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## THE MULTIPLE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

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**Abstract:** The current historical moment allows the subject to be seen in different ways and with different values, according to numerous social and political issues. Human diversity is finally being recognized, after much effort by the marginalized population, which for years has lived through social exclusion and political helplessness. This context leads the Occupational Therapy profession to reassess itself, with regard to its multiple possibilities of social contribution and its areas of activity. The present work aimed to analyze, through a survey of bibliographic data, the types and quality of the contributions of occupational therapists in the educational context, during the last 10 years of public policy on special education from an inclusive perspective. In a quality-quantitative approach, we provided the information for the appropriate analyzes provided by means of a bibliographic survey. This one refers to the publications of Occupational Therapy activities and its performance in educational contexts, giving visibility to its different possibilities of action in this area and identifying possible latent demands. The results found can be used as subsidies for new research and proposals for action and training in Occupational Therapy.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Education, Occupational Therapy, Assistive Technology.

## INTRODUCTION

After several historical periods, in which the subject was also seen in different ways and with different values, according to the sociopolitical perceptions of its time, human diversity has finally been recognized, the result of a lot of effort and struggle of marginalized populations, victims of social exclusion and political helplessness. Among these groups are people with disabilities.

In the area of education, for a long time, the understanding remained that special education, which took place in parallel with ordinary education, would be the most appropriate model for assisting students with disabilities or who did not adapt to the inflexible education system.

Currently, one can visualize the evolution of achievements in relation to spaces and rights of the global movement for inclusive education. Such advances were triggered in defense of the right of all students to be together, learning and participating, without any type of discrimination.

Experiencing all stages of school learning and receiving the same multiple opportunities for development and acquisition of knowledge is the desire of all students and their families, whether or not they present some differentiated condition, such as disability. The current educational model does not always go in this direction: years of segregation of people with disabilities or with different cultural and social modes have founded learning practices and strategies that have not favored those who do not respond to the pedagogical materials offered or who need other strategies to develop their learning capabilities.

Important achievements have been made in Brazil to ensure that changes happen. Transformations in public policies are driven by the affirmation that everyone benefits when schools promote responses to individual student differences.

In this sense, in addition to decrees and resolutions to establish the new special education policy from an inclusive perspective, there is a set of documents, technical notes and opinions that help to implement the commitments established by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These actions portray the quest to face the proposed challenge and provide for the construction of projects capable of overcoming the historical processes of exclusion, with the objective of promoting changes in the education systems to ensure access and permanence of all in school. It is within this context that the new Special Education is organized (Zulian et al., 2015, p. 10).

Many initiatives have been taken with the objective of reorganizing the academic structure, in order to receive everyone with equity of actions that favor the maximum development of the potential of each student within the school.

Thinking about offering learning opportunities to everyone is worrying about ensuring that the student, regardless of their differences and social or functional demands, will be able to actively participate in the activities proposed at the school, developing, at their own time and in their own way, knowledge that will guarantee you independence and autonomy (Zulian et al., 2017).

The moment calls for a multi and interdisciplinary effort, to which professionals from different areas have contributed. Partnerships and exchanges are essential, given that diverse knowledge can be redirected in the proposal to solve new problems faced in the new school, the inclusive school, in order to bring the necessary reinforcement and support to teachers who are at the forefront of education., as it turns out:

[...] teachers feel orphans in a proposal that needs partnerships and support, they are unaware of basic questions about the

conditions of students with disabilities and often feel powerless in their specific action. Ignorance about aspects peculiar to disabilities and about the possibilities of each child also generates situations of fear, refusal, prejudice in relation to the presence of the disabled student in the classroom (Rocha et al., 2003, p. 75).

The Occupational Therapist has already carried out many actions in the school, over the last 16 years of the Public Policy on Special Education in an Inclusive Perspective, but with a performance without a systematizing rule. Since December 26, 2018, the Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (COFFITO) has recognized the Occupational Therapy specialty in the school context, through Resolution Number of this professional, since their main concern refers to the student's occupational performance, which is promoted in the different learning spaces.

With their training based on the guarantee of human functionality, the Occupational Therapist (OT) has the possibility of acting on different fronts, always with the objective of contributing to the efficient promotion of inclusive education. The actions carried out directly at the school or with the student with a disability are as diverse as possible and there is an understanding that it is important to organize such knowledge and experiences, either to present them during the formation of the TO, or to identify possible niches not yet available. visualized or little explored in the field of activity of this professional.

