
Towards inclusion from the early childhood education: an analysis of teachers' perceptions

Caminando hacia la inclusión desde la etapa de educación infantil: análisis de las percepciones del profesorado

从幼儿教育阶段迈向融合教育:对老师关于融合教育观点的分析

Переход к инклюзии в образовании детей младшего возраста: анализ восприятия учителя

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Abstract

This research presents a study made with a total of 294 Early Childhood Education teachers in the province of Malaga, aiming to analyzing their perception of inclusion from an organizational and curricular dimension. To this end, a quantitative, non-experimental, ex-post facto research has been carried out, based on the survey technique for the collection of information. The results show that changes are taking place both at the school level and at the classroom level in relation to inclusion. The changes introduced, especially in the teaching methodology, are remarkable, but it is necessary to highlight the deficiencies perceived both in the initial and in the permanent training of the teaching staff, as well as the need to bet on the development of a collegiate and collaborative culture among the members of the educational community.

Key words: pre-school education; teachers; school integration; inclusive education; educational needs.

Resumen

En esta investigación se presenta un estudio realizado con un total de 294 maestros/as de Educación Infantil de la provincia de Málaga, con el objetivo de analizar la percepción que poseen respecto a la inclusión desde una dimensión organizativa y curricular. Para ello, se ha realizado una investigación de corte cuantitativo, no experimental, ex post facto, fundamentada en la técnica de encuesta para la recogida de información. Los resultados muestran que se están produciendo cambios tanto a nivel de centro como a nivel de aula en relación con la inclusión. Son destacables los cambios introducidos especialmente en la metodología docente, pero es de resaltar las deficiencias percibidas tanto en la formación inicial como permanente del profesorado, así como la necesidad de apostar por el desarrollo de una cultura colegiada y colaborativa entre los miembros de la comunidad educativa.

Palabras clave: educación preescolar; profesorado; integración escolar; educación inclusiva; necesidades educativas.

概要

这项研究通过对马拉加省的294名幼儿教育教师的调研,从组织层面和课程方面分析他们对融合教育的看法。本研究为定量研究,非实验性的事后调查,通过调查问卷技术收集信息。结果表明,在学校和课堂层面都在发生与包容性有关的变化,尤其值得注意的是在教学方法上带来的变化。但我们仍应注意到在教师的初始培训和持续培训中存在的不足之处,同样也应该在教育社区人员间建立发展合作性文化。

关键词: 学前教育; 老师; 学校融入; 融合教育; 教育需求。

Аннотация

В данном исследовании мы представляем исследование, проведенное с участием в общей сложности 294 учителей по воспитанию детей младшего возраста в провинции Малага, с целью анализа их восприятия инклюзии с точки зрения организационной и куррикулярной составляющих. С этой целью было проведено количественное, неэкспериментальное, постфактум-исследование, основанное на методе анкетирования для сбора информации. Результаты показывают, что изменения происходят как на уровне школы, так и на уровне класса в отношении инклюзии. Заслуживают вни-

мания изменения, внесенные, в частности, в методику преподавания, однако следует подчеркнуть очевидные недостатки как первоначальной, так и текущей подготовки преподавателей, а также необходимость приверженности развитию культуры коллегальности и сотрудничества между членами образовательного сообщества.

Ключевые слова: дошкольное образование; учителя; школьная интеграция; инклюзивное образование; образовательные потребности

Introduction

Moving towards an inclusive education sets up for a great challenge, which results in a complex, difficult and ethically vexed process, fraught with dilemmas (Booth, 2006; Escudero & Martínez, 2011; Echeita, 2017). Nowadays, inclusion implies a change of mentality and attitude towards the conception of “differences”, understanding diversity as an inherent condition of human beings (Balongo & Mérida, 2016; Pérez, 2017). Inclusion should be considered as a process of seamless search for procedures to respond to diversity, to learn how to live with and within it, and how to enrich from this experience (Gutiérrez, Martín, & Jenaro, 2014), providing every student with equal and quality opportunities for their own character development (Balongo & Mérida, 2016; Echeita, 2017).

