

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIGHER EDUCATION

EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA NO ÂMBITO DA EDUCAÇÃO SUPERIOR

LA EDUCACIÓN INCLUSIVA EN EL MARCO DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

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ABSTRACT: This paper shows inclusive education as that which allows the construction of dimensions that promote equity, collaboration and development in the university community of new looks towards those groups traditionally excluded. Firstly, the concept of inclusive education is reviewed, recognizing that although considerable progress has been made in this area, there are still some important aspects that remain unresolved. Secondly, it is necessary to identify some theoretical and procedural gaps that pose fundamental challenges for teacher training at the higher level, and thirdly, it identifies those strategies that promote the construction of inclusive spaces that seek to minimize or reduce barriers to the presence, participation and learning of students.

KEYWORDS: Educational inclusion. Teacher education. Higher education.

RESUMO: *Este artigo considera educação inclusiva aquela que permite a construção de dimensões que promovam a equidade, a colaboração e desenvolvam novas perspectivas na comunidade universitária em relação aos grupos tradicionalmente excluídos. Primeiro, o conceito de educação inclusiva é revisado, reconhecendo que, embora tenham sido feitos progressos consideráveis nessa área, ainda existem aspectos importantes que não foram resolvidos; segundo, reconhece-se a necessidade de identificar lacunas teóricas e processuais que levantam desafios fundamentais à formação de professores de nível superior; e, em terceiro lugar, são identificadas estratégias que promovam a construção de espaços inclusivos que busquem minimizar ou reduzir barreiras à presença, participação e aprendizado dos alunos.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Inclusão educacional. Formação de professores. Educação superior.*

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RESUMEN: *El presente artículo muestra a la educación inclusiva como aquella que permite la construcción de dimensiones que promueven la equidad, la colaboración y el desarrollo en la comunidad universitaria de nuevas miradas hacia aquellos grupos tradicionalmente excluidos. Primero se revisa el concepto de educación inclusiva, reconociendo que aunque se han hecho progresos considerables en este tema, aún quedan algunos aspectos importantes que permanecen todavía sin resolver, en segundo lugar se advierte la necesidad de identificar algunos vacíos teóricos y procedimentales que plantean retos fundamentales para la formación docente del nivel superior y en tercer lugar se identifican aquellas estrategias que promueven la construcción de espacios incluyentes que buscan minimizar o reducir las barreras para la presencia, la participación y el aprendizaje de los estudiantes.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Inclusión educativa. Formación docente. Educación superior.*

Educational inclusion

Most of the ideas that gave rise to inclusive education, emanating from a series of principles and demands of international organizations, came about under the protection of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, especially article 26, which states: "Everyone has the right to education. Education will be directed to the full development of the human personality and to strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." In turn, UNESCO (2005) defines the term Educational Inclusion, from the context of this process that identifies and responds "to the diversity of the needs of all students through greater participation in learning, cultures and communities, reducing exclusion in education" (9), among other factors, it should be noted that inclusive education does not refer to the way a special group of students is educated, but to the way everyone is educated (TOBÓN, 2012).

In general, these concepts highlight the need to identify inclusive education as one that seeks the participation of all students regardless of the particular characteristics they have, being the main responsible for their learning process, in view of the fact that they have to interact with peers to exchange knowledge, taking into account the context to be able to solve different problems or situations (GÓMEZ; GARCIA, 2017). The author Salinas (2013) also recognizes inclusion with reference to "a process that aims to respond to the diversity of needs of all students, with the objective of increasing their participation in learning and eliminating exclusion inside and outside education" (80).

According to Ainscow's (2006) point of view, it recognizes the agreement of three elements in the concept of inclusion: presence, learning and participation, which considers a process of systematic improvement that educational administrations and schools must face; to

try to eliminate barriers of different types that limit the presence, learning and participation of the student in the institutions in which they are educated.

