EDITORIAL

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. BUILDING PATHS TO MOVE FORWARD.

José Mª Fernández Batanero
Universidad de Sevilla (Spain) (http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4097-5382)

Current societies are characterized by a diversity of cultures, contexts, and individuals that blend within a social, political and economic fabric, which causes people to share a series of characteristics that are in some cases similar, and in others, unique. Making all these differences come together in a single space and not be the distinguishing element that generates exclusion, is one of the challenges faced by education these days. Educating in this context entails necessarily considering the presence of three basic dimensions: quality, equity, and inclusion. Quality and equity are crucial to guaranteeing an inclusive education, based on the understanding that, inclusion and quality shall be reciprocal variables in the educational models of the twenty-first century.

Educational inclusion involves a transformation of the education paradigms from an approach based on diversity and not on homogeneity. In this sense, the articles included in this case study present contributions that will shed light on the challenges existing in the educational inclusion processes which, without a doubt, will lead the way for advancement. We will find an ampler vision on aspects that influence an exclusion-free education, from the training of faculty in attention to diversity and cultural diversity strategies, both at non-university and university levels, learning of languages for people with special educational needs, or gender perspective. All of these are factors for innovation and educational change.

The first article, written by professors Esperanza Alcaín and Marta Medina, from Universidad de Jaén, seeks to answer one of the challenges posed in inclusive education: the legislative perspective. In their work, they perform an analysis of the Spanish university educational system, which allows us to make a diagnosis of the reality and the outstanding challenges from the regulatory point of view with the purpose of achieving an inclusive university education.

The article by Anabel Moriña and Almudena Cotán, researchers at Universidad de Sevilla, offers the results of a research work that analyzes the facilitators and obstacles identified by students with functional diversity during their years at a university, specifically on how faculty can contribute or not to their social and educational inclusion. Relevant findings that, without a doubt, cooperate toward strengthening the initial training of university faculty.

The third article comes from the hands of professors Victoria Figueredo and Luis Ortiz, of the University of Almeria. Their research work reveals the poor initial training of the Primary Education teaching staff in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Spain) on the issue of the work to be done in areas of cultural diversity, a training that is determined by the limited planning and coordination concerning the process of acquisition of intercultural competences. The fourth article, authored by Maria Isabel Negri Cortés and Juan Jose Leiva Olivencia, deals with the education professionals as agents of social and labor training of young individuals with intellectual functional diversity. This work takes us into the pressing need to provide quality training to counselors and teachers that will equip them to foster the development of skills and social and work competences in young individuals with special education needs due to cognitive limitation, all of which will enable their access to employment and adult life.

Elisa Perez, Mª Elena Gómez, and Rocío Serrano present an interesting study aimed at getting to know the perception that the AICLE (Integrated Learning of Contents and Foreign Languages) faculty has regarding the intercultural competence. The findings show that the AICLE faculty defines intercultural competence as closely linked to the linguistic competence and, therefore, indicate that communication activities are those that help promote Intercultural Competence the most.

The search for specific strategies for language teaching in students with attention-deficit disorder (ADD), aimed at obtaining a significant and functional learning, is the sixth article. Its author, María Cristina Santana-Quintana, from Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, emphasizes the pedagogical implications by proposing practical answers to the challenges arising from the situation of disability and those faced by Higher Education today. In this sense, its application has allowed identifying compensation and affective or socio-affective strategies as the most appropriate ones, since they enhance skill performance, eliminate stress, and increase motivation, among other aspects.

Finally, on the seventh article, professors Manuel Villarruel-Fuentes and Fernando Pérez-Santiago of the Úrsulo Galván Technological Institute and the National Technological Institute, both in Mexico D.F., respectively, present us a study aimed at identifying and comparing, under a gender perspective, the types of teaching and learning being implemented in the Technological Institutes of the state of Veracruz, Mexico. The results showed that professors, regardless of gender, privilege experiential learning by discovery, observing the principles of meaningful learning and constructivism, while it is necessary to strengthen the learning scenarios and teaching strategies used, guiding them toward alternative models, mainly in the Science-Technology-Society approach.