Moving toward the inclusion of university students with disabilities. Barriers,

facilitators and recommendations identified by inclusive faculty.

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Abstract

This study analysed the factors identified by inclusive faculty members that hinder or facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities, and their recommendations for universities to achieve full inclusion. Forty-four inclusive faculty members participated and a biographical-narrative methodology was used. The results showed the existence of different barriers (physical, inaccessible study program, negative attitudes and inadequate educational policies). Facilitating elements were also identified (offices of attention to students with disabilities, positive attitude of the faculty and training courses on disability). The participants recommended the hiring of more technical staff, the creation of support groups in all faculties, more training and information on disability for the entire university community and the implementation of university policies about inclusion.

Key words: Disability; Higher Education; Barriers; Facilitators; Recommendations for inclusion.

Introduction

International regulations about disability, such as the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), have brought significant advances in the field of inclusive education. In Spain, the Organic Law of Universities 4/2007 establishes that these must guarantee the principles of equal opportunity and no discrimination based on disability, and that the university buildings and facilities must be accessible. To this end, all public Spanish universities provide a service of attention to students with disabilities. This service offers guidance to these students, resources to facilitate their social and educational inclusion, and information to the faculty, whenever necessary, about the reasonable adjustments that they must make to address the needs of students with disabilities. In recent years, the presence of students with disabilities in the university has increased. According to the Universia Foundation (2018), in the academic year 2017/2018 there was a total of 21,435 students with disabilities in Spanish universities, which was an increase of 3.1% with respect to the previous year. In view of this reality, universities are hastily making adjustments to guarantee the inclusion of these students. Universities have worked hard to offer elements that facilitate the social and educational inclusion of students with disabilities. However, there are still numerous barriers that hinder the academic life of these students (Garabal-Barbeira, Pousada, Espinosa, & Saleta 2018). As a result of these barriers, in some cases, the university is a context of segregation and exclusion for them (González, Martínez, & de Juan 2017; Langørgen & Magnus 2018).

Most studies published to date are focused on identifying the barriers (Lourens & Swartz 2019; Martins, Borges, & Gonçalves 2018; Moriña & Perera 2018) and

facilitators (Leyser, Greenberger, Sharoni, & Vogel 2011; Lombardi & Murray 2011) that exist in the university environment, from the perspective of students with disabilities.

Regarding the elements that hinder the inclusion of students with disabilities, Borland and James (1999) highlighted the existence of three types of barriers, which are those related to: physical accessibility (spaces, infrastructure), the study program (methodology, curricular adaptations, content access and presentation, etc.), and the attitudes of the university community members (faculty, classmates, staff). Black, Weinberg and Brodwin (2014) also highlighted political barriers, which are derived from the lack or scarcity of truly inclusive policies.

Physical access barriers influence the life of people with disabilities, since they limit their access to participation spaces (Polo & López 2005). In the last years, efforts have been made to progressively remove these barriers in educational institutions. However, some universities still lack spaces accessible to students with disabilities, which hinders, in some cases, their participation in the academic activities (Bualar 2018; Spassiani, et al. 2016). Barriers of physical access can be outside of the campus or within the university buildings and classrooms, making the teaching-learning process more difficult for these students. In this sense, Moriña and Morgado (2018) found that the most common external barriers include urban obstacles (streets in poor condition, inaccessible sidewalks, etc.) and transportation obstacles (inaccessible public transportation, no access to the campus, etc.). Regarding internal barriers, these authors highlighted the lack of ramps, the poor functioning of elevators, unadapted furniture, insufficient or excessive lighting, and even noise pollution, which are elements that impede the academic development of these students. Therefore, it is important to keep adapting the university spaces based on the principles of the Universal Architecture

Design, which only considers a space to be inclusive if nobody is excluded from it (Watchorn, Larkim, Ang, & Hitch 2013).

