

A Challenge for Teachers of Inclusive Higher Education: Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences in UTM



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Abstract

The paper shows the results of a research process that aimed to analyze the pedagogical strategies applied by teachers in the academic process to students with disabilities at the Technical University of Manabí, thus raising the challenge of training professionals in Higher Education. For this purpose, a qualitative-quantitative methodology was used in which 50 teachers were surveyed, which allowed obtaining the required information. The paper presents the ideas offered by teachers about inclusive education, which leads the institution to reflect to refine strategies that promote management in an inclusive education system. Through the development of the research, it was possible to verify the disposition of the teaching staff of the Technical University of Manabi, to continue reinforcing the inclusive policy drawn up by the government and particularly by the direction of the educational institution.

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1. Introduction

An inclusive university is one that is committed to society, which in addition to teaching quality teaching and producing the best research, assumes the social mandate to be a reference of human values and progress [1].

An inclusive university must be managed democratically and transparently, offering equal opportunities to all those who access it. But in addition to ensuring the equity of those who are part of the university community, it is capable of launching proactive mechanisms to search for diverse people, including people with disabilities, offering a welcoming environment that facilitates the necessary support to reach the maximum development of its potential [2]. What has been analyzed above is an unavoidable fact in today's multicultural society, where diversity is a distinctive feature of modernity.

Inclusive education is a way of responding to each student that presents an educational need so that their learning achievement is meaningful and understands each of the topics addressed in the classroom. This education is marked by the transformation and the respective adaptations of the institutions of higher education in order to

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design inclusive strategies in the process of academic formation. "It is necessary to address and understand the concept of inclusive higher education and its dimensions, to avoid falling into false interpretations, as is the case with the concepts of inclusive education and inclusive education" [3].

If you are committed to the inclusion of diversity in an institution, understood as a synonym for enrichment and plurality, you will be moving towards Higher Education that provides good professionals while forming critical citizenship capable of undertaking models of fair and equitable coexistence. In short, an inclusive university is a university that can better assimilate the future life [1]. Ecuador's progress in the area of inclusive education has been internationally recognized. A recent one took place in the European Exhibition of Accessibility and the Universal Conception "Urban Acces" 2015, celebrated on 03/10/2015 in Paris. In this event, the "Design for All" foundation, an organization dedicated to the promotion of scientific research, knowledge generation and application of inclusive designs, awarded Ecuador for its disability policy. Specifically, for the promotion of the Ecuadorian Methodology for the Development of Universal Accessibility, in charge of the Vice Presidency of the Republic and the Technical Secretariat for Inclusive Management of Disability (SETEDIS). Ecuador is the first Latin American country to receive the award, which commits the "Design for all" foundation to include the Ecuadorian proposal as an international reference in this field [1].

The Organic Law on Disability [4] and the National Plan for Good Living 2013-2017 [5] in Ecuador contain inclusion issues in several areas: education, health, housing, decent work, among others. These models of development are inclusive and seek to leave welfare programs behind, with the aim of positioning each citizen as a subject of rights. The Technical University of Manabí (UTM) is a public institution that has taken advantage of this momentum by making great efforts in the field of inclusive education. In just five years it has become a university with an appreciable development in this field. It is one of the few in the country in whose structure there is an official area dedicated to inclusive education and is a pioneer in Ecuador in the incorporation of subjects related to gender perspectives and sex education into the curricula. Due to its institutional trajectory, its professionals share the desire to become a reference university for the region regarding inclusive education. Their experiences in inclusive issues could be a guide for other universities that intend to embark on the path of quality and excellence from inclusive education [1].

The ten faculties of the UTM and the Institute of Basic Sciences, the latter with a faculty category, welcome approximately 18,000 students in 33 careers. Of these, 88 have physical, auditory, visual or intellectual disabilities. It employs 81 managers (1 rector, one academic vice-rector, ten deans, 32 vice-deans of schools and 37 departmental heads, including 26 academic departments). The teachers are 576, of them 16 with disabilities. 261 teachers are principal, 262 auxiliaries and 53 aggregates; 410 work full time (40h / week) and 166 at part time (20h / week), according to article 10 of the Career and Ladder Regulations of the Professor and Researcher of the Higher Education System [6]. The UTM is the Ecuadorian university with a higher percentage of students, teachers, and employees with disabilities [1].

