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## *Inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs*

*Estrategia pedagógica inclusiva para el desarrollo de habilidades deportivas en estudiantes con necesidades educativas intelectuales*

*Estratégia pedagógica inclusiva para o desenvolvimento de competências desportivas em alunos com necessidades educativas intelectuais*

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## ABSTRACT

The study deals with the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs, in the inclusive Physical Education class; its manifestations and empirical limitations in an Ecuadorian educational institution and the search for an explanation to the scientific problem, through a proposal for its solution. The objective was declared to design an inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs, during the Physical Education class. The research had a qualitative-quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-explanatory and transversal approach, non-probabilistic, intentional and stratified sampling was used, with 32 10th grade students, four of them with intellectual educational needs and the Education teacher Physical; the structural-functional systemic approach was used in the design of an inclusive pedagogical strategy; as well as observation and interview to characterize the current state of the research object. A group of professionals was consulted to determine the relevance of the strategy, using the nominal group technique, who came to the conclusion that the proposal is relevant and applicable in inclusive pedagogical practice.

**Keyword:** pedagogical strategy, sports skills, inclusion, special educational needs.

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## RESUMEN

El estudio versa sobre el desarrollo de habilidades deportivas en estudiantes con necesidades educativas intelectuales, en la clase de Educación Física inclusiva; sus manifestaciones y limitaciones empíricas en una institución educativa ecuatoriana y la búsqueda de una explicación al problema científico, a través de una propuesta para su solución. Se declaró como objetivo diseñar una estrategia pedagógica inclusiva para el desarrollo de habilidades deportivas en estudiantes con necesidades educativas intelectuales, durante la clase de Educación Física. La investigación tuvo un enfoque cualitativo-cuantitativo, no experimental, de tipo descriptivo-explicativo y transversal, se empleó un muestreo no probabilístico, intencional y estratificado, con 32 estudiantes de 10mo año, de ellos, cuatro con necesidades educativas intelectuales y el docente de Educación Física; se utilizó el enfoque sistémico estructural-funcional en el diseño de una



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estrategia pedagógica inclusiva; así como, la observación y la entrevista para caracterizar el estado actual del objeto de investigación. Se consultó a un grupo de profesionales para la determinación de la pertinencia de la estrategia, mediante la técnica del grupo nominal, los que arribaron a la conclusión que la propuesta es pertinente y aplicable en la práctica pedagógica inclusiva.

**Palabra clave:** estrategia pedagógica, habilidades deportivas, inclusión, necesidades educativas especiales.

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## RESUMO

O estudo trata do desenvolvimento de habilidades esportivas em alunos com necessidades educacionais intelectuais, na aula de Educação Física inclusiva; suas manifestações e limitações empíricas em uma instituição educacional equatoriana e a busca de uma explicação para o problema científico, por meio de uma proposta para sua solução. O objetivo foi elaborar uma estratégia pedagógica inclusiva para o desenvolvimento de habilidades esportivas em alunos com necessidades educacionais intelectuais durante a aula de Educação Física. A pesquisa teve uma abordagem qualitativa-quantitativa, não experimental, descritivo-explicativa e transversal, foi utilizada uma amostragem não probabilística, intencional e estratificada, com 32 alunos do 10º ano, quatro deles com necessidades educacionais intelectuais e o professor de Educação Física; a abordagem sistêmica estrutural-funcional foi utilizada na concepção de uma estratégia pedagógica inclusiva; bem como observação e entrevista para caracterizar o estado atual do objeto de pesquisa. Um grupo de profissionais foi consultado para determinar a relevância da estratégia, utilizando a técnica de grupo nominal, que concluiu que a proposta é relevante e aplicável na prática pedagógica inclusiva.