In this sense, knowing what OT has already been doing in this area and how it has been done seems to us to be an important organizational starting point. The research described herein aimed to gather such information through a bibliographic review and to qualitatively and quantitatively analyze the contributions of the Occupational Therapy professional in the educational context during the period from

2009 to 2019.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature, carried out through a bibliographic survey, based on pre-defined keywords, which provided information for the foreseen analyses, in a quali-quantitative approach. The search was carried out using the Google Scholar platform and the publication period of the selected works was between 2009 and 2019. The survey was carried out in September 2019.

The choice of the Google Scholar portal as a research source was due to the reduced number of results found from publications of this characteristic only in specific Brazilian Occupational Therapy journals, the first option of the investigation. In addition, another advantage presented by this mechanism is related to the possibility of filtering only articles published in indexed journals registered in the CAPES portal. We consider Puccini (2015) regarding the credibility of the platform, who argues, in his research, that Google Scholar has more scope for searching scientific articles than other recognized portals, such as PubMed and SciELO.

As sample material, we only considered works found in the first 10 pages of results. With this clipping, we obtained 200 works: 101 resulting from the search for the keywords “Inclusive Education”, “Education”, “Occupational Therapy” and “ Assistive Technology “, while 99 were found using the keywords “Occupational Therapy” and “Educational Contexts”. In sequence, we developed a data crossing to identify duplicate articles, which led to a decrease in the total number of works to 181.

Subsequently, considering these 181 works, we selected those that qualified as articles. Thus, we excluded from our sample material originating from books, conferences, theses and citations. The result obtained in this stage

of the work was 56 articles.

After reading the respective 56 abstracts, those whose purpose did not include the presentation of the contributions of occupational therapists in the educational context were eliminated. The result, after screening the abstracts, was 23 eligible articles, all from indexed national journals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first observation made from our study was that such publications are often carried out by the Occupational Therapist, but published in journals in other areas, such as education. Of the 23 eligible articles, 13 were published in Occupational Therapy journals, 8 in Education journals, 1 in Technology journal and 1 in Social Health journal, as shown in Table 1.

From the reading carried out, several types of OT actions in the school context were identified, according to the selected authors, considering that some were repeated throughout the analyzed articles. For better organization and analysis, the proposed actions were divided by types, based on the descriptions in the texts. Some of them were assigned subtypes, because they are part of the same action, as we can see in Table 2.

To define the types of actions found, in addition to the 23 articles object of this research, the Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (Ferreira, 2009) and the Dictionary of Occupational Therapy - Reference Guide (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2006) were used.

From the reading of eligible articles and identifying the actions of Occupational Therapy in the school context mentioned in these works, we carried out a qualitative-quantitative analysis of the results obtained. To facilitate this, the number of articles and the number of times each type of action is cited were counted. The quantification obtained is represented in Graph 1:

AREAS	MAGAZINES	PUBLICATIONS
TO	TO-USP Magazine. SP	5
	TO-UFSCAR Magazine. São Carlos	8
EDUCATION	Rev. Brazilian by Ed. Esp.-UFSM	3
	Rev. Education. UNEMAT. MT	1
	Special Education In debate. Victory. ES	1
	Rev. Education-Webs. UERJ	1
	Journal of Education-PUC. Campinas	1
	Educational Criticism	1
OTHERS	Science Tech. FEEVALLE. LOL	1
	Social Health. SP	1

Table 1. Distribution of publications found by different journals

TYPES OF ACTION	SUBTYPES
Enable	Training
	Handling
Empower	Training
	Instruct
	instrumentalize
Support	Give support
	do together
Guidance/Consulting	-
To evaluate	-
Rehabilitate (Therapy)	-
give resources	Strategies
	Use
	Confection
	material adaptation
	Low cost material
	loan of materials
	Resource indication
Accessibility	Space analysis/suitability
	Adequacy in infrastructure

Table 2. Types of actions performed by TOs in the school context

To facilitate the understanding of the organization of the data obtained by the literature review carried out in this research, we arranged them according to table 3. Considering that the types of actions mentioned encompass their subtypes (previously detailed with table 2). The reasoning for Table 3 follows with the number of times that the specific type of OT action appears in the 23 analyzed articles.

