Teaching for All: Profile of Faculty Members who Facilitate the Success and Inclusion of Students with Disability

Abstract

The presence of students with disability in university classrooms is a current reality, which implies the need to develop inclusive teaching practices.. The purpose of this study was to analyze the beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics of faculty members towards students with disability. A total of 42 participants were recruited since they had been previously selected as inclusive faculty members by students with disability. All participants taught at the faculties of education and belonged to 6 Spanish public universities. The biographic-narrative methodology was used, and the analysis of the data was defined by its narrative nature. The results indicate that the majority of faculty are either from the social model of disability or from inclusive education approaches. They value their attitude towards students with disabilities as positive. Among their personal characteristics, empathy, closeness, involvement, and vocation are highlighted; and regarding their professional characteristics, they point out their commitment to their work, flexibility, the use of participative methodologies, or their role as a guide in the teaching and learning process, among others. These results have clear implications for teacher training plans with the aim of promoting inclusive pedagogy in higher education.

Keywords: Attitude; Beliefs; Disability; Faculty member profile; Inclusive Higher Education.

Introduction

In recent years, universities have made great efforts for the inclusion of students with disability. However, inclusive education still poses a challenge to many universities. Since a few decades ago, there has been an increasing number of studies tackling this issue, focusing on possible causes and proposing diverse solutions for it (Scheef, Hollingshead, and Barrio 2020; Squires and Countermine, 2018).

With respect to international regulations about disability, reports such as the World Declaration on Education for All (United Nations 1990) and the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations 2006), show significant advances in the field of inclusive education. In Spain, the recent Organic Law of the University System determines that the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination on the grounds of disability must be guaranteed and establishes that universities must guarantee universal access to buildings and their physical and virtual environments, as well as to the teaching-learning and evaluation process for people with disabilities (Organic Law 2/2023). Therefore, it is especially necessary to introduce a new way of considering disability.

The Same Concept, Different Perspectives. Considerations on Disability

Throughout history, disability has not been always perceived the same way, nor has it been studied from the same paradigm. Pérez and Chhabra (2019) identify numerous theoretical models that try to explain disability, among which are the individualistic models that include the medical model; and the social model, in which the biopsychosocial and the human rights model, among others, are immersed.

The medical model of disability, attributes the causes of disability to the individual (Oliver 1990; Palmer and Harley 2012). From this model, people with disabilities are only considered valid for society if they are 'normalised' (Bingham et al. 2013). The social model of disability, which focuses the cause of disability on society, considers that the needs of people with disabilities come from the collective response of society to them (Gallagher, Connor, and Ferri 2014). Within the social model of disability, Pérez and Chhabra (2019) include the biopsychosocial model which understands disability as a result of the interaction of the person's state of health and the surrounding environment. Thus, from this model disability is referred to when the interaction between internal factors (state of health, treatment) and external factors (society, infrastructure) does not function or fails to function to its full potential (Shakespeare, Watson, and Alghaib 2016).

Pérez and Chhabra (2019) also include the human rights model of disability within the social model of disability, that emphasizes dignity as an inherent characteristic of human beings and impairment as part of human diversity and advocates that disability cannot be taken as an excuse that subtracts rights from these people (Degener, 2016). This model is closely linked to the inclusive education approach. This approach welcomes diversity in its whole, considering it as an inherent characteristic of human beings. The inclusive education considers disability as an asset and not as a problem (Booth and Ainscow 2002; Sapon-Shevin 2013) and it is based on the assumption that all students, regardless of their condition, must be given the chance to have quality learning and the right to participate in it.

The Faculty Members as a Key Element for the Real Inclusion of Students with Disability

Students with disability have become an emerging group in higher education, in the 2020/2021 academic year 23.851 students with disability were enrolled in Spanish universities (1.5% of all university students), this represents an increase of 4.5% with respect to the previous year (Universia Foundation 2021). This increase is also reflected in other contexts at the international level (Alhaznawi and Alanazi, 2021; Seale et al. 2020). This reality implies the need to make changes at the institutional level, since there are still barriers that hinder the full participation of these students in their learning process (Moriña and Orozco 2021). In this sense, some studies have reported that some of these barriers exist among faculty members, since, in some cases, these have shown a negative attitude towards disability (Gibson 2015).

