INCLUSIÓN EDUCATIVA Y PEDAGOGÍA CRÍTICA*

Resumen: En este artículo presentamos los principios básicos de la inclusión educativa, centrándonos especialmente en la inclusión del alumnado con discapacidad, y sostenemos que la educación inclusiva debería ser entendida como un proceso de transformación de las escuelas tradicionales en espacios de aprendizaje para todo el alumnado. El artículo se basa en la pedagogía crítica para argumentar que las prácticas educativas excluyentes se han desarrollado centrándose en la discapacidad más que en las capacidades de este alumnado. En esta misma línea, el artículo proporciona evidencias científicas para desacreditar mitos relacionados con la educación del alumnado con discapacidad, especialmente mitos que han contribuido a su exclusión de las aulas ordinarias. Finalmente, basándonos en el modelo de las Comunidades de Aprendizaje, proporcionamos algunas estrategias concretas para la transformación de las aulas ordinarias en ambientes plenamente inclusivos.

Palabras clave: Inclusión educativa, calidad educativa, diversidad, discapacidad, comunidades de aprendizaje.

Silvia Molina y Miranda Christou

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Abstract: This article outlines the basic principles of educational inclusion, focusing specifically on the inclusion of disabled students in mainstream classrooms, and argues that inclusive education should be understood as a process of transforming traditional schools into spaces of learning for all students. The article uses the lens of critical pedagogy to argue that exclusionary educational practices have been developed through the medicalization of learning disabilities which focused on the disability rather than the abilities of disabled students. Following the same line of thinking, the article provides scientific evidence to debunk myths related to the education of disabled students; especially myths that contributed to their exclusion from mainstream classrooms. Finally, based on the Learning Communities model, we provide some concrete strategies for transforming mainstream classrooms into fully inclusive environments.

Keywords: Educational inclusion, quality of education, diversity, disability, learning communities.

Silvia Molina y Miranda Christou

EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Silvia Molina.
silvia.molina@urv.cat
Universitat Rovira i Virgili.
Miranda Christou.
miranda.christou@ucy.ac.cy
University of Cyprus.

1.- INTRODUCTION. TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

Despite international declarations which adopt children's universal right to education and confirm the importance of education for social inclusion, a fully inclusive education[1] remains a challenge for many educational systems. Educational inclusion is defined first, as the inclusion of all students in schools and classrooms, that is, their inclusion in the same physical environment for the purposes of teaching and instruction. Second, educational inclusion is defined as the right to access to quality education for all children which also assures subsequent opportunities for social inclusion. Evidence from educational institutions around the world shows that a person's level of education determines their opportunities for employment and future social inclusion (OECD, 2008). This means that in order to achieve social inclusion it is necessary to develop educational interventions that guarantee quality education for all students.

Educational inclusion takes into account the existing diversity among students and goes beyond traditional negative responses which perceive diversity as a burden and provide differentiated opportunities to different groups of students. These approaches to diversity tend to adapt the contents of instruction to the students' different characteristics and level of attainment. As a consequence, students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are seen as less able to attain the same level of education as others have fewer opportunities to learn and overcome their initial disadvantage. Such discriminatory approaches are still the reality in many schools around the world.

---

[1] The terms *educational inclusion* and *inclusive education* are used interchangeably in this paper.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

However, educational inclusion is today seen as a basic process in combating social exclusion. For example, the *World Declaration on Education For All and Framework for Action* which was adopted by the World Conference on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990) emphasizes the universal right to education and the importance of access to education that satisfies basic learning needs and provides acceptable levels of learning acquisition. Furthermore, the declaration places special emphasis on disadvantaged groups and it clarifies the significance of offering equal opportunities to all students to develop their learning abilities and have a real chance to find employment and avoid social exclusion. In the same year and following the same orientation, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990) claims the right for all children to equality of opportunity in receiving education. In 2000, the *Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2000) affirmed the aim to expand and improve education for children, especially for disadvantaged groups, so that they can have access to complete free high quality compulsory primary education.

One of the disadvantaged groups identified in these declarations are students with disabilities who face specific and long term risks in being educationally and socially excluded. Historically, special needs students and/or students with disabilities have been educated separately from 'mainstream' classrooms and have been denied opportunities to learn and develop their full potential. Today, however, educational systems around the world recognize the importance of educational inclusion for all students, especially for disabled students. The term *inclusive education* originated from educational reforms that emphasized the importance of educating students with special needs in mainstream classrooms. *The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993), for example, claims the principle of equal opportunities for students with disabilities in integrated settings, and the education of persons with disabilities as a part of the general education system. The *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) claims the principle of *inclusive education*, that is, the right of all children to receive education and to achieve acceptable levels of learning achievement. All of these declarations emphasize that the different characteristics, interests, capabilities and specific learning needs of disabled students are recognized so that the educational context of schools is adapted to meet these needs.

Based on these definitions of educational inclusion it becomes important to identify practices and strategies that contribute to the inclusion of all students. In this article, we provide a framework for understanding educational inclusion, not simply as an end result but as a process of transformation of mainstream schooling as it has been practiced until today. Furthermore, we focus specifically on special needs students and use the lens of critical pedagogy to argue that exclusionary educational practices have been developed through the medicalization of learning disabilities which focused on the disability rather than the abilities of disabled students. Following the same line of thinking, the article provides scientific evidence to debunk myths related to the education of disabled students; especially myths that contributed to their exclusion from mainstream classrooms. Finally, based on the Learning Communities model, we provide some concrete strategies for transforming mainstream classrooms into fully inclusive environments.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

2.- WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION?

In this section we provide a basic framework for understanding educational inclusion and we emphasize that educational inclusion must be understood as a process and as a historical response to the increasing diversity of educational institutions.