In view of all the conceptions exposed concerning inclusive education so far, the need to analyze its importance in the school context stands out, recognizing that, in the case of Mexico, great relevance has been given especially in basic education, this conception seems to be supported by the inclusive education programs proposed by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), among them is the initiative called *Equity and Inclusion Strategy in basic education: for students with disabilities, remarkable skills and severe learning, behavior or communication difficulties*, which is inserted in the context of the pedagogical approach of the Educational Model, in essence, is identified under the concept of "unprecedented effort that is part of the framework of a transversal strategy, that seeks to shape an inclusive education based on equity, justice and equality as indispensable elements to ensure quality in educational services" (SEP, 2018, p. 4).

However, some studies indicate that there is currently a diversified educational system, where there are still several structural difficulties, which hinder the manifestation of the full potential of inclusive education, so there is the challenge of solving these problems from a comprehensive, sustainable and systemic perspective, in order to meet and satisfy all social and economic levels. Fernández (2017) points out that, among other aspects, it is necessary to redesign the institutional system to cover issues of equity and inclusion.

In the legal framework in Mexico, since 2011 there is the General Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, with the last reform in 2018; where it is established that the "State will promote, protect and guarantee the full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, ensuring their full inclusion in society in the context of respect, equality and equal opportunities". (p. 1).

The concept of inclusion analyzed by Ainscow and Miles (2008) is particularly interesting; especially because it presents us with different perspectives, on the one hand, point out that inclusion is related to disability and special educational needs, on the other aspect it is identified as a response to disciplinary exclusions, it is also oriented to all groups vulnerable to exclusion and, finally, with a desire to promote a school and education for all.

Inclusion in higher education

Based on previous comments, the results obtained by Romero and García (2013) and García (2011) are particularly interesting, which conclude that many efforts have been made to incorporate inclusive education in basic education schools. In the case of Mexico, important initiatives have been carried out concerning teacher training and the incorporation of children with disabilities into regular schools, in this sense, Ocaña, Hernández, Sánchez, Linares, Guerra, Reyes, Soto (2019), point out, that despite the fact that Mexico has had the General Education Law on inclusive education, since 2016, it only applies to general basic education. In these circumstances, higher education has remained a pending theme to integrate processes aligned with the Educational Model of THE SEP (Secretariat of Public Education) that proposes the integral training of students in the conviction and capacities necessary to contribute to the construction of a society more just and inclusive, respectful of diversity, attentive and responsible with the general interest (SEP, 2016). According to the approaches of SEP, it is expected to set up a university education that I contemplate in its processes, an inclusive vision. It should be noted that the term inclusive has several connotations, according to Stubbs (2008) points out that it is relevant to indicate that the word "inclusion" refers to age, sex, ethnicity, language, health and economic status, religion, lifestyle and not just a notorious or apparent disability; From this point of view, inclusive university education cannot be conceived as one that trains its students from a homogeneous model, the university is called to attend in a diversified way to its students, so that it really receives the qualification of inclusive.

According to the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (2018), in 2018, in Mexico, there were about 4,210,250 higher education students, where 49.7% were men and 50.3% were women. In their statistics, the ANUIES indicate that, of the total number of students enrolled, 1% represented students with disabilities, however, it does not refer to the specific needs of each of them according to their cultural or social context. A relevant characteristic of these results shows that those students who present some educational condition or need are not reported and, therefore, it is very likely that they will be excluded from special care with appropriate strategies for them.

In 2017, an article by Cruz y Casillas called: higher education institutions and students with disabilities in Mexico, presents a study where about 53 Mexican universities are reviewed, among which only 12 had so far actions or programs to support students with disabilities, according to the authors' point of view, pointing out that "most of them are just inclusion initiatives." In the study, they point out that there are institutions that adopt specific programs

of care for students with disabilities, being the only inclusion criterion; for example: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Universidad Veracruzana (UV), Universidad Autónoma de Tlaxcala (UATX), Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí (UASLP), Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL) and Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango (UJED). Together, these studies provide important results on the situation of inclusion at the higher level, based on the above, it is very significant to note that the only inclusion criterion is oriented to students with disabilities, which implies that students with educational needs are not visible, which can determine a condition of risk and vulnerability to the circumstances they must face in their university education.