Specifically, in the Spanish context, the recent report of the Universia Foundation (2021), indicates that, sometimes, there are faculty members who show a negative attitude towards these students, even showing a lack of respect and a lack of attention to their needs. The attitude of faculty members is a key element to achieve real inclusivity in the teaching-learning process (Alhaznawi and Alanazi 2021; Polo, Fernández-Jiménez, and Fernández 2018). In fact, it has been frequently observed that the positive attitude of faculty members has very significant implications for students with disability at the academic level, such as improvements in their academic performance and an increase in their interest and motivation for studying (Benkohila, Elhoweris, and Efthymiou 2020; Hansen, Dawson, and Specht 2017).

Generally, faculty members show a positive attitude towards these students (Lipka, Khouri, and Shecter-Lerner 2020; Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018; Polo, Fernández-Jiménez, and Fernández 2018). However, they do not always have the tools and knowledge required to facilitate the inclusion of these students. In fact, the good attitude usually shown by

these professionals has been reduced in many cases due to their lack of training in matters of disability and knowledge of how to make the necessary adjustments to address the needs of these students (Banks 2019; Moriña and Carballo 2018).

What Would the Profile of an Inclusive Faculty Member Look Like? Characteristics of Faculty Members who Develop Inclusive Educational Practices

There are different studies which offer diverse alternatives and examples to develop inclusive practices in the university context, with the aim of ensuring that the teaching practices are effective when including students with disability (Cotán et al. 2021; Hewett et al. 2017; 2018). Nevertheless, the responses to the needs of students with disability are rather reactive than proactive, which sometimes implies that the attention is neither sufficiently effective nor immediate (Sandoval, Morgado, and Doménech 2020; Hewett et al. 2017). This reactive response can create barriers to access to the curriculum for these students, a difficulty that could be mitigated if subjects were designed from the beginning with the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) in mind (Black, Weinberg, and Brodwin 2015).

There are few studies that provide data on the personal and professional characteristics of inclusive faculty members. Among the personal characteristics, students with disability have highlighted their comprehensive attitude, their flexibility towards their needs, the mutual trust and the close teacher-student relationship (Fuller et al. 2004; Kioko and Makoelle 2014). Likewise, faculty members have highlighted their flexibility and their comprehensive attitude (Kioko and Makoelle 2014; Stein 2014).

With respect to the professional characteristics, students with disability have claimed that this faculty member is characterised by using different means, ways and channels to transmit the

information and contents of the subject, adapting these contents to the needs of the students and being informed and trained in matters of disability (Hewett et al. 2017; Fuller et al. 2004; Kioko and Makoelle 2014; Morgado, Lopez-Gavira, and Moriña 2017). In agreement with the point of view of students with disability, faculty members have pointed out that the professional characteristics of inclusive faculty include the willingness to provide the necessary tools to facilitate the learning of their students, the use of diverse methodologies and a variety of channels to transmit the contents of the subject, and having information and training about the different disabilities and how to provide the help that these students may require (Carballo, Morgado, and Cortés-Vega 2021; Kioko and Makoelle 2014). Therefore, most of these characteristics, which both students and faculty members identify in inclusive faculty, are not exclusively linked to whether the student has a disability.

The objectives of the present study were the following:

- To analyze the conception of faculty members towards disability
- To examine the role of the attitude of faculty members in the learning of their students with disability
- To describe the personal and professional characteristics that define inclusive faculty members

Materials and Methods

This study is part of a broader project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, entitled "Inclusive Pedagogy at University; Narratives by faculty members (ref. EDU2016. 76587-R)"'. This project examined the beliefs, knowledge, designs and actions of inclusive university

faculty members. This paper, in particular, is focused on analysing, describing and understanding the conceptions and attitudes of inclusive faculty members towards disability. It also aims to describe the personal and professional characteristics that define these faculty members. The research questions that guided this analysis were the following: What is the faculty member's conception of disability?; How is the attitude of inclusive university faculty members towards students with disabilities?; What characteristics define participants as inclusive?; and What are the key characteristics of the ideal inclusive faculty?

