

Research Article

Perceptions and Teaching Strategies for School Inclusion

Antonio Martínez Sánchez¹

1. Universidad de Almería, Almería, Spain

The educational inclusion of students depends on a set of perceptions, beliefs and feelings experienced by teachers, as well as the methodological adaptations they make to address the diversity present in the classroom. Therefore, this study aims to know the attitude of teachers regarding the educational inclusion of students, as well as analyze the strategies used in the classroom to promote said inclusion. The research design developed corresponds to a quantitative, descriptive study. The sample is made up of a total of 60 teachers from different specialties of the Early Childhood and Primary Education stages. The instruments used to develop the study were the Teacher Perceptions Questionnaire on Inclusive Pedagogy and the Teaching Adaptations Scale. The results obtained show that teachers have a good perception of student inclusion and it is evident that they develop appropriate strategies to promote said inclusion in the regular classroom.

1. Introduction

Inclusion is a multidimensional concept that involves the evaluation of differences, diversity, social justice, equity and human rights (Zabeli et al., 2021). In Western societies, this concept is linked to the formation of democracy (Zhukova et al., 2022).

From an educational perspective, inclusion is related to the diversity that is present in many areas of society in which, it is increasingly common to recognize and value these differences. Inclusive educational policies promoted at the national and international level involve numerous changes in teaching responsibilities and roles to promote attention to diversity (Ainscow, Slee & Best, 2019). In this sense, the current Organic Law 3/2020 of Modification of the LOE (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2020) demonstrates inclusive education as a guiding principle of the educational system (Sánchez Serrano et al., 2021). This regulation emphasizes equity and inclusion as elements

that guarantee children's rights and attention to diversity from a non-discriminatory perspective based on equality (Gómez Jiménez, 2021). To this end, measures have been established at the curricular level that delve into the right to education (Luengo Horcajo et al., 2021). In this way, educational diversity represents a broad definition that focuses, in general, on all students and, in particular, on students who present Specific Educational Support Needs (NEAE) linked, among others, to learning difficulties. students with disabilities, foreign students, high abilities and ethnic minorities (Pascual Sevillano et al., 2019). Therefore, the purpose underlying educational inclusion is to better serve the interests and needs of students in an increasingly diverse school context (Llorent et al., 2021).

Teacher training is a crucial aspect in inclusive education. At a methodological level, inclusive education requires, among other measures, the implementation of organizational and curricular adjustments that allow diversity to be recognized. This implies a challenge for the school and the teachers who materialize the principle of attention to diversity (García García et al., 2009). Some of these measures, which involve providing an educational response to each of the needs and characteristics of the students, are organizational strategies in the classroom, teaching methodological principles, evaluation of learning, grouping and/or adaptation of activities, among others (Arnaiz Sánchez, 2019).

In addition to teacher training, it is essential to investigate the behaviors, thought processes and actions of teachers regarding attention to diversity and inclusive education. Teachers, who have deep knowledge of the organization and functioning of the school, should have knowledge of inclusive education, response measures to diversity, and their impact on educational results (Domingo et al., 2019). To know the willingness to these changes, it is interesting to analyze the self-perception that teachers have in relation to the school's commitment to educational inclusion. Self-perceptions are personal resources that are built through the teacher's interaction with her social environment, these being predictors of commitment and mediators of this and the context (Connell & Wellborn, 1991).

This perception, which is related to the training received, makes teachers demand greater preparation to make specific adaptations for students with NEAE (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007). Likewise, those teachers who do have the necessary skills and knowledge show concern regarding the effectiveness of their practices, considering that the educational needs of their students cannot be adequately addressed in the regular classroom (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Therefore, the attitude perceived by the teacher is a predictor of the acceptance of diversity, which influences the construction of students'

knowledge, teaching and their own teaching practice (Aguado et al., 2008; Álvarez et al., 2005; López López & Hinojosa, 2012; Torres & Fernández, 2015).