Regarding the curricular barriers, there is a remarkable lack or deficiency of training and information among faculty members about disability and, consequently, they generally do not know how to implement teaching-learning strategies to satisfy the needs of students with disabilities (Corrales, Soto, & Villafañe 2016; Moriña & Carballo 2018; Paz 2018). In addition to the lack of training, attitudinal barriers have also been reported, which are considered to be the most important barriers, since they can influence other people (Gitlow 2001). In this regard, it is known that the attitude of the faculty is a factor that plays a double role in the academic success of students with disabilities, since it can facilitate or hinder their educational inclusion (Black, et al. 2014; Moriña, Molina & Cortés 2017).

Lastly, the political barriers refer to the existing incoherence between the international, national and regional regulations about inclusion, as well as to the need to implement them, given that these inclusive policies must be compatible with inclusive practices in order to provide real support to the faculty (Taylor 2016). Numerous studies highlight the lack of real inclusive university policies that eventually materialise into inclusive practices (Black, et al. 2014; Hamour 2013; Peček, Macura, Milovanović, & Čuk 2015; Taylor 2016).

With respect to the elements that facilitate the social and educational inclusion of students with disabilities in the university, different studies point out the importance of both the student disability services and the faculty. In this sense, several studies consider the student disability services as great facilitators for these students, as they offer them counselling and resources that help them in their academic life (López-Gavira, Moriña, & Morgado 2019; Núñez 2017; Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson 2005).

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Similarly, it has been found that faculty members play a fundamental role in the inclusion and participation of students with disabilities in the teaching and learning processes (Fullarton & Duquette 2016; Polo, Fernández-Jiménez, & Fernández 2018). Generally, faculty members show a positive attitude toward students with disabilities (Bamiteko, Ibi, & Bukar 2017; Martins, et al., 2018; Polo, et al. 2018), especially those with training and information about the characteristics and needs of these students, who are flexible in their teaching practices (Collins, Azmat, & Rentschler 2018) and follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to plan and teach their subjects (Getzel 2008). This positive attitude has a significant impact on these students at the academic level, as it improves their performance and increases their interest and motivation for the subject (Hansen, Dawson, & Specht 2017; Kim & Lee 2016; Trolian, Jach, Hanson, & Pascarella 2016).

Therefore, it is fundamental to foster positive relationships between the faculty and students with disabilities, following the principles of UDL (Seale 2008), and thus adjust the study program (Veitch, Strehlow, & Boyd 2018) with the aim of attaining a more inclusive higher education. In this line, several studies have concluded that, in order to reach the full social and educational inclusion of students with disabilities, certain actions are required, such as the creation of mechanisms that improve organization and coordination at the institutional level (Gairín, Muñoz, Galán-Mañas, Fernández, & Sanahuja 2013), the establishment of inclusive study program (Everett & Oswald 2018; Hockings 2010), the organization and provision of adequate training programmes for faculty members in disability and attention to diversity (Moriña & Carballo 2018; Pang 2018) and the flexibilisation of inclusive practices (Grimes, Southgate, Scevak & Buchanan 2019).

As was previously mentioned, most studies on this topic are focused on the perspective of students with disabilities, with very few authors exploring the opinions of the faculty. To fill this gap in the literature about the barriers and facilitators encountered by students with disabilities in their university life, the aim of the study was to know the barriers and facilitators identified by faculty members who carry out inclusive teaching practices and to analyse their recommendations to attain a more inclusive higher education. Specifically, three objectives were set: (1) to identify the elements considered by faculty members as barriers that hinder the academic life of students with disabilities; (2) to identify the elements considered by faculty members as facilitators that help students with disabilities in their academic life; and (3) to analyse the recommendations of faculty members to create more inclusive universities.

Method

This study is part of a larger project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness and European Union FEDER funds entitled 'Inclusive education at university: Faculty members' narratives' (Ref. EDU2016-76587-R). The purpose of this study was to know the beliefs and knowledge of inclusive faculty members regarding disability, how they contemplate that reality in their teaching projects and what actions they carry out in the classroom to facilitate the inclusion of all their students. To this end, a qualitative methodology was followed. Specifically, the biographical narrative method was employed with a sample of faculty members who were selected by their own students with disabilities. This study aimed to answer the following research questions: Do faculty members believe that the university can be an institution that hinders the academic life of their students with disabilities? Do faculty members believe that the university is an institution that facilitates the social and educational inclusion of

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their students with disabilities? What recommendations do inclusive faculty members have for universities to become more inclusive?