From this point of view, the term inclusion should be understood as an educational and social improvement (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Valcarce, 2011; Azorín, 2017; Sales, Moliner, & Lozano, 2017). An inclusive center shall encourage the participation of the entire educational community and prevent exclusion and discrimination (Booth, 1996; Ainscow, 1999; Ainscow et al., 2006; Sales, Moliner, Aimaia, & Lozano, 2018). Hence, inclusion must be regarded as a comprehensive perspective from which analyze the equity challenges in education in schools (Ainscow, 2016; Echeita, Simón, & Sandoval, 2016; Echeita, 2017).

The Spanish legal framework is clearly committed to an inclusive model. The Spanish Organic Law on Education 2/2006 (abridged in Spanish as LOE), published on May 3rd, abides by an inclusive model via its first article, dedicated to the Principles and Aims of Education, and its two first principles: a) Quality education for all students, regardless of their personal circumstances and conditions; b) Equity to ensure equal opportunities, inclusive education and non-discrimination, promoting countervailing strategies for personal, cultural, economic and social inequalities, with particular attention to those resulting from disability. The legal ground is set with the above-mentioned law. However, the law itself does not seem sufficient inasmuch the Spanish regional autonomous governments have legal competences in terms of education as well and, thus, the concretion of inclusion strategies may vary from one another.

In regards the region of Andalusia, the art. 113.5 of the Andalusian Education Act 17/2007, of December 10th, establishes that “the schooling of students with specific needs of educational support (SNES) is ruled by the principles of normalization, school and social inclusion, flexibility, personalized learning, and inter-administrative coordination”. However, the LOE reveals immediately its inconsistency as it creates another subcategory within the SNES regarding students with special educational needs (henceforth SEN), which in spite of its original meaning (Warnock, 1978), is now used to label students with disabilities or severe behavioral disorders (art.73).

Only those students with SEN can be exempt from regular schooling. In this sense, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has requested Spain (art. 24) measures to guard inclusive and quality education on the law. The petition includes an explicit clause that prevents the exclusion of students because of their disability and that pays special attention to facilities and extracurricular activities as well. Information on the practical efforts to transform the educational system and on the financial measures and human resources available are also requested, alongside the training received by teachers in every region. The administration of education must indicate how its decision on where the students with disabilities are emplaced for schooling can be appealed both rapid and efficiently, and what are the measures provided to ensure full participation of these students and their parents (National Disability Observatory, 2017).

Despite the current regulations and the inclusive measures that are being adopted, it must be pointed out that currently the centers have yet to adjust their facilities, strategies, organization and methodologies, to mention a few examples, to all students (Sánchez-Teruel & Robles-Bello, 2013; Echeita, Simón, & Sandoval, 2014; Coll, 2016). In this sense, it would be very appropriate to generate collaborative and support networks (Ainscow, 2015; Balongo & Mérida, 2016). Moreover, the following dimensions must be considered essential in an inclusive education (Echeita, 2017):

- Students shall be present in all the educational spaces.
- Students shall participate, live together, and have a well-being in accordance with the dignity of every human being.
- Students shall learn and progress in the acquisition of basic skills necessary to achieve a quality adult life, without leaving anyone behind for personal, social, individual or group reasons.

Certainly, inclusion in education is a great challenge for the Spanish educational system, which requires structural, resources and strategic educational reforms (Grande & González, 2015), and a new conception of school culture (Messias, Muñoz, & Lucas-Torres, 2013).

Early childhood education as a means for inclusion

Early education can be considered the pillar in people's education, since this stage favors the development and promotion of fundamental competencies and skills for life (Barrero, 2016), such as comprehensive, motor, cognitive, affective, and social development (Grande & González, 2015; Balongo & Mérida, 2016). In many cases this stage can be considered the first approach of students to diversity (Santana & Marcelino, 2017), as in early childhood classrooms different interests, motivations, learning paces, behaviors, maturity levels, and so on, coexist, which require pedagogical adaptations to provide an educational response to students (García, 2008; Illán & Molina, 2011). That is, in the early childhood classroom the build-up of a quality environment for all students is essential.

