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Exploring the beliefs of Spanish teachers who promote the development of inclusive pedagogy

Inmaculada Orozco ⓘ and Anabel Moriña ⓘ

Departamento de Didáctica y Organización Educativa, Universidad de Sevilla, Seville, Spain

ABSTRACT

This article explores the beliefs of 25 Spanish primary education teachers who develop inclusive pedagogy when planning and implementing actions for all students. We used a qualitative methodology and the data were gathered through semi-structured and in-depth interviews. We analysed the data using an inductive coding system. The results revealed the beliefs of the participants about diversity and inclusive education, their professional self-concept, how they understood learning and their beliefs about their self-efficacy as teachers. These teachers showed a humanistic perspective that welcomes diversity and they felt responsible for the presence, learning, happiness and success of all their students.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right. However, many children are deprived of this opportunity (UNESCO 2017). In this sense, inclusive education poses a challenge to education systems, since these must be committed to the belief that every learner is important and everyone must be educated together (Ainscow, Slee, and Best 2019). Within the education system, teachers are a decisive element to achieving authentic inclusive and democratic practices in the schools (Monteiro et al. 2018; Sanahuja, Moliner, and Moliner 2020). Indeed, teachers' beliefs influence the teaching-learning process and these can help strengthen and transform their students' ability to learn (Hart and Drummond 2014; Klibthong and Agbenyega 2018). These authors even recognise a pedagogy of transformability, since the capacity of the student is not fixed from birth, but rather depends on what the teacher believes/thinks and, consequently, does.

Believing that diversity in schools is possible means regarding differences as opportunities and not as difficulties (Chiner, Cardona, and Gómez 2015). Competent teachers must be not only prepared to teach all their students efficiently, but also proactive in identifying barriers to learning, participation and resources (Ainscow 2016; Arnaiz, De Haro-Rodríguez, and Maldonado 2019). Moreover, they must also have a set of high expectations and beliefs that allow them to rethink their own praxis in order to

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CONTACT Anabel Moriña ✉ anabelm@us.es 🏛 Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla 41004, Spain

support the learning of all students and label no student as different (Brennan, King, and Travers 2019; Civitillo, De Moor, and Vervloed 2016).

Inclusive pedagogy: an opportunity for everyone to learn and participate together

Regarding teachers and inclusion Rouse (2009) and Florian and Linklater (2010) stated that the learning capacity of all students will depend on what the teachers 'believe' (expectations and trust on their students), 'know' (about theory, policies and regulations) and 'do' in the present (transform knowledge into actions). The inclusive pedagogy approach can be complemented with a fourth dimension, borrowed from higher education, which corresponds to accessible teaching design or planning for everyone (Gale and Mills 2013). Therefore, beliefs, knowledge, designs and actions are part of the inclusive pedagogy, an approach that responds to the diversity of students to prevent the exclusion of some children in the classrooms (Florian 2014). In particular, inclusive pedagogy represents a change in the concept of teaching and learning and involves creating a rich environment characterised by lessons and learning opportunities for all students to participate in the life of the classroom (Florian and Linklater 2010).

Teaching beliefs and implicit theories: A conceptual framework for understanding inclusive pedagogy

In this article, we studied the first dimension of analysis to approach inclusive pedagogy: beliefs. This complex dimension falls within the framework of implicit teaching theories (Pozo et al. 2006). These are defined as a set of coherent and consistent principles that affect the way in which different school situations are dealt with, interpreted and addressed. These implicit theories are organised on the basis of experience, context and personal situation (López et al. 2013; Urbina, Simón, and Echeita 2011). The study by Pozo et al. (2006) identified three types of implicit theories on how to conceptualise teaching and learning: the direct one (transmissive and product-centred), the interpretative one (reproduction of information as a linear process) and the constructive one (reflection and construction activities).