When analyzing the results obtained, we considered notes made by each author read and presented an explanation of the types of OT actions, starting from the least to the most cited procedure.

Through the analysis, it was found that *rehabilitate* appeared less often in the articles, totaling only three articles that refer to this type of OT action in the school context. According to the Occupational Therapy Reference Guide, rehabilitate can be defined as “Helping individuals to regain skills and abilities that have been lost as a result of illness, injury, illness, disorder, or incarceration” (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2006, p. 82).

The mention of the rehabilitation action has low recurrence in the analyzed studies, although such activity is part of the actions in Occupational Therapy. We attribute the low rate to the fact that this action can and must happen when the professional receives the student with learning difficulties or with several sequels that make the child’s schooling process difficult, but this service is carried out in offices or therapeutic spaces and not in the school environment. In addition, the activity has different objectives from the objectives of TO at school.

According to Araújo et al. (2012), therapeutic interventions are identified as demands based on the observed behavior and the individual needs of each one, aiming to reinforce learning in academic contexts. Then, the action *evaluate* appears in eight of the 23

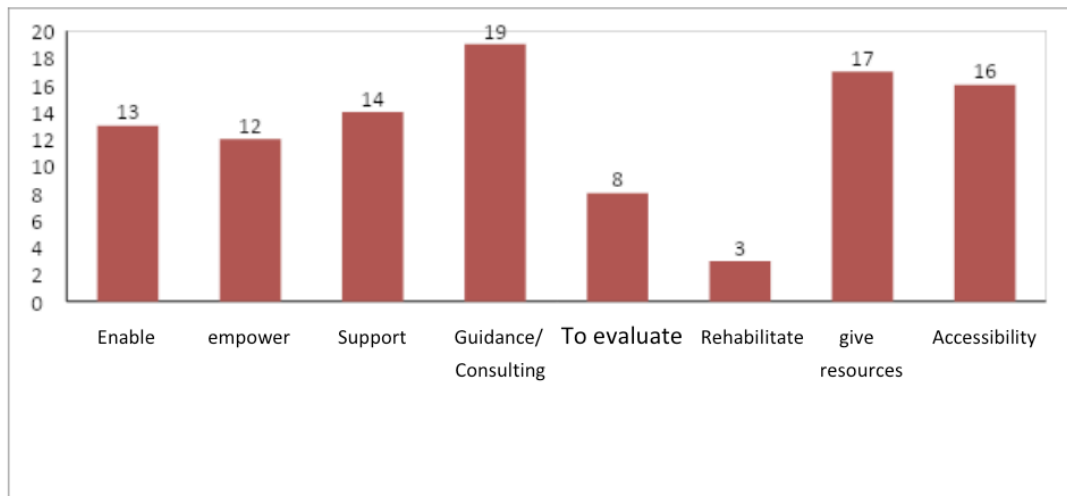
articles analyzed, totaling 35% of recurrence.

For Viana (2015), “The work of Occupational Therapy with Assistive Technology (AT) is linked to assessments of users’ needs, with regard to their physical, cognitive and sensory abilities” (p. 97). Thus, one cannot forget how important AT resources are in school inclusion. Functionality assessment protocols and the degree of difficulty, very relevant in the school context, are also widely used by the TO.

It is through evaluations and monitoring of the effectiveness of the use of Assistive Technology that subsidies are available for meetings with teachers, with the aim of jointly discussing and evaluating how much the resources used by students with disabilities provide them with access to the curriculum and participation in activities developed in the school context (Baleotti & Zafani, 2017).

Several authors, such as Fiorini and Araújo (2015), Givigi and Alcântara (2016) and Rocha and Deliberato (2012), for example, claim that the occupational therapist is one of the health professionals who can contribute to facilitating adaptation and social participation of children with educational needs in the school environment. It is understood that this statement is given both by the skills concerning the Occupational Therapy professional in carrying out assessments relevant to the context of learning, as well as by their ability to carry out and teach how to carry out case studies, from which important subsidies can be drawn for the processes assessment and, consequently, new individual and collective referrals at school.

