





# Inclusive competence in teaching practice: bibliometric analysis and categorization proposal

## *Competencia inclusiva en la práctica docente: análisis bibliográfico y propuesta de categorización*

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### Abstract

Inclusive education is an essential component of regular education, which implies that teachers attend to diversity in their classrooms, therefore, it is expected that they are prepared to exercise their profession in an adequate manner.

In order to know which competencies are necessary to serve students with Special Educational Needs, the objective of this research is to propose a theoretical categorization of the most relevant competencies through teaching practices by means of a review of tested instruments.

To achieve this objective, a review of 24 quantitative studies assessing the competencies, perception and inclusive practices of teachers in various countries was carried out. For the selection of the instruments, certain selection criteria were established, such as keywords, year of publication, reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) and studies with factor analysis, to ensure the quality and validity of the construct.

From the instruments analyzed, 18 tools with 87 different dimensions were identified, which were classified and conceptually categorized into five main dimensions: Pedagogical process, Inclusive practices, Collaborative work, Attitude and values, and Professional development. These categories contemplate the inclusive competencies that it is considered that teachers should possess in their professional practice.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, teacher competencies, questionnaire, teacher training, educational needs

### Resumen

La educación inclusiva es un componente esencial de la educación regular, que implica que los docentes atiendan a la diversidad en sus aulas, por lo tanto, se espera que estén preparados para ejercer su profesión de manera adecuada. Para conocer cuáles son las competencias necesarias para atender a estudiantes con Necesidades Educativas Especiales, el objetivo de esta investigación es proponer una categorización teórica de las competencias más relevantes a través de las prácticas docentes por medio de una revisión de instrumentos probados. Para lograr este objetivo, se llevó a cabo una revisión de 24 estudios cuantitativos que evalúan las competencias, la percepción y las prácticas inclusivas de los docentes en diversos países. Para la selección de los instrumentos, se establecieron ciertos criterios de selección, como palabras clave, año de publicación, índice de confiabilidad (Alpha de Cronbach) y estudios con análisis factorial, para garantizar la calidad y validez del constructo. A partir de los instrumentos analizados, se identificaron 18 herramientas con 87 diferentes dimensiones, que fueron clasificadas y categorizadas conceptualmente en cinco dimensiones principales: Proceso pedagógico, Prácticas inclusivas, Trabajo colaborativo, Actitud y valores y Desarrollo profesional. Estas categorías contemplan las competencias inclusivas que se considera que deberían poseer los docentes en su práctica profesional.

**Palabras clave:** educación inclusiva, competencias del docente, cuestionario, formación de docentes, necesidades educativas.

## 1. Introduction

Education, as a fundamental right recognized by UNESCO (2008), considers inclusive education an essential part of the educational practice to guarantee that all students have access to equitable and quality education, regardless of their abilities, needs or individual characteristics and can participate fully in school life, without segregation, i.e., it seeks to ensure equal opportunities for all students at all education levels (Calvo, 2013; Echeita, 2012).

Inclusive education requires creating a high-quality learning environment that minimizes the barriers that students may face in the education system, while recognizing individual differences (Ainscow and Miles, 2008).

For Blanco (2009), the creation of these spaces not only benefits students who are in difficulty but all, as it fosters the cohesion and integration of the group. Barriers can be reduced, and learning facilitated by identifying the needs present in the classroom, especially if adopting the measures from the Universal Design for Learning (hereinafter UDA) (Alba-Pastor *et al.*, 2014). In this approach, the teacher is more flexible when planning the objectives, considering the methodology, resources and evaluation of all students, even those who had not initially considered themselves as subjects with needs. In this way, the actions and skills applied by teachers become tools to strengthen learning in a particular way and generate more inclusive environments (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2013).

For Booth and Ainscow (2011), inclusive education is a concept transversally present in all social, school and family environments, which is defined as a process that seeks to increase the participation of students, both in the curriculum and in school and cultural communities, while working to reduce exclusion in these areas. The latter can be achieved when one begins to recognize individual differences and needs regarding how each person learns, relates and interacts (Gimeno Sacristan *et al.*, 2011).

According to the authors, it is important to guarantee full inclusion in which education provides all students with inclusive processes, especially children and young people with special educational needs (hereinafter SEN) that can be temporary or permanent, in which they have equal opportunity to develop without discrimination to learn together

with their peers (Dios *et al.*, 2018; Verdugo Alonso *et al.*, 2018).

There have been advances in relation to educational inclusion and the increase and participation of several actors involved in these processes, which have resulted in a significant increase in students with SEN in schools and greater relevance compared to regular education, although it continues being a challenge for education in general (Eslava Suanes *et al.*, 2015).