From the approach of inclusive pedagogy, Florian (2014) understands beliefs as conceptions of the teacher that lead him/her to design and develop projects to include all their students. Hart and Drummond (2014) identified three interrelated pedagogical principles that guide these decisions about what to do and what not to do: 'co-agency' (teachers and children are recognised as active learners who work together), 'everybody' (the group is a powerful resource for leaning) and 'trust' (all children can learn and want to learn).

Other authors consider beliefs as a set of personal guidelines that teachers accept as true, which they use to define and understand the educational context, as well as the teacher identity (Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet 2017). Within the professionals who develop inclusive pedagogy, these authors differentiated four types of beliefs: educational (inherent theories about the purpose of education), teacher role (perception toward teacher competences and duties), learning and students (understanding of the learning process and the nature of the capacities of each of the students to learn) and self-

efficacy (personal view of the competence in a specific professional context during the execution of a task).

In the study of López et al. (2013), three dimensions of analysis were proposed in terms of beliefs: individual differences in learning, the educational response of the school to diversity and the educational values of the teaching staff. In fact, teachers' beliefs are essential for changing toward inclusive schools that guarantee humane, quality practices based on student rights, equity, justice and social transformation (Kamenopoulou and Dukpa 2018). Thus, numerous studies show the need for more educational research about the beliefs of teachers, given their relevance and influence on the praxis (Tiwari, Das, and Sharma 2015; Van Uden, Ritzen, and Pieters 2014) and the planning of teaching and learning processes (Lui, Sarah, and Bonner 2016).

The beliefs of inclusive teachers: levers for the participation of all students

Sheehy and Budiyanto (2015) revealed that those teachers who implement an inclusive philosophy usually have a constructivist and social approach and a self-concept of facilitators. Likewise, López et al. (2013) and Lui, Sarah, and Bonner (2016) concluded that the constructivist perspective predominates among primary education teachers. Another study revealed that beliefs have an affective component so powerful that they can condition the teacher regardless of their academic knowledge and usual practice (Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet 2017). However, in some cases, beliefs are usually associated with different cultural and social contexts (the resources offered to the school, the available time and the training received, experience in inclusive education, the ratio and type of disability of students or the professional support provided) (Yakar and Turgut 2017).

In short, different studies conclude that an intrinsically motivated teacher with high expectations for everyone associates diversity with richness (Özokcu 2018) and believes that he/she can reduce school failure and absenteeism, and increase the commitment, social participation, learning and success of each of his/her students (Van Uden, Ritzen, and Pieters 2014). In turn, these conceptions have a direct influence on behaviour, since it has been demonstrated that teachers with positive perceptions are usually more innovative and affective (Tiwari, Das, and Sharma 2015). Other authors have shown that teachers consider it essential to adjust their methodologies to meet the needs of all students (Moriña and Orozco 2019; Ismailos et al. 2019), have an open mind free of prejudices that allow them to enjoy and establish support and collaboration networks (Florian 2017; Rappoport et al. 2019), develop projects and welcome the families and the educational community (Gavish 2017).

Ajayi (2017) also analysed the beliefs of teachers and concluded that they believe that the main motivation that leads them to fight for equity is that they want to prepare all their students for real life, reflection and oppressive systems. Likewise, this author adds that teachers, instead of requesting help from specialists to individualise their teaching, they take into account the 'ethics of care', since they consider themselves capable of teaching all students and responsible for creating a warm and safe learning environment.

Slišković, Burić, and Macuka (2017) provided evidence of the perspectives of primary education teachers on their teaching performance. The latter described themselves as

people who are emotionally involved in the life and fate of their students. In other studies about inclusive pedagogy, they see themselves as 'agents of change' (Pantić and Florian 2015), committed to the well-being of their students, and describe their work not as a mere job, but as a life vocation.

