

# Inclusive English classrooms: requirements, implications and limitations. -A qualitative case study-

## Aulas de inglés inclusivas: requerimientos, implicaciones y limitaciones. –Un estudio de caso-

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### Abstract

This article presents the results of a qualitative case study which attempted to answer the following research questions: What are the perceptions that the educational community has of inclusive education in the English language classrooms? What are the parameters that this school follows in order to work with inclusive English classrooms? And what strategies are being used in the classrooms in order to respond to students' individual needs? The study was developed approximately during eight months in a public school in Bogota. Class observations and interviews to different members of the educational community were done and questionnaires to teachers and students with special educational needs were applied in order to provide a thorough description of the processes of inclusion in the institution. The findings revealed that although some few teachers use some personal strategies in order to respond to some students' individual needs, there are still many obstacles that become a barrier for the successful development of an inclusion process in the institution and lacks that need to be attended to and supplied.

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### Key words

SEN (Special educational needs) students, inclusion, integration, inclusive English classrooms.

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### Resumen

Este artículo presenta los resultados de un estudio de caso que buscaba responder a las siguientes preguntas de investigación: ¿Cuáles son las percepciones que tiene la comunidad educativa de un centro educativo distrital acerca de la educación inclusiva en las aulas de inglés?, ¿Cuáles son los parámetros que esta escuela sigue para trabajar con aulas de inglés inclusivas? Y ¿Qué estrategias se utilizan en las aulas de inglés para responder a las necesidades individuales de los estudiantes? El estudio fue realizado durante ocho meses aproximadamente en el centro educativo en mención. Para realizar una descripción completa del proceso de inclusión en la institución se realizaron observaciones de clase, entrevistas a diferentes miembros de la comunidad educativa y se aplicaron cuestionarios a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales y a sus docentes. Los hallazgos revelaron que aunque algunos pocos profesores utilizan estrategias personales para responder a las necesidades individuales de los estudiantes, hay aún muchos obstáculos que se constituyen en una barrera para el desarrollo exitoso de un proceso de inclusión y carencias que se deben atender y suplir.

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### Palabras clave

Estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales, inclusión, integración, aulas de inglés inclusivas.

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The descriptive qualitative case study reported in this article characterized the state and process of school inclusion of children with special educational needs in the English language classrooms of a public school located in the south of Bogotá. The aim of the study was to observe and describe how the culture of inclusion and the corresponding processes are being developed in this institution and at the same time to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the students with special educational needs specifically in the English classrooms.

Revision of documents, identification of perceptions and attitudes of the school community towards inclusion and observations of the English teaching/learning processes were done in order not only to provide a detailed description of the phenomena of inclusion in this specific school but also to give some recommendations to address the issue, so as to guarantee all the students a education with quality, framed in a society aware and committed to the creation of a new environment for everyone to feel recognised and valued. It is important to highlight the good intentions regarding the issue of inclusion in our system of education on the part of the government agencies to create a society in which every individual is recognized with his strengths and weaknesses, without any kind of discrimination because of particular situations and differences that may hinder the children's learning process. In this regard, it can be mentioned that according to the concept 130011 issued by the "Secretaría de Educación Distrital" (SED, 2010) in response to a legal requirement done by the researcher Pablo Andrés Convers Hilarión about the public policy called "Política Pública Distrital de Discapacidad", they claim that around 7.000 girls and boys with special educational needs (SEN) and talents have been enrolled into 91 formal regular schools specialized in different aspects of educational needs in the capital. The SED also argues in that document that they made an investment of \$1.637.735 pesos per SEN student in 2010 and organized supporting teams to develop the policy. However, based on the results of this research, we contend that there is still much to do with respect to this issue.

In order to achieve the main objective of this research, it was necessary to track the proposals and care plans, in order to verify if students with special educational needs (SEN) were really being recognized in the school or if they were only occupying a place in a classroom and, therefore, their socialisation processes and their educational needs were being neglected. Finally, it is important to see how English language teachers are being prepared to deal with inclusion of SEN students and to provide them with learning strategies, bearing in mind that the learning of a foreign language implies complex processes and requires a constant interaction in the classroom.

## Theoretical Framework

### Inclusive Education

**Defining Inclusion.** According to Loreman, Depeler and Harvey (2005), inclusion implies a total insertion of every child, with abilities and disabilities, in every single school activity. This means that inclusion involves much more than the presence of students with special educational needs in the classrooms and schools; it is their participation and recognition as individuals who belong to the community and who must have the same rights and opportunities of every single person. This is how inclusion will be understood in this study. As Allen and Cowdery (2005) point out, what matters about inclusion is not only providing a place or a set of strategies or a especial curriculum; what is really important when dealing with inclusion is to develop in both SEN and regular students a sense of belonging, a positive attitude and interest for being valued and to have choices. Inclusion has to do with accepting diversity and schools providing support to SEN students and their families in order to help them achieve their goals. No matter who the individual is, the desire to be a meaningful part of society is inherent to all of us, making it essential to recognize every individual as an active member of a society which is built day by day.

Differences between Inclusion and Integration. Inclusion and integration are two terms which are

usually used indistinctly to describe the process of sending SEN students to mainstream schools. But it is necessary to consider the characteristics that totally differentiate these two terms when talking about education and working with students with special education needs in regular classrooms. The following chart highlights the differences between inclusion and integration based on the ideas stated by Norwich (2008), although he considers that inclusion is a term which embraces integration.

**Table 1.** Difference between Inclusion and Integration. Adapted from Norwich (2008, p.19).

Integration	Inclusion
This term refers to placing the individual in a system which assimilates the child without taking into account other factors.	Inclusion is a systematic process which has a social meaning. It implies reconstructing regular schools to have the capacity to offer all students what they need. It is about participation, interaction and social recognition

Inclusion goes beyond having a kid in a classroom occupying a seat. It means to offer them more than the integration to the current education system; it is to think of him as an individual with particularities, with different needs, abilities, and goals. Therefore, it is the duty of society and especially of the educational system to provide every student with the opportunity to be herself / himself and to grow up both in academic and personal aspects.

### Special Educational Needs

According to Farrell (2006) common special educational needs include special learning conditions, communication conditions related to speech and language, hearing impairments which include some degrees of deafness, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and developmental disorders. Students with these kinds of special needs are likely to benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching or the use of technology. Students with physical or cognitive differences or disabilities require special attention in the schools; this fact is known within the frame of inclusion as Special Educational Needs (SEN). 'Special needs' is a term used in clinical diagnosis and functional

development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological. Students who have these special educational needs require different strategies to learn and to interact with others in an educational environment.