**Palavra-chave:** estratégia pedagógica, habilidades esportivas, inclusão, necessidades educacionais especiais.

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## INTRODUCTION

The approach to inclusive education acquires greater interest every day in the scientific community. Currently, it is very pertinent to carry out research, not only from the general approach of pedagogy, but from the specificity of the different subjects, due to the growing reform of educational policies in several countries around the world and Latin America in particular, where its legislative norms advocate the educational inclusion of different subjects with special educational needs (SEN) in educational institutions; inclusion that must be based on the use of its potential and not on the possible limitation of the subjects involved.

In the scientific literature on inclusive education, researchers such as Shaefer (2019) stand out, who consider that inclusion is a social phenomenon that is related to education. This assertion is based on the principle that everyone has the right to be educated, and then contribute to the education of others. Other authors such as Chiva *et al.* (2021) consider that educational inclusion is "(...) the process of increasing the presence, learning and participation of students in the curriculum, in school communities and in culture, while reducing their exclusion in them. " (p. 123); in this definition, the three fundamental components of the inclusion category are made explicit.

The United Nations Organization (UN), in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its objective 4 advocates for quality education and the member countries of this international organization are committed to guaranteeing inclusive and equitable education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities (UN, 2015); therefore, the need to address educational disparities and provide relevant skills for individual empowerment and employment becomes a fundamental axis of this educational vision.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador recognizes the right to inclusive, intercultural and quality education, as a means for human development and equity (National Assembly of Ecuador, 2011). This constitutional right highlights the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country as a value to be preserved and promoted that encourages the comprehensive formation of citizens aware of their environment and their values.



The Organic Law of Intercultural Education of Ecuador establishes specific guidelines for the educational system that are based on the principles of equity, inclusion and respect for diverse cultures and languages; in this way, it is proposed to promote an education that adjusts to the needs of different ethnic and cultural groups and highlights the role of community participation in educational management, which must guarantee greater involvement of society in the construction of relevant and quality education (Ministry of Education, 2016).

The approach to inclusive education must be carried out from all the subjects that make up the educational curricula. Physical Education is not an exception and constitutes the context of this research; however, it is pertinent to keep in mind its particularities, not only in relation to its objectives and contents, but also with respect to the space of realization and the fundamental means it uses.

These singularities make Physical Education an ideal vehicle to stimulate educational inclusion. Without a doubt, it is a challenge for professionals to focus on content, such as sports skills, in an inclusive class, where there is a diversity of learners.

Several authors study intellectual disability as an SEN; in this sense, Peredo (2016) considers that it manifests itself when there are relevant limitations in intellectual functioning, with important implications for school learning; on the other hand, González (2021) expresses that this disability affects the intellectual quotient, with a considerable decrease that reaches between the ranges of 70 and 75% or lower, for its development and intellectual development, which influences its adaptive, conceptual, practical and social skills.

Other researchers focus their results on various fields of education, such as educational inclusion, the use of social networks as a means of learning and gamification in classes (Bonilla and Sánchez, 2022; Calderón and Caballo, 2018; Paz, 2020; Severo, *et al.*, 2021 and Vidal, *et al.*, 2018). However, we cannot speak of a systematization in the approach to educational inclusion, in subjects with intellectual disabilities, during the development of sports skills in the Physical Education class.



During the research a group of limitations in physical-educational practice are identified that arouse interest in delving into their causes and solutions. These are summarized in:

- Little treatment, adaptation and differentiated approach to sports skills or abilities during the Physical Education class that allows students with intellectual educational needs to be included.
- Limited presence, participation and motivation of students with intellectual educational needs in the Physical Education class.
- Lack of methodological actions with a strategic-educational approach, to stimulate the participation and inclusion of students with intellectual educational needs, in the Physical Education class.

The limitations related above generate a contradiction between the educational potential of the Physical Education class and the teacher's methodological resources to develop sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs. This statement allowed to identify as a research problem: how to contribute to the development of sports skills in children with intellectual educational needs in an inclusive Physical Education class? And the objective was declared to design an inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs, during the Physical Education class.

