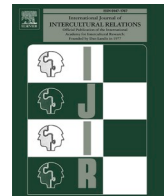




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Review

Territory and treatment of diversity: The case of the Communities of Cantabria, Asturias, Andalusia, and Valencia (Spain)[☆]Marta García-Lastra^{*}, José M. Osoro Sierra*University of Cantabria, Faculty of Education, Avenida de los Castros, s/n 39005, Santander, Spain*

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ABSTRACT

The presence of culturally diverse students in the classrooms of educational centers suggests that the autonomous communities with educational powers in Spain address the issue in a rather complex way. The case that concerns us in this text centers on the legislative and organizational analysis of four autonomous communities in Spain: Cantabria, Asturias, Andalusia, and Valencia. Each of the territories analyzed has distinct characteristics in terms of the approaches taken in relation to this type of student body, derived not only from the number of such students present in the classrooms, but also from other criteria of an ideological nature and educational or pedagogical positioning given this reality. We move from a macro analysis to a more concrete one that tries to define what, who and how the autonomous communities and the educational centers coordinate this process.

This leads us to the consideration of at least three elements that are related to this decision-making process: the legislation that results from this reality, the specific organization of the educational centers, and the structures that have been created ad-hoc to respond to diversity.

The process must be understood from a broad view of the situation that goes beyond that which is exclusively school-based. We must not forget that this is a matter of human rights, of democratically agreed-upon values, and of establishing appropriate conditions so that rights and values can be made possible within educational contexts. Without forgetting this macro perspective, the analysis includes the way in which communities present the cultural project and how this is manifested in the official curriculum in the form of practices that are determined by the construction of an image of childhood.

Introduction

In this article, we present the path taken by four Spanish autonomous communities in which attitudes towards immigration are vastly different, based on both the presence of immigrant groups within the total population, and on the development of intercultural

[☆] This work has been developed following the partial reports carried out at the Spanish state level in the R+D project "Cultural Diversity in Schools": Discourses, Policies and Practices. Financed by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (CSO 2017-84872-R): García-Lastra and Osoro Sierra (2018, 2019); Otero-Enríquez, García-Abad, Domínguez-Mujica, and Pérez-Caramés (2019); Vallespir, Rincón, and Morey (2019); Venegas, Luque, Velasco, and Sánchez (2018). The methodological perspective used in these reports has been qualitative, combining the documentary analysis of legal and educational documents together with in-depth interviews to people in charge in the process of implantation of reforms in intercultural education in each autonomous communities.

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education. We shall address the communities of Cantabria and Asturias, ranked, at the state level, among the five communities with the smallest immigrant populations, and Andalusia and Valencia, where the presence of these groups has been much more pronounced in recent decades.

A factor also worth noting is geographical location: Asturias and Cantabria are located in the north of Spain, while Andalusia and Valencia are in the south and east. The northern communities, moreover, are uniprovincial, while the other two¹ are multiprovincial. There are also significant labor or economic disparities between the populations of these territories. For example, the unemployment rate in Cantabria is 11.9 %, compared to 21.2 % in Andalusia. Of those studied, Cantabria ranked as the region with the lowest average income per household, reporting an average income of 24,091 euros, compared to 27,669 euros in neighboring Asturias.²

This article joins other previously published works that have addressed intercultural education in the Spanish autonomous communities. Among others, we can point out Borrero López & Blázquez Entonado (2018); Cruz Terán (2008); Etxeberria, Garmendia, Murua, & Arrieta (2018); Garreta-Bochaca (2006); Garreta-Bochaca, Macia-Bordalba, & Llevot-Calvet (2020); Garreta-Bochaca, Terrén, & Alcalde (2005); Goenechea & Iglesias (2017) or Vallespir (2006). This interest is due, as previously mentioned (Iglesias de Ussel, 2010), to the fact that it is in this territorial and administrative area that the competencies regarding the social integration of the immigrant population are undertaken, including those related to intercultural education (Fernández Echeverría & García Castaño, 2015; Martínez-Usarralde, Yanes-Cabrera & Llevot-Calvet, 2016). Thus, it is at the regional level that measures related to meeting the needs of culturally diverse students and their particular experiences are designed and implemented. Pursuant to Essomba (2006), these measures have been mediated by the experience of the administration in the management of competencies in education, its political significance, the percentage of immigrant population, the demographic density, and the population's linguistic plurality and openness. The measures implemented, albeit from a different perspective as we shall observe in these pages, can be classified according to: the multicultural approach to education; the welcoming of students; those aimed at organizational and curricular aspects; those linked to attention to linguistic and cultural diversity; and those related to teacher training (Consejo Económico y Social, 2019; García Fernández & Goenechea, 2009).