Participants

A total of 42 faculty members participated in this study, who were recruited from the Faculties of Education Sciences of 6 Spanish public universities (3 in Andalusia, 2 in the Community of Valencia and 1 in Madrid). The participants were contacted through students with disabilities from these universities. Firstly, the student disability services of the 6 institutions were contacted, which then informed the students about the study and invited them to participate in it. These students were asked to select the faculty members who had facilitated their educational inclusion in the university. To this end, they were given a list of criteria that a faculty member should meet in order to be considered inclusive: *he/she believes in the possibilities of all students; facilitates the learning processes; his/her teaching is active, using different methodological teaching strategies; cares about the learning of all his/her students; is flexible, eager to help; motivates his/her students; establishes close relationships and favours the interactions among students; makes students feel important in the classroom; allows the students to participate in class and build knowledge together; and, keeps a horizontal communication with all students.* Secondly, the snowball technique was used (Dusek, Yurova, & Ruppel 2015). Specifically, different members of the university community (faculty members, students and other agents) were asked to tell students with disabilities about this project.

The students provided data of faculty members who had facilitated their educational inclusion and who carried out inclusive educational practices in their classrooms. Once they were identified, those faculty members who taught in Faculties

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of Education Science were contacted via e-mail. In this first contact, they were informed about the study and were asked for their participation. A total of 65 faculty members were initially contacted, of whom 42 agreed to participate.

Regarding the profile of the participants, their age ranged between 33 and 59 years, with an average of 41.2 years; there were 17 men (40.5%) and 25 women (59.5%); their teaching experience ranged between 7 and 32 years, with an average of 15.8 years; and, lastly, they belonged to different fields of knowledge: social sciences (40%), arts and humanities (31%), health sciences (17%) and sciences (12%).

Instruments

Two semi-structured interviews were designed ad hoc for this study. The first interview was focused on the beliefs and knowledge of the participants regarding disability, and the second interview tackled the design of the teaching projects and actions they carried out in the classroom to facilitate inclusion. Specifically, this study analyses the results obtained in the first interview. The questions asked to the participants included the following: Do you think that the university favours inclusive education, giving opportunities for all students to learn and participate on equal terms? How is this achieved? Do you think that the university, in any case, could pose a barrier for students with disabilities to study a career and complete their studies successfully? What recommendations would you give to make universities become more inclusive, giving a quality response to all students?

Procedure

The interviews were performed by the members of the research team, who were previously trained for it, and had a duration of 60-90 minutes each. Most of the interviews were done face-to-face (n=34), whereas others were conducted via Skype

(n=6) or phone call (n=2). They were all recorded in audio and then transcribed verbatim.

Before the interviews were performed, the participants gave their informed consent and were told that their data would be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Similarly, they were informed that, if they wished to abandon the study at any point, their data would be excluded from it.

The data were gathered in a period of 7 months. The analysis of the data was conducted using a system of categories and codes, following the guidelines of Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood (2013). The results were extracted using the IBM MaxQDA v.12 software.

Results

Inclusive faculty speak out about barriers to the inclusion of students with disabilities

The first objective of this study was to know the elements that the faculty members identified as barriers to the university life of students with disabilities. The obtained results indicate that the participants recognised barriers in physical access, curricular access, attitudes and even policies.

With respect to physical barriers, the faculty members considered that the infrastructures, both external and internal, are still not adapted for all the people who enter the university.

> *"Sometimes, the student has to receive the lecture in the ground floor because she cannot go to the third floor, as it is not adapted for her or there is no room for her wheelchair... these are, let's say, difficult experiences for them, right? We also have different campuses, and the administration buildings are in different places; so, it is very difficult for these students to move to the different*

buildings, isn't it?" (Faculty member 11).