Subsequently, the action of *enabling* or *rendering capable* is found in 12 of the 23 articles read, corresponding to 52% of this total. For this research, the item *enable* is *understood* as being related to the teacher and school employees. In addition, items such as *training*, *instructing* and *instrumentalizing* are



Graph 1. Data referring to the quantification of the types of OT actions in the school context

TO ACTIONS IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT	NUMBER OF ARTICLES CONTAINING THE ACTION	PERCENTAGE (IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL OF 23 ARTICLES)
To enable	13	57%
empower	12	52%
Support	14	61%
Guidance/Consulting	19	83%
To evaluate	8	35%
To rehabilitate	3	13%
To give resources	17	74%
Accessibility	16	70%

Table 3. Number of analyzed articles that contain the action cited and the appropriate percentages in relation to the total

contained in the action of enabling.

It is important to highlight the issue of teacher training in this new teaching and learning process, which is essential for them to be able to appropriate new technologies and face the challenge of re-elaborating their pedagogical proposals with didactic and pedagogical materials accessible to students with disabilities (Viana, 2015).

According to the Dictionary of Occupational Therapy, training refers to “the organization of a variety of information to form thoughts and ideas” (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2006, p. 47). We can observe, with the following quote, the importance of teacher training:

The education professionals who participated in this research pointed to training as one of the necessary conditions for working with these students. It was possible to highlight, in some excerpts of the testimonies, indications aimed at the lack of teacher education and training (Folha & Carvalho, 2017, p. 86).

Transmitting knowledge to someone or teaching is, for the Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (Ferreira, 2009), synonymous with instructing, an item that appears in several articles read. As an example, Maia et al. (2016, p. 693) define it as “instructing a classroom teacher about sensory regulation strategies”. Instrumentation, on the other hand, that according to Gontijo et al. (2012, p. 265) refers to “to expand both theoretical and practical tools that allow teachers to maximize their performance in the educational process”, is also prominently present among the analyzed articles.

*Training* is an OT action that is very present in the school context and its sub-items demonstrate that it is an action that aims to instruct and instrumentalize, that is, to give, train and provide tools so that these professionals are able to provide the student with the experience of the school and the

education in a way that suits their needs.

Dealing with diversity in classrooms, promoting student learning in different ways, is a demand that often scares or impacts the teacher, which generates discourses, for example, that justify not knowing how to do it. In this sense, the activity of training such professionals is understood as one of the multiple actions of indisputable importance attributed to the occupational therapist.

Appropriate training of teachers, through training programs, can assist in the reflection and transformation of professional praxis, resulting in the strengthening of the social support network for the students’ ability to evolve and learn (Gontijo et al., 2012). Furthermore, we can point out that

According to the authors, the occupational therapist can contribute to the training of teachers in training, extension, specialization courses, in the selection of contents for licensure, or in in-service training movements (Mantovani & Caiado, 2011, p. 85).

Occupational Therapy has accumulated, throughout the professional history, knowledge and working methods that meet the needs of students with disabilities. In this sense, several authors point out that, in a school context, the Occupational Therapist plays a very significant role in training and raising awareness of all those involved (52% of the authors read). In this process of inclusion are the family, the school and the community, since this behavior is essential for the success of children with disabilities, as defended by Maia et al. (2016), Folha and Carvalho (2017), Mantovani and Caiado (2011), Assis and Martinez (2012), among others.

It is worth mentioning that, according to Folha and Monteiro (2017, p. 202), “School health has been an action strategy in primary health care policies, but it still represents a vast unexplored field for the work of occupational therapists from the perspective of education



for all". The authors also point out that the intersectoral relationship between Health and Education has many affinities in the field of public policies and that the territory is a space for the production of life and, therefore, of health. In addition to being of multiple possibilities, it includes the school units with the subjects of their community, with which the Family Health teams can build and strengthen the articulation with the school community, transmitting knowledge and providing resources for the inclusion process of students with disabilities in this context.

The term *enable* appears in 13 of the 23 articles read, totaling 57% of recurrence. Remembering that enabling, in this research, is related to the students, in the case of schools. This type of action includes training and handling actions, considering that Occupational Therapy is the art and science of enabling engagement in everyday activities.

*Training*, according to the Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (Ferreira, 2009, p. 1985) is "to make fit, capable, for a certain task or activity". The term *training* appears as a form of equating measure to enable the individual, since the OT uses training in several aspects in this context. In this sense, "Object handling and manipulation are patterns of dexterity in the isolated movements of picking up and releasing the fingers, as well as patterns of coordinated manipulation" (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2006, p. 60).