Teachers are a fundamental part of this inclusion process and changes, since they are responsible for reducing the barriers that limit access to knowledge and must carry out innovative actions for students to achieve the established curricular objectives (Royo Peña *et al.*, 2019). To this end, they will be prepared not only with theoretical knowledge, which is an important part of their training, but also with aspects and competences that complement their profile and enrich their teaching practice, allowing them to take action against educational inclusion when teaching (Juárez Romero *et al.*, 2018).

Therefore, these competencies will be key in the teacher to carry out inclusive practices to create learning environments in which he promotes the participation and success of all students, regardless of their personal characteristics (Herrera *et al.*, 2018). This implies the incorporation of a combination of skills, knowledge, motivation, values, attitudes that allow to achieve effective action and constitutes an essential component in the professional practice (García Ferrandis *et al.*, 2021).

In this sense, it is necessary to know about the SEN and inclusive regulations to guarantee and respect their rights and learning rhythms to maximize it and ensure the participation of all students (Dios *et al.*, 2018; Román-Meléndez *et al.*, 2021).

The mastery of these skills is considered as the competence framed in the professional field. According to Fortea (2019), teachers require specific skills that relate directly to the subject areas of their profession, allowing people to prepare themselves with the scientific and technical foundations for future life.

Therefore, the ability to carry out inclusive processes requires a solid and broad pedagogical training, as indicated by Amaro Agudo *et al.* (2019), which involves deploying actions in their performance and professional development. Among these, the

implementation of teaching resources and strategies in environments of solidarity and democratic participation with all students, flexibility and adaptation of the curriculum and innovation of the teaching practice that relate the information to essential situations of life, also the creation of environments for professional collaboration and teamwork (García-González *et al.*, 2018; Gimeno Sacristan *et al.*, 2011).

In this sense, De Haro *et al.* (2020) and García-González *et al.* (2018) point out important aspects as a basis for inclusive education, which consider the adaptation of curricular objectives and the modification of students' learning styles (Kuyini *et al.*, 2021).

For their part, Deng *et al.* (2017) mention the ability of teachers to attend SEN in ordinary classrooms, which highlights the teaching process, communication, cooperation, attitudes and beliefs and reflection as fundamental areas of this competence (Colmenero and Pegalajar, 2015; Dios *et al.*, 2018).

According to İlik and Sarı (2017), another important element present in inclusive teaching is the ability to assess students' "knowledge, skills, techniques, attitudes and values" (Moreno Olivos, 2021, p. 225), which requires teachers to prepare and implement strategies that fit their students' needs.

In this sense, Alquraini and Rao (2018) mention the importance of continuous training required by teachers to keep up with advances in the field of education and continue improving their teaching practice to provide equal education to all (Burke and Whitty, 2018).

Thus, the competent teacher in the inclusive field will be the one who is ready to adequately prepare all students in an effective and comprehensive way and can manage the classroom according to the particular needs (Sáenz De Jubera Ocón and Chocaró De Luis, 2019), ensuring that learning experiences allow students to develop more efficiently in life.

Finally, these approaches that guide inclusive competence in teachers align with the model of inclusive pedagogy, as Florian (2012) indicates, which promotes a broad view of the learning potential of all students.

Therefore, this research aims to contribute with the review of the most important dimensions in the literature on inclusive competence of teachers in their educational practice, in order to propose a

categorization that allows defining the essential components for their professional development.

## 2. Methodology

A documentary bibliographic analysis was conducted to carry out this study (Clauso, 1993), which consisted of reviewing in detail the contents of different previously validated tools, to obtain accurate information and present them (Arnaiz and Guirao, 2015; Luna and Reyes, 2015). It has a descriptive approach (Gómez Vargas *et al.*, 2015), which details the review process and the results of the dimensions obtained on inclusive competence evaluated in teachers in the academic field of different countries.

Specifically, 24 quantitative studies on tools to assess the competencies, perception and inclusive practices of teachers in different countries were selected. Qualitative studies were excluded because they did not explicitly meet the selection criteria proposed for the research.

The conceptual categorization level of the factors found was performed, based on the similarity of the theoretical content of each tool based on the three phases according to what Bernete (2013) states.

1. Data collection: instruments were selected under certain criteria:
  - Keywords of the UNESCO Thesaurus, in both Spanish and English: inclusive education, teacher competencies, factor analysis, educational needs, questionnaire, training, teacher.
  - Publications of the last ten years (2012-2022).
  - Factorial, exploratory or confirmatory analysis.
  - Reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha).

For selecting these instruments, articles were chosen from journals indexed with a high impact factor, because they have a higher frequency of reference and are included in some more relevant databases at the scientific level.

As indicated, for the selection of tools, the reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA, henceforth) or confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, henceforth) were considered to know the validity of the construct (Braun *et al.*, 2012).

