



# Should we move from special education to inclusive education? Perspectives and possibilities of advance

### Debemos ir de la educación especial a la educación inclusiva? Perspectivas y posibilidades de avance

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### Abstract

The present work is the result of an investigation that had as objective to analyze the beliefs about the inclusion of people with disabilities in the teaching of a disabled student. The purpose of this text is to problematize the idea that inclusive education is a discursive and representational space that has been given thanks to the transition or continuity of special education. The methodology is qualitative with a descriptive scope from an interpretative paradigm. A questionnaire was used with 13 open questions made to 61 teachers of compulsory education, all students of the master in Pedagogy of a Higher Education Institution in the city of Puebla. The results were given a speech type of analysis. The results indicate that although some discourses have shown an almost antagonistic division, for teachers mixing and complementing is necessary, that is, the knowledge of special education complements the principles of equality, equity and non-discrimination of the inclusive education. The reached conclusions show the need for complementarity between inclusive education and special education to advance in a human development project.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, disability, discourse, special education, teachers, education.

#### Resumen

El presente trabajo es resultado de una investigación que tuvo como objetivo analizar las creencias que sobre la inclusión de personas con discapacidad tienen los profesores al atender a un estudiante en situación de discapacidad. El propósito de este texto es problematizar la idea que la educación inclusiva es un espacio discursivo y representacional que no se ha dado gracias a la transición o continuidad de la educación especial. La metodología es de corte cualitativo con alcance descriptivo desde un paradigma interpretativo. Se utilizó un cuestionario con 13 preguntas abiertas realizadas a 61 profesores de educación obligatoria todos estudiantes de la maestría en Pedagogía de una Institución de Educación Superior de la ciudad de Puebla. El tipo de análisis que se dio a los resultados fue de discurso. Los resultados señalan que a pesar de que en algunos discursos se ha mostrado una división casi antagónica, para los profesores la mixtura y complementariedad es necesaria, es decir, el saber de la educación especial complementa los principios de igualdad, equidad y no discriminación de la educación inclusiva. Las conclusiones a las que se llega es la necesidad de complementa-

riedad entre la educación inclusiva y la educación especial para avanzar en un proyecto de desarrollo humano.

**Descriptores:** Educación inclusiva, discapacidad, discurso, educación especial, profesores, educación.

### 1. Introduction

Educational policies in the last decade in México1 have pointed the efforts to new processes of subjectivity (Soriano, 2015), where, an abstract idea of person has overcome to give way to new closer and regional traits that allow to understand a small phenomenon from its historicity and political, economic and social context. The intention with this exercise is to investigate the definitions of equality between individuals and allow differentiating diversity as constitutive aspects of the humanity (Gardou, 2016; Skliar, 2002).

The concepts of educative inclusion (EI), inclusive education (EI) and disabled person (DP), constantly appear in educational speeches. The ultimate objective of these apparitions would have to be the configurations of discursive practices materialized in educational actions that allow problematizing the school space to rethink the actions, adjustments and identities related in the pedagogical relations.

Even though in this research is mentioned the discursive element, the changes that it implies are not only nominal or at the level of the concepts, but instead originate from an ontological and epistemological reconfiguration on the professors performance and the entire educational community against the difference and the diversity that new ordinations seek to propitiate.

Much have been written on the subject, that is, there is academic literature that refers to the educative discursive which has led to various studies on the inclusion of DP to institutional spaces as the school on equal conditions (Aguerrondo, 2008; Ainscow and Miles, 2008; Arnaiz, 2012; Echeita and Duk, 2008; Fernández, 2003; Jacobo, 2012; Juárez, Comboni and Garnique, 2010; Ocampo, 2015; Yadarola, 2006). However, the problem that has been

observed does not have to do with the number of proposals and elaborations on the subject, but the way of the representations for the constitution of some subjectivity.

