigenous peoples' memory, ancestry, and identity. The author draws attention to the fact that learning does not mean abandoning distinctive ways of living, but rather expanding the possibilities for understanding the world without severing bonds with the territory and the collective. This reflection is especially relevant when discussing the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities because it demonstrates that human development cannot be analyzed solely through biomedical or school-based parameters. The ways in which each community understands care, learning, and social participation constitute fundamental elements in developing genuinely inclusive pedagogical practices.

Alongside these reflections, Ailton Krenak offers a forceful critique of contemporary forms of knowledge production that fragment the relationships among human beings, nature, and community. According to the author, learning means participating in collective life and recognizing that human existence is profoundly connected to territory and to relationships established with others. This understanding significantly broadens the concept of school learning, making it possible to recognize that the development of Indigenous students with disabilities also occurs through experiences outside the classroom, including cultural practices, oral narratives, collective celebrations, and knowledge shared by elders. From this perspective, inclusion is not restricted to access to the formal curriculum; it also involves effective participation in community life.

Orality occupies a central position in this process. In Indigenous communities, much knowledge is transmitted through narratives, stories, songs, rituals, and teachings shared across generations. These

educational processes strengthen collective memory and contribute to the development of students' cultural identities. When incorporated into daily school life, traditional narratives expand learning opportunities by establishing connections between curricular content and students' concrete experiences. For students with disabilities, these practices may foster different forms of communication, expression, and participation, respecting individual learning paces and potential without severing connections with the community's cultural frameworks.

Another fundamental aspect concerns territory. For Indigenous peoples, territory does not merely represent a physical space for housing or economic production; it is a structural element of identity, spirituality, memory, and knowledge production. Educational experiences developed through contact with nature, the observation of environmental cycles, the traditional management of natural resources, and community activities produce learning that could hardly be developed exclusively within the classroom. Valuing these experiences broadens opportunities for Indigenous students with disabilities to participate by recognizing different ways of engaging with knowledge and breaking with pedagogical models centered exclusively on written language or teachers' oral exposition.

This understanding is supported by the contributions of Paulo Freire, according to whom learning acquires meaning when it is connected to learners' concrete lived realities. By arguing that school content should engage with students' experiences, Freire provides important elements for conceiving Indigenous School Education as a space in which the curriculum emerges from the encounter between scientific knowledge and knowledge collectively constructed by communities. Pedagogical practice thus ceases to consist of transmitting previously defined content and becomes an ongoing process of shared knowledge construction.

From this perspective, inclusion ceases to be understood as the exclusive responsibility of teachers or specialized services. Instead, it becomes a collective commitment undertaken by the entire community. Families, leaders, elders, teachers, and students share responsibility for educating new generations, contributing to the development of contextualized, culturally responsive pedagogical strategies committed

to each student's holistic development. For students with disabilities, this collective participation represents an important protective factor because it strengthens bonds of belonging, expands opportunities for communication, and fosters the development of educational pathways compatible with the realities experienced within Indigenous communities.

Accordingly, traditional knowledge cannot be understood as supplementary content within the school curriculum or as folkloric elements intended solely to celebrate Indigenous culture. It constitutes an epistemological framework capable of guiding inclusive pedagogical practices, broadening students' forms of participation, and strengthening the articulation among school, community, and territory. When recognized as legitimate knowledge, traditional knowledge becomes an instrument for transforming the school itself, contributing to the development of intercultural educational processes committed to cognitive justice, appreciation of diversity, and realization of the right to education for all.

### **INTERCULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The transformations that have occurred in Brazilian education policies in recent decades have demonstrated that the consolidation of inclusive education depends to a considerable extent on teacher education. However, understanding teacher education merely as the acquisition of techniques or methodologies for serving students with disabilities constitutes a limited perspective in view of the complexity present in Indigenous schools. Teaching in these contexts requires competencies that extend beyond traditional didactic knowledge and involve understanding the cultural, linguistic, historical, and territorial specificities that characterize each Indigenous people. Educating teachers for inclusion therefore means preparing them to establish pedagogical relationships grounded in intercultural dialogue and recognition of diversity as a structural principle of education.