According to the Yucatan Declaration (2008), which was written in correspondence with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, states that it is "necessary to recognize the universality, indivisibility, progressivity, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the need to ensure that people with disabilities in universities, exercise them fully and without discrimination" (p. 1), for this, it is considered essential that universities guarantee their students with disabilities, that the transit through the spaces of their professional training, is carried out with the full enjoyment of their human rights and without discrimination, however, it has previously been demonstrated that, despite the fact that this agreement was made more than 10 years ago, there is still a long way to go for the full fulfillment of it.

From this point of view, the results of the 2017 National Survey of Discrimination (ENADIS) clearly demonstrate that one of the main problems of people with disabilities is the lack of opportunities to find employment. Of this population group, 48.1% perceive that their rights are little or nothing respected. 15.1% of those over 18 years of age living with disabilities were denied scholarships or other government social programs; 6.5% had the opportunity to continue studying. According to these results, the university has a very great challenge, which involves considering the construction of proposals that compromise its full functioning. While efforts are made, there is, however, a substantial gap between the care received by students with disabilities at the level of basic education and higher education.

Universities are still struggling to implement an inclusive educational model; According to recent results of the research, elements of resistance to change are noticed, with important barriers to full inclusion, Tapia and Manosalva (2012) point out in their research, that as progress is made at the levels of the educational system, barriers become very complex and it is the level of higher education that shows greater resistance and barriers within the integration process. Torres (2011), emphasizes that educational inclusion can and should be considered an

attitude, in this sense, it becomes a system of beliefs and values that will be present in the decision-making of those who bet on it. In order to study the inclusive approaches that are demanded in higher education, it is proposed the development of a consolidated dimension in the design and development of psychopedagogical strategies that allow responding to diversity and, thus, creating inclusive educational environments.

For the above, it is necessary that, from the educational dimension, greater responsibility is accepted in the creation of innovative processes that guarantee people with disabilities access to the training system. Consequently, higher education institutions must develop, within their educational policies, inclusive practices through the training of their teachers, which allow them to develop flexible pedagogies that integrate the diversity of the student body.

Currently, there is a growing interest in the inclusion of people with disabilities, no doubt this because they make up a small and segregated group in different dimensions of the social context, recent developments in the field of inclusive education have shown that although there are national regulations and policies on disability, as is the case with the Yucatán agreement, this population requires conditions that favor their participation and learning, which seek to reduce the barriers that keep them excluded; considering that the lack of egalitarian relations has remained an obstacle to be overcome.

According to statistics released by the World Health Organization in 2011, the worst outcomes of people with disabilities are reported in terms of health, academic context, lower economic participation and poverty rates, in clear inequality with people without disabilities. All this responds to the obstacles that limit their access to services considered basic, particularly health, education, employment, among others (WHO, 2011), in this same sense, Boudeguer and Squella (2010) point out that disability is generated by physical barriers of the environment, alluding to the current approach to accessibility, transforming into this: "ability to approach, access, use and leave any space or enclosure independently, ease and without interruptions" therefore, the physical environment influences the manifestation or elimination of disability. According to Raphael (2012b), he argues that our Mexican society remains strongly discriminatory, which distances us from democracy.

Regarding the barriers that make it impossible for people with disabilities to fully include themselves in higher education, López (2014) concludes in his research that:

[... Educational policy and school and pedagogical practices create barriers to inclusion, as they tend to individualization, segregation and the disempowerment of learning and participation of students with special educational needs (p. 279).

Research has so far revealed that there is no clear evidence that inclusion has consolidated in higher education, indicating that there is still a substantial gap between care and support given to students with disabilities at the level of basic education and at higher levels of education. Although considerable progress has been made in this area, many important issues remain unresolved, according to the analyses presented by Alcántara and Navarrete (2014) and Cruz y Casillas (2017) indicate that higher education institutions, not only in Mexico, are responding late to the implementation of an inclusive education model, so it is essential that, from the school context, a relevant commitment is assumed in the creation of innovative methodologies that guarantee people with disabilities full inclusion in the educational system.