2.1.- Inclusion as a response to diversity

Educational inclusion is a response to the increasing diversity in classrooms in terms of ethnicity, culture, gender, religion and ability. These markers of diversity reflect current societal changes of an increasingly globalized world. In this framework, educational systems must provide educational standards for diverse groups of students and deal with the complexity and the richness of diversity. Educational inclusion aims at responding to the diverse needs of students and at the same time providing a high quality education for all of them. Furthermore, the inclusive approach understands diversity not only as a difficulty which has to be dealt with, but as something valuable and enriching, which can be used as a learning opportunity for everyone (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

2.2.- Inclusion as being educated together and belonging to the group

Inclusive schools start from the premise that all the students are capable to learn in regular classrooms and, as a consequence, schools should be open to all the students of a certain community or neighbourhood, regardless their individual characteristics (Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Carrington, 1999), including, for example, recently arrived migrant students, or students with learning disabilities. However, inclusion goes beyond instruction in the same environment, and argues that all the children are treated equally and respected, regardless of their special needs (Ainscow, 1994). Inclusive education does not assume the existence of a 'standard' or 'mainstream' student against whom all other students are measured. By adopting the position of *equality of differences* (Flecha, 2000), inclusive education does not view difference as a threat but as a valuable aspect of schooling that makes learning a challenge for all students.

2.3.- Inclusion as the access to relevant learning contents

Inclusion also refers to students' right for access to the general curriculum. The general curriculum is contains the knowledge and skills that are considered necessary for everyone to be included in any given society. The inclusive approach emphasizes the importance of opening all possible opportunities for different groups of student to have access to the general curriculum (Ainscow, 1994; Carrington, 1999). Therefore, an inclusive school will aim both at the acceptance of all students as members of the community and the access of all the students to the contents of the general curriculum (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). To make this objective possible, inclusive schools must organise their resources or add new ones, and reconsider their teaching strategies, such as making

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

more flexible the ways in which the different students can achieve the learning objectives.

2.4.- Inclusion as the transformation of the school

Inclusive education also necessitates a transformation of basic assumptions in mainstream schools. Traditionally, learning difficulties and school failure have been attributed to the individual characteristics of the students. On the contrary, inclusive schools suggest that these difficulties are not located in the individual but in the ways the learning environment in the school is organized so as to make it difficult for these students to learn (Carrington, 1999). This means locating the problem in the educational system and not isolating individual students. When the educational system is sensitive to the diverse needs of the students then the possibility of failure and exclusion is reduced (Muthukrishna & Shoeman, 2000). In other words, the inclusive approach emphasizes the interaction between the students' needs or difficulties and the learning environment in the school and argues that we need to focus on the obstacles in the school environment to achieve inclusion for all students.

Elimination of barriers. The transformation of the schools in order to become more inclusive involves, on the one hand, eliminating certain barriers to inclusion which exist in the schools. When the responsibility of confirming that all students obtain certain learning objectives is located in the schools and not in the students then we can talk about the "disability of the system" when students are not learning. This means that educational systems have to address the factors which cause a disability to the system and respond to the diversity of students. These factors are also known as barriers; therefore, inclusion consists of the identification and the elimination of such barriers (Muthukrishna & Shoeman, 2000; Ainscow, 1994).

Global approach. Inclusion works, on the other hand, as a global approach, which is related to the philosophy of the school and the way it approaches the problems it faces (Carrington & Robinson, 2004; Carrington, 1999). It does not consist of adding particular modifications to the pre-existing structures, but of the transformation of core issues which affect the global structure of the organisation and which will help to respond to the diversity of students (Ainscow, 1994). It is also necessary to redefine the functions of the different professionals who work in the schools and the creation of a positive atmosphere where mutual support can be provided in the process of transformation.

Inclusion as a process. Finally, the transformation towards inclusion has to be understood as a process which never ends, as schools can always move towards greater inclusion. Therefore, inclusion is not a final result but the process of continuous improvement of the schools as they learn to improve their capacity to include all students. It consists of an attitude of schools which includes paying attention to the variety of learning obstacles for students. Furthermore, it necessitates a continuous reflection about the practices which are being carried out in order to examine whether they constitute a barrier for learning (Ainscow, 1994).

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

Inclusion as a principle

A main reason to work in inclusive schools is to consider inclusion as a value judgement, that is, the aim to achieve an educational system that gives high quality education for all, and that avoids segregation between the best students and the worst students (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Inclusion is also related to the idea that the school and the class teacher are responsible for the education of all students, not assuming that certain students are only responsibility of specific professionals or institutions. Finally, inclusion does not depend on whether it is possible or not, or whether it is easy or difficult, but on the fact that it is a democratic value to be taken into account by the educational institutions to realize the right of all children to receive an inclusive education (Porter, 2003; Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

3.- INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

In this article, we view the question of inclusive education, and especially the inclusion of disabled students, as a central problematic in critical pedagogy. Starting from the position that education is inherently political, critical pedagogy is grounded in a social and educational vision of justice and equality (Kincheloe, 2005). This means that the inclusion of all children in the educational process should be taken as a given if schooling is to be truly democratic and transformative of oppressive structures that operate in society. As commonsense as this may sound, it has not been historically true but rather the result of long struggles from different minority groups demanding access to public education. Furthermore, even when educational institutions appear to have a multicultural or diverse face they are not always inclusive of all students. The main goal of inclusive education is not simply the congregation of different students in the same classroom but the understanding of how such diversity fundamentally challenges dominant assumptions about learning, ability and the purpose of education.

Furthermore, critical pedagogy deploys a critique of educational practices that maintain oppression and posits that learning is a social process inseparable from social change (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Historically, there have always been groups of people who were deemed as un-teachable or unable to learn: girls, the colored, the poor, the non-citizens or simply those who were medically diagnosed as slow and incompetent learners. Quite often, claims for the exclusion of these students from the classroom were shaped either in the form of 'scientific' arguments on genetic inferiority or in the line of benevolent treatment: they do not want to learn, they are not interested in becoming literate and they would be happier if we relieve them of the burden to learn. This form of 'charitable racism' (Macedo, 2006) is especially extended in the case of special needs or disabled students who are seen as unable to reach the levels of attainment compared to 'normal' students.

The historical, ideological and scientific processes that come together to create educational spaces of exclusion have been the focus of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes that everyday struggles in the classroom must be understood in a larger cultural context

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

that justifies and naturalizes education for the few. Critical pedagogy aims at naming these processes and identifying the obstacles to democratic education that have overshadowed students' right to learning (see Darder, Baltonado and Torres, 2003). The language of critique, however, should not eclipse the language of possibility (Giroux, 1997). This article adopts a critical stance towards current educational practices that fail to be truly inclusive but at the same time it outlines, through the Learning Communities program, a vision of democratic education that critically responds to the ostensible paradox between difference and equality.

