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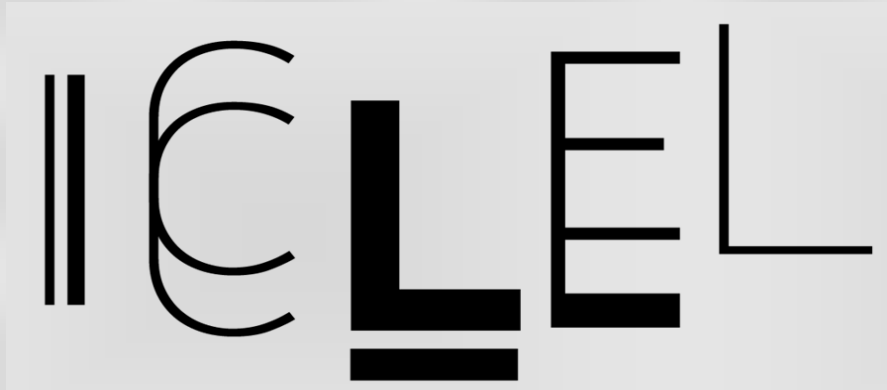
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ICLEL 2015 PROCEEDINGS BOOK

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Effective teaching strategies to the educational exclusion*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify effective practices in education in order to address the issue of failure amongst pupils in secondary schools. The methodological design for the investigation, of descriptive nature, has been that of a case study, with three sources of information: documentary analysis, classroom observations, and the perceptions of the persons in charge of implementing the attention to diversity measures. Among the conclusions from the study about prevention of early dropouts, it is worth mentioning, on the one hand, the importance of carrying out planning, organization and teaching strategies with regard to scholar inclusion. On the other hand, the necessity of bringing out new types of coexistence based on respect, as well as developing educational policies that help to encourage a higher level of social commitment, and a better professional development for teachers. The participation of all the relevant sectors is essential if the school is to see itself as a unit of exchange or a research space which incorporates differentiation into its processes of innovation.¹

Keywords Inclusion, difficulties in schools, failure in schools, vulnerability

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union has committed itself to creating a knowledge-based society in Europe, and considers the fight against failure in schools to be a basic educational problem. In fact, in June 2010, the EU Summit approved five goals to be achieved by 2020, where the need to reduce early school leavers to 10% or less is tackled once again (it had previously been dealt with in the Lisbon Strategy). According to the OECD report “Education at a Glance 2013” the Spanish education system has higher school failure rates than the European average, and one of the highest amongst neighboring countries. The numbers of early school leavers within the Spanish education system has been falling moderately since the beginning of the economic crisis and fell by 25% in 2013, although in spite of this it continues to be more than double the European average. Moreover, none of the plans approved by the Spanish Government over recent years have made a positive impact in this regard.

The latest report, “Education at a Glance. OECD indicators (2012)”, shows that 49% of Spanish people complete only their compulsory education. Although this percentage has decreased year by year (in 1997 it had reached 69%), we are still a very long way from the European and OECD figures. In Spain’s case, more than 130,000 pupils left compulsory education with no qualifications whatsoever, and with no effective way of getting back into the system, meaning they will have no upper secondary qualifications and will become what the European Union terms “early school leavers”. Such high failure rates are not justifiable in a country with income levels such as Spain’s, where nursery and primary education are good, and where there are high figures for university attendance. Such high school failure rates are therefore unjustified, and they occur for reasons and variables which are rectifiable.

There have been different approaches to understanding the phenomenon, one of which is linking school failure to social exclusion in education, where researchers agree that it should be analyzed from a multidimensional perspective (Vaquero 2011; Choi and Calero, 2013). In this regard, all the reports from the OECD that have dealt with the issue in question point to three ways in which this phenomenon may manifest itself. The first is low academic achievers, i.e. those who do not attain minimum levels of learning during their school life, the second when a pupil leaves or finishes compulsory education with no relevant qualifications, and the third points to the social consequences and employment implications for these pupils who are so ill-prepared. Educational failure, seen in terms of social exclusion in schools, can therefore be understood as a process with different stages (during a pupil’s education, at the end of it and after leaving school) which, in turn, have knock-on effects.

Within this context, we have put forward the following research questions:

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What educational practices help bring about a decrease in educational failure in underprivileged contexts?

What is the role of teachers and the managerial staff in developing effective educational practices?

To what extent do internal practices (curricular, organisational, those related to relations with surroundings, etc.) developed by schools contribute to problems involving attendance and school leaving rates.