The work presented below was carried out based on the analysis of legal and educational documents prepared by the various entities responsible for education in the autonomous communities, which have been analyzed since the early years of this century. One should bear in mind that until the end of the nineties, the Spanish autonomous communities did not have total authority in the sphere of non-university education.

Spain: from an emigrant country to an immigrant country

In the last three decades, the migratory trend in Spain has changed direction. It went from being a country of emigrants to becoming a receiving society for people who, in most cases, were looking for new work opportunities in the country (Reher, Requena, & Sanz, 2011), in addition to those who were looking for a place to settle after retirement (López de Lera, 1995). The economic crisis that began in 2008 marked a change in this trend, with a decreasing number of foreigners entering the country. A new upturn, however, can be observed as of 2014 (Otero-Enríquez et al. (2019). Which leads us to point out that in 2019, once again, the number of foreigners residing in Spain exceeded five million, an aspect that had not been observed since 2013.³ Despite these years of declining numbers, Spain has continued to be perceived as an attractive place for immigration. This fact points to the "persistence of immigration" as a notable phenomenon in the country (Arango, Mahía, Moya, & Sánchez-Montijano, 2017), with consequences regarding social and demographic transformation (Iglesias de Ussel, 2010; Moreno Fuentes & Bruquetas Callejo, 2011). Spain, according to the IOM (International Organization for Migration) (2020), is currently one of the twenty receiving countries with the highest number of international immigrants.

In this global scenario as a country especially attractive for immigration, it is necessary to restore the true nature of the different autonomous communities, which, mainly because of the labor supply they were offering, have become hot spots (for example, the Balearic Islands, Madrid, Valencia and Andalusia), compared to others such as Galicia, Extremadura, Asturias and Cantabria, which, even within the upward trend of receiving immigrant populations, has barely represented 5% of the total population compared to others where it reached 20 % in the last twenty years.⁴

Specifically, with regard to the Autonomous Communities involved in this work, Asturias and Cantabria did not exceed percentages of 4% and 6% respectively. Against this background, Andalusia and Valencia have experienced a significant increase in the number of immigrants, between 9% and 18 %, during the years in which the migratory phenomenon was most pronounced.⁵

Intercultural education in Spain: a general framework

The application of the idea of intercultural education has been diverse and has hinged on the countries and moments in which it was developed (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2001; Gundara & Portera, 2008). Acknowledging these differences, it can nevertheless be argued that

¹ It is important to remember that the Spanish political-administrative organization is distributed in 17 autonomous communities, some uniprovincial and others not, with a wide legislative autonomy and determined competencies in the educational, health and legal fields, etc.

² <https://www.ine.es/dynInfo/Infografia/Territoriales/index.html>.

³ INE, https://www.ine.es/prensa/cp_e2020_p.pdf.

⁴ Población y variación interanual (españoles/extranjeros) por sexo y año (ine.es) (1998–2020).

⁵ Población y variación interanual (españoles/extranjeros) por sexo y año (ine.es) (1998–2020).

the concept of "education for diversity" is part of a broader, comprehensive and yet complex vision, which includes not only cultural differences but also economic, ideological and gender differences (Neuer, 2012). In accordance with Louzao's vision (2019), we emphasize that intercultural education implies more than the mere coexistence of diverse cultures. It is imperative that relationships between groups be promoted, building on symmetrical relationships that recognize cultural identity.

The consideration and treatment of cultural diversity within the formal education system in Spain began with the arrival of immigrant students in the 1990s, later than that of other nearby external contexts (e.g. Germany, United Kingdom, France or Sweden) and with the distinction of having received the first generation of immigrant students (those who were born and had their first school experiences in their country of origin), as opposed to the prevalence of second-generation students (those born in the host country) in other countries (Moreno Fuentes & Bruquetas Callejo, 2011).