Therefore, early childhood education shall be considered as a key step in the inclusive management of students, since daily interaction in the classroom requires the development of a wide range of methodological proposals, in addition to carrying out a compensatory function. On regards the first aspect, the Statutory Decree 428/2008 establishes the ordinance and the education in early childhood in Andalusia and high-

lights the importance of ensuring educational experiences at this stage of education in order to stimulate and encourage the development and learning of children on the centers, since these experiences are one of the most effective ways to eradicate inequalities linked to social differences.

On regards the second aspect, the Statutory Order of August 5th, 2008, which develops Early Childhood Education curriculum in Andalusia, states in its methodological guidelines that the organization of individual and collective spaces, distribution of time, the selection and organization of teaching resources and materials, and grouping and educational proposals shall be oriented to facilitate and enhance children's action to stimulate their exploratory and inquiring behaviors.

Considering the current regulations, schools should build up from individual differences. Early education schools shall be understood as healthy and peaceful places, where students can ease, express themselves, share affection, talk, listen, learn, create, discover, enjoy, and so on. A place to belong (Díez, 2007) and to feel safe (Petriwskyj, Thorpe, & Tayler, 2005). Therefore, it could be asserted that the basis of early education reflects the basis of an inclusive school.

Another characteristic of inclusive school relies in people's possibility to be listened and heard. The research, conducted by Ceballos-López, Susinos-Rada, and García-Lastra (2019) aimed at promoting school improvement by listening to the students, stresses the importance of implementing processes that would involve everybody in school by enhancing the daily listening of children and valuing the interpretations they make out of their school experience.

Moving towards inclusion in education

Many centers are much more inclusive in early stages of education that later stages, when they start to diverge from its inclusiveness as students move upward the education system (Domenech, 2017). This could be caused by the lack of mechanisms to enforce inclusion in schools permanently (Arnaiz & Guirado, 2015). Hence, it is necessary to identify the barriers leading to exclusion in the classroom alongside the measures to prevent it (López Melero, 2011). To sum up, inclusive education shall begin with daily practice in the classroom being necessary teacher's educational commitment (Grande & González, 2015; Lledó & Arnaiz, 2010), so it is essential that teachers have a solid basic and permanent training (Susinos & Ceballos, 2012; Llorent-García & López-Azuaga, 2013; Izuzquiza, Echeita, & Simón, 2015; Echeita, 2017).

However, despite the importance given to teachers' involvement and training on inclusive practices, these are still insufficient (Silverman, Hong, & Trepanier-Street, 2010; Fyssa, Vlachou, & Avramidis, 2014; Sucuoglu, Bakkaloglu, Iscen Karasu, Demir, & Akalin, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to know the teachers' perceptions both on inclusion and the limitations and barriers that they come across on a daily basis in the classroom. In this sense, Sales, Moliner, Amaïama, & Lozano (2018) conducted a research covering 2440 teachers to get to know their perceptions on inclusion, in early education and primary schools in different regions. The results revealed that these teachers felt they were involved in a collaborative and dialectal culture, where they were able to share ideas, put them into practice, work as a team and make important decisions considering everyone's opinions. On the other hand, this research also highlighted the importance and need to implement active and participatory methodologies to enhance students' inclusion.

After conducting a qualitative study in an early childhood education classroom, Balongo and Mérida (2016) concluded that each teacher shall schedule their own teaching, so it is adjusted to their group, minding that activities and working groups are a fundamental pillar in order to promote inclusion, as well as the participation of those directly involved in the teaching-learning process and their families. Azorín (2017) conducted a study with 3 English schools and highlighted the importance of family involvement, collaborative work, and the implementation of solid and coherent educational projects. Therefore, they all indicate that both leadership and collaboration are essential for an inclusive culture.

Despite the good predisposition of teachers and the positive evidence shown by the studies carried out, there are still barriers to inclusion related to its organizational, curricular, and formative dimensions. For that reason, schools' organization should facilitate flexible groupings, support in regular groups, splitting groups or offering specific subjects, reinforcement, and remedial teaching, as well as curricular enrichment activities. The curriculum should be common and diverse so that all students can fully participate (Arnaiz, 2005). In other words, the inclusion design should set the trend focusing on a universal approach (Grande & González, 2015).