This understanding shifts the focus of teacher education from a perspective centered exclusively on disability to an approach that integrates Special Education, Indigenous School Education, and

interculturality. The challenges teachers face in Indigenous communities arise not only from the need to develop curricular adaptations or use accessibility resources, but also from the responsibility to develop pedagogical practices capable of engaging with different forms of knowledge production while respecting Indigenous languages, traditional knowledge, community organization, and each people's life projects. In this context, continuing education assumes a strategic role because it enables educators to revisit their practices continually in light of social transformations and the demands presented by communities.

Paulo Freire understands teacher education as an ongoing process of critical reflection on one's own practice. According to the author, teaching entails continuous learning, questioning lived experiences, and reconstructing the knowledge produced in daily school life. This perspective becomes especially significant in Indigenous schools, where teachers are constantly called upon to articulate different cultural and epistemological universes. Educational practice ceases to be understood as the application of predefined methods and becomes an ongoing process of listening, dialogue, and knowledge reconstruction in partnership with students and the community.

This conception aligns with the reflections of Maurice Tardif, who understands teachers' knowledge as the result of articulating academic knowledge, professional experience, and learning developed through social relationships. In Indigenous schools, this articulation acquires particular characteristics because it incorporates knowledge produced by elders, community leaders, families, and students themselves. Teachers cease to be regarded as the sole holders of knowledge and assume the role of mediators among different forms of knowledge, recognizing that learning also occurs through collective experiences, cultural practices, and community life. Intercultural teacher education therefore does not consist merely of preparing teachers to teach in Indigenous contexts; it entails developing professionals capable of continually learning from those contexts.

Vera Maria Candau's contributions broaden this discussion by arguing that critical interculturality presupposes confronting the power relations historically established among different sociocultural groups. From this perspective, educating teachers also means developing a critical stance toward school practices

that, often unconsciously, reproduce processes of exclusion, prejudice, and the erasure of Indigenous knowledge. Intercultural teacher education should foster the development of practices committed to social justice, articulating equality policies with recognition of the cultural identities present in the school environment.

This reflection becomes even more relevant when considering the circumstances of Indigenous students with disabilities. Teaching requires sensitivity to understand that specific educational needs cannot be analyzed separately from students' cultural experiences. Pedagogical strategies developed exclusively through urban or Western frameworks tend to produce limited responses in view of the diversity found within Indigenous communities. It is therefore necessary to develop contextualized practices in dialogue with families, leaders, and the knowledge collectively produced within the territory.

In this regard, community participation ceases to represent a supplementary element of teacher education and instead becomes an integral part of the process. Elders, traditional leaders, parents, and other community members help broaden teachers' understanding of Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, and interpreting the world. This interaction strengthens the development of culturally contextualized curricula and helps educational processes respect collective identities without disregarding students' individual needs.

Experiences developed in Mato Grosso do Sul demonstrate that this perspective is entirely feasible. The **Teko Arandu** Intercultural Indigenous Teacher Education Degree Program at the Federal University of Grande Dourados and the Intercultural Pedagogy Program at the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul are initiatives that articulate academic education with knowledge produced in Indigenous communities. By adopting methodologies that bring universities, schools, and territories closer together, these programs contribute to educating teachers capable of working in intercultural and inclusive contexts, strengthening Indigenous leadership in the production of educational knowledge.

Nevertheless, the challenges remain substantial. Many Indigenous schools still face difficulties regarding the provision of continuing education, the production of bilingual teaching materials, the

availability of accessibility resources, and specialized support for students eligible for Special Education services. These challenges are compounded by the scarcity of research consistently articulating Indigenous School Education, Special Education, and interculturality, which limits the production of theoretical and methodological frameworks capable of guiding public policies that are more responsive to the specificities of Indigenous peoples.

In view of this scenario, it is essential to understand teacher education as a collective and ongoing process developed in dialogue with Indigenous communities and committed to valuing their knowledge. More than preparing teachers to address diversity, it entails educating professionals capable of recognizing diversity as the very foundation of democratic education. When articulated with welcoming, pedagogical mediation, and traditional knowledge, intercultural teacher education significantly broadens the possibilities for developing schools that foster belonging, participation, and learning for all students, reaffirming inclusion as an ethical, political, and cultural project.