Inclusive university education and education

Higher education institutions must implement, within their educational policies, inclusive practices through the training of their teachers, which allow them to develop teaching-learning-evaluation strategies with an inclusive approach, so that the incorporation of people with disabilities is promoted.

It is essential to review the proposals that, based on previous research, were made on the importance of teacher education. According to this aspect, Yupanqui, Aranda and Vásquez (2014) point out that teachers' interventions should be oriented towards the promotion of education on the use of inclusive language, support in the timely identification of risk conditions and in the design and implementation of curricular adaptations for the management of disruptive behaviors; environmental and accessibility adaptations, as well as education in sensory integration techniques, among others.

In the opinion of Rojas (2011), a teacher must meet the social needs of the community, that is, seek to do good to the society in which it develops, without neglecting its personal and professional growth. In this perspective, an inclusive education aims to build a bond between the teacher and each of his students based on full recognition and mutual respect (LÓPEZ, 2016). An integral part of teacher education involves access to specialized practices in diversity care issues, in this context, it implies training in various dimensions, based on disciplinary, pedagogical, human and other development.

On the other hand, Coll (1996) points out that the activity of teachers has a close relationship with the way students learn and develop, with the difficulties and problems encountered in performing new learning and with interventions that aim to support them to overcome these difficulties. In this context, the teacher must respond to the new demands placed

by inclusion in the classroom, overcome their own barriers, design learning environments that favor the reduction of barriers to learning and the participation of their students.

On the other hand, Fernández (2012) highlights that teachers participate in the analysis, planning, development and modification of educational processes; therefore, they should be trained to develop a range of skills that allow them to be inclusive and contribute to their professional practice. Similarly, Alcaín and Medina (2017) comment that teaching work is the main form of education strategies with inclusion in universities, emphasizing that it is necessary to revalue the role of the teacher within the classroom, that attention to diversity is no longer perceived, based on a concept of extra load; but turn it into an opportunity for professional growth. The teacher of his intermediate function should consider in the systematic planning of the contents, in the differences of educational mediation, in order to achieve the expected objectives, considering the implementation of the formative evaluation for learning and not only of learning, which will allow the correct decision-making for the benefit of learning improvement, thus responding to the demands placed by inclusive education. The teacher and institutions must be in permanent training in order to develop the necessary skills to enable them to achieve these goals.

Another essential element that stands out is the construction of dynamics in the classroom, is the creation of spaces of respect and inclusion, in which acts of discrimination are not accommodated; in this sense, it is necessary to generate spaces of awareness and awareness about educational diversity in universities, based on this, it is worth reflecting that the inclusion process is an emerging issue, which demands global actions of society in general. Finally, Almanzor (2002) considers that the pedagogical training of teachers can contribute to teachers referring about their insertion in the time they had to live and participate in a more prominent way in the construction of a better future. The research presented so far shows that teacher education is a fundamental item in achieving the objectives pursued by inclusive education, teachers must evaluate themselves in their practice, identify their limitations and barriers to achieve a paradigm shift, reconfigure their role as mediator and facilitator of significantly inclusive spaces, through the application of differentiated strategies aimed at the adequate attention of diversity.

Pedagogical strategies for inclusive education

Pedagogical strategies for diversity allow to reduce egalitarian and homogenizing routines, oriented to the design of methodologies that operate from an innovative and creative view of available resources, such as support and teaching materials, inclusive orientation programs, organization of schedules and spaces, restructuring of forms of interaction and mobilization of the group.

On the other hand, De la Oliva (2015), proposes the operation of training projects, argues that the use of these strategies favors inclusion, leading to overcoming possible barriers existing in the classroom. According to the General Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, (2018) the importance of the teaching function stands out, observing some fundamental characteristics of this work, in section VI indicates that the teacher must provide students with material disabilities and technical assistants that support their academic performance, also made indications oriented to managers, who must acquire and equip schools and educational centers with books in Braille, teaching materials, support from Mexican sign language interpreters or braille system specialists, computerized equipment with technology for blind people, all those supports that are identified as necessary to provide a quality education, in section VII, the importance of including the teaching of the Braille Writing System and the Sign Language is established. Mexican in public and private education, promoting the production and distribution of free textbooks in the Braille Writing System, macro types and audible texts that complement the knowledge of students with disabilities and, finally, in section XIII, is warned the importance of promoting students who need to meet the requirement of social service to offer their support to people with disabilities.