2. Research Methods

The research was conducted using the empirical method and is qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative part has been based on the documentary analysis of current and institutional regulations and grounded theory. With an ethnographic, hermeneutical and evaluative approach, supported by recent research carried out at the UTM, gathering detailed information about the investigated topic that allowed know the situation and strategies used by the university for the academic training of students through the Department of Inclusion, Social Equity and Gender

The quantitative result was based on the completion of a survey of UTM teachers, unraveling the pedagogical strategies used by teachers and staff of the department in charge of social inclusion of people with disabilities. The observation technique and the use of the available investigative instruments were put into practice, in this case: Field Diary and Questionnaire. To collect the data required during the application of the 50 surveys with teachers; also counting on the cooperation of the participating members, who endorsed the information obtained to carry out the development of the work Tables and Figures are presented center, as shown below and cited in the manuscript.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Inclusion and equality

Inclusion and equal opportunities have become central issues for higher education policies in Ecuador. Access to educational services, as part of the social assets and commitment of the national state, leads to the analysis of broader issues related to inclusion and pedagogical strategies used by teachers for the training of students. "Ecuador's higher education system promotes inclusive social transformation. The institutional policies of

Ecuadorian universities are based on their needs and compliance with current regulations, exceptionally rich in the field of inclusion "[1].

The Institutions of Higher Education (IES) in their task of teaching, research and community outreach, constitute the main reference to contribute in the processes of interaction between human activities and society, to reduce the formation of negative scenarios and strengthen resilience. Universities have a unique opportunity to influence the behavior change of people, decision-makers, and communities; besides contributing to the understanding of the interaction processes between human activities, society and nature to reduce the formation of risk scenarios. Likewise, multidisciplinary scientific research becomes a very important tool for building public policies that reduce susceptibility and strengthen resilience, based on the complementation of scientific knowledge and the local knowledge of the communities. Therefore, it is necessary to consolidate the responsibilities of higher education institutions, both vertical and horizontal.

The problems that tend to place the human being at a disadvantage have accompanied humanity since its emergence: diseases, loss of loved ones and natural disasters among others, are presented with an endless succession as part of life. In this contextual reality acquires a very important meaning the ability of human beings to face adversities and emerge stronger from them

3.2 The inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education

The inclusion of people with disabilities has been part of the international discussion for several years, but at the same time it has opened up opportunities for people to be trained in a higher education center and thus eliminate the inequality gap. In Latin America, educational inclusion has taken a different route, between the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, countries such as Ecuador, Panama, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Mexico enacted their respective general laws for the protection of persons with disabilities [7].

Based on these foundations, Ecuador begins with the process of inclusion of people with disabilities in education, covering areas that develop skills necessary for their life process in which they enjoy a priority social integration fully guaranteed by the Ecuadorian state. Who is obliged to develop protection policies for the inclusion of these vulnerable groups, seeking their integral social development in an environment of equal conditions?

According to the Organic Law of Ecuadorian Disability [4] in Article 27 states that: "The State shall ensure that people with disabilities can access, stay and complete, within the national education system and the higher education system, their studies, to obtain education, training and/or training, attending classes in a specialized educational establishment or a school education establishment, as the case may be".

In education, through the measures adopted by the government, it is tried to develop a student potential in equal conditions that guarantee the academic excellence is certifying a specialized education. According to the treatment and the attention that they should receive in the establishments for the education, which must comply with all the rules that guarantee its correct development. Within the inclusive scope, alternatives are adapted to be installed in an adequate student environment, so the state provides its public entities with all the necessary tools that tend to improve their integration.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador [8] in article 46, literal three is endorsed: "Preferential attention for the full social integration of those with disabilities. The State will guarantee its incorporation in the system of regular education and society ". Later in the legal document itself is recognized in article 47, literal seven that people with disabilities have the right to: "An education that develops their potential and skills for their integration and participation under equal conditions. Its education will be guaranteed within the regular education. The regular schools will incorporate differentiated treatment and those of special attention specialized education. The educational establishments will comply with accessibility standards for people with disabilities and will implement a scholarship system that responds to the economic conditions of this group ", guaranteeing the inclusion of these people, so that they are integrated in the different social, labor, cultural, and sports fields, educational, scientific, informative, and abiding by the rules of inclusion.

3.3 Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences of the UTM

The Organic Law of Higher Education [9] guarantees total accessibility to educational services. Chapter 1 of the Principle of Equal Opportunities guarantees free access to people with disabilities so that they can be trained professionally. The Technical University of Manabí was created by legislative decree of October 29, 1952, has ten faculties and the Institute of Basic Sciences with an approximate of 18,000 students. The Unit of Inclusion, Social Equity and Gender, as well as its Commission that was created at the initiative of the Academic Vice-Rector, who intends that, with the essential support of this unit, the UTM will become a benchmark for inclusion for the country.

The perception of inclusion prioritizes disability so that it is proposed and shared with managers and teachers the idea that the institution can be a friendly university for people with disabilities [10]. The Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences has approximately 2,000 students, and 28 of them have disabilities (1 psychological, 12 visual, 7 physical, 7 auditory and 1 mental) of which 17 correspond to the male and 11 to the female, with a Age ranging from 20 to 39 years. Inclusion within the Faculty of Humanist provides the facility to be able to access studies where they are not limited to developing their abilities and student abilities. The relationship that exists between classmates is inclusive, in this way it seeks to equalize their condition to achieve equal opportunities.