Taking these contributions into account, this study is presented, which has a double objective. On the one hand, analyze the perception that teachers of different specialties have about the educational inclusion of students. On the other hand, delve into the inclusive methodological strategies that teachers use in their teaching practices to address diversity in the classroom. This means valuing professional knowledge through its expectations and obtaining guidelines for reflection from which to rethink the reality of the educational practices that are developed to facilitate inclusion in classrooms. We hope that teachers have a good perception about the educational inclusion of their students, as well as that they have the appropriate strategies to address diversity.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Participants

The sample of participants in this research is made up of teachers in the specialties of Primary Education, Early Childhood Education, Hearing and Language, Therapeutic Pedagogy and Integration Support from three public educational centers located in the province of Almería. This sample is made up of 60 professionals, of which 42 are women and 18 men. The ages are between 25 and 51 years old. All participants have extensive and recognized professional experience in the field of attention to diversity.

2.2. Design

For the design of the study, a selective methodology has been chosen, being of an exploratory type through a cross-sectional survey, in the search of trying to describe the attitude of teachers in relation to educational inclusion, as well as knowing the inclusive methodological strategies they use at the level of classroom teaching for attention to diversity.

2.3. Instruments

To collect data for the study, different measurement instruments were used. On the one hand, to know teacher attitudes in relation to educational inclusion, the reduced version of the Teacher Perceptions Questionnaire on Inclusive Pedagogy is used (Cardona et al., 2000). It is a scale composed of 12 items

organized into three factors: 1) Basis of inclusion (8 items); 2) Training and resources (3 items); 3) Personal supports (2 items). This questionnaire uses a Likert-type scale whose answers range from 1 to 5 (not at all agree to strongly agree) in which participants must indicate their perception of inclusion. The reliability analysis of the questionnaire highlights that it presents an acceptable level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$).

On the other hand, to study the methodological strategies used by teachers for inclusion, a reduced version of the Teaching Adaptations Scale (Cardona, 2000a) was used. It is made up of 21 items related to the different educational strategies that are distributed in four factors: a) Organization and effective classroom management (4 items); b) Teaching and evaluation of Learning (8 items); c) Grouping strategies (5 items); d) Strategies for adapting activities (4 items). A 5-point Likert-type scale is used (from never to always) in which teachers must indicate whether they use each of the inclusive educational strategies and how frequently. Regarding the reliability of the instrument, the data reflect a high degree of internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

2.4. Procedure

The procedure used was established in different phases. Initially, it consisted of selecting and establishing contact with the educational centers through their management teams to inform them about the study to be carried out and request their participation on a voluntary basis. Once approval was obtained, all participants were informed about the objectives and characteristics of the research, guaranteeing at all times the anonymity of their responses. Next, the administration of the instrument was carried out in the participating centers in an individualized manner. Likewise, during the implementation of the questionnaire, the researcher described in detail how to complete each of its dimensions.

2.5. Analysis of data

Once the questionnaire was completed, the SPSS v.23 program was used to analyze the data and the results obtained. To respond to the objectives of the study, descriptive statistical parameters have been used through the use of means and standard deviations.

3. Results

Below, the most relevant evidence is presented regarding the responses obtained in the different dimensions of the questionnaire in relation to the study objectives.

In relation to the first objective, to analyze the teaching perception towards inclusion, Table 1 shows the results of the factors of the Teacher Perception towards Inclusion Questionnaire (Cardona et al., 2000).

	Basis of inclusion	Training and resources	Personal supports	CPI total score
Half	29.83	8.23	6.90	44.97
DT	2.66	2.54	1.73	5.54
N	60	60	60	60

Table 1. Results of the factors of the Teacher Perception Questionnaire towards inclusion

Regarding the first factor, related to the bases of inclusion, the maximum score indicates that they have a favorable attitude towards educational inclusion and the minimum an unfavorable or segregating attitude towards it. In this case, the scores range between 7 and 35. As Table 1 shows, the mean is 29.83 (SD=2.66), so teachers have an adequate basis in favor of educational inclusion.