Purpose of the study

As Pozo et al. (2006) concluded, beliefs are not activated equally in all school situations (educational policy, school culture, educational stage or student group composition). We consider that the present study fills a gap in the literature on inclusive pedagogy, since previous studies on beliefs, although they had an inclusive perspective, were mostly quantitative and analysed 'vulnerable students', 'those with intellectual disabilities', 'disruptive behaviours' or 'difficult-to-include students' (Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet 2017; López et al. 2013; Urbina, Simón, and Echeita 2011). Our study explores diversity from a qualitative approach. In fact, we also aimed to answer those questions that were left open in these studies and are considered essential to address: the conceptual change around educational inclusion and the perception of self-efficacy (López et al. 2013; Urbina, Simón, and Echeita 2011).

The study by Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet (2017) analysed the beliefs of university students, who were being prepared to teach in primary schools, about the role of the teacher in relation to teaching students with disabilities. The categorisation proposed by these authors inspired us to organise our own analysis. Furthermore, we consider that this analysis contributes to the literature, since the study of Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet (2017) was not carried out in Spain, and the participants were university students. Another reason for selecting this model was that, while Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet (2017) focused on the beliefs of initial teachers in training programmes and students with disabilities, we studied the beliefs of teachers who are already working and currently carrying out inclusive education in their classrooms for all students.

We based our study on this because we believe that the four main categories it incorporates bring together a wide variety of dimensions that teachers encounter in their professional lives. These beliefs fall into four main categories: educational beliefs, beliefs about the role of the teacher, beliefs about learning and students, and beliefs about self-efficacy.

Therefore, for all these reasons, the objective of this investigation was to explore the beliefs of Spanish teachers who teach in primary schools. In order to achieve this purpose, we used the theoretical categorisation of beliefs proposed by Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet (2017): educational, teacher role, student learning and self-efficacy.

Specifically, our research questions were the following: What are the teachers' beliefs about diversity and inclusive education? What are their beliefs about what characterises them as teachers? What do they think about learning and the capabilities of all their students? What are their beliefs about self-efficacy?

Method

The results included in this article are part of a doctoral thesis project that analyses the beliefs, knowledge, designs and actions of teachers who carry out inclusive pedagogy in

different educational stages (Early childhood, Primary, Secondary and Higher Education). Moreover, this study is framed within a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness entitled 'Inclusive education at university: Faculty members' narratives'. Specifically, in this article we only explored the beliefs of primary education teachers who engage in inclusive pedagogy. We used a qualitative methodology and conducted a multiple case study (Stake 2006).

Spanish educational context

In Spain, the current education law states that the education system must have the necessary mechanisms to recognise and promote learning and the talents of everyone (Organic Law 8/2013, of 9 December, for the Improvement of Educational Quality). Moreover, at the level of educational policies, these good practices refer to a teaching practice that contemplates as a principle the diversity of the students and personalised attention according to the needs of each of them (Royal Decree 126/2014, of February 28th, which established the basic curriculum of Primary Education). Primary Education is mandatory and free in public schools. This stage comprises six academic levels, which are 1st to 6th level of primary education, and children access it at the age of 6 years.

Primary Education is taught by teachers, who must be competence in all areas of this level. The teaching of Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Spanish Language and Literature and Mathematics are given by regular teachers. The teaching of Music, Physical Education, foreign languages and the subjects assigned by each Autonomous Community is taught by teachers with the corresponding specialisation or qualification.

With regard to teacher training, in most Autonomous Communities there are training centres, which are characterised for being independent from schools. These centres aim to satisfy the teacher training and update needs of schools from a didactic and pedagogical approach (through training, counselling, information, etc.), in order to improve the quality of the educational practice. The training offered is free of charge, as it is financed with public funds.

Participants

The recruitment of participants was the result of a convenience and criteria purposive sampling. We contacted two teacher training centres. The training consultants of these centres were the ones who provided us the contact details of teachers who carried out inclusive pedagogy in primary education. This nomination was from a list of characteristics (produced by the authors) based on the model of inclusive education (Florian and Linklater 2010; Forlin 2001). According to this list of characteristics that teachers were required to have in order to be considered inclusive, the profile of the participants was that of a teacher who: gets everyone to participate in class, uses active methodologies, cares about the students, makes necessary adjustments, motivates his/her students or establishes support and collaboration with the educational community.