3.3 Interpretation of results

Based on the 50 surveys applied to teachers of the faculty of humanistic and social sciences of the UTM, determined that 62% have had students with disabilities, noting that these young people have had to live in a society where they are faced with different ways to be included in higher education. The respondents stated that the process of training these students has not been easy. Despite the institutional efforts made, the university is not yet adequate for its free student movement, which means that people with disabilities have to arrive earlier because of the issue of mobilization and that they need help from their families to be able to go to the classrooms.

Teachers surveyed stated that they apply pedagogical strategies such as: audio-visual, didactic material, curricular adaptations, printed material, support, tutorials, technological resources, sign language, study techniques and habits, assignment of responsibilities inside and outside the classroom, stimulus for decision-making by itself, preparation of projects on topics of interest, stimulation of spatial intelligence through drawings, essays based on photos, murals, diagrams, diagrams, mental maps, videos, location of the disabled in a position close to the teacher and with peers who positively influence and finally anticipate the activities that will be carried out during the day or during class time as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Inclusive strategies that are applied in the learning process

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Audiovisual material	11	7,53
Apply sign language	3	2,05
Elaborate teaching material	11	7,53
Teaches techniques and study habits	9	6,16
Use support material (calculators, computers, others)	7	4,79
Provide printed material	8	5,48
Use technological resources	11	7,53
Make curricular adaptations	10	6,85
Facilitate tutoring	12	8,22
Assigns responsibilities inside and outside the classroom	11	7,53
Stimulate decision-making for yourself	11	7,53
Elaborate projects on topics of interest	7	4,79
Stimulates spatial intelligence through drawings, essays based on photos, murals, diagrams, mental maps, videos	9	6,16
It places them in a position close to the teacher and with peers who influence him positively	13	8,90
Anticipate the activities that will run during the day or during class time	12	8,22
Other	1	0,68
TOTAL	146	100

Teachers also adapt in their entirety to the changes that education raises about inclusion in higher education and the training they receive eventually interests them to learn about the new policies that the state poses for the treatment of people with a disability. The survey showed that 54% of teachers do not have bibliographic resources according to the educational learning needs of disabled students, meaning that within the faculty there are several types of disabilities; however, innovative strategies are identified that favor students and that become a true academic challenge.

The academic competences difficult to understand are reinforced by 58% for each teacher, facilitating dialogues, as shown in Table 2, intended for reflection on the different cultures of their students, which promote tolerance, coexistence, cooperation, and solidarity among the entire university community.

Table 2
Dialogues intended for reflection on the different cultures of students by the teacher

Answer	Propecia Dialogues	
	Frequency	Percentage
Si	29	58
No	21	42
Total	50	100,00

Finally, one hundred percent mentions that having a positive attitude towards students with educational disabilities becomes a great academic challenge that not everyone is willing to face, but that requires optimism to achieve a harmonious coexistence in the classroom. And finally, through the statistical data of the Department of Inclusion, Social Equity and Gender from 2013 to the present, it was found that no student with disabilities has yet graduated from the Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences, but they are attending classes regularly, which guarantees the possible degree in later semesters, although certain teachers say that they have graduated students, but they are not in the database of the university.

Discussion of the results

In education through the measures adopted by the government, it is tried to develop a student potential in equal conditions that endorses academic excellence, guaranteeing an inclusive education, according to the treatment and attention received in educational establishments, which must comply with all the rules that ensure their normal development. The teacher has the greatest will to develop his role, must apply the correct pedagogical strategies according to each educational need, to be able to transmit the necessary information for his professional training. From a practical point of view, inclusive education seeks to provide appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in education. The purpose of this allows teachers and students to feel comfortable with diversity and perceive it not as a problem, but as a challenge and an opportunity to enrich the ways of teaching and learning.

The development of education is a project that encompasses the entire University from its inclusive culture, in the case of the UTM it requires coordinated maintenance from and among all the organs and sectors, especially the rectorate, the unit of inclusion, social equity and gender, faculties and academic departments. We can not produce inclusive forces without a cooperative will, transformative leadership, policies, and resources supported by an effective organization. Several of these factors have the UTM or are in the process of consolidation. But the attitude, will, training and the didactic knowledge for an inclusive education constitutes the base of everything, being a permanent challenge in all the levels of the Educational System.

4. Conclusion

The inclusion of people with disabilities is a subject that has gradually been placed on the agenda of public policies in higher education in Ecuador. After the accelerated growth of educational systems, it has begun to focus on the issue of equity and the inclusion of those social groups that have been systematically introduced or excluded from a university education. In the Technical University of Manabí, the inclusion of the disabled in education has been a long and complex process as well as the incorporation of pedagogical strategies of inclusion in educational levels by the teacher, such as the growing mobilization and visibility that have acquired people with disabilities.

Inclusion at the top level is still an emerging issue in the educational field and, in general, there is very little work on the obstacles faced by young people with different types of disabilities and those that usually exist focus on certain educational programs or modalities. Therefore, to include a student with a disability means to start a series of academic, material, technological and psychological supports and services that allow him to integrate fully into university life.



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