

Educational inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities. Requirements for in-service teacher training

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ABSTRACT

This research responds to the need to improve the continuous training of Primary Basic Education teachers to contribute to the educational inclusion of students with Intellectual Disabilities in the Colombian context. For this, methodological requirements are proposed that take into account training experiences, the needs of teachers and the reality of the institution characterized by learning located in close connection with the Institutional Educational Project.

Keywords: Continuing training; Educational inclusion; Intellectual disability

Introduction

More and more countries in Latin America are concerned about updating, reforming or changing their educational system in order to optimize the quality of education. To this end, it has been considered a priority to improve both initial and continuing teacher training, an aspiration legitimized by various international organizations such as the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Regional Organization for Higher Education in Latin America (CRESAL) and the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), among others.

Continuing teacher education has been addressed by various authors and from different perspectives.

In general, they agree that continuous training allows teachers to improve their pedagogical and didactic skills, which translates into higher quality teaching, and also enables them to be updated and adapted to the constant changes in the educational environment. However, challenges also arise, especially when training professional competencies together with the practical skills necessary to face their responsibilities in educational contexts marked by exclusion, marginalization, vulnerability and unequal access.

For its part, the educational institution represents for each student who enters it the opportunity to prepare themselves academically and socially in interaction with their peers; It is up to the teacher to attend to them all, starting from the premise that they are different, including those students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) who have traditionally been excluded in different educational spaces, as stated by Muñoz and Fonseca (2023), the inclusion of students with ID is a current problem that afflicts the global, national and local educational community, since this group needs more tools and new strategies in their learning process; what is sought is not only to integrate them into the classroom, but to show full inclusion, where they are provided with help according to the specific educational need they present (Colorado & Mendoza, 2021).

In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education (MEN) (2013) in its document Colombian System of Educator Training and Policy Guidelines recognizes the need for teacher training, when it states that, as a multiethnic and multicultural nation, it demands that the educator's training links territorial, social, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender and sexual orientation diversity, as well as personal capabilities, guiding the development of their potential and rights.

It is highlighted that despite the fact that the inclusive education process for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and teacher training has been designed, it is still not carried out with the required quality; therefore education is not responding to this reality and current need.

In the context described above, the municipality of San Juan de Pasto began the process of inclusive education for children with SEN in 2006, when an interdisciplinary team was formed and ten educational institutions were chosen as a pilot for the implementation of the program.

The research carried out by the author reveals the need and relevance of the topic, as inconsistencies such as the following can be appreciated; The studies carried out on in-service teacher training in the area of educational inclusion of students with ID do not specify requirements and procedures in relation to the role of the Educational Institution (IE) for such training, taking into account the perspective of situated learning and in close connection with the PEI.

Taking into account the above, the objective of this article is: to propose methodological requirements for the continuous training of Primary Basic Education teachers in the educational inclusion of students with Intellectual Disabilities.

Development

Continuous training constitutes an imperative for the improvement of educational quality, since it allows them to acquire knowledge and skills that help them to improve their teaching practice and, therefore, the quality of the education they offer to their students.

Almoguea, Baute and Rodríguez (2019) state that continuous training is a process under debate and current within the educational field, thus it is pertinent to refer that worldwide we speak of continuous training, postgraduate training and continuing education; in Latin America the use of the term training is more frequent.

The importance of continuous teacher training is undeniable in order to appropriately meet the constant demands that arise in different educational environments, as has been confirmed by studies carried out by different researchers. However, there is no consensus as to how to approach it and how it should be carried out and evaluated, since there are dissimilar models, methodologies and strategies to implement it.

Attention to diversity in education has been a constant challenge since the early days of pedagogy. Individual differences have been scientifically proven to have a biological

basis, which is influenced by psychological and social components. Therefore, the attention to these differences varies from one learner to another, taking into account the causes and characteristics that distinguish them.

The terminology inclusion is part of the active vocabulary of education professionals, currently it would be a failure if it did not go beyond being a fashionable term, which, in fact, marks, stigmatizes and labels learners, from the use given as a word (Reinoso & Ramirez, 2020).

Educational inclusion implies that students with ID go through formal education, for which it is necessary, the commitment of the entire institution, attending to diversity by generating environments that favor quality pedagogical practices for all.

Cortez (2024) states that when talking about disability in educational environments, difference should be valued, recognizing that all people are different and that it is necessary to establish permanent changes in order to achieve a relevant and quality education, taking into account the characteristics of each context.