Participants

A total of 65 faculty members who taught in the faculties of education at 10 Spanish universities were contacted. Finally, 42 faculty members from 6 Spanish universities participated. The participants were selected exclusively by students with disability.

The sample was accessed through two ways. On the one hand, the collaboration of the Disability Support Services (DSS) of the different universities was requested. The technical staff of these services contacted the students with disability to inform them about the project so that they could voluntarily nominate those faculty members who had facilitated their inclusion during their stay at the university. On the other hand, the snowball technique was used (Dusek, Yurova, and Ruppel 2015). Specifically, different members of the university community (faculty, students and other staff) informed students with disabilities about this project and invited them to participate by nominating a faculty member who facilitated their academic inclusion in the university. To this end, students with disabilities had to select faculty members who met the criteria that emerged from the results of a previous project in which barriers and supports were analyzed from the voices of students with disabilities (Moriña, Cortés-Vega, and Molina 2015):

- They believe in the possibilities of all students

- They facilitate learning processes

- Their teaching is active, using different methodological teaching strategies

- They show concern for their students' learning; they show flexibility, willing to help

- They motivate students

- They maintain close relationships and favor interactions among students

- They make you feel important, that you are one more in the classroom

- They allow students to participate in the class and build knowledge together

- The communication they maintain with you and your classmates is horizontal

With respect to the profile of the participants, their age ranged between 33 and 59 years, with an average of 41.2 years. Regarding gender, 17 were men (40.5%) and 25 were women (59.5%). The teaching experience of the participants ranged between 7 and 32 years, with an average of 15.8 years. The participants belonged taught to different fields of knowledge: Social Science (SS) (40%), Art and Humanities (AH) (31%), Health Science (HS) (17%), and Science (S) (12%).

Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

A semi-structured interview was designed ad hoc for the study to explore faculty beliefs about disability. Nineteen questions were asked, organised into six areas: (1) conception of disability; (2) attitude and role of faculty; (3) training on disability; (4) teaching and learning process; (5) reasonable accommodations; and (6) university. Specifically, in this paper we present the results related to areas 1 and 2. The questions asked were the following: What is your concept of disability? How do you think your attitude influences students' learning? How would you define

yourself as an inclusive faculty member? Which do you think are the fundamental characteristics, both personal and professional, of an ideal faculty member who develops inclusive education and gives a quality educational response to all students?

Trained members of the research team interviewed the participants. Most of the interviews (34) were face-to-face in places set aside for this purpose in the different universities, 6 through Skype and 2 via phone call. All of them were recorded in audio and had an average duration of 90 minutes. Finally, all interviews were transcribed by two members of the research team who had been trained for this task, and then translated into English by an expert translator, respecting at all times the literality of the discourse of the faculty members participating in the study.

Ethical aspects

At the beginning of the interviews, each participant signed an informed consent form. This document informed about the project and the treatment of the data in compliance with Organic Law 3/2018 on Personal Data Protection. All participants gave their informed consent and were assured that their data would be treated in a confidential and anonymous way. Likewise, they were informed that, if they wished to leave the study, their data would be deleted.

Data Analysis

A qualitative methodology was used. Specifically, a biographical-narrative methodology was followed, which allowed us to give a voice to the inclusive faculty selected by the students with disabilities and to gain access to their understanding of their reality. Faculty voices have often been silenced in research and from this approach their subjectivity is recognised and valued (Lesseliers, Van Hove, and Vandevelde 2009). Progressive coding was developed (Huber 2004).

Based on the interview script, a very broad system of categories was created, which was subsequently completed in a second stage of coding of the interviews, through which new codes appeared (for more information see Moriña, Sandoval, and Carnerero 2020). Specifically, this paper presents the results corresponding to the Beliefs dimension. Table 1 shows the system of categories and codes analysed in this paper. Finally, the data were processed through the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA.