If we are to do what we can to mitigate failure and social exclusion in schools, we must identify and develop effective educational practices to combat these tendencies in pupils. In this sense, many authors at both national and international level have researched and studied themes such as school failure and social exclusion, difficulties in schools, vulnerability and pupils at risk (Echeita, 2008, Jiménez, Luengo and Tabernet, 2009; Luzón, Porto, Torres and Ritacco, 2009; Sammons and Bakkum, 2011, Di Franco, 2013). In the last decade, failure in schools has been the subject of a variety of studies and reports within OECD, as noted above, which have approached the problem from the point of view of a “lack of inclusion in schools” (Escudero, 2009; González Faraco, Luzón, and Torres Sánchez, 2012; Fernández-Batanero, 2010; Echeita, 2013).

Examining the school context may be a good way of understanding the role it plays in why pupils leave school, and a way of considering changes in approach and organisational dynamics to prevent early school leaving. This could be achieved in a number of ways, one of which involves improving teaching practices so that they “guarantee success for all pupils”. This inevitably leads to the development of good practices in schools, in other words, those which improve learning for all pupils so that they can lead effective and productive lives i.e. acquire the skills needed to become a citizen in a democratic, plural and diverse society (Walberg and Paik, 2007, Brophi, 2007). Equally, we agree with Marqués (2002) who considers “good teaching practices” to be educational measures which facilitate the development of learning activities with high educational value, such as those involving a high incidence of disadvantaged groups, less failure in schools in general, more in-depth learning, etc. Ultimately, these are learning strategies aimed at improving the quality of life of both individuals and groups (Coffield and Edward, 2009).

Nevertheless, “good practice” is a complex subject, involving a multitude of variables. Escudero (2009) stresses that teachers should reflect on pedagogic approaches defined by others. Coffield and Edward (2009), add to the five dimensions and introduce context and students, referring specifically to the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, highlighting the leading role of teachers and possible professional training needs, in addition to drawing attention to the importance of creating a link between good practice and family and social contexts.

If we base our description on inclusive practices on the criteria provided by the "Public Platform for Inclusive Schools" (2006), we may affirm that good practices are those which:

a. Include all pupils; b. Encourage an inclusive culture within schools; c. Involve effective cooperation between the various education players; d. Use various resources and different educational strategies; e. Have a flexible organizational model; f. Have a specific and systematic programme. However, talking about good educational practices also involves talking about high-quality teachers, who are personally committed to the success of all their pupils (Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005; Hanushek and Woessman, 2010), where the attitude of teachers represents a crucial aspect in the success of inclusive classrooms. Positive attitudes from teachers towards inclusion reflect themselves in their behaviour in classrooms (Leatherman and Niemeyer, 2005). At the same time, teachers who are aware of their teaching approaches (aims and strategies) and who use them well, obtain better academic results with their students (Maquilón and Hernández Pina, 2010).

Furthermore, it is now an indisputable fact that the collaborative relationship which must exist between the family and school depends, to a large extent, on the perceptions and attitudes that the relatives have towards the schools and their staff. There are even scholars who believe that variables related to the family environment represent the main predictors of a student's academic achievement and that these are even more important in determining such achievement than school related variables (Brunner and Elacqua, 2003). In this regard, we find an abundance of studies which reveal the relationship between family involvement in homework and the positive perceptions of parents of children with special educational needs regarding the inclusion process (Elzein, 2009; Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2010; Olsson and Roll-Pettersson, 2012; Arellano and Peralta, 2013).

Another variable to take into account regarding educational inclusion and school failure is the leadership exercised by managerial staff within schools as these individuals play a very important role in terms of developing changes to teaching practices, the quality of these practices and the impact of these on the quality of teaching for pupils at schools (Currie and Lockett, 2011; Jappinen, 2012). Good and inclusive managerial practices refer more to collective processes than to individual action, expanding the role of leadership to include the participation and representation of teachers, administrators at various levels and members of the school community, including of course the pupils themselves (Ryan 2006).

However, even if schools can do little about the characteristics and socio-economic circumstances of its pupil intake, they are nevertheless obliged to provide rich and effective educational environments for “all” their pupils. From this starting point, internal assessments of the school and teaching staff, as well as a good look at social and education policies may help them not only to determine whether or not there is good practice, but also to reveal the barriers which are preventing it from happening.