2. Data extraction: information was recorded for each instrument (Table 1). Thus, 18 studies with factor analysis were taken into account

and six that do not have factor analysis were not included in the categorization, however, they were included in the literature review.

**Table 1.** Instruments analyzed: Inclusive competition

Questionnaire Author Country	Journal	Database	Analysis	N	$\alpha$	Type of questionnaire
PCITS (Kuyini <i>et al.</i> , 2021) Botswana	International Journal of Inclusive Education Q1	WOS	AFE	116	0.91	Teaching competencies
TALIS 2018, (Lopes y Oliveira, 2021) Portugal	Education Sciences Q2	Scopus	AFC	2544	0.84	Inclusive teaching practices
CPCH (Chan y Luk, 2021) China-Hong Kong	Assessment y Evaluation in Higher Education Q1	EBSCOHost	AFE	2192	0.72	Teaching competencies
ESAPD (Polo Sánchez <i>et al.</i> , 2021) España	Anales de psicología Q2	EBSCOHost	AFE	82	0.92	Inclusive teaching practices
SE-PETE-R - (Kudláček <i>et al.</i> , 2020) República Checa	International Journal of Inclusive Education Q1	WOS	AFE AFC	200	0.92	Inclusive teaching practices
CEINCLUSIVA - (De Haro Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> , 2020) Colombia	Revista electrónica interu- niversitaria de formación del profesorado Q3	Scopus	AFE AFC	158	0.96	Teaching competencies
CEFI-R (Rodríguez Macayo <i>et al.</i> , 2020) Chile	Foro Educacional	WOS	AFE	497	0.85	Inclusive teaching practices
CEFI-R (González-Gil <i>et al.</i> , 2019) España	Revista Aula Abierta Q3	WOS	AFE	202	0.89	Teaching competencies
PTPIAS (Walker y Laing, 2019) Australia	e-Journal of Business Education y Scholarship of Teaching	EBSCOHost	AFE	326	0.914	Inclusive teaching practices
CPDIADPS (Colmenero <i>et al.</i> , 2019) España	Cultura y Educación Q1	WOS	AFE	428	0.98	Inclusive teaching practices
CEPIPEE (Alquraini y Rao, 2018) Arabia Saudita	International Journal of Disability, Development and Education Q2	EBSCOHost	AFE AFC	179	0.95	Teaching competencies
ESCOD (Dios <i>et al.</i> , 2018) España	Revista Mexicana de Inves- tigación Educativa Q2	Scopus	AFE AFC	1495	0.95	Teaching competencies
#ICOMpri3 (Calderón <i>et al.</i> , 2018) España	Estudios sobre Educación Q3	ProQuest	AFE	335	0.89	Teaching competencies

Cuestionario Autor País	Revista Cuartil	Base de Datos	Análisis	N	$\alpha$	Tipo de cuestionario
CEFI-R (González-Gil <i>et al.</i> , 2017) España	Revista Aula Abierta Q3	Research- Gate	AFE	697	0.74	Teaching competencies
ITCQ (Deng <i>et al.</i> , 2017) China	International Journal of Inclusive Education Q1	WOS	AFE AFC	505	0.95	Teaching competencies
IEP (İlik y Sari, 2017) Turquía	Educational Sciences: Theory y Practice Q3	EBSCOHost	AFE AFC	19 24	0.98	Teaching competencies
CFDES (Colmenero y Pegalajar, 2015) España	Estudios Sobre Educación Q3	EBSCOHost	AFE	90	0.92	Inclusive teaching practices
CECD (Luna y Reyes, 2015) México	Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa Q2	EBSCOHost	AFE	128 791	0.98	Teaching competencies

Finally, the identified dimensions were classified and categorized, assigning codes according to their respective definitions. To select them, first, the results of the studies were reviewed and, later, the indicators proposed by each tool were analyzed. This process allowed identifying common factors, discarding repetitions and selecting those that are most relevant to inclusive competition.

3. Data exploitation: the punctuation and writing of the text were edited, the content was analyzed through the analysis of word frequency, topics and semantic networks to find patterns and trends in the content to improve the results.

### 3. Results

The results allowed to determine the categorization of the dimensions that include inclusive competition according to the reviewed literature.

These studies have factor analysis with a very good reliability index in their Cronbach alpha coefficient (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

A total of 87 dimensions were found that were conceptually classified and categorized into 12 categories with common theme, covering the five established competencies (Arnau Sabatés and Sala Roca, 2020) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Classification of dimensions in studies

Dimension	Category
D1. Pedagogical process dimension	Didactics / Methodology / Curriculum / Assessment
D2. Inclusive practices dimension	Adaptations / Inclusion
D3. Collaborative work dimension	Peer work / Collaborative work
D4. Attitude and values dimension	Values / Leadership / Behavioral problems
D5. Professional development dimension	Training

*Pedagogical process dimension:* as for pedagogical competence, it includes aspects related to those teaching and learning processes that are organized

in a conscious way and are aimed at the training of students, including the design and development of a curriculum, didactic planning, methodological and

evaluation strategies (Amaro Agudo *et al.*, 2019; İlik and Sarı, 2017; Sierra Salcedo, 2007).