We also used the snowball technique (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2000), by contacting those 'colleagues' who were recommended by the initial participants. The criteria formulated to select the sample were seven: (1) primary education teachers who carried out inclusive pedagogy, (2) teachers of the province of Seville (Spain), (3) age diversity,

(4) gender diversity, (5) diversity in years of teaching experience, (6) availability to participate, and (7) willingness to talk about their personal and professional career.

The sample consisted of 25 teachers from 11 urban public primary education schools. They all taught in an ordinary classroom. The participants were characterised by the fact that they taught in schools with a high rate of students in a situation of vulnerability and at risk of social exclusion. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the research participants.

Interviews and procedure

We created a semi-structured and in-depth interview script with questions intended to analyse the beliefs, knowledge, design and actions of teachers who carried out an inclusive pedagogy. In this study, we only focused on teacher's beliefs. In these interviews, four topics were discussed: (1) educational beliefs, (2) beliefs about the role of the teacher, (3) beliefs about learning and students, and (4) beliefs on self-efficacy. The questions addressed for each issue were:

(1) What is diversity in your opinion? And inclusive education? What do you think diversity can contribute to the class?
(2) How would you define yourself as a teacher? Which do you think are the characteristics that best describe you best? Why?
(3) Why do you think that all children learn the same way? Why? Do you think that some students need to be taught in a different manner? Why? Do you think that there are some student who do not 'learn all they should' in the regular classroom, or hinder the progress of other students? Why?

Table 1. Profile of participants.

Participant	Gender	Age	Years of teaching experience	Specialisations
Participant 1	Female	34	7	Foreign Languages (English)
Participant 2	Masculine	48	28	Physical Education
Participant 3	Female	50	29	Foreign Languages (English)
Participant 4	Female	36	13	Primary school teacher
Participant 5	Female	34	9	Primary school teacher
Participant 6	Female	53	27	Primary school teacher
Participant 7	Female	55	33	Foreign Languages (French)
Participant 8	Female	37	9	Primary school teacher
Participant 9	Masculine	39	15	Physical Education
Participant 10	Female	55	26	Primary school teacher
Participant 11	Female	47	28	Primary school teacher
Participant 12	Female	42	16	Primary school teacher
Participant 13	Female	52	26	Music Education
Participant 14	Masculine	41	12	Foreign Languages (English)
Participant 15	Female	56	30	Primary school teacher
Participant 16	Female	57	36	Primary school teacher
Participant 17	Masculine	36	14	Primary school teacher
Participant 18	Female	42	15	Primary school teacher
Participant 19	Masculine	41	13	Primary school teacher
Participant 20	Masculine	35	10	Physical Education
Participant 21	Female	45	18	Primary school teacher
Participant 22	Masculine	43	15	Primary school teacher
Participant 23	Female	36	13	Primary school teacher
Participant 24	Female	42	18	Foreign Languages (English)
Participant 25	Female	43	21	Primary school teacher

(4) Do you think you are prepared to attend to the diversity of your classroom? Why? Which do you think are your best strengths to achieve inclusion in your classroom every day? What do you think you still need to do to contribute to the inclusion of all students?

In every case, for the development of the interviews, the most favourable conditions were created to guarantee the comfort of the interviewees. The average duration of the interviews was 90 min. All the information was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

The transcripts of the interviews were initially analysed for an in-depth reading of the data. Inductive categories and codes were then established, in order to make sense of the information collected. In this way, we developed a coding inductive system that facilitated the compression of the gathered data (Miles and Huberman 1994).

The data presented belong to the category of beliefs. Table 2 shows the codes and subcodes that were used for each type of belief (educational purpose on inclusion and diversity, teacher role, learning and students and self-efficacy).

Finally, all these codes and categories were incorporated into the MAXQDA 12 software to facilitate the handling of the information. To ensure the rigour of the analysis, all the information was analysed simultaneously by the two authors of the article.