## ***MATERIALS AND METHODS***

The research approach was qualitative-quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive, explanatory and transversal. It described the behavior of the variables involved in the object of research, in educational practice. Data obtained during the empirical diagnosis or characterization were achieved at a specific time in the study.

The study explains how the inclusive process occurred in the Physical Education class, with students with intellectual educational needs, to develop sports skills, through a pedagogical strategy.



Theoretical methods were used such as inductive-deductive methods that allowed generalizations related to the factors and characteristics of intellectual disability, as well as the different treatment alternatives for sports skills in the inclusive Physical Education class; the analytical-synthetic facilitated the analysis of the state of the art to deepen the specialized bibliographic search, referring to intellectual disability, inclusive education, sports skills and pedagogical strategy, in addition to interpreting empirical data.

The study population was made up of the pedagogical community of the Sagrada Familia Educational Unit, in the city of Ambato. In identifying the sample, a non-probabilistic, intentional and stratified sampling was used, which was made up of 32 subjects from parallel A, 10th grade, from the Higher sublevel of Basic General Education, where the inclusion criterion was the presence of four students with intellectual educational needs, in addition to their Physical Education teacher.

The characterization of the research object was carried out through a descriptive study using observation and interview methods. The observation of the Physical Education class used was the participant, through a checklist with indicators of presence, participation, acceptance and learning of sports skills; and a three-level scale: agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree. The individual and open interview was carried out with the Physical Education teacher to obtain data about their perspective in relation to the field of research, the particularities of the four subjects with intellectual educational needs and acceptance by the rest of the students.

The theoretical systematization study and the results of the empirical description allowed, with the help of the structural-functional systemic approach method, the design of the research proposal. In determining the theoretical relevance of the strategy, the nominal group consensus technique was used. For this technique, 15 professionals with expertise in the topic investigated were selected. The inclusion criteria were established: having at least ten years of work experience in the pedagogical field (with priority in the area of physical activity), and some experience in the educational link of children with intellectual educational needs. Once the selection has been made, the composition of the nominal group is presented in Table 1 (Table 1).





*Table 1. - Characterization of the members of the nominal group*

Job title	Amount	Percentage	Specialty
<b>Graduate</b>	8	53.3	Physical Education (5) Psychopedagogue (1) Special Education (2)
<b>Master</b>	4	26.6	Pedagogy of physical activity and sports (2) Educational Sciences (1) Master in Educational Psychopedagogy (1)
<b>PhD</b>	3	20.1	Physical Culture, Physical Activity or similar (2) Pedagogical sciences (1)

*Source: results of the consultation with professionals followed in the nominal group*

To achieve consensus among the group members, the procedure described by Córdova (2020) was followed with the methodological steps presented below:

#### Step 1. Presentation of the topic

A 20-minute presentation was given by one of the researchers, where the structure, content, compendium of physical-inclusive activities and the forms of evaluation of the strategy were presented; as well as, the theoretical bases and the main results of the empirical descriptive study. Then he was invited to participate in the group and ask their questions, points of complex understanding were clarified and comments were made.

#### Step 2. Idea generation

This moment lasted ten minutes, where each of the group members made notes of their main considerations, regarding the structure and operation of the inclusive pedagogical strategy presented as a proposal.

#### Step 3. Registration and clarification of ideas

Under the direction of a moderator (the same one who presented the results), the word was given to each of the members who expressed their criteria regarding the pedagogical proposal presented, then each of the ideas was noted down and grouped in order of similarity or relationship, and then argue and justify the reason for their evaluations. Participation in the debate was encouraged to seek consensus.



#### Step 4. Voting

Each member of the group selected the ideas that they considered most important (out of 3 a5), assigned them a predetermined value from 5 to 1, in descending order; the general tabulation was then carried out and voted on according to the following criteria: very relevant, relevant, somewhat relevant and not relevant.

Descriptive statistics was used as mathematical-statistical methods, empirical distributions of absolute and relative frequency were calculated and double-entry tables and bar graphs were presented.

## RESULTS

### *Main diagnostic results*

In the diagnostic study, methods and techniques such as surveys and observation of physical education classes were used (15). To do this, the following dimensions and indicators were taken into account, derived from the evaluations of the theoretical systematization carried out on this topic.

Dimension 1. Educational inclusion, it has the indicators: participation of students with intellectual educational needs in sports skills activities in the Physical Education class, interaction with the group of students and the teacher and communication in each one of class activities.

Dimension 2. Pedagogical skills of Physical Education, has the indicators: selection, preparation and mastery of the contents, explanations offered in classes and methodological and organizational tools used.

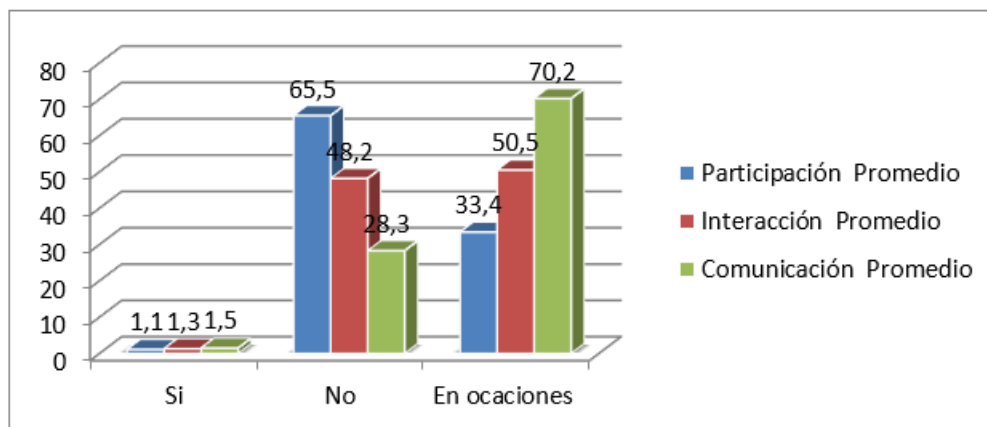
Results of observation of Physical Education classes. A total of 15 observations were carried out covertly to avoid the bias of the students knowing that they were objects of research, which is why it was carried out from the school portal where there is a complete view of the Physical Education area. The aspects to be evaluated corresponded to the indicators



declared in the research. For this purpose, the four students with this type of SEN from the investigated group were analyzed and the results were averaged with the Microsoft Excel processor of Windows 2010.

Figure 1 shows that of the three categories contained in the observation guide, the least marked in the three indicators was the yes option, while the no option was the one that obtained the highest average score; the category was sometimes the second with the highest average located.

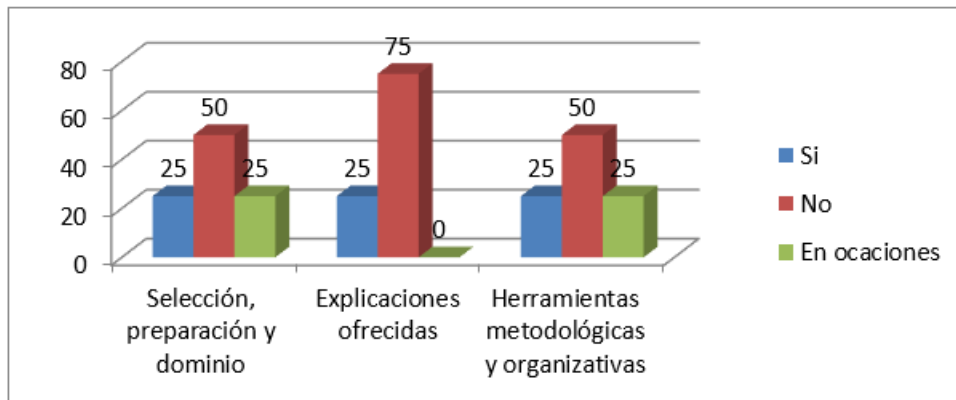
It is important to note that the communication indicator was the highest in this category, which shows that it is an aspect to keep in mind in the solution proposal; the results, in general, reflect that students with SEN still do not have adequate educational inclusion in Physical Education classes, this generates the need to conduct a survey of the four teachers linked to the investigated group (Figure 1).



*Fig. 1. - Results of observation of Physical Education classes*

By carrying out a survey of Physical Education teachers linked to the research, in order to know the level of pedagogical skills for the management of SEN in Physical Education classes, the results shown in Figure 2 were obtained (Figure 2).





*Fig. 2. - Percentage of teachers' responses, according to the selected indicators*

When assessing the results shown in the graph, it can be seen that only one of the teachers investigated, for 25% of the sample, showed compliance with the indicators; the other respondents were in the no and sometimes categories. The results presented make evident the proposal of an inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs, during the Physical Education class that contributes to the transformation of the results derived from the diagnosis.

#### *Exemplification of the pedagogical strategy developed*

The pedagogical strategy presented is composed of four stages (Figure 3), the first is diagnostic, in which a characterization of the group of students to be investigated was carried out, based on their potential, limitations, level of sports skills and inclusion (Figure 3).





*Fig. 3. - Schematic representation of the pedagogical strategy developed*

The second stage is planning, where the objectives to be achieved, the methods and procedures were identified, a group of exercises and games were selected for the classes, a dosage or distribution of the content was carried out and the methodological indications for the application were specified.

Stage three is the implementation of the activities. To do this, the teaching resources to be used were managed and the most appropriate places were selected to develop the games and physical activities.

Stage four is evaluation and in this the indicators were selected. Pedagogical observation was carried out to assess compliance with them and an assessment to make the necessary adjustments, based on compliance with the objectives.

Examples of some inclusive physical activities, as part of the strategy compendium.

Exercise 1. Relay race with adaptations

- Organize a relay race in which students form teams. Each team is made up of an equal number of students with and without special educational needs.



- To make the activity inclusive, some adaptations can be implemented, such as allowing students with intellectual educational needs to use a wheelchair, a walker, or even walk while being hand-held by a peer.
- Each student must complete a short distance and pass a baton to the next member of their team.
- Cooperation and mutual support among team members is encouraged.

### Exercise 2. Accurate throw

- Create a series of games that involve throwing objects at a target. Balls, hoops or discs can be used, depending on the preferences and abilities of the students.
- The distance between the participants and the target is adjusted according to the abilities of each one. For example, students with intellectual educational needs may be closer to the target.
- Active participation is encouraged and each attempt is celebrated regardless of whether the throw reaches the target or not.
- Students are encouraged to work as a team, either by assisting in the throw or by supporting the partner who is attempting to throw.

### Game 3. Ball in motion

- This game is a variant of basketball that can be adapted to include students with different abilities.
- An adjustable basketball hoop is used, or hoops are placed at different heights, to accommodate students with different shooting abilities.
- Students are divided into teams and offered a basketball or soft ball.
- Students must pass the ball between themselves and try to score a basket in the hoop. Different points can be assigned, depending on the distance or difficulty level of the throw.



- Students are encouraged to work together and celebrate successes regardless of their individual abilities.

At this point in the research, the results obtained after applying the nominal group technique are presented. For a greater understanding of it, an analysis was carried out of each of the aspects valued by the group members, in accordance with the four aspects that, by consensus, grouped the opinions, in correspondence with the evaluative categories declared in the previous section.

Aspect 1. Structure (Table 2).

*Table 2. - Results of the assessment of the members of the nominal group on the structure of the pedagogical strategy*

Aspect 1	Very relevant	Relevant	Something relevant	Not relevant
<b>Assessment of the structure of the inclusive pedagogical strategy, for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs</b>	12 (80%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0

*Source: group consensus*

When evaluating the results of aspect one by the members of the group, Table 2 is constructed, which shows that the majority of the members attributed the category of very relevant, reflected in 12 evaluations, for 80 % of the total members who they selected this option; only two, 13.3 %, considered the structure of the strategy as relevant and one, 6.7 %, evaluated it as relevant. It is highlighted that none of the participants in the debate granted the category of not relevant, which denotes that this component is well structured (Table 3).



Aspect 2. Contents of the stages (Table 3).

*Table 3. - Results of the assessment of the members of the nominal group on the Content of the stages*

Aspect 2	Very relevant	Relevant	Something relevant	Not relevant
Assessment of the contents of the stages of the inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs	11 (73.3%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	0

*Source: group consensus*

Table 3 shows the results of the second aspect valued in the nominal group, as in the previous one, the majority of the members considered that the contents of the stages are very relevant, 11 of them, for a 73.3 %, while three, for 20%, considered it to be relevant and only one, for 6.7%, gave it the category of somewhat relevant, which is why this aspect evaluated as very relevant.

Aspect 3. Compendium of physical-inclusive activities (Table 4).

*Table 4. - Results of the assessment of the members of the nominal group on the compendium of physical-inclusive activities*

Aspect 3	Very relevant	Relevant	Something relevant	Not relevant
Assessment of the compendium of inclusive physical activities for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs	10 (66.6%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0

*Source: group consensus*

The results of aspect three are displayed in table 4. It can be seen, as has been regularity in this study, that the majority of the group members selected the very relevant category, for 66.6% of the total; pertinent was rated four, for 26.7%, and somewhat pertinent was rated only one, for 6.7%. These results demonstrate the favorable criteria of the group members regarding the compendium of inclusive physical activities.





Aspect 4. Forms of evaluation (Tabla 5).

**Table 5.** - Results of the assessment of the members of the nominal group on the forms of evaluation

Aspect 4	Very relevant	Relevant	Something relevant	Not relevant
Assessment of the forms of evaluation of the inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0

*Source:* group consensus

In table 5, the results of aspect four are assessed, it is observed that 14 members, for 93.3%, valued the forms of evaluation of the inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs as very relevant, while only one, 6.7%, considered it relevant.

In general, the previous aspects put for consideration by the members of the nominal group were evaluated as very relevant, this corroborates that the inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs is relevant, applicable and useful for the proposed end.

## DISCUSSION

Every day, inclusive Physical Education is demanded at different levels of education, but it is considered that the basic level is essential because the age of the children allows them to assimilate, more easily, each of the sporting skills that this discipline requires. on your resume.

Correspondingly, Letelier *et al.* (2020) state that inclusion in the Physical Education class, within the teaching framework, is a challenge that the teacher and the group of students must face; this is an aspect that is agreed upon, since from professional experience in this field, it is confirmed that the teacher's pedagogical skills play a fundamental role.



The inclusive pedagogical strategy that is presented encourages the linking of actions, operations, exercises and games for the development of sports skills, which reaffirms its relevance and necessity; which coincides with the adaptive limitations associated with practical skills, which manifest before the age of 18 (Requenes, 2021).

What Moreno and Martínez (2006) say is significant, who delve into the theory of self-determination and show an explanatory model of human motivation applied to various areas, including physical-sports activity where the foundations, research, measurement instruments and practical applications of self-determination theory in physical activity and sport have a significant place. This research creates an important theoretical platform for scientific inquiry; however, the biggest difference established between this and the inclusive pedagogical strategy for the development of sports skills in students with intellectual educational needs during the Physical Education class that is presented as a result is that the exercises and games designed integrate adaptation and the inclusion.

## CONCLUSIONS

Derived from the study and the theoretical systematization developed, insufficiencies related to inclusive pedagogical tools were evident in students with intellectual educational needs for the development of sports skills, during the Physical Education class.

The analysis and interpretation of the results, through the consultation of professionals with expertise who are members of the nominal group, allowed to recognize that the proposed pedagogical strategy presented is relevant and meets the characteristics to be implemented in the community investigated.



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***Conflict of interests:***

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

***Authors' contribution:***

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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