Generally, students with ID are characterized by difficulties in the development of intellectual activity, which are based on a slowdown in the acquisition and development of psychological functions, including language and memory, relevant cognitive functions when acquiring and consolidating learning (Montalvo, 2012); pay little attention and fatigue quickly, have difficulty performing activities independently, as well as remembering, so it is necessary to repeat several times the tasks performed, require more time to respond (Rincón & Linares, 2017), also present difficulties when developing abstract thinking and in performing formal operations, however it is estimated that they can reach similar levels to students without disabilities, although they present a slower pace than expected (Chivás, 2018).

Regardless of the characteristics raised, the authors of this article consider it essential to highlight the importance of understanding ID from a socioecological perspective with a multidimensional approach to human functioning, encompassing the intellectual and adaptive behaviors, which will allow identifying obstacles in learning, participation and developing educational strategies to improve pedagogical and social quality.

It is considered imperative that the educational reality of teachers be the basis of their continuous training, which implies a detailed analysis of it in order to identify problems and needs, as well as to find adequate solutions. This training should establish didactic

objectives, define the necessary contents expressed in knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to achieve the purposes, and determine organizational strategies, methods, means, procedures and evaluations.

When addressing the content of educational inclusion of students with ID during the continuing education of PBS teachers, it should be ensured that they are able to acquire the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

In relation to **knowledge**, the student should master:

- ✓ The conceptualization of DI, as well as psycho-pedagogical characteristics of students with DI.
- ✓ The specific didactic resources for students with ID.
- ✓ The requirements in the realization of curricular adaptations for students with ID.
- ✓ The use of technological learning tools for students with ID.
- ✓ Requirements of differentiated and adjusted assessment for students with ID.
- ✓ Personalized attention strategies for students with ID.
- ✓ The principles for the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the Integrated Plan for Reasonable Accommodation (PIAR).

You will need to acquire **skills** to:

- ✓ Characterize students with DI with emphasis on determining their potential and needs.
- ✓ Plan processes based on the particularities of students with ID.
- ✓ Use specific didactic resources for students with ID.
- ✓ Design and implement curricular adaptations to facilitate access to learning and participation of students with ID.
- ✓ Use technological learning tools for students with ID.
- ✓ Implement forms of assessment that correspond to the potential and needs of students with ID.
- ✓ Guide families of students with ID to enhance the development of their children.
- ✓ Design and implement the PIAR as a planning instrument that enables the flexibility of the curriculum, taking into account the characteristics of students with ID, so that they can successfully complete their school cycle.
- ✓ Apply the principles of the SAD, seeking alternatives, materials and means so that learning is for all students and not only for those with ID.

They must also develop **attitudes** that allow them to:

- ✓ Assume a responsible attitude in the search for appropriate solutions to the main problems of students with ID, as well as promote tolerance, coexistence, cooperation and solidarity towards these students.
- ✓ Interest in participating in actions for the educational inclusion of students with ID.
- ✓ Positive attitude in recognizing the need for pedagogical training on the subject of educational inclusion of students with ID.

The relevance of the educational inclusion of students with ID as part of the content makes it necessary to include it in teacher training activities, which, on a permanent basis and in a contextual, intentional and flexible manner, will allow preparing teachers to contribute to the quality of PBS.

The authors of this research consider that the theoretical study on the continuing education of PBE teachers allows reflecting on the lack of methodological requirements that make it possible to integrate in continuing education activities, the content of educational inclusion of students with ID, situated learning and the Institutional Educational Project.

In relation to the requirements, Guirado and Rivero (2013); Pulido (2014) and Causilla (2017) state that they must be measurable, comparable, without ambiguities or contradictions; they comprise all the tasks related to the determination of the needs and the same cannot conflict among them; it is necessary to check the requirement well, verify the correct functioning in practice and that the implemented requirements correspond to what was initially intended; these establish what should be done, but not how to do it.

Therefore, the theoretical foundations expressed, together with the analysis of the results of research conducted on the subject allowed the researchers to determine methodological requirements to integrate in the continuing education of EBP teachers, the educational inclusion of students with ID as training content, situated learning and the IEP, they are:

- 1. To consider the educational inclusion of students with ID as a central category of the training activities designed, so that the proposed contents contribute to the continuing education of the PBS teacher.**

It is essential that during training, activities are designed to place students with ID at the center, ensuring that all the contents proposed for the continuing education of teachers contribute to their comprehensive development.

By conceiving the educational inclusion of students with ID as a central category in training activities, it is ensured that specific work is done on their needs and promotes their academic and social development, equal opportunities and fosters an inclusive environment in which all students feel valued and respected, in addition, collaborative learning is favored and diversity in the classroom is enhanced, enriching the educational experience of all students.