*Inclusive practices dimension:* the competence of inclusive practices considers the adaptations, resources and supports of the teacher in the educational process. It recognizes the strategies and resources that can be used as the implementation of the UDA (Alba-Pastor *et al.*, 2014). It also implies knowing which students should work together and the moment in which the professor should provide such support from an educational policy perspective (Fischer *et al.*, 2018).

*Collaborative work dimension:* this collaborative work dimension sets out specific strategies as suggested by Kudláček *et al.* (2020) for working as a team, reflects aspects of teacher participation as part of the community and integrates inclusive actions that provide information on the degree of collaboration and interaction that both students and teachers have in the teaching-learning process in different environments (Hernández-Ayala and Tobón-Tobón, 2016; Sagredo-Lillo *et al.*, 2020).

*Attitude and values dimension:* the attitudinal dimension recognizes the actions that occur in the framework of the teacher's ability to act in different situations, contexts and with respect to others. It is based on their ability to solve problems about processes related to diversity (Ainscow, 2015; García Ferrandis *et al.*, 2021).

*Professional development dimension:* the professional development dimension focuses on the lifelong and continuous training performed by teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, reflected in the ability to achieve effective learning by their students (Moreno Olivos, 2021). These processes include initial training, current and permanent self-training, which are necessary due to changes and requirements that arise throughout the professional career (Fischer *et al.*, 2018; Herreros López, 2017).

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

On the one hand, inclusive competence is contextualized in this theoretical categorization in the framework of generic competences, which result from the way of acting and proceeding in the daily basis, which involves the ability to learn, adapt and relate in different environments (Amaro Agudo *et al.*, 2019); on the other hand, in professional compe-

tences, which focus on the work of the teacher in the school environment.

Kantor *et al.* (2021) point out that it is essential that teachers, as part of their professional development, know about pedagogical processes in relation to the training and application of teaching methods and technologies adapted to the SEN of their students.

As mentioned by Alba-Pastor *et al.* (2014), the implementation of new teaching strategies and mastery of these resources require specialized skills and knowledge when applying UDA. In the same way, it also requires being prepared to carry out changes at the methodological, didactic, curricular level and conduct evaluations according to the needs of the group; therefore, the teacher is expected to be in constant training process (Furtado Nina *et al.*, 2020).

It should be mentioned that actions involving the development of inclusive practices should be a priority in the educational policy pursued by schools. This requires the support of a multidisciplinary team capable of identifying or detecting any need and developing innovative strategies to apply the curriculum through appropriate adaptations to students (González-Gil *et al.*, 2017).

Regarding the professional training of teachers, Calderón *et al.* (2018) and Deng *et al.* (2017), stress the importance of previous and ongoing training by teachers. The studies highlight that this aspect represents a weakness in the training profile, and also refer to the importance of institutional support for the professional development of teachers and improve their inclusive capacity, both individually and institutionally. Furthermore, studies emphasize the need for the educational institution to be directly involved in this process of development and support for teachers.

Other authors, such as Kuyini *et al.* (2021), agree that it is necessary to develop inclusive competence, based on the skills, attitudes and values of teachers in relation to the performance of inclusive and intercultural educational practices, teaching and learning styles, educational experiences and behavior management (Dios *et al.*, 2018; González-Gil *et al.*, 2017; Román-Meléndez *et al.*, 2021).

When analyzing the inclusive competences of teachers, it is important to orient the training and preparation of teachers to contribute with the inclusive culture of educational institutions.

It is also considered necessary to incorporate these competencies in the teacher training curriculum as an integral part of their professional practice, since it recognizes education as a driving force for change and can therefore be projected towards the formulation of proposals and programs as part of new educational policies.

In this regard, it is important to highlight the need to work together, between those responsible for teacher training and those responsible for education policy, to establish strategies that promote inclusion in education and improve the possibility of meeting the needs of all students, thus seeking to increase educational quality (Polo Sánchez *et al.*, 2021).

Finally, it is important to note that this research is based on a literature review of quantitative studies that address the dimensions of inclusive competition. However, it is suggested that research be expanded by including qualitative studies that enrich the theoretical scope and provide perspectives on practices related to inclusive competition. These qualitative studies can be considered as possible areas of work and future lines of research in the field of educational inclusion.

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