The second factor, the training and resources that teachers have at their disposal, the maximum score indicates adequate training and sufficient resources and the minimum score indicates inadequate training and insufficient resources. The scores range between 3 and 15, obtaining an average score (as shown in Table 1) that is 8.23 (SD=2.54), so teachers have somewhat inadequate training and limited availability of resources.

In the third factor, the personal support available to teachers, the maximum score indicates that they have sufficient support and the minimum score indicates a lack of personal support. Here the scores range between 2 and 10. As reflected in Table 1, the average is 6.90 (SD=1.73), so teachers obtain the help of more or less effective personal support. Below, Table 2 shows the results obtained in each of the questionnaire factors.

	Half	DT	N
Basis of inclusion			
1. Separating children and young people with SEN from the rest of their peers is unfair.	3.80	1.14	60
2. Inclusive education favors the development in students of tolerant and respectful attitudes towards differences.	4.57	.67	60
3. All students, even those with moderate and severe disabilities, can learn in a standardized environment.	3.63	.80	60
4. Inclusive education is also possible in secondary education.	4.03	.66	60
5. Inclusion has more advantages than disadvantages.	4.37	.61	60
6. I am a supporter of inclusive education.	4.60	.55	60
7. Adequate attention to diversity requires the presence in the classrooms of other teachers, in addition to the teacher-tutor.	4.83	.45	60
Training and resources			
8. I have sufficient training to teach all students, even those with SEN.	3.30	1.25	60
9. I have enough time to attend to their SEN.	2.60	1.06	60
10. I have sufficient material resources to respond to your needs.	2.33	.87	60
Personal supports			
11. I have enough help from the center's PT teacher.	3.53	.89	60
12. I have enough help from the psychopedagogical team.	3.37	.92	60

Table 2. Results of the items from the Teacher Perception Questionnaire towards inclusion

Considering the second objective of the study, to assess the adaptation strategies of the educational process to promote the inclusion of students, Table 3 presents the results on the Teacher Teaching Adaptations Scale (Cardona, 2000a).

	Classroom organization strategies	Teaching and evaluation strategies	Clustering strategies	Teaching adaptation strategies	Total EAE score
Half	17.33	34.90	17.60	16.00	85.83
DT	1.81	3.32	3.58	3.45	9.47
N	60	60	60	60	60

Table 3. Results on the Teacher Teaching Adaptations Scale

Regarding the first factor, classroom organization strategies, the maximum score indicates a frequent use of inclusive educational strategies and the minimum score indicates a low frequency in the use of said practices. In this case, the scores range between 4 and 20. As shown in Table 3, the average is 17.33 (SD= 1.81), so the teachers make frequent use of organizational strategies in the classroom.

Regarding the second factor, teaching and learning evaluation strategies, the maximum score reflects an adequate use of teaching-learning and evaluation strategies, and the minimum score reflects poor use of said strategies. The scores range between 8 and 40. As Table 3 shows, the average is 34.90 (SD=3.32), so teachers use teaching and evaluation strategies with a high frequency that are relevant to address the characteristics and needs of the students.

In the third factor, strategies to group students, the maximum score indicates that the teachers implement grouping strategies and the minimum that they do not use strategies to carry out said groupings. The scores range between 5 and 25. As we see in Table 3, the average is 17.60 (SD=3.58), so different strategies are used to organize the students, grouping them according to the needs of the context.

In relation to the fourth factor, strategies for adapting activities, the maximum score shows a correct use of strategies to adapt the activities and the minimum score shows an inadequate use of strategies for adapting the activities. The scores range between 4 and 20. As shown in Table 3, the average is 16.00 (SD=3.45), so the teachers use minimally adequate strategies to adapt the students' activities. Table 4 shows the results obtained by the teachers in each of the scale factors.