According to Ortiz (2000), the first step towards inclusive education is the unconditional acceptance of differences, because diversity strengthens students by offering learning alternatives. In fact, in the understanding of teaching, it is where one perceives the complexity of the teaching action, to guarantee the above, this author suggests the adoption of an interactive teaching-learning proposal. These precepts are related to the quality of education, so it is essential that higher education institutions constantly guarantee and manage support and resources aimed at consolidating inclusive processes.

In the same order of ideas, a teaching practice strategy based on universal design for learning (DUA) is proposed, as it allows the development of opportunities and interactions for the valorization of diversity and offers advances in the structure of access and innovation in teaching and learning methodology. In this construction, both students and teachers play the

role of mediators and can provide scaffolding or aid tailored to the needs of other students. Since, through educational inclusion, it is intended to generate spaces open to diversity and improve capacities; the emphasis on interaction and the exchange of experiences from different perspectives is fundamental for the generation of shared knowledge.

Given everything that has been said so far, the great challenge of higher education stands out, where the public policies of the Mexican State represent a fundamental role, which must be configured essentially with a focus on equality and non-discrimination, in Mexico, a substantial step was taken, in 2019, Article 3 of the Political Constitution of the Mexican United States was modified (Last modified August 9, 2019) , the changes are indicated in section II, corresponding to the criteria that will guide education, and this education is framed:

"e) It will be equitable, for which the State will implement measures that favor the full exercise of people's right to education and combat socioeconomic, regional and gender inequalities in access, transit and permanence in educational services... Similarly, students in social vulnerability will be supported by establishing inclusive and cross-cutting policies. (f) it will be inclusive, taking into account the diverse capacities, circumstances and needs of students. Based on the principle of accessibility, reasonable accommodations will be made and specific measures will be implemented with the aim of removing barriers to learning and participation; g It will be intercultural, promoting harmonious coexistence between people and communities by respecting and recognizing their differences and rights in the context of social inclusion; h) It will be integral, will educate for life, in order to develop cognitive, socio-emotional and physical capacities in people that allow them to achieve their well-being, i) It will be of excellence, understood as the constant integral improvement that promotes the maximum realization of students' learning, for the development of their critical thinking and the strengthening of the bonds between school and community" (2019, p. 7).

Together, these modifications to Article 3 imply the design of a structure that configures the processes that enable its compliance and implementation; therefore, it will be necessary to articulate efforts within the social fabric, in addition to the development of teaching methodologies based on knowledge and experience, among many other initiatives. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out educational reforms in teacher training at all educational levels, in order to provide teachers with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of inclusive education and bring their work closer to the needs and expectations of students living in a world of permanent change.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the term inclusive education brings together a multitude of processes that involve society as a whole; from the vision of Díaz, Zárate and Ortiz (2017) inclusive education is an aspiration and a need of the current university, which must fundamentally have the basic principle of the involvement of all and mutual acceptance; in this

sense, what is not fulfilled spontaneously, is taught and learned, and is part of life. In a society, community, school, group and in a subject, there must be the capacity for acceptance, coexistence, help, tolerance and the spirit of improvement. From this context, it is essential to implement strategies aimed at reducing, minimizing or eliminating barriers that hinder the presence, participation and learning in higher education, especially strategies that consider proposals of laws or regulations, the optimization of physical infrastructure with the support of information and communication technologies, as well as those that promote the development of specific programs of inclusion and continuous training of the university community areas involved in inclusive education.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning what Jennifer O'Donoghue (2019) exposes, concerning the concept of inclusive education from which she claims to be broad enough to be able to respond to and promote diversity of any kind so that everyone can be, learn and participate in school. Inclusive education is not a battle won; it is a continuous process of identifying and eliminating the attitudes, priorities and paradigms that prevented us from moving forward.

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