This paper aims to problematize IE and its relationship with special education (SE), especially what has to do with the inclusion of DP. One of the objectives is to point out those aspects that are often no longer questioned because they appear to remain in time, that is, some speeches that have constituted a kind of look towards the educational and that have been almost immovable in a certain time periods. In this sense, the idea is to identify omissions, exclusions, speeches, relationships, etc. that are present when referring to SE and IE.

Another objective is to interrogate these meanings in order to indicate their discursive differences and epistemological origins, and the emergency spaces from which they have appeared. What matters is the knowledge that has originated the enunciation of its main postulates and the effects that have caused in the professors of high school in the city of Puebla.

Finally, the speeches of high school professors, city of Puebla, are used. The professors course the master in pedagogy of an institution of higher education. In the analysis the idea was to show the logics or systems of reason that have allowed the construction of a type of representation, which often has not allowed the constitution of spaces and discursive practices that benefit the inclusion processes in Schools.

### 2. Theoretical-analytical tools: definitions and background

Theory plays an extremely important role because it helps to construct explanations and interpretations and to problematize phenomena, in this case the educative (Sautu, 2003; Buenfil,



2006). In studies of qualitative analysis, this element becomes even more important, since they are constructs that originate since the delimitation of the problem to investigate, explaining part of the phenomenon and allowing to build new knowledge from it.

Theory is seen as a toolbox of conceptual tools, tools that depending on the use provide explanations and interpretations of a certain reality.

It is worth mentioning that theory is not a monolithic entity that explains everything and possesses totalizing truths, rather it provides tools that depend on the investigator, in a way that his/her expertise and dominance would allow certain explanations; use that constitutes knowledge around a specific topic. Based on the foregoing, what is discussed in this paper as educational phenomena are concepts such as SE and IE, both related to the issue of the inclusion of people with disabilities in schools in Mexico.

From this analytical and theoretical perspective, the idea is rescuing and analyzing the speeches about IE and SE mentioned as referents in the educational institutions and that have permeated a type of representation of the professors. It should be noted that these speeches, rather than mere objective concepts that show a stable, continuous and timeless reality, point to the formation of realities and subjectivities in the social aspect.

From Foucault's Perspective (1968, 2010), a discourse surpasses the question of concepts and linguistic variations, although it recognizes the extra-linguistic elements, it highlights this vision by pointing out the statements as a unit of analysis.

It should be noted that enunciation does not make any reference to the syntax of a language or to the conformation of a subject with a predicate whose grammatical rules allow the chaining of words. Enunciation is understood what can be said in a space, configuration and discursive practice. It also has to do with the identification of the subject that has been ordered to that discourse and which is legitimized to enunciate it (Foucault, 1968, 2010; Barcalett, 2016).

As noted, a first unit of analysis to approach the discourse is the enunciation. However, as mentioned above, the analysis of the enunciations is not subject only to a syntactic, semantic or morphological particularity; linguistic analyses are related with a political and power-knowing game.

In this context, it is necessary to address the statements from another logic or system of Reason2, where the important things are not the concepts themselves, but the fact that they have meaning from a set of representations. That is, from a more classical sense of the use of the enunciations and the concepts, the latter have been the ones with more interest when analyzing certain linguistic structures; however, this treatment has caused a series of omissions and problems. One of them has to do with putting the concept as the main unit of analysis, a vision that perceives it as an object of neutral use, a resource that indicates a direct relation with the realities or problems that is wanted to understand when it is investigated.

From the epistemic perspective of this work, there is nothing less uncertain than to proceed in this way. Analyzing the sign notion of Saussure (1945), can be seen the reminiscences of this thought, logic or system of reason that led some social researchers to seek the oneness and universality of language; idea that so far has been impossible to perform when it is recognized that any language does not directly point to reality, but it serves as a means; therefore it is its use that will allow to construct different theories.

Enunciates must be visualized and problematized as unit of analysis. According to Foucault (2010), enunciates does not pretend to petrify meanings; they surpass the mere definitions and extends their analytical margin by pointing out that it is not who said it but how it was said, from which position and in which order of speech.