The arrival of these students to Spanish classrooms was quite abundant and occurred in less than a decade, with the highest number of immigrant students over the total number of students in the 2008–09 and 2009–10 academic years (9.8 % and 9.7 % of total students, respectively).⁶ This figure decreased somewhat in the following school years until it began to increase again in the 2017–2018 academic year. Although this trend of establishing an immigrant population in the country continues, it should be noted that the variation in student numbers has not been quite as pronounced. According to Izquierdo Escribano (2008), the education of immigrant children has become a fundamental part of their experience, considering, in his words, that "the key to the immigrant model, the horizon to which society is heading, is not pioneering labor and their social involvement, but the quality of the integration of the generations that follow" (p.59). The children's education and the possibilities that it can offer them thus becomes a factor that roots them more firmly in the country.

According to data for the 2019–20 academic year, the majority of foreign students in Spain are enrolled in public schools (approximately 80 %) and, in terms of the different academic levels, 39 % are enrolled in primary education, 22 % in compulsory secondary education (ESO) and around 7% in vocational training. This trend is the same in all Spanish Autonomous Communities. However, if we look at the cultural origin of these students, we can observe differences in the four Autonomous Communities analysed in this article: while in Cantabria, Asturias and Valencia most of the students come from the European Union (between 23 % and 33 % of the total number of immigrant students), in the case of Andalusia, North Africa is the main area of origin: 32 %. The presence of students of African origin is also important in Valencia (23 %), compared to a meagre 10 % in Asturias and Cantabria. South America is another particularly significant origin in all four communities.⁷

The approach to cultural diversity in schools has evolved from being excluded from the educational system to being integrated into its classrooms, in the same way as has occurred with other forms of diversity/inequality in groups that were not present at the beginning of the institution, such as women, people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or those with different abilities (see, for example, Fernández Enguita, 2016; Parrilla, 2002; Subirats, 2006). Before the 1990s, this type of diversity in Spain was restricted to internal differences within the country and to the gypsy population (García Fernández & Goenechea, 2009; Garreta Bochaca, 2014). Regarding the latter group, the system developed measures such as "bridge schools", aimed at "preparing" students for their arrival in "normal" schools or compensatory education programs (Abajo & Carrasco, 2004; Fernández Enguita, 1999; Garreta-Bochaca & Llevot-Calvet, 2007; Salinas Catalá, 2015). Specifically, the 1980s were characterized by compensatory measures aimed primarily at this gypsy population that moved towards intercultural education as the proportion of immigrant students in the classroom increased and the value of cultural diversity improved (Garreta-Bochaca & Torrelles-Montanuy, 2020; Garreta-Bochaca et al., 2020). The first measures taken were aimed at the teachers who were particularly sensitive to the students who were arriving at the schools, setting in motion initiatives that would later be taken up by the administrations at the local level to be gradually reinforced with the general idea of "compensating for inequalities in education" that the LOGSE (Organic Law for the Regulation of the Educational System) of 1990 had already taken up. From that moment on, the scope of the law was extended as a new form of diversity and inequality emerged in Spanish classrooms (Fernández Echeverría & García Castaño, 2015; Sánchez-Medina, Macías-Gómez-Stern, & Martínez-Lozano, 2014).

This new point of view, in accordance with Louzao and Durantez (2012), entails a shift from compensatory actions for students towards the pursuit of an intercultural perspective, starting, in their words, from a position of "very limited intercultural didactics, and the incorporation of a didactic approach focused on social content" (p. 185). Intercultural education thus emerges with a two-fold approach: addressing foreign pupils arriving in classrooms in an increasingly intensive manner, while providing all pupils with the skills to thrive not only in school but also in societies that are ever more culturally diverse (Pozo, Vallespir, & Cabrera, 2016).

The Organic Law of Education (LOE) of 2006 (LOE, 2006), takes a further step in this journey by focusing on diversity and equity rather than on the origin of the people, and, unlike previous regulations, does not relate the status of immigrant students to compensation needs (García Fernández & Goenechea, 2009). As stated by Bernabé Villodre (2013), Article 2(g) of this law (Purposes of the Spanish Educational System) will, for the first time, include the term "interculturality" in a legal document such as this one. Specifically, it will speak of this new reality as an "enriching element of society".