The Ministerio de Educación Nacional in Colombia, in Decree 366 of 2009, Article number 2 points out that a student has a special educational need when she/he has a deficit that can be observed in the limitations of his academic performance in an educational environment and which becomes a clear disadvantage in relation to the other students, due to their physical differences, and the emergence of communicative and social barriers. This article of the abovementioned Decree also states that there are different kinds of disabilities: of sensorial type, such as deafness, blindness, low vision and deaf-blindness, of physical or motor type, of cognitive type as a Down Syndrome or others which are characterized by meaningful limitations that influence the intellectual development or the ability to communicate and to establish relationships with others as in the Asperger Syndrome, the autism and the multiple disability.

**Physical disabilities (differences).** The World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) defines disabilities as follows:

'Disabilities' is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action, while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. (p. 1)

A disability of this kind may occur during a person's lifetime or may be present from birth. A physical impairment is any disability which limits the physical function of limbs or fine or gross motor ability.

**Learning Disabilities.** According to what Logsdon (2009) states in her article Learning Disabilities Guide, “Learning disabilities are neurological differences in processing information that severely limit a person’s ability to learn in a specific skill area. Everyone has differences in learning abilities, but people with learning disabilities have severe learning problems that persist throughout their lives. Learning disabled people may have difficulty in school or on the job. Learning disabilities may also impact independent living and social relationships.” (p. 1).

Students who face these kinds of disabilities may suffer frustration if the strategies they require are not fostered; also the affective factor is very important because these students need to be recognized and their inclusion in the classroom implies their active participation and valuing their experiences and their human qualities. According to Article No. 2 in the aforementioned decree, a SEN student is understood as a student who has any limitation which is shown in the academic performance within the school environment. These limitations can be physical, environmental, cultural, communicative or social. A disability can be related to senses: blindness, deafness, or in some cases both; in other cases the disabilities are related to cognitive aspects. In this article, we are going to focus on the disabilities present in the students who attended the school where the study was developed; these include hearing and sight impairment.

### **Teaching Strategies for SEN students**

Nind and Wearmouth (2005) present a very interesting and systematic review of studies which were held in mainstream classrooms with the purpose of enabling SEN students to be included in those classrooms. Those studies looked at inclusion in terms of teachers’ successful strategies to deal with the issue, the importance of using research to inform pedagogical practice to improve inclusion processes both in academic and social contexts. This review includes different strategies such as: adaptation of instruction, adaptation of materials, adaptation of assessment adaptation of classroom environment, behavioral/programmatic inter-

vention, peer tutoring, and peer group interactive team teaching.

### **The English Language Classroom**

According to Haver (2009), there are important elements to create a successful English classroom which facilitates the language teaching/learning process. These elements involve the physical appearance of the classroom, the role of the teacher, the classroom materials, and the classroom environment in general. First, Haver states that posters, pictures, diagrams, charts, etc. need to be displayed throughout the classroom space. Thus, the classroom needs to be a place with enough space to develop different didactic activities and it requires creating a pleasant environment in order to focus and motivate all students. Second, she points out that the role of the teacher is fundamental; it is necessary to have mutual respect between teacher and students, and among students; they need to feel free to make mistakes without fear of being judged or ridiculed. Third, she mentions that a good English classroom needs to have visual aids to be used in the teaching practice and a set of didactic materials appropriate to the students’ ages, such as magazines, pictures, flashcards, puppets, books, and a collection of games, among others. Finally, she claims that “a successful ESL classroom is one where students are happily immersed in English while participating in activities and projects which will strengthen their language skills.”

Likewise, Greenspan, Simons and Wieder (1998) point out that in order to have an appropriate classroom environment for inclusion, it is necessary to follow three basic principles: First, it is necessary to meet each child at his own level of development, foster that stage, and enable the child to move on to the next level; it is fundamental to know every student’s situations, abilities and disabilities in order to respect her/his learning process. Second, it is important to tailor the environment to each child’s strengths and weaknesses and help all children, with special needs or not, to build greater competency. Finally, it is very useful to interact with children in ways that help them to think and problem-solve

at their own levels. These interactions need to be a part of ongoing, trusting, intimate relationships that children have with the teacher and with each other. In an English classroom it is fundamental that students feel free to learn at their own pace and have accommodations and alternative assessment strategies in place to meet their unique needs, if they have any, without being apart or isolated. Since students need to experience success, learning goals need to be clear and attainable but still encompass some challenge to them.

### **National and International policies in regards to Inclusive Education**

**National policies.** Currently, the Colombian legislation seems to account for the rights of people with special educational needs, as it is stated in the Decree N° 366 of 2009, which regulates the organization of the service of educational support for disabled students in the frame of the inclusive education. In this article will look at the process of inclusion to education in Colombia in the light of this law, and describe and critique the possible pros and cons that arise from it and from its actual implementation in educational institutions in our country.

Apparently, the general objective of Decree N° 366 of 2009 is to establish mechanisms of social integration of people with limitation; however, as can be noticed in the following description of the regulation, we may say that its general objective is rather to guarantee education to all people in the country regardless of their educational needs, suggesting the use of specialized support for students with special educational needs. This decree declares that the Colombian State, through its public educational institutions, will guarantee access to education and training in primary, secondary, professional, and technical levels to people with disabilities; they are to be provided with integral education within the most appropriate environment to their special needs.

According to that Decree, no one will be discriminated because of his/her disability to have access to the education service either in a public or private institution in any educational level. To this end, it is established that the inclusion of popula-

tion with disabilities in regular classrooms should be promoted, adopting pedagogic actions, means and resources, and special programmes designed to address every individual's educational need: teachers must be provided with specialised materials and trained to deal with the issue of inclusion and agreements must be made between regional administrations, universities and non-governmental institutions to offer special educational programmes, including rehabilitation as a preponderant element. It is stated that the national government will exercise permanent control over the fulfilment of the regulations established in the Decree; should an educational centre deny educational services to disabled people, it will be fined by the Ministry of Education or the Secretary of Education. Nevertheless, there are not explicit mechanisms to ensure the fulfilment of the necessary conditions to offer true inclusive education: teacher training, support from specialized professionals, academic help for the SEN students' families and appropriate facilities and educational resources, among others.

**International policies.** Amaya, Parra and Ramírez (2006) presented in their research an account of the following international events and policies about Inclusion which state the importance of this issue in every educational environment: The Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> and the World Declaration of education for all, held in 1990, The Salamanca Statement and framework for action on special needs education, the "X Conferencia Iberoamericana de Educación", and "Panorama y Perspectiva inicial en Iberoamérica."