In this sense, the ideas of Bernaza (2004) should be taken into account, which refers that the logic of the contents must respond to the problem that generates them and they must be:

- Integrative in the articulation and combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which enhance the professional and personal development of teachers.
- Relevant by favoring the practical significance of the content, recognizing the social and IEP demands.
- Flexible by considering the changes that allow it to adjust to the learning needs of teachers, since as these needs are satisfied, others are generated.
- Applicable and experiential by providing content orientation based on the problems of the performance of their functions and educational practice, through the exchange of experiential experiences of those who participate in this process.

The sequencing of the contents should facilitate the ascending and continuous graduation of these, and take into consideration as a central axis the characteristics of the educational institution and its PEI, which favors attending to the professional and personal development of its teachers to ensure the educational inclusion of students with ID.

2. Plan continuous training based on professional practice, the natural contexts where teachers work and the IEP.

Training activities result from professional practice and should anticipate the natural framework of teaching work where, as experiences are integrated, practical, theoretical and research contributions are introduced and new contributions are generated. Collaborative learning situations that promote participation and require teachers to organize their knowledge, skills and values should also be developed. The development

of simulated situations should be characterized by their contextualization and correspond to the environment where teachers develop professionally, that encourage cooperation and require critical analysis, problematization and reconstruction of educational theory and practice related to the educational inclusion of students with ID in the context of the EBP, taking as a point of reference the educational institution where they work and its PEI.

The institution should become a place that promotes and fosters the development of students with ID, instead of limiting, marginalizing or denying their capabilities. To achieve this, it is important to avoid loss of interest, monotony in classes and the belief that they cannot learn more, limits should not be imposed on their possibilities and a stimulating environment should be created for their growth, which is imperative to favor the fulfillment of the objectives to be achieved in training activities.

It is also necessary to start from the needs and motives, from an affective-motivational understanding based on the sensitization towards the problem of ID, which is defined as a predisposition of the teacher to assume with an optimistic attitude and feelings and without prejudice, the search for practical alternatives to the educational needs of students with ID and their families.

It is important to assume an optimistic position towards the possibilities of students with ID and to project educational actions in favor of enhancing their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), predicting qualitative and quantitative advances in their individual performance and thus a favorable evolution in their formation and development as good individuals in society.

3. To facilitate the interaction of teachers in practical sessions, allowing them to directly apply strategies and knowledge acquired in simulated situations and case studies drawn from daily educational practice.

The active participation of teachers in the construction of strategies and in the continuous reflection on their inclusive pedagogical practice should be encouraged.

It is very appropriate for discussing and questioning concepts and ideas that are normally considered as valid knowledge, thus contributing to the joint construction of learning by discovery, helping participants to be authentic participants in their teaching, together with other peers.

In this sense, simulation is a very useful tool that does not attempt to replace practice with the real student and requires meticulous elaboration, using certain rules, which must be complied with. Depending on the type of simulator used and the real situation to be reproduced, it is necessary to know beforehand what are the objectives to be achieved, to show the strengths and weaknesses of the activity.

The more complex the situations to be reproduced, the more important it is to define the roles of the participants. In addition, the simulation allows the evaluation of communication skills, professionalism, ethics, leadership, individual and team work.

In summary, the constant training of teachers is essential for their professional and personal development, as well as to address the challenges posed by scientific and technological progress, in correspondence with the demands of economic, social and political development.

To achieve the educational inclusion of students with ID in PBS, an institutional, personal and social change is necessary, where continuous teacher training is based on the practice and analysis of concrete situations from a theoretical perspective, highlighting situated learning as key and the teacher as an enriching dynamic agent, through exchange and reflection.

The conceptual reference is supported by sufficient and adequate authority figures, the importance of the subject matter is demonstrated, the results achieved are presented in correspondence with the proposed objectives and that contribute to the solution of the problem posed, innovative information is contributed to studies of the science in question, pertinent quotations are used, predominantly primary sources.

Conclusions

The systematization of the historical, contextual and theoretical referential elements of continuous training based on situated learning of VBS teachers made it possible to determine the concepts, categories, regularities and trends that led to the elaboration of methodological requirements which should be put into practice in training activities, however, it is necessary to continue deepening in the theoretical study of the subject, to

conduct research involving the inclusion of various types of disabilities in education, taking into account that this is a challenge that must be addressed with the greatest possible responsibility, since the development of the potential of each of the students belonging to this population depends on the teachers.