		<i>Half</i>	<i>DT</i>	<i>N</i>
Organization strategies and effective classroom management				
1.	I establish norms, rules and routines.	4.63	.55	60
2.	I teach the group-class as a whole.	3.63	1.05	60
3.	When programming, I consider the needs of the group and the students with SEN.	4.57	.67	60
4.	I spend time reteaching certain concepts and/or procedures.	4.50	.62	60
Teaching strategies and learning evaluation				
5.	I explain and show my students how they have to study/learn.	4.30	.69	60
6.	I use various strategies to capture their attention in the explanations.	4.50	.62	60
7.	I motivate them.	4.53	.62	60
8.	I teach them memorization strategies.	3.67	1.17	60
9.	I verify the mastery of concepts and/or previous skills in my students.	4.23	.67	60
10.	I keep track and monitor your progress.	4.63	.55	60
11.	I consider the results of the evaluation to program the following contents and activities.	4.53	.50	60
12.	I check that the objectives have the appropriate level of difficulty.	4.50	.50	60
Clustering strategies				
13.	I teach individually, at certain times, to some students.	3.97	.92	60
14.	I group my students into small groups (homogeneous or heterogeneous) within class for certain activities.	3.97	1.14	60
15.	I group only some students in the class to work in pairs.	2.40	1.31	60
16.	I group all the students in the class into pairs.	2.90	1.23	60
17.	I readjust the physical space of the classroom based on the activities to be carried out.	4.37	.92	60
Strategies for adapting activities				
18.	I break down activities into simpler sequences.	4.17	.90	60
19.	I propose activities of various levels of demand.	4.03	.92	60
20.	I prepare various activities to carry out simultaneously.	3.73	1.13	60
21.	I design and prepare alternative materials.	4.07	1.00	60

Table 4. Teaching Adaptations Scale Report

4. Conclusions and discussion

With this study we intend to offer evidence about the situation of educational inclusion, based on the evaluations of teachers themselves who have professional experience in addressing diversity. The main conclusion of the work is that, in general, teachers are moving towards educational inclusion in perception, attitude and measures of attention to diversity. However, there is still a way to go to guarantee real inclusive education that guarantees the participation and success of all students.

If we analyze the results in detail, in the first objective that is related to the teacher's perception of the inclusion of students, we started from the hypothesis that the teachers had an adequate perception of the educational inclusion of students. From the results obtained, we can confirm this hypothesis, which coincides with other studies that indicate that the positive perception of educational inclusion (Aguado et al., 2008; Álvarez et al., 2005; López López & Hinojosa, 2012; Torres & Fernández, 2015). In fact, teachers have a positive perception towards educational inclusion and a willingness to use strategies to promote the teaching-learning process of students.

Regarding the second objective of the study, to assess the adaptation strategies of the educational process that they use in the classroom to promote the inclusion of students, the hypothesis was generated that teachers use strategies to address diversity through the corresponding adaptations of the teaching process. Well, the results obtained show this hypothesis, that is, that teachers put into practice various appropriate strategies to address diversity in their classrooms. This shows that teachers do not have adequate training or strategies to promote the educational inclusion of students, going so far as to demand greater training in measures to address diversity (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007).

The results highlight the need to continue promoting inclusive practices in educational centers in a continuous process of reflection in action, since teachers encounter difficulties when implementing inclusive strategies in practice in the ordinary classroom. These difficulties are related to skills, level of knowledge and feeling of effectiveness.

In short, inclusion is a complex developing process, which is why, as professionals involved in the training of teachers, it is necessary to critically analyze the initial training that we provide to our

students to seek a professionalism committed to the educational inclusion of the student body.

Finally, it should be noted that the present study has limitations in relation to the representativeness of the sample, so it would be necessary to extend it to other educational centers. However, we consider it necessary to continue investigating the perceptions that teachers have regarding attention to diversity to improve inclusive practices.

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