

Implementation of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in the Portuguese Educational System: Attitudes and Training Needs of Special Education Teachers'

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Abstract

Since 2008, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health - ICF (WHO, 2001) is the framework of reference in the assessment and intervention process with students with SEN, in the Portuguese educational system. As a consequence special education teachers' training needs emerged from it. In this study, we characterize the received training and the special education teachers' attitudes and training needs towards ICF. The sample consisted of 913 Portuguese special education teachers who responded to Attitudes Towards Training Questionnaire in ICF - ATTQ-ICF. This study demonstrates that teachers' training on the use of the ICF should occur as soon as possible in their training and it should be extended to other experts involved in the educational process of the student. The need for more knowledge about the tools and methods to assess functioning, the knowledge about the eligibility criteria for special education and the definition of qualifiers based on the ICF classification system also emerged. Finally the discussion of case studies is also considered crucial in the training process. In summary, a training model is needed that has a sufficient number of training hours; that includes training modalities which support teaching practice in a continuous way; that fosters discussion of the barriers to practical implementation of the ICF and finally, that includes a concrete case discussion.

Keywords

ICF, SEN, Attitudes, Teachers' Training, Special Education.