## **PROSPECTS FOR STRENGTHENING INTERCULTURAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The advances achieved in recent decades in the fields of Indigenous School Education and Special Education represent important milestones in consolidating an education committed to human rights and appreciation of diversity. Nevertheless, the realization of these rights continues to depend on overcoming historical challenges that extend beyond the boundaries of the school and encompass public policy, teacher education, the production of scientific knowledge, and the strengthening of Indigenous communities' participation in determining the direction of education. In this context, considering prospects for intercultural inclusive education means envisioning pathways that articulate social justice, cognitive justice, and recognition of differences as structural principles of educational practices.

One of the principal challenges consists of consolidating public policies capable of effectively integrating Indigenous School Education and Special Education. Although Brazilian legislation guarantees the right to inclusive education and recognizes the cultural specificities of Indigenous peoples,

difficulties related to funding, the provision of specialized services, the production of bilingual teaching materials, accessibility, and pedagogical support for Indigenous students with disabilities remain common. Many initiatives continue to be fragmented and are implemented through isolated programs without coordination among different education systems. The development of cross-sectoral policies involving education, health, social assistance, and human rights constitutes an essential step toward increasing the effectiveness of these actions.

Another decisive aspect concerns strengthening pre-service and continuing teacher education. Intercultural education must cease to occupy a peripheral position in teacher education curricula and become a structural component of teacher preparation, especially in regions with significant Indigenous populations. Likewise, Special Education must engage with the cultural specificities of different peoples, avoiding universalizing models that disregard distinctive forms of community organization, learning, and knowledge production. Educating teachers for intercultural contexts means developing competencies for dialogue, collaborative research, and the collective development of pedagogical strategies that respect the particularities of students and communities.

The production of pedagogical materials also constitutes an area requiring continuous investment. Most resources used in Brazilian schools were developed for urban and monolingual contexts and have little connection with the sociocultural realities experienced by Indigenous peoples. The development of contextualized materials with the participation of communities, traditional leaders, and Indigenous teachers broadens learning opportunities by integrating scientific knowledge, Indigenous languages, traditional narratives, and experiences within the territory. For Indigenous students with disabilities, such contextualization fosters more meaningful educational processes because it brings school content closer to their experiences and strengthens their sense of belonging to the community.

Within this process, expanding Indigenous leadership in the production of educational knowledge represents an indispensable prospect. Throughout history, much of the research on Indigenous education has been produced from perspectives outside the communities, frequently interpreting their realities

through cultural frameworks foreign to Indigenous ways of understanding the world. Strengthening the participation of Indigenous researchers in universities and graduate programs contributes to expanding the epistemological plurality of scientific production by incorporating interpretations developed from the experiences, territories, and cosmologies of Indigenous peoples themselves. This movement strengthens not only Indigenous School Education, but also Brazilian science itself by recognizing different ways of producing knowledge.

Another relevant prospect concerns expanding research that examines the interface among disability, interculturality, and Indigenous education. Despite the growth of academic scholarship on school inclusion and Indigenous School Education, studies that analyze the experiences of Indigenous students with disabilities in an integrated manner remain relatively scarce. This gap constrains the development of public policies and pedagogical practices grounded in evidence produced within Indigenous contexts themselves. Encouraging collaborative research conducted in partnership with schools, universities, and communities represents a promising pathway for expanding knowledge of this reality and strengthening educational processes that are more responsive to cultural and territorial specificities.

Experiences developed in different regions of the country demonstrate that the most consistent advances occur when universities, schools, and communities establish lasting cooperative relationships. Community outreach projects, continuing education programs, participatory research, and interinstitutional actions enable knowledge to circulate among different educational spaces, fostering the development of shared solutions to the challenges faced by Indigenous schools. These collaborative networks contribute to overcoming top-down models of knowledge production by recognizing that teachers, students, families, and community leaders also produce knowledge that is fundamental to the development of inclusive pedagogical practices.

Within this horizon, it is necessary to understand that intercultural inclusion is not a fully completed objective, but an ongoing process of institutional, pedagogical, and social transformation. As

new demands emerge within Indigenous communities, challenges for educational systems are likewise renewed, requiring flexible policies, continuing education, and a willingness to foster dialogue among different forms of knowledge. An intercultural inclusive school is defined not merely by the presence of Indigenous students with disabilities in its classrooms, but by its capacity to recognize that each individual expands the possibilities for collective learning and contributes to the development of a more democratic education.

