



Contribution: "**Analysis of Measures for Attention to Diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education: The Case of the Region of Murcia, Spain**"

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Abstract

In this paper we present an analysis of how measures to treat diversity of students with specific educational support needs are implemented in Spanish Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO in Spanish) (12-16 years) in the Region of Murcia (Spain). First, a review of the existing legislation that deals with such measures is reviewed, and then our empirical study is presented.

Keywords: Compulsory Secondary Education, attention to diversity, ordinary and specific measures, educational support, qualitative methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Spanish State Education Authorities and Autonomous Communities are responsible for regulating various curriculum and organizational measures generically called "*measures for attention to diversity*," by which each school should adapt general teaching procedures to the different types of students enrolled in their system. Thus, each school combines two complementary and inalienable principles which are typical of schools and democratic societies, according to Gordon (2001), such as: the attention to diversity principle and the inclusion principle.

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The attention to diversity principle is based on the duty of States and their education systems to guarantee the right to education, accepting diversity of students' needs, addressing inequalities and adopting an open and flexible model that grants all students access to school without exception and ensures academic results of acceptable standards. To this end, system and schools ought to make timely decisions aimed at providing quality education adjusted to students' specific needs and different environments, without giving up a frame of reference and membership that are necessarily common (Darling-Hammond, 2001 ; Escudero y Martinez, 2004). In turn, *the inclusion principle* implies recognizing everyone's right to participate in basic learning with equal opportunities and achievements, and to share the same school curriculum and a regular teaching space (Ainscow, 2001, UNESCO, 2004, Parrilla et al 2002; Arnaiz, 2003), so that full development and socialization of all individuals without exception may be possible. Furthermore, there should be respect for differences and cooperation throughout the community.

Current Spanish Organic Act on Education, which rules Spanish Education System (LOE, 2006), coined the term *students with specific educational support need* to refer to those students who demand educational care measures during a school period. Such measures may be different from ordinary measures, and their implementation requires special educational support and attention focused on: a) special educational needs, b) specific learning difficulties, c) high intellectual abilities, d) late entry into the Spanish education system; e) personal features or backgrounds that imply an educational disadvantage; and f) school history involving initial inequality.

Furthermore, article 22.4 of *LOE* (2006) points out that Compulsory Secondary Education should be organized in accordance with the principles of common education and attention to student diversity. It is the educational administration's duty to regulate measures for attention to diversity as well as organizational and curriculum measures that allow schools a flexible organization of their teaching procedures. Among the measures envisaged, the following may be mentioned (LOE, Art. 22.5): adaptation to curriculum, integration of subjects in various areas, flexible grouping, splitting up of classes, variety of subject on offer, support programmes and individualized treatment programmes for students with specific educational support needs. Consequently, those measures to treat diversity that come into force will focus on all students achieving Compulsory Secondary Education Objectives. Under no circumstances they imply any kind of discrimination that prevents students from achieving those objectives and finishing their courses (LOE, art.22.7). Thus, the aforementioned diversity and inclusion principles would be satisfied.

In the Region of Murcia these measures have undergone some adaptations (*Decree 291/2007*), so that currently they are as follows:

- a) *Ordinary measures for attention to diversity*. These refer to general actions that our education system makes available to provide a common quality education to all students, thus ensuring a schooling process on equal opportunity terms and functioning as a compensating element of human, cultural, economic inequalities. These measures are: individual learning support, flexible grouping, grouping of subjects and splitting up of classes, development of a School Educational Project, adaptations of the curriculum to the environment and to

students (which do not involve modifying prescriptive common goals); individual and group guidance for teaching support, availability of subjects for students to choose from, guidance and tutorials/student mentoring; use of human and material resources of school and environment.

- b) *Extraordinary measures for attention to diversity*. These refer to those programmes of organizational, curriculum and personalised treatment aimed at students with specific educational needs, which may be applied when students do not achieve the expected results after going through ordinary support measures. The aim is to make students achieve basic skills and year objectives. Measures may be: retake of one year, Curriculum Diversification Programme, Professional Induction Programme; Individual Curricular Adaptation for students with special educational needs; Adapted Programme Units (UPA in Spanish); Programme for students with special educational needs associated with mental disabilities (PRONEEP in Spanish); Open Classrooms; and Compensatory Education Workshops.