### **Methodology**

The research methodology chosen was the case study since this approach allows the researcher to describe a phenomenon as a whole, and offers at the same time the possibility of understanding it without omitting important details or influences of the context. According to Merriam (1998) "a qualitative case study is an

1 The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/155 of 21 December 1995, approved the amendment to article 43, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, replacing the word "ten" with the word "eighteen". The amendment entered into force on 18 November 2002 when it had been accepted by a two-thirds majority of the States parties (128 out of 191).



intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit,” (p. 21) and it has to be particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic.

### **Setting**

The research was carried out in a school which is part of the public schools of the Localidad Quinta of Usme, located in the south of Bogota. The school has three different branches with approximately 3000 students. It offers education to both girls and boys with low income in three different shifts. This research was developed in the branch called SEDE A, in the high school section, because it is the one which has the biggest amount of students with special education needs.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The participants of this study were different members of the educational community of the selected school, who signed an informed consent in which the purpose of the study and their participation in it was explained. The participants were: the groups in which there was any case of special educational need, regular and SEN students, SEN students' parents, the English Language teachers in charge of the English classes in the groups with cases of special educational needs, the counselor, and the principal. The selection of participants responds to what Patton (2002) presents as a “typical case sampling” (p. 236), due to the fact that the sample of participants “is not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant or intensely unusual” (p. 236). The participants represented a sample which could have been chosen in a similar way, in any of the schools in the capital in which SEN students are enrolled.

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

Three data collection instruments were designed and piloted, namely class observations, interviews and questionnaires; besides that, it was also planned to analyse the documents the school may have in relation to inclusion. The first step to start collecting data was to get all the informed consents signed; after that the class observation process was carried

out. Three consecutive sessions of English class of 90 minutes were observed in each of the four classrooms where there were SEN students. Some of the sessions were video recorded in order to enrich the data collected with the field notes. This process took about two and a half months, going everyday to the school and observing classes during the complete shift when possible.

During these two months in some free hours with the help of the counselors of the school, SEN students' parents were asked to go there in order to respond to the interviews. All the interviews were done and recorded individually. All of the seven SEN students' parents were interviewed: six mothers and one father. Regular Students' and SEN students' interviews were done individually and during the last week of observations. The appointments to have the individual interviews with the counselors and the school principal were previously arranged and took place at the principal's office. The teachers' questionnaires were administered at the end of the observations to avoid teachers changing their typical practices in the classrooms to suit the strategies mentioned in this questionnaire. Students' questionnaires were administered during the observation time in free hours; they were not administered to all the SEN students at the same time, to avoid them to be seen as the ones with “problems” when being sent to the same place, at the same time.

The revision of documents started the first day of data collection because this is a procedure which has to be carefully done and may take a lot of time. First of all, a public document that is the national Decree N° 366 of 2009 was revised to have an overview of the national legislation in relation to educational inclusion. The revision of institutional documents was planned to be done after the counselors' and the principal's interviews in order to learn from them what documents were available and in this way save time.

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

The grounded approach to data analysis was used because as Johnson & Christensen (2004) state the findings emerge from the data through interactions

with them and there is not any predefined category before approaching the data. The process of identification of the categories featured a series of systematic stages in order to build validity, which Cook and Campbell (1979) define as the most accurate approach to the truth or falsity of a statement proposition or conclusion. In order to respond to this aspect, methodological triangulation was employed, that is, the use of multiple ways to collect information from different participants of the study, ensuring the possibility to corroborate any finding using different pieces of evidence taken from different data collection instruments.

The first stage was the analysis of the field notes taken during 15 ninety-minute sessions of English classes; the second stage was the analysis of the questionnaires applied both to teachers and SEN students, and the last stage was the analysis of the transcriptions of the 15 minute interviews with each participant of the study namely the seven SEN students, the three English teachers, the principal, the counselor and thirty six regular students. The field notes and the transcriptions were color coded, using a color to highlight data which may correspond to each one of the questions and another one to highlight pieces of data which could become outliers. The data were kept in folders according to the date of collection and according to the participants. To do this rigorous analysis, an analytical process was followed. This process implied naming, grouping, finding relations, and finally displaying the data in mind maps; following these steps made it easier to see the data as a whole in order to have a general picture of the situation and the phenomenon being studied, as Freeman (1998) suggests.

### **Findings**

From the analysis three main categories emerged, each one related to one of the research questions revealing that there are positive and negative aspects in relation to attitudes, perceptions, parameters, resources, parents' involvement and strategies in relation to inclusion.

### **The educational Community's attitudes towards and perceptions about the inclusion process**

In the development of an inclusion process the attitudes and perceptions of the members of the educational community specifically parents, teachers, counselors, principal, regular and SEN students are crucial due to the fact that an inclusive environment has to be based on the community, which needs to have a positive and open attitude to diversity, as Thomas, Walker & Webb (1998) state.

### **SEN students' interfering attitudes towards the activities because of their difficulties**

Even though the attitudes of the educational community toward students with special educational needs is a fundamental aspect in the development of inclusive environments, the data showed through the different participants' ideas and opinions that the SEN students' attitudes also contribute to the success or failure of the process. It is clear that in some cases these attitudes interfere and do not facilitate the class work and the activities proposed by the teachers, due to the fact that SEN students need to be interested and involved. Negative attitudes on the part of SEN students become a barrier during the development of some activities; although the positive attitudes from teachers and regular students is fundamental to help SEN students feel free and motivated to participate, they are not enough if SEN students are not open to the others and to the activities. However, these attitudes take place mostly because of affective factors; in some cases that happens because they are actually rejected by their partners but in other cases because they are not confident enough because of their special educational need. In the following extract taken from the field notes of an English session observed, the SEN student does not show any interest in the activities which are being carried out. There is a total lack of interest and commitment.

SP4 does not volunteer to participate in the contest; he is not paying attention to the instructions. (Field Notes, October 21st, 2010. Page 1, Lines 8-10)

However, when SEN students were asked in the questionnaires about their class participation, they said that they do not participate because they do not understand what it is said in the classroom; this is something particular since instructions most of the times are given in English and then in Spanish what makes us understand that the problem is not related to the use of English or Spanish but to the way those instructions are given. In the following excerpt taken from a regular students' interview, they mentioned that their SEN partner preferred to be quiet, and that they thought that this was because when he speaks what he says is not clear and that makes him feel intimidated and insecure due to his fear to become the object of his partners' jokes.

I: Ok ¿Cómo es la participación de S. en clase? ¿Él participa en clase de inglés o no participa?