Thus, strengthening intercultural inclusive education means reaffirming a commitment to a school that respects differences without transforming them into inequalities, values traditional knowledge without relinquishing dialogue with science, and recognizes each student's right to learn in an environment where identity, culture, and diversity are understood as constitutive dimensions of human development. One of the greatest potentials of contemporary Indigenous School Education resides in this encounter among different forms of knowledge, different individuals, and different ways of understanding the world.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The discussion developed in the undergraduate thesis that became this chapter demonstrated that the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities constitutes a challenge that extends beyond the boundaries of Special Education and Indigenous School Education when these fields are considered separately. It is a subject that requires the articulation of different fields of knowledge, public policies, and pedagogical practices, with interculturality and recognition of human diversity in its multiple dimensions serving as its structural axes. Throughout the analysis, it became evident that the realization of the right to education depends not only on ensuring access to school, but also on developing educational environments capable of fostering belonging, participation, learning, and appreciation of Indigenous peoples' cultural identities.

The reflection presented here made it possible to understand that Indigenous School Education has distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other educational contexts, particularly because it recognizes the centrality of territory, ancestry, orality, Indigenous languages, and traditional knowledge in educating new generations. These elements do not constitute peripheral aspects of the curriculum, but epistemological foundations that guide teaching and learning processes. From this perspective, the inclusion of Indigenous students with disabilities cannot be conceived merely as methodological adaptation or the provision of specialized services; it presupposes recognition of different ways of producing knowledge, learning, and participating in community life.

In discussing welcoming and pedagogical mediation, the chapter emphasized that these dimensions represent ethical principles of educational practice, guiding the development of relationships based on respect, listening, and intercultural dialogue. Welcoming was understood as a permanent stance of recognizing the particularities of students and their communities, while pedagogical mediation was presented as a process of articulating scientific and traditional knowledge and fostering culturally contextualized learning experiences. Thus, both constitute indispensable elements in consolidating inclusive pedagogical practices committed to equity and social justice.

Another aspect discussed extensively concerns the importance of traditional knowledge as a framework for developing intercultural curricula. Recognizing that the knowledge produced by Indigenous peoples possesses scientific, cultural, and pedagogical legitimacy broadens the understanding of the school itself as a space for dialogue among different epistemologies. This perspective breaks with educational models based on the homogenization of teaching processes and strengthens the development of practices that respect each student's learning times, ways of learning, and forms of participation, especially those of students with disabilities.

The analysis further demonstrated that teacher education occupies a strategic position in consolidating intercultural inclusive education. More than merely preparing teachers to serve students eligible for Special Education services, it is necessary to educate professionals capable of understanding

the complexity of the cultural relationships present in Indigenous schools, engaging with communities, and recognizing the value of the knowledge produced in their territories. Pre-service and continuing education must foster ongoing processes of reflection on practice, encouraging the development of intercultural, collaborative, and socially engaged competencies.

The prospects presented throughout the chapter also reveal that consolidating intercultural inclusive education depends on strengthening public policies, expanding research at the interface between Special Education and Indigenous School Education, producing contextualized teaching materials, and ensuring the active participation of Indigenous communities in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of educational actions. The development of collaborative networks among schools, universities, Indigenous movements, and public agencies constitutes a promising pathway for addressing persistent challenges and broadening the possibilities for the holistic development of Indigenous students with disabilities.

This chapter sought to contribute to a deeper discussion of a subject that remains underexplored in Brazilian academic scholarship, demonstrating that inclusion in Indigenous contexts cannot be understood merely as an access policy, but as an ethical, political, and epistemological commitment to recognizing the plurality of knowledge and human diversity. By bringing Indigenous School Education, Special Education, and interculturality into dialogue, it has sought to demonstrate that these fields are not competing but complementary in the development of educational practices committed to human rights and social justice.

Finally, it is reaffirmed that the realization of inclusive education in Indigenous schools depends on the capacity to recognize that cultural, linguistic, and functional differences do not represent obstacles to learning, but opportunities to broaden educational experiences and strengthen democracy. Developing a school that welcomes, engages in dialogue, and learns from diversity means recognizing that the right to education is realized only when all students are guaranteed not only access to knowledge, but also the right to learn without relinquishing their own identity, culture, and the knowledge that constitutes their

history. From this perspective, interculturality ceases to be merely a guiding principle of education policies and affirms itself as an enduring commitment to building a more just, plural, and genuinely inclusive society.

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