But how can the discourse analysis approach? What theoretical tools can help to understand the order that guides the discourse? How to perform a non-literal, ahistorical and timeless interpretation? Foucault (1988) proposes a type of genealogical analysis that allows this approximation.

Foucault's Genealogy or Genealogical Analysis (1988) is a critique of a historical understanding of the phenomena that rewards the unity of the subject around an origin, universality and a continuity of phenomena. The author mentions that regional spaces, ruptures, exclusions, struggles of power and clashes by knowledge cannot be observed from a system of reason where there is an epistemological sustenance that highlights an idea of positivity of the events and the continuation in time.

The facts must then be approached from their genealogy, from the logic of the event, from an emergency game and provenance, where the origin, the center, the constructed structure of the events do not exist as such. Rather it is the discontinuous, the historical, and the micro-situations.

The event points the discursive space in which certain enunciation can be said, a context of complex enunciation that has allowed the constitution of truths in the social aspect (Foucault, 1988). Then, the logic that guides the phenomena or speech as events does not allow thinking the continuity, that is, that discourse is not subject to the logic of cause and effect, rather to the accident.

It can be said that they emerge in a certain time and space, but also in a game of truth that allows their enunciation, the construction of a statement that can be accepted as real. But emergency does not have a unified origin; rather it comes from the result of configurations and practices that allowed it, by way of the vicinity, the encounter and the kinship, to emerge. The origin is also thought as an accident, not causal, not cumulative, but spontaneous and often unpredictable (Foucault, 1988).

### 3. Special education and inclusive education: where to place people with disabilities?

Part of the current literature addresses the subject of special education and inclusive education from the logic of continuity, it is not necessary to fully enter all the statements that are issued, just see the main titles, which logically work as enunciates. Enunciates that announce the passage from SE to IE in this linear and continuous idea of a discourse to another (Juárez, Comboni and Garnique, 2010; Parra, 2011; De León, 2010).

The problem with this type of explanations is that they do not allow understanding the systems of reason and logics that are behind the concepts. The latest reforms have handled the topic as imperative since the ordinations have requested a step or change of paradigm, but few people have explained how the apparent educational and also scientific revolution has been constituted. For example, the idea to move from SE model to IE (SEP, 2017) is being disseminated as a strong discourse announcing a relationship of otherness; thus a type of antagonism3 that points to the near extinction of one element against the other.

SE in its passage through educational and pedagogical discourses had an emergency place and a very different origin to IE. As an event, special education is part of an individual and biomedical vision of the subject (Skrtic, 1996; Warner, 1996; De la Vega, 2010). Pathos is present from all its epistemological foundation. It could be understood as a matter of health, a type of orthopedics on the bodies that seek to heal.

Emergency has to do with the generalization of a universal abstraction of the human; a type of formal equality that had an important pillar with the Cartesian Cogito (Barcalett, 2016). The existence within humanity of an inherent rationality to all allowed thinking the intervention of those who apparently were not in that possibility.

The issue had to do with a look at the normalization of actions of individual capacity, towards the road in the construction of an abstract, equal, highly rational image of man/woman. The entry of biomedical science and biopolitics played a main role. Medical studies on human beings soon became interventions of the bodies of individuals considered "abnormal" (Foucault, 2014). Individuals that were often at a



stage of backwardness, so the orthopedic intervention of redirection and composure should be the way (PSI function). The origin of these enunciates and the ability to build statements comes from the medical area, the disease, the *pathos* on the body to be cured. If analyzed and compared the event of inclusive education, is seen it is not an aggregation of special education, is not an improvement of SE, is not its continuity.

Inclusive education emerges from a place of different enunciation, it did not originate from "scientific" studies neither from an individual process, and nothing is healed. Its origin can be placed in another discursive practice, in another configuration. It aims at spaces rather than the body; moves away from *pathos* and points out a subject that rather than being pathological is legal. Its discourse is in the law, in the principles of justice, that are far to possess an individual look on the body to be repaired.