RS(J): Casi no.

I: Y ¿El profesor le dice oiga participe o algo?

RS(B): No pues todos le decimos participe, participe, pero a él le gusta estar es como mas callado.

I: Estar callado ¿Tu por qué crees que le gusta estar callado, A?

RS(A): Porque cuando él habla no se le entiende casi, entonces a él le da como pena hablar, se intimida porque después los demás se le vayan a reír entonces...

(Regular students' interview. June 9, 2011)

### **Regular students' encouraging and discouraging attitudes towards SEN students**

The data allowed us to understand that the regular students' attitudes toward SEN students become a factor with the power of encouraging or discouraging SEN students' participation and their development of a sense of belonging.

SP7 is working with his group, he is participating; he speaks very slowly, so the other students make fun of him. He continues working and what he says is taken into account. Teacher goes checking place by place. She asks some of the students to read out loud. SP7 volunteers and reads out loud, some students make fun of him but he continues. (Field Notes, November 7th, 2010, Page 1, Lines 5-10)

Later in the same session students were working on another stage of the activity that was to design a "friso" -a kind of threefold small poster- about a reading previously studied. In that part although the SEN student made an effort and showed commitment with his group and the activity, this effort was not recognized by his partners who looked down on him because of his disability to speak fluently.

### **SEN students' rejecting attitudes because of lack of attention and exclusion**

Rejecting attitudes from SEN students was mentioned by many of the participants of the study as a factor that becomes a barrier for the development of inclusive environments in the institution. On the one hand, regular students expressed that in many cases the ones who make the decision of being isolated and who do not integrate with the group are the SEN students; they considered that there was a negative attitude on the part of those students and that in that case it is difficult to approach them but they did not attempt to analyze the causes of that situation.

RS (I.): el es como diferente a uno [I: ¿diferente en qué corazón?] él es todo raro... como le digo, él es como alejado y cuando uno le dirige la palabra él habla pero hay veces se pone todo rabón ahí.

I: ¿Tu qué opinas C.?

RS (C.): Sí él es el que se hace a un lado.

(Regular students' interview. May 9, 2011)

On the other hand, the English Language teachers did try to pinpoint some of the causes; they considered that most of SEN students in the school tend to isolate themselves, in some cases because of their own will, but in other cases because their partners isolate them and they recognized that sometimes this happens because teachers do not know the students' difficulties; this is due to the big number of students, which makes it almost impossible for them to detect every student's needs and to offer them appropriate assistance. Although, according to their words, they know that some students feel ne-



glected or rejected, they do not know how to handle the situation or they do not have the conditions to find the possible solutions, as it is observed in the following excerpt of a teacher's interview.

I: ¿Usted cómo cree que se sienten estos niños acá en el colegio? ¿Cómo los percibe?

ET2: A nivel general son chicos que tienden a aislarse, que si no tienen un grupito pequeño son chicos que los aíslan, ya sea por sus propios compañeros o en sí a veces porque los docentes no conocemos las dificultades de los estudiantes, entonces tiene uno que escudriñar y escudriñar pero entonces son 40 y mientras escudriñas el tiempo se te va y no te alcanza. Ése es el asunto.

(English Teacher's interview. June 9, 2011)

### **SEN students' parents, counselor, English teachers and principal's concerns about lack of specialized help**

According to the members of the school staff, the participation of the parents of SEN students in the process is poor. Due to the fact that these are families with low economic resources, in some cases it is difficult for them to leave their jobs and to commit themselves with the institution, and in other cases according to the principal of the school, they just see the school as a place for their kids to be safe instead of seeing it as a place which could offer their children opportunities to grow intellectually and personally. In the interview with the counselor of the school, she stated that the school is always interested in supporting the families with SEN members; however, the families' answer to this support is not positive, as can be seen in the following excerpt.

I: Si, si, si ¿Y los papás como se portan los papás ¿Cómo es la comunicación del colegio con los papás o los papás con el colegio? En ese caso ellos...

C: La comunicación del colegio es directa con los padres de familia pero la respuesta es muy poca, muy poca; de diez casos nos responden dos.

I: Sí, obviamente eso dificulta el proceso, mejor dicho, pero cantidades.

C: Sí de diez casos nos responden dos, los demás...

I: O sea, ¿qué en sí qué personas se encargan de hacerles el seguimientos a estos estudiantes? O sea, según veo aquí de orientación básicamente...C: De orientación y directores de curso

I: Orientación o directores de curso [C: Sí] ¿Los otros profesores en general solo reportan el caso y ya? ¿Hasta ahí llegan cierto?

C: Sí

(Counselor's interview. March, 2011)

### **Concerns about parents' lack of involvement in the process**

The principal and some of the English teachers of the school, as shown in the following examples taken from the transcriptions of the interviews, also manifested that due to the difficult conditions that the parents face every day in relation to money, work, resources and security, for them it is enough with having a place in the institution. They also expressed that the parents are immersed in a circle of hopelessness which takes them to a total abandonment of their kids' learning processes.

I: Hablábamos de los padres, cuál es la relación de los padres de estos niños generalmente con el colegio?

P: Pues los padres quedan más tranquilos cuando consiguen el cupo pero los padres también están como en el círculo de la desesperanza, los padres no suelen tener recursos para decir lo llevo a tal instituto o me lo atienden en tal parte, de hecho acá en la localidad hay como tres colegios que atienden estos tipos de discapacidad, entonces cuando uno logra hacer el vínculo con el colegio que no es fácil porque esos colegios permanecen full, el padre (dice) pero yo no tengo plata para el bus, yo no lo puedo estar llevando a la terapia, yo no lo puedo acompañar porque yo tengo que trabajar, el padre realmente no tiene la visión ni la capacidad de proponerse como tarea hacer que su hijo salga de esa limitación y logre un desarrollo más o menos normal, es muy difícil.

(Principal's interview. June 9, 2011)

### **Lack of resources, teacher training, specialized attention, and adequate facilities**

The members of the educational community who participated in the study expressed that there are many lacks that need to be supplied in order to create a real inclusive environment: resources, teacher training, specialized attention, adequate facilities and solidarity for SEN students. In terms of materials, some participants mentioned that currently the institution does not have any of the didactic material required to offer support to students with special educational needs. The following excerpt illustrates how some participants of the study considered this aspect relevant in the process to be able to support their teaching practices.

I: ¿Qué otro tipo de condiciones facilitarían el proceso? Si estuviéramos pensando en el ideal. (...)