Table 1

Categories and codes system. Own elaboration

Dimension	Categories	Subcategories	Indicators (codes)
Beliefs	**Conception of disability**	Models of disability	A1. Medical Model
			A2. Social Model
			A3. Inclusive Education Approach
	Attitudes	Role of attitude in student learning	B1. Positive influence on learning
			B2. Student interest, motivation, performance and engagement
		Variables linked to positive attitude	C1. Previous experiences with people with disability
			C2. Faculty training or research profile
			C3. Adjustments to the needs of the whole student body
			C4. Attention to the rights and interests of all students
			C5. Responsibility to comply with the regulations
	Faculty members' profile	Self-description	D1. Personal characteristics
			D2. Professional characteristics
		Ideal inclusive faculty	E1. Ideal Personal characteristics
			E2. Ideal Professional characteristics

Results

The results of this study allowed to understand the conceptions of the inclusive faculty members of Educational Sciences about disability, the influence of their attitude on the learning processes of students with disability, as well as the characteristics that define them as inclusive faculty members and those that would define the ideal inclusive faculty.

The Inclusive Faculty Members´ Conception of Disability

The first objective of this study was to know the conception of the faculty members about disability. The results indicated that the faculty members did not have a homogenous conception of disability. Only two participants (4,8%) from the field of Science (Organic Chemistry) supported the medical model to define disability. The rest supported either the social model of disability (n=26; 61,9%) or the approach of inclusive education (n=14; 33,3%).

Those who based their beliefs on the deficiency or medical model to define the term 'disability', attributed its causes to the individual and perceived it in terms of deficiency, difficulties or barriers, and limitations.

> *'It is a lack of something that could be emotional, physical... something that allows the person to get on in all circumstances at the same level as any other person' (Faculty 42, S).*

However, other faculty members understood disability from the social model, attributing its causes to other external variables and not to the individual, that is, as the consequence of social prejudices, difficulties and problems related to social contexts.

> *'I think that there are no disabled people; instead, we all have some degree of diversity. Thus, there are people who need some help in some aspects, scopes, teaching methodology, evaluation, etc., and other people who have other needs, and not because*

they may have what could be traditionally called a physical or mental disability, but for

other reasons.' (Faculty 12, SS).

Lastly, there were faculty members who supported the approach of inclusive education. They understood that the concept of disability comprises people with different capacities and related it to concepts such as equality, equity and challenges.

'I consider them all equal, while being aware that some students may have some type of

deficiency and other students may have another type of deficiency. Then, I try to be

sensitive with these differences. I combine the concept of equality with that of equity.

Thus, one must give all students what they need…' (Faculty 26, HS).

The Influence of Inclusive Faculty Members' Attitude on the Learning of Students with Disability

The second objective of this study was to examine the role of the attitude of faculty members in the learning of their students with disability. According to the results obtained, most of the faculty members considered that their attitude had a positive influence on the learning of their students.

'I think the only way to teach someone something is to get close, asking questions and

asking yourself questions too... Thus, I do believe that this works; people go home happy,

they thank you for that and they even say 'look, I have learned more in these four months

than in x time in high school.' (Faculty 24, AH).

Specifically, the participants stated that the positive attitude of the faculty members fosters the interest, motivation, academic performance and the involvement of the students and improves the interpersonal relationship between the faculty members and the students.

'I believe that being an open faculty, willing to help, makes the students become more

interested in the subject, which in turn makes them improve their academic performance. The faculty members who put more barriers and higher walls between them and the students usually obtain worse results, because the students become discouraged and scared...' (Faculty 41, S).

Some participants stated that this attitude was closely related to their previous experience with people with disabilities (students, friends or relatives).

'I believe it is experience, I have a deaf niece who is ten years old and so, of course, the sensitivity is there. I understand that you can have that sensitivity without the need for experience, but in my case, it is linked to personal experiences that I had' (Faculty 30, SS).

Other faculty members pointed out that their attitude was linked to their training, and to their teacher or researcher profile.

'I think that having medical training and working with human beings and suffering makes one become especially sensitised... as a psychologist' (Faculty 25, HS).

Another aspect related to the positive attitude towards care and attention to the needs of these pupils was the principle of equality. This led them to make the effort to offer a teaching adjusted to the needs of all students, regardless of their origin, their characteristics or whether they had a disability, and to base their reasoning on the attention to the diversity, integration and inclusion of all students.

'The fundamental basis of my subject is that we are educating citizens, and I believe in a school of and for all, and thus I must care for all ... because it seems to me that all my students must be equal. Therefore, I try to adapt' (Faculty 3, AH).