IE interrogation is not done to the subject but to the discourse that has allowed to construct subjectivities in the social, where few have been excluded; a game of inclusion and exclusion.

As can be observed, the reason systems are diametrically opposed in many of their elements. On the one hand, from the conception of the subject; on the other, the mechanisms by means a discourse has been considered true, that is, the Constitution of knowledge that in a given time and space created a subjectivity from a *pathos* or from a vision of law.

Ocampo (2015), states IE more as a political movement, to do IE or propitiate inclusion has to do with a game of political forces and not so much with the configuration of the EE as knowledge.

IE does not originate from knowledge of SE and it does not question such knowledge. It consists of the reconfiguration of symbolic spaces from which people interact day by day. In this context, the knowledge of SE is not going to be replaced by the knowledge of the IE because there is no causal relationship between them.

Debating in terms of epistemic level will not lead to the solution of the problems. The non-antagonistic coexistence of the knowledge that constitutes the statements of each discourse must be accepted, and must be thought how their coexistence can contribute to the self-realization of individuals in their individuality and also to the creation of spaces that allow these people the ability to articulate a series of functions (Nussbaum, 2007, 2012).

The problem at this point is not that a linear discourse has been built around special and inclusive education, rather the question lies in the scarce possibility of success in the established antagonistic relationship. In other words, knowledge of special education is necessary to establish an inclusive education. The antagonisms created do not help because they constitute the extinction of one for the existence of the other.

Danger lies in the relevance and success of both discursive configurations from this binary logic that does not allow thinking about the complex reality and the discursive complementarity. In this sense, the idea is to analyze the constitution of enunciates that reconstitute the interaction of both speeches, which present a possibility as a game of truth and language.

Logic can be applied in both and the meeting place will be the context of the individual since as a whole.

#### 4. Method

This research was descriptive and interpretative. The instrument for data collection was a qualitative questionnaire with 13 open questions. The subjects of the study were 61 teachers of High School from Puebla, and students of a master course (see table 1). The data were transcribed taking care of their fidelity in order to analyze the discourse.

A codification process was carried out, which consisted of the following: since they were master students, an "A" was placed; a "U" that pointed out his/her status as a University student and then the number of questionnaire that was assigned to them according to the way they were collected.

The questions included in the instrument had as main objective to analyze the beliefs that teachers have about the inclusion of people with disabilities, especially when assisting a disabled student; however, this research only problematizes the discourse that refer to the step from special education to inclusive education. For this reason were created the dimensions shown in the table below (See table 2):

Tabla 1. Dimensiones e ítems

Dimension	Item
Implications and job conditions when assisting students with a disability.	Working with a disabled student implies     The institution conditions to work with a disabled student should be
Aspects that imply the inclusion of students with any disability to the classroom seen from the teaching perspective.	<ul> <li>Strengths, benefits or positive aspects that carry working with disabled students are</li> <li>The negative aspects of working with disabled students are</li> <li>The educative practice of a teacher changes with the presence of a disabled student be-cause</li> </ul>
Feelings, values and attitudes present in the work with students with any disability.	When a teacher works with a disabled students appear values such as     When working with a disabled student the attitudes present in the teacher are
Concept and beliefs of special education, inclusive education and disability. Ethical conflicts of teachers.	<ul> <li>Inclusive education refers to</li> <li>Disability is known as</li> <li>Special education is</li> <li>The ideal place for disabled students to learn is</li> <li>The ethical conflicts faced by the teachers when working with disabled students are:</li> </ul>

Source: own elaboration

Because of the space, the results presented only correspond to the dimension "concept and beliefs of special education, inclusive education and disability. Ethical conflicts of Teachers ", the item analyzed was "the ideal place for students with disabilities to learn is".