"My campus has physical barriers because the buildings only have stairs up and down. Well, now they have started to put ramps and they have just put an elevator in the module where I have the office. We have students in wheelchairs, and they had a classroom that was practically as if they were in the street, a special place, because there are no classrooms accessible to the students, that is, it has physical barriers, but all the old faculties of the campus have that structure, with a lot of architectural barriers" (Faculty member 16).

Regarding the barriers related to the study program, the participants highlighted that, in some cases, the lack of training and information about disability is a factor that hinders the academic development of the students.

"The key is the information and training related to diversity. Obviously, some conditions do not favour this. If I have 80 students and I don't get enough information about these matters, it is impossible for me to provide the personalised attention they need, since we are overloaded with tasks" (Faculty member 33).

"Each center should inform the faculty members when they have a student with a disability, so that these faculty members can be prepared. They should receive recommendations from the technician at all times and in all cases. Therefore, it is insufficient, and it is all left to the goodwill and sensitivity of the faculty, which should not be the case" (Faculty member 29).

Some faculty members even considered that training in disability and attention to diversity should go beyond the faculty, involving the entire university community.

"I have never been in the situation of a person with a disability who wants to enter the university, but I guess that students have the same lack of information

as faculty members and the administrative staff. So, it is important to implement information programmes" (Faculty member 7).

Furthermore, the participants highlighted that, in some cases, the attitude of the faculty can pose a barrier to students with disabilities.

"If a person is in a classroom and the content is given in a way that makes that person feel as if he/she was not there, then that person is excluded. For instance, if I show a picture and the person cannot see anything in it, then that person cannot participate or learn; that is, through such action, I'm implicitly telling that person that he/she is not in this class, that this class is not for him/her but only for those who can see" (Faculty member 28).

"Well, I think the first obstacle they encounter is the faculty member, by not adapting their subject to the students' disabilities. That's the first problem; I don't know the lack of support that we, as faculty members, provide to the students" (Faculty member 9).

Lastly, political barriers were mentioned by all the participants, who pointed out, as the most relevant, the shortage of staff in the student diversity services, which, in turn, slows down the response of these to the demands of both students and faculty members. They also stressed on the shortage of material and economic resources to attend to these students, as well as on the excessive number of students per classroom and the lack of fully inclusive policies.

"The values of the university are not materialised into neither policies nor practices. We all talk about social responsibility as a way of showing that we care, as I say, but talking about social responsibilities is a different matter" (Faculty member 18).

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"As for sports material... there are three wheelchairs in the gymnasium, but these are not adapted for the sports context, so, what use can we make of them? A person can't go fast with a normal wheelchair, but with an adapted one this is possible. We don't have sound balls, balls with visual signs or fluorescent tape, so, for instance, how do we mark the lines on the floor? We can't. We don't have specific adapted material" (Faculty member 31).

Inclusive faculty highlight the factors that facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities

The second objective of this study was to know the elements that facilitate the optimal academic and social development of students with disabilities. The participants commented on the efforts that universities have been making to include all students, highlighting the efficiency of the student disability services.

"I don't think so. Nowadays, the university is not a barrier to students... from the moment they enter the university, they are always in contact with the service that manages and facilitates their life in this sense, and I believe that the university is capable of responding to the challenges related to attention to diversity in the present" (Faculty member 11).

"I think it's starting to make an effort, and at least now we have a student disability service. There are regulations that force the faculty to attend to their needs, even if some of us don't know about such regulations. More resources and grants are being provided... but I think that all this is still not enough" (Faculty member 29).

Furthermore, the participants stated that architectural changes are being made to remove the barriers in university spaces and environments.

"Let's see, the university is more adapted from the architectural perspective. In the classroom, we can find collaboration from the technical teams and people receive great support, although I'm only talking about my faculty, which is more sensitive toward these matters" (Faculty member 25).

Another facilitator identified by the participants was the positive attitude of faculty members toward attending to all their students.