After more than two decades of significant evolution in the treatment and implementation of the principles and measures of intercultural education, the remaining subjects are still focused on teacher training (voluntary in this area at both the initial and permanent level), the practical involvement of intercultural education or the resources allocated to it by the administrations (Garreta-Bochaca & Torrelles-Montanuy, 2020).

⁶ <http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaDynPx/educabase/index.htm?type=pcaxis&path=/Educacion/Alumnado/Matriculado/2018-2019RD/Extranjeros&file=pcaxis&l=s0>.

⁷ <http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaDynPx/educabase/index.htm?type=pcaxis&path=/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado/2019-2020-rd/extran&file=pcaxis&l=s0>.

Intercultural education in four Spanish autonomous communities theoretical approaches

What is the theoretical framework that underlies the approach to attending to culturally diverse students? The analysis of the four communities provides us with evidence that is more or less common to each of them: the direct link that exists with the concept of attention to diversity that has been present in our educational panorama for some years.

We find ourselves in a context in which, alongside the micro approaches that each of the autonomous communities brings to cultural diversity, there is a macro vision in relation to the policies that, at the national level, focus on it. This is evidently related to the position that the State has with respect to children's rights, which are manifested in values accepted by all, and among which we find the systems of care, the economic protection of children and their families, and the curricular structure in the educational field. These are broad values and approaches accepted at the state level in line with the European context, that should allow for more local interpretations.

The Spanish case is a clear example of this contextual interpretation, in which, under the premises of the national scope, each of the autonomous communities outlines and contextualizes its situation according to a collective vision of education and teaching. But is this really the case? In principle, we do not believe so. Rather, we consider that the policies on cultural and ethnic diversity in our country, far from referring to a territorial and social context, have a more political (ideological) vision than an educational one. In the following section, we will look at what has occurred in each of the communities analyzed.⁸

Cantabria

Each of the actions that have been programmed around the cultural diversity of the students in Cantabria is under the direction of the Guidance Unit, which depends on the Ministry of Education. The general approach is to seek out mechanisms and approaches that provide an appropriate response to the educational needs of all students. It is clear that this idea is a general one, and does not distinguish between the specific educational needs of each individual. Once the theoretical position of the unit has been established, specific programs will be developed to meet the needs of culturally diverse children.

The starting point is the Decree of Attention to Diversity (98/2005) ([Consejo de Gobierno. Comunidad de Cantabria, 2005](#)). This decree points to a broad approach to the concept in which the most significant characteristic is an intentional distancing from the deficit model that has often been present in our educational landscape up to such a point. The approach is broad and seeks to respond to temporary and permanent needs due to both personal and social factors related to situations of socio-cultural disadvantage. Explicit reference is made to foreign students and those belonging to ethnic minorities, establishing as general criteria two basic principles of an organizational nature: that attention to diversity (of any nature) affects all teachers, and that the educational center is the central element from which the needs of the students are met.

From the general approach of this decree, two very important action plans aim to understand the theoretical foundations of cultural diversity:

- a The General Model of Educational Orientation (2006) ([Consejería de Educación Gobierno. de Cantabria, 2006](#)): this model proposes an early intervention in the field of interculturality. It is embodied in two highly beneficial support instruments, namely, Intercultural Classrooms and Intercultural Teams, which are structures external to educational centers, conceived as elements of direct intervention with this type of student body.
- b Interculturality Plan ([Consejería de Educación. Gobierno de Cantabria, 2005](#)): this document was published in parallel to the Decree of Attention to Diversity and includes the fundamental aspects of the educational actions in relation to attention to diversity. It is the only document that explicitly points to "immigrant and ethnic minority students" as a form of recognition of cultures.

It is precisely this last document that, from our point of view, presents a consistent theoretical approach in relation to other autonomies. Together with the measures needed to attend to culturally diverse students, both from the point of view of immigrant students and those belonging to ethnic minorities, it addresses an important concept that had already been included in educational regulations years ago: the idea of citizenship, referring in this case to immigrant students. Specifically, the commitment by institutions to help immigrant students obtain citizenship is what makes this plan so appealing. It is a right, in terms of recognition, and acquisition of participation, within the host society.