ET2: Exacto, también y pues no sé qué otra, a nivel de recursos y material por ejemplo, apenas si trabajamos acá con las uñas, imagínate ahora con estos chicos que hay que presentarles de todo un poco, pues es terrible.

(English Teacher's interview. June 9, 2011 ).

Materials constitute an element which may facilitate the instruction of both SEN students and all the regular students in a classroom. Bearing in mind that the setting where this study was carried out is a public school with low economic resources, it is important to mention that the creativity and disposition of the teachers to adapt their materials is vital in the process. However, economic support on part of governmental entities in charge of education is needed if there is a real interest in creating inclusive schools.

On the other hand, the following sample reveals the importance given to teacher training by the participants of the study mainly teachers, principal and counselor. Dash (2006) highlights the importance of teacher training due to the fact that the inclusion of students in the regular classroom is mandatory and is a reality, and that the regular education teachers have acquired a vital role in the learning experiences of the SEN students they have in their classrooms. Supporting this claim, some of the participants of

the study mentioned that there is a huge need for training on inclusion principles and strategies. As teachers stated, they have never received any training on the issue of inclusion, which could become a barrier for them to participate in the process with a certain level of self-confidence. The following excerpts taken from the interviews from different participants support the ideas previously presented.

I: Bueno, y ¿considera usted que el colegio está preparado para un proceso de inclusión en la institución?

ET3: (...) Pues yo creo que está preparado pero allá los orientadores pero nosotros como docentes no nos comunican, no nos dan unos parámetros y unas bases para poder trabajar con esos muchachos, pues es muy difícil.

I: ¿O sea que según usted qué necesitaría o se ha pensando en el ideal que debería tener el colegio en fin para que los niños se desarrollaran?

ET3: Primero que todo que a los maestros nos capaciten para que los podamos trabajar en el salón y luego la infraestructura, los salones y los materiales. (Teacher's interview. June 9, 2011 ).

In the previous example an English teacher stated that the institution requires communication related to the process of inclusion, teacher training and facilities adaptation in order to be able to develop a successful process. The data also revealed that there is a need for specialized support. Although the Secretaría de Educación Nacional, has some programs related to special needs, these are not enough to provide for the needs of the institution, as mentioned by the principal and the counselor of the school in the examples below. The principal of the school said that although they try to get some support from the governmental entities of the zone and the Secretaría de Educación, the support received is very poor and not enough to cater for all the needs. She also mentioned that when they ask for information, they do not receive any answer.

Finally, the need for the school facilities adaptation is mentioned by the participants as one of the relevant aspects to take into account in the development of an inclusive environment in the

institution. In the following excerpt taken from the interviews with the English teachers and the counselor, the data showed that they considered fundamental to do some adaptations in relation to the school spaces, such as the access to the school and the stairs, especially for children who cannot walk.

I: Bueno ¿considera usted que el colegio está preparado para atender las necesidades especiales de estos estudiantes?

C: No, el colegio no tiene preparación ninguna, ni física, ni académica, ni nada, nada es un colegio lleno de baches que aquí, por ejemplo cuando hemos tenido, bueno aquí no tanto en la otra escuelita de abajo, tuvimos una hija en silla de ruedas cinco años. una escuela que está llena de escaleras toda la escuela está hecha en escaleritas de dos de tres peldaños toda la escuela está hecha así yo luché mientras estuve allá dos años con la rectora; yo le decía: estos dos peldaños convirtámoslo en rampas (si) porque mire la dificultad de esta niña esta niña mire cuando era chiquitica no pesaba tanto pero ya cuando fue creciendo pesaba muchísimo; dos, tres, cuatro niños tenían que desplazarla todos los días súbala, bájela; al señor celador escude la puerta mientras entraba; no! ¡Eso es una injusticia!  
(Counselor's interview. March, 2011)

The reduction in the number of students in every classroom is also part of the adaptations that need to be done. She also mentioned that the school needs to be rebuilt in order to offer the spaces needed but acknowledged that is something very difficult to achieve but by having classrooms with fewer students, it would be possible to offer students more personalized attention.

### **Lack of parameters and policies to guide the inclusion processes**

Based on the data analysis it is possible to state that many of the participants consider having policies and parameters to address the issue of inclusion an important element which has not been considered in the institution. In the following example taken from the interview with the principal of the school, she

affirms that there is not any parameter or guideline to follow in the institution; although the Decree 336 issued in 2009 by the Secretary of Education exists, there is a total lack of knowledge of it and of what is stated by the government.

I: En el colegio existe algún documento o parámetros específicos que guíen el proceso de inclusión?

P: No, no existe ningún documento al respecto. Pues aquí se reciben y se hace lo que se puede pero un documento oficial o parámetros no los hay.  
(Principal's interview. June 9, 2011)

The counselor of the institution also explained that there are not any parameters related to inclusion to be followed by the institution. She mentioned that what she does is to identify the students with special educational needs and to send them to hospitals and specialized institutions for help. She also mentioned that this is the only possibility she has and that the programs the Secretaría the Educación offers are planned for a very short time, therefore, there is not enough follow up to the processes of the SEN students.

I: ¿No existe no existe ninguna documentación, ni por decir algo de la Secretaría?

C: Apoyo no; nosotros no tenemos ningún apoyo de la Secretaría de Educación, no.

I: Bueno, ni planes de acción, ni nada de eso? ¿Solo lo que ustedes alcanzan hacer lo que ustedes pueden hacer con lo poco que tienen?

C: No. Trabajamos con las uñas con las uñas, trabajamos con las uñas. Mire por ejemplo este es un niño que está en segundo de primaria, este es un niño que yo el año pasado entregué a bienestar familiar y duró seis meses allá; es un niño que necesita terapia ocupacional, programas de repaso continuo eh: y no; o sea la familia no nos ayuda.

I: ¿O sea que no, no hay una persona que les pueda dar ningún tipo de orientación a ustedes? ¿No hay nadie que venga de ninguna parte, que digan bueno aquí nos vamos a organizar de esta manera, vamos hacer esto con los niños nada, o sea de esto no existe nada?