In this very line of action, the aforementioned Decree provides the curriculum for Compulsory Secondary Education in Murcia. Article 10, devoted to attention to diversity, points out that educational activities should include attention to student diversity, combining the development of all pupils with their personal needs. Section 2 of this article points out the involvement of public authorities in this process, as it states that the Ministry of Education should establish curriculum and organizational measures to cater for all students, especially those who demand teaching support.

Article 14 of *Order of September 25, 2007*, by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Science and Research, which regulates the implementation and development of Compulsory Secondary Education in the Autonomous Region of Murcia, clearly states that schools should make appropriate decisions about brighter and more motivated students so that their expectations are met and their abilities fully developed.

Bearing in mind the principles of equality, equity and quality, the legislation mentioned above suggests it is advisable to apply ordinary measures rather than specific ones when a student has special educational support needs and, if possible, in a more normalized context (the regular classroom). Therefore, an appropriate response to diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education should be the structuring of teaching-learning situations so that they provide enough variety and flexibility to ensure that, in a specific context in which these situations occur, as many student as possible have access to the largest number of skills specified in the objectives for a particular school year (Decree 291/2007 of 14 September and Order of September 25, 2007).

While our legislation puts all this into effect, upon our visit to schools or when giving a training course for teachers, we usually observe that the way schools organize these measures differ from what is established (Arnaiz, 2009; Martinez 2005). Rather, schools tend to apply specific measures before ordinary ones on students with educational support needs. This results in alternative learning environments outside the regular classroom with specialist teachers who give these students support implied in such specific measures. Thus a parallel path for learning emerges and these students are left outside the standard classroom for a very long time (often as much as 70-80% of the school day).

1. RESEARCH APPROACH

With all the information of this paper in mind, our aim was to find out about the organizational and curriculum dynamics for catering for students diversity implemented in five Secondary Education schools in the Region of Murcia (Spain). To this end, we analysed how schools implemented ordinary and specific measures to deal with diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education (12-16 years old) in accordance with current law. We intended to verify and assess whether these measures were properly and effectively implemented, and whether a quality educational response was provided in compliance with the concept of inclusion and social cohesion (Karsz, 2004; Fernández Enguita, Souto and Rodriguez, 2005). Our objectives were as follows:

General objective

The overall goal of the present study focused on analyzing how ordinary and specific measures for attention to diversity were implemented in Compulsory Secondary Education, and how teachers who implement such measures were trained.

Specific objectives

In order to achieve the general objective of this study, we suggested a number of specific objectives:

1. To learn about the teaching experience and training background of teachers in charge of attention to diversity.
2. To analyse how ordinary measures for attention to student diversity were implemented in schools.
3. To analyse how specific measures for attention to student diversity we implemented.

METHODOLOGY

Population and sample

At present there are 109 state schools and 94 private or state funded privately-run schools in the Region of Murcia (Spain), where some or all levels of Compulsory and Non-compulsory Secondary Education are taught. There are also 4 state schools, 8 private or state funded privately-run schools and 6 private schools which exclusively teach vocational training programmes and social guarantee programmes as initial professional training.

The criteria used for the selection of our sample were the following:

- School ownership (state/private or state funded privately-run schools).
- Geographical location and correspondence with teaching areas (urban/rural/semi-urban/semi-rural).
- Schools that offer all Secondary Education courses.

- Former School Structures for Non-compulsory Secondary Education and Vocational Training
- Implementation of specific measures to deal with diversity.

Following the introduction and implementation of these criteria, five schools were chosen by incidental sampling to ensure these criteria were properly represented. The following tables show the characteristics of selected schools:

TABLE 1: Ownership and location

	School1	School2	School3	School4	School5
School ownership	Private or state funded privately-run schools	State	State	State	State
Geographical location	Semi-urban	Rural	Rural	Semi-rural	Urban

Source: Inclusive Education Team of the University of Murcia

TABLE 2: Students enrolled in selected schools

	School1	School2	School3	School4	School5
Total number of Compulsory Education Students	243	404	461	366	493
Students with special educational needs (n.e.e. in Spanish)	6	12	36	3	0
Foreign Students	4	34	67	23	0

Source: Inclusive Education Team of the University of Murcia

TABLE 3: Professionals working in the Guidance Department

	School1	School2	School3	School4	School5
Head of Guidance Department	2	1	1	1	1
Curriculum Diversification Teacher	3	3	3	3	3