Finally, it is still necessary to continue conducting studies that evaluate the current process of educational inclusion and, consequently, the inclusion level in the education system. In that sense, this study aimed to identify teachers' perceptions and needs towards the process of achieving an inclusive school from organizational and curricular perspectives. The study also aimed to search for evidence of factors that favor learning, which enhance the development of good educational practices regarding the special attentions that requires dealing with students' diversity in early education.

Methods

A non-experimental ex post facto design was implemented (Simón & Goes, 2013), in which none of the variables employed had been modified, only the information that was necessary to answer the research questions, exploring which variables impact on the educational process (Torrado, 2012). For this purpose, a quantitative study was carried out using the survey as instrument for collecting information.

Objective

The main objective of this study was to analyze the perception and teaching needs related to inclusion –specifically those associated to the organizational and curricular dimensions–, of teachers of the second cycle of Early Childhood Education.

Population and Sample

An intentional sample of 294 teachers of the second cycle of Early Childhood Education (3-6 years) working in the province of Malaga was selected, choosing those centers that have close relations with the Teacher Training Center of Malaga. 94.6% of the participants were women, of whom 29.7% were aged between 41 and 50. It is worth noting that only 1.9% of the participants were aged under 25.

A total of 98.5% of the centers that collaborated in the study were public. 42.5% of these schools were located in towns with more than 25,000 inhabitants, while only 6.2% were in towns with less than 1,000 inhabitants. Most teachers worked in centers comprising between 17 and 24 units, 36.7% were in centers with 9 to 16 units (29.3%), and only .4% worked in unitary schools or rural public schools.

Instrument

The survey used to collect information was developed by Torres and Fernández (2015) to explore teachers' perceptions on inclusion at Primary School. In this case, none of the original dimensions or items have been modified since the aim was to replicate the study in the Early Childhood Education stage. The questionnaire was structured in 4 dimensions: socio-professional (composed of 10 items including data related to the center and the teaching staff), integration and attention to diversity in the center's official documents (6 items, which include data related to measures for attention to diversity described in the center's official documents), integration process and attention to diversity in the center and in the classroom (10 items related to the measures designed to respond diversity in the center and in the classroom) and educational support structures and staff (10 items, related to the functions of the school counseling team, support teachers and training). The questionnaire presented a positive reliability index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .853$)

Data collection and analysis procedure

Data collection was carried out both in paper and digital formats using various channels: e-mail, center control platform, postal mail, and hand delivery. The questionnaire was also accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose and value of the study and guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses.

The data collected were categorized and analyzed using the statistics software SPSS v.24 for Windows. A univariate analysis of frequencies and percentages and a bivariate analysis to detect relationships between variables were conducted. For the open-ended questions, a qualitative analysis was performed based on the categorization of the results obtained.

Results

All these teachers are highly experienced as 26.6% of them have over 20 years of professional experience and 34.7% of them between 11 and 20. Only 3.5% of them have less than 2 years' experience. 41,3% of these teachers have passed a Spanish Degree in Early Education (*Diplomatura de Maestro en Educación Infantil* in Spanish) and 37.8% of them is certified to work with the Initial, Intermediate and Primary Education stages apart from being certified for the Early Education stages. This shows teachers' interest to acquire further skills and attend specific training, though only 35.9% of them state to have attended 1 to 3 complementary activities (workshops, seminars...) on Special Education during the past 5 years, and 41.3% of them have attended no such activities at all.

Over half of these teachers have held positions that are related with education management: 39% of them have worked as tutors, 25.5% of them have also been coordina-

tors of educational cycles and 9.7% of them have provided support within the classes, apart from these two previous positions.

Regarding the integration and attention to diversity, the review of the official documentation with the schools shows that 93.1% of the Educational Programs of these schools include a mention on special needs and support for the corresponding students. 69.9% of the schools have carried out modifications in these Programs about specific infrastructures, like, for example, the inclusion of adapted toilets, the provision of “barrier-free” spaces for all students... However, the modifications incorporated in the educational projects have only been effective in 47.88% of the centers, as can be seen in Figure 1.