This approach is articulated in two directions: on the one hand, the compensation of the inequalities at the beginning and, on the other hand, the study of Spanish as a second language, meanwhile presenting the need to incorporate into the curriculum the traditions and history of the different cultures, offering objectives for the students, teachers and families.

With regard to the structures that have been designed (as previously presented in the general model of orientation mentioned above) there are two plans: firstly, the Intercultural Dynamization Classrooms which are external structures that give specialized support to the centers and secondly, the creation of the figure of Interculturality Coordinator.

Regarding the first of these structures (Intercultural Dynamization Classrooms - ADI), the support provided is linked to the assistance, advice, dissemination and collaboration with the centers and their professionals in areas as diverse as the welcoming, evaluation, and monitoring of students who enter the educational system late, analysis and advice on resources available for direct

⁸ Readers should understand that we will not be making a comparative analysis of the communities, given that the context of action and the educational realities are different in each one of them.

work with students, help in the processes of family participation in the educational processes initiated by the school, translation of materials and collaboration with teacher training centers in the realm of ongoing teacher training.

Among the professionals that make up these classrooms are Educational Guidance Teachers, Community Service Technicians, specialists in the socio-linguistic field and Cultural Mediators from China, Eastern European countries, Arab countries and Latin American countries.

The second of the structures accompanying the Interculturality Plan is the Interculturality Coordinator. This professional works at the center and is the first point of reference within the school for the students and their families. The mission of the Interculturality Coordinator covers various areas, such as the initial evaluation of the students who are incorporated into the classrooms, collaborating in the Welcome Plan with other teachers in the center, direct intervention in the acquisition of communication skills in Spanish, and collaboration in welcoming the families into the center.

In addition to these specific measures aimed at foreign students and/or ethnic groups, plans to compensate for inequalities in social and educational disadvantage and the plan for absenteeism and dropping out of school are also considered.

The theoretical approach of the community of Cantabria is based on a notion of inclusive diversity that incorporates in its ideology basic elements such as celebrating differences, responding to individual needs, and proposing a curricular model that allows these elements to be incorporated into the school curriculum. The model must be part of the school's organization and must take the environment into account.

Asturias

The autonomous community of Asturias has developed its theoretical approach around the Decree of Educational and Professional Guidance (Decree 147/2014) ([Consejería de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Principado de Asturias, 2014](#)). In this Decree, there is no explicit mention of the aspects of interculturality, nor of culturally diverse students, but rather it refers, in a comprehensive manner, to the incorporation of the entire student body into the orientation processes that educational centers carry out.

The basic principles upon which the intervention is based are

- 1 The principle of prevention: This educational and professional orientation presents a proactive approach that aims to foresee the appearance of difficulties in a person's development.
- 2 The principle of development: This educational and professional orientation should be understood as a process by which an individual is accompanied throughout his/her educational stages in order to achieve his/her maximum growth potential.
- 3 The principle of social intervention: The context is an essential element of reference for the orientation activities, which would take into account the contextual and environmental conditions of the individual, especially the family conditions, since these influence his or her decision making and personal development.
- 4 The principle of personal and social empowerment: Understood as a process in which individuals or social groups come to acquire the skills necessary for taking control of their own lives, and for supporting and reinforcing the personal empowerment of other members of their group or community.

Along with this global approach to educational orientation in which the basic and general aspects of the treatment of diversity are incorporated, the instructions at the beginning of the course are introduced as practical elements of action in which, specifically, the rules aimed at students with linguistic deficiencies, basic skills and knowledge are dictated.

With the aim of responding to the needs of culturally diverse students, the following objectives are proposed:

- a) To promote the intercultural education of the student body, fostering respect, communication, and mutual understanding among all students, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, or religious background.
- b) To guarantee continuity in the students' educational process and to ensure that the educational response is consistent with their educational needs.
- c) To establish measures to address issues of diversity that enable students to progress, thus ensuring equal opportunities for access, permanence, and advancement in the educational system.
- d) To facilitate the coordination of educational support for these students, the collaboration and involvement of their families or legal guardians, teamwork on the part of the teachers at the school, coordination between the different public administrations, and between these and the different associations or institutions of a private nature that collaborate with the educational administration in the development of socio-educational activities.

The support provided to culturally diverse students depends directly on the educational centers under the supervision of the educational inspection service of the Board of Education itself.