2. METHOD

The research was designed as a case study from a descriptive perspective. The general aim of the research focuses on identifying “good practices” which have been shown to be effective, in the sense that they bring about highly significant levels of learning amongst the vast majority of secondary education pupils. The following data form part of the research project detailed above. They are concerned specifically with practices and results involving pupils who experience pronounced difficulties with the curriculum and mainstream learning in compulsory secondary education, and who therefore run a high risk of being educationally and socially excluded.

Participants

The study focused on a state secondary school (covering compulsory years of education) in Seville (Spain), situated in one of the most disadvantaged and underprivileged areas of the city. The school was selected on the basis of two criteria: firstly, because it was categorized by the Education Authority as a “Special Measures” school, and also because it had reduced its pupils’ “failure rate” at the end of their compulsory education by 27% in the last four years. There are 573 pupils enrolled at this school, of which 18% are not Spanish, these pupils coming from Morocco, Sahara, Romania, China, Bolivia and Colombia. Diversity support programmes and measures currently under development and which form the subject of our study, are the following: the *Mentoring at School programme* which is put into practice during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of compulsory secondary education, with 6 groups each made up of 10 pupils; the *Compensatory Education programmes* with 12 groups and a total of 317 pupils, and the *Curriculum Development programme* with one group and a total of 15 pupils.

As soon as the school had been selected, we proceeded to analyse the school’s documentation and carry out in-depth interviews with the management team, staff in the Guidance Department and teachers involved in the development of the various measures for differentiation. We also carried out classroom observations. The in-depth interviews and classroom observations were all carried out during the 2009-10 school year.

Overall, 47 in-depth interviews were carried out and 12 classes were observed, these taking part within the context of the *School Mentoring at School* (2nd and 3rd years), *Compensatory Education* (2nd and 3rd years) and *Curriculum Development programmes* (4th year).

Our theoretical reference for analysing and interpreting the data was the theory of “good practice”, and the theoretical framework helped us define some specific criteria for identifying good practice. The concept refers specifically to the beliefs, perceptions, vision and values of the teaching staff, the values and expectations inherent in the programmes and how they contribute to reducing the risk of pupils leaving school without the knowledge they require, however little that may be. It also refers to the selection and organisation of learning content, clarity in terms of the type of learning and objectives (particularly with regard to the type of contents and learning used within these measures) and tasks, activities, materials and personal/social relations in class. Finally, it involves the assessment of learning and of schools, their teaching staff, families and the community.

Most secondary schools in a socio-economically, educationally and culturally disadvantaged context, with pupils at risk of educational exclusion at school and in danger of not completing their compulsory secondary education with any degree of success, have considered within their policy documentation a series of normative measures for achieving the required learning. These, however, have their own methodological variations, reorganisation of curriculum contents or programmes for differentiation of the curriculum (whether socio-linguistic or technological/scientific), along with strategies for adapting them. The programmes and measures for differentiation currently under development, which formed the subject of our study, were as follows: the Curricular Development Programme, Compensatory Education programmes and the voluntary programme, “Mentoring at School”.

In this chapter we present the qualitative results obtained from the analysis of data gathered in a secondary school (taken as the actual unit of study), and more specifically, from the documentary analysis, which includes interviews and classroom observation.

The interview protocol was evaluated using the technique known as “expert opinion”, in which nine specialists took part from a number of Spanish universities. They were chosen according to the following

criteria (Scientific level and teaching category; Recognition as a researcher; Research work in a relevant field; Practical experience in the profession; Years of experience as a researcher).

The in-depth interviews focused on the following aspects: pupils attending the programme, the curriculum, the internal context of the school; support, resources and professional training for teachers; and general assessment of the programme. The contents were analysed using the computer program Nudit 5 (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) and in the following phases: pre-analysis, formulation of the categorisation system, codification, analysis and interpretation.

The results are presented below in a number of heuristic categories.

3. RESULTS

From an analysis of its documentation, we noticed that the school had a strong interest in providing an appropriate response to differentiation in classrooms, and in guaranteeing the success of all pupils as far as possible. In this way, the Education Plan the school is developing revolves around five basic principles (safeguarding mixed, interactive groups and rejecting homogeneous forms of group organisation; incorporating as many resources as possible into the classroom; adapting the curriculum; seeking a new model for working together; training teachers).

“All this is why there is a commitment to mixed interactive groups, which encourage communication between pupils through discussion and reasoning. They promote mutual help which benefits everyone and develops meaningful interaction between pupils.” (Educational project, 2007).