"If the faculty member is flexible and empathetic and has a student with a disability, then he/she will do his/her best to make that person feel truly included; that is, not only in the mind of the faculty member, but making sure that this student can participate in every activity. Also, in this way we work on the awareness and attitude of the rest of the students" (Faculty member 10).

"I personally think that the commitment shown by the faculty members and the office , yes… I think it works [the service of attention to students with disabilities], firstly because the perspective of the people who work in this service is rather vocational than institutional, and, secondly, because the faculty are also committed" (Faculty member 34).

Regarding training in disability, the participants stated that there are resources and actions aimed at training faculty members.

"The Valencian government has created an Inclusivity Counselling. Inclusivity is already widely spread in society, and here in Castellón we have worked on this through training, especially in the Department of Education, where we have great professionals" (Faculty member 21).

Inclusive faculty make recommendations for a more inclusive university

The third objective of this study was to know the recommendations of the participants for universities to become more inclusive. Among such recommendations,

they stressed on the improvements that should be made in the student disability services to speed up the administrative processes and the personalised responses to the needs of these students. Moreover, the faculty members recommended the creation of support groups to attend to students with disabilities in the different university centres; this would create a connection between the students and these special services, which would in turn improve the attention to their needs. Similarly, they stated that the role of the "tutor faculty member" should be created in the universities to provide counselling to other faculty members with less experience in attention to students with disabilities.

> *"Also, I think that there should be support faculty members who could help other faculty members in these matters" (Faculty member 18).*

> *"Yes, there should be more personalised staff for students. This is not a problem of one institution, as each institution must manage its cases. There should be strategies like the tutor programme, for instance [...]. Something like that, but aimed at students with disabilities, with tutor faculty members and even tutor students" (Faculty member 42).*

> *"There should be support services in all the centers or, at least, someone responsible for giving quicker solutions to the problems that arise" (Faculty member 10).*

The participants also made recommendations to improve the training and information received by the entire university community.

> *"I would provide compulsory training in inclusive pedagogy and disability to all faculty members, that is, to the new faculty members and to everybody else. In this way, the older ones can update their knowledge in this topic" (Faculty member 1).*

> *"Just as we talk about the training of students, we should also talk about the*

training of the faculty in this aspect, right? Because many of us are unaware of the skills that students with diversity have... some training, I'm not going to say compulsory, but with some kind of compensation so that the faculty would have some motivation to do it. We need to understand the educational inclusion of people with diversity in the classroom. We should have our own training courses ... Because everyone goes to many training courses in their subject, but not necessarily to learn the characteristics of students with diversity in their classroom; there is hardly anything in that aspect" (Faculty member 23).

Other recommendations made by the participants were related to the university policies. Specifically, the faculty members considered that, in order to attain more inclusive universities, it would be necessary to apply the inclusive policies that already exist, that is, to implement them through specific protocols that guide the attention to students with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability.

"Everything stipulated in the regulations should be specified... the attention to diversity system should be larger and have more technicians; for instance, one technician per knowledge area or per campus. In addition, each faculty should create the role of the tutors in a support group, to ensure that students can talk about their problems whenever they need to" (Faculty member 29).

"The university needs to make and implement inclusive policies; it is always good to keep working on this matter" (Faculty member 21).

Lastly, the participants made some recommendations to improve the classroom environment. In this sense, they highlighted the need to lower the ratios, change the classroom distribution, and offer inclusive technological and material resources.

"Well, I think that, in order to provide a more personalised attention, we need more faculty members, because we have a lot of students per classroom, and that

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makes everything a lot more difficult. For instance, here in the Faculty of

Psychology, the Bologna Process is hard to implement with so many students"

(Faculty member 32).

"I think that this faculty would benefit from an improvement in the visibility of

the screens; for example, I have to close the blinds all the time because the

projectors are not good and the screen is hardly visible. I find it hard myself,

and those who have some sort of vision impairment can't see anything at all... I

believe that the distribution of the classroom we have now in the university is

awful; it doesn't allow for inclusive classes to become a reality" (Faculty

member 2).