Their meeting with the school and with educators must, in a collaborative perspective, assist in environmental adaptations, in the positioning of the student inside and outside the classroom, in the preparation or indication of adapted resources and in the implementation of alternative communication (Mantovani & Caiado, 2011, p. 85).

The item *enable*, whose sub-items are *training* and *handling*, then refers to the ways to make the student able to carry out

their activities within the school. Either by introducing activities that stimulate a certain function (Folha & Monteiro, 2017), or by giving functionality to stereotypes (Della Barba & Minatel, 2013).

Pelosi and Nunes (2011) mention authors such as Rita Bersh, among others, stating that it is not enough for the Assistive Technology resources to be available to the school, it is also necessary that the support team, in which the Occupational Therapist is present, enable the professionals to use them and, consequently, enable the student.

In this sense, Trevisan and Della Barba (2012) point out that the OT is seen as one that has resources, knowledge and skills to train and empower the client in search of solutions to their problems, as mentioned in several of the 23 articles analyzed in this research.

Still on this topic, Calheiros et al. (2018) mention the Occupational Therapist's participation in the team aimed at solving educational problems related to the school inclusion process and, among the objectives of this same team, highlights the action of building the skills of all those involved.

It is understood that the high percentage of the presence of the practice of enabling performed by the OT in an educational context reflects, as well mentioned by the authors found, the skills of this professional in preparing the other for the various confrontations necessary to guarantee quality in the accomplishment of human functions, in every situation.

The next type of action, named *support*, which can be understood as "sustain, support" (Ferreira, 2009, p. 166), appears in 14 of the 23 articles considered in this research and refers to action with regard to students, teachers and/or family members. Several authors, such as Maia et al. (2016, p. 683) recall that "occupational therapists are part of the trans and interdisciplinary team, whose primary

intervention objectives are to support, enable and empower children and their families”.

Together with teachers: it is important that the occupational therapist can support the teacher, informing him about the basic concepts of ADHD and the consequences for learning and in the classroom. The occupational therapist has important elements in the process of building activities that can help teachers to reorganize their school routine and children's access to knowledge (Silva et al., 2012, p. 286-287).

Within this type of OT action, the subtypes of *support* and *doing together*, often cited by the authors of this research, fit. Whereas “*giving support* reduces anxiety about uncertainty through information” (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2006, p. 93).

Therefore, within the scope of school health promotion, the occupational therapist can act favoring the exchange of experiences with the educator, in favor of the adequacy of school activities for the global development of the child, as well as in order to support educators and students by contributing in raising awareness, curricular adaptations and qualification of attention, care and respect for students with special demands (Folha and Monteiro, 2017, p. 206).

The action of doing together it is used in the sense of collaboration with education professionals, exemplified by Mantovani and Caiado (2011, p. 86), who mention that “there is a need to establish a horizontal relationship of exchanges and collective work”.

This item highlights one of the functions of the Occupational Therapist in the school context, which was frequently mentioned in this research (61% of the articles), to provide support and support for the work of education professionals in an interdisciplinary way, as defended by authors such as Pelosi and Nunes (2011), Zulian et al. (2015) and Baleotti and Zafani (2017).

Della Barba and Minatel (2013) address the importance of support to support the school

in the unique needs that manifest during the school period, such as informational support. Support also extends to families:

[...] the family must have special attention. Due to the fragility of bonds between families and school, the occupational therapist can propose activity workshops that offer a space for dialogue between school and family. Parents need a welcoming and supportive space, at the same time they need to know better about their child's difficulties (Silva et al., 2012, p. 287).

It is known that the premise of TO is to do it together, to support it so that the subject is strengthened and gains autonomy to do it alone. Undoubtedly, such action is performed with quality in all areas of Occupational Therapy, which includes the school area.

*Making accessible or Accessibility* is cited in 16 of the 23 articles, that is, in 70% of them. Remembering that Universal design is intended to respond by seeking to eliminate architectural and social barriers with careful planning.

Among the actions that go in this direction, we can mention that the OT analyzes and adapts the spaces and instruments in order to reduce and/or minimize the present architectural barriers, making the spaces appropriate and comfortable for all its users and the tools available. to be used. In the school context, such action is indispensable, which certainly justifies the great emphasis given to it by most of the authors read.