C: No. "Salud al colegio" entre comillas es apoyo porque, porque los programas que ellos presen-

tan son de muy corta duración. A ellos les hacen contratos como de dos meses, como de tres meses entonces entre que vienen ellos presentan y viene el padre de familia y los conocen se pasa el segundo semestre; cuando ya se va hacer la acción directa, ya se han ido entonces son programas discontinuos [I:si?] de “Salud al colegio” que debería prestar ese apoyo porque ellos tienen todo: el médico, el psicólogo; tienen los terapeutas; tienen todos los recursos: sin embargo no es que ellos no quieren prestar el servicio, es que nombran un profesional para todo uso y ellos tienen que volar desde el hospital hasta aquí hasta el Danubio hasta Santa Marta. ¿Cómo hace un profesional recogiendo los casos, después de que los recoge los ubica por instituciones, por edades, por padres de familia? [I: Hum ¿y hasta dónde tiene que ir?] hacer todos los procesos y ya en eso se tiene que ir, se acabó el programa solamente un niño logré que ellos me ubicaran y me apoyaran en el proceso, pero porque la profesional lo cogió como propio, [I:uhum] que fue un niño autista y ella hasta que lo ubicó en la institución que corresponde para el autismo pero porque eso fue compromiso de ella desde el día que cogió ese niño y porque la mamá estaba muy pendiente y preocupada y de ese niño. Sí, teníamos todos los reportes, mire todo, todo estaba: entonces ese caso si hasta que lo logramos ubicar en el sitio correspondiente. (Counselor’s interview, March 2011)

It could be determined that there are not any clear parameters to follow in order to assist students with special educational needs or any program to create inclusive English classrooms in the institution. Also, previous excerpts evidence that the Decree 366 is completely unknown by all the members of this educational community, they do not even mention it.

### **Strategies currently used in the English Classrooms**

From the set of teaching strategies compiled by Nind and Wearmouth (2005) to promote inclusion of SEN students aforementioned, there was only adaptation of materials and in one teacher adaptation of the instructions given and of the assessment proce-

dures was observed. Unfortunately, adaptation of the instruction, of the assessment or the classroom environment was not often detected. Likewise, there was a lack of student training on how to get teacher attention to increase the rate of praise or feedback they could receive or to achieve accuracy in their work completion (called behavioral/programmatic intervention). There was not either any evidence of peer tutoring or peer group interactive team teaching to help SEN students cope with their difficulties.

### **Instructions as a key aspect for the development of the activities**

In the following excerpt taken from the field notes of one of the sessions observed we can notice that the way teachers give the instructions determines how the activity proposed is developed by students. In this case the teacher implements a strategy to give instructions to both SEN and regular students. This strategy was to provide the instructions in oral and written way, then she used paraphrasing on the part of students probably in order to corroborate that the instructions were clear; in this way she is ensuring that everyone regardless any special need understands the instructions and can start the development of the activity. Although this teacher has not had and training on inclusion, she uses her common sense providing a successful alternative to help her students with their learning process.

The teacher gives the instructions using a loud voice first, then she writes them on the board using big letters, and finally she asks some students to paraphrase them. (Field Notes, October 22nd, 2010. Page 1, Lines 1-20)

On the other hand, in the following excerpt taken from the field notes of an observation session we can notice how the lack of instructions interferes with the students’ work. A general instruction is given, but there is not any clarification on what students have to do. As mentioned in the excerpt, “students seem to be lost”; that is a feeling which does not allow students to develop the activity successfully or to finally achieve their goal.



The teacher says that they have to do a “friso”. Students start working but they have different ideas of what a “friso” is, they seem to be lost. Finally by asking other partners they understand what to do. (Field Notes, November 9th, 2010. Page 1, Lines 1-4)

### **Inadequate strategies for evaluation**

The data revealed that several strategies for evaluation are used in the English classrooms, however, many of them are not successful and they are sometimes generalized to all students disregarding the individual needs in the classroom.

Teacher asks students for their homework and goes place by place asking questions, checking the notebook and assigning a grade. The student with a hearing impairment is not asked any question, only her notebook is checked. (Field Notes, October 22nd, 2010. Page 1, Lines 11-15)

Although some teachers mentioned in the interviews that they design different instruments according to individual needs, the data gathered through the field notes and in the interviews to regular students showed a different outlook of the situation. Students mentioned in the interview that all students in the classroom are evaluated in the same way and with the same instruments regardless any especial need.

I: Y alguna vez, F. ¿Alguna vez ella ha utilizado alguna otra actividad con V, no? O para todos es lo mismo?

RS (F): No, para todos es lo mismo.

I: ¿Cómo evalúan a los niños? ¿A todos cómo los evalúan a ustedes en clase?

RS (F): Pues ella utiliza muchas notas para darnos posibilidades de que nos vaya bien.

I: Bien. ¿Pero qué les evalúa? ¿La escritura más que todo?

I: ¿La parte oral poco? y ¿A V. le evalúa igual que a todos, A?

RS(A): Como dije desde un principio todo por igualdad.

(Regular students' interview. Junio 9, 2011)

In some other cases the data showed that one of the choices of the teachers in relation to evaluation is to evaluate only some of the abilities, especially writing and grammar and what they do in order to be “fair” is to evaluate following different parameters for the students with special educational needs such as not evaluating listening if the student has a hearing impairment, or to evaluate them only according to what the teacher considers the SEN student is able to do; in other cases teachers do not evaluate the abilities but their attitudes and their level of commitment and responsibility.

I: Sí ¿Cómo evalúa a esos estudiantes? Por lo menos si un estudiante me dice que tiene problemas auditivos, en ese caso se evalúa o no se evalúa el listening o cómo se evalúan las habilidades?

ET2: Se evalúan pero siendo sincera pues el nivel de evaluación es diferente como para un chico con necesidad de digamos que un chico normal sin ningún tipo de problema; con ellos si es diferente por ejemplo con una actividad de listening dependiendo si es la grabadora procuro que esté cerca de la grabadora que tenga el material disponible que tenga los recursos necesarios para que pueda trabajar; si hay necesidad de ponerle la grabadora una y mil veces y le entra más o menos la información y ya no hay inconveniente. Los chicos ya con necesidades cognitivas ya pues el asunto es otro completamente distinto. No, digamos es igual pero hay que explicarle una cantidad de veces qué vamos hacer, cuál es el objetivo que queremos evaluar, cómo lo vamos evaluar qué debe tener en cuenta; entonces mientras el proceso de listening toca estar permanentemente explicándole porque se despista fácilmente.

I: ¿Y se evalúa sobre el mismo nivel a todos los estudiantes en cuanto a exigencia?

ET2: No, o pues yo personalmente no; yo tiendo hacer más laxa, pienso que este bueno este chico no escucha bien le acaban de hacer una cirugía en el oído que antes escucha por ejemplo. Entonces cómo lo voy a evaluar de la misma manera que evaluo a un chico regular? O sea es diferente; vale más el esfuerzo de los chicos.