Therapeutic Educator	1	1	2	2	1
Compensatory Education Teacher	1	1	1	2	
Specialist Teacher in Community Services	1	1	1	1	
Hearing and language Primary Teacher	1	1		1	
Adapted Programme Unit Tutor		1			
Professional induction programme teacher		1	3		

Source: Inclusive Education Team of the University of Murcia

Data collection instruments and development of the research study

We used semi-structured interviews for data collection that were addressed to the Management Team, Guidance Department and Teachers (i.e. 4th-year Compulsory Secondary Education tutors). The aim was to collect information related to the aforementioned ordinary and specific measures for treating diversity of the schools. Interviews were conducted by the research team and there were 31 participants, who were professionals working in the schools under study, as shown in the table below:

TABLE 4: Interview to professionals

	School1	School2	School3	School4	School5
Management Team	2	2	2	2	2
Head of Guidance Department	1	1	1	1	1
Compulsory Secondary Education Tutors	2	2	4	3	5
TOTAL	5	5	7	6	8

Source: Inclusive Education Team of the University of Murcia

The development of our research took place in the following chronological order: review of the literature, development of guidelines for interviews, interview conduction, analysis and evaluation of results and conclusion drawing process.

Design, analysis of information and interpretation of results

The design of this study was part of a qualitative methodology and pursued an exploratory and descriptive purpose. We developed a category system that would allow the analysis of data. This system was developed inductively, that is from the data themselves. The category system was developed as follows:

- *Teaching experience and teacher training*: this piece of information refers to the teaching experience of interviewed 4th-year teachers and of the management team.
- *Attention to diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education*: considerations about the feasibility of attention to diversity, obstacles and difficulties.
- *Ordinary measures*: teaching support (who gives it, where and why, support purpose and nature), groupings, school project, curriculum adaptations that do not involved any changes in prescriptive common goals, compensatory education / interculturality (level of knowledge of other cultures and actions to foster intercultural environments and integration), support models, availability of subjects for students to choose from, guidance and tutorials/student mentoring, resources (school and environment material and human resources).
- *Specific measures*: Individual curricular adaptations, Curriculum Diversification Programme, Programme for students with special educational needs associated with mental disabilities (PRONEEP in Spanish), Professional Induction Programme, Compensatory Education Workshops, retake of one year.

The response to the overall objective of this research study will be presented after summarizing globally the most relevant results for each of the specific objectives.

Objective 1: To learn about the teaching experience and training background of teachers in charge of attention to diversity.

In general terms, teachers of the five schools had very extensive *teaching experience*, and on average they had been teaching for 16 years. Those teachers with most teaching experience had been working for 25 years, and the one with least experience had been working for only 1 year. Of all the interviewed teachers, 33% had very long experience teaching in schools where there were students with educational support needs; 26% had not so long teaching experience, and 41% had scarce experience.

As a whole, interviewed teachers had extensive *training* in issues related to the degrees they had studied at university (Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, Music, History, Language and Literature, etc.). However, they seemed to have spent fewer hours on teacher training (teaching, school organization and collaborative work). This is striking if we bear in mind the fact schools welcome students with special educational needs, from other cultures, with learning difficulties, as well as talented students. To put it simple, teachers are good professionals in their fields of specialization, but lack specialist knowledge on attention to diversity, which highlights the huge problem it is for them to give an adequate educational response that suits the characteristics of their students.

Although this was a general feature among 4th-year Compulsory Secondary Education teachers (tutors, specialists of different subjects), professionals working in the Guidance Department seemed to have been given a different kind of training. These professionals, along with tutors, were responsible for giving support to students with educational support needs. We found that counsellors (i.e. psychologists, pedagogues or psychopedagogues), Therapeutic Pedagogy teachers, Hearing and Language teachers, Compensatory Education teachers and specialist teachers (expert teachers in different subjects and also in treating diversity) had extensive training in issues related to attention to diversity. This contrasts sharply with the aforementioned information and what is reported by tutors. Perhaps this difference in training is what “justifies” that tutors often deny any responsibility for their problematic students and rely on their colleagues from the Guidance Department who they consider well prepared specialist in dealing with educational support needs.

Interestingly, teacher training takes place mostly on an individual basis in teacher training schools or at university. Teachers prefer to be trained outside school and in their own time, not in school hours. Training should be directly related to the subject they teach at school or their tasks in the Guidance Department. Training directly held in schools, with the participation of all teachers and with the aim to improve issues that affect the school situation as a whole (such as attention to diversity) is scarce.