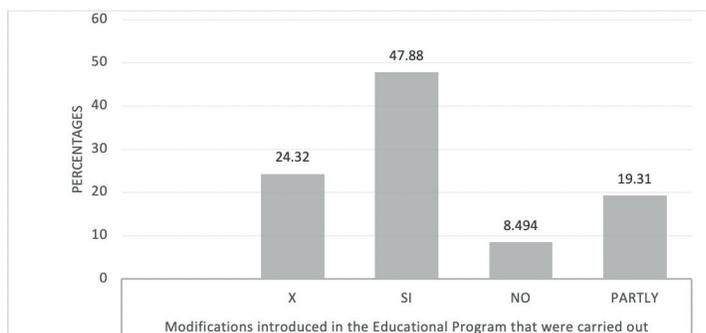


Figure 1. Modifications introduced in the Educational Programs that were really carried out

The most significant changes in the dimension “integration process and attention to diversity in the center and in the classroom”, have been in relation to the organization of the center, specifically, the promotion of the course/cycle (26.3%) and the most valued change has been the student grouping, according to 41.7% of the surveyed teachers.

In the classroom, teachers stated that the most significant changes are related to methodology, although they considered that those changes are minor, as can be seen in Figure 2.

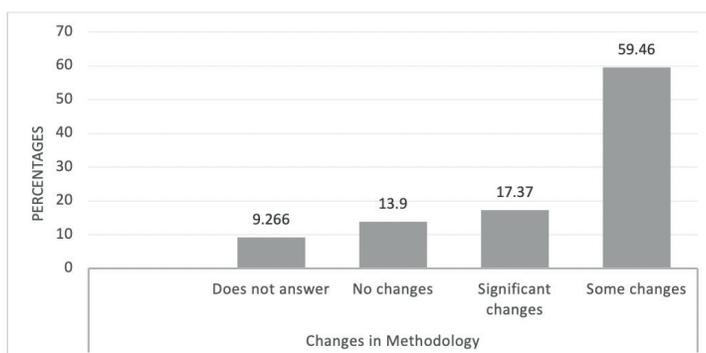


Figure 2. Changes produced by students with special needs in methodology during the teaching and learning process inside the class

The contingency table (see Table 1) shows that within the Early Childhood School, a total of 259 participants asserted they had modified somehow the methodology to adapt it to students with special needs. From this total: 98.1% of them actually work in Spanish state schools in over 25.000 inhabitants 'cities (42.9%); they have 17 to 24 units (37.7%); are mainly women (95.5%) aged 11 to 20 years old (40.3%) with some diploma in Early Education (43.5%).

The comparison calculations show some significant statistical differences in the contingency analysis with variable V7. Initial Training, which could indicate that teachers with some level of training in special needs and educational support tend to perform a more significant methodological adaptation to attend their students, in particular, those with a Degree in Early Education or a Degree in Pedagogy/psycho-pedagogy (15.6% of them state they made some really significant changes).

Table 1
Methodological changes for students with specific educational needs

Variable	Test	value	g.l.	Asympt. Typical error	Approx. T	P
V1. Centre type	Pearson Chi-square	1.242	3	-	-	.743
V2. Number of inhabitants	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.033	-	.081	.409	.683
V3. Centre sizes	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.014	-	.082	.170	.865
V4. Gender	Pearson Chi-square	6.618	6	-	-	.358
V5. Age	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.125	-	.075	1.662	.097
V6. Years of experience	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.143	-	.081	1.756	.079
V7. Initial training	Pearson Chi-square	93.776	63	-	-	.007
V9. Attention to seminars	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.094	-	.087	-1.079	.281

On the other hand, 35.9% of participants stating they carried out some methodological changes had attended 1 to 3 seminars during the past 5 years. About the study performed in Primary Schools, this element is also the one with most significant changes. About 92.3% of teachers, state that when students need some change in the development of programmed activities and when the time schedules or decision-mak-

ing processes are adapted, these students attend more classes (71.8% of the participants agreed that both flexibility and adapted decision-making innovating processes influenced in their daily activities). However, many teachers participating in the study reflected they still proposed activities like: “reading, visual-based and craft activities” (questionnaires 5, 6, 17, 31, 159, 160), “Attention, reason and logic-based activities that promote socialization and communication” (questionnaires 26, 27,45, 47, 89), though other teachers asserted they modified the activities to be used by all students (questionnaire 53) with a more constructivist methodological approach (questionnaire 123).