Likewise, many faculty members stated that they did not have a special or specific interest towards students with disability; they rather attended to the rights and interests of all their students.

> *'I believe that all students have the right to education, to realise their projects. I believe that we should help these students to achieve their goals. It is not a special interest towards disability, but an interest towards the students.... I think we should accompany them, regardless of whether they have a disability, come from another country, speak another language...' (Faculty 35, S).*

Moreover, they considered that attending to the interests of their students was a teaching requirement and a responsibility to comply with the regulations.

> *'I understand that it is my duty as a teacher to care for all the people I have in the classroom.' (Faculty 14, AH).*

The Self-Description of Inclusive Faculty and the Profile of the Ideal Inclusive Faculty Member

The third objective of this study was to describe the characteristics that define inclusive faculty members. In order to achieve this aim, participants were asked how they defined themselves as inclusive faculty member and how they would define the ideal inclusive faculty member.

On the one hand, the results indicated that the participants based the definition of themselves on personal characteristics such as close relationship, commitment, involvement, flexibility and thoroughness. Furthermore, they considered that they were faculty members who made the effort to induce in their students an intrinsic motivation, the interest in learning and their involvement in the learning process, as well as the value of respect.

'I think I am a friendly faculty. I try to keep very close relationships with my students within the teaching context. I care for their learning... I always try to motivate them, make them interested, make them see the application of everything we work on, make them see that the content of the subject is useful and necessary. I truly intend that, to have a teacher-student relationship based on bonding and the interest for learning…' (Faculty 29, SS)

Among the characteristics that defined them, other participants also highlighted empathy, communication, commitment with the students and teaching, concern for innovation, offering applied contents, and making sure that the subject was accessible and that the students felt respected.

'I establish close relationships within the pedagogic limits… by establishing fluid communication channels, with empathy and comprehension, I think we make a difference in what we do, e.g., in the evaluations, in the classroom, when correcting. Also, concerned about the contents, I always try to innovate, to provide something new and to offer them the applied version…' (Faculty 30, SS).

Likewise, they defined themselves as people with great vocation for teaching and highly motivated to address to the demands that emerge in the classroom, and even to participate in the resolution of conflicts that could be generated.

'I have a well-developed teaching vocation and I believe that the students perceived that. It is very important to show them that you love your job, that you love teaching, that you love this task, and they really give credibility to this kind of attitude. I think I am an

empathetic person, that I have the capacity to listen and, over all, I have the motivation to give a response to the students and to their problems in the classroom' (Faculty 11, AH).

They considered themselves as very critical people with their own teaching practice, which led them to reflect on their performance constantly.

'Well, passionate, constant, and hard-working. With a constant reflective attitude about my practice' (Faculty 12, SS).

Some indicated that they even cared for the happiness of their students and for waking this feeling in them.

'I always tell my students that, regardless of the capacities of each, the objective of the class is for everyone to achieve the feeling that they are progressing... My goal is that all my students improve and obtain the best results possible, so that they can enjoy the feeling that they are progressing' (Faculty 5, SS).

On the other hand, the results also allowed knowing how the participants defined the ideal inclusive faculty members. With respect to the personal characteristics, they considered empathy, close relationships, commitment and sensitivity towards the students, teaching vocation and capacity to listen.

'I think close relationships... a good inclusive faculty member takes the time to know his/her students, has them in the core of the teaching-learning process and, from that point, he/she demands efforts from the group... I think that's it: commitment, sensitivity, having a broad range of tools, getting information about what is being done and how it is done, and being able to recognise when things are not done properly and back up.' (Faculty 18, AH).

'First, you must love your job and enjoy it. Second, you must be empathetic and available whenever a student needs your help, regardless of whether he/she has a disability, because inclusive education is for everyone' (Faculty 42, S).

Regarding the professional characteristics, they frequently highlighted that ideal inclusive faculty members should be well-trained and use dynamic and participatory teaching methodologies, and their role should be focused on facilitating, mediating and providing resources and tools to the students.

'Knowing the subject matter very well, making teaching entertaining and learning easy, and facilitating the contents in a different way' (Faculty 41, S).