Table 2. Characteristics of participants

Nivel educativo	Número de docentes
Educación Básica	47
Educación Media Superior	14

Source: own elaboration

## 5. Results: Is the step to inclusive education the following stage? Some information from the teachers' perspective

For this, there are three possibilities to assist students with disabilities. One of them mentions that they to be in the SE where they can be given adequate attention.

AU61 "There are trained teachers and have adequate facilities"

AU46 "In this space there is specialized staff in the subject, in addition the classrooms and the materials are for the exclusive use of people with disabilities"

AU45 "Regular teachers are not trained in first aid"

AU22 "Attention to this type of students cannot be given in regular school because regu-



lar teachers are not trained to special education, especially to address deafness, blind, etc."

AU23 "Because a special infrastructure is needed to have a positive contribution to the care of the disabled"

According to previous comments can be identified two main aspects of why the SI is the place for people with disabilities. In this sense, it should be remembered that the ideas presented represent the condition of the discourse which encloses a representation of what can be said in a given discursive order.

At first, the issue of technical support and infrastructure are mentioned, since special education schools have better accessibility conditions and adaptations that are essential to assist students with disabilities. There is a strong space component that is a condition for exercising a type of autonomy in students.

On the other hand, another topic very different from the first one appears. It is related to the knowledge of the SE.

For teachers, knowing the ES surpasses the mere pedagogical vision, that is, they face a component that is far from their teaching role, which has its foundation from a paradigm of pathos, disease, medical and clinical gaze. Although teachers have not expressed the concept they have about disability and people with disabilities, the question asked about the space presents the idea of a human being and a deficit condition that reduces him/her. A finiteness where the pathological is the basis for making decisions about people, in this case on the place they should occupy in the social area. Nevertheless, the evidence of this emergency and its origin demonstrate that are necessary condition that allow the comprehension of phenomena related to the deficit situation of some DP; therefore, these ideas represent statements that are valid from a system of reason.

On the other hand, there are teachers who point to the regular classroom as the ideal space for the DP. The discourse conceives, from another system of reason, what is prudent to say,

but facing a different approach, a vision of law and more social.

AU54 "Contextualize the person in a real society"

AU40 "Collective learning is more meaningful and has better results"

AU43 "Students can develop fully with society and with students and children of their age, providing security to children"

AU3 "When the student finishes school, he/she will face real life and there are no special education, so, it is better develop other skills that will serve him/her in a regular classroom"

AU49 "Because it is a right, because there should be no exclusion"

AU8 "Because if they are in the special school they will not learn how to relate to everything in real life, the difficulties are found in the day by day, in the street"

AU31 "Because with the support of the peers the students with disabilities could develop other skills, besides it would be to include them in society"

As can be seen, the explanations of the teachers that support the attention of students with disabilities in the regular classroom do not differ significantly, they concentrated in the social aspect, a participation without exclusion, and as mentioned by them, "the encounter with a real world", where everyone coexists in the same space, which is a human and fundamental right.

If both positions are compared, it is not possible to say that some lack a certain effect of truth, that there are insurmountable errors in the explanations, because both of them come from a logical system that is valid and point out different elements that from the literature are fundamental when it comes to human development.

On the one hand, there is the part of being able to develop substantive and combined capacities (Nussbaum, 2007, 2012), that is, to acquire skills that allow the person to be able to be in the world autonomously and with self-determina-

tion. On the other hand, there is another capacity that has to do with the opportunity to be able to deploy operations in spaces that do not differentiate. Nussbaum (2007, 2012) defends in this approach that the human being develops in the individual but building the ideal scenario for it.

This is how both approaches rather than being opposed could be complementary. It has been stated by another group of professors, the biggest in this research.