The answers of participants asked about which methodological modifications they had actually performed were very diverse: “we offered some experiences to work on multiple intelligences” (questionnaire 12), “we intended to develop more the social skills part together with body expression and communication” (questionnaire 79), “we opted for a guided and/or tutored experience with the other students” (questionnaire 91), “we introduced some global and mixed methods at the same time” (questionnaire 120). Though, despite all this, teachers are still demanding some major amplification of their training in methodological strategies to improve their practice in the class (30.6%), and some further training in specific needs to attend these students properly (34.6%).

As regards whether the selection and sequences of educational contents are being modified with the inclusion of students with specific needs, even when no significant methodological changes have taken place, we have decided to describe here their variations, considering the questionnaire parameters. Contrast statistics show the presence of significant differences in the contingency analysis with variables 2 (number of inhabitants in the cities where the centres where located), 3 (centre size), 5 (age) and 6 (years of experience). This means that the modification of contents to attend a student with special needs in a class is going to be conditioned by such variables: number of inhabitants of the city where the school is located, the school size, teachers’ age, and years of experience (see Table 2).

Table 2
Modification in the selection and sequence of contents.

Variable	Test	value	g.l.	Asympt. Typical error	Approximate T.	P
V1. Centre type	Pearson Chi-square	2.597	6			.857
V2. Number of inhabitants	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.226	-	.076	2.855	.004
V3. Centre sizes	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.173	-	.083	2.051	.040
V4. Gender	Pearson Chi-square	4.349	12	-	-	.946

Variable	Test	value	g.l.	Asympt. Typical error	Approximate T.	P
V5. Age	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.155	-	.075	2.043	.041
V6. Years of experience	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.234	-	.078	2.907	.004
V7. Initial training	Pearson Chi-square	113.510	126	-	-	.780

We also focussed on the “educational support structures and staff”, particularly on the function of support teachers in the centre. Results showed that support teachers were, in most cases, working with the tutor of the class to attend these specific needs (19.31%), and providing individualized attention to students with special needs (16.22%).

Moreover, inclusion of the students with special needs in classes has modified quite positively the expectations of teachers about the other students (66.41%). Our study seems to reveal that Early Childhood Education teachers are more willing to implement inclusive education strategies as stated by one of them: “a positive integrative attitude is essential because it helps reverse our fear to face students with special needs, a fear produced by ignorance” (questionnaire 280).

The contrast analysis of contingency shows that there are significant differences for variable 7 (Initial Training), as as shown in the Table 3.

Table 3

Statistical significance based on the modification of teachers' expectations

Variable	Test	value	g.l.	Asymptom. Typic error.	Approx. T.	P
V1. Centre type	Pearson Chi-square	2.055	4	-	-	.726
V2. Number of inhabitants	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.020	-	.092	.213	.831
V3. Centre sizes	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.077	-	.099	.779	.436
V4. Gender	Pearson Chi-square	14.264	8	-	-	.075
V5. Age	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.050	-	.081	.619	.536

Variable	Test	value	g.l.	Asymptom. Typic error.	Approx. T.	P
V6. Years of experience	Goodman and Kruskal's gamma	.058	-	.089	.054	.513
V7. Initial training	Pearson Chi-square	79.49	84	-	-	.014

For Variable 7 (Initial Training), the percentage of teachers that most change their expectations about students with special needs in terms of education inside the class, were those that had a Spanish Degree in Early Education (44.8%).

These teachers feel the improvement of inclusion is due to:

- A better training of teachers that helps detect and understand the difficulties, providing a positive attitude and empathy, together with a favourable and enriched environment.
- A major support, assessment and attention provided by specialists, based on early detection and specific attention within the class.
- A better cooperation, coordination and dedication with the families that helps potentiate their awareness of inclusive education.
- A lesser number of students per teachers, more human and material resources to attend in a more personalised, individualised way and provide for quality attention.

Discussion

In this study, most of the participant schools were public, a fact that reveals the high level of commitment of these schools to improve public education; these results agree with those obtained by Torres and Fernández (2015). In the official documents practically all the centers include measures for the attention to student diversity, although the implementation of these strategies has focused on adapting the center infrastructure more than on other types of educational measures. This pattern coincides with the results of the study conducted by Azorín (2017); real inclusion can only be achieved by implementing solid Educational Projects which involve all members of the educational community.