Discussion and Conclusions

In the last years, different actions have been developed to make universities

more inclusive and thus guarantee the rights of people with disabilities. The results

obtained in this study allow describing the elements that hinder or facilitate the

educational inclusion of university students with disabilities, from the perspective of

faculty members who carry out inclusive practices. Similarly, they provide a set of

recommendations for universities to further shift toward full inclusion.

Although the university contexts are more accessible nowadays than a few

decades ago, there are still physical, attitudinal and political barriers that hinder the full

inclusion of students with disabilities (Borges, Martins, Lucio-Villegas & Gonçalves

2017; Toutain 2019). The data presented in this study allow confirming, from the

perspective of inclusive faculty members, the persistence of certain barriers that make

university environments inaccessible. As in other countries (Spassiani, et al. 2016), the

findings of the present study confirm that such barriers are still present in the Spanish

university context. Specifically, the participants highlighted the physical barriers present in numerous classrooms, such as the lack of ramps, poor lighting or acoustics, and unadapted furniture, which have also been identified by students with disabilities (Bualar 2018). To avoid the presence of these barriers, Oliver (1990) proposed that university environments should be built with diversity in mind. In this regard, Powell (2013) and Watchorn et al. (2013) suggested that the planning of university spaces should be based on the principles of universal design, thus recognising the diversity and heterogeneity of students and their needs.

In line with the findings of previous studies (Corrales, et al. 2016; Moriña & Carballo 2018; Paz 2018), the results obtained in the present work allow identifying the existence of barriers that hinder the access to the study program. According to the participants, such inaccessibility to the study program derives from different factors related to the faculty members themselves. Among these factors, they mentioned the generalised lack of training and information about disability and attention to diversity, as well as the social barriers posed by the negative attitude of some faculty members toward disability and toward making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In line with the conclusions of De los Santos, Kupczynski and Mundy (2019), this led the participants to consider that universities must commit to the training in matters of inclusivity not only for faculty member, but for the entire university community. This would prevent faculty members from becoming a source of exclusion or segregation for students with disabilities (Gibson 2015; Moriña, Cortés, & Molina 2015).

In agreement with the findings of Taylor (2016), the faculty members who participated in the present study considered that there were also political barriers, such as the lack or shortage of material and economic resources and specialised technical

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staff in the student disability services, as well as the high ratio in the classrooms. These factors hinder the full implementation of inclusive policies and, therefore, impede the realization of specific practices that guarantee the academic inclusion of students with disabilities. All this shows that, in Spain, further work is necessary to comply with the commitment made in the Paris Agreement (2018) to achieve social cohesion, developing policies that encourage and support universities to fulfill their social responsibility and contribute to the development of a more cohesive and inclusive society, thereby guaranteeing the full social and educational inclusion of all students (Lourens & Swartz 2019).

Therefore, students with disabilities are still facing different barriers that hinder their academic life (Bualar 2018; De los Santos, et al. 2018; Lourens & Swartz 2019). However, there are also elements that facilitate their educational inclusion. In this sense, different studies have shown the facilitators that students with disabilities have identified in their university life (Moriña & Morgado 2018; McIntyre, Gurayah, Adonis, Elliott, Müller-Nedebock & Sibeko 2019). The results obtained in the present work allow advancing in this line and present, from the perspective of inclusive faculty members, the factors that contribute to the inclusion of students with disabilities. Specifically, the participants highlighted the support provided by the student disability services of the different universities to both students with disabilities and faculty members. These findings are in line with those reported by Núñez (2017) and Riddell et al. (2005), who also identified institutional coordination as a facilitator, which also benefits students with disabilities (Gairín, et al. 2013).

Faculty training was also identified by the faculty members as a facilitator, in agreement with the works of Moriña & Carballo (2018) and Pang (2018). However, the participants stated that, due to the voluntary nature of the continuous training

programmes, those faculty members who are not sensitive toward inclusion will not attend such courses.