Discussion

This article sheds light on the conceptions of disability held by university faculty members who are considered inclusive by their students with disabilities. It also offers information on how these faculty members understand that their attitude influences the learning process of these students. Moreover, it provides an overview of the profile of inclusive faculty members, showing data of how they described themselves as inclusive faculty members and what characteristics they considered fundamental in the ideal inclusive faculty.

Regarding the conceptions of inclusive faculty members about disability, there is heterogeneity among the participants. Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves (2018) observed that most of the faculty members perceived disability from the medical model. In contrast, the participants of the present study show a heterogeneous view, since a minority of them support the medical model and the vast majority is in favor of either the social model of disability or the inclusive

education approach.

It has been found that the medical model is more present in the field of Health Science (Rosa et al. 2015) while the social model of disability and the inclusive education model have been more present in the field of Social Science, for example, in the area of Education (Zhang et al. 2018). The results obtained in this study are partially supported by those found in other studies, since those inclusive faculty members who support the medical or deficiency model to define disability belong to the field of Science, specifically Organic Chemistry, and not to the field of Health Science, as observed by Rosa et al. (2015) in their study. Thus, the obtained results indicate that the social model of disability and the inclusive education approach are present in Social Science, Art Humanities and Health Science.

An interesting result found in this study indicate that inclusive faculty members who start from the medical model to define the concept of disability, base their teaching practice on the social model of disability and the approach of inclusive education, such as participant 41 and 42. In response to the needs of their students with disability, they offer them support and show a positive attitude towards them so that they can enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other students (Kumar and Widerman 2014; Oliver 1990). This may be due to the pedagogical knowledge that these faculty members may have acquired through their interactions with other faculty members in the field of education.

These data allow asserting that changes are taking place in the way in which disability is being welcomed in the scope of higher education. In this sense, training in matters of disability is important, as it promotes conceptions of this based on both the social model of disability and the inclusive education approach (Sánchez-Díaz and Morgado 2023).

All participants of the present study consider that their attitude towards students with disability is positive, this result is in line with those found in previous studies (Lipka et al., 2020; Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018; Polo et al., 2018). Furthermore, the results suggest that such attitude has a very significant influence on the academic life of these students. Specifically, it is related to a greater academic motivation, greater involvement in their learning processes, improvements in their academic performance and better faculty-student relationships (Hansen, Dawson, and Specht 2017; Trolian et al. 2016).

Another interesting contribution of this study is that the results show that the positive attitude of inclusive faculty members towards students with disability is related to the previous experience with other people with disabilities (students, relatives, friends, etc.), affinity with their professional profile, the principle of equality, and compliance with the teaching tasks and with the university politics related to the attention to students. All this leads them to develop actions that favor an inclusive teaching practice, based on the inclusive education approach, which consider diversity as an opportunity and defend the right of all students to receive quality education, as claimed by Sapon-Shevin (2013).

All this allows concluding that the positive attitude of the faculty towards students with disability is a key factor to achieve inclusive teaching and learning processes (Alhaznawi and Alanazi 2021; Polo, Fernández-Jiménez, and Fernández 2018).

Lastly, the data of this study allow drawing clear conclusions about the characteristics that define a faculty member who develops inclusive educational practices and about the characteristics that an ideal inclusive faculty should have. Regarding the characteristics that define the participants as inclusive faculty members, the great majority of participants

highlighted, among their personal characteristics, empathy, communication skills and teaching vocation, which they also considered fundamental of the ideal inclusive faculty. Moreover, they described themselves as friendly people, committed to their job and flexible, which are qualities found also by Fuller et al. (2004), Kioko and Makoelle (2014) and Stein (2014).

Many participants also mentioned other characteristics that defined them as professionals. Among these, they highlighted faculty training as a key aspect to develop inclusive educational practices. Likewise, they indicated that it is important to be informed about the characteristics of their students (type of disability, needs and the necessary adjustments). These results are in line with those obtained by Morgado, Lopez-Gavira, and Moriña (2017); Hewett et al. (2017); Kioko and Makoelle (2014) and Reupert, Hemmings, and Connor (2010), who stated that both faculty training and information about the different disabilities and needs of these students are fundamental characteristics of the ideal inclusive faculty member. For this reason, it is important for universities committed to inclusion to offer specific training programs to their faculty members, as proposed by Carballo, Morgado, and Cortés-Vega (2021b).