(Teacher's interview. Junio 9, 2011)



### **Lack of strategies to involve every student in the activities**

The data revealed that there is a lack of strategies to involve every student in the activities. Although some teachers and students made an effort to get involved in the class activities, it was observed that there was a low level of commitment on the part of both teachers and students in the development of activities. This situation could be emerging because the teachers do not know how to handle the situation but also because of the specific characteristics of the groups, namely the number of students, the lack of materials, the lack of innovative ideas, and possibly the lack of interest of teachers to foster an enjoyable learning process. The following excerpt taken from the field notes of one of the sessions observed illustrates how students show a total apathy toward the activities and also how this attitude of the regular and SEN students does not generate any reaction on the part of the teacher.

After teacher finishes checking homework, he asks the ones who did not do it to do it. Only some of them try to do it, the others copy and SP4 is not doing anything and continues walking around the classroom and nothing happens. (Field Notes, October 19th, 2010. Page 1, Lines 13-18)

### **Conclusions**

Regarding the first related question to the perception that the educational community of the school has of inclusive education, there are different factors that according to the participants of the study become a barrier for the development of a successful process of inclusion in the institution. First, the data showed that the lack of communication and information about the issue of inclusion constitutes one important element that hinders the implementation of inclusive practices. Second, in relation to the perceptions and attitudes toward the process, the English teachers, the counsellor and the principal considered that developing an inclusion process in the institution is impossible due to the fact that they lack the materials, the knowledge about the topic, and the specialized support that they consider

essential to offer quality education to every student in the English language classrooms.

According to the participants, there are other additional requirements to be fulfilled in order to achieve the goal of having inclusive English language classrooms in the institution or any other inclusive classroom. Firstly, a change in the attitudes toward special educational needs is imperative; although there are some members of the educational community who consider the special needs in a classroom as an opportunity for both teachers and students to grow in the personal, professional and academic fields, there are some others who think that inclusion implies more work and does not constitute any positive element in the classrooms. Secondly, the data revealed that teacher training is needed not only to know how to handle the situation but also to help teachers to develop certain level of confidence and positive attitudes in relation to inclusive teaching practices. Thirdly, SEN student parents' involvement is crucial and has become a barrier due to the low level of commitment that most of them showed because of their job duties; this situation can be observed in their constant absence in their children's academic process.

Finally, in relation to the perceptions and culture of inclusion in the institution, it is important to mention that according to the findings of the study there are many rejecting attitudes from both SEN and regular students. In many cases, regular students see the special need of a partner as a defect and in some others the SEN students are the ones who consider themselves different and rejected. Regular students have not been helped to become aware of the importance of recognizing all their partners' abilities regardless any physical or cognitive difference and SEN students have not been oriented to recognize themselves as valuable individuals. A sensitizing campaign to make all students aware of their responsibility in the construction of a fairer society where everyone has the right to participate and to be recognized could be one strategy to begin with this process; this action would help to achieve the goal proposed by Allen and Cowdery (2005) in which they point out that what is really important

when dealing with inclusion is to develop in both SEN and regular students a sense of belonging, a positive attitude toward each other, an interest for being valued and to have choices.

With regards to the second question that deals with the parameters that the school follows in order to work with inclusive classrooms, the data revealed that the school does not have any official document which contains specific parameters in relation to the implementation of an inclusive process in the institution. Although it is a fact that the school has to assist all students in the institution regardless any special need, something relevant that the data showed is that none of the English teachers knew exactly how to address inclusion in their classrooms; furthermore, some of them had not even realized that the school has students with special educational needs and that it has a responsibility with their specific needs.

Although the Decree N° 366 of 2009 exists and it is an official law in our country, none of the participants of the study seemed to know about it. This Decree was not mentioned by any of the participants as a policy to follow. There is evidence that the actions taken by some of the members of the community in relation to inclusion correspond more to their personal will and interest rather than to an established program or policy which may guide the process and which may motivate teachers to implement inclusive practices. Therefore, it could be useful for the development of a successful process of inclusion to evaluate the requirements for its implementation in the institution, based on their reality and school context so as to ask the government for the necessary support in terms of budget and specialized professionals in the area, to receive appropriate training and to have some specific guidelines besides the official decree all with the view of making that process something feasible.

Finally, to answer the last question that is related to the strategies which are being used in the English classrooms at this school in order to respond to students' individual needs, the data showed that consciously and unconsciously, and going beyond obstacles and barriers in some cases the English tea-

chers make an effort to implement some strategies for instruction, evaluation and integration in the classroom. However, in this respect it is important to mention that the effort that they make is not enough as they do not have the time, the materials, the facilities, and preparation to help some students with special needs which are difficult to attend to and which need some specialized support and assistance in the classroom. As a result, English teachers tend to treat both regular and SEN students' learning processes on the same basis.

### **Requirements and Implications**

The implementation of a successful process of inclusion in the English classrooms in this and any other institution would have a number of requirements and implications for the field of education, the ELT community in Colombia and for the school where the research took place.

To begin with, it is important to mention the implications for the field of education. It is necessary a change of mind and attitudes towards students with special educational needs. First, the entire educational community needs to start looking at inclusion as a practice required for the construction of a society in which every student's needs and abilities are recognised and taken into account. Second, it is also relevant to consider aspects related to the curriculum, the vision of language, learning and teaching, and the teachers' development principles. Moreover, it is fundamental that the governmental entities in charge of education provide the resources in terms of money, time and on-going training and adapt the schools facilities to offer all students and teachers what they need to achieve their academic and social goals. And finally, the school community has to deeply reflect upon the issue of inclusion in order to take action, which aims to provide every student in the classroom with the possibility to feel included and part of the community, taking into account not only their needs but also their abilities in the construction of their knowledge and the improvement and transformation of their reality.

In addition, as Holtgraves (2002) considers, language has to be seen as Action not as an abs-

tract system: he points out that this action can be Interpersonal, Contextualized, Coordinated and Thoughtful. Every decision made and every action taken by an individual in the language teaching and learning process is based on his personal interpretation of reality; that is to say that every student and teacher need to have the possibility to interpret every event or action in the class in a different way. Due to the fact that every person regardless his/her specific characteristics or special educational need is a citizen of a multicultural world, everyone has a right and a need to learn about other cultures to become culturally competent. Every individual part of an educational community needs to learn to accept and value people from backgrounds different from their own. In this way, learning another language might help students to understand different cultural features which might be helpful for them become more aware of their own.

Besides that, the English language teachers of the school play a vital role in the process of inclusion since they constitute the door to educational change. "The expectations of the teachers, their sensibilities, their priorities and values contribute to the quality of the experiences in learning for all students, and consistently, these influence into what is taught" (Hartney and Naish, 1993, 341). Therefore, it is necessary on the one hand to involve them and make them aware of their importance in the process of inclusion, and on the other hand, to provide them with specialized training and appropriate resources and classroom conditions to develop their practices.