The data analysis reveals that most of the teachers have an extensive professional experience, since most of them have been teaching for an average of 10 years. However, not all of them take specialization courses on a regular basis, which coincides with the results obtained by Silverman, Hong, and Trepanier-Street, (2010), Lledó and Arnaiz (2010), Fyssa, Vlachou, and Avramidis, (2014), Sucuoglu et al. (2014). Therefore, both initial and continuous inclusion training remains deficient.

Regarding the changes introduced in the center, the promotion of grades/cycle was the most significant; according to the teachers participating in this study, it is the most effective measure to respond to inclusion since it increases flexibility in student learning. At the classroom, methodology changes have been the most valued by the teach-

ers, leaving aside the modification of other aspects of the teaching-learning process, such as the timetable modifications, adaptation of contents, etc.

According to these results, we can infer that Early Childhood Education teachers attach more importance in the teaching-learning process to methodology, initiating new strategies and innovations that allow them to adapt to students. These data are confirmed by those obtained by Lledó and Arnaiz (2010), Gairín, Muñoz, Gaán-Mañas, Fernández, and Sanahuja (2013), Balongo and Mérida (2016), Escarbajal, Arnaiz, and Giménez (2017), as and Sales et al. (2018). All these authors consider the development of innovative, active, and participatory methodologies the most appropriate way to achieve real inclusion in the classroom.

These results are not consistent with the study in Primary Education conducted by Torres and Fernández (2015), where the main modifications were made in timetables, followed by content adaptation, and leaving aside the adequacy of methodology.

Therefore, there is a great difference between Primary and Early Childhood Education stages; Primary Education adjusts to the curriculum content and requirements instead of adapting to the students' learning paces, interests and needs. Although these differences have been observed in this study, Lledó and Arnaiz (2010) stated that there are no significant differences between Early and Primary Education in the analyzed dimensions related to inclusion.

According to the results obtained in this study, Early Childhood teachers' expectations towards the presence of students with special educational needs in the classroom have increased, which indicates that they are more predisposed to adapt their teaching to all students; they are more committed to inclusion inside the classroom than during outside activities, and to collaborate closely with specialized professionals. These results agree with those obtained by Lledó and Arnaiz (2010) and Sales et al. (2018), in contrast to the results obtained by Torres and Fernández (2015) in Primary Education, where no significant changes were found in teachers' expectations regarding the incorporation of any student within the classroom.

Thus, it is necessary to continue creating a collegiate and collaborative culture, where all members of the educational community work together towards a common goal. Despite this, such collaborative culture is still insufficient (Escarbajal, Arnaiz, & Giménez, 2017). It is noteworthy that the teachers who have most changed their expectations have been those who obtained the Spanish Degree in Early Education, a result that suggests that these teachers received a more inclusive formation during their initial training, developing a greater sensitivity and predisposition to meet the needs of all their students.

Conclusions

The objective of this study was to analyze Early Childhood Education teachers' perception of inclusion from organizational and curricular dimensions, to try to assess whether changes implemented in classrooms to respond to all students needs are significant, or, on the contrary, whether the concern for inclusion is just an empty discourse. After carrying out the study, it can be observed that there is still a long way to go, even though Early Childhood Education can be considered a more flexible, open, and adaptable educational stage than others since the teaching-learning process adapt to students, and not to the curriculum.

The implementation of appropriate measures that address inclusion in the official documents of the centers is a substantial step forward. In addition, architectural barriers are being eliminated, but there is still one more step –and perhaps the most important–, which is the elimination of mental barriers, prejudices and taboos of teachers and other members of the educational community.

We all should commit to inclusion and change the way we understand education, both in the classroom and beyond the walls of the school. It implies the construction of an inclusive culture and building a better society based on collaboration, coordination, and empathy where everyone has a place. But this requires an ascending and descending involvement: it must start from teachers, their classrooms, their daily work, and their commit to it, from families and the collaboration with them, as well as from teaching teams, centers, and administrations. In addition, administrations must be committed to inclusion, both in the planning of initial and continuous training, and in the provision of resources and infrastructures to respond to educational demands.

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