Based on this approach, the specific measures outlined in the above-mentioned instructions include the following:

- Welcoming sessions: these are in-house procedures of the center that involve planning the welcoming, attending to the families, and providing information to all of the center's teachers as to the specific needs of these students.
- Welcoming and access to the curriculum classes, directed above all at students with a low level of Spanish and designed primarily for language immersion and to provide access to the curriculum.

- Intensive language immersion classes, directed at centers that do not have their own resources, be it in academic structures or human resources. Among the former are itinerant classrooms aimed at primary school students and, among the latter, intensive classes for those centers that offer language immersion programs aimed at secondary school students.

Finally, we must point out the specific actions to be taken in the field of interculturality, namely:

- Portuguese Language and Culture Program: this program seeks to preserve the language and culture of origin. Promoted through the Camoes Institute, it falls under the administrative and disciplinary responsibility of the Education Attaché Office of the Portuguese Embassy in Spain. Participation in the program is open to all students of the center who wish to participate, regardless of their origin, with the approach being intercultural education.
- Romanian Language, Culture and Civilization Program: this program was established under the bilateral framework of the Agreement of cultural and educational cooperation between Romania and Spain, and also under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. This program focuses on the preservation of language and culture of origin, taught by Romanian teachers with a degree in humanities selected by the Ministry of Education, Research and Romanian Youth, acting through the Institute of the Romanian Language in Bucharest. It aims to strengthen the enrichment of the social and cultural values of the Romanian and Asturian students while promoting intercultural education and the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their origin, in the educational system. It is open to students of any nationality.

Andalusia

The initial approaches by this autonomous community with respect to culturally diverse students arose as a result of the publication of Law 9/1999 on Educational Solidarity ([Presidencia. Junta de Andalucía, 1999](#)). With a powerful theoretical substrate, this document established the bases for theoretical and practical action for the region's educational proposals, which subsequently took the form of specific measures that directly affected students, teachers and schools. The central element of its discourse lies in the attention paid to the population at risk, given its socio-cultural disadvantage. Fundamentally, the program addresses two large groups: the gypsy community, and students from other cultures who have settled in the community due to the phenomenon of migration. The principle approach is to improve the conditions of accessibility to educational centers for this population, to seek mechanisms for guaranteeing the permanence of students in the educational system and to facilitate their advancement within it. The law represents a clear continuity of the educational compensation tasks designed and implemented in previous years.

This approach to identity is intended to bring together a series of actions and measures that provide a contextualized response to students and their families through the educational centers and the design of the Center's Educational Projects:

- To foster the value of interculturality in the centers and through their projects.
- To design measures for coexistence.
- To promote participation in the social environment.
- To correct possible deviations in relation to discrimination
- To foster the involvement of parent associations.
- To develop volunteer proposals and actions.
- To design activities in educational compensation centers.

As noted, this law has a strong conceptual focus that is substantiated by subsequent legal provisions. Thus, in Decree 167/2003 ([Consejería de Educación y Ciencia. Junta de Andalucía, 2003](#)), the processes of compensatory education have been formally proposed as a key concept to gain insight into the consideration of cultural diversity within the school. The principles of compensation are centered on those derived from inequalities due to social, economic, cultural, geographical, ethnic or other factors, founded on the idea of normalization of inter-administrative coordination and social and educational integration, and on the attempt to provide "contextual" compensation derived from students' placement in specific problem areas.

The decree clearly focuses on the groups previously identified in the aforementioned law: the gypsy community and immigrant students.

Regarding the former, the basic measures to be adopted by the educational centers are specified in the incorporation of the aspects of the Gypsy culture to the school curriculum as a basic form of integration stemming from knowledge of their culture. Moreover, the establishment of organizational and curricular adaptation measures are promoted as specific follow-up initiatives aimed at this student body.