AU13 "Because there would be a teamwork, where the regular classroom teacher will know how to work with support and the inclusiveness is done"

AU36 "To complement one with the other"

AU2 "To know and feel integrated into a social group motivates the student to develop skills and abilities. In addition, the teacher must have a special knowledge to provide the right tools"

AU18 "Because sometimes in regular school teachers lack the knowledge to best serve these students, but attending regular school supports them to feel better and learn"

AU58 "I think the two provide support in the student and strengthen to benefit the student"

AU52 "Both are necessary because consider the inclusion and the equity"

AU48 "Trained people are required to fully attend to the needs, but also the student is integrated into the society"

AU42 "Both, because they need to coexist and learn from regular children and have individual support for the teaching process"

AU59 "the student with a disability must be in the regular classroom and share experiences, however, he/she can attend a special education school to receive complementary support"

In the political and educational discourse have been contrasted SE to IE, as mentioned in previous lines, their genealogy is different, did not emerge from an antagonistic relationship. This complementarity can be noted in two elements in the previous comments. In the first place, the need for a specialized knowledge that can facilitate the individual capacity of the person, and on the other hand, the construction of a combined capacity, that is, the constitution of a space that allows the interaction of functions, the participation, autonomy and self-determination.

In cohesion with the latter, to create a capacity where the functions and different types of capacities can be in the same space. The problem of the discourses that have been expressed and the use that have been given to them, is that they have imagined an antagonistic relationship between two systems of reason that do not claim the annihilation of the other, but the team work. As mentioned, the genealogy of the SE, its origin, the space and synergy of forces that made it happen, is far away to be the beginning or continuation of IE. There is not a scientific revolution in the style of Kuhn (1945), where knowledge must or may disappear with the presence of new science.

What the comments point out is the coexistence of two discursive spaces as practices that must coexist in one place in order to achieve human development in DP. Then, it is not a question of deciding where they will be, instead, what is needed is to think about how teachers will respond to students' needs (Echeita, 2014) and for that all knowledge is needed.

### **Conclusions**

The discourses that were analyzed in this work and that indicated some discursive configurations are the result of a series of power confrontations at a discursive level. As noted, there is political and educational interest in the topic of inclusion and education of DP. And it has been from this political component where the conflict has occurred between two positions, which in the symbolic and representational space have opposed as a binary pair. In this text it has been explained that this provision is non-existent from a genealogical analysis,



The proposal was to describe the logics and systems of reason that have originated the emergence and event of both educational models. It has been pointed out that its origin is different and that antagonism is non-existent and also precludes the inclusion.

From the point of view of the discourses of the teachers this confrontation has happened; there are some who have been questioned and have taken a stance, however their explanations are not contradictory, that is, those who have opted for one or another option have not been able to point out the constitution of an oppositional pair; rather they have pointed out constituent elements of each discourse, demonstrating the relation of otherness, the complementarity of these.

Nevertheless, most teachers have enunciated this element that represents a type of mixture, a peaceful coexistence that represents the complexity of space rather than simplification from each discourse.

This third way does not facilitate the problem, rather announces the need for new discursive configurations from educational policies that do not simplify both speeches (SE and IE) but, from a critical stance, it contributes to the generation of capacities where any kind of operation is allowed. The question should no longer be for space, but for the creation of a community that learns and develops as a systemic whole.

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#### **Notes**

- National Program for Strengthening Special Education and Educational Integration (2000); Disabled Persons Act (2005); Guidelines for the operation of Special Education Services (2006); Sector Education Program (2007, 2010); General Law for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (2011); Educational model for compulsory education (2017).
- 2 Cruz-Pineda (2012, p. 169) mentions that the systems of reason "are systems through which new social representations are established, that is, the individual builds new and different subjectivities to establish new and different relationships not only between the individuals but also with the knowledge.
- 3 Buenfil, (1994, p. 19) conceptualizes antagonism as "a bond that is established between two reciprocally denying subjectivities. On the one hand, it differs from contradiction and real opposition, and on the other hand, from subordination, domination and oppression. Antagonism does not elude the empirical, but the symbolic order where social relations are established."