Focusing on the measures aimed at ensuring that pupils achieve the Certificate of Secondary Education, we shall begin with the “personalised curriculum”, which can be taken as the basis for combining comprehensivity with differentiation. The first stage in adapting the curriculum, at both personal and individual level and at group level, is the assessment undertaken by the Guidance Department when pupils start their first year of secondary. The department conducts its own tests, linking them to primary school records and information from meetings with tutors in the pupil’s old school. The aim of this initial assessment or appraisal is, in fact, to consider the individual needs of each pupil. On the basis of this, support or learning reinforcement groups are formed for those who have fallen the furthest behind, especially in basic subjects (language and maths). However, it is the teacher’s job to personalise tasks and adapt them to the needs of pupils who are falling behind in their learning.

Support groups are composed of pupils who are behind in the curriculum, whether because they are considered to have less ability to learn or because they are less motivated. In third year, pupils who are motivated to succeed but are unable to do so are separated from those who display some form of disruptive behaviour. The first group is given differentiated support and, if necessary, they can enrol in the “Mentoring in Schools” programme. The second group is given help in reinforcing basic skills, mostly language and maths.

It should be noted that pupils who have repeated a year, but who are motivated and in risk of not passing, receive help from the “Differentiation Programme”. There is no doubt that this measure improves chances of success, and the vast majority of pupils succeed in their aims (a recognised school qualification). However, despite this, the teachers are aware that these pupils are not equipped to study for the Baccalaureate, and some of them are steered towards work-oriented modules.

Finally, as a voluntary measure towards differentiation, it is worth noting that those involved in the “Mentoring in Schools” programme indicated that they were very satisfied with the results. The programme had made a good impression in a number of schools which had embraced the programme from the start. They saw better academic results, higher expectations in the pupils taking part and greater involvement from families in their children’s education.

The programme involves six groups with ten pupils each, and it is aimed at pupils in the first three years of secondary school who join the programme voluntarily. They come from families with a low cultural or vulnerable social background, or who live on the edge of social exclusion. For four hours a week, spread over two afternoons, they learn how to work independently and develop their learning skills to help them carry out tasks under the guidance of a teacher or teaching assistant with whom they can discuss their work. The programme works well, thanks to the low numbers in each group (ten pupils) and written agreement from parents that pupils will not be absent without a good reason. There is even a waiting list should any pupils withdraw. During the sessions, computers are available and the library is staffed.

Following this review of differentiation strategies, we note below some of the educational practices which the school has implemented and considers effective. In order to do this, we will arrange them according to the pupils, the curriculum, teaching staff and the internal context of the school itself.

We describe here a series of learning activities relating to the field of students. Firstly, our interviews and observations highlight the need to break with what the teachers themselves term “more traditional methodologies”, which were not able to keep pupils motivated, which are based on the use of abstract language and where the pupils get used to distancing themselves from what is going on in the classroom.

“We have to leave aside more traditional methodologies which do not succeed in motivating the pupils, where the students tend to have no interest in class work and have a negative attitude towards everything to do with school” (Teacher, 3).

This methodology encourages smaller groups which facilitate individual attention, especially in groups of pupils within differentiation programmes. All groups in the school are mixed, and homogenous groups are rejected on the basis that they involve segregation. Interaction is seen as the basis for their learning strategy with a definite commitment to collaborative learning. More able pupils help struggling ones to overcome their difficulties. Pupils tutor others as a matter of course, and this benefits both pupils. The school also has teams of volunteers who are able to help pupils as friends rather than as teachers. These volunteers are particularly committed to the school, and this has become a cornerstone of the social support system.

“Dividing pupils into homogeneous groups reduces the ratio, but this is not enough to change the dynamics of the classroom. It is possible to achieve exactly the same with less pupils as with twice as many. Smaller class sizes should not be based on dividing pupils according to learning levels which segregate, but should be used to take advantage of more participatory methodologies” (Educational Curriculum Project).

In terms of work methodology, the school concentrates more on detailed understanding of the material than providing a large quantity of it, linking the contents to the pupils' interests, encouraging motivation, interrelating themes and materials, making use of themes, case studies and practical issues, and paying a great deal of attention to pupils' actual learning levels. This encourages each of them to pay attention and follow the class (personalising the content), and helps maintain positive personal relations with them in terms of support, help, encouragement, willingness to help and getting the best out of their learning.