Teachers do not demand training projects that would train them in areas that may be useful for the school (regardless of the subject they teach) and that may be held in the school facilities. Issues such as school life, how to teach Spanish as a second language, how to apply methodological strategies in a classroom focused on diversity, etc., could be addressed and contextualized in the school itself. For example, School 3 claimed to be actively involved in giving teacher training; Schools 2 and 5 informed to have participated in projects on a couple of occasions; and Schools 1 and 4 admitted to have never participated in this kind of training dynamics. Training processes address topics such as: how to develop a school project focused on attention to diversity, learning Spanish and use of technology in the classroom.

Despite the lack of training carried out by schools, professionals from the five schools under study admitted to take bigger steps and move towards becoming an increasingly inclusive school when they are trained and work in a collaborative manner.

Objective 2: To analyse how ordinary measures for attention to student diversity were implemented in schools.

In this section we present each of the ordinary support measures carried out in the schools we studied.

Pedagogical support is carried out in four of the five schools and applied in small groups or individually, usually in the regular classroom on a temporary basis and according to the opinion of Spanish Language and Mathematics teachers. The aim is to consolidate basic contents which are critical to learning processes that take place later, and to avoid that any difficulties or backwardness in learning increase over time. Only School 4 lacks pedagogical support measures, despite teachers pointed out that the proficiency level of their students is generally low.

We found *flexible groupings* in the five schools under study. However, it turned out that student groups were sometimes used for segregating the class, given the criteria teachers use for group formation. An example of this is found in three schools (School 1, 3 and 4). The criterion used in School 1 for the entire school year was to group students according to the optional subjects students had chosen (that is, a bureaucratic or administrative criterion). The situation of Schools 3 and 4 was even more segregating and homogenizing, since groupings were set taking students' abilities and/or academic skills as a basis and remained unmodified for the rest of the school year. Only Schools 2 and 5 used pedagogy-related criteria such as setting class-groups as heterogeneous as possible, so that there were inter-group homogeneity and intra-group heterogeneity within groups. We took into account criteria such as: number of students repeating a year, academic performance, characteristics of students with educational support needs. We then allocated students in various groups in equal numbers. In cases like these, teachers have the same teaching programme, yet contents are covered with different levels of depth, so that students can shift from one group to another.

In general terms, the *development of School Projects* in the five schools was guided by collaborative and democratic procedures of decision making, and by a high level of teacher participation. This process was so because the management teams and teachers wanted to inform the educational community about the educational ideology and school working procedures. Also, they wanted to build joint reference with regard to teacher practices and school general actions. We observed, however, that School 1 required major adaptations in order to fully adjust its educational response to the reality of students and environment.

Adaptations of the curriculum to the context and to students which do not involve modifying prescriptive common goals

Teachers interviewed in the five schools admitted to rarely carry out adaptations to the main curriculum. Only tutors of School 5 reported they carried out changes in their teaching programme, objectives and content so that their response may be adapted to students with special needs. Nevertheless, there was no written record of such adaptations

The *support model* found in the five schools followed a therapeutic, poor and marginal approach (Arnaiz, Guirao and Garrido, 2007). It was carried out by specialist teachers (Therapeutic Pedagogy, Hearing and Language, Compensatory Education) outside ordinary classes (support classes), as schools considered this method was more effective and allowed better learning. According to management teams and teachers, schedule problems and lack of specialist teachers also determined why this type of support was given. Tutors' opinions suggested that support teachers performed mainly a direct intervention action on pupils with special educational support needs, rather than give advice and support to peer students.

Availability of subjects and optional subject offer catering for students with learning needs.

The opinions given by management teams and teachers of the five schools suggested that the availability of subjects for students to choose from in schools did not give an educational response in accordance with the characteristics of enrolled students. This measure aims to offer subjects that encourage the personalization of the school

curriculum, bearing in mind the abilities and educational needs of students. However, it becomes a bureaucratic and administrative measure, as optional subjects are set by Education Authorities for reasons of lack of resources and are the same for all schools regardless of their background and characteristics of students. Thus, the very purpose of the measure is violated, which aims at proposing optional subjects that: promote autonomy, interaction and communication among students with learning difficulties; adapt to students' learning styles; and facilitate students' transition to adulthood.