In relation to the immigrant students, the aspects envisaged are those related to schooling and the gradual normalization of the students, with emphasis on Spanish language learning as a priority requirement in the normalization measures, as well as respect for the cultural identity of the students and their families. Furthermore, the educational centers are provided with tools that allow them to elaborate, approve, apply and evaluate the educational compensation plans of the centers. This aspect is regulated by the Order of February 26, 2004 ([Consejería de Educación y Ciencia. Junta de Andalucía, 2004](#)). In the process of contextualizing theoretical approaches related to culturally diverse students, measures related to the creation of specific units for use in educational work are especially practical. This is the case of the Order of January 15, 2007 ([Consejería de Educación. Junta de Andalucía, 2007](#)), in which the measures and actions for the attention to immigrant students are presented. The creation of Temporary Classrooms for Linguistic Adaptation (ATAL) was derived from the premises set out in Decree 167/2003 ([Consejería de Educación y Ciencia. Junta de Andalucía,](#)

2003). In this decree, reference is made to students' difficulty in gaining access to the educational system, in remaining in it and in progressing within it. The basic actions of this decree include measures to welcome these students, educate them in Spanish, and ensure that they are able to preserve their culture of origin.

Concerning teachers, the Instructions of June 30, 2011 ([Consejería de Educación. Junta de Andalucía, 2011](#)) establish the competencies and tasks of teachers for the development of specific actions in the schools' compensatory plans. These instructions propose as a basic element the interprofessional collaboration in schools and, specifically, that of the guidance departments. The mission is to support curricular reinforcement directed and designed for students with compensation needs. Similarly, it contemplates intervention in aspects such as accompaniment and intervention in those situations of risk and school absenteeism, as well as in everything related to coexistence in educational centers such as the improvement of coexistence, mediation and intervention or conflict resolution.

Finally, the instructions of October 9, 2012 ([Consejería de Educación. Junta de Andalucía, 2012](#)) establish the organizational and operational forms of two specific programs of action in relation to educational compensation in centers with social transformation needs. The programs referred to are the School Accompaniment Program and the Linguistic Support for Immigrants Program. In both programs, the educational success of students with compensatory educational needs and language acquisition are sought as fundamental elements of inclusion and learning measures.

In this brief analysis of the theoretical aspects that underlie the measures of assistance for socially disadvantaged students, we cannot overlook the Andalusian Education Law (17/2007 of December 10) ([Presidencia. Junta de Andalucía, 2007](#)), which establishes and contextualizes the educational and social pedagogical approaches of the Spanish Organic Law of Education (2006). This law outlines the conceptual elements on which the process of educational attention was built, respecting attention to diversity: educational equity, permanent improvement, coexistence, integral formation of students, construction of citizenship, understanding of the world and culture, and development of the knowledge society.

Valencia

The Order of July 4, 2001 of the Department of Culture and Education ([Presidencia. Generalitat Valenciana, 2001](#)), by which is regulated the attention to students with educational compensation needs, is the first reference that we encounter in the formulation of the attention to culturally diverse students. It was constructed according to the concept of prevention and compensation of inequalities caused by personal, social or cultural differences. The aforementioned order defines the concept of educational compensation aimed at students who present difficulties in their integration into school due to unfavorable social, economic, cultural, ethnic or personal circumstances. Some of these aspects are compensatory measures in relation to late incorporation into the educational system, delay in schooling or lack of knowledge of the official languages of the Valencian Community. This may be the result of the student being an immigrant or a refugee, belonging to ethnic or cultural minorities in a situation of social disadvantage, or irregular schooling due to family itinerancy or repeated or periodic educational abandonment, residence in socially, culturally or economically disadvantaged areas, functional dependence on institutions for the social protection of minors, hospitalization or long-term home hospitalization due to medical prescription, or maladjustments to the school and educational environment.

The aforementioned order sets out the basis for the development of educational compensation programs and raises the possibility of allocating additional human and material resources. The CAES (Centros de Acción Educativa Singular) have been created as a particular denomination to refer to those centers that provide schooling to students with educational compensation needs, proposing, in addition, the guidelines to follow in the modifications of the Educational Projects, Curricular Projects and General Annual Programming.

In the 2016–2017 school year, a pedagogical approach to the actions to be carried out by the educational centers was made via the Improvement Plan of the educational centers of the Valencian Community, regulated by Order 38/2016 ([Conselleria de Educación, Investigación, Cultura y Deporte. Generalitat Valenciana, 2016](#)). In accordance with the notion of equity and the improvement of educational skills, the order proposes a series of interventions for schools from a clearly inclusive approach and through a series of specific actions such as the Shared Classroom Program (PAC), the Program for Improving Learning and Performance (PMAR) aimed at students in 3rd of ESO, the reinforcement program for 4th of ESO (PR4) or support measures for students with specific needs for educational support (NEAE).