Teamwork is also essential when working with children with special educational needs. There must be constant dialogue among professionals in the institutions in order to find joint strategies that will improve inclusion processes; also, there must be a constant recognition of SEN students as an important part of the community, and not as a problem. In this way, it might be easier to ensure every student's success in all the actions that he/she should undertake not only at school but also at a personal level. Similarly, the family should play an active role in this process using their experience with and knowledge of the children to account for their

needs and to support the institution in the actions that might be taken.

In order to achieve the purposes of inclusion in the institution where the research was held, teachers need to be guided in order to provide students with different strategies which might be useful for them to learn and use the language to transform their reality. The main purpose of teachers' professional development in inclusion has to lead them to understand that within an inclusive language classroom students need to be active - not passive learners. It is necessary that students feel encouraged to make choices as often as possible, thus, a teacher with a clear idea of what inclusion implies will allow students some time to flounder as the most powerful learning stems from taking risks and learning from mistakes.

Based on the findings, it is possible to state that this study has a number of specific implications for the school where the research was held to become a real inclusive environment. One of the main pedagogical implications has to do with creating spaces to discuss the inclusion processes and requirements, and to share different strategies to address the issue in the institution. It is imperative to help teachers to become aware of the importance of providing high quality education to every student taking into account any special educational need, not only for the benefit of the institution but also for the community and the society in general. Bearing in mind the previous ideas, we can highlight the importance of changing certain teaching practices such as the ones which are teacher centered and which ignore the different needs students have in an inclusive classroom and the need for designing and implementing updated teaching strategies.

Besides, it is fundamental to consider the topic of inclusion essential within the school's teacher training plans and programs. This implies to choose people in the institution to be in charge of establishing communication lines within the school and between the school and the governmental entities in charge of education, with the main purpose of getting support from the state; not only with materials and training but also with professionals specialized in the area of special educational needs.

This whole training plan has to be based on the school specific needs in relation to the issue of inclusion.

Another important implication for the institution is to address the need of promoting and encouraging teachers' research. Finding updated information and observing other successful inclusive practices and experiences might help them to develop their own inclusion process in a positive way. Knowing about other teachers' inclusive practices and experiences might be encouraging for teachers with wrong beliefs about inclusion, to start improving their practices and taking advantage of their knowledge, experience and creativity.

It is also relevant to revise, analyze and adapt the standards suggested in the National Bilingual Plan. Since the characteristics of the school under study differ from the ones of other public schools in terms of population, location and resources, it is necessary to base the English curriculum on the specific needs and possibilities of the school. Consequently, it is necessary to design and implement strategies which encourage and motivate students to be active participants of their English learning process and of the school life in general, bearing in mind that too high standards could be discouraging for both teachers and students since the goals could seem to be impossible to achieve.

Finally, the schools facilities need to be adapted and modified based on students' special needs, in order to guarantee all students access not only to all the school facilities but also to all the academic and extracurricular activities held in the institution. This implication involves the state's greater commitment, as it is the one responsible for providing economic support to the public institutions.

Since the aim of this case study was to describe and analyze the inclusion of students with special educational needs in English regular classrooms, a number of implications for the participants of the study also emerged. First, the students with special educational needs who may be the main beneficiaries of a successful inclusion process, have to be seen by all the members of the educational community as individuals who have lots of inter-

esting and valuable ideas and experiences to share, instead of subjects with disabilities who require full attention and only medical care. It is also necessary to plan and implement strategies to help students with special educational needs to become aware of their responsibility in the English learning process and to foster positive attitudes through the use of lively and didactic instruction, personalized attention, and other teaching strategies, such as the ones mentioned in the theoretical framework. In this way, the activities may contribute to create favorable spaces to learn and to socialize. Moreover, students with special educational needs require building up self-confidence in order to be able to exploit their greatest potential. Second, the SEN students' classmates who are the ones who share their daily academic and extracurricular activities need to look at their SEN partners as equals. That is to say, regular students need to start understanding and respecting differences, taking advantage of what everyone in the classroom has to offer in order to create a fairer learning environment and at the same time a better society.

Third, SEN students' parents need to become aware of their role in their children's learning process, due to the fact that they have to support these processes at home; consequently, an inclusion successful process implies parental guidance and involvement. The support at home is required since the responsibility of educating individuals does not correspond only to teachers. In relation to this aspect, it is vital to offer parents the opportunity to get together to share their experiences and to receive some information and support to deal with their kids' special needs or abilities and to help them become aware not only of the importance of providing their children with all the materials and the academic assistance they need at home, but also of the significance of helping them become self-confident and independent. This means to help them become aware of their abilities and possibilities regardless their special needs.

Fourth, there is a need for English teachers in charge of the classes in the groups with SEN students to become aware of the importance of creating real



inclusive environments not only to help students achieve their goals but also to improve their own teaching practices by learning how to understand and support SEN students' learning processes. Thus, they are required to design and implement meaningful and appropriate strategies and materials to address every student's needs in the English classrooms. A big change of attitude on the part of teachers is needed in order to see the inclusion processes as an opportunity to improve their students' learning conditions and at the same time to start promoting a new vision of the society in which everyone is recognized regardless any physical impairment or learning difference. Consequently, they may have the possibility of growing in the professional and personal fields becoming transformers of their students' and their own reality and contributing to the construction of a better society.

Fifth, for an effective inclusion process, the counselor of the school becomes essential to lead the program of inclusion in the institution. One reason is that she is the person who leads most of the extracurricular activities and deals with psychological and social issues. Besides, she is the person who knows the medical histories of every SEN student and apart from that, with her professional experience dealing with special needs she could become an available resource for teachers. However, she cannot help the huge amount of students in the school; she needs a lot of extra professional help and these processes related to inclusion she deals with need to be more expedite.

Consequently, the principal of the school as the head of the institution needs to be informed and committed to guiding every single step of the inclusion program; furthermore, she needs to become one of the main agents in charge of following, evaluating, and suggesting adjustments for the inclusion program and the educational community members' performance based on what she observes in order to develop a successful process of inclusion in the school.

All in all, one of the principal implications of this research is the need to lead teachers, students and the school community in general to become

aware of the importance of creating real inclusive environments not only to help students achieve their goals but also to help teachers improve their teaching practices. Thus, teachers may have the possibility to grow in the professional and personal fields, becoming transformers of their students' and their own reality and contributing to the construction of a better society.

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