One of the cornerstones of attention to diversity is *guidance and mentoring of students*. LOE (2006) includes the contributions made by the European Framework and explains under which preconceptions guidance and mentoring should be provided, whose main recipients are students, families and education professionals. The five schools implemented the Plan of Educational Guidance and Tutorial Action, and addressed a wide range of issues such as: education based on values, study skills, programmes to improve coexistence, acquisition of social skills and conflict resolution skills. We confirmed this was one of the measures that schools regularly implemented with high student participation.

Objective 3: To analyse how specific measures for attention to student diversity were implemented.

In this section we explain the most relevant specific measures carried out in schools.

Curriculum Diversification Programmes

This measure was implemented in the five schools. The opinion of teachers involved in these programmes was unanimous: these programmes allowed a more global approach in all areas, as well as the possibility of adapting goals and contents so that they may be changed or reduced to a minimum. The main feature of this programme was grouping different subjects together in two main areas: Science-Technology and Socio-Linguistics. A weekly meeting coordinated and monitored the process in which all members of the Guidance Department participated.

A teacher of the field of Science-Technology from School 5 recognized that these programs allow a more global approach between areas, thus making objectives more flexible, allowing the removal of contents, the reduction of the level of difficulty so that it may be adjusted to students' abilities, the development of a more participatory methodology and the development of activities as close as possible to reality. With regard to the socio-linguistic field, a female teacher from School 4 pointed out that the main changes associated with the development of this programme focused on the definition of minimum objectives, reduction of contents, use of participatory methodologies (debates, videos viewing or completion of more work by the students) and adaptation of assessment.

Similarly, four teachers from Schools 1 and 3 welcomed this programme, as it allowed certain variations so that contents were more direct and practical, as well as the development of activities which were practical, manipulative and closer to everyday life, which in turn facilitated student learning.

Significant adaptations of the curriculum

This measure to treat students with special educational needs arising from disabilities, severe behavioural disorders or autism was implemented in the five schools. It allowed teachers to carry out appropriate adjustments which deviated significantly from objectives, contents and assessment criteria described in the curriculum. These adjustments are usually made by the guidance department with participation, to a greater or lesser extent, of the rest of teachers. Interestingly, adaptations become parallel programmes, as they are applied to students, either individually or in small groups, outside the regular classroom. An example of this was teachers from Schools 1 and 2, who reported that students carry out their curriculum adaptation individually in the regular classroom or in the support classroom but without sharing the teaching-learning process with peer students.

Programme with curriculum adaptations for students with special educational needs associated with mental disabilities (PRONEEP in Spanish).

This programme was implemented in Schools 2 and 3. Fourteen students with special educational needs associated with mental disabilities benefited from it. Students were between 14 to 18 years of age, had retaken at least 4 years if compared to their classmates, and had no chances of achieving the overall curriculum objectives, which meant they would not be granted the Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. Teachers welcomed this programme because it allowed these students to follow their own learning plan outside the regular classroom with the help of a support teacher who was also a Therapeutic Pedagogy specialist. Taking these students out of the regular classroom “homogenized” classes, which, according to tutors, benefited fellow students as their learning pace was not hindered.

Professional Induction Programmes took place in Schools 2 and 3 and *Compensatory Education Workshops* were carried out in Schools 2, 3 and 4.

Professional Induction Programmes are designed to prevent early drop-out, raise new expectations of further training and qualifications, and facilitate access to work life, enabling students to successfully achieve social, educational and work integration and to develop core competences to continue studying. The aim of these programmes is that students develop professional skills and to make it easier for them to attain the Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. Nine students from School 2 and nineteen from School 3 attended these programmes, and the contents were Automotive and Computing. Teachers really appreciated this measure because it introduced students to work life and motivated them to continue learning when faced with difficulties with basic concepts.

Compensatory Education Workshops are made up of groups of students under sixteen years old who have severe problems adapting to the regular classroom, lack motivation to learn at school and are at early drop-out risk. Teaching is delivered through project activities with contents from different areas and of a practical and/or pre-professional nature that may appeal to students’ interests. The main aim of these workshops is to prevent early school drop-out and to promote the integration of student with compensatory educational needs. 22 students in School 2 and 37 in School 3 attended these workshops.