Ethical questions of the research

In order to protect the rights of the participants, they were requested to sign an informed consent, which communicated that participation in the study was voluntary and safeguarded from possible risks or damage, always respecting and guaranteeing their privacy and confidentiality. To this end, each of the interviews was given back to the corresponding participant via mail, so that they could verify them and make the necessary changes.

Moreover, in order not to reveal the real identity of the participants, their real names do not appear in the results. To indicate the number of each participant in the corresponding verbatims, the letter P (P = Participant) was used, followed by a number (P1–P25).

Table 2. Codes and subcodes.

1.Beliefs	2. Codes	3. Subcodes
Educational	Inclusive Education, Diversity, contributions	Commitment, sensitivity, philosophy, peculiarity, reality, present, sense, challenge, richness, respect, recognition and opportunity
About the role of teacher	Teacher's self-concept and characteristics.	Accompaniment, building knowledge, potential students and happiness
About learning and students	Impediment, learner learning and different teaching	Help between equals, environmental condition, inadequate methodologies, different interests/rhythms, multiple resources, learning pathways and teacher reflection
On self-efficacy	Ideal professional, strengths, inclusive prospectives.	Willingness, teaching experience, ongoing pedagogical training, growth, confidence, personalisation, coherence, support and exchange networks

Results

The results are organised according to the four types of believes that an inclusive professional has (Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet 2017): educational purpose on inclusion and diversity, teacher role, student learning and self-efficacy.

Which are the teachers' beliefs about diversity and inclusive education?: Kaleidoscopic views on the meaning of inclusive education and diversity

The participants of this study considered that inclusive education meant committing to the students in order to make learning relevant, as well as welcoming and making room for and sense of everyone, with no exceptions. They perceived that it was about being sensitive and connecting to what each child needed, instead of offering the same to everyone.

> I think that true inclusion occurs when you enter a classroom and, regardless of what you find there, the students will be taught and admitted according to what they are. (Participant 20)

The teachers believed that this philosophy in the classroom contributed to rethinking their teaching duty and that it was the only way in which children could learn, be, share and understand life and knowledge. Furthermore, they stated that a group would never be homogeneous, since each person is an important and unique contributor. They considered that diversity was inevitable and that it will always be present; it irradiated richness, coexistence and, above all, compassion.

> I think that what diversity stimulates the most is respect, since, in my opinion, it is essential for children to know mathematics and Grammar, but it is even more important for them to know how to behave in society, because that makes them become better people. (Participant 1)

Furthermore, most of the teachers conceived the idea of diversity as the reality and essence that characterise each of them. They even stated that if diversity disappeared, education would lose its meaning. They did not see it as a difficulty or a barrier, but as a challenge that encouraged them to practice their profession with excitement. Moreover, they believed that differences meant enrichment, opened the mind and were inherent to the human being.

> I think that diversity involves accepting the reality of the world. We cannot make educational islands, since the world is diverse. (Participant 10)

Some of the participants extrapolated diversity to their daily practice, applying a sensitive and compassionate view on the different learning styles. They stated that differences in schools were essential to prevent their work from becoming a routine, and that each person must be acknowledged the way they are.

> If we were all the same, teaching would be very boring, wouldńt it? There wouldńt be different ways of teaching, or methods … We would all be cut from the same cloth. (Participant 8)

Other teachers considered diversity as respect and opportunity, and they did not mention disability, ethnicity or religion. They moved away from the medical model and associated

diversity with the amazement of magical, varied and daily moments that had to be valued and which could occur in any classroom if there was room for social interaction.

> In my opinion, diversity is each of the moments in which you enter a classroom to end a conflict, or you seat next to a child to explain something to her. Diversity is there, in those diverse moments … (Participant 20)

What are their beliefs about what characterises them as teachers?: the profile of an inclusive teacher

Most of the participants defined themselves as affective, close, humble, reflective, patient, curious, innovative and committed to their work. However, most of them perceived themselves as accompanying components of the teaching-learning processes, mentors that liberate and empower all children so the latter can be regarded as equals by their peers.

> I could define myself as a teacher that makes the effort to, step by step, mix with the class, so that I am not the only source of initiative every day. (Participant 20)

The participants perceived that their role was not that of a mere transmitter of knowledge; among their functions, they should stimulate and create moments in which knowledge can be created by everyone. They did not assume that students were subjects without knowledge; they rather believed in the potential of each of them, since children can learn without the help of adults.

> What defines me best is this … perhaps the teacher comes not to teach, but rather to accompany the learning process, since, actually, Ím the one who learns the most … (Participant 22)

In general, they perceived themselves as people open to change, progress and educational complexity, concerned about relationships, and in permanent training. Above all, they considered themselves as transformation agents responsible for the happiness and the environment of the group-class, since they believed that the classroom is a space where everyone must feel safe and well with everyone else and themselves, to be able to learn.

> What I want is my students to come to school happy, and once they all feel comfortable in my classroom, once we all love, respect and value each other … only then we start learning. (Participant 1)

What do they think about learning and the capabilities of all their students?: opportunity and the meaning of everyone

The participants stated that no child had difficulties or hindered the learning of the group-class; they rather believed that students helped each other and that they had to attend to the life history of each child. These biographic testimonies drew an inevitable trajectory due to the environment that they thought determined the different ways of being, feeling, thinking and acting of the students. They said that learning always took place, although it depended on the social, economic, familiar and personal circumstances.

> I think that we must stop sometimes because we do not know what happened to that child once he/she entered the school. I think that difficulties are mostly familiar or social … and not related to learning. (Participant 11)

Furthermore, they were sure that if some students did not learn, it was due to the teaching methodologies and practices that teachers apply in the classroom.

> I think that if a child does not learn everything, the teacher is to blame. In fact, I think that there are children who do not learn because of the methodology that teachers use or the way they work. (Participant 19)

The teachers also thought that every single student learned differently, since each of them are defined by different motivations, capabilities, interests, curiosity and taste, as well as a different maturing and learning pace. Moreover, they stated that students must be provided with varied and accessible resources so that each of them can choose how they want to learn or feel more comfortable.

> I believe that the teacher must try to offer as much as possible so that all students with diverse and accessible resources, through one way or the other, manage to achieve their maximum performance. (Participant 1)

When they were asked if they conceived that some students had to be taught differently, they stated that this occurred with all students and that, firstly, every child had to be welcomed and understood in order to show them the way to be followed. In addition, they said that the key to this would be to free the students in order for these to discover and decide by themselves how they wanted to learn, offer the same dynamics, adapt the resources to make the environment accessible, and reflect on the requirement level in each case.

> I think that there is no need to teach differently, but to let children learn their own way. (Participant 20)

What do teachers believe about their self-efficacy?: conceptions about teacher training and strengths for inclusion

With respect to beliefs about their own abilities and competences on diversity, the answers were varied. Some felt that they were prepared, as they were backed by their will, teaching experience and training. These three competences were the ones that they thought allowed them to trust their work and be able to face the school's everyday nature with confidence and success. However, others stated that they were concerned and their learning never stopped, since this allowed them to grow personally and professionally, feel alive and improve all the time.

> I would like to be learning until the last day of my life, especially regarding this. You always have the feeling that you're missing training, information … and resources. (Participant 4)

Moreover, the participants were aware of the great challenge of being a teacher committed to diversity in the present time, and they considered that their training is necessary and should be compulsory, permanent and continuous. They stated that teachers must know methods, resources and strategies without limits, since they must offer their students the best education and one can never be completely prepared.

> I have to prepare myself daily to see which path they are taking, which tools are the ones I must provide them so they can continue on their own … but nobody is fully prepared. (Participant 20)

The strengths which these professionals considered that allowed them to achieve inclusion in the classroom everyday were sensitivity, empathy, affection, group cohesiveness, the training received, self-confidence and each of the students.

> The greatest strength is probably confidence … And not only self-confidence, but confidence in each child so that they feel good. (Participant 20)

Likewise, the participants mentioned that their strengths were being flexible and consistent, vocational, willing to consider new ways of doing things, and having previous experience. They stated that one of their best skills was the creation of personalised conditions, with the aim that each child could enjoy their processes and reach their maximum potential.

> Serenity and patience are two important traits of the teacher. I think that each person needs a different amount of time to learn, and I try to respect this and give it to them. (Participant 3)

Furthermore, the teachers highlighted that the most characteristic skill that encouraged them to keep supporting and carrying out inclusive education was the belief in diversity itself and being rational with its inherent theories and those that are implemented. This philosophy was perceived by the teachers as the only way to expand knowledge and innovate in the classroom dynamics.

> The greatest strength I can feel is that I strongly believe in it and that my response is increasingly bigger. I think that teachers must first believe it, in order to know and do. (Participant 22)

Despite all this, when they reflected on the improvement of their self-efficacy and what else they thought they still had to do to contribute to inclusion, they insisted in in-service training, the creation of solid and community support networks, and the knowledge of successful educational experiences as examples for other teachers.

> You always have the feeling that you can do more, and I would like to know how to do this, learn new possibilities, new ways … (Participant 4)

Discussion

Teachers who are developing inclusive pedagogy in primary education have beliefs which are characterised for having a perspective that welcomes diversity, making it a decisive element for the presence, participation and success of all students in the life of the classroom (Arnaiz, De Haro-Rodríguez, and Maldonado 2019; Sanahuja, Moliner, and Moliner 2020).

It is interesting, among the findings presented in this research, that most of the teachers perceive diversity as a source of opportunity and richness. The participants understand that each child in the classroom is important and benefits the learning of the group (Ainscow 2016; Florian 2014). Our study also reveals that these teachers recognised diversity in the classroom as a life philosophy. They did not associate the concept of

diversity with any label. They understood that diversity is the social reality and that it was their responsibility to attend to every difference. Therefore, a lesson learned from these teachers is that diversity challenges them and, at the same time, helps them to reflect on and improve their educational practice (Brennan, King, and Travers 2019; Hart and Drummond 2014).

The participants of this study defined themselves as good, altruistic, motivated professionals concerned with in-service training. In addition, they also perceived themselves as people who try to offer the most reasonable educational response possible to guarantee the optimal well-being of all their students, who should have a positive impact in future society (Kamenopoulou and Dukpa 2018). Moreover, they considered themselves as accompanying components of the teaching-learning processes. This is a coincidence and an extension of the role of the facilitator defined in the studies by Pozo et al. (2006) and Urbina, Simón, and Echeita (2011). These teachers assumed that their role is decisive for the happiness and inclusion of their students. Thus, the relationship between happiness and learning was considered as an essential ingredient of inclusive pedagogy in the classroom (Budiyanto, Kaye, and Rofiah 2018; Van Uden, Ritzen, and Pieters 2014). It would be advisable for teachers to take care of their affections and receive training in emotional education. In fact, this type of training should be compulsory so that teachers can get to know themselves better, detect their strengths and rethink their roles in the classroom.

The beliefs that teachers have about learning are constructivist (López et al. 2013; Lui, Sarah, and Bonner 2016; Sheehy and Budiyanto 2015). This becomes clear when the participants believe in the potential of all students and understand that everyone can learn with and from others (Hart and Drummond 2014). To achieve this, an open mind is required, as well as the creation of significant practices based on personalised learning design, equity and social justice. Ainscow, Slee, and Best (2019), Ajayi (2017), and Brennan, King, and Travers (2019) share this idea and stated that teachers must learn to adopt a socio-political analysis method that allows them to develop a set of questions and assumptions to challenge the school policies that reinforce inequalities. It would be advisable for teachers and management teams to receive training in educational curricula and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Rose and Meyer 2002). This training would enable them to break down their prejudices about educational needs and implement more inclusive actions for all.