Another aspect we wish to highlight is the level of independent learning in the classroom. The teacher has a lesser role and pupils' roles are increased, so that there is no need for constant supervision from the teacher. This is an important feature of the Mentoring in Schools programme, where the teacher can be seen guiding pupils in their work. There is not only collaboration between teachers in the classroom, pupils also work together in most of their classroom activities.

“Throughout my years as a teacher in the Mentoring in Schools programme, I have realised that we have to change roles and that we should spend less time explaining things to pupils and more time planning, supervising and working together with the group” (Interview n° 4).

In relation to the curriculum field, say that with respect using lesson and curriculum planning as a tool for improvement there is a basic concern with these measures is how to select and organise content, and how to clarify learning targets (aims and skills). Curricular planning for these measures (even if it is not always coordinated) in which the strategies and activities are considered to be “good practice”, require additional input from teachers, and this effort is clearly reflected in the progress in class.

In another sense, one of the main dilemmas facing the school in terms of adapting the curriculum for this type of pupil is deciding which elements should be different and which should remain similar.

“The important thing is to work out what these pupils need to know, and then we have to make the course content meaningful for them. To do this, all the teachers have to work together in a co-ordinated way” (Teacher, 14).

To say also that marking schemes based on clear criteria in terms of learning goals and how they will be assessed. In their marking schemes, teachers take into account the starting levels of each pupil, helping each one to meet any needs they may have.

Assessment is considered to be a resource for the benefit of learning, not just to provide qualifications, and it helps adjust and regulate learning processes. Evaluation is seen as an ongoing, formative and discerning process which makes it easier to individualise teaching and learning processes.

Decisions on what to include are based on fundamental concepts. The materials used in the classroom contain no academic language. The contents are organised so that the materials are interrelated and emphasise joint processes (such as making the contents easy to understand and relevant to everyday life, organising learning around projects and practical work, making use of pupils' interests, environment and real-life experiences).

The materials are created and adapted to suit different subject matter and learning levels. Staff in the language, English, social studies and maths departments create their own resources or adapt existing ones for most of their groups, especially for first and second year secondary pupils.

The elaboration of the initial diagnosis, pupils who have fallen behind by two years or more when they enter secondary education are given an initial assessment by the school's guidance team. These pupils are assessed individually to see whether they come from a vulnerable family background which may be prone to social exclusion, whether in terms of employment, cultural factors or the break-up of the family.

In the school we studied for this research, the participation of family and community is considered very important, especially in preventing absenteeism. There can only be commitment from both sides when families and the community feel that they are an integral part of the learning project. The teachers and

management team value the participation of the community very highly, and are therefore helping to open up institutional channels which enable this to happen.

Likewise, with the observations there parts that classrooms are spaces which are open to the community. Families are always encouraged to take part in academic and cultural activities or fun-type events. All available resources are brought into the classroom, avoiding anything inappropriate or anything that might lead to segregation.

Regarding to teachers it is important to highlight the huge professional and personal involvement of the teachers who are working on the various programmes to ensure that their pupils progress and improve in all aspects of their personal, academic and professional learning. The people behind these measures sometimes note that this was one of the original reasons for implementing them in this school. It is remarkable how, despite having no specific training in these programmes or differentiation strategies, and with pupils clearly at risk of social exclusion, a large number of the teachers we observed and interviewed have training or experience in a complementary area which gives them a greater variety of resources or strategies for use in their teaching work.

Training is seen as professional development, and reflective practice is one of the main strategies. The teachers are aware that working in a socially and educationally disadvantaged environment involves knowledge, training and the acquisition of skills to develop specific strategies towards “success at school” for all pupils.

One of the things we saw again and again in our observations was the personal and social support the pupils received. For this reason, we can demonstrate that there is considerable effort to ensure pupils have high expectations about their learning potential.

“We try to make sure that these pupils start to feel capable of learning again and have the desire to learn. This means having confidence in them and using much more contextualised and pupil-centred methodologies (Teacher, 12).

Part of the reason for this school’s success is the way it sees respect as the foundation for working together, respect for everyone as learners, especially with regard to learning in mainstream classrooms. We respect the desire to learn, and all attempts to learn, not the place in the curriculum where each individual learns. There is respect for all members of the school, whatever their role or contribution.

“The way we interact in the classroom and at school needs to become more human. Teachers have to be able to motivate pupils, to make them hungry for knowledge and learning. We have to exchange an atmosphere of confrontation and punishment for one of reflection, understanding and shouldering of responsibilities. Respect is at the centre of our model of working together” (Educational Curriculum Project).