Adapted Programme Units (UPA in Spanish)

These kinds of programmes are aimed at 15-year-old students who have school backwardness of more than two years and do not integrate well into school life for various reasons. They have discipline or behavioural problems, difficulties with keeping pace with class work, disruptive behaviours, inability to integrate, coexistence difficulties, low self-esteem, passive attitude, lack of study habits, etc. Only six students from School 4 attended this programme.

Teachers expressed a very positive opinion about these measures, as they seemed to be well suited for their target students. Without these measures, students would not be able attend schools and the only alternative for them would be special education schools. We noticed, however, that these measures functioned parallel to the normal course in regular classrooms in all schools. Those who attended these programmes hardly shared teaching-learning experiences in different subjects with peer students. As a result, students gained little benefit from the ordinary measures described above, since they were introduced in a “different circuit” because they either had school backwardness due to a disability, belonged to an ethnic minority, or had other problems, and obviously did not follow the pace of the general group.

DEBATE AND CONCLUSIONS

Generally speaking, the different groups interviewed in the five schools believe that there are there are great difficulties in how to tackle attention to diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education. The main problems identified by Management Teams and teachers were: lack of human resources, poor school-family collaboration, lack of training, behaviour problems and low student motivation, lack of material resources, school organization, lack of room for different groupings, excess of student per class, poor coordination and lack of a collaborative culture, lack of time for curriculum adaptations required by students, and lack of autonomy to manage projects that support the development of attention to diversity measures.

It is worth highlighting teachers’ extensive teaching experience, yet they lacked experience in how to cater for students with teaching support and compensatory educational need. Only two schools combined teaching experience with measures to treat student diversity. Teachers were aware that they should work in order to give increasingly appropriate answers to different student needs. In accordance with LOE (2006), the shift towards an inclusive and quality education demands better trained professionals specialised in treating diversity. Better management and school resources are necessary, as well as teacher collaboration with regard to improving School Projects and teaching practices. All this should take place in an agreed and coordinated manner and in adequate contexts for socialization and professional development.

There seems to be some misunderstanding of the changes related to the concept of diversity. There are still too many professionals who think that “attention to diversity” refers to a particular type of student (problematic, with disabilities, misfit, immigrant) and not to all students in all classes in all schools. Any backwardness or learning problem is at risk “of becoming” a special educational need that demands special support. The “responsibility of attention to diversity” is often redirected towards support professionals, and this in turn distorts the process (Álvarez; Álvarez; Castro and Fueyo, 2008).

Sometimes, measures to deal with diversity tend to be used as a “drainage system” of the regular education system. That is, when a school (under the process of adaptation to mainstream education) has not sought preventive and less exclusive solutions for its problems, it implements specific measures. Teachers then tends to label more and more pupils as problematic and when this happens teachers pass on their teaching responsibility to special programmes and other professionals (Velázquez de Medrano, 2004; Martínez; de Haro; Escarbajal, 2010).

As a result, it is worth reconsidering the difficult balance between understanding and diversity in Compulsory Secondary Education. Some professionals have taken on the idea that schools may “diversify” and welcome all kinds of nursery or primary students, but that their inclusion in high school is, however, quite difficult due to tight schedules, high numbers of students per class, and psycho-evolutionary characteristics of students. These difficulties hinder teachers from meeting students’ special needs.

Student characteristics and the resources introduced in schools by Education Authorities determine the measures for attention to diversity. We found that only Curricular Diversification Programmes and Significant Curriculum Adaptations were implemented in the five schools under study out of the eight specific measures that may be applied in the Region of Murcia. The other measures may be found in other schools, yet not many students benefit from them.

Specific measures to treat diversity involve human resources (Therapeutic Pedagogy teachers, Compensatory Education teachers), financial support and extra materials for schools, but they do not eventually result in improving attention to diversity in the regular classroom. Rather, they result in taking problematic students out of the regular classroom to gather them in other programmes. The remaining students follow the Compulsory Secondary Education Curriculum without any difficulties. The teaching programme is followed normally and ordinary measures for attention to diversity are implemented. Specific measures for attention to diversity are applied in and out of the classroom to students with difficulties, who are redirected to alternative learning paths. Teachers believe this is the best solution for those students with problems and those without any difficulties. This creates an increasingly elitist school that is not focused on diversity and follows parallel education systems.

The necessary steps towards an inclusive education imply understanding diversity as a natural wealth and an educational value, and that schools engage in fighting inequality (Arnaiz, 2011). Only in this way shall we contribute to the full development of students’ abilities and skills.

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