In addition to these elements linked to specific programs to be developed by the center in the form of documentation, others of a clearly pedagogical/curricular nature are the essence of the intervention and that are specified in aspects such as the specific structure of the curriculum of the subjects, the center's linguistic project, flexibility in the organization of the groups, proposals for reinforcement and enrichment activities, the offer of electives, educational compensation measures, drop-out programs, and coexistence and complementary measures for students repeating a course. All these aspects are considered from an inclusive perspective with the aim of preventing or compensating for the inequalities of the students and which, in any case, pose challenges to the schools in terms of organization and methodology.

The most recent theoretical/pedagogical approaches to the idea of educational inclusion were established in Decree 104/2018 of July 27th ([Conselleria de Educación, Investigación, Cultura y Deporte. Generalitat Valenciana, 2018](#)), by which the principles of equity and inclusion in the Valencian educational system were developed (published in the *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat Valenciana* on August 7th, 2018). From this perspective, concepts such as diversity have been developed, based on a positive positioning and improvement of the teaching and learning processes, to which the school must respond in order to eliminate any form of exclusion and inequality. It also points towards a co-educational and democratic model. Concepts such as equal opportunities, participation, and learning in common contexts have also been incorporated into the discourse.

The development of this perspective simultaneously addresses a holistic approach to educational action. This must go beyond the

school environment to involve the entire educational community, other agents who are capable of combining school and community actions, and the proposal of individual and collective actions.

One can clearly see that in the development of regulations in the Valencian Community, the theoretical approach has gone from a compensatory model of attention to diversity, to a current position of inclusiveness.

Conclusions

The detailed analysis of the processes followed in relation to the attention of culturally diverse students leads us to consider, as an initial noteworthy aspect, that we are facing a reality that goes beyond that which is exclusively educational. Attending to immigrant students demands that, in addition to educational measures, we also take steps of a political and social nature to accompany their development: childcare systems, economic protection, investment by the state or the autonomous communities, and the curricular structure itself within the educational system would all be aspects worthy of consideration.

Within the sphere of education, it must be understood that we are not only encountering a problem in the school system. Education includes all aspects of schooling, and involves a transition from merely curricular elements related to the content of the subjects to more global ones that have to do with the multicultural approach to education, the diversity of forms of receiving students and their families, the organizational and curricular aspects of the schools, attention to linguistic and cultural diversity, and other aspects that have to do with investment and teacher training.

In general, a change of perspective is being observed in the treatment of cultural diversity. Education, and schools, in particular, have turned towards "complexity" in the vision and treatment of interculturality. Thus, a shift has occurred from concrete measures for working with immigrant students (bridge classrooms, educational compensation) to the installation of a complex vision based on the idea of attention to diversity, or more recently, educational inclusion. Nevertheless, the reality of schools remains in a kind of penumbra and stagnation in which the endemic problems of education, such as teacher training, the organization of schools and the curriculum, or educational investment, re-emerge. These aspects, taken seriously, would give a vision of the "intercultural" as an enriching element of schools and society.

The processes implemented in the autonomous communities analyzed, in which there is a clear variety in the population of culturally diverse students, do not show a correlation between the number of immigrant students and the normative development among them. In this way, we can see that in the case of Cantabria there is a clear normative development, but above all, a conceptual development of what is understood to be attention to diversity, with a clear global focus far from the model of deficit or educational compensation. We could point out that, in the case of the communities of Cantabria and Asturias, their approach ranges from a general to a specific one. In both cases, the approaches are derived from their particular orientation models and, from there, their normative/theoretical approach descends to particular elements in which the specific plans and programs of attention to immigrant students are specified.

In the case of the Andalusian and Valencian communities, the response is understood in a more concrete way. Although a general approach exists (especially in the case of Andalusia), the focus from the outset has been on cultural and social diversity and on specific workplace measures within schools. The broader cultural diversity of the student body likely results in specific measures being implemented from the outset. This can be seen clearly in the Valencian case.

The notion of addressing diversity moves in each of the autonomous communities analyzed from a global approach in which diversity refers to the whole population towards a more restricted vision in which diversity refers to a specific population.

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