Moreover, the participants believed that the competences that allowed them to reach true inclusion are experience, willingness, training and vocation. Sheehy and Budiyanto (2015) also mentioned in their research that the beliefs about inclusive pedagogy depend on experience and understanding the complexity of teaching. However, some participants felt that training in inclusive pedagogy should never stop (Klibthong and Agbenyega 2018). In this way, our study provides another, more humanistic view of self-efficacy that is precise and demands more research, as reflected in previous studies on implicit theories (López et al. 2013; Urbina, Simón, and Echeita 2011). In particular, our study shows that training is fundamental, as well as the will and passion for the profession. For these teachers, the learning environment is important for them to feel responsible and committed to their work, but also to the well-being and happiness of all their students. This corroborates the studies of Domović, Vidović, and Bouillet (2017) and Majoko (2018), which indicate that the affective component in teaching

can condition teachers regardless of their knowledge. In our case, we also reflect that one of the main strengths that drive them to respond to diversity is their own belief in it and their vision of diversity as an attitude toward life.

Despite all this, the teachers humbly perceived that, although they had experience in this regard, they still had much to do to make their teaching effective and include schools in society. Therefore, they believed that further research needs to be conducted with other teachers about approaches and ways of perceiving education and culture. They also suggested discovering, experiencing and learning from greater successful experiences in different institutions and other ways of doing things, in order to coexist with diversity and give it the welcoming it deserves (Florian 2017).

Limitations and further research

Firstly, we consider that the availability and specificity of the sample was an unexpected difficulty, since the process was slow, as it required contacting the training centres and the school management teams, as well as frequently adapting to the timetable and circumstances of the teachers in order to complete all the questions of the interviews.

We believe it would be essential to analyse good examples of teachers in order to conduct life histories that could inspire others and transform their way of thinking, being and acting, with the aim of achieving the participation of all students. Moreover, with the aim of comparing their beliefs with their classroom practices, we intend to observe the class dynamics of the most significant and accessible teachers. Therefore, we intend to listen to their students' voices, for whom we will design other interviews.

To sum up, this study opens new horizons to further explore the beliefs that make inclusive pedagogy possible in the ordinary classroom. In this sense, it would be fundamental to include more educational stages in order to acquire a more holistic view on this pedagogical approach.

Conclusion

The beliefs described in this article could be the 'levers' that these professionals need in order to be sensitive with differences, reflect on their duty in the school, rethink their role, and remodel their reasoning, views, planning and practices (Moriña and Orozco 2019). In fact, the real educational transformation of the teacher involves believing that changes must be made in the environment rather than in the individual. Thus, disability is not in the students but in the methodologies, strategies and means that are considered useful in each case (Nind and Lewthwaite 2018; Schuelka 2015).

With this study, we can draw four lessons that can contribute to improving the practices of other colleagues at this stage and any other: (1) prioritise human rights over the curriculum; (2) put the student at the centre of the teaching-learning process; (3) create a cooperative and stimulating environment with multiple options available to all; and (4) reflect with other colleagues on possible alternatives to a specific classroom that will benefit everyone permanently.

These perspectives lead to think that a teacher who supports inclusive pedagogy must believe that his/her duty is not to classify but to educate, respect, recognise human rights and consider each student as a free citizen that brings change and culture. In particular,

these beliefs can be useful for teacher trainers to debunk prejudices before initial teachers work in the school. Reading this paper can also help teachers who are already working to revise their conceptions of diversity and their practices. Teacher-training centres should also design training plans that include in-school teacher training based on reflection-action-reflection.

To sum up, for practices to be inclusive, in-service teacher training on inclusive education should be compulsory and without limits (Klibthong and Agbenyega 2018). This study offers clues for more useful pedagogical training and highlights the need for training that is far removed from technique or strategies and focused on the reflective analysis of prejudices, concerns and daily experiences about diversity. If we start with beliefs, we will be able to challenge the social reality, attain emancipation and create fairer and more collaborative praxes.

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ORCID

Inmaculada Orozco ⓘ http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5170-7805
Anabel Moriña ⓘ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0852-7523

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