The adequacy of the physical environment, pedagogical resources and school materials represents one of the important possibilities in the context of inclusive education, and is in line with the propositions established in the document National Policy on Special Education, from the perspective of Inclusive Education (Baleotti & Zafani, 2017, p. 410).

The item *accessibility* and its sub-items speak of actions and equivalent environmental measures, which are developed both in relation

to the structure of the environment and in the adaptation of resources and materials, understanding that the disability is not in the subject itself, but in its environment, in the barriers that result in difficulties in accessing the right to education (Viana, 2015).

This item aims at the role of occupational therapists as “reality modifying agents” (Sousa et al., 2015) and in helping to eliminate barriers that may be present in these environments. Thus, actions are necessary, with which the TO identifies them and requests adjustments, which can be carried out by the same professional or by others, such as engineers, bricklayers, etc., provided that access to learning opportunities is guaranteed, such as, for example, digital information.

Viana (2015) recalls that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can also be used as AT, as computers are tools that help people with disabilities in the development and learning process, but access to this resource is only through through adaptations that overcome the present barriers. Several authors, Calheiros et al. (2018), Rocha and Deliberato (2012), De Paula and Baleotti (2011), Zulian et al. (2015) and Givigi and Alcântara (2016) point out that all these resources seek to provide more effective solutions and alternatives to gain functionality for their users and that OT plays a prominent role in this task.

*Give resources* was one of the items most found among the articles read, more precisely in 17 of the 23, corresponding to 74% of them, which shows us its relevance and possibly the great expectation for the TOs, with regard to the school. The Occupational Therapy action related to giving resources encompasses sub-items frequently cited in the articles read, such as: *adapting material, borrowing materials, indicating resources, making, using resources, low-cost material and strategies*.

The activities carried out in school spaces

aim to discuss and implement actions with the school team (coordinators, teachers, directors, monitors, inspectors and other employees who make up the school's staff), such as adaptations of materials and furniture, technology resources assistance, application of strategies for flexibility and access to the curriculum, discussion of common goals for the effective school inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs ( Della Barba & Minatel, 2013, p. 603).

It is necessary to emphasize that, when dealing with the *resource item*, we are in the field of Assistive Technology. In this literature review, it was possible to observe the same findings of Sousa et al. (2015), in which the use of Assistive Technology in the school environment is addressed by several occupational therapists, due to the significant importance of the topic, both for the school community and for children with disabilities. The proper positioning of students and the manufacture of functional splints and orthoses, among many other resources, are also mentioned in the articles read with due relevance (Maia et al., 2016; Lopes and Borba, 2013; Fachinetti et al., 2015).

The *adaptation of materials* appears very frequently as an occupational therapy action and, in many cases, the demands are similar, as mentioned by Baleotti and Zafani (2017). The TO's expertise in manufacturing diverse resources and making use of materials of all kinds, from high technological complexity, such as ICTs, to the great use of low-cost materials, appears significantly in our bibliographic review as a differential of the TOs, which places them once again in a highly valued position in the educational context.

Throughout the professional history, Occupational Therapy has accumulated knowledge and working methods that meet the needs of students with physical or motor disabilities. Their meeting with the school and with educators must, in a collaborative

perspective, assist in environmental adaptations, in the positioning of the student inside and outside the classroom, in the preparation or indication of adapted resources and in the implementation of alternative communication (Mantovani & Caiado, 2011, p. 85).

Within the educational context, Occupational Therapy uses resources in different ways and on different occasions. This is evident when we see that *resource* is the word that appears with the second highest frequency found in this research, in addition to being the one that is most divided into sub-items, always with the aim of meeting various difficulties.

Also with regard to resources, Viana (2015) mentions that the OT's view and its knowledge can help and contribute to the evaluation, analysis and prescription of various resources, in addition to making and/or adapting others. This way, the Occupational Therapist presents itself on different fronts, providing solutions to the multiple barriers encountered in the process of supporting school inclusion. Such a task, according to our bibliographic findings, stands out among the many.