With respect to faculty performance, the majority of the participants state that they made constant efforts to offer applied examples of the subject matter, which is consistent with the recommendations of Sánchez-Díaz and Morgado (2023) and Reupert, Hemmings, and Connor (2010) to favor inclusive teaching practices. Furthermore, and in line with the observations of Fuller et al. (2004), the inclusive faculty members claim that they offer extended contents as much as possible, using materials to complement the content of the subject, such as articles, book chapters, press documents, etc. With respect to the teaching methodologies, they generally state that they use participatory and innovative methodologies, and they consider that their role as

faculty members consist in facilitating and mediating the educational processes and offering resources and tools to their students to succeed in their academic life (Alvarez, Guasch, and Espasa 2009).

Among the professional characteristics that the ideal inclusive faculty member must have, numerous participants highlight dynamism, both in teaching and in the methodologies used. To this respect, Sánchez-Díaz and Morgado (2023) and Kioko and Makoelle (2014) stated that faculty members who develop inclusive practices must use different teaching techniques and offer the content through different methodological strategies, avoiding master lectures as the only way of teaching (Moriña 2021).

This professional profile of ideal inclusive faculty is intimately connected to the principles of the UDL. These principles enact offering students different alternatives for access, representation and participation, thus considering students' different ways of learning (CAST 2018; Kumar and Wideman 2014). UDL-based teaching practices, therefore, provide learning opportunities for all students, including students with disability, while promoting more motivating and meaningful learning for them (Scott et al. 2019).

By way of conclusion and imagining the profile of what defines the inclusive faculty members, the vast majority of participants highlight the presence of personal characteristics such as empathy, communication (including a friendly treatment and the capacity to listen to the students), flexibility, commitment and teaching vocation. On the other hand, the professional characteristics of the ideal inclusive faculty member considered by the participants are faculty training, the use of examples applied and adapted to the reality of the students, dynamism in teaching and in the methodologies used, and facilitating the necessary resources and tools for

their optimal learning. This is a wide range of characteristics that, combined with a positive attitude towards disability and the conception of the teaching-learning process from an inclusive approach, will help students with disability and the rest of students to find themselves in a positive, comfortable and pleasant environment that will ultimately favor inclusive education in the scope of higher education.

Limitations, Implications and Future Directions

One of the limitations of this study is related to the sample, since the results are focused on revealing the conceptions, characteristics and attitudes of inclusive faculty members who taught in the faculties of education and who belonged to the fields of Art and Humanities, Science, Social Science and Health Science, with no other fields of knowledge being represented. The data gathering process was slow and costly, since the faculty members were not contacted directly; instead, we had to previously contact the students with disability to ask them for the data of faculty members that had facilitated their inclusive education. Although this procedure had been slow and costly, the process guaranteed access to faculty members who had truly developed inclusive educational practices and, therefore, allowed knowing examples of good practices to favor inclusive education in the scope of higher education.

Specifically, the findings of this study provide very interesting evidence about the profile of inclusive faculty members: how they perceive disability, how their attitude is towards students with disability and what personal and professional characteristics identify and define the ideal inclusive faculty member.

The data found allow to fill a gap in the scientific literature on this topic that has been so scarcely analyzed. The study makes it possible to obtain a holistic view of the profile of inclusive faculty members in the university context from the faculty´s own voice and to contrast this view with the previously studied perspective of students with disability. Likewise, one of the key implications of this study is that it provides a 'snapshot' of the profile of inclusive faculty members for those faculty members who wish to engage in inclusive practices, as the data reveal their personal and professional characteristics and attitudes towards students with disabilities. These data also should be taken into account in university policies, including faculty training plans oriented towards achieving inclusive university teaching (training of junior faculty members, specific information and training on disability, inclusive methodological strategies, etc.).

Thus, future studies should consider the voice of faculty members from different fields of knowledge, and include other informers, such as students with disability themselves and even students from other minorities. This would allow obtaining a broader and detailed perspective about inclusive teaching practices in the scope of higher education.

Disclosure Statement

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