Lastly, the third objective of this study was to know the recommendations of inclusive faculty members to make universities more inclusive. The obtained data show some guidelines to remove the barriers identified by the participants, which, according to them, hinder the full inclusion of students with disabilities. Specifically, and in agreement with the works of Núñez (2017) and Riddell et al. (2005), they encourage the university management teams to improve the student disability services by hiring more specialised staff. Although they state that these services provide support to students and faculty members, the participants also point out that such support, in some cases, takes a long time to arrive. As a result, the reasonable adjustments required to attend to the needs of these students are made on the fly, without previous planning. When this happens, some barriers may be reduced, but new difficulties may arise for students (Hughes, Corcoran, & Slee 2016). In this context, it is worth highlighting the words of Hockings (2010), who stated that, in order to provide an inclusive education, it is necessary to apply an "anticipatory approach of the curricular design" (pg. 4), which would allow responding to the needs of students with disabilities and promoting the social and educational inclusion of all students in a continuous manner (Bunbury 2018). In this line, other recommendations made by the faculty members are related to the creation of protocols or practical guidelines that provide the faculty with strategies, tools and resources that facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities in the classrooms, thereby complying with the regulations and guaranteeing the rights of these students. To this respect, the findings of Hsiao, Burgstahler, Johnson, Nuss and Doherty (2019) show that the provision of strategies and skills to attend to students with disabilities guarantees the full implementation of inclusive practices in the classroom. In

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this sense, the participants of the present study recommend the creation of real inclusive policies that go beyond a mere declaration of intentions.

Regarding faculty training in matters of disability, the inclusive faculty members highlighted the need to create training plans that involve the entire university community, which is in line with the conclusions of Murray, Lombardi, and Wren (2011) and De los Santos et al. (2019). Among other aspects, such training plans must provide information about the regulations, sensitise the academic community about the need to attend to the needs of students with disabilities and inform about the possible reasonable adjustments that can be made to guarantee equal opportunities. According to (Sandoval, Morgado, & Doménech 2020) these adjustments should involve physical changes in the classroom, improvements in teaching methodologies, accessibility of information, and the use of different material, human and technological resources, as well as flexibility in time and evaluation systems.

All these recommendations made by the participants of this study are especially relevant, as they are in agreement with those made by students with disabilities, who consider that, in order to really make classrooms more inclusive, the architectural spaces must be accessible to everyone, and faculty members must have a positive attitude toward disability and be trained in matters of disability (Moriña & Morgado 2018).

To conclude, the key findings of this study allowed us to draw some conclusions. Firstly, from the perspective of inclusive faculty, the main barriers to the inclusion of students with disabilities are the inaccessibility of spaces and study program, the negative attitude of some faculty members toward disability and reasonable adjustments, and political barriers. Secondly, there are elements that facilitate the inclusion of these students, such as student disability services and the training of some faculty members in disability and diversity matters. Lastly, the

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inclusive faculty recommend universities committed to inclusion to hire more technical staff, offer practical guides or action protocols to the faculty, and provide training plans in this area to the entire university community.

Main contributions and limitations

The results of this study allow advancing toward the real inclusion of students with disabilities in the university. This is an innovative work, since it shows, from the perspective of inclusive faculty members, the elements that hinder or facilitate the inclusion of university students with disabilities. Similarly, the faculty members provide some key recommendations for universities that would help remove the barriers that these students are still facing today and provide the necessary support, thus guaranteeing their educational inclusion.

Specifically, the results demonstrate the importance of creating student disability services in every faculty, which should facilitate the coordination between the different centres and central administration services of each university. Furthermore, the participants recommend the real implementation of the inclusive policies that already exist in the university, to guarantee the inclusion of students with disabilities. Lastly, a future line of action should focus on the participation of the entire university community (students, faculty members and administrative staff) in training and informative initiatives about attending to the needs of students with disabilities, with the aim of increasing the commitment and awareness of everyone in this matter.

With respect to limitations, this study was focused on the perspective of faculty members who carried out inclusive practices. In future works, it would be interesting to gather the opinions of other agents involved in the inclusion of students with disabilities, such as the technical staff of student disability services, inclusive faculty members from

other faculties and administrative and service staff.

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