The teachers try to create their own materials, teaching units, topics and projects. If material is used from books, it is seen as a starting point for preparing material which can help orient pupils in their class work.

“We have to contextualise the materials. In most of the books, you find more learning strategies than content” (Teacher, 9).

Amongst the teachers we interviewed and the classrooms we observed, we wish to highlight how often teachers share work within the same class. Co-teaching not only improves their ability to attend to the needs of the pupils, it also requires agreement between teachers on the learning activities they are developing. The support afforded by bringing in a second teacher is not only aimed at pupils at risk of educational exclusion at school (although with two teachers, each one can dedicate specific time to providing individual attention in the classroom) but also at the teachers and the whole class. Co-teaching is used in all language, English and maths classes. Volunteers are used in language and social studies, and Special Needs teachers are available in language and maths lessons in all first year groups.

This is an essential factor in schools where there is a high standard of learning. Not only leadership with regard to other teachers, but also leadership of pupils.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The most important conclusions we wish to highlight include the following: firstly, that no measure to prevent social exclusion in schools (and consequently failure in schools) can be effective if all the members of the school do not support it or are not prepared to make significant changes to improve the quality of their learning environments. This must also become a fundamental element in the school’s daily objectives. “Good practice” is linked to the personal, rather than the professional commitment of the teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005; Hanushek and Woessman, 2010), so it is clear that the success of any measure depends on the feelings of the school management team and the teacher or team of teachers carrying out the measure. These coincide with work carried out by Currie and Lockett (2011) and Jappimen (2012). In this sense, we were able to demonstrate that the teaching staff were highly involved with and informed about the pupils’ situations, and that they made efforts to provide innovative solutions and create

attractive teaching units and projects with a solid base. They did all this without the benefit of specific pedagogic training in these programmes and measures. Thus, we are able to say that we coincide with the findings of Leatherman and Niemeier (2005) when they state that the attitude of teachers represents a crucial aspect for the success of inclusive classrooms. Another factor which we consider to be crucial in order to implement good practices is cooperation between staff in order to adapt their teaching methods and seek out alternative strategies.

Secondly, the strategies and plans which are developed need to be based on the school's exploration and understanding of issues, such as why pupils stay away from school, why they feel alienated from the school environment or from the curriculum, and distance themselves from it, and why they are not socially engaged or focused on their learning. It is essential, therefore, to determine the extent to which the infrastructure itself, the curriculum offered, the learning which is developed in the classroom, interaction with the environment and the school's ethos contribute to the problems of support and early school leavers. Basic agreement on an analysis of the reasons for these problems is possibly the first step in improving current methods.

Thirdly, the development of classroom teaching is based on a more professional approach characterised by a relaxed atmosphere of trust and respect, where positive expectations are instilled in the pupils about their learning options and where measures are taken to adapt the curriculum to the diversity of the pupils.

The fourth, a good relationship between the school and families. In this regard, we coincide with studies by scholars such as Elzein (2009), Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2010), Olsson and Roll-Pettersson (2012), Arellano and Peralta (2013), where a positive correlation between family involvement and academic results is found.

Finally, we wish to note the importance of pedagogic leadership in school management teams. Pedagogic training for team members considerably helps to overcome difficulties with implementing integrated projects in schools. These findings coincide with those of Ryan (2006).

Implications fall into various spheres:

The first involves a political aspect, with the aim that authorities consider and favour inclusive proposals and do not sustain a model for schools based on homogeneity, competitiveness and differences between pupils when developing legislation.

The second involves the Spanish educational authorities with the aim of them developing comprehensive training plans within the framework of the principles of educational inclusion, where this is regarded as that which rejects exclusivity in favour of diversity and which promotes high-quality educational and training processes based on human relations. However, in order for a holistic vision and subsequent development of rationality and criticality, in addition to their integration and social analysis, to be achieved, these plans must train aspiring teachers and equip them with the skill of reflecting upon their actions and ways of acting, providing them with a strategic vision of their surroundings. This vision may integrate and develop skills and competencies which a high-quality level of teaching requires, i.e. comprehensive and strategic training.

The third involves the educational community in general since it is necessary to make known and, at the same time, recognise the importance of high-quality teaching at schools, good teaching practices and contributions to knowledge on school improvements which this group develops in their day-to-day work as professionals and the results of which have been reflected in research over the past twenty years.

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