Finally, the term *guide/consultancy* was the most found in the articles of this research, more precisely, in 19 works among the 23 analyzed, a recurrence of 83% regarding the use of the item. In the scope of Occupational Therapy, *consulting* is an activity in which an OT performer comes from elsewhere to provide guidance and support. In this case, the therapist is not hired directly to work at the school, but to offer assistance in the educational context.

According to Baleotti and Zafani (2017), through Collaborative Consulting, it is possible to facilitate the insertion of this professional in the school space to get closer to educators, with a view to the exchange and collective construction of knowledge and practices aimed at improving the educational

quality of students with disabilities.

This is a work to be developed in partnership with educators, students, parents, the community and support staff (other health professionals), through the application of actions related to the guidance of teachers regarding the particularities of each student and projects that they aim to raise the awareness of the school community to overcome prejudices that constitute barriers to inclusion (Della Barba & Minatel, 2013, p. 603).

It is understood that, as mentioned by Baleotti and Zafani (2017), the consultancy proposal seeks to bring together the efforts of health professionals. In this case, the interaction between the occupational therapist and education professionals, such as teachers and school managers, for decision-making and planning interventions that best meet the needs of students.

One of the possible approaches that subsidizes the work of occupational therapists in educational spaces is the Collaborative Consulting framework, a process in which a consultant works in an egalitarian, non-hierarchical relationship with other professionals, parents and/or guardians, helping in the process of decision-making and implementation of actions according to the students' educational interests (Folha & Monteiro, 2017, p. 207).

The results of the research by Cardoso and Matsukura (2012), presented in one of the 23 articles read, point to consulting activities as the main types of actions carried out by occupational therapists in the school inclusion process. In this action model, the TO offers guidance to the family in relation to school and inclusion, general guidance to the teacher in public and regular schools, in addition to working with practical activities of evaluation, production of resources, reasonable adaptations, in addition to accessibility adjustments. environmental and instrumental.

Collaborative consultancy has been considered as one of the elements for a more successful school inclusion, being relevant in the development of interventions in the face of student learning difficulties and [...] in the sense of joining forces to achieve political-social achievements ( Baleotti and Zafani, 2017, p. 410).

The authors point out collaborative consulting as a way for the OT health professional to work in education, offering services in the area, since vacancies for hiring this professional by the Education sector are common, in addition to having an already recognized importance. Such services are usually offered in an outsourced way, with consultancies.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings of this research, we found that the actions of Occupational Therapy in the educational context are multiple. Despite such diversity, all have the objective of helping the triad student – education professionals – family members to deal with the issue of including people with disabilities in schools. The occupational therapist assists in the school inclusion process, demystifying the disability, facilitating the child's permanence within the common education and expanding their academic performance.

Although this specialty is already guaranteed by the Occupational Therapy Council in the form of Resolution Number 500, there is still no legislation that ensures the presence of OT in schools. However, the professional is of great importance in this context of activity, as we can see from the large number of actions related to consultancy provided to schools. In this sense, the occupational therapist, by being part of the school team, builds a more accessible path for teachers and students towards inclusion, which points to the demand for opening specific vacancies for this health professional

by the education sector.

We believe that training, instructing and equipping professionals in this field is, without a doubt, an effective OT action in an educational context, both because of the multiple skills of this professional and because of their training possibilities.

It is important to emphasize that the results found regarding the multiple roles and contributions of Occupational Therapy in a school context are in accordance with the special education policy in the inclusive perspective, currently in force in Brazil, in which there is a proposal for non-clinical action in this context, corroborating what we found in this research: the result of the *rehabilitation item* was the one with the lowest recurrence among the analyzed works.

However, we do not want to forget here the great contribution of OT in the processes of rehabilitation of students with deficits in their development or with learning difficulties. The students' rehabilitation processes at the clinic are not replaced by the OT's performance at school, being complementary actions.

Regarding the finding that most of the articles found were not published in Occupational Therapy journals, but in Education journals, we believe that it would be important for the recognition of this practice that occupational therapists invest in publishing their work also in journals in their area, despite understand that such publications in education journals make sense, when we think about the dissemination of the possibilities of contributions of this health professional in the educational field.

Once the relevance of Occupational Therapy work in a school context is observed, new questions arise regarding the training of this professional to work in this sector. Perhaps it is a topic that can trigger new research and new work, since we understand that the training of this professional has been

updated with different implementations in his curriculum, in order to guarantee his preparation for the new markets that await him at each new time.

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