Inclusive education began as the problem of disabled students' integration in mainstream classrooms but it has today evolved into a question of inclusion for all students (Slee, 2001b). As Slee (2001a) has emphasized, inclusive education is about the theory and practice of the politics of difference, it is about who is counted in and who is counted out, not simply about students labeled as special needs students (SEN). In this paper we refer to inclusive education through the case of disabled students but we want to emphasize the fact that this is not a separate issue and that the education of disabled students is a social justice issue just as the education of women and blacks was —and in many cases today still remains— an issue of social justice.

In applying a critical lens to inclusive education we emphasize the following: First, inclusive education is critical of how special needs students have been dehumanized through the medical lens of deficiency that focuses on their limitations rather than their abilities. In an educational culture of positivism (Giroux, 1997) that identifies the medical with the scientific and fails to examine the production of disablement as a cultural process, special needs and disabled students have been framed by what they lack compared to an imagined, average mainstream student. Traditional formulations of disability highlight a person's defective individual pathology and divorce such understandings from cultural, political or historical specificity (Slee, 2001b). New directions in disability studies in education have documented the shift from the medical model to a conceptualization of disability as "inevitably values-laden and historically/culturally situated" (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher & Morton, 2008, 447). Researchers emphasize that we need to understand that disability is not simply an individual medical trait but a socially- and organizationally-defined condition that is often maintained as disabling because of exclusionary structures in society.

In the same line of critique, disabled scholars have questioned traditional practices of research production and dissemination that do not confront social oppression (Oliver, 1992; Barnes, 2003) and emphasize that the main issues in researching disability in education have been issues of power. As Barton (2005) argues, the societal oppression of disabled people is often reproduced in current research practices on inclusive education which may ignore the needs, the concerns and especially the voices of disabled people. He calls for a widening of the research agenda so that disability research can be inclusive in order to genuinely address issues of social justice, equity and citizenship.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

Second, inclusive education is not simply about a set of methodologies that will facilitate the smooth integration of different students in the same classroom without questioning issues of power and students' voice. This fetishization of method (Macedo, 2006) that reduces teachers' work to tools and techniques, ignores the fact that the process of developing critical social consciousness (*conscientização*) (Freire, 1970) is an everyday struggle that is often unpredictable and frustrating. Whereas a vision of inclusive pedagogy must address the everyday practical realities of teaching and learning it cannot be reduced to a set of methods and skills —such approach will only serve to depoliticize the process of learning and disconnect it from theory. It is, in fact, this false dilemma between theory and practice, or theory and action, that critical pedagogy has repeatedly addressed (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Third, inclusive education is about the cultural politics of exclusion as well as the relationship between culture and the economic interests that maintain exclusion. Slee (2001b, 172) notes that the advent of mass compulsory schooling was accompanied by the idea that failure was inevitable and probably desirable in order to serve market needs for unskilled labor: "A rational, indeed scientific, explanation was produced that attached blame to the defects and pathological inability of those who were failed by the narrow academic curriculum and restrictive pedagogy on offer". In the same way that critical pedagogy interrogates the marketization of education, inclusive education aims at understanding how educational exclusion became possible under the mantle of democracy and educational choice. The current educational focus on efficiency and accountability reflects new ways in which the idea of diversity in education is rendered too complex and difficult to apply.

4.- THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Research in inclusive education today refers not only to the integration of disabled and special needs students in mainstream classrooms but also to the overarching and increasingly more urgent question of democratic schooling. While many of the issues that are raised can be traced back to research on the inclusion of special needs students, some scholars argue that inclusion is not a disability question concerning a minority population but an issue that lies at the heart of discussions about equality and the promise of modern democracies (Vlachou, 2004; Arnesen *et al*. 2007; Slee, 2001a).

Traditionally, disabled and special needs students have been educated separately, either in different schools or segregated classrooms within mainstream schools. Disabled children face obstacles in accessing public education in many countries around the world even in educational systems where the law has been modified to account for their integration in mainstream classrooms. As Vlachou (2004) has pointed out, the initial exclusion of children with disabilities was followed by integration policies that largely failed to account for the full range of inclusion in school life. Even today, when disabled children are not segregated, excluded and socially rejected they may be simply tolerated and passed from grade to grade in order to be granted a symbolic graduation diploma.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

The inclusion of disabled students in mainstream classrooms remains the last frontier in the struggle for inclusive and democratic education and it is important to recognize that these obstacles are maintained by 'common sense' beliefs about ability and human agency. Before outlining strategies to promote educational inclusion we would like to identify the most common misconceptions associated with inclusive education, especially in relation to the integration of disabled children in mainstream classrooms.

Myth 1—Special education students are happier and learn more when segregated

Research on the effects of inclusion for special needs students shows that there are definite positive effects on social development when students are integrated in mainstream schools (Peetsma *et al*., 2001). While studies have shown both positive effects for inclusion as well as limitations (see for example, Baker *et al.,* 1995; Zigmond & Baker, 1995) most researchers emphasize that integration of students in mainstream classrooms is effective and positive when it is accompanied by adequate teacher training and instruction models —such as co-operative learning— that facilitate the learning of children with diverse cognitive abilities. In one of the first studies to examine this issue, Dunn (1968) showed that, in spite of the material and personal resources invested, there was no evidence to support the idea that the segregated grouping of mildly retarded children contributes to better learning. In fact, the author found evidence that their attainment was lower in these segregated groups, even in studies that compared segregated children's performance with children attending regular classrooms without any support.

Apart from the fact that such studies depend on factors that are not always taken into account (e.g. the educational system, teachers' and parents' attitudes towards integration) a major limitation has been the lack of control group to counterweight the progress or lack of progress for special needs students in mainstream classrooms as well as the absence of longitudinal data. Using matched pairs of primary-aged pupils in mainstream and special education classes Peetsma *et al*. (2001) conducted a longitudinal study on the cognitive and psychosocial development of children with learning and behavioral difficulties and children with mild mental retardation. At 2 years, special needs students integrated in mainstream classes faired better than special needs students in special education classes: the first group (learning behavioral difficulties) made more progress in mathematics and the second group (children with mild mental retardation) had developed more school motivation. At 4 years, students in regular education had overall better academic performance than their special education counterparts. Peetsma *et al*. (2001) review the relevant literature and argue that the positive effects for these two groups of students are significant but also dependent on the conditions of inclusion at every school.

Furthermore, students' reactions to segregated schooling show that inclusion has more benefits beyond better learning. According to Fitch (2003), placement of students with disabilities either in special education segregated classrooms or in traditional but non-inclusive classrooms is associated with a lower feeling of capacity, and lower self-

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

confidence on their competence and academic performance. On the contrary, when students with disabilities were in inclusive settings, their self-concept, self-confidence and academic performance increase. Besides, they also show a higher feeling of belonging to the community and were more socially valued than children in segregated special education classrooms or in regular but not inclusive classrooms. On the contrary segregated children had a lower level of hope, a reduced feeling of belonging to the group and a feeling of rejection. Along the same lines, Fisher, Roach and Frey (2002) found that ability grouping generates lower self-esteem, reduced expectations and the stigma of being less intelligent in the lower level groups, including special education classrooms. This has an impact on academic performance itself, as there is evidence that students' self perception affects their efforts to achieve.

It is important to note that the literature on this issue shows that there is a difference not only between segregated and non-segregated settings, but specifically between inclusive and non-inclusive placements. This is because inclusion means not only schooling in a non-segregated setting, but also a redefinition of schooling, as we have already described. Supports and services of special education and others integrated in the ordinary classroom and the interaction between students in the learning activities help to reduce the possibilities of these students to fail in the ordinary classrooms.

Contrary to these findings, however, some teachers and teachers continue to maintain negative attitudes towards inclusion, or to believe that there are limits to inclusive practices. Parents tend to express support for the philosophy of inclusion in general but remain attached to the idea that special education schools provide necessary expertise for the education of special needs students (O'Connor, 2007). In surveying the experiences of children with special educational needs in the UK context which is largely inclusive Croll (2001) found that the majority of teachers believe that the mainstream classroom was a more appropriate placement for disabled children. For those teachers who favored the option of a special class or unit or school, Croll found that they were related to low levels of support for their special needs students (less than one hour a day). However, there were also a few cases where the teachers received high levels of support but still believed that the mainstream classroom was not the best place for students with specific and identifiable difficulties.

On the other hand, research shows that teacher perceptions on the feasibility or importance of inclusive education are influenced by systemic processes that often create negative conditions for inclusion. In some cases, top-down policies of inclusion find schools unprepared to handle the challenges of inclusion and teachers unable to articulate a vision of inclusive education that goes beyond the idea of integrating special needs students in the classroom (Pather, 2007). In a small scale qualitative study Rose (2001) found that teachers feel that they need more training and guidance in order to deal with special needs cases in their classrooms. In reviewing the literature on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion Avramides and Norwich (2002) conclude that the main factors influencing inclusion are environment-related, not teacher-related. This means that factors such as a teacher's age or experience are less important in shaping their attitudes com-

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

pared to factors such as how the mainstream school environment is restructured before students with disabilities are included. The researchers also emphasize the role of pre- and in-service training for teachers to prepare them for inclusive education.

Myth 2—The presence of disabled children in the classroom leaves the rest of the children unattended

Parents are often concerned that the presence of disabled children in the classroom works against the time allocated to the rest of the children (see Rose, 2001) and they believe that integration in mainstream schools may not be the best option neither for disabled children nor for the rest of the children who may be left behind (O'Connor, 2007). Generally speaking, the presence of a special needs child may require more time for teacher preparation and may require that teachers reevaluate their time management in the classroom in order to attend to the needs of all students (Rose, 2001). However, these perceptions are often exaggerated to justify ideologies of exclusion. For example, Arnesen *et al*. (2007) cite a study where, despite teachers' interview statements that they spend more time with 'weak' students, classroom observations showed that students who are regarded as 'talented' actually receive more of the teachers' time and attention.

Furthermore, such perceptions are maintained by individualistic approaches to education which view learning in the form of a banking system (Freire, 1970) where there is a direct relationship between teachers' time in class and students' attainment. These perspectives ignore the fact that learning is a communicative act that does not take place in the isolated mind of a child but, as Vygotsky emphasized, in a cultural-historical context where understanding happens through interaction and communication. Inclusive education emphasizes that we cannot possibly expect that mainstream classrooms will function in the same way after we 'add' or 'integrate' special education children. On this issue, other researchers point out that schools have generally failed to educate a large number of students (ethnic minorities, bilingual students, disadvantaged students) not just special needs children (Lloyd, 2008; Vlachou, 2004) and emphasize that there is a need for reconsidering our basic assumptions about learning and ability. In other words, it is not about assimilation or normalization (Slee, 2001b) but about the transformation of education to be a more effective environment for all students.

Finally, it is important to remember that there has not been enough research to examine how integration of disabled children affects the dynamics of learning for all students. One of the issues that comes up in the literature is a distinction between severe and less severe forms of disability, especially when parents' and teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are concerned (O'Connor, 2007; Pather, 2007; Avramides & Norwich, 2002): most adults seem open to the idea of inclusion except for the severe cases of disability such as mental retardation and multiple disabilities (the 1% of the total population) who, they believe, can benefit from special education classrooms or schools. Children's perspective on the inclusion of disabled students in the classroom, however, has not been sufficiently addressed and it is this question that Bentley (2008) sought out to answer in her ethnographic study of the inclusion of a Rett syndrome student (Lynda) in a main-

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

stream classroom. Bentley found that, compared to Lynda's peers, adult professionals were more likely to act in an exclusionary manner; for example, talking about Lynda as if she was not present or focusing on her limitations. On the contrary, her peers engaged in multiple everyday acts of appreciation, engagement, assimilation and accommodation which invited Lynda to participate in their learning. The author concludes that Lynda's peers showed the ability to use inclusive best practices that have been identified in the research literature — and they did so in an instinctive way. Furthermore, the study showed that when inclusion works — because it is supported through resources and personnel — then it is empowering both for the disabled student and her peers. The agency Lynda's classmates exhibited in working with her through dynamic and adaptive communication that did not interrupt the flow of collaborative group work is also a testament to the learning that takes place for these classmates who have the privilege to interact with a Rett syndrome student. This aspect was probably lost on the adults who could see Lynda mostly through the lens of deficiency.

Myth 3—The presence of disabled children in the classroom lowers standards for all students

The most recent debate to emerge from the field of educational inclusion is what we would call the "Inclusion versus Standards" debate. Some researchers argue that the focus of inclusive education on teaching students of diverse abilities in the same classroom may contradict the drive for uniform standards at each level for all students (Lloyd, 2008; Arnesen, Mietola & Lahelma, 2007). This contradiction comes up because the push for standards in education does not take into account the heterogeneity of students' cognitive abilities and it creates undue pressure on teachers to produce average results that conform to the standards' norms. As Dyson (2001) has also pointed out, the goals of inclusion and high standards may be contradictory because it is possible for schools to meet the standards of achievement through exclusionary, not inclusive, approaches.

In a similar manner, Lloyd (2008) argues that the removal of barriers to participation of disabled children in mainstream classrooms in the UK was followed by an emphasis on removing barriers to achievement which means that schools adapt curricular goals for special needs students so that they can continue to remain engaged and achieve realistic learning goals. She points out, however, that the curriculum itself is structured in an exclusionary way, based on notions of normalization that create a deficit model for special needs students even, or especially, when barriers to achievement are removed: "Nowhere in the strategy is there any attempt to address the inaccessibility of the schooling system itself with its rigid norm and standard related measures of success and achievement which, as discussed above, can be seen to be the greatest barriers of all to full participation for all children" (Lloyd, 2008, 228). In other words, the competitiveness of the standards agenda is what excludes students even in a system that aims to be inclusive (see Benjamin, 2002), especially because standards, by definition, are created in a way that half of the population falls below the average.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

Furthermore, researchers argue that the pressure for national standards is reflected in teachers' conventional constructions of ability which contradict the philosophy of inclusive education. In analyzing teachers' discourses of inclusion in Finnish and Norwegian schools Arnesen *et al.* (2007) argue that even in cases where inclusive policies have been dominant values for several decades, teachers continue to construct normative models of ability while avoiding to openly categorize students. The researchers believe that national policies for raising standards have worked against the inclusive goal of de-standardizing ability and against the understanding that cognitive abilities are more complex than current assessment techniques.

Clearly all these findings mean that we need to problematize the concept of standards especially as it has been confounded with achievement. Rouse and Florian (2006) point out that whereas standards are related to the success of attaining a specific learning goal irrespective of starting points, achievement is concerned with student progress over time. The researchers argue that the main question for educational inclusion is whether the presence of special needs students affects other students' achievement *not* the school's average standards which are predictably lower when special needs students are included. They proposed, therefore, the examination of student achievement (not mean standards) in schools with higher and lower percentages of special needs students. In this way, there were able to examine whether the presence of disabled children influenced the rate of attainment for the rest of the students. Results showed that schools with higher percentages of SEN pupils performed better (that is, their students increased their achievement) compared to schools with lower percentages of SEN students (Rouse and Florian, 2006). The authors conclude: "[T]he evidence from this study suggests that, the presence of relatively large numbers of children with special educational needs in the case study schools does not have a negative impact on the achievement of children who do not have this designation. Indeed, many staff in these schools believed that the strategies used by the school for including pupils with SEN contribute to improved achievement for all (Rouse and Florian, 2006, 491).

Given these critical perspectives, we would like to summarize the general characteristics of educational inclusion in the case of students with disabilities before presenting the case of the Learning Communities project as an illustration of all these principles in action:

The inclusion of students with disabilities as a global approach

As the inclusive perspective aims at creating schools which promote the learning of all students, whatever their characteristics are, they also constitute a good framework to promote the learning of students who have specific learning difficulties or disabilities (Ainscow, 1994). This approach contrasts with the traditional approach of special education which has contributed to segregation (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). The inclusion of students with disabilities involves a process of transformation of the school structure and function, covering both the special and the ordinary education, and making the schools responsible of all their students (Evans, Ilfeld & Hanssen, 1998). Therefore,

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

the inclusion of students with disabilities does not consist of including them into a pre-existing structure, but on creating structures and curricula that are able to include all the students (Carrington, 1999).

Responsibility towards the students with disabilities. The global approach in the case of the students with disabilities is related to the responsibility that schools and teachers have to educate all their students and consider all of them as "their students" (Peters, 2002). This approach is a departure from the special education model which considered that the education of students with disabilities is exclusively the responsibility of special education teachers or other specialized professionals (Evans, 2003). When teachers consider these students as "their students" they take the responsibility of their education. Therefore, more opportunities of developing inclusive practices appear, as well as collaborative processes between professionals (e. g. classroom teachers and special education teachers) which facilitate that their different knowledge and expertise sum in order to obtain better results (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

Benefits for all. Inclusive education provides benefits especially for the most disadvantaged students, such as students with disabilities. However, the global approach of inclusive schools involve benefits for the school as a whole, that is, for the education of all the children (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2004; Stainback & Stainback, 1996). First, when the diversity of students means that schools must improve in order to be able to respond to the educational needs of all students. This means that students with learning difficulties can be seen as a source of information about learning and ability that can be beneficial for all students (Ainscow, 1994). Therefore, inclusion becomes an opportunity to transform and improve the school for all students. Second, this assures that all the necessary support and resources are available for all students in the classroom, not isolated outside the classroom (Carrington, 1999; Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Third, the inclusion of students with disabilities contributes to enriched coexistence for all students. In inclusive schools the coexistence between different people and the joint work between them promotes solidarity, changes of attitudes and values, and overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, which is necessary in the current changing and diverse society (Stainback & Stainback, 1996).

Inclusion as a social model of disability

The interactive approach of the inclusive schools, which consider the students' difficulties in relation with the school practices, moves away from the view that disability is an individual characteristic and towards the idea that all learning ability or disability depends on elements such as the learning context, school practices, and teachers' attitudes. These are factors that teachers can influence in order to promote the learning of all students. Based on such characteristics, some authors have considered inclusion as a social model of disability (Chenoweth & Stehlik, 2004; Nind & Cochrane, 2002), which encourage the schools to minimize the existing barriers to learning and participation (Booth & Ainscow, 2002).

5.- STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

In this section we present a variety of strategies that follow the principles of educational inclusion, both in a general sense and in the issue of inclusion of disabled students. These are measures which focus on providing different types of support and resources to the schools and teachers (Meijer, Soriano & Watkins, 2003).

First, educational inclusion challenges the traditional function of special schools. This means that educational inclusion will transform special schools into resource centres for mainstream schools, in order to provide support, guidance and expertise for students, teachers and administrators. This transformation of special schools will facilitate disabled students' transition into mainstream schools.

Second, the inclusive approach necessitates a change in our understanding of student support: in inclusive educational systems support is not offered outside the classroom, only to students labelled with learning difficulties. It consists, rather, of a system of support in relation to the school staff, the class teacher, the pedagogic assessment teams, the families and the communities. As a result, the students' environment —teachers, parents, community— are seen an integral aspect of student achievement (Meijer, Soriano & Watkins, 2003; Puigdellívol, 2005).

Third, the special education teacher's role is transformed along with the changing nature of special schools (Porter, 1997, 2003). From an inclusive perspective, the role of the special education teachers consists of providing support to the teacher in order to develop strategies and activities which facilitate the inclusion of all the students in the ordinary classroom. This form of support makes it possible for students with disabilities to attend regular classrooms and follow the mainstream curriculum. Furthermore, as the special education teacher supports the class teacher, then the achievement of disabled students becomes the responsibility of both teachers, not just the special education teacher.

Finally, educational inclusion emphasises that the general curriculum should be available to all students, including students with disabilities. Specific adaptations may be necessary, for example through individualised educational plans, in order to make possible the continuing progress of all students. However, any such adaptation should be carried out by keeping in mind that the learning material for all students should be aimed at preparing them to be competent members of society. Therefore, curricular adaptations can modify the way in which the learning contents are presented and learned, but they should not restrict a student's opportunity to achieve the necessary learning for social inclusion.

Learning communities and Interactive groups as inclusive experiences

Learning Communities is a project of social and cultural transformation that takes place in an educational centre and its environment in order to achieve an Information Society

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

for all, based on the Dialogic Learning and through the participation of the community in the classroom and the school context (Elboj *et al.*, 2002). Dialogic learning (Flecha, 2000; Aubert *et al.*, 2008) is based on the idea that learning is constructed through egalitarian dialogue and interactions between people. This means that dialogic learning pays attention to interactions that take place in regular classrooms, between teachers and students, as well as interactions that occur outside the classroom and the school with other members of the community. The Learning Communities approach is based on contributions from relevant authors in the fields of education, psychology and sociology. For the purpose of this article, these contributions have been grouped into four main issues.

1. Context is important in the learning process which means that in order to transform and influence learning we need to transform the context where it takes place. Vygotsky (1979) has highlighted the relevance of the sociocultural context for the development of the linguistic and intellectual abilities. Furthermore, Freire (1997) argued for the possibility to transform the learning context through human action and emphasized the power of education to overcome inequalities.

2. Human interactions have a central role in the development of intellectual capabilities and academic performance. Based on Bruner's (1997) contribution this idea emphasizes the possibility of learning through student interactions, either through teaching to each other or learning from each other. Similarly, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1979), elaborated the theory that children can learn more from interactions than from isolated individual study. These interactions work in the zone between the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level, and include interactions both with adults or other children which contribute to children's learning and development. According to the Vygotsky, social interactions in the learning process have an impact on the development of the elemental (biological) processes and higher psychological processes. Finally, Mead's contribution (1973) on the "self", "me" and "I" argued that the "self" is socially constructed based on experiences with others, which are incorporated to shape one's concept of the "self". Therefore, when human interactions are at the centre of meaning-making and in the learning process, they tend to promote learning achievement and motivation for all students.

3. Third, as argued by Vygotsky and Chomsky, there is a universal ability of language and it has a central role in learning. According to Chomsky (1968, 2000) the faculty of language is what makes dialogue and communication between people possible, and it is a universal aspect of human nature. Furthermore, Vygotsky pointed out that language and action are part of the same complex psychological function and they are connected through a dynamic relationship. This means that the solution of difficult tasks requires more communication and exchange of ideas between students.

4. The egalitarian dialogue is a tool which contributes to achieving democratic educational practices. This idea is based on the theories of Habermas and Freire. In the Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas (1987) conceptualises the communicative

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

rationality as the rationality which uses knowledge to achieve an agreement on a given task, and communicative action as the action that takes place when actors need to agree on a situation or the action plan they have to undertake to solve a problem. According to Habermas, all persons have the ability of language and action, and therefore all individuals can take place in communicative actions and consensus building actions. In a similar way, Freire (1970) in his Theory of Dialogical Action, explained that dialogical actions are those actions oriented to understanding, transformation and liberation and move away from simply reproducing power structures in education.

The Learning Communities approach is based on all of these contributions and it is also an approach that argues in favour of educational inclusion. First of all, Learning Communities respond to the increasing diversity in school and aim at supporting all students to achieve educational success and social inclusion. In this sense, the objective of Learning Communities is equality through diversity not homogeneity. Learning Communities take into account student diversity –in terms of culture, ethnicity, gender, ability– and views this diversity through the principle of the *equality of differences* (Flecha, 2000), which means that all different identities are respected and valued and that all students are offered the means to achieve educational success.

In order to achieve this objective, the Learning Communities approach carries out a school transformation, which is part of the global approach of the project. In this case, however, the transformation goes beyond the school and involves the whole community, including the families and the neighbourhood. The process of transformation in a learning community involves a series of steps in which the different members of the community participate. For example, the steps involve thinking of how the community wants their school to be –that is, dreaming the school– establishing a priority for the dreams that will be achieved, planning, implementing the transformation, and finally evaluating what has been achieved and continue dreaming of new transformations.

Access to the same learning contents for all the students is promoted in the Learning Communities and high expectations are emphasized for all students. This means that the school and the community make available all the resources and support which are considered necessary so that all students can achieve. Instead of lowering learning objectives in order to adapt to the particular level of achievement of a student or a group of students, the learning context is transformed so that all the students have the possibility to achieve their best results. As a consequence, even students with disabilities can work on the same learning content and the same learning activities with the necessary support. As a consequence, the process of becoming a Learning Community involves transforming the students' learning environment. This transformation implies, for example, that community members enter the classroom to help students in the learning activities, or that family and community members with low levels of education are encouraged to attend community education programmes in the school.

Within the Learning Communities project, *interactive groups* are a classroom practice that promotes both school success and good coexistence between the students. This

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

practice is different from ability grouping which segregates students according to their ability. On the contrary, *interactive groups* consist of dividing the classroom heterogeneous groups of students and it is usually applied in instrumental subjects. This way of organising the classroom facilitates the participation of all students, including students with disabilities who can participate more easily in the regular learning activities of the ordinary classroom. Two main elements of the interactive groups contribute to educational inclusion of the students, and especially of those with disabilities (Molina, 2007).

The first one is the interaction between students and the opportunity for students to help each other. In this way, diversity between students becomes a positive resource for learning as the students who find difficulties to complete activity can be supported by other students who have already achieved a higher level of learning. Support among peers occurs either because students with learning difficulties ask for it, or because other students offer to support them. Moreover, the opportunity to work interactively in a group is a learning opportunity for all students, both for those who offer support and those who receive it.

The second element is community participation. Interactive groups function with volunteer adults from the community who are available to offer support to classroom activities. Their role consists both of giving direct support to students and encouraging interaction and mutual support. When there is a disabled student in the group, the volunteer can pay special attention to them, in order to guarantee that they are included and follow the activity, either by helping them or by asking other students who are proficient in the task to help them. Other forms of support can be taken up; for instance, in some cases the special education teacher participates in the interactive group where there is a student with disability in order to offer more specialized support.

Within this framework, students with disabilities find the opportunity to receive the necessary support from their peers and from adults as part of the normal course of learning activities. However, as the inclusive approach states, the educational inclusion not only benefits students with learning difficulties and with disabilities, it is also advantageous for the rest of the students. When students with disabilities are included in the interactive groups it becomes possible for other children to benefit from the additional resources and explanations about the activities which can be aimed at a particular child. Furthermore, it is possible that even children with disabilities can provide help to their peers in particular contents in which they are more proficient. This may have a double effect: first, contributing to the performance of other members of the group, and second, transforming perceptions and prejudices towards students with disabilities.

6.- CONCLUSIONS

In this article we have reviewed contributions from the literature which support the educational inclusion as an approach to promote the learning and good coexistence for all students, including those with more difficulties and with disabilities, and which has also been claimed as a right for all children. As a global approach, educational inclusion in-

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

volves a process of school transformation which creates better schools for diverse groups of students. There are specific practices which are contributing to inclusion, and these consist basically of including all the necessary resources in the classroom in order to help the class teacher to respond to the needs of all the students based on the general curriculum and within the regular classroom.

In this article we have also emphasized the need to view the partial or total exclusion of disabled students from mainstream classrooms as a central problematic in critical pedagogy. We argued that the medicalization of disability and the view that disability is located in the individual rather than the interaction of the individual with the social and cultural environment has contributed to the marginalization of special needs students in traditional schooling. We pointed out that research has de-mythologized several perceptions related to the inability of disabled students to learn or to the problems created when they are integrated in mainstream classrooms.

In this framework, the Learning Communities approach and, within them, the interactive groups are examples of inclusive practices which put into action measures that facilitate all students' access, including those with disabilities, to the contents of the general curriculum. Three main characteristics of this project can be highlighted. First, the transformation of the classroom and beyond, including the transformation of the school environment, in order to develop a project of global transformation of the learning environment which promotes learning for all. Second, the creation of heterogeneous groups of students, which allows diversity to be used as a positive source of learning for everyone. Third, the inclusion of all the resources in the regular classroom, including the participation of family and community members in the regular classroom activities. These characteristics contribute to the inclusion of the most disadvantaged students within the regular running of the school, and constitute a beneficial learning environment for all.

7.- REFERENCES

AINSCOW, M. (1994): *Special Needs In The Classroom: A Teacher Education Guide*. Paris, UNESCO.

AINSCOW, M.; BOOTH, T. & DYSON, A. (2004): Understanding and developing inclusive practices in schools: a collaborative action research network, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 8* (2), 125-139.

ARNESEN, A.; MIETOLA, R. & LAHELMA, E. (2007): Language of inclusion and diversity: policy discourses and social practices in Finnish and Norwegian schools, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 11* (1), 97-110.

AUBERT, A.; FLECHA, A.; GARCÍA, C.; FLECHA, R. & RACIONERO, S. (2008): *Aprendizaje dialógico en la Sociedad de la Información*. Barcelona, Hipatia.

Silvia Molina y Miranda Christou

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

AVRAMIDES, E. & NORWICH, B. (2002): Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: a review of the literature, *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17* (2), 129-147.

BAKER, E. T.; WANG, M. C. & WALBERG, H. J. (1995): The effects of inclusion on learning, *Educational Leadership , 52* (4), 33-35.

BARNES, C. (2003): What a difference a decade makes: reflections on doing 'emancipatory' disability research, *Disability and Society, 18* (1), 3-17.

BARTON, L. (2005): Emancipatory research and disabled people: some observations and questions, *Educational Review, 57* (3), 317-327.

BENJAMIN, S. (2002): *The micropolitics of inclusive education*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

BENTLEY, J. K. C. (2008): Lessons from the 1%: children with labels of severe disabilities and their peers as architects of inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 12* (5-6), 543-561.

BOOTH, T. & AINSCOW, M. (2002): *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*. (Bristol Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)).

BRUNER, J. (1997): *La educación, puerta de la cultura*. Madrid, Visor.

CARRINGTON, S. (1999): Inclusion needs a different school culture, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3* (3), 257-268.

CARRINGTON, S. & ROBINSON, R. (2004): A case study of inclusive school development: a journey of learning, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 8* (2), 141-153.

CHENOWETH, L. & STEHLIK, D. (2004): Implications of social capital for the inclusion of people with disabilities and families in community life, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 8* (1), 59-72.

CHOMSKY, N. (1988): *El lenguaje y los problemas de conocimiento*. Madrid, Visor.

-- (2000): *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

CONNOR, D. J.; GABEL, S. L.; GALLAGHER, D. J. & MORTON, M. (2008): Disability Studies and Inclusive Education—implications for theory, research and practice, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 12* (5-6), 441-457.

CROLL, P. (2001): Children with Statements in Mainstream Key Stage Two Classrooms: a survey in 46 primary schools, *Educational Review, 53* (2), 137-145.

DARDER, A.; BALTONADO, M. & TORRES, R. (2003): Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction, en DARDER, A. BALTONADO, M. & TORRES, R. (eds.) *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. New York, RoutledgeFalmer, 1-21.

DUNN, L. M. (1968): Special Education for the Mildly Retarded. Is much of it justifiable?, *Exceptional Children, 35*, 5-22.

DYSON, A. (2001): Special needs in the twenty-first century: where we've been and where we're going, *British Journal of Special Education, 28* (1), 24-28.

ELBOJ, C.; PUIGDELLÍVOL, I; SOLER, M. & VALLS, R. (2002): *Comunidades de aprendizaje. Transformar la educación.* Barcelona, Graó.

EVANS, J. L.; ILFELD, E. M. E. & HANSSEN, E. E. (1998): *Inclusion. Inclusive ECCD: A Fair Start for All Children*. Massachusetts, Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Haydenville, MA.

EVANS, P. (2003): *Aspects of the integration of handicapped and disadvantaged students into education. Evidence from quantitative and qualitative data.* OECD/OCRI.

FISHER, D.; ROACH, V. & FREY, N. (2002): Examining the general programmatic benefits of inclusive schools, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 6* (1), 63-78.

FITCH, F. (2003): Inclusion, Exclusion, and Ideology: Special Education Students' Changing Sense of Self, *Urban Review 35* (3), 233-252.

FLECHA, R. (2000): Sharing Words. Lanham, M. D.: Rowman & Littlefield.

FREIRE, P. (1970): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, Continuum.

-- (1997): *A la sombra de este árbol*. Barcelona, El Roure.

FREIRE, P. & MACEDO, D. (1987): *Literacy: Reading the Word and Reading the World*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

GIROUX, H. A. (1997): *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture and Schooling.* Colorado, Westview Press.

HABERMAS, J. (1987): *Teoría de la acción comunicativa*. Madrid, Taurus.

KINCHELOE, J. L. (2005): *Critical Pedagogy Primer*. New York, Peter Lang.

Revista Electrónica Teoría de la Educación.
Educación y Cultura en la Sociedad de la Información.

TESI, 10(3), 2009, 31-55

LLOYD, C. (2008): Removing barriers to achievement: a strategy for inclusion or exclusion?, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 12* (2), 221-236.

MACEDO, D. (2006): *Literacies of Power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Colorado, Westview Press.

MEAD, G. H. (1973): *Espíritu, persona y sociedad. Desde el punto de vista del conductismo social.* Barcelona: Paidós.

MEIJER, C.; SORIANO, V. & WATKINS, W. (2003): *Special Needs Education in Europe*. Thematic publication of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

MOLINA, S. (2007): *Los grupos interactivos: una práctica de las comunidades de aprendizaje para la inclusión del alumnado con discapacidad*. (Non published doctoral theses). Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona.

MUTHUKRISHNA, N. & SCHOEMAN, M. (2000): From "Special Needs" to "Quality Education for All": a participatory, problem-centred approach to policy development in South Africa, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 4* (4), 315-335.

NIND, M. & COCHRANE, S. (2002): Inclusive curricula? Pupils on the margins of special schools, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 6*(2), 185-198.

O'CONNOR, U. (2007): Parental concerns on inclusion: The Northern Ireland perspective, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 11* (5-6), 535-550.

OECD (2008): Education at a Glance 2008: OECD Indicators. Retrieved the 22 September 2008 from: http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_41266761_1_1_1_1 ,00.html .

OLIVER, M. (1992): Changing the social relations of research production, *Disability, Handicap & Society, 7* (2), 101-114

PATHER, S. (2007): Demystifying inclusion: implications for sustainable inclusive practice, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 11* (5-6), 627-643.

PEETSMA, T.; VERGEER, M.; ROELEVELD, J. & KARSTEN, S. (2001): Inclusion in Education: comparing pupils' development in special and regular education., *Educational Review, 53* (2), 125-135.

PETERS, S. (2002): Inclusive education in accelerated and professional development schools: a case-based study of two school reform efforts in the USA, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 6* (4), 287-308.

PORTER, G. L. (1997): Critical elements for Inclusive Schools. In PIJL, S. J.; MEIJER, C. J. W. & HEGERTY, S. (eds.): *Inclusive Education, a Global Agenda*. Londres, Routledge Publishing.

-- (2003): El reto de la diversidad y la integración en las escuelas. *Aula de Innovación Educativa, 121*, 37-42.

PUIGDELLÍVOL, I. (2005): *La educación especial en la escuela integrada: una perspectiva desde la diversidad*. Barcelona, Graó.

ROSE, R. (2001): Primary School Teacher Perceptions of the Conditions Required to Include Pupils with Special Educational Needs. *Educational Review, 53*(2), 147-156.

ROUSE, M. & FLORIAN, L. (2006): Inclusion and achievement: student achievement in secondary schools with higher and lower proportions of pupils designated as having special educational needs, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 10* (6), 481-493.

SLEE, R. (2001a): 'Inclusion in Practice': does practice make perfect?, *Educational Review, 53* (2), 113-123.

-- (2001b): Social justice and the changing directions in educational research: the case of inclusive education, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 5* (2-3), 167-177.

STAINBACK, S. & STAINBACK, W. (1996): *Curriculum Considerations in Inclusive Classrooms: Facilitating Learning for All Students*. Baltimore, Paul H. Brookes Pub.

UNESCO (1990): *World Declaration on Education For All and Framework for Action.*

-- (1994): *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. Adopted by the World conference on special needs education: Access and quality.*

-- (2000): *The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments.*

UNITED NATIONS (1990): *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

-- (1993): *The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.*

VLACHOU, A. (2004): Education and inclusive policy-making: implications for research and practice, *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 8* (1), 3-21.

VYGOTSKY, L. S. (1979): *El desarrollo de los procesos psicológicos superiores*. Barcelona, Crítica.

ZIGMOND, N. & BAKER, J. M. (1995): Full inclusion for students with learning disabilities: too much of a good thing? *Theory into Practice, 35* (1), 26-34.

Para citar el presente artículo